



The Status of Pennsylvania's School Libraries 2008

Pennsylvania School Librarians Association

- **School libraries are being closed.**
 1. Over 75% of Philadelphia's 265 public schools do NOT have a school librarian and library; only 64 have librarians for 2007-08; there were 83 in 2006-07.
 2. Site-based management practices of local school administrators who do not understand the role of the library are facilitating library closures as school librarians retire.
 3. New funding programs, such as the "Costing Out" Study, may unintentionally cause more school districts to close libraries since they are not mandated.

- **Age and size of school library collections inadequate**
 1. A recent study reported the average age of school library books in four counties of PA. The average age of school library collections is 25 years old.

County	Beaver	Berks	Bucks	Luzerne
Ave Age	1984	1985	1985	1978
 2. In this same study, the average number of books per student remained well below PDE's guidelines.

	Bks Per Student	Recommended "Standard" Level
Elementary	13	25
Middle School	12	20
High School	10	20

- **Availability of school librarians** to promote reading and teach students how to find and use information *dramatically declining*.
 1. 63% of all currently employed PA school librarians are over age 50 and most will retire within 5 to 10 years.
 2. Only 8 PA universities have library preparatory programs; 6 are graduate programs.

- *Poorest schools with least resources and neediest students are the ones increasingly without school library programs.*
 1. Nearly 40% of all PA public schools are without a librarian and school library (estimated since there are 3,568 public schools and 2242 school librarians).
 2. 55% of the 142 schools in “corrective action II” that have not met AYP targets in over five years are in the Philadelphia School District (SDP).
 - Of the 78 SDP in corrective action II, 71% do not have school librarians.
 - Less than half of the SDP corrective action II schools participate in ACCESS PA and only 21% use the POWER Library databases with students and staff.
 - Only 4% of these schools have librarians belonging to PSLA and benefiting from its professional development opportunities.
 - It appears there is a *connection between schools without libraries and librarians and those not meeting state academic achievement targets*. Those students are at risk!

For more information:
Marg Foster, President PSLA
mfoster@northalleggheny.org
412-348-1498 (W)
412-486-7672 (H)

Debra E. Kachel, Chairperson, PSLA Legislation Committee
dkachel@mansfield.edu
717-393-6205 (H & W)

PSLA Website: <http://www.psla.org>