



Building Student Achievement and Success Recognizing the Need for School Library Services Provided by Licensed Librarians

The Ohio Education Library Media Association (OELMA) joins Governor Kasich, the Ohio General Assembly and the education community in their belief that high student achievement is our essential focus. The School Library Media Specialist provides the instruction, resources, and expertise that students need to become citizens of our global community.

Our children face a world where information is at their fingertips, where valid data lives side by side with inaccurate facts. They need to be able to find, evaluate and use information, differentiating the good from the bad. Our challenge is to hone their critical thinking skills and creativity to excel. Our schools develop young citizens who will participate effectively in our communities as contributing members of the work world.

The school library media specialist is a professional with a teaching degree and licensure as a school librarian. They are in a unique position to:

- serve as instructional leaders with a broad view of curricular needs who mold a collection of resources that support student achievement
- take a leadership role in the school to integrate technology use
- ensure that all students are ethical users of information and able to safely work in an online environment
- work with all students to create learners who are discerning users of the wealth of information available
- collaborate with teachers at all grade levels and disciplines to design and deliver instruction that develop critical thinking skills
- support learning standards as students work on projects and research
- provide professional development to colleagues in research and technology resources

We know that highly qualified teachers guide students to academic achievement, leading to high performance when tested in core academic areas. We also know studies show that students on their own--without professional guidance--spend an inordinate amount of time searching for resources, consequently limiting their success on the work. The answer? Research shows that schools that value and provide a strong library program headed by a School Library Media Specialist raise student achievement.

The investment in resources and staffing for a school's library program provides:

- educational resources including online databases, audio books, EBooks, research tools, professionally vetted websites--all available at school and at home
- equitable access to technology for all students
- a location that encourages individual study, group collaboration and large group presentations

We have invested in technology and resources for our students. Library media specialists build on this base to provide essential skills that foster student achievement in school and build learning habits that support our children as they move from school to the work world. A strong library program supports student achievement to meet the challenges of the global community.

Now more than ever before public school districts need highly trained and qualified School Library Media Specialists in our elementary, middle and high school buildings. In this highly technical age in a global society where information is expanding exponentially it is imperative that trained library media specialists be employed to serve our students' needs. Equally important is the role these skilled specialists play in training and collaborating with teachers to design and deliver instruction that develops complex thinking skills in our students. Assisting our teachers in developing more refined research skills to promote advanced student achievement is a must in our schools today and the licensed librarian who has certification also as a teacher is uniquely qualified to assist in this important endeavor. At a time in our educational development when students are exposed to high stakes testing, the teaching of basic information literacy skills by our media specialists is a must. As you assume your new position and responsibilities, please consider licensed school library media specialists as partners who will play a critical role in the implementation of our K – 12 technology plan of the future. Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts with you.

Jeffrey W. Weaver, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Upper Arlington City School District

Our school librarians are integral members of our faculty. They are key members of the educational team that serves our students. They provide instruction and guidance in the retrieval of information and the appropriate interpretation of that information as well as the ethical use of that information, discerning use of online resources, and integration of technology in instruction. Their work supports every student and staff member, and is critical to academic achievement and lifelong learning. Their background in collection development, research, and pedagogy is of central importance in all schooling. Without their services, our students lose a competitive edge in the information age, when the effective use of information may mean the difference between success and failure.

Dr. Mark Freeman
Superintendent, Shaker Heights City School District

