April 13, 2009

Dear Principal,

We recently completed a collection evaluation of the nonfiction texts in the 300 section of the media center. The 300s encompass social sciences: political and cultural history, careers, and college preparation. We evaluated the section by using a random sampling method. We chose, at random, a 10 percent sample of the approximately 2,000 titles located in the social sciences section. We then averaged the copyright years of these 200 titles. Right now, the 300 section texts have an average copyright date of 1993, sixteen years prior to 2009.

Governor Thomas Johnson High School opened in 1967 and is currently 42 years old. In our random sample, 26 books were published prior to 1967. The oldest text in the sample, *Holidays Around the World*, was published in 1953, fourteen years before GTJHS opened its doors to students. Sometimes media center specialists find it appropriate to buy retrospective sources to enhance their selection. Retrospective sources are texts that are older than the current year, but still meet a curricular need. However, *Holidays Around the World* had been a published text for fourteen years prior to the opening of the school, much longer than most media center specialists would allow for a new purchase.

Among the random sample, there were quite a few titles that were obviously outdated from our current political and cultural state. One such text, *Lonesome Road: the Story of the Negro’s Part in America* by Saunders Redding, was published in 1958, five years before the Civil Rights riot in Birmingham, six years before Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, and 10 years before Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination. In the chapter entitled “Morning Fair” of *Lonesome Road*, the narrator notes, “Nineteen forty-five was the year when integration was begun in the army and seemed assured in the future of other branches of the armed services. […] and the year a Negro was first mentioned as governor of the Virgin Islands” (Redding 326). Aside from the obvious textual inaccuracy of referring to an African American as a Negro, the narrator is also noting some “strides” in the journey of African Americans. These strides are nothing compared to the events of the Civil Rights Movement. By allowing this text to remain in the media center or to use it as a reliable source on African American history is inappropriate. A high school student unversed in reliable research may take information from this text at face value.

Another title from the random sample, *Amy Vanderbilt’s New Complete Book of Etiquette: The Guide to Gracious Living*, was published in 1967, the year GTJHS opened. This book could serve as an excellent artifact for research on the independent female’s journey in the United States. However, one cannot rely on a high school student viewing any texts he or she finds in the media center as an artifact. Rather, students’ perceptions of the media center, rightly so, is that of a place where they can gather secondary information from print resources for research. High school students find primary information much more quickly on appropriate websites. They qualify this information with accurate and up-to-date secondary sources in the print sources. At one point in her book, Amy Vanderbilt comments, “It’s hard to face this, but no woman can find happiness in putting career above her husband and family […] the hard truth is that more women with young children fail at making happy homes while working full time than succeed” (Vanderbilt 189). The comment above may be true for many 21st century families. However, this concept of womanhood and woman’s duties as wife and mother has changed and evolved, especially following the Feminist Movement of the 1970s. No longer should this text be available to high school students, both male and female, because its instructions are no longer relevant in our evolved gender system both in the workplace and at home. Multiple current career texts would easily replace this text, and be more gender-neutral and much more up-to-date.

We included the above two examples to help emphasize the need for change. This section we evaluated has a number of rich, current resources. However, it also has quite a few books that are out-of-date in both copyright and content. We used both the Wilson’s Core Collection for Senior High Students and other reliable selection tools to compile a 10 book sample to replace the 10 oldest texts in this section. We averaged the copyright dates of these replacement texts and found that 2006 is a reliable year to average replacement texts around. Using this year and the average book prices highlighted in the March issue of *School Library Journal*, we determined the following replacement prices:

* If we were to raise the average copyright date of the entire media center collection to 1996, we would need no less than $19,315.22.
* If we were to raise the average copyright date of the entire media center collection to 2000, we would need no less than $57,945.66.
* If we were to raise the average copyright date of the entire media center collection to 2006, the year we determined from our small replacement selection, we would need no less than $102,370.66, to replace the 5,337 books that do not meet a 2006 copyright average.

The good news is that currently the media center holds enough print resources so that there are 10 books per student, a statistic that meets the MSDE requirements. Unfortunately, many of these texts are not up to date and need to be replaced.

In an effort to improve this collection so that the average copyright age, and thus the information the students are finding in the available print resources, is more recent, we need extra funding. Besides the current allotted amount provided for us to purchase materials annually, we would like to request $20,000 extra, spread over four years. With this extra money, we will be able to replace many of the texts like *Lonesome Road* and the *New Complete Book of* *Etiquette* with texts that correspond with current student research needs.

Please refer to the attached fact sheet and attached list of suggested new titles if you have questions about our process and our conclusions. Thank you very much for taking time from your schedule to consider our request. Please visit us in the media center or send us an email if you have any questions or would like to discuss this request further.

Sincerely,

Mischelle Collela

Kate Walters

Below is a list of ten current print resources that a student may find in the 300 section of the media center. These sources were selected to replace the 10 oldest books in the sample of the 300 section.

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| 10 Oldest Books | Suggested Replacement Sources |
| 1. *Holidays Around the World*-1953  2. *How to Live With* *Statistics*-1954  3. *The* *Fables* *of India*-1955  4. *Lonesome Road: The Story of the Negro’s Part in America*-1958  5. *How Much and How Many*-1960  6. *46 Days of Christmas*-1960  7. *Black Like Me*-1961  8. *The Supreme Court*-1962  9. *Body, Boots, and Britches*-1962  10. *Celebrating Christmas Around the World*-1962 | 1. *Traditional Festivals: A Multicultural Encyclopedia*-2005  2. *Cracking the SAT*-2008  3. *Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees*-2009  4. *Encyclopedia of Race and* *Racism*-2008  5. *Countdown to College: 21 “to-do” lists for high school*-2003  6. *Encyclopedia of the End: Mysterious Death in Fact, Fancy, Folklore, and More*-2009  7. *Black Like Me*-2004  8. *The Supreme Court A to Z*-2007  9. *The Latino Student’s Guide to College Success-*2002  10. *But What If I Don’t Want to Go to College? A Guide to Success Through Alternative Education*-2006 |

Note: Many of the choices for replacement texts above involve college preparation and careers. Currently, the GTJHS media center does not have a large or recent selection of texts for high school students to browse for information regarding college and career preparation. Also, one of the texts is geared exclusively towards Latino students. GTJHS has the largest Latino student populations in Frederick and this population is rapidly growing every year.