

Association of Illinois School Library Educators
PO Box 110
Seneca, IL 61360

May 13, 2021

Illinois General Assembly
Senate Education Committee
705 Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: HB 234

Dear Committee Members:

The Association of Illinois School Library Educators has reviewed the text of HB234 and urges the committee to approve this bill. Additionally, our organization is prepared to offer assistance in creating materials to support Illinois schools as they implement this important legislation.

AISLE has consistently promoted the inclusion of media literacy in Illinois classrooms, and this bill solidifies the importance of this integration. HB234's definition of media literacy is aligned with our state standards for school library educators and provides high schools in Illinois with the task of incorporating these standards into their curricula.

Requiring that schools teach students how to analyze, evaluate and communicate effectively is essential in the 21st century. Students in Illinois are already connected digitally to the world on a global scale; however, as they become global consumers of information they should also become critical thinkers about the information that they consume and produce. Media literacy instruction entails teaching students to think critically about the information that they create and how this information may be used.

The Illinois School Code already provides for protection for students from a variety of threats, and this bill also provides protection for our students: requiring that high schools provide a clearly delineated media literacy program assures that our schools are preparing students to live in the digital landscapes that they inhabit. By ensuring that students have access to media literacy instruction, the General Assembly will be taking a huge step toward ensuring that our students become informed citizens who are able to fully participate in our democracy.

The Association of Illinois School Library Educators, whose membership has a vast wealth of experience not only in media literacy but also in effective instructional methods, stands ready to assist the Illinois State Board of Education in the implementation of this addition to the Illinois School Code, and we urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

