

[ADAPT THIS LETTER FOR USE IN YOUR DISTRICT]

To Administrators/School Committee Members

Success in the 21st century requires that our students are literate, technologically adept, and able to access and evaluate information efficiently. We are preparing students for jobs that do not yet exist in a world where information is created at an overwhelming rate. Well-staffed school libraries with adequate resources ensure student success. It is imperative that school library programs continue to receive local support.

Resource-rich school libraries and licensed school librarians promote information literacy. They help students acquire critical thinking skills and increase their global awareness. More than 19 studies across the U.S. and Canada demonstrate that the services of professional school librarians, well-funded collections, and rich digital resources enhance student achievement.* These research studies show that, when classroom teachers collaborate with full-time, credentialed school librarians to design, implement, and assess instruction, student achievement increases significantly. Yet, Massachusetts has no clear plan for its school library programs, no requirement for licensed school library teachers in its schools, and no standards for library programs. It is up to our cities and towns to lead the way toward providing this important resource for all students.

A well-run, well-staffed library program ensures students are grounded in 21st century skills, and it does so in a cost-efficient manner because certified school library teachers work with all students and staff to ensure that both print and electronic materials are well used. They understand technology and promote its use in schools in meaningful and appropriate ways. Library teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to provide differentiated instruction, literacy support, adequate resources, and instruction in information use.

We urge you to provide support for your school library program to ensure academic success for your students.

Sincerely,

*For specific study data go to:

http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/s/slw3_2008.pdf