



***Letter mailed to all Texas school district superintendents.***

March 15, 2024

As educators and advocates for public education, Texas Library Association members share the frustration of Texas school districts that are facing significant budget deficits. The state has not provided additional funding for public education in years, and that combined with the increased cost of doing business, means that superintendents are having to make hard choices. Unfortunately, in some districts, those difficult decisions have included laying off educators, including librarians.

Certified school librarians are highly qualified and experienced educators who teach a variety of classes in the largest classroom on our school campuses. They do not just sit behind desks and check out books. They must have a master's degree, be certified teachers with at least two years of classroom teaching experience and pass a state examination on school library and information content areas to obtain a School Librarian certificate. They add value to a campus and increase student learning and achievement.

Districts that do not have certified librarians lose highly knowledgeable and versatile educators who are essential to student achievement and success. Librarians not only provide individual and classroom instruction to students at all grade levels - and to parents and other community members - they support and partner with classroom teachers and administrators on curriculum development, professional development, and literacy initiatives.

Additionally, the new mandatory collection development standards adopted by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) and approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE) make it essential that districts maintain certified school librarians to ensure compliance. TAC 13, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter A, §4.2 (f) of the new mandatory collection development standards states that "School districts should ensure a professional librarian, certified by the State Board for Educator Certification or other dedicated professional library staff trained on proper collection development standards is responsible for the selection and acquisition of library materials."

Ensuring compliance with HB 900 while maintaining a vibrant library to support student achievement requires professional training and certification, as recognized by TSLAC and SBOE in these new standards.

Decades of research consistently show a positive correlation between the literacy achievement of students with access to school libraries staffed with certified librarians compared to students who are not provided with these resources. It has also been shown that students who read for pleasure are more likely to have greater overall academic success.

The Texas Library Association and Texas Association of School Librarians (a TLA division), recognize the significant funding challenges faced by school districts but hope that any decisions made take into account the critical role librarians play in students' academic success. We are happy to provide additional information and answer questions about school library programs, and the role of certified school librarians.

Sincerely,

*Gretchen Pruett*

Gretchen Pruett, President  
*Texas Library Association*

*Brooke King*

Brooke King, Chair  
*Texas Association of  
School Librarians*

*Shirley Robinson*

Shirley Robinson, Executive Director  
*Texas Library Association*