

Submitter: Jessica Marie
On Behalf Of: Salem Public Library
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1075

I'm writing to express my very strong support for SB 1075 regarding school media program standards that will require the agency to hire a full-time staff position dedicated to school library programs to execute the work and push for strong school library programs inside the agency.

Reading is a foundational skill for children to acquire knowledge, succeed in school, and access future opportunities for success. Decades of research indicate that a child's reading level in 3rd grade is directly related to their ability to thrive later in school and life. However, as of 2019, less than half of Oregonian 3rd graders were proficient at reading, with notable disparities in the state's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and rural communities. With Covid, the gaps are widening further.

The data is unequivocal: School libraries and librarians play a pivotal role in the educational and emotional well-being of students. Administrators should make sure that professional librarians are available for students in every school.

Librarians play a key role in literacy development at every level of a student's education. Their knowledge of literature and how to apply it in an educational framework enables them to match each student with the right books and other resources to meet their educational and informational needs while also providing that crucial element of developing a lifelong love of reading, which is essential to educational success. Librarians are also key in teaching students as they traverse their school careers and develop their research skills in order to find the best resources to meet their informational needs. In addition, school librarians play a key role in filling knowledge gaps of teachers whose focus is rightly on curriculum but who are often unfamiliar with literary trends, research strategies and methods, and how to access research resources beyond books, not to mention imparting those skills to students.

I strongly urge you to pass SB 1075 as an important step in recognizing and improving literacy rates for Oregon students.

Sincerely,
Jessica R. Marie, Youth Services Senior Librarian
Salem Public Library