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# ALA American Library Association

March 10, 2023

John Boyd  
Board of Directors  
Evergreen Public Schools  
13413 NE LeRoy Haagen Memorial Drive  
Vancouver, WA 98684

Dear Superintendent Boyd, President Bocanegra, and Board Members:

At a moment when the ability to navigate a vast and constantly shifting world of information is a matter of profound consequence, we are alarmed to hear that Evergreen Public Schools proposes to eliminate their secondary certified information professionals—Teacher Librarians. We urge the Board to prioritize funding so that Evergreen Public Schools can appropriately staff its libraries and ensure that every student has access to a full-time certified teacher librarian.

Building a continuum of literacy and inquiry skills while nurturing the whole child is foundational to school librarianship, and it is central to success for learners in school and beyond. More than 60 studies from across the country conclude that student achievement—from reading scores and digital proficiency to graduation rates and post-secondary success—is higher in schools with professionally staffed libraries<sup>1</sup>.

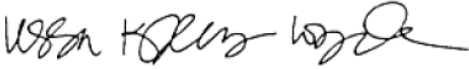
These findings are no accident. Teacher librarians are the heart of their schools and central to their district's goals. Teacher librarians align their work with content area and technology standards and facilitate students' engagement in authentic learning; curation of resources for personal and academic growth; collaboration towards individual and common goals; examination of diverse perspectives and experiences; reflective practices that nurture exploration and innovation; and capable and ethical use of information technologies.

Evergreen's teacher librarians impact every learner in their schools, fostering a culture of reading and inquiry that reflects the needs and interests of every member of the community. They collaborate with teachers to embed literacy and inquiry across the curriculum. And they offer supplemental programming that extends learning beyond the classroom. This excellence in practice was recognized in Evergreen teacher librarians Ben Kort and Paul Warner. They were recently awarded the Washington Library Association's Teacher Librarian of the Year award—Mr. Kort for elementary and Mr. Warner for secondary.

Current Washington educational law outlines best practice in staffing and providing for a school library and information technology program<sup>2</sup>. This is in alignment with the American Association of School Librarians position statement on appropriate staffing.<sup>3</sup>

Evergreen Public Schools is rightly proud of its commitment to excellence, and we share the belief that the entire community benefits from an excellent school system. The proposed cuts undermine that

commitment and diminish the district's ability to fulfill its mission. As presidents of the American Library Association and American Association for School Librarians, we urge the Board to follow best practices as outlined in Washington education law and ensure that Evergreen Public Schools prioritizes the funding necessary to fulfill its commitment to the families in the district and maintain full-time teacher librarians at all of its schools.



Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, President  
American Library Association



Kathy Lester, President  
American Association of School Librarians

cc: Johanna M. Jacobsen Kiciman, WLA President  
Sarah Logan, WLA President-Elect, Teacher Librarian  
Elizabeth Roberts, WLA School Library Division Chair

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<sup>1</sup> <https://kappanonline.org/lance-kachel-school-librarians-matter-years-research/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.k12.wa.us/educator-support/education-staff-associate-esa/librarians/laws-regulations-guidance>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/advocacy/statements/docs/AASL\\_Appropriate\\_Staffing.pdf](http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/advocacy/statements/docs/AASL_Appropriate_Staffing.pdf)