

October 18, 2021

## **Position Statement on the Censorship of Books in School Libraries in Tennessee**

The Tennessee Association of School Librarians (TASL), Tennessee Library Association (TLA), and Friends of the Tennessee Libraries (FoTL) jointly express our strong beliefs in the freedom to read and unfettered access to information, as protected by our First Amendment rights. We oppose censorship within school libraries on the grounds that it is unconstitutional and contrary to the professional ethics of librarianship, and challenge and removal processes are already in place at the local school district level.

As the Library Bill of Rights states,

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

[Library Bill of Rights. American Library Association](#)

School districts already have reconsideration policies for textbooks and materials. Concerns about library materials should be first discussed with the school librarian; many concerns can be addressed and resolved informally. If no resolution is reached, one may consult the school's reconsideration policy and submit a formal request for reconsideration. If there is still concern after those steps are taken, the district school board's procedures for requesting materials reconsideration should be followed.

Every book is not for every reader but every child should have access to books they may want to read. School librarians strive to know learners and assist them in finding books that fit their needs and interests. Ready access to a wide variety of reading materials increases the chances that learners will become readers and choose to read.

A parent/guardian has the right to determine what's best for their child and only their child. Therefore, the reconsideration processes already in place should be strictly followed.

The executive boards of the Tennessee Library Association, Tennessee Association of School Librarians, Tennessee Library Ecosystem Coalition, and Friends of Tennessee Libraries have voted to support this position statement.

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