

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools

DATE: June 12, 2025

SUBJECT: COMAR 13A.05.04 Programs for Library Media Services
(Permission to Publish)



Purpose

The purpose of this item is to request permission to publish amendments to the Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.05.04 *Programs for Library Media Services*.

Background

In 2024, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Freedom to Read Act, H.B. No. 785 (2024), which amended MD Code Ann., Education §4–142. This statute provides requirements for school library media programs, including:

- Setting standards for the operation of a program (e.g. not excluding or removing materials because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval);
- Developing and implementing local policies and procedures for reviewing objections to materials; and
- Prohibiting retaliation against librarians, certified media specialists, or school library media program support staff for performing their job duties.

The revisions to the current COMAR will ensure statutory alignment and provide school library media programs with specific directives for reviewing and revising their existing reconsideration policies, complementing the established procedures that all school systems currently maintain for materials review.

Executive Summary

The proposed amendments to COMAR 13A.05.04 will align the current regulations with the requirements in the Freedom to Read Act while updating existing regulatory language to provide clarity and ensure consistency across the school systems. Language from the Freedom to Read Act has been integrated into the regulations - specifically at COMAR 13A.05.04.02F(1)-(6). These sections clearly outline the components that must be considered and included as the current reconsideration policies are edited and revised by each school system.

Edits were also made to the existing regulations to ensure that in today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, students are presented with lessons and opportunities to become discerning digital citizens capable of thriving in their future career and college pathways. In addition to instruction on information literacy, students also need an understanding of digital and media literacies that encompass the safe

selection and utilization of these rapidly evolving technologies and computer systems. As a result, these different competencies have been added to the regulations so all students will receive instruction on these essential concepts through their school library media programs.

To support the addition of these competencies in the regulation, a definition section was added to the beginning of the chapter to ensure all Maryland stakeholders are utilizing a uniform definition for the terms. Technology has become an essential component of education and career and college readiness. Definitions were added for information literacy, digital literacy, media literacy, and digital citizenship. The sources for these definitions include the American Library Association (ALA), American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE).

Additionally, language was added to COMAR 13A.05.04 to support and strengthen the responsibilities and role of the School Library Media Specialist in their schools and districts. Research and data illustrate the crucial role certified school library media specialists play in creating a culture of reading within the school by maintaining a collection of high interest, current, and relevant literature and informational text. Also, Maryland's school libraries are increasingly integrating technology and providing safe and innovative spaces for all students, adding additional and clarifying language to existing regulations will ensure students continue to have access to resources both physically and digitally.

Action

MSDE is requesting permission to publish amendments to (i.e., repeal and replace) COMAR 13A.05.04 Programs for Library Media Services.

Attachments

SLM COMAR PowerPoint

COMAR 13A.05.04 Revisions

[Freedom to Read Act](#)

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

School Library Media COMAR 13A.05.04

June 12, 2025

Presented By | Kimberly Cowles, Educational Program Specialist for School Library Media

A photograph of a smiling female teacher with curly blonde hair, wearing a green shirt, giving a high-five to a young student with curly dark hair wearing a yellow and black striped shirt. They are in a classroom with other students and desks visible in the background.

Presentation Outline

1. .01 Definitions
2. .02 Public School Library Media Programs
3. .03 Public School Library Media Program Reporting and Monitoring

.01 Definitions

Addition of section .01 for content relevant definitions:

- Information literacy
- Digital literacy
- Media literacy
- Digital Citizenship



[American Library Association](#)

[American Association of School Libraries](#)

[International Society for Technology Education](#)

.02.A-C Public School Library Programs

Added the **terms digital and media tools and technologies and digital citizenship.**

.02.A.4 Public School Library Programs

Removal of ***personnel and support staff.***

.02.C.2.b Public School Library Programs

Participate in the selection of school library media materials.

.02.A-C Public School Library Programs

Added the terms digital and media tools and technologies and digital citizenship.

.02.A.4

Removal of ***personnel and support staff.***

.02.C.2.b

Participate in the selection of school library media materials.

.02.C.2.b

Added, “**including school library media personnel in curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation at each grade level.**

.02.C.2.d Public School Library Programs

Provide professional development services including:

- Copyright
- Privacy
- Accessibility
- Instructional technology and digital learning
- Digital citizenship



[Maryland Code, Education 4-142](#)

.02.C.3.b Public School Library Programs

Implementing procedures for the acquisition, organization, circulation, and removal of instructional materials and technologies in accordance with **Education Article, 4-142, Annotated Code of Maryland.**

.02.C.3.d Public School Library Programs

Promoting instructional materials, technologies, and services that **address the interest, information, and instructional support** of students, staff, parents, and the community.

[Maryland Code, Education 4-142](#)

[COMAR 13a.12.04.06 Library Media Administrator](#)

.02.C.4.a-b Public School Library Programs

Provide personnel who include:

- a. Certified school library media personnel **at each school**
- b. A **certified library media administrator**...to support and coordinate the school library media program



[COMAR 13a.12.04.06 Library Media Administrator](#)

.02.C.4.b Public School Library Programs

Implementing procedures for the acquisition, organization, circulation, and removal of instructional materials and technologies in accordance with **Education Article, 4-142, Annotated Code of Maryland.**

.02.D Public School Library Programs

02.D

Beginning
October 1, 2025,
each LEA shall
have school library
media documents
which are reviewed
every **2 years**.

02.D.1

**Selection policies
and procedures**
consistent with
B(2) of this
regulation.

02.D.2

**Objection policies
and procedures**
consistent with E
of the regulation.

.02.D.3a-e Public School Library Programs

Curriculum and instruction documents align with:

- a. MD Standards for SLM
- b. MD Digital Learning Standards
- c. Integrate with curriculum
- d. Include scope and sequence
- e. Includes technology



[Maryland School Library Media Standards](#), [Maryland Digital Learning Standards](#)

.02.D.4.a-f Public School Library Programs



Operational procedures to include:

- a. Circulation policies
- b. Purchasing policies
- c. Selection policies
- d. Evaluation and removal of obsolete books
- e. Inventory policies
- f. End of year reports

[Maryland School Library Media Standards](#), [Maryland Digital Learning Standards](#)

.02.E Public School Library Programs

02.E.1-7 Objection policies and procedures

1. Objection review committee
2. Establish a uniform process to submit an objection
3. The review process
4. Approved policy will be posted on school system website
5. Approved policy will align with Maryland Code, Education 4-142.

[Maryland Code, Education 4-142](#)

.03 Public School Library Program Reporting and Monitoring

Periodic review to include:

- Submission of the Maryland Annual School Library Survey by May 31.
- The biannual submission of the school library media program implementation documents references in regulation .02E of this chapter.

Authority: Education Article, §2-205 and §4-142, Annotated Code of Maryland

.01 DEFINITIONS

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

(1) Digital citizenship.

- (a) “Digital citizenship” means a set of norms that define how to use technology responsibly and appropriately.
- (b) The norms include digital access, etiquette, law, communication, digital literacy, commerce, safety, security, health, wellness, digital rights, and digital responsibilities.

(2) Digital literacy.

- (a) “Digital literacy” means the knowledge and skills that enable individuals to effectively utilize digital, information, and communication technologies to locate, evaluate, synthesize, create, and communicate information.
- (b) “Digital literacy” requires both cognitive and technical competencies, as well as an understanding of the human and technological complexities within the digital media landscape.

(3) Information literacy.

- (a) “Information literacy” means the knowledge and skills that enable individuals to recognize when information is needed and to effectively locate, evaluate, organize, use, and communicate that information.
- (b) “Information literacy” is critical in situations that involve decision making, problem solving, or knowledge acquisition, requiring the ability to navigate and utilize information in a variety of formats.

(4) Media literacy.

- (a) “Media literacy” means the knowledge and skills that enable individuals to interpret and produce media content by encoding and decoding symbols transmitted through various media, while also critically analyzing, synthesizing, and creating mediated messages.
- (b) “Media literacy” includes all forms of electronic, digital, print, and artistic visuals used to convey messages.

.02 PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS

- A. Each local school system shall establish in each school a unified school library media program for the use of all students which shall include, but not be limited to:
 - (1) An organized and centrally managed collection of instructional materials and technologies;
 - (2) Instruction emphasizing digital, media, and information literacy integrated into all content areas;
 - (3) Appropriate materials and technologies to support the instructional programs of the local school system; and
 - (4) A certified school library media specialist.
- B. The school library media program shall be integrated with the local school system's instructional programs by having certified library media personnel:
 - (1) Participate in the development and implementation of all educational programs;
 - (2) Participate in the selection of school library media materials; and
 - (3) Instruct students, in cooperation with other teachers, in information literacy skills, which have been integrated into other areas of the curriculum.
- C. Each local school system shall develop and implement a plan for its school library media program which shall include the following goals and subgoals to:
 - (1) Provide direct instruction to help students become digital, media, and information literate through the achievement of the following learner outcomes:
 - (a) Locating and using information resources including digital technologies,
 - (b) Reviewing, evaluating, and selecting materials and digital tools for an identified information need,
 - (c) Learning and applying reading, research, and critical thinking skills to organize information,
 - (d) Comprehending content in various types of media,
 - (e) Retrieving and managing information,
 - (f) Demonstrating an appreciation of literature and other creative expressions as sources of information and recreation,
 - (g) Creating materials with digital tools and formats, and
 - (h) Applying ethical behavior to the use of information through digital citizenship instruction;

- (2) Support instruction by:
 - (a) Collaborating with school and system level staff as well as with other individuals and organizations,
 - (b) Including school library personnel in curriculum development implementation and evaluation at each grade level,
 - (c) Providing resources to support instruction, and
 - (d) Providing professional development services which include but are not limited to:
 - (i) Copyright,
 - (ii) Privacy,
 - (iii) Accessibility,
 - (iv) Instructional technology and digital learning, and
 - (v) Digital citizenship;
- (3) Provide services which include but are not limited to:
 - (a) Evaluating and selecting instructional materials and technologies in accordance with local board of education policies,
 - (b) Implementing procedures for the acquisition, organization, circulation, and removal of instructional materials and technologies in accordance with Education Article, §4-142, Annotated Code of Maryland,
 - (c) Providing reference and information assistance for specific requests,
 - (d) Promoting instructional materials, technologies, and services that address the interest, information, and instructional support of students, staff, parents, and the community, and
 - (e) Providing access to people and information outside of the school community;
- (4) Provide personnel who include:
 - (a) Certified school library media personnel at each school with additional technical or clerical assistance at the school building level to organize and operate a school library media program, and
 - (b) A certified library media administrator and technical and clerical assistance to support and coordinate the school library media program;
- (5) Make accessible a comprehensive and organized collection of selected instructional materials and technologies according to policies established by local boards of education; and
- (6) Provide an adequate physical facility which is accessible and conducive to learning.

- D. Beginning **October 1, 2025**, each local school system shall have school library media program implementation documents which are reviewed and approved by local boards of education every two years. These documents shall include:

(1) **Selection policies and procedures consistent with § B(2) of this regulation;**

(2) **Objection policies and procedures consistent with § E of this regulation;**

- (3) Curriculum and instruction documents for teaching digital and information literacy skills including reading, research, and critical thinking skills which:

- (a) Align with the Maryland Standards for School Library Media,
- (b) Align with the Maryland Digital Learning Standards for Students,
- (c) Integrate with content curriculum,
- (d) Include a scope and sequence of skills and objectives, and
- (e) Include the use of technology; and

- (4) Handbooks or manuals of operational procedures which include but are not limited to:

- (a) Circulation policies and procedures,
- (b) Budgeting and purchasing policies and procedures,
- (c) Selection policies,
- (d) Policies and procedures for the evaluation and removal of obsolete or damaged books,
- (e) Inventory policies and procedures, and
- (f) Policies and procedures for end-of-year reports.

- E. Objection policies and procedures.

- (1) Objection Review Committee.

(a) Each local school system shall establish a committee to review objections to materials in a school library media program.

(b) The committee must include at least one certified school library media specialist or **certified school library media** administrator.

- (2) Each local school system shall establish a uniform process to submit an objection to materials in a school library media program by a student, parent or guardian of a student enrolled in a school in the local school system, or school personnel.

- (3) The process shall include:
 - (a) The standards or criteria used to review materials;
 - (b) A reasonable timeline to conduct and conclude the review process;
 - (c) A requirement that final review decisions and the basis for those decisions be documented in writing; and
 - (d) An explanation of the appeal process.
- (4) The approved policy and procedures will be posted on the website of the local school system.
- (5) The approved policy and procedures shall align with the following standards:
 - (a) The materials, services, and resources provided in a school library media program are provided for the interest, information, and instructional support of students and school personnel of the schools the program serves;
 - (b) Materials may not be excluded from a school library media program solely because of the origin, background, or views of the individual who created the material; and
 - (c) Materials may not be excluded or removed from the catalogue of a school library media program because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval.
- (6) Materials under review due to an objection shall remain available for use by students and school personnel until the review process has concluded.
- (7) A county board may not dismiss, demote, suspend, discipline, reassign, transfer, or otherwise retaliate against a librarian, certified library media specialist, or school library media program support staff for performing their job duties consistent with the standards in § F(4) of this regulation.

.03 PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM REPORTING AND MONITORING

- A. Each local school system superintendent shall certify to the State Superintendent that the elementary and secondary school library media programs meet or are working towards meeting the requirements set forth in these regulations, according to the periodic review schedule established by the State Department of Education, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Annual submission of the Maryland Annual School Library Survey by May 31; and
 - (2) The biannual submission of the school library media program implementation documents referenced in regulation .02E of this chapter.

- B. The State Department of Education shall implement a procedure for conducting periodic reviews of local school system school library media programs in order to identify program and professional development needs that exist in library media programs. The Department shall submit a copy of the results of its periodic review to the appropriate local school system superintendent.