January 30, 2016

Dr. Cynthia A. Cave

Assistant Superintendent, Policy and Communications

Virginia Department of Education

PO Box 2120

Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Dr. Cave,

On behalf of the Virginia Library Association, I am writing to thank you and the Board of Education for your decision to reject proposed changes to be made to the *Regulations Governing Local School Boards and School Divisions* at 8VAC20-270-160, Instructional Materials.

We support parents being actively involved in their children’s education. At the same time, we wish to reiterate our belief that statewide regulation will turn into institutional labeling and then self-censorship by educators or others in an effort to avoid the conflicts and challenges intended, thereby depriving students of the opportunity to be exposed to a wider range of viewpoints from which to choose as they develop their personal opinions. Decreasing the range of viewpoints discourages the promotion of diversity and diminishes intellectual rigor. We are heartened that the Board entrusts educators with being able to work with parents to convey the bigger “messages of literature,” something we see teachers, media specialists, and librarians across the Commonwealth doing on a daily basis.

We appreciate your stance on the side of intellectual freedom and the right to read.

Respectfully,

Keith Weimer, President

Virginia Library Association

CC: Governor Terry McAuliffe

Dr. Dietra Trent, Secretary of Education