**Flexible Scheduling per the Georgia Department of Education**

Flexible scheduling is addressed in the GaDOE rule [IFBD 160-4-4-.01](http://archives.gadoe.org/_documents/doe/legalservices/160-4-4-.01.pdf). A Georgia school library media program must include a plan for flexibly scheduled media center access for students and teachers in groups or as individuals simultaneously throughout each instructional day. Accessibility shall refer to the facility, the staff, and the resources and shall be based on instructional need. Flexible scheduling is maintained by allowing full participation of teachers and the library media specialist in collaborative planning and allowing students to come to the library media center at any time.

Flexible scheduling is any schedule that is controlled by the library media specialist in collaboration with the classroom teachers to meet the needs of the students at the students' point of need. A schedule that is mandated and/or controlled by the school administration is not flexible. The media program is not to be used as a means to provide planning time for teachers. Flexible scheduling is not having a sign-up sheet available and allowing teachers to sign up for the media center. A flexible schedule works in partnership with collaboration. The media program shall be a collaborative effort between the classroom teacher and the library media specialist. Collaboration is essential to a quality K-12 media center instructional program. Flexible scheduling is essential to an effective K-12 media center program that recognizes the importance of collaboration. One cannot exist without the other.

The American Library Association and the American Association of School Librarians position statement is that schools must adopt the educational philosophy that the library media program is fully integrated into the educational program. This integration strengthens the teaching/learning process so that students can develop the vital skills necessary to locate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information and ideas. When the library media program is fully integrated into the instructional program of the school, students, teachers, and library media specialists become partners in learning. The library program is an extension of the classroom. Information skills are taught and learned within the context of the classroom curriculum. The wide range of resources, technologies, and services needed to meet students learning and information needs are readily available in a cost-effective manner.

The integrated library media program philosophy requires that an open schedule must be maintained. Classes cannot be scheduled in the library media center to provide teacher release or preparation time. Students and teachers must be able to come to the center throughout the day to use information sources, to read for pleasure, and to meet and work with other students and teachers.

Planning between the library media specialist and the classroom teacher, which encourages both scheduled and informal visits, is the catalyst that makes this integrated library program work. The teacher brings to the planning process a knowledge of subject content and student needs. The library media specialist contributes a broad knowledge of resources and technology, an understanding of teaching methods, and a wide range of strategies that may be employed to help students learn information skills. Cooperative planning by the teacher and library media specialist integrates information skills and materials into the classroom curriculum and results in the development of assignments that encourage open inquiry.

The responsibility for flexibly scheduled library media programs must be shared by the entire school community.