

Staffing Model, Part B: Libraries for the 21st Century, Learning and Resource Centers for the School

Proposal Summary

Provide funding for 21st Century Libraries by improving funding for Teacher Librarians, Library Aides, and resources to improve library collections, research resources and databases, and equipment. Libraries provide critical support for the state's four academic learning goals by improving student access to information to solve problems and use technology applications to improve their learning.

Specifically, state funding should include a Librarian ratio allocation of 1 per 500 students; a Library Aide ratio allocation of 1 per 500 elementary students, 1 per 750 middle school students, 1 per 1,000 high school students; and \$25 student funding for library collections and equipment. The funding allocations are embedded in the Certificated Instructional Staff ratio, Classified Staff ratio, and Non-Employee Related Cost (NERC) ratio respectively. Policy: Expand the state's learning goals to include that students are skilled in the application of technology to obtain and evaluate information/data to problem solving; reevaluate Librarian certification standards in cooperation with the Professional Educators Standards Board.

Background and Historical Funding and Practice in Washington

Historically Washington funding formulas have provided funds for schools to employ librarians and aides and buy and replace collections; the key formulas are Certificated Instructional Staff and Classified Staff funding ratios and the NERC allocation. However, the funding formulas have not delineated funding for these components. School districts under a myriad of funding pressures are reducing support for libraries; policymakers have no tools to evaluate whether or not libraries are adequately or under-funded; communities want students across the state to have equitable access to quality libraries to enhance reading skills and feed a love of reading and to teach technology-based research skills.

However, libraries in Washington have experienced a reduction in resources. Some information is anecdotal because the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) does not collect data on expenditures for libraries separate from other instructional expenditures. We do not know how much districts have spent over time to build or maintain collections, access to data bases, or equipment; we do not know the average hours students have access to a library each week.

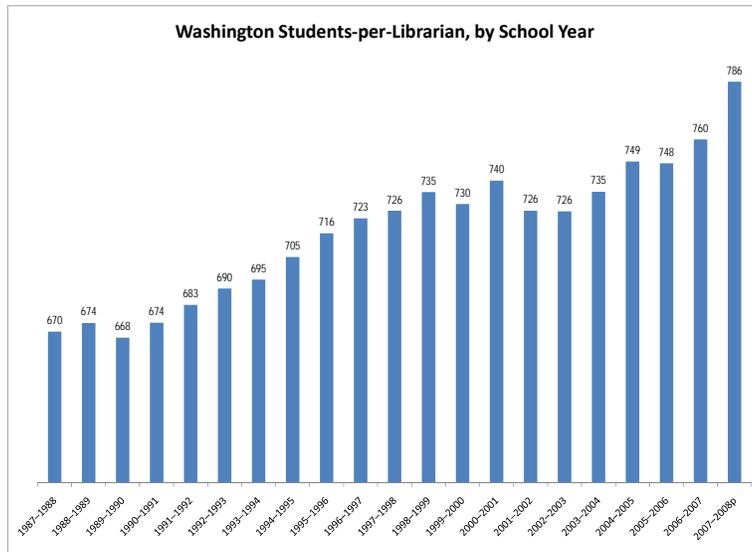
We do know that districts spent \$11 per student on library materials and equipment in 2006-07¹ (including some donations). This may be understated because district practices vary in how library materials from Parent Teacher Association and other gifts are recorded (some gifts are made directly to the library and are not run through the districts' accounting system). If the current NERC allocation per student is proportionately divided among the necessary NERC categories, the state allocated \$2 per student for library materials/equipment. Even with districts investing so much more than the state, we know anecdotally that school library collections are very old, several range from an average published date of 1979 to 1983. While collections will always include

¹ Data based on survey information from 69 school districts representing 37 percent of the student FTE population.

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older literature, materials for science, technology, and social studies must be kept up-to-date and these ranges would suggest that they are not.

We also know that fewer and fewer certificated librarians (Library Media Specialists) are employed by school districts; we cannot identify at the state level if districts are employing more library aides to replace librarians as we do not collect employment data on library aides separate from other instructional/administrative aides.



A critical component of school library funding, Title V Federal funding, has been cut annually for several years, and will be fully eliminated for the 2008-09 school year. (Title V could be used for more than libraries, but libraries were a specific allowable use of the funding. Districts may have a small amount of Title V carry forward to use in 2008-09, but no new funds will be allocated.)

Title V Allocations per Student Used for Libraries, by School Year:

2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
\$6.71	\$7.03	\$6.92	\$6.86	\$5.21	\$3.45	\$1.72	\$1.73	\$0.00

The 2008 Legislature responded to alarming information regarding library reductions and inequitable access to libraries and provided \$4.09 per student in one-time funding in the 2008-09 school year to augment current district library investments (districts cannot supplant current state funds with the new funding).

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School libraries do more than inspire reading and literacy through great books. Libraries are the nexus between information and technology literacy. Technology is commonly thought to be the purview of either elective courses in computers or incorporated into classroom curriculum. “Information” is a school-wide responsibility (gathering, processing, and communicating information). However, information literacy “is the set of skills and knowledge that not only allows us to find, evaluate, and use the information we need, but perhaps more importantly, allows us to filter out the information we don’t need.”² The two must be combined as a skill set because technology has driven up the volume and complexity of information retrieval and evaluation. No single teacher can teach both content (several at the elementary level) and the skills and processes for the use of technology to identify, evaluate, and communicate information about content.

Libraries provide the tools and skill sets surrounding information literacy for students to apply to other curriculum areas and begin practicing and demonstrating their knowledge. Libraries become a learning tool to assist teachers in creating powerful links between curriculum and the real world.

Libraries have become the incubator for skills that society expects. Almost every occupation requires the use of technology; even entry-level employees must be able to acquire and use information. Information is most often linked to technology: search engines, analysis tools, communication tools. If our system is aligned to educating students for more than entry-level positions, they must be educated to identify information problems, gather the right information and use information to develop solutions, and then communicate the process and outcome to implement solutions.

Research and Funding/Practice of Other States

What we know from common sense is indicated by research also. Research on the impact of access to high quality libraries on student achievement indicates that such students score higher on standardized tests.

² Michael B. Eisenberg, Information Literacy: Essential Skills for the Information Age, DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology. Vol. 28, No. 2, March 2008, page 40.

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	Research Summary	Comment or Note
Primary Research		
Several researchers for 19 states ³	School library services are linked to improved student achievement; student achievement improves with increased accessibility to quality libraries; several studies identify a statistically significant impact; several also control for school and community demographics.	
Resources in Other States		
New Jersey (based on new 2008 reform results)	1.0 Librarian allocated to every school with 400 or more students.	
Virginia	0.5 Librarian for schools with less than 300 students; 1 Librarian for schools with more than 300 students; 1 Librarian per 500 students for middle and high schools with more than 1,000 students.	
Oklahoma	Elementary: 0.5 Librarian for schools with less than 300 students; 1 Librarian for schools with more than 300 students; after 500 students, a half-time Library Assistant is added. Middle and High Schools: same as Elementary, but after 1,000 students, schools are expected to provide 1.0 Librarian and 1.0 Assistant. Schools are expected to spend \$7-9 per student on resources.	
NW Accreditation	Schools with enrollment of 250 to 500 should have a full-time qualified Librarian; schools with more than 500 students should also have additional library media staff.	
School Finance Researchers		
Picus/Odden for Wa Learns	Recommend 1.0 Librarian for each prototype school plus 1.0 Library Technician for each high school. Prototype schools are identified as elementary 430; middle school 450; high school 600. The Picus/Odden recommendation is scalable with school enrollment and does not include a funding floor.	This recommendation converts to a district-level per student allocation of about 1:476 for Librarians and 1:2,000 for Technicians (or 1:600 for HS students).
Conley, 2007	Recommend 1.0 Librarian for each prototype school plus 1.0 Library Aid for each elementary/middle school; 2.0 aides for each high school. Prototype schools are identified as elementary 475; middle school 681; high school 1,323.	
Library Materials		
Picus/Odden for Wa Learns	Allocate \$20 per elementary and middle school student; \$25 per high school student.	
Conley, 2007	Adds \$30 per student for library materials.	This amount is added to what districts currently spend.
School Library Journal, 2003	Median expenditures for school library media centers: Elementary, \$10,475; middle, \$14,600; high, 22,250.	Without more detail, it is difficult to accurately identify per pupil expenditures. Using the prototype school size of Conley, elementary expenditures per pupil are \$22; middle school are \$21; and high school are \$17.

³ Research Foundation Paper, U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, 2008.

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Resource Proposal

Provide funding for 21st Century Libraries in several components of our funding formulas---a Librarian ratio allocation of 1 per 500 students; a Library Aide ratio allocation of 1 per 500 elementary students, 1 per 750 middle school students, 1 per 1,000 high school students; and \$25 per student funding for library collections and equipment. The funding allocations are embedded in the Certificated Instructional Staff ratio, Classified Staff ratio, and Non-Employee Related Cost (NERC) ratio respectively. Library collections funding of \$25/student will permit a district to provide four research databases (cost is estimated at \$3.50 - \$4.00 per student, assuming a statewide subscription level), leaving at least \$21 for books (about \$20 each), subscriptions to periodicals and other databases, library equipment (computers), and incidentals.

Key policy embedded in funding---libraries should not always be a mechanism to provide teachers with planning time. In many schools, the library (and art, music, physical education) provides the planning time for teachers, so teachers do not accompany their students into the library to divide students and provide more students with one-on-one attention. This proposal assumes that teacher planning time is largely accomplished through other funding mechanisms and will encourage more frequent interaction between the teacher/librarian/students. This interaction is critical to ensure that libraries are an extension of classroom learning; they are linked to lesson plans and learning standards; and that what students do in the library contributes directly to work assigned in the classroom.