

MTA RESOLUTION in SUPPORT of SCHOOL LIBRARIES

May 2009

At the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, April 30 to May 3 2009, MSLA representatives Heather Macpherson and Clare O'Neill presented this resolution and ushered it to its eventual passage. Patsy Divver and Ann Collins were helpful in offering supporting information. The resolution was written by the MSLA Advocacy co-Chair, Judi Paradis.

Background Success in the 21st century requires that our students are literate, comfortable in a multicultural world, and able to access and evaluate information efficiently. School libraries that are well-staffed and have adequate resources ensure student success.

Resource-rich school libraries and licensed school librarians play key roles in promoting information literacy. They help students acquire critical thinking skills and increase their global awareness. More than 19 studies have demonstrated 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.

See collected data from studies at:

http://librarypublishing.scholastic.com/content/stores/LibraryStore/pages/images/sl_w_04.pdf

Yet, Massachusetts has no leadership within the Department of Education, no clear plan for improving school library programs, no requirement for licensed school library teachers in its schools, and no statewide standards for school library programs.

Judi Paradis is the Library Teacher at the Plympton Elementary School in Waltham. She was co-Chair of the MSLA Legislation/Advocacy Committee through May 2009

The Massachusetts Teachers Association recognizes that all students need equal access to school libraries that provide

- 1) full-time, licensed professionals;
- 2) adequate resources that reflect multiple perspectives;
- 3) opportunities for classroom teachers and school librarians to collaborate.

Resolution Given the lack of support for library programs in Massachusetts and the need for strong literacy and library programs that lead to students' overall academic success, be it resolved that the Massachusetts Teachers Association:

- Supports our members in the Massachusetts School Library Association in their efforts to petition the Massachusetts Board of Education to appoint a study group to develop a long-range plan for school libraries in Massachusetts;
- Urges the Governor, members of the Board of Education, state legislators, and local elected officials to increase funding for credentialed school library teachers, books, online resources, and other library materials;
- Promotes policies that ensure access to library resources for all learners;
- Supports professional development opportunities for school librarians and classroom teachers consistent with local, state, and national standards; and
- Encourages collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians to enrich student learning.

Surviving and Thriving: Tips We Share **Managing without an Assistant**

This January, my paraprofessional was cut. I was a little nervous about how I would manage my work load without her but I also decided to make this an opportunity to shine and to show everyone what a certified library teacher does. One strategy that I used to keep up with library basic needs was to start the class with a "DO NOW" activity which they can complete within ten minutes and while they complete the "DO NOW" I check in students a few at a time, and organize the books to be shelved. The DO NOW can be as simply as playing one of my online Library Practice Games; practicing notetaking (for Grade 5); doing a word search, or completing a quick reference book scavenger hunt. Students are kept busy but do not need me to micro manage and administrators love it.

~Submitted by Katie Cerasale-Messina, AC Whelan Library,

