



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
 State Superintendent of Education

October 6, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education
FROM: Eric G. Mackey *EJM*
 State Superintendent of Education
SUBJECT: Alabama School Library Programs

As the heart of the school community, school libraries are central to teaching and learning; librarians' integration with the full scope of the school's instructional program enriches student learning and improves achievement for all students. School libraries provide physical and remote access to appropriate high-quality resources and services during and outside the school day. School librarians structure meaningful learning experiences across the curriculum to ensure that learners will be able to independently inquire, locate, analyze, share, and create new knowledge in an increasingly digital world—training students to be responsible lifelong learners.

By their very definition, school libraries are not public libraries and serve a specific targeted audience that includes mostly juvenile users. This nuance of school libraries makes it even more important for educators to ensure that the materials available are age and developmentally appropriate and that parents and guardians understand the mission and role of school libraries and their collections. Overwhelmingly, our school librarians demonstrate remarkable skill in building collections aligned to the Science of Reading in early grades, as well as the research mission of media centers. Even with the best of collections, sometimes questions arise. And, as much as librarians try to review materials, no librarian can fully know all the content in every book.

Therefore, every local board of education should have an approved written policy that guides the selection, deselection, and reconsideration of library resources. This policy should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis, be familiar to all school administrators and school library staff, and be disseminated widely to community stakeholders. The reconsideration portion of this policy establishes the framework for any person or group registering a complaint or formal challenge to library resources and possible resolutions for all involved. The procedure for handling complaints and for reconsidering challenged materials should be clearly defined and communicated in the policy and should be applicable to everyone. In addition, this policy should communicate procedures for appeal to the local board of education for both those who seek a work's removal and those who desire its retention.

If you have questions regarding school library programs, please contact Mr. Sean J. Stevens, Program Coordinator, Instructional Services, by email at sstevens@alsde.edu or Mrs. Cristin Dillard, Education Administrator, by email at cdillard@alsde.edu or by telephone at (334) 694-4768.

EGM/SJS/CD

cc: Mrs. Angela Martin
 Dr. Melissa Shields
 FY24-2004

Mr. Sean J. Stevens
 Mrs. Cristin Dillard

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