

Resolution that School Libraries and Librarians are Critical to Educational Success

Whereas school librarians help students acquire unique skills not taught in the classroom and information and technology skills essential for students in the 21st century;

Whereas there has been research conducted in 22 states and a Canadian Province that provides significant evidence indicating the value added to student's academic development by the presence of a strong school library program led by a credentialed librarian;

Whereas it has been shown that incremental increases in the following can result in incremental gains in student learning:

- Increased hours of access for both individual student visits and group visits by classes
- Larger collections of print and electronic resources with access at school and from home
- Up-to-date technology with connectivity to databases and automated collections
- Instruction implemented in collaboration with teachers that is integrated with classroom curriculum and allows students to learn and practice such 21st century skills as problem-solving, critical thinking and communication of ideas and information
- Increased student usage of school library services
- Higher total library expenditures
- Leadership activities by the librarian in providing professional development for teachers, serving on key committees, and meeting regularly with the principal;

Whereas the most universal finding is that the presence of full-time, credentialed school librarians and appropriate support staff who implement a quality, school integrated program of library services is directly related to these student educational gains;

Whereas quality school library programs staffed by credential school librarians prepare students to have the 21st Century skills they need to succeed in college and careers. They are particularly critical to help close the achievement gap of students who come from economically disadvantage backgrounds.

Whereas the de-professionalization and curtailment of school library instructional programs has not only had a negative impact on students and student achievement in K-12 learning environments, but also a negative impact on the ability of youth to utilize the resources of public and academic libraries;

Whereas more than 28,000 citizens signed a White House petition to ensure that every child in America has access to an effective school library program and asking that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provide dedicated funding to help support effective school library programs in order to ensure more students have access to the school librarians, resources and tools that constitute a 21st century learning environment;

Whereas in its response, the Obama administration acknowledged that "school libraries do much more than house books and store data: a school library can broaden the horizon of learning for students and link them with communities and experiences far beyond their own classroom and community"; and

Whereas members of the American Library Association, as librarians, educators and contributors to our communities, recognize that there is an interdependence among types of libraries within a community, where what affects school libraries affects our profession as a whole, and that school libraries are at the center of this ecosystem; and members of ALA have an obligation to help ensure that every child in America receives a strong foundation in literacy and civic values like Intellectual Freedom, including the critical thinking skills necessary to thrive in a dynamic and competitive 21st century economy, now, therefore, be it;

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Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA):

1. directs the ALA Presidential Task Force on School Librarians to lead the Association in its continued mission to address the urgent need for advocacy for school libraries and school librarians; and to address the impact of the de-professionalization and curtailment of school library instructional programs on students and student achievement, continuing to engage librarians of all types from across the association to advocate for school libraries, which are imperative to the survival and success of all libraries;
2. encourages state associations and affiliates to influence legislation requiring adequate funding and appropriate staffing of school libraries in schools at all levels;
3. places a high priority on seeing that upcoming ESEA legislation recognizes and specifically supports the necessity for effective school library programs and credentialed school librarians;
4. works to encourage federal lobbying efforts to include school libraries in legislation and regulations, including areas such as digital literacy and broadband; and,
5. actively seeks partnerships with national organizations to reach mutual goals of sustaining school libraries.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association



Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council
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In Anaheim, California