

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 in support of SB 1075. I have had the pleasure of working as a licensed school librarian in or with a range of school districts in Oregon as a teacher-librarian, a district librarian, and at Education Service Districts (ESDs). The ESD roles in particular allowed me to see a huge diversity of schools - from urban to rural and big to small. I have seen the broad variety of school library experiences our Oregon students have.

I've seen lucky Oregon students who have access to a strong school library program, staffed by trained and licensed library staff who are involved in their professional organizations and use their professional learning communities to continue learning about how to best serve their schools. In these schools, the library is a vibrant place full of stories and ideas and creativity and curiosity. That magic permeates the whole school through school-wide literacy and research programming spearheaded by the library staff.

On the flip side, I've seen some dire situations that pass for school library programs - with part-time or volunteer library staff. Though their hearts are in the right place, with no training or experience in how a school library works or any understanding of reading engagement and literacy, these programs can be not just neutral, but actually add to the reading trauma of Oregon students. In addition to having little training or experience, the staff of these programs also usually lack a connection to any kind of school library learning community, either within their district or within the state. Their administrators also likely don't know about those learning opportunities.

Adding a school library specialist at ODE will be a good first step in bringing some equity to school library programs throughout the state. While it won't affect staffing issues from district to district, the ODE specialist can provide resources and training to library staff and administrators. This will increase the quality of school library programs in communities across Oregon regardless of their current level of library staffing.

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

Sincerely,

Kate Weber  
HB Lee Middle School Media Specialist  
Reynolds School District  
Portland, Oregon  
Oregon Library Association (OLA) member / Oregon Association of School Libraries (OASL) board member