

March 30, 2023

Senate Committee on Education
900 Court St NE, HR B
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support SB 1075. In the last 40 years, the number of licensed school librarians in Oregon has dropped from over 800 to under 150. This drop represents a catastrophic loss in information literacy instructions for Oregon students. SB 1075 is an important step in rebuilding strong school libraries across the state.

Research explicitly links strong school libraries with improved student achievement. High schools with licensed librarians have improved graduation rates and this is particularly true in high-poverty schools. Research also shows a significant relationship between the presence of a licensed high school librarian and college first-semester GPA. Academic success at every level is driven by strong school libraries staff by licensed teacher librarians.

Licensed teacher librarians are highly trained professionals equipped to teach research skills, critical thinking skills, computer technology skills, and communication skills. These kinds of Information literacy skills are essential for academic success, effective functioning in the workplace, and participation in society as knowledgeable citizens. As a community college librarian, I have seen how under prepared many students are in the areas of research, information evaluation, and critical thinking. We can and must do better. We need licensed school librarians. SB1075 requires ODE to hire a full time staff person dedicated to school library programs to do the work of rebuilding strong school library programs across the state. It's the least we can do.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to pass SB 1075.

Sincerely,

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