

ALA American Library Association

November 22, 2021

Members of the City Council
District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chair Mendelson and City Council Members:

Students today must skillfully navigate a complex information landscape to succeed in school, in the workplace, and in society. We commend the City Council for taking an important step towards ensuring that all DC Public School students have equitable opportunities to develop these critical skills by funding certified school librarians in every school this year; and we urge you to pass B24-0443, the Students' Right to Read Amendment Act of 2021.

In previous letters to this body, we cited research that demonstrates improved student outcomes in schools with professionally staffed libraries,¹ and we shared the *National School Library Standards*² that provide a framework upon which that success is built. Yet, year to year, DC Public School families cannot be certain that students will have access to an effective school library.³

The good news is that the infrastructure to remedy this already exists. Several DCPS schools have exemplary school librarians who offer evidenced-based best practices. The recently appointed Director of Library Services has a model in the 2014 DCPS plan that resulted in 100% of librarian positions filled, coordinated professional development, and an annual per-pupil allocation to sustain library collections.

With passage of the Students' Right to Read Amendment, you are affirming DCPS's strategic priorities and making a commitment towards greater equity for students. Equally important, you are investing in the District's educational, economic, and civic future: one where residents have the skills and dispositions necessary to continue learning independently and collaboratively; to be adaptable, capable, and ethical consumers and creators of information; and to be engaged and informed community members.

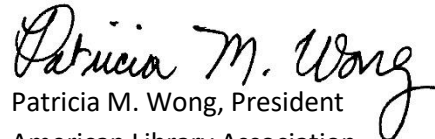
¹ <https://kappanonline.org/lance-kachel-school-librarians-matter-years-research/>


² <https://standards.aasl.org/>

³ https://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/advocacy/statements/docs/AASL_Position_Statement_Effective_SLP_2018.pdf

On behalf of our members in the District of Columbia and across the country, we thank you for introducing this important legislation. We are pleased to support B24-0443 and urge its passage.

Sincerely,


Patricia M. Wong, President
American Library Association


Jennisen Lucas, President
American Association of School Librarians

cc: The Honorable Muriel Bowser, Mayor
DC Board of Education
Lewis Ferebee, Ed.D., Chancellor, DC Public Schools
Meg Metcalf, President, DC Library Association