

18.48 Equitable Access to School Library Information and Technology Programs

Resolution passed 2024

Whereas, state law ([RCW 28A.320.240](#)) defines School Library Information and Technology Programs as school-based programs, staffed by a certified teacher librarian (CTL), that provide a broad, flexible array of services, resources, and instruction that support student mastery of the state learning standards in all subject areas and the implementation of the district's school improvement plan; and

Whereas, PTA advocates for equitable access and funding for school libraries and media centers in all public schools, and supports the perspective that age- or developmentally appropriate books, programming, and media resources should accurately reflect historical facts, inspire creativity, and encourage responsible civil discourse; and

Whereas, PTA supports laws, regulations, policies, and programs that protect against censorship and protect free access to information and ideas in schools, and the use of established best practices to ensure the rights of educators, parents, students, and other community members to assume roles in the evaluation, selection, adoption, or removal procedures for instructional materials and school library materials; and

Whereas, a CTL is a certificated teacher with a library media endorsement, who assists students in completing their high school and beyond plans, integrates information and technology into curriculum and instruction, provides instruction to students and staff in digital citizenship and on effective use of emerging learning technologies, and creates a culture of reading by curating a diverse, student-focused collection of materials; and

Whereas, decades of research indicate that students with access to high-quality school library information and technology programs with CTLs show higher academic achievement across all subjects, gain essential information literacy skills, critical thinking skills, and digital citizenship lessons, and are more likely to develop a love for reading and literature, leading to improved literacy rates and overall academic success; and

Whereas, for students in high-poverty schools, one key factor distinguishing high-performing high-poverty schools is a quality library program, and for students experiencing the impact of poverty on literacy, the positive effect of having a library was nearly as large as the effect of poverty was negative; and

Whereas, there is not currently a staff position at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) overseeing school library information and technology programs, supporting districts in their implementation, and providing transparent reporting of data to OSPI, the legislature, and the public; and

Whereas, Washington state law permits school boards to offer school library programs provided by staff who are not certificated teacher librarians “as the board deems necessary”, resulting in students in many Washington school districts having no access to CTLs. There has been a 26% decline in the number of CTLs statewide since 2010, and in 2022-23 less than 60% of the state funding allocated for CTL positions was used by school districts for that purpose; and

Whereas, the students most likely to be in the educational opportunity gap are the ones most likely to be without access to school library information and technology programs with CTLs; these students are disproportionately likely to be located in small, rural districts, communities that are more diverse, have higher rates of economic need and unemployment, higher levels of child abuse or neglect, and higher percentages of multilingual student populations.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate that the Washington State legislature and local school districts allocate sufficient funding and resources to operate a high-quality school library information and technology program, with a goal of staffing every school with a Certified Teacher Librarian; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for OSPI to support school districts to establish and maintain high-quality library programs in all schools; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for legislation to ensure school districts provide accurate reporting on these programs to OSPI, the state legislature, and the public, requiring transparency on library staffing and funding allocations.