

Collection Plan

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Whitman Community Overview

Walt Whitman is one of 26 middle schools in the Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) system, which serves over 185,000 students and is the largest public school district in the state of Virginia. Whitman's student body is made up of equal parts 7th and 8th grade students with a total student population of 911. The Whitman library strives to serve the entire student body. In 1985, Whitman moved to its present location placing Whitman out of its community boundaries, requiring all students to ride a bus to school. The school community lives in three different areas: Hybla Valley, Mt. Vernon, and Fort Belvoir. The areas are economically diverse Ft. Belvoir having a low poverty rate, while Hybla Valley has nearly double the rate of poverty in Virginia with 20.6% rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). According to the Fairfax County Public School's profile, Whitman's membership demographics for the 2020- 2021 year were: 52% Hispanic or Latino, 20% Black (not of Hispanic origin), 17% White (not of Hispanic origin), 4% Asian, and 4% other. Enrollment of Black students dropped 6% from 2018 to 2021. 24% of the student body are English learners and 75% are English proficient. In 2021, 57% of the students received free or reduced lunch, a 5% drop from 2018. Enrollment services are provided as: 73% general education, 11% advanced academics, 35% middle advanced academics, 24% English learner services, and 19% special education services. The Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profile reported Whitman Middle falls behind the division and state testing scores on reading, writing, science, math and social studies. The teacher quality for this school reports that Whitman has 4.6% out-of-field and inexperienced teachers. More than a percent above the division and state average. It is rated a medium poverty school. (VDOE, 2021). Walt Whitman is one of two community schools in FCPS which benefits from partnerships with community resources.

Whitman Collection Analysis Overview

Upon completion of a collection analysis it was determined that the Whitman collection is robust in volume but dated. The collection's average age is 11 years old. Over 1,200 books during the 2019-2020 school year and COVID-19 pandemic were damaged or lost. Based on a random sampling of the biography section, Whitman's collection does not offer a diverse selection of material. The biography section should be weeded and selection of new materials should be purchased to reflect the demographics and experiences of the Whitman students. A closer look should be taken at the rest of the collection to see if this trend of lack of diversity in the collection needs to be addressed.

The Whitman library collection analysis was meant to ensure that it meets the needs and goals of the school community. The collection offers a wide variety of resources but lacks current and relative representations of the community. The collection strives to be integral to the curricular and instructional needs of the students but lacks a variety of formats for different types of learners. The collection benefits from materials outside the school but would be wise to foster a strong connection to the military base and their resources. The library would like to be responsive to the changes in school programming and would like to be an asset to faculty, students and parents. Based on this analysis the following recommendations are made for future planning:

- Develop a Whitman library mission statement that reflects the goals and beliefs held to achieve the best experience for all users.
- Conduct a weeding project. Enlist students and faculty to join the library staff in weeding the collection so that it reflects current, relevant and accurate resources.

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- Seek resources to replenish the void left from the missing and damaged books during the COVID-19 pandemic. Be mindful in selecting resources that meet the needs of the students, not just replacing them with the same materials. Resources supporting Portrait of a Graduate and SOLs should be taken into consideration.
- Establish relationships with community stakeholders to garner support and resources for the mission and goals of the Whitman Library.

The Whitman collection analysis offers the librarians the opportunity to reflect on the community it serves and rebuild the resources and relationships to create an amazing user experience for all. Due to COVID-19 restrictions still in place, a hold will be placed on establishing community stakeholder to garner support and resources. The Ft. Belvoir Army base is not open to community outreach at this time.

Goal #1: Library Mission Statement

According to Mary Keeling's article Mission statements: Rhetoric, Reality or Road map to success, "Mission statements serve two purposes in communication. First, the act of crafting a mission statement brings people together to negotiate and clarify roles and responsibilities. Second, the mission statement communicates an intent to serve the community by defining an understanding of the needs of its members; the skills, resources, and capacity needed to fulfill those needs; and an expected outcome that will benefit the community." (Keeling, 2013).

Whitman will craft together a strong mission statement that will reflect our unique community and address the goals of the library and its programs. An example of selected resource to base the mission statement can be taken from Newport News school district, "The mission of the [school library] media center is to develop the curiosity, creativity, and knowledge base of our students so they collaboratively build learning networks to analyze works of others and to create and

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communicate works of their own. To that end, students will become effective, ethical, and discriminating users of information and technology. (Keeling, 2013).

| | Goal #2 Mission Statement Action Items | Assessment |
|--------|---|---|
| Year 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Research and review mission statements from other middle school libraries.● Gather input from students, faculty and parents on their definition of the library and their personal needs.● Draft school library mission statement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Survey students, faculty, and parents on the validity of the draft mission statement. |
| Year 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Make changes based on survey responses to the draft statement.● Finalize the mission statement.● Share the statement with the community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Does the mission statement reflect the goals of the library?● Provide at least 5 points of evidence in where the mission statement is being used or seen in the daily life of the library. |
| Year 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review and reflect on the mission statement.● Make changes if evidence cannot support the statement.● Highlight the achievements of the library that reflect the mission statement to the administration and community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mission statements and library achievements should be communicated in internal and external media to the staff, students and community.● Comments and suggestions should be sought out as an ongoing improvement plan for the library. |

Goal #2 Weeding Project

According to the American Library Association (ALA), “Regardless of format, an optimal library collection is one that is reviewed on a consistent basis for accuracy, currency, usage, diversity, and subject area gaps.” (ALA, 2021). The Whitman Library has no record as to the last weeding project since the current librarian took position four years ago. Books are weeded as

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needed but the entire collection has not been reviewed. The Fairfax County Public School policy on weeding will be used as the resource. FCPS policy on the redistribution and disposal of products reads:

- **Collection Maintenance**

- A complete inventory of the collection will be completed every three years
- Weeding
 - Remove materials in accordance with R3013. Materials should be weeded if they:
 - are in poor physical condition
 - contain obsolete, outdated, or inaccurate information
 - are in conflict with the representation ideals associated with FCPS policy
 - have low circulation

An inventory was completed last year and it is good practice to weed the collection at this time.

| | Goal # 2 Weeding Project Action Items | Assessment |
|--------|---|--|
| Year 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Survey users on impression of the collection. Does it reflect their needs, interests?● Weeding of Nonfiction Section based on the FCPS criteria.● Utilize student and faculty volunteers to support the weeding project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Run record reports of nonfiction sections for age of collection.● Run reports for circulation data of nonfiction books before and after the weeding project.● Reflect on user survey results to influence further actions. |
| Year 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Survey users on impression of the collection. Does it reflect their needs, interests?● Weeding of Fiction Section based on the FCPS criteria.● Utilize student and faculty volunteers to support the weeding project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Run record reports of fiction sections for age of collection.● Run reports for circulation data of fiction books before and after the weeding project.● Compare and contrast user survey results. Note improvements, similarities. |
| Year 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Survey users on needs for professional development. Interests? Areas where support is needed?● Weeding of the Professional collection based on the FCPS criteria.● Utilize faculty volunteers to support the weeding project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Run record reports of nonfiction sections for age of collection.● Run reports for circulation data of nonfiction books before and after the weeding project.● Reflect on user survey results to influence further actions. |

Goal #3: Covid 19 Resource Replacement

Due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, many of Whitman's physical resources were lost.

Fortunately the America Rescue Plan passed will provide federal support for libraries across the country. \$200 million was sent to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. (Lobosco, 2021). Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Library Instruction and Support received \$788,554, over \$8,000 of which was awarded to Whitman to replace print books. The C-19 funds are specifically to be used to replace the exact copies of the books that were lost but there is some room to select titles that support our program goal of developing and maintaining a culturally responsive library collection, i.e. a fiction title that reflects under-represented groups in the collection or a nonfiction title that provides inclusive coverage of the topic. It is important to select a wide variety of culturally diverse resources. Researchers argue, "Pushing past the "single story" and the "all-white world of children's books" is crucial to shaping a broad collection of books that reflect the multiple ways that students can experience the world to find themselves, and others, in the books they read (Boyd, et. all, 2015). With 83% of Whitman students identifying as non-white, it is imperative to select print books that reflect their cultures and lives.

Examples of a selection of diverse books include:

Reynolds, Jason. (2019) *Long way down*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books. 336 p.

Reynolds' free verse fantasy highlights a 15-year-old African American youth's dilemma over whether to avenge his brother's murder. During a 60 second elevator ride, Will meets figures from his past who have been slain by gun violence. A Newbery Honor Book, Coretta Scott King Honor Book and Winner of the Walter Dean Myers Award, this novel leaves readers with questions regarding the code of honor and conduct of life.

Cisneros, Ernesto. (2020). *Efren divided*. Quill Tree Books. 272 p.

Efren, a young Mexican-American boy, struggles to support his family after the deportation of his mother. Cisneros writing tackles the complexity of immigration issues while also touching on the subject of empathy, activism, friendship and kindness. A glossary of Spanish words is included in the back of the book. This realistic fiction middle grade novel is the winner of the 2021 Pura Belpre Children's Author Award.

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| | Goal #3 Resource Replacement Action Items | Assessment |
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| Year 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review list of lost books that are eligible for Covid-19 funding.● Purchase paper copies to replace diverse titles. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Run report on usage of paper books replaced by Covid-19 funds.● Run report on how many books lost during pandemic were not replaced due to lack of diversity. |
| Year 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Using annual funds, replace the percentage of books that were lost and not replaced due to lack of diversity, with books that reflect the Whitman student body.● Use selection aids like “We like Diverse Books”, culturally-specific book awards: Coretta Scott King Award and Stonewall Book Award. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Student survey: Does the library provide books that they want to read? That reflects their lives.● Run report on usage of new books added to the collection. |
| Year 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use annual funds to purchase other collection materials that support the diverse needs of the Whitman student body. Look at technology and makerspace materials.● Reflect on student survey results to influence purchases. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Record usage of collection materials both print and other to see trends.● Review the library mission statement and provide evidence of how collection development supports Whitman Library’s purpose and goals. |

Collection Planning Summary

The Whitman Library will benefit from building a mission statement and actively seeking ways to support the library’s purpose and goals. By undergoing a weeding project that involves the faculty and staff, and taking time to review and replace materials to insure they reflect Whitman’s diverse community, the library will be poised to be a central part of the academic and community life of all who utilize it’s services for years to come.

Resources

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