

## Senate Bill 226 - Memorandum of Concern and Informational Responses

**The Georgia Library Media Association, the state affiliate of the American Association of School Librarians, offers here rebuttals of allegations in testimony by supporters of Senate Bill 226 regarding parents' access to reconsideration of materials, selection of materials, and database access to obscene materials in school libraries:**

***Contention 1:** Parents' concerns regarding materials in schools are not being heard so new state code should be created to address this problem.*

[Georgia DOE Rule 160-4-4-.01](#) Media Programs Requirements specify that each local board of education shall adopt a media policy that provides for the establishment of a media committee at the system level and at each school and requires development of procedures for the school system and for selecting materials locally and handling requests for reconsideration of materials (generally known as book challenges).

**New code is not needed. Current GaDOE Rule requires districts to create policies and operating guidelines for selection of instructional materials and the process for hearing concerns regarding those materials is tailored to their local community. Most questions regarding materials are handled informally with mutually satisfactory resolution.**

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***Contention 2:** Materials circulated in schools do not conform to community standards.*

Certification as a library media specialist in Georgia requires a minimum of a Master's degree. Courses in selection, organization, and curation of print and digital resources; promoting children's and young adult literature; instructional design; and curricular trends are part of these programs. District selection policies guide purchases to meet each school population's needs with input from the school media committee members (including parents) as well as consideration of professional reviews and awards.

**Schools and libraries offer materials to meet the wide-ranging needs of all students. Parents may direct requests to restrict their own child's reading to teachers and librarians and/or follow their local school district's already established reconsideration policy.**

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***Contention 3:** Obscene materials are readily accessed in schools via online databases.*

Internet filtering for content inappropriate for K-12 students is federally mandated in CIPA. Online databases provided through state and district contracts curate content for target audiences such as K-12 students. As has been the experience in several other states in which similar bills have been proposed, keyword searches in databases using a K-12 password did not lead to obscene materials. No Internet filters are fool-proof and some students are masterful in bypassing filters. Each local school district establishes Acceptable Use Policies for technology and disciplinary consequences for students who bypass filters.

**Exposure to obscene materials using school databases has not been reported as a problem in our schools. Students may intentionally bypass Internet filters but GALILEO reports that they are confident that if an elementary, middle, or high school student searches within their default set of resources, they will not be exposed to pornographic or obscene materials.**

***On one tenet we agree with this bill's proponents: Libraries SHOULD be a safe place for ALL students. For questions regarding the information offered, please email [gaschoollibraryadvocacy@gmail.com](mailto:gaschoollibraryadvocacy@gmail.com)***