“School libraries are an essential part of a complete school program. They provide an equitable, fiscally responsible strategy for sharing resources across grade levels and the curriculum while addressing core reading, information, and technology literacies.”


“School libraries often serve as a second classroom. Our children are losing out on qualified professionals trained to collaborate with teachers and engender students meaningfully with information that matters to them both in the classroom and the real world.”

—U.S. Congressman Raul Grijalva from Arizona, co-sponsor of SKILLS Act


“Just as success in the Industrial Age depended on a school system that taught us how to read and write, add and subtract; our success in the Information Age depends on a school system that teaches us how to manage information, utilize technologies, innovate, and above all—think.”

—Matthew Barrett, former chairman of Bof Montreal


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According to the American Association of School Librarians, students who are information literate can:

+ Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.
+ Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge;
+ Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.

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+ Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge; according to the American Association of School Librarians, students who are information literate can:

=Policies makers are in a position to impact every student in every school by supporting quality school library programs. School libraries, under the guidance and instruction of a certified/licensed school librarian, economically deliver and share essential resources, and provide access to technologies that improve both the quality of student learning and the quality of teacher instruction. Research conducted in twenty-two states and one Canadian province has shown that standardized test scores of students are higher where:

- A certified/licensed full-time librarian teaches students, collaborates with teachers on instruction, and provides professional development to teachers;
- Networked computers link library resources to classrooms;
- The collection contains up-to-date books; and
- Per-pupil library expenditures are higher.

Quality school library programs play an even greater role in providing academic support and closing the achievement gap for those students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Research results remained significant when accounting for all other school and community variables, including poverty, ethnicity, community education levels, and the quality and pay of teachers.

Vast inequalities exist in school library programs, and in access to information and the instructional technologies with which our students learn and our teachers teach. As an influential leader, you make a difference in student achievement by taking a stand to support quality school library programs with trained staff, and by setting policy to grow all students an equal opportunity to learn. This brochure, based on national school library guidelines, presents goals and key questions to think about as you consider options to invest in a proven strategy to improve student learning.

School libraries are cost-efficient and effective. The bottom line—school library programs provide our youth with the skills they need to select, interpret, form, and communicate ideas in compelling ways with emerging technologies, preparing students for the demands of a global, competitive economy, and the workplace of the twenty-first century.

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The school library program has strong support from the school board, school administrators, and the community.

GOAL: The school library program provides equal access and opportunities for all students to use library resources.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Does the school library provide students, staff, and parents access to the school library and its resources?
- Does the school library program have a budget that is sufficient to meet the needs of all students?
- Is the school library program represented on school-improvement, technology-planning, and other decision-making committees?
- Does the school librarian collect and share data to justify requests for needed materials and personnel?
- Does the school librarian reach out to community leaders and elected officials to inform them of the success and progress of the school library program?
- Does the school librarian invite students to participate in community-outreach activities, creative expression, and other groups or events that reach the human, physical, and financial resources of the school library program?

The school library provides important programs to support academic success.

GOAL: The school library offers a wide range of reading and interest levels.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Does the school library collection reflect our community and ensure that all students have access to information technologies?
- Does the school library have up-to-date technologies and resources—such as libraries online and on-site—for individual, small group, and whole-class use?
- Can students borrow electronic devices, such as computers, tablets, and e-readers, to use in school libraries?
- Is the library available for student and teacher use after school hours?
- Does the school librarian engage in community-outreach activities, creative expression, and other groups or events that reach the human, physical, and financial resources of the school library program?

"Many... think of the library as a cost rather than as an investment. There is no question that quality library media programs, like all quality programs, require substantial funding—but not every quality program pays off for students across the board like libraries can."


As a policymaker, do you support dedicating a portion of the school library budget to support instruction?

GOAL: Does the school library offer 24–7 remote access and equal opportunities for all students to use library resources.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Does the library collection reflect our community and ensure that all students have access to information technologies?
- Does the school library have up-to-date technologies and resources—such as libraries online and on-site—for individual, small group, and whole-class use?
- Can students borrow electronic devices, such as computers, tablets, and e-readers, to use in school libraries?
- Is the library available for student and teacher use after school hours?
- Does the school librarian engage in community-outreach activities, creative expression, and other groups or events that reach the human, physical, and financial resources of the school library program?

The school library is a vital component of the school's educational program to support academic success.

GOAL: The school librarian is an active leader, advocating for the students, programs, and financial resources needed to ensure that students develop critical thinking, research, and information technologies they need to learn.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Does the school librarian collect and share data to justify requests for needed materials and personnel?
- Does the school librarian reach out to community leaders and elected officials to inform them of the success and progress of the school library program?
- Does the school librarian engage in community-outreach activities, creative expression, and other groups or events that reach the human, physical, and financial resources of the school library program?