

1. What thought "struck you" or was an "AHA" moment for you as you looked through the resources and considered the idea of intellectual freedom?

When considering intellectual freedom and censorship in regards to the school library, what often comes to mind are parents and school board officials asking for specific books to be removed based on their controversial topics such as works on homosexuality and racial issues. In, "Does Censorship Matter?" by Pat Scales, the thought that struck me was how some acts that do not completely remove texts from the library, are still infringing on students' rights to intellectual freedom. For example, the use of restricted shelves that house books only available to students upon parental consent, has been argued to unintentionally imply that these students who do obtain access are somehow "evil" or "immoral". An example of this was a student in Arkansas having to obtain parental permission to check out any of the *Harry Potter* books from the restricted shelf. Though the librarian had not completely removed these books from the library, she was still requiring the student to seek out approval for obtainment of a text and was imposing unintentional labels upon the student for having the request. All in all, restrictive shelving is not advised.

2. What type of impact do you believe intellectual freedom has on the management of school libraries?

When managing a school library, librarians are forced to maintain a balance between provision of intellectual freedom and following imposed mandates given to them by the federal government. For example, according to Teresa Chmara's article, "Minors' First Amendment

Rights: CIPA and School Libraries”, CIPA requires librarians to install filtering softwares into all library computers. If they do not, they are in direct violation of the law and risk not receiving state or federal funding for their library. According to the ALA’s stance on filters and filtering, they believe that filters should not be imposed on anyone and rather, all students should instead be formally education on digital citizenship and safe technology practices.

In addition to filtering, school librarians must advocate for the continued availability of certain books that may be deemed “unfit” by parents or school boards. Pat Scales discusses this issue in her article, “Does Censorship Matter?”. Often, school districts unwittingly infringe upon students’ First Amendment rights by electively removing controversial titles from the school library’s collection.

As a school librarian, it is important to advocate for students’ intellectual freedom, and ensure utilizing practices that promote students’ First Amendment rights when managing the school library.

3. As a school librarian, how will you promote AND protect the intellectual freedom of your students?

To promote and protect the intellectual freedom of my students, I will teach students safe internet practices through formal lessons on digital citizenship, educate my administrator and other school district officials on ALA’s stance on intellectual freedom, and remind these officials of how this impacts students’ First Amendment rights. When books are proposed for the removal from the library collection by parents and others based on their containment of

controversial content, I will advocate for those books and reiterate my stance on protecting students' rights to intellectual freedom.

4. Share at least two challenges that you can foresee for protecting the intellectual freedom of your students.

One challenge I foresee is when parents and others request for a book to be removed from the library collection based on the fact that it has controversial content or ideas they do not agree with.

Another challenge I foresee is the required filtering of content on library computers by district, state, and federal regulations.

5. Describe how you will address the two challenges that you have identified.

For the challenge of the book request removal, it will be up to me to defend the work and explain to the aggrieved party that restriction of the work from the library would be fundamentally infringing on their student's rights detailed by the First Amendment. I will advocate for the book to my administrator, and any other district administrators I would need to speak with.

In regards to filtering on library computers, I will teach students about digital citizenship in order for them to navigate the internet safely, as no filtering software can block accurately. I will try to work towards unblocking sites with valid, safe material that are being restricted by the

school's filtering software. Teachers and librarians, according to Teresa Chmara's article, "Minors' First Amendment Rights: CIPA and School Libraries", have the ability to unblock sites with "constitutionally protected material".