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Rep. Chris Gorsek
House Committee on Education Members
RE: HB 3263

Hello Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso León and Helt, Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Andee Zomerman, I am a Library Media Assistant in the Beaverton School District, and I am here to ask for support to place HB 3263 into legislation. I am a Certified Teacher and in a few weeks, I will have my School Library/Media Endorsement. Because of my passion for the library, I am working as a Classified employee. The Beaverton School District does not employ Teacher-Librarians.

When my family moved to Beaverton in 2011, I volunteered in the library at my daughters' K-8 school. I observed the Teacher-Librarian as she instructed every grade, from Kindergarten to Middle School. She taught the basics of the library catalog, locating books, and a love of literature; but she also taught research skills, provided critical thinking activities, taught the students fact vs. fallacy, provided realia to complement literature, showed students how to use multi-media, and as an imperative curriculum for this generation, she focused on digital citizenship.

When the Teacher-Librarian wasn't with students, she was collaborating with classroom teachers to strengthen or even co-teach their lessons. She provided professional development to the school staff. She was a leader in the school community.

In the Fall of 2012, the Teacher-Librarian position was eliminated in the Beaverton School District. Parents and classroom teachers quickly noticed the deficit. Classes were still visiting the library on a rotating schedule, but now a Library Media Assistant was in charge. The same employees whose main responsibilities had been book circulation and book repair were now solely in charge of 6 classes a day for 45 minutes each. As a parent volunteer, I watched an assistant, who used to love her job, now try to wrangle classes without any training in classroom management. I saw her try to recommend books without any training in children's literature. Without her teaching license, I saw her "babysitting" up to 30 kids at a time with no other employee present. This was not fair to her, the school, and most importantly, the students.

Six and a half years have passed since that Fall. LMAs have settled into their own grooves. I, myself, was drawn to the job because I saw the harm when an employee (the only educational requirement for this position a high school diploma)

without any guidance or training tried to do what licensed predecessors did. Were they responsible for failure? No. The district which eliminated teaching positions was responsible.

Students without Teacher Librarians are not receiving the quality of education they deserve. A collaboration of studies on school libraries has proven schools with Certified Librarians have students who score better on standardized tests, read at a higher level, and display higher writing scores.¹ School librarians also help students acquire unique skills not taught in the classroom and information and technology skills essential for students in the 21st century. In fact, the state of Oregon has school library standards which are not currently met in most districts.²

While classroom teachers build relationships with their students, Certified Librarians have the opportunity to build a relationship with every student. This means a Teacher Librarian can personalize guidance to support aspects of learning in academic, social, and behavioral contexts. A Teacher Librarian can spend time with students to help them gain confidence in reading, researching, and digital awareness. Classroom teachers do not have these lessons built into their mandated curriculums. Teacher Librarians help lessen the inequity between families who value reading and families who have other priorities.

I'd like to end with the results of the study, "How Pennsylvania School Libraries Pay Off: Investments in Student Achievement and Academic Standards." Researchers Keith Curry Lance and Bill Schwarz conclude, "This study adds to the evidence that all K-12 students need quality school library programs with full-time certified staff to achieve academically. These findings also suggest that staffing libraries with certified librarians can help close achievement gaps among the most vulnerable learners."³

Oregonian students deserve the education a fully staffed library can provide.

Thank you.

¹ <https://www.irs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/>

² <https://www.oregon.gov/Library/libraries/Pages/School-Standards.aspx>

³ <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED543418>