

Improving Student Learning Outcomes Funding School Library Programs 2019 Questions for State Lawmakers

- Governor Murphy and Commissioner of Education, Dr. Repollet have prioritized innovation and creativity as ways to improve student outcomes as well students' college and career readiness skills. School library media specialists are the teachers best suited to not only instruct students but also to assist other teachers with teaching digital citizenship and critical thinking skills. **What can you do to ensure that school librarians and library programs are funded in the state budget and not cut by local school districts?**

- When school librarians and library programs are cut from local budgets it is the students who suffer. How can we expect to boost early literacy without supporting libraries as the primary resource for books and literature? Research has shown that having a certified school library media specialist has a measurable effect on reading scores. **What can you do to ensure that school librarians and library programs are funded in the state budget and not cut by local school districts?**



- As New Jersey raises the academic bar and schools refine the curriculum to help students achieve higher standards, an effective school library is a cost effective and critical tool to support student learning and achievement, and improve student outcomes. **What can you do to ensure that school librarians and library programs are funded in the state budget and not cut by local school districts?**

- Did you know that New Jersey does not require every school to have a library media center or a certified school librarian? Did you know that the state's school funding model includes school librarians in the staffing assumptions as well as library programs? Even with the all the research backing the value of strong school library programs in academic achievement, there is nothing in state law or regulation to prevent a school district from reducing school library programs, services or staff. Currently, there is legislation, A1995/S2394 that would require a certain ratio of school librarians to students. **Would you co-sponsor this bill?**

- Information literacy and the ability to evaluate information is a critical skill for an informed citizenry. School librarians are the certified staff with the credentials to teach digital and information literacy; the ability to acquire, organize, evaluate, communicate and create information? Currently, there is legislation, A132 /S2933 which would require an information literacy curriculum. **Would you co-sponsor this bill?**

Other Supportive Statements

- Several scholarly studies document the positive impact school libraries have upon student learning and achievement. The studies show that a school library staffed by a certified school library media specialist, and provided with adequate print and technological resources, has a direct positive impact on student test scores. (1)
- The Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries, at Rutgers University, has published findings from its study One Common Goal: Student Learning which shows New Jersey school library programs staffed by certified school library media specialists are cost-effective in helping students achieve higher standards and are critical for the intellectual, social, and cultural development of students. (2)
- For over 20 years, numerous studies have determined the positive impact of school library programs staffed by certified school librarians. The studies show that students who have access to a robust school library program perform better in Language Arts and Literacy on standardized tests regardless of socioeconomic background. (3)
- The presence of a certified teacher-librarian on staff has a particularly high relationship to a school's five year graduation rate. (85% compared to 79% without certified teacher-librarians). The five year graduation rate in high poverty schools was 78.8%, five-year graduation rate versus 43.2% without a certified teacher-librarian. (4)
- According to Brett Williams, senior vice president of public affairs for CreativeFuture, "Young people are creating, sharing, and working online more than ever before. Knowing their rights and responsibilities as creators and consumers is an essential 21st century skill." The school librarian teaches students to not only use technology to access information, but also how to evaluate and incorporate into research and further learning. In addition to providing direct instruction to classes and individual students, the school librarian collaborates with classroom teachers with curriculum projects. (5)
- School librarians have deep expertise in digital literacy skills; have well-developed instructional strategies based on thinking critically, communicating creatively in a variety of media, and solving problems creatively; and are often role models for strong leadership, initiative, and other career and life skills. (6)

Sources

- (1) "School Library Impact Studies" collected by the Library Research Service <http://www.lrs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/>.
- (2) NJ Study of School Libraries: One Common Goal - Student Learning http://www.njasl.org/NJ_Study.
- (3) "School Libraries Work". <http://library.dadeschools.net/promotions/School-Libraries-Work.pdf>.
- (4) Coker. Certified Teacher-Librarians, and Student Achievement in Washington State Schools. <https://wala.memberclicks.net/assets/WLMA/Advocacy/wsslit%20exec%20summary%204.7.15.pdf>
- (5) Cavangh. "Copyright Piracy Language and ESSA". <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/>.
- (6) Trilling. From Libraries to Learning Libratories. <http://www.schoollibrarymonthly.com>.