Scenario 3: The principal checks out some books that have gay and lesbian characters in them. He fails to return them, but offers to pay for them.

I would take his money. It is always possible the books were lost, and I would replace the books. However, I would then monitor his activity in the media center. If needed, I would discuss my concerns with the principal directly. I would let him know that while special interest groups are much more active in foreign countries and their libraries, it is enough of a problem in the United States that the ALA has commented on this technique, “preservation and replacement efforts should ensure that balance in library materials is maintained and that controversial materials are not removed from the collections through theft, loss, mutilation, or normal wear and tear. There should be alertness to efforts by special interest groups to bias a collection though systematic theft or mutilation” (ALA).

I’ll let him know that I hope it was not his intent to leave me with the impression that he was purposefully censoring books from children, but I can also back up my position with articles on the first amendment in libraries,

In other words, if a book is age appropriate and there are students who would benefit from reading it, then removing a title based on the disapproval of its content raises a constitutional issue, says ALA's Caldwell-Stone. ‘Students do have a measure of First Amendment rights, and it says that governments can't censor materials unless they're obscene, [contain] child pornography, or are harmful to minors.’

Librarians need to remember that it's not their job to impose their own ideologies on the kids they serve or to parent or protect them, Scales says. And even though schools are required to act in loco parentis-Latin for ‘in place of parent’-the doctrine only applies to school librarians when it comes to the safety and health of their students, not when it comes to censorship, she adds (SLJ, 2009).

Hopefully, he simply thought he was acting in the best interest of children and will stop once the libraries procedures (and the US Constitution) are pointed out to him. While I may often be the sole librarian in a school, I will always have my colleagues in the county, my county supervisor, the state association, and the ALA/ALSC and the US government support behind me. I would always confront someone in a non-adversarial way first, and then begin to get support from over his or her head if needed.

# “Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries.” American Library Association. (2011). Web. 1 Nov. 2011. <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/intellectual.cfm>

Whelan, Debra Lau. "A Dirty Little Secret. (Cover Story)." School Library Journal 55.2 (2009): 26.

MasterFILE Premier. Web. 1 Nov. 2011.

Scenario 2: A minority student who rides a bus to school tells you that he does not have Internet access at home and he has no study hall period in which to complete a research assignment that his social studies teacher has made.

My first priority would be getting the student into a library. I see my job as ensuring access to information as well as a guide to the information. I would make sure he knew my hours before school, after school, and at lunchtime. I would also make sure he knew the public library branches, hours and computer-time booking policies, although this may not be the best option since computer time may be limited per day at the public library (MCPS). I’d also assist him in accessing the bus routes that may be needed to get to the closest library to his home. Depending on the geographic area, I may also be able to alert him to community center and human services programs that offer Internet time.

Once I am certain he knows all of his options for access, I’d also speak with the teacher about collaboration and booking time ideas for computer/internet based projects that students may not have access to at home. Perhaps the teacher is not aware of the real roadblocks and problems faced by students that do not have computer access in their homes. In the article, “Roadblocks on the Information Highway,” the following comparative scenario is given,

The computer and Internet are big parts of Olivia's life. If she forgets her math homework, she goes to a website to print out the problems or e-mails her teacher for help. During the past year, she worked on a variety of school projects using her home computer: She developed a brochure for a science project, she researched the life of a French explorer, and she looked at footage from a webcam on the school roof to check the weather…

The computer is not nearly as big a part of Tina's life as it is Olivia's. Tina's teacher assigns little more than a worksheet or two for homework each night. It's hard, after all, to expect the many students in Tina's class without access to a home computer to complete research assignments for homework. (Celano).

I’d want to be careful to collaborate to find a solution that did not result in the teacher discontinuing interesting projects because students did not have access. I’d want to try to ensure we gave information access to all rather than lowering the expectations for all because of accessibility problems.

Public Computers Booking and Use Policies. Montgomery County Public Libraries. 2011.

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/libtmpl.asp?url=/content/libraries/usingthelibrary/sessionmngmtpolicy.asp#timelimits>

Celano, Donna; Neuman, Susan B. "Roadblocks On The Information Highway." Educational Leadership 68.3 (2010): 50. MasterFILE Premier. Web. 3 Nov. 2011

Scenario 11. A parent comes into the media center to inform you that her family is moving and she needs a list of all the books checked out by her daughter, who is in middle school, so she can make certain all books that have been checked out are returned before the family moves.

My first assumption will be that the parent is simply trying to organize for a move, and thank her for being so respectful and thoughtful to the library. I will explain that the circulation computer deletes circulation records once books are returned. I will also explain that I can give that list of currently checked out books (if there are any) to her daughter and she may ask to see it, but with the First Amendment it is up to her daughter, even if her daughter is under 18. As with the principal, I would assume at first that the parent simply may not know this is the case. She may be fine with the policy once she is aware of the policy. I would have articles on hand to back me up, like this excerpt,

What do librarians and other educators need to know about students’ privacy rights in school libraries? For starters, every state—except for Florida, Maine, Connecticut, and Massachusetts—and even the District of Columbia safeguards the confidentiality of school library records when it comes to minors. Although these protections vary greatly, *no state law* gives teachers or principals the right to access a student’s library circulation record. For the most part, kids are protected from curious parents, too, with only 15 states (Alaska, Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Ohio, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) giving caregivers the authority to view their children’s circulation records (Adams, SLJ).

As well as a copy of the current Maryland law that covers this, Md. STATE GOVERNMENT Code Ann. § 23-107. Circulation records. I will also be purchasing a copy of the ALA’s current edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual.

The question becomes what are my responsibilities if the books are not returned. Once the family becomes financially responsible, do the records fall under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)? I was unable to find any full text articles that could answer my question. In a LawLibrary Blog in 2005, Helen Adams (same author as the article above) writes, “Why does it matter whether K-12 library records are ‘education records’? If library records are ‘education records’ under FERPA, parents and/or guardians will have access to the library records of minor children through the age of 17.” Adams’ blog goes on to list the reasons why the law is unclear on this point and she concludes with, “Not having a clear determination on the ambiguous legal definition of “education records” in FERPA leaves school librarians at a disadvantage in protecting the privacy of their minor student patrons” (Adams, LawLibrary) It seems this is up for interpretation; I’m uncomfortable not having a clear answer to back up my position. I would need to seek help if the parent contested my policy based on FERPA.

Adams, Helen R. "The Privacy Problem." School Library Journal 57.4 (2011): 34. MasterFILE Premier. Web. 6 Nov. 2011.

Adams, Helen R. “Are student library records protected by federal law (FERPA)? A surprising analysis” LibraryLaw.com (2005). Web. 6 Nov. 2011.http://blog.librarylaw.com/librarylaw/2005/07/are\_student\_lib.html