

Why weed these materials?

Weeding is an essential part of libraries to help them function properly. Weeding is the removing of materials from a library collection in a systematic and deliberate way. Through weeding, collection development can become smoother and more thoughtful. Weeding allows room for the collection to grow and become richer. This is due to weeding materials that are outdated, not frequently circulated, or worn. In our current library (Newport High School) there are materials that have never been weeded.

The library is a resource that should provide information accessibly, presenting all points of views. However, when you have a library that hasn't been properly weeded the amount of information can become overwhelming. Most of the books are outdated or never circulated and that takes up the space needed to allow new books to come in. Libraries should have sources of information and books that are relevant and can help the school, students, and teachers. The library is the heart of the school and should be used as a resource.

When I took over the librarian position with Newport High School, I knew that weeding would be an important task that should come first. Surely, I do not need to speak on the state of the library and the back office as many of you have seen it. I spent my first couple of weeks tackling the amount of hoarding. To make the library functional I have to first understand the students, learn the culture of the school, learn the collection, learn the library systems, and weed. The amount I have weeded appears to be a large number of books, but if weeding had been done properly many of those titles would have been weeded slowly overtime.

Fiction weeding:

Many of the fiction I weeded truly is surplus. The previous librarian had a passion for libraries and for books, however several titles were ordered multiple times. If the book was a Kentucky Bluegrass winner, she would order anywhere from 4-8 copies. The books did not have to be award winners for her to order more than needed. I had 8 copies in the back of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Roderick Rules* and 2 copies that were shelved. This is an overwhelming number of books, especially for students. When students are looking for books if there is too much out there, they become overstimulated with the selection process. As a fellow librarian I love to be surrounded by books within reason. There were quite a few copies that were very outdated. I looked at checkout dates and circulation dates to determine what would be removed. There were books I remember reading at my time here and saw that it didn't circulate past that date.

Non-fiction:

This area of the library was the most intense to weed. It required my attention due to how many books in that subject there were. For example, on the Dewey Decimal scale number 300 is social sciences. If I were to weed books about the civil rights movement, I had to consider how many do we have in the collection and what is the copyright/publishing date. Has new information come out that is more relevant and truer? If I only had a few books for this topic then I had to keep them so students and teachers had access to that resource. I then created a list of what would need to be ordered to make that section more relevant.

Overall, the weeding process has been challenging and time consuming. I did not just pull titles and decide on a whim we wouldn't have them anymore. It is a large number of books being withdrawn from our system, but we still have a huge collection available. My goal is to make the library a hub for students and teachers. I want to work with teachers to pair classes and learn what the library can offer. I want students to see themselves through the representation of the library and the collection.

Where will the weeded materials go?

Ultimately the first priority is ensuring students can have access to free books. I plan to keep collections that were weeded for free book fairs. Many surplus items can go to teachers and classrooms for literature circles and to the students. If the items are extremely outdated and in rough condition, I suggest recycling them. We have books that have black dust because they were buried in that back room for so long and they are poorly outdated.