

ASSOCIATION POSITION PAPERS

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LEGAL STAFFING AND SUPPORT OF LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS AT THE ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND SECONDARY LEVELS

I. Authorization. The Board authorizes the President of the Association to investigate those school districts that are reported to the Association to be in violation of curriculum regulations on professional staffing and Federal regulations on funding.

II. Procedures. Upon receiving a report of a violation and before implementing any type of a formal investigation the President shall determine the validity of the allegation. The President shall also determine whether the individual(s) who have registered the complaint wish to be publicly identified. The Association shall respect an individual's request for anonymity.

If a violation does appear to exist, the President shall, in the name of the Association and on behalf of the Board, write a letter of inquiry to the chief school administrator outlining the alleged violation, stating the Association's concern, and calling upon the chief school administrator to respond to the allegation. If the response is satisfactory (either proving the allegation false or indicating steps that are being taken to correct the problem) the President shall express the Association's appreciation for the cooperation, or when appropriate and necessary, the President shall indicate that the Association will continue to monitor the situation.

When the President deems that a situation demands special consideration or action by the Board, the President shall apprise the Board. The Board shall then authorize the President to implement the approved course of action.

III. Department of Education. The President shall call upon the Pennsylvania Department of Education to investigate those school districts that the President believes are in violation of the curriculum regulations and Federal regulations. This shall be done after the President has contacted the chief school administrator and has

not received a satisfactory response or has confirmed that a violation exists and will not be corrected voluntarily.

The Board shall be advised by the President that the Department of Education has been called upon to act.

IV. Membership Responsibility. At the beginning of each school year the President shall alert the membership through *Learning and Media* of the need for them to report to the President those school districts that are in violation of state and Federal regulations.

(Board of Directors Meeting, September 16, 1977)

(Amended, Board of Directors Meeting, January 27, 1990)

EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

PSLA is a professional educational association committed to advancing high standards for school library media programs throughout the state. Such programs require the services of certified personnel to meet the needs of students and teachers in the schools of the state. The Association is therefore concerned that these personnel are used most effectively in creating a positive learning environment. Due to economic conditions and the need to spend tax dollars wisely, it is especially important that these services which are vital to students and teachers continue to be given high priority by those responsible for budgetary decisions.

Therefore, PSLA is opposed to replacing certified personnel with untrained and/or uncertified personnel. While adequate supportive staff such as volunteers, student aides, clerks and para-supportive staff such as volunteers, student aides, clerks and para-professions is essential, professionally educated and certified school librarians can most effectively match appropriate learning resources with individual and group learning needs of students and teachers.

Therefore, PSLA recommends that individuals aware of the use of non-certified personnel in place of those properly certified report in writing such practices to the President of PSLA for review and action.

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*(Board of Directors Meeting, April 27, 1978)
(Amended, Board of Directors Meeting, January 27, 1990)*

PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association is committed to the free exchange of ideas and information. To support our belief in the "Library Bill of Rights" of the American Library Association and to ensure intellectual freedom to all students, we advocate:

1. The maintenance in each school building of a library media facility, collection, program, and full-time certificated librarian
2. Optimum access to library media facilities, materials, and services for all students and programs.
3. Selection of materials which support the curriculum and provide for the individual needs, interests, abilities, maturity levels and cultural backgrounds of the students.
4. Provision of a balanced collection of materials representing a diversity of viewpoints and information.
5. Selection of all materials based on established literary and educational standards.
6. Development and adoption of a written selection policy based upon the concept of academic freedom where materials are not restricted or removed without due process of review.

SCHOOL AND PUBLIC LIBRARY COOPERATION

Introduction

School and public library cooperation is a topic which has been discussed for more than 100 years. PSLA firmly believes that current and future demands on educational agencies and

their school library media centers to deal with the information explosion in the curricular process must be of paramount consideration in the development of cooperative programs. A set of principles which was adopted in 1961 by the Council of Chief State School Officers and which remains applicable today differentiates the missions of school and public libraries:

1. The school library serves the school, and the public library serves the community. Teachers and pupils are members of both the school and the community.
2. Public library service -- including service from state, regional, county and community libraries -- may supplement but never supplant the school library.
3. The school has the primary responsibility for instruction and guidance of children and youth in the community in the use of libraries. The program of library instruction directed by the school librarians has the broad purpose of teaching library skills adaptable to all types of libraries for continuing self-education.
4. Cooperative planning in the selection and utilization of materials for children and young people is the responsibility of school administrators, teachers, school librarians, public librarians, and other community leaders concerned with youth.

Cooperation as defined in the literature can be classified as follows: (1) informal arrangements, (2) formal arrangements, and (3) combination. Markuson² defines an informal arrangement as "any activity between two or more libraries to facilitate, promote, and enhance library operations, services to users, or use of resources." Examples given include notification of assignments, using occasional telephone reference service, placing other libraries on mailing lists, school students taking field trips to public libraries, schools promoting public library events, sharing reading lists, joint celebrations, and creating union lists of special resources such as films. Lauaghlin³ provides additional potential informal arrangements:

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1. Developing a catalog periodicals indicating all titles held by each school and public library in the service area.
2. Exchanging bibliographies
3. Bringing together classroom collections and special materials to public libraries which can aid students in doing research units.
4. Enabling young adult librarians from the public library to discuss their programs and reference services in the public schools.
5. Setting up a system which enables members of the school's audio-visual club to operate equipment for the public library.
6. Providing the school library media specialist with a borrowing card in the school's name so the public library can loan materials to teachers without being individually responsible.
7. Development of a joint community resource file that is available in both school and public libraries.

The above list of informal activities is not meant to be all-inclusive.

The same source defines formal arrangement as any activity between two or more libraries based on legal framework, such as service contracts. Examples include policy-based cooperative collection development, standardization of cataloging procedures, purchasing hardware and software for compatibility, and network participation.

Finally, combination can be offered as any two or more multi-type libraries sharing facilities, goal setting, services, administration, and/or evaluation procedures. The impetus for combining libraries is usually financial. According to Aaron's 1978 study of combination⁴, however, there is no documented evidence that economy results from combining school and public programs, and Jaffe's 1982 study⁵ confirms failure of most combination ventures based on lack of adequate financial support as identified by Rowell⁶ in 1963.

Present-day reasons for interest in the various types of school and public library cooperation as listed by Aaron include:

1. demands generated by the information explosion.
2. declining fiscal resources.
3. community educational programs.
4. legislation, particularly at the federal level.
5. availability of computer communication technology.
6. consideration by communities and school districts of the feasibility of cooperative ventures, the PSLA Board of Directors endorses the position articulated below.

Position

Multi-type library cooperation is beneficial to school libraries in expanding resource and service bases when all cooperative participants identify and agree to common goals and joint planning, implementation, and evaluation to achieve them. These goals must be based on common concerns and must not compromise the basic missions of the various types of libraries involved. For the school library, that basic mission is teaching students to utilize information sources via the curriculum.

Characteristics common to successful multi-type library cooperation include:

1. benefits to the individual libraries that make them more effective in serving their primary constituency.
2. retention of the special character of the individual libraries that enables response to a primary constituency.

Examples of such cooperation include joint purchasing, joint processing, networking, and joint collection planning.

Multi-type library cooperation not beneficial to school libraries is public-school library combination because the needs of students and teachers in the curricular process

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are sacrificed to the generalist demands of the public library constituency in terms of staffing, programming, and collection development.

Bibliography

1. Council of Chief State School Officers, "Responsibilities of State Departments of Education for School Library Services." Washington: Council of Chief State School Officers, 1961.
2. Markuson, Barbara. "Library Network: Problems to Consider, Decisions to Make." Wisconsin Library Bulletin 71 (May-June 1975): 98-102 ED 108 693.
3. Laughlin, Mildred. "Action Activities: 37 Ways to Do it (Bringing School and Public Librarians Together)." Learning Today II (Spring 1978): 72-76.
4. Aaron, Shirley and Smith, Sue O. A Study of the Combined School Public Library, Phase I. Tallahassee: State Library of Florida, 1977. ED 150 986.
5. Jaffe, Lawrence Lewis. "The Combined School/Public Library in Pennsylvania." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1982.
6. Rowell, John A. "Report Card to Pennsylvania School Librarian; The School Public Library Combination." Pennsylvania Library Association Bulletin 9 (September 1963): 29.

SCHOOL LIBRARY INFORMATION CENTER

The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association believes the School Library Information Center must:

*be a facility that functions as the information center of the school,

*help meet the diverse needs of students and teachers,

*be a wall-less gateway to traditional as well as innovative information resources

that promote cultural diversity, information, technology and visual literacy,

*link learners to worldwide information resources enabling them to compete in the global community,

*motivate students to become critical thinkers who can locate, process, evaluate, synthesize and utilize information,

*provide learning experiences that encourage students to become discriminating consumers and skilled creators of information,

*promote opportunities for students to develop lifelong reading skills and lifelong learning skills,

*have professional staff to give instruction, to participate in curriculum development, and to use instructional and information technology,

*support a school library program that is integrated with the total educational curriculum.

Current research studies confirm academic success is directly linked to an effective School Library Information Center that is professionally staffed and adequately funded. Successful operation of the School Library Information Center is dependent upon adequate clerical staff and appropriate scheduling.

Sources of Information:

Pennsylvania Guidelines for School Library Information Programs, Pennsylvania Department of Education. (Draft, 1995)

Information Power; Guidelines for School Library Media Programs, American Library Association, 1988.

(Board Approved, June 10, 1995)

STUDENT INTERNET ACCESS

The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association asserts that:

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School librarians are partners with students, teachers, administrators, and community members as we assist school students as they access and evaluate all information, including that found on the Internet.

The Internet is a valuable depository of historical as well as current events. Students are able to access vast amounts of information in a very quick manner.

School districts throughout the Commonwealth have adopted Internet Acceptable Use Policies, which govern the use of the tool within their districts. Formulating and applying such policies must remain the responsibility of school boards across the Commonwealth.

(Board Approved, June 22, 2001)

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable bases, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,
by the ALA Council.

The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association also endorses all Interpretations of the *Library Bill of Rights* which can be found on the ALA web site at

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/statementsif/interpretations/default.cfm>

POSITION STATEMENT ON INSTRUCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

AASL supports the inclusion of certified school library media specialists as part of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) "Instruction" classification.

School library media centers are classrooms in which school library media specialists teach and students and teachers learn. In school library media centers, students read, utilize print, non-print, and technology resources, and learn to evaluate and use information for projects and reports efficiently, effectively, and ethically, with the goal of developing lifelong learning and literacy skills and strategies. In school library media programs, classroom teachers and school library media specialists collaborate for instruction and support the development of each other's teaching skills. Multiple research studies, more than 60 since 1965, have affirmed that there is a clear link between school library media programs staffed by state-certified school library media specialists and increased student achievement (Library Research Services Web site at <http://www.lrs.org/impact.asp>).

School library media specialists are recognized

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by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) as teachers whose teaching can be measured to meet standards for professional teaching excellence and by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) as teachers who are critically important for student achievement (<http://www.nclis.gov/info/schoollibraryactivities.html>). School library media specialists are teachers who serve as crucial partners in ensuring that states and school districts meet the reading requirements that are part of No Child Left Behind (P.L. 107-110). In Part B, Subpart 1, Section 1208 of No Child Left Behind (P.L. 107-110), Instructional Staff is defined as "principals, teachers, supervisors of instruction, librarians, and school library media specialists". Despite the vital role school library media specialists play as teachers and collaborators with classroom teachers, NCES classifies school library media specialists as "Support Staff--Instruction" rather than "Instruction" along with classroom teachers. School library media specialists were placed in the instructional support category by NCES in the 1950s and, despite the evolution of school library media specialists' work from book warehouse managers to instructional leaders and partners, school library media specialists remain in this support staff classification. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and NCES conflict in their classification of school library media specialists.

Failure to classify school library media specialists as instructional staff and to recognize the impact of state-certified school library media specialists on student achievement, especially in reading, may result in a critical loss of funding for library positions and resources and a dangerous deterioration of library services for our nation's children. AASL will take a lead role over the next several years to communicate with state and national government leaders as well as the leadership of educational organizations about the importance of, and the role played by, school library media specialists in student achievement.

Approved by the PSLA February 4, 2006

Position Statement on Professional Responsibilities in Pennsylvania School Libraries

The effectiveness of the school library as an integral part of the teaching and learning process of the school depends on the quality of the

professional personnel responsible for the program. A professional in each school building who is well-educated and highly motivated is critical to the success of the program.

The school librarian's specific responsibilities espoused by the American Association of School Librarians in *Information Power; Building Partnerships for Learning* are listed in the following:

- Teacher:** is knowledgeable about current research on teaching and learning and skilled in applying its findings to a variety of situations
- Instructional Partner:** identifies links across student information needs, curricular content, learning outcomes, and a wide variety of print, nonprint, and electronic information resources
- Information Specialist:** provides leadership and expertise in acquiring and evaluating information resources in all formats; in bringing an awareness of information issues into collaborative relationships with teachers, administrators, students, and others; and in modeling for students and others strategies for locating, accessing, and evaluating information within and beyond the school library
- Program Administrator:** works collaboratively with members of the learning community to define the policies of the program to guide and direct all activities related to it.

Orchestrating all of these responsibilities in a living and dynamic school library program becomes complex for the practitioner. Evidence of competency exceeds that which can be determined from teaching in another subject area or a content-area test.

The need by school districts for Highly Qualified Teachers as defined in the No Child Left Behind Act is understood and appreciated. To ensure that school library professionals go beyond meeting minimum Pennsylvania certification needs and are adequately prepared, the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association recommends the Praxis test be coupled with the companion document to PDE 428, "Employee Evaluation Form; School Librarian – Companion" designed to more adequately measure the competencies of practicing school librarians and give the best possible outcomes.

(Board of Directors Meeting, September 17, 2005)

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