House Education Committee
Informational Meeting

H.R. 987 of 2010
Pennsylvania School Library Study: Analysis & Recommendations

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Academic & Professional Experience

- University of Pittsburgh, Tenured Associate Professor & Director, School Library Certification Program
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Education:
- PhD, University of Pittsburgh
- MLS, Kent State University
- BS, California University of Pennsylvania
PA School Library Study: My Responsibilities

Contracted by the PA State Board of Education to:

- Analyze survey data and draft findings;
- Draft potential recommendations;
- Gather opinions at 3 public roundtable meetings; and
- Present final Study and recommendations to State Board for approval.
House Resolution 987 of 2010

Urges the **State Board of Education** to conduct a study of the Commonwealth’s public school library services for students in kindergarten through grade 12:

- measuring and comparing access to print and electronic resources, professional support and instruction in the use of information and research . . . and

- evaluating how funding and resources are allocated for school library services in relation to student and community circumstances.
Overview of Study to Comply with Resolution 987

- Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (PSLA) and PA Department of Education (PDE) worked together on electronic survey conducted in April/May 2011.
- PDE sent request to complete survey via PENN*LINK to chief school administrators in 500 school districts, 141 charter schools and 14 Career and Technical Centers.
A Benchmarking Study

Represents first comprehensive study of school libraries in Pennsylvania public schools:

- Baseline data represent 2010-11 school year;
- Study results are useful for benchmarking and comparison with future years.
Types of Schools in Study

- School District Schools
- Comprehensive Career and Technical Centers (CTSs)
- Charter Schools

Administrative Unit Number (AUN) for each school district and charter school and four-digit code for each school were verified to determine which schools participated in the Study.
Responses

Demographics
- 500 School Districts
- 2,970 Schools
- 14 Comprehensive
- 141 Charter Schools

No. & % Responses
- 389 Districts (78%)
- 2,180 Schools (73%)
- 2 CTCs* (14%)
- 22 Charters (16%)

(*Resurveyed later with 100% participation)
How representative were participating school districts?

The 389 of 500 school districts (78%) represented:

- **Every geographic area** of PA (Determined by which districts in each of 29 Intermediate Units participated)

- **Mix of rural, urban and suburban communities**

- **Range of academic progress** from Making AYP to Warning and Corrective Action.
What about districts that didn’t participate?

The 111 of 500 school districts (22%) that didn’t participate represented:

- Almost every geographic area of PA
- Range of rural, urban and suburban communities.
- Range of academic progress from Making AYP to Warning and Corrective Action.
How representative were grade levels of schools participating?

- **Elementary** School Grade Range: 1,336 (66%) (Includes K-8)
- **Middle** School Grade Range, 6-8: 320 (15%)
- **High School Grade** Range, 9-12: 330 (16%)

Percentages accurately represent the numbers of PA schools in these grade ranges.
Key Finding: Most Schools Offer Students a Library

- 94% of schools (2,068) offer students a library.

- 103 of 128 schools with no library are in the School District of Philadelphia.
Key Finding: Libraries Need These Building Blocks

Building-blocks or components of a library program:

- Staffing
- Information Literacy Curriculum
- Funding for Library Resources
- Resources: Print & Electronic
- Information Technology Infrastructure
- Student Access
Why are these key components important?

- In multiple empirical studies conducted in 22 states including PA, researchers have demonstrated that students in schools with libraries that are adequately staffed, resourced and funded achieve higher academic success regardless of socio-economic or educational levels of community.

(School Libraries Work! 2008)
Key Finding: Students & Teachers Need Full-time Librarians

- 95% of libraries had school librarians (1,972).

- Of these 1,972 librarians, only 44% (711) worked full time in the school library.
  - 23% worked between 30-35 hours per week.
  - 25% worked between 11 and 29 hours per week.
  - 8% worked 10 or fewer hours per week.
Why do students & teachers need school librarians?

- Librarians are **certified teachers** whose content area in Pennsylvania is Library Science, K-12, and who actively **teach information literacy skills** to both students and teachers.

- Librarians serve as **technology leaders** in their schools and teach teachers how to integrate information technology.

- Librarians lead the school to **encourage students to become independent readers**.
What do librarians contribute to teaching & learning?

- Librarians collaborate with teachers to help students learn by integrating the teaching of related information literacy skills into the curriculum, academic content and PA Common Core Standards.

- To accomplish this, librarians must work closely each day with teachers in planning instruction, teaching students and assessing how well students are learning.
Having certified school librarians and aides emerged as the most critical component of the library program at all levels to increase student academic performance.

(Lance, 2012)
Key Finding: Librarians Need Support Staff

- 69% of librarians have some staff support.
- 31% of librarians have no staff support.

- 55% of support staff work between 20-39 hours per week.
- 23% of support staff work between 10-19 hours per week.
Why do librarians need support staff?

- In busy school libraries, **aides perform many routine tasks**—circulating and re-shelving books, scheduling classes, taking attendance, and even pushing chairs under tables at the end of each period.

- With aides, **librarians can concentrate on collaborative planning and learning activities with teachers** that lead to student academic success, teach teachers and students how to use information technology, and encourage independent reading.
Key Finding: Librarians & Teachers Don’t Have Time to Collaborate

- 2/3 of librarians do not have a designated time to plan with teachers.
- Almost 2/3 of librarians are able to plan one hour or less with teachers each week.
Key Finding: Librarians Teach Information Literacy Skills

- A librarian is a certified teacher of information literacy and an instructional partner with other teachers.

- 58% of librarians spend between 6-21 hours per week teaching students information literacy skills.

PA School Library Study
What Research Shows

Information Literacy Instruction:

- The more often students receive instruction in information literacy from their librarians, the higher their test scores in reading and writing.  
  
  (School Libraries Work! 2008)

- Librarians play a leading role in encouraging students to read independently for information and pleasure and to develop a habit of reading. Both administrators and teachers value this role highly.

  (Lance, 2012)
Key Finding: Libraries Lack Current Information Literacy Curriculum

- Only **half** of school libraries have a Board-approved, K-12 information literacy curriculum that is less than five years old.

- Need to integrate **PA Common Core Standards** into information literacy curriculum.
Key Finding: Elementary Libraries Need Flexible Scheduling

- ¾ of elementary libraries used fixed scheduling (i.e., assigned, fixed period for each class to receive weekly instruction).

- Need for flexible scheduling for classes to use library when most appropriate for learning, integrated with curriculum and standards.
What Research Shows

Integrating Information Literacy Teaching:

In schools where students have access to a full-time certified librarian who collaborates with teachers and integrates the teaching of information literacy into the curriculum and the PA Common Core Standards, students score higher on PSSA Reading and Writing Tests.

(Lance, 2012)
Key Finding: Funding for Library Resources Is Inadequate

- 39% of districts provided funding of $1-$10 per student for library resources.
- 21% of districts provided funding of $11-$15 per student for library resources.

2011 Guidelines for PA School Library Programs recommend:
- $41 per elementary student;
- $45 per middle school student;
- $50 per high school student.
What Research Shows

**Funding:**

- Students in schools where libraries receive higher funding for resources score higher on PSSA Reading and Writing Tests.
  
  (Lance, 2012)
Key Finding: Adequate & Current Print Resources Are Necessary

- The size of almost **66%** of library collections is between **5,000 and 15,000** volumes.

- Almost **40%** of libraries have collections that are between **16 and 25 print books** per student. (1,000 students = 25,000 books; 500 students = 12,500 books)

- **75%** of libraries report average copyright of book collections within the **past 25 years**, i.e., as old as 1987.
What Research Shows

Resources:

**Students perform better** on the PSSA Reading and Writing Tests in schools where the library **collection is larger and includes more current resources.**

(Lance. 2012.)
Key Finding: Current Electronic Resources Are Scarce

In addition to electronic resources offered through POWER Library:

- 47% had 5 or fewer licensed databases for students.
- 28% had no additional licensed databases.
- 76% had no additional eBooks.
- 17% had no video resources.
- 33% had no audio resources.
Key Finding: Basic Information Technology Infrastructure Is Available

Automated online catalog:
- 91% of libraries had an automated catalog accessible within the school building.
- 69% of libraries had an automated catalog accessible remotely from home or other locations.
Key Finding: Outdated Computing Equipment Is Common

- **58%** had between 1-39 computers **less than 5 years old**.

- More than **50%** of libraries had computers that are **more than 5 years old**.

- **15%** of libraries had purchased/leased **no computers in past 5 years**.

- Only **3%** of schools had **one-to-one laptop programs**.
What Research Shows

Information Technology Infrastructure:

- At every grade level, students in schools with more and newer library computers average higher test scores in reading and writing on the American College Test. *(School Libraries Work! 2008)*

- Where networked computers link school libraries with classrooms, labs and other instructional sites, students earn higher PSSA Reading Test scores. *(Lance. 2012)*
Key Finding: Student Access to Library & Librarian Is Limited

In half of the school libraries, students didn’t have access to the:

- Librarian throughout the school day because the librarian was serving another school.
- Library before or after the school day because it was not open.
Recommendations Based on Study Results

- After data was analyzed, recommendations were drafted and then discussed at three roundtable meetings.
- Findings and recommendations were presented to the State Board of Education.
- State Board approved Study and recommendations on September 21, 2011.
Context of Recommendations

Not all students in publicly funded PA schools have access to a quality library program that is:

- **Staffed** by a full-time, certified librarian to collaborate with teachers and an aide;
- **Open** throughout the school day;
- **Supported** by an adequate collection of current and useful print and electronic resources; and
- ** Provisioned** with needed information technology infrastructure.
Recommendations

- Recommendations were based on academic benefits that would accrue to students and teachers in PA publicly funded schools.

- 6 recommendations were approved for consideration by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
Recommendation 1

- **Restore Division of School Library Media Services** in the Office of Commonwealth Libraries and **appoint a director** with appropriate credentials.

- **Status**: Division and position restoration approved by PDE, awaiting Maintenance of Effort documentation before filling position.
Recommendation 2

○ Spearhead a working committee of PDE staff, school librarians and officers of state professional associations to develop a model information literacy curriculum based on PA Common Core Standards.

Recommendation 3

- Encourage school districts to assess their school library program annually.

- Status: PSLA submitted 4 questions for PIMS survey that were approved by PDE but because of Act 25 of 2011 moratorium no questions can be added at this time.
Recommendation 4

- Distribute Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs to all chief administrative officers.

- **Status:** PDF of Guidelines mounted on PDE website and link distributed.
Recommendation 5

- Provide specialized guidance and assistance to school districts in identifying, evaluating and using adaptive technologies for students with visual disabilities to access library materials.

- Status: Sessions held for librarians at 2012 PSLA Conference.
Recommendation 6

- Provide specialized guidance and assistance in identifying and evaluating resources in languages other than English for students who are English language learners.

- **Status**: Sessions held for librarians at 2012 PSLA Conference.
Recommendations for School Entities

- Assess adequacy of support for library.
- Implement an information literacy curriculum.
- Consider moving to a flexible schedule for elementary school libraries.
- Assess the currency, usefulness and scope of resources.
- Make open-source eBooks available.
Recommendations for School Entities

- Investigate sources of **grant funding**.
- Plan **fund-raising** activities.
- Plan district- & school-wide activities for **reading motivation**.
- Consider using **volunteers** to assist librarians.
A Goal for All Constituencies

All PA students in public schools have equal access to an adequate school library program regardless of whether they live in an advantaged or a disadvantaged community.
Thank you

- I appreciate this opportunity to review the PA School Library Study findings and recommendations with you.

- I hope that all constituencies can work together to assure that all PA students have access to an adequate school library.

- I welcome your questions and comments about the Study. Please contact me if you need further information.