

New York State Reading Association's Position Statement Supporting Libraries and Librarians

The New York State Reading Association (NYSRA) is comprised of over 2500 literacy specialists, classroom teachers, teacher educators, researchers, librarians, and parents throughout the state. The purpose of the association is to promote literacy education in New York. NYSRA provides on-going professional literacy education of teachers, and it advocates for the teaching of reading before governmental and professional bodies.

As advocates of literacy, the New York State Reading Association has great concerns about the status of funding for the vital resources that libraries and librarians provide. Despite an increasing demand for literacy skills both in the classroom and in the workplace, budgets for all types of libraries are being cut, resulting in students without access to certified librarians and critical library resources. NYSRA believes libraries and librarians are essential for the success of New York students.

The importance of skilled librarians

The Common Core Learning Standards are rigorous and demanding and require skills that students develop in the care of a skilled librarian. In the 21st century, a librarian does much more than shelve books. Librarians use their expertise to help students develop literacy and technology skills to access, use, and synthesize information. Librarians also work with teachers to develop and present curriculum to meet the demands of the Common Core and literacy across the disciplines. Full-time, professional librarians should be required at elementary, middle, and high school libraries as well as in our public libraries and colleges.

The importance of library resources

The Common Core emphasizes informational books and materials which can be equitably provided in libraries. In addition, the Common Core and Regents requirement for research papers will necessitate additional access to library materials including print resources, databases, and primary documents and artifacts. Public libraries also provide community access to technology that is essential for daily living. Funds for libraries should be maintained and increased where possible in order to meet these increasing demands.

The importance of library access

Libraries serve as the intellectual center for schools and communities. It is essential that students are able to use the library throughout the school day and beyond in order to acquire necessary literacy skills and support content area learning and research. Public libraries must be open to citizens during day, evening, and weekend hours to allow for access to resources. School and public libraries should receive sufficient public funding to allow libraries to provide opportunities for the local community.

If New York is to continue its tradition of educational excellence, we must support our public, school and academic libraries and certified librarians.

A selection of resources in support of this position statement

American Association of School Librarians (n.d.). *Strong School Libraries Build Strong Students*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/advocacy/AASL_infographic_resources.pdf

This site includes a two- page document with links to research supporting school library programs.

American Association of School Librarians (2012). *School Libraries Count: National Longitudinal Study of School Library Programs*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/researchandstatistics/slcsurvey/2012/ASL-SLC-2012-WEB.pdf>

A report of the annual online survey of school library programs in the United States. Findings indicate that despite cuts in many areas, school library programs remain consistently strong. However, the survey also indicated that the number of computers outside of the library with networked access to services has significantly increased. The trend is to increase remote access to library licensed databases.

American Library Association (2007). *Libraries Connect Communities: Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study 2006-2007*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/research/initiatives/plftas/previousstudies/0607/index.cfm>

This survey of technology access in libraries throughout the United States demonstrates that technology is attracting larger numbers of people to public libraries each year. It includes information on children as consumers of technology, especially as users of databases that help with homework.

American Librarian Association (n.d.). *Add It Up: Libraries Make the Difference – Talking Points*.

Retrieved from

http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/advocacyuniversity/additup/6to12/anntk_public Public library

http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/advocacyuniversity/additup/6to12/anntk_school School library

These advocacy documents provide readers with talking points in favor of funding of public and school libraries.

Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries (2010; 2011). *The New Jersey Study of School Libraries: One Common Goal-Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.njasl.info/cissl-study/>

Executive summaries of an intense two-phase study of school libraries in the New Jersey educational program indicating that libraries and librarians contribute to the intellectual life and development of students in complex and diverse ways.

Krashen, S & Shin, F. (2004). Summer Reading and the Potential Contribution of the Public Library in Improving Reading for Children of Poverty. *Public Library Quarterly*, 23.3/4, 99-109.

Research indicates that there is surprisingly little difference in reading gains between children from high- and low-income families during the school year. Rather, the difference is what happens in the summer. The author stresses the need to expand and improve the services libraries offer to low-income children in order to close the reading achievement gap.

McClure, C. R. & Bertot, J. C. (1998). *Public Library Use in Pennsylvania: Identifying Uses, Benefits, and Impacts*. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED419548>.

According to focus groups conducted in Pennsylvania's urban and rural communities, libraries make specific, unduplicated, and important contributions to the education, socialization, and well being of Pennsylvania's children.

New York Comprehensive Center Educational Technology Team (2012). *Informational Brief: The Impact of Public Libraries on Students and Lifelong Learners*. Retrieved from http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/nyla/nycc_public_library_brief.pdf.

Report demonstrates positive impact of public libraries and makes connections to learning across the lifespan.

New York Comprehensive Center (2011). *Informational Brief: The Impact of School Libraries on Student Achievement*. Retrieved from http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/nyla/nycc_school_library_brief.pdf
Executive Summary Retrieved from http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/nyla/nycc_school_library_brief_exec_summary.pdf

Report indicates that school libraries are critical to student achievement, curriculum development, and instruction.

New York State Libraries (2013). *Libraries and the Common Core*. Retrieved from http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/commoncore/13lib_cc.htm

A statement from the New York State Libraries on the importance and roles of librarians and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Submitted by Sherry Guice, Mary Lindner, and Liz Yanoff
Albany City Area Reading Council
January 2014

