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ALA American Library Association

May 10, 2021

Dirk Phillips, Superintendent
Board of Education Members
Glen Ridge Public Schools
12 High Street
Glen Ridge, NJ 07028

Dear Superintendent Phillips, President Ginsburg, 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 Glen Ridge Public Schools proposes additional cuts to the number of certified information professionals—librarians, or school library media specialists—leaving students throughout the district without appropriately staffed libraries.¹

More than 60 studies from across the country show that student achievement—from reading scores and digital proficiency to graduation rates—is higher in schools with professionally staffed libraries.² These findings are no accident. School librarians are the heart of their schools and central to their district's goals. Pairing *National School Library Standards*³ and *New Jersey's Learning Standards*, school librarians facilitate students' examination of diverse perspectives and experiences; collaboration towards individual and common goals; curation of resources for personal and academic growth; reflective practices that nurture exploration and innovation; and capable and ethical use of information and technologies. They impact every learner in their schools, advancing initiatives that ignite students' passions for reading, inquiry, and lifelong learning. They are also invaluable partners to teachers and administrators, enhancing resources for instruction and assessment, and providing professional development and technology support.

As your district addresses the impacts of COVID-19 on students, school librarians are integral to your community's resilience and to the priorities outlined by Education Secretary Cardona for allocation of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.

With previous cuts to professional library staff, Glen Ridge students are already at a disadvantage to their peers in other New Jersey districts. State administrative code requires that students receive library media services and information literacy instruction. Education in this information age requires full-time

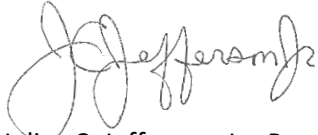
¹ http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/advocacy/statements/docs/AASL_Appropriate_Staffing.pdf

² <https://www.baltimorelibraryproject.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/09/Library-Impact-Studies.pdf>

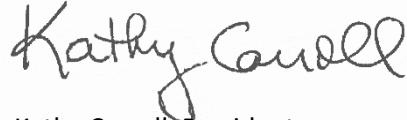
³ <https://standards.aasl.org/>

certified information specialists in every school. We urge you to uphold the district's commitment to excellence and equity, and appropriately staff every Glen Ridge School with a certified librarian.

Sincerely,



Julius C. Jefferson, Jr., President
American Library Association



Kathy Carroll, President
American Association of School Librarians

cc: Beth Thomas, President, New Jersey Association of School Librarians
Jen Schureman, President, New Jersey Library Association