



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 204**

January Session, 2025

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1271

*Senate, March 25, 2025*

The Committee on Children reported through SEN. MAHER, C. of the 26th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Library and other educational material" means any material  
3 belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a school library  
4 media center, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books,  
5 magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and  
6 digital material, software and other material not required as part of  
7 classroom instruction.

8 (2) "School library staff member" means a school library media  
9 specialist, school librarian, any certificated or noncertificated staff  
10 member whose assignment is in the school library or any individual  
11 carrying out or assisting with the functions of a school library media  
12 specialist or school librarian.

13 (3) "Individual with a vested interest" means any school staff member

14 employed by a local or regional board of education, parent or guardian  
15 of a student currently enrolled in a school at the time a reconsideration  
16 form is filed under subsection (e) of this section and any student  
17 currently enrolled in a school at the time a reconsideration form is filed  
18 under subsection (e) of this section.

19 (4) "Remove" means deliberately taking library material out of a  
20 library's collection. "Remove" does not include the process of clearing  
21 such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

22 (b) Each local and regional board of education, after consulting with  
23 the superintendent of schools, the director of curriculum and a librarian  
24 employed by such board, shall adopt a (1) collection development and  
25 maintenance policy, (2) library display and program policy, and (3)  
26 library material review and reconsideration policy. Each such policy  
27 shall ensure that all library materials are evaluated and made accessible  
28 in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in  
29 section 10-15c of the general statutes, including, but not limited to,  
30 discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion,  
31 national origin, sexual orientation or disability. In developing each such  
32 policy, the board shall have control over the content of each such policy,  
33 provided such policies are in accordance with the provisions of this  
34 section. Each local and regional board of education shall review, and  
35 update as necessary, each such policy every five years.

36 (c) The collection development and maintenance policy shall, at a  
37 minimum:

38 (1) Recognize that library and other educational materials should (A)  
39 be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all  
40 students, and (B) represent a wide range of varied and diverging  
41 viewpoints in the collection as a whole;

42 (2) Require student access to age-appropriate and grade-level-  
43 appropriate material, and provide access to library and other  
44 educational material that is relevant to the research, independent  
45 reading interests and educational needs of students based on a student's

46 age, development or grade level;

47 (3) Recognize the importance of the school library media center as a  
48 place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas  
49 and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by  
50 students;

51 (4) Acknowledge that a school library media specialist is  
52 professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides  
53 students with access to the widest array of age-appropriate and grade-  
54 level-appropriate library and other educational material; and

55 (5) Establish a procedure for a certified school library media specialist  
56 to continually review library and other educational material within a  
57 school library media center using professionally accepted standards,  
58 which shall include, but need not be limited to, the material's relevance,  
59 physical condition of the material, availability of duplicates or copies of  
60 the material, availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-  
61 appropriate material and continued demand for the material.

62 (d) The library display and program policy shall, at a minimum:

63 (1) Recognize that library displays should (A) be provided for the  
64 interest, information and enlightenment of all students, (B) represent a  
65 wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, (C) require student  
66 access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate content, and (D)  
67 provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent  
68 interests and educational needs of students;

69 (2) Recognize the importance of displays and student programs as  
70 resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information  
71 and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by  
72 students; and

73 (3) Acknowledge that a school library media specialist is  
74 professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs that  
75 provide students with access to the widest array of age-appropriate and  
76 grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

77 (e) The library material review and reconsideration policy shall, at a  
78 minimum:

79 (1) Establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to  
80 challenge any library and other educational materials, display or  
81 student program;

82 (2) Limit consideration of requests to reconsider and remove  
83 material, displays or student programs to the parents and guardians of  
84 students and eligible students currently enrolled in the school or school  
85 district;

86 (3) Require that no library and other educational material, display or  
87 program shall be removed from library media centers, or programs be  
88 cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in  
89 such material, display or program, or because of the origin, background  
90 or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program;

91 (4) Require that library and other educational materials, displays and  
92 student programs shall only be excluded for legitimate pedagogical  
93 purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection  
94 maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and  
95 maintenance policy or the display and program policy;

96 (5) Require that any process for petitioners to challenge any library  
97 and other educational material, display or student program shall neither  
98 favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics;

99 (6) Provide for the creation of a request for reconsideration form that  
100 may be submitted by an individual with a vested interest to the  
101 principal of the school in which the library and other educational  
102 material is being challenged to initiate a review of such material. The  
103 form shall require such individual to specify which portion or portions  
104 of such material such individual objects to and provide an explanation  
105 of the reasons for such objection. Such individual shall not submit a  
106 request for reconsideration form without including such individual's  
107 full legal name, address and telephone number;

108 (7) Require the principal, or the principal's designee, to promptly  
109 forward the request for reconsideration to the superintendent of schools  
110 for the school district. The superintendent, or the superintendent's  
111 designee, shall appoint a review committee consisting of: (A) The  
112 superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, (B) the principal of the  
113 school in which the library and other educational material is being  
114 challenged, or the principal's designee, (C) the director of curriculum,  
115 or a person in an equivalent position, employed by such board, (D) a  
116 representative from the local or regional board of education, (E) at least  
117 one grade-level-appropriate teacher familiar with the library material,  
118 provided the teacher selected is not the individual who submitted the  
119 form, (F) a parent or guardian of a student age thirteen years or older  
120 enrolled in the school district, provided the parent or guardian selected  
121 is not the individual who submitted the form, (G) a parent or guardian  
122 of a student age fourteen years or older enrolled in the school district,  
123 provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who  
124 submitted the form, and (H) a certified school librarian employed by  
125 such board or employed by another board of education in the state. In  
126 cases where such form is submitted by a student enrolled in grades nine  
127 to twelve, inclusive, and when appropriate and at the discretion of the  
128 superintendent, a student enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive,  
129 may serve on the review committee if such student did not submit the  
130 reconsideration form, provided the superintendent consults with the  
131 principal of the school involved in such reconsideration request prior to  
132 making this determination whether to include such student on the  
133 review committee;

134 (8) Require that any library and other educational material being  
135 challenged remain available in the school library media center  
136 according to such material's catalog record and be available for a  
137 student to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made by  
138 the review committee;

139 (9) Require the review committee to evaluate the request for  
140 reconsideration form, read the challenged material in its entirety,  
141 evaluate the challenged material against the school district's collection

142 development and maintenance policy and make a written decision on  
143 whether or not to remove the challenged material not later than sixty  
144 school days from the date of receiving such request. The review  
145 committee shall provide a copy of the committee's decision and report  
146 to the individual with a vested interest who submitted the form and to  
147 the principal of the school;

148 (10) Permit the individual with a vested interest who submitted the  
149 request for reconsideration form to appeal the review committee's  
150 decision to the local or regional board of education for the school  
151 district. The board, after evaluating the challenged material under the  
152 school district's collection development and maintenance policy, shall  
153 (A) provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration of  
154 or refusal to reconsider the library and other educational material, (B)  
155 provide any final decision that is contrary to the decision of the review  
156 committee, and (C) publish such reasons or decision on the Internet web  
157 site of the school district;

158 (11) Provide that once a decision has been made by the review  
159 committee on any library and other educational material, such material  
160 cannot be subject to a new request for review and reconsideration for a  
161 period of three years;

162 (12) Permit a school district to consolidate any requests for review  
163 and reconsideration of the same challenged library and other  
164 educational material; and

165 (13) Prohibit the removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the  
166 sole basis that a person with a vested interest finds such book offensive.

167 (f) Any school library media specialist or school library staff member  
168 who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this section  
169 shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might  
170 otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity  
171 with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such  
172 implementation.

173 (g) Any school library media specialist, school library staff member,  
174 teacher, administrator, school staff member or local or regional board of  
175 education member may bring an action for emotional distress,  
176 defamation, libel, slander, damage to reputation or any other relevant  
177 tort against any person who harasses such school library media  
178 specialist, school library staff member, teacher, administrator, school  
179 staff member or local or regional board of education member for  
180 implementing the policies described in this section.

181 (h) Each local and regional board of education shall make the (1)  
182 collection development and maintenance policy, (2) library program  
183 and display policy, and (3) library material review and reconsideration  
184 policy adopted under this section available on the board's or governing  
185 body's Internet web site, or, if no such Internet web site exists, inside the  
186 school library or included as part of such school library's policy manual.

187 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

188 (1) "Library and other educational material" means any material  
189 belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a public library,  
190 including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines,  
191 reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material  
192 and software.

193 (2) "Public library staff member" means a public library media  
194 specialist, public librarian, any certificated or noncertificated staff  
195 member whose assignment is in the public library or any individual  
196 carrying out or assisting with the functions of a public library media  
197 specialist.

198 (3) "Individual with a vested interest" means any individual residing  
199 in the town in which the public library is located or the town in which  
200 the contract library is located at the time a reconsideration form is filed  
201 under subsection (e) of this section.

202 (4) "Remove" means deliberately taking library material out of a  
203 library's collection. "Remove" does not include the process of clearing

204 such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

205 (b) The board of trustees, or other governing body, of each public  
206 library shall adopt a (1) collection development and maintenance policy,  
207 (2) library display and program policy, and (3) library material review  
208 and reconsideration policy. Each such policy shall ensure that all library  
209 materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the  
210 protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the  
211 general statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on  
212 race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual  
213 orientation or disability. In developing each such policy, the board shall  
214 have control over the content of each such policy, provided such policies  
215 are in accordance with the provisions of this section. The board of  
216 trustees or other governing body shall review, and update as necessary,  
217 each such policy every five years.

218 (c) The collection development and maintenance policy shall, at a  
219 minimum:

220 (1) Recognize that library materials should (A) be provided for the  
221 interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, and (B)  
222 represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the  
223 collection as a whole;

224 (2) Recognize the importance of the public library as a place for  
225 voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas and the  
226 promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents;

227 (3) Acknowledge that librarians are professionally trained to curate  
228 and develop a collection that provides resident with access to the widest  
229 array of library and other educational materials; and

230 (4) Establish a procedure for a librarian to continually review library  
231 and other educational material within a public library using  
232 professionally accepted standards, which shall include, but not be  
233 limited to, the material's relevance, the physical condition of the  
234 material, the availability of duplicates or copies of the material, the



235 availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate  
236 material and the continued demand for the material.

237 (d) The library display and program policy shall, at a minimum:

238 (1) Recognize that library displays should (A) be provided for the  
239 interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, (B) represent a  
240 wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, and (C) provide access  
241 to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests and  
242 educational needs of residents;

243 (2) Recognize the importance of displays and programs as resources  
244 for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas  
245 and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents;

246 (3) Acknowledge that librarians are professionally trained to curate  
247 and develop displays and programs; and

248 (4) Differentiate between library displays and programs that are  
249 created or curated by librarians or staff members of the public library  
250 and those displays and programs created by members of the public or  
251 community groups and exhibited in the public library.

252 (e) The library material review and reconsideration policy shall, at a  
253 minimum:

254 (1) Establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to  
255 challenge any library and other educational material, display or  
256 program;

257 (2) Limit consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays or  
258 programs to individuals residing in the town in which the library is  
259 located or the town in which the contract library is located;

260 (3) Require that no library material, display or program shall be  
261 removed from library media centers, or programs be cancelled, because  
262 of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material,  
263 display or program or because of the origin, background or viewpoints

264 of the creator of such material, display or program;

265 (4) Require that library materials, displays and programs shall only  
266 be excluded for legitimate pedagogical purposes or for professionally  
267 accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the  
268 collection development and maintenance policy or the display and  
269 program policy;

270 (5) Require that any process for petitioners to challenge any library  
271 material, display or program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group  
272 based on protected characteristics;

273 (6) Provide for the creation of a request for reconsideration form that  
274 may be submitted by an individual to the library director to initiate a  
275 review of such material. The form shall require such individual to  
276 specify which portion or portions of such material such individual  
277 objects to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection.  
278 Such individual shall not submit a request for reconsideration form  
279 without including such individual's full legal name, address and  
280 telephone number;

281 (7) Acknowledge that reconsideration requests are not confidential  
282 patron records under section 11-25 of the general statutes;

283 (8) Require that any library material being challenged remain  
284 available in the library according to its catalog record and be available  
285 for a resident to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made  
286 by the library director;

287 (9) Require the library director to evaluate the request for  
288 reconsideration form, read the challenged material in its entirety,  
289 evaluate the challenged material against the collection development and  
290 maintenance policy and make a written decision on whether or not to  
291 remove the challenged material not later than sixty days from the date  
292 of receiving such request. The library director shall provide a copy of  
293 the library director's decision and report to the individual who  
294 submitted the form;

295 (10) Permit the individual who submitted the request for  
296 reconsideration form to appeal, in writing, the library director's decision  
297 to the board of trustees or other governing body for the library. The  
298 board, after evaluating the challenged material under the collection  
299 development and maintenance policy, shall (A) consult with (i) the  
300 library director, (ii) the State Librarian, or the State Librarian's designee,  
301 (iii) a representative of the cooperating library service unit, as defined  
302 in section 11-9e of the general statutes, (iv) the president of the  
303 Connecticut Library Association, or the president's designee, and (v) the  
304 president of the Association of Connecticut Library Boards, or the  
305 president's designee, (B) deliberate on such request for reconsideration,  
306 (C) provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration or  
307 refusal to reconsider the library material, and (D) provide any final  
308 decision that is contrary to the decision of the library director;

309 (11) Provide that once a decision has been made by the library  
310 director or the board of trustees or other governing board on the  
311 reconsideration of any library material, such material cannot be subject  
312 to a new request for reconsideration for a period of three years;

313 (12) Permit a library director to consolidate any requests for  
314 reconsideration of the same challenged library material; and

315 (13) Prohibit the removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the  
316 sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive.

317 (f) Any librarian or staff member of a public library who, in good  
318 faith, implements the policies described in this section shall be immune  
319 from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or  
320 imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial  
321 proceeding that results from such implementation.

322 (g) Any librarian or staff member of a public library may bring an  
323 action for emotional distress, defamation, libel, slander, damage to  
324 reputation or any other relevant tort against any person who harasses  
325 such librarian or staff member for implementing the policies described  
326 in this section.

327 (h) The board of trustees, or other governing body, of each public  
 328 library shall make available the (1) collection development and  
 329 maintenance policy, (2) library display and program policy, and (3)  
 330 library material review and reconsideration policy adopted under this  
 331 section on the board's or governing body's Internet web site, or, if no  
 332 such Internet web site exists, inside the library or included as part of  
 333 such library's policy manual.

334 Sec. 3. Subsection (i) of section 11-24b of the general statutes is  
 335 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*  
 336 *passage*):

337 (i) No principal public library shall be eligible to receive a state grant  
 338 in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b), (c) and (d) of this  
 339 section if such principal public library does not maintain and adhere to  
 340 a collection development [ , collection management and collection  
 341 reconsideration policies] and maintenance policy, a library display and  
 342 program policy and a library material review and reconsideration policy  
 343 that have been [approved] adopted by the board of trustees or other  
 344 governing body of such library pursuant to section 2 of this act. Such  
 345 [collection reconsideration] material review and reconsideration policy  
 346 shall offer residents a clear process to request a reconsideration of  
 347 library materials. In the instance of a book challenge, these policies shall  
 348 govern.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	11-24b(i)

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	11-24b(i)

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 1(e), "library" was inserted before "material" for consistency; in Section 1(e)(4), "may" was changed to "shall" for consistency with standard drafting conventions; in Section 2(b)(2), "library program and display" was changed to "library display and program" for consistency; in Section 2(e), "library" was inserted before "material" for consistency;

in Section 2(e)(4), "may" was changed to "shall" for consistency with standard drafting conventions; in Section 2(h), "library program and display" was changed to "library display and program" for consistency; and in Section 3, "library" was inserted before the first instance of "material" for consistency.

**KID**        *Joint Favorable Subst.*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

## **OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:**

<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>FY 26 \$</b>	<b>FY 27 \$</b>
All Municipalities	Potential Revenue Gain	Minimal	Minimal
All Municipalities	Potential Revenue Loss	1,400	1,400

## **Explanation**

The bill results in a potential, minimal revenue loss to municipal libraries of approximately \$1,400 each annually beginning in FY 26 if they do not comply with the bill's provisions. The bill also results in a potential, minimal revenue gain annually beginning in FY 26 to municipalities that do comply. The bill requires libraries to develop maintenance, display, and review policies. It disqualifies them from receiving Library Incentive Grants if they do not comply.

The Library Incentive Grant is administered by the Connecticut State Library (CSL), and has been funded at \$225,000 annually since FY 24. The grant provides funding to local libraries that adhere to certain collections and other policies.

The bill has no fiscal impact to the CSL as it does not change the overall funding amount for the Library Incentive Grant. It is anticipated that the CSL would reallocate funding that was eliminated for a library that did not comply with the bill's provisions. To the extent this occurs,

there would be a minimal revenue gain to municipalities that receive this grant.

The bill has no fiscal impact to local and regional school districts. It establishes similar requirements for school libraries that it establishes for municipal libraries. It is anticipated that local and regional school districts have the resources to comply with the bill's provisions. School libraries do not receive Library Incentive Grants.

***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to compliance with the bill's provisions.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 1271*****AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires local and regional boards of education (“school boards”) and public library boards of trustees or other governing bodies (“governing bodies”) to each adopt policies on (1) collection development and maintenance, (2) library display and programs, and (3) library material review and reconsideration. Under current law, public libraries (but not school libraries) must adopt collection development, collection management, and collection reconsideration policies to be eligible for state grants; under the bill they must instead adopt policies meeting the bill’s requirements.

The bill requires the policies to, among other things, ensure that library materials are evaluated and made accessible to conform with applicable state non-discrimination laws, which generally prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. It also specifically requires the policies adopted under the bill to, among other things:

1. recognize that library and other materials should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints;
2. establish a process for receiving, considering, and making decisions on requests for reconsideration or removal of library material and a process for appealing decisions; and
3. prohibit removing library material (a) on the sole basis that someone finds the book offensive or (b) because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the material’s creator or as expressed in the material.



The bill's policy requirements for school boards and public library governing bodies are largely the same in content and procedures, but there are some requirements specific to the different policies. For example, the school policy must (1) address student access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate material and (2) require a superintendent who receives a reconsideration request to appoint a library material review committee to consider the request.

Lastly, the bill also grants employees immunity from liability when they perform their duties under the bill and allows them to bring legal action for defamation or damage to their reputations related to the same.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

## **DEFINITIONS**

The bill defines "library and other educational material" as any material belonging to, on loan to, or in the custody of a school library media center or public library, including nonfiction and fiction books, magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material, and software. In the case of school libraries, it also includes other material not required as part of classroom instruction.

An "individual with a vested interest" is (1) for school policies, a school staff member employed by a school board, a student enrolled when a reconsideration form is filed, or a parent or guardian of such a student and (2) for public libraries, a resident of the town where the public library is located or the town in which the contract library is located when the reconsideration form is filed.

## **REQUIRED LIBRARY POLICIES**

### ***General Requirements***

The bill requires school boards and public library governing bodies to each adopt, for their respective libraries, a (1) library collection development and maintenance policy, (2) library display and program policy, and (3) library material review and reconsideration policy. The bill requires that these policies ensure that library materials are evaluated and made accessible so they conform with applicable state

laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Under the bill, in developing each policy, the school boards and governing bodies have control over the content of the policy, as long as the policies conform with the bill's provisions. Each school board and public library governing body must review, and update as necessary, each policy every five years.

### ***Collection Development and Maintenance Policy***

The bill requires collection development and maintenance policies for both schools and public libraries to:

1. recognize that library and other materials should (a) be provided for students' or residents' (as applicable) interest, information, and enlightenment and (b) represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection;
2. recognize the school library media center's or public library's importance as a place for voluntary inquiry, disseminating information and ideas, and promoting free expression and free access to ideas by students or residents, as applicable;
3. establish a procedure for certified school library media specialists or public librarians to continually review library and other material within a school library media center or public library (as applicable) using professionally accepted standards, including the material's relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates or copies, availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate material, and continued demand for the material; and
4. acknowledge that librarians and school library media specialists are professionally trained to curate and develop collections providing the widest array of library and other materials.

***School Specific Requirements.*** For schools, the bill includes an

additional requirement. The policy must require giving students access to (1) age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate material and (2) library and other educational materials that are relevant to students' research, independent reading interests, and educational needs based on a student's age, development, or grade level. School policies must acknowledge that school library media specialists are professionally trained to curate a collection providing age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate library and other materials.

### ***Library Display and Program Policy***

The bill requires the library display and program policy for both schools and public libraries to:

1. recognize that library displays should (a) be provided for students' and residents' (as applicable) interest, information, and enlightenment; (b) represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints; and (c) provide access to content that is relevant to students' or residents' research, independent interests, and educational needs;
2. recognize the importance of displays and programs as resources for voluntary inquiry, disseminating information and ideas, and promoting free expression and free access to ideas; and
3. acknowledge that a school library media specialist or public librarian is professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs.

***Policy Differences.*** Additionally, the bill requires the school policies to recognize that displays should give students access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate content and acknowledge that library media specialists are trained to develop these age-appropriate displays and programs.

The display policy for public libraries must make a distinction between displays and programs created or curated by library staff and those that are created or curated by the public or community groups and

exhibited at the public library.

***Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy***

Under the bill, the library material review and reconsideration policies must include a process for requesting that library materials be removed, create a reconsideration request form, details of the request process including a 60-day deadline for the library material review committee or the library director to issue a decision on removal, and an appeals process.

Under the bill, “remove” means deliberately taking library material out of a library’s collection, but does not include the process of clearing no longer useful materials out of the collection.

***Requirements Applicable to Both Schools and Public Libraries.***

The bill requires the reconsideration policy for both schools and public libraries to:

1. establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to challenge any library and other educational material, display, or program;
2. prohibit removing library material, displays, or programs (or, in the case of programs, cancelling them) because of the origin, background, or viewpoints expressed in the material, display, or program, or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the material’s creator;
3. require that library materials, displays, and programs can only be excluded for legitimate educational purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices adopted under the collection development and maintenance policy or the display and program policy;
4. require that any process for petitioners to challenge any library material, display, or program cannot favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics;

5. require the individual submitting the request for reconsideration to include his or her full legal name, address, and telephone number;
6. require that any library material being challenged remain available in the library media center or library according to its catalog record and be available for students or residents to reserve, check out, or access until the review committee or library director makes a final decision;
7. permit a school district or library director, as applicable, to consolidate any requests for review and reconsideration of the same challenged library material; and
8. prohibit the removal, exclusion, or censoring of any book on the sole basis that someone finds the book offensive.

***Reconsideration Request and Appeals Process Policy Differences***

While the policies for school libraries and public libraries are broadly similar under the bill, there are some differences in the reconsideration request process and appeals process.

***School Library Policy, Decisions, and Appeals.*** Under the bill, the policy must create a request for reconsideration form that may be submitted to the principal of the school where the library and other educational material is being challenged to start the material review, and the form must require the individual to specify which part of the material he or she objects to and provide an explanation for the objection. The bill requires that these forms provide an opportunity for a request submission by individuals with a vested interest (students, parents, and staff members, as described above). However, the bill also requires the policy to limit consideration of requests to reconsider and remove material, displays, or student programs to the parents and guardians of students and eligible students currently enrolled in the school.

Regarding the school's process, the policy must require the principal

or a designee to promptly forward the request for reconsideration to the school district superintendent. The superintendent or designee must appoint a review committee consisting of (1) the superintendent or designee; (2) the principal of the library's school or the principal's designee; (3) the curriculum director, or the equivalent position of the school board; (4) a school board representative; (5) at least one grade-level-appropriate teacher familiar with the library material; (6) a parent or guardian of a student age 13 or older enrolled in the school district; (7) a parent or guardian of a student age 14 or older enrolled in the school district; and (8) a certified school librarian working for the school board or employed by another school board in the state. The individual who submitted the request for reconsideration cannot be a member of the review board.

In cases where a high school student submits the form, and if the superintendent deems it appropriate, a high school student may serve on the review committee if he or she did not submit the form, but the superintendent must consult with the school principal of the library in question before deciding whether to include the student on the review committee.

The policy adopted under the bill must require the review committee to:

1. evaluate the request for reconsideration form,
2. read the challenged material in its entirety,
3. evaluate the challenged material against the school district's collection development and maintenance policy, and
4. make a written decision within 60 school days after receiving the request whether to remove the challenged material.

The committee must give a copy of the committee's decision and report to the individual who submitted the form and to the school principal.

The bill requires that the policy allow the individual who made the reconsideration request to appeal the review committee's decision to the school board. The board, after evaluating the challenged material under the school district's collection development and maintenance policy, must:

1. provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration of (or refusal to reconsider) the library material,
2. provide any final decision that is contrary to the decision of the review committee, and
3. publish the reasons or decision on the school district's website.

Under the bill, once the review committee decides, the material in question cannot be subject to a new reconsideration request for three years.

***Public Library Policy, Decisions, and Appeals.*** The public library policy must only allow individuals residing in the town in which the library or contract library is located to submit requests to reconsider and remove material, displays, or programs.

The policy must create a request for reconsideration form that an individual can submit to the library director to start the material review. The form must require the individual to specify which part of the material he or she objects to and explain the objection. The policy must also state that reconsideration requests are not confidential patron records under state law.

The policy must require the library director to:

1. evaluate the request for reconsideration form,
2. read the challenged material in its entirety,
3. evaluate the challenged material against the library's collection development and maintenance policy, and

4. make a written decision within 60 days after receiving the request about whether to remove the challenged material.

The library director must give a copy of the decision and report to the individual who submitted the form.

The policy must also permit the individual who made the reconsideration request to appeal the library director's decision in writing to the library's governing body.

The bill requires the policy to include several steps the board must take. First, after evaluating the challenged material under the collection development and maintenance policy, the board must consult with (1) the library director; (2) the state librarian or his designee; (3) a representative of the cooperating library service unit, as defined in state law; (4) the Connecticut Library Association president or her designee; and (5) the Association of Connecticut Library Boards president or her designee, and then deliberate on the reconsideration request. Finally, it must provide a written statement of the reasons for reconsidering (or refusing to reconsider) the library material and provide any final decision that is contrary to the library director's decision.

Under the bill, once the library director or governing board decides, the material in question cannot be subject to a new reconsideration request for three years.

### **LIBRARY EMPLOYEE PROTECTION PROVISIONS**

The bill includes certain protections for library staff and others involved in carrying out its provisions.

The bill grants library employees immunity from liability (civil or criminal) when they perform their duties under the bill in good faith, and the immunity includes any judicial proceeding resulting from the bill's implementation. The employees covered are any school library media specialist, public librarian, and school library or public library staffer.



The bill permits any school library media specialist, school library staffer, teacher, administrator, school staffer, school board member, public library librarian, or public library staffer to bring an action for emotional distress, defamation, libel, slander, damage to reputation, or any other relevant tort against any person who harasses any of the specialists, librarians, staff, or board members for implementing the policies required in the bill.

***Requirement to Post Policies***

Under the bill, each school board and governing body must make the (1) collection development and maintenance policy; (2) library program and display policy; and (3) library material review and reconsideration policy adopted under the bill available on the board's or governing body's website, or, if there is no website, inside the school or public library or included as part of the school or public library's policy manual.

**LIBRARY GRANTS**

By law, a public library must adopt and adhere to collection development, collection management, and collection reconsideration policies to be eligible for state library grants. The bill modifies this to say public libraries (this excludes school libraries) must adopt the policies the bill requires to be eligible for state library grants. Existing law and the bill require the reconsideration policy to offer residents a clear process to request a reconsideration of library materials.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 12    Nay 5    (03/06/2025)