

**Ohio Education Library Media Association - Testimony on SubHB153**  
**House Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee**  
**April 8, 2011**

Chairman Carey, Ranking Member Lundy and members of the Subcommittee, my name is Krista Taracuk and I am speaking on behalf of the Ohio Education Library Media Association (OELMA). OELMA is a professional organization for Ohio's licensed and certified school library media specialists committed to Ohio's teachers and students as partners to provide learning experiences that facilitate classroom instruction.

The purpose of speaking to you today is to point up problems library media specialist are having in being available to serve some school staffs and students. And also to identify a growing problem in the way some districts are attempting to fulfill the classroom position of certified school librarian. We recognize the financial needs of our districts; however, the Administrative Code is specific to stipulations for districts to follow when using non-certified teacher aides or replacement individuals for teaching positions. We also realize that no agency is available to guide districts in making these hard decisions on what programs and teachers to cut in order to balance the school district budget. The Library media specialist (certified school librarian) is a licensed, certified teacher, not an adjunct employ that only manages the school library. Due to these concerns, many school librarians are being replaced by untrained individuals who are not under the supervision of a licensed, certified media specialist (teacher).

Every day, Ohio's students and teachers learn crucial 21st century skills through the instruction by their school's Library Media Specialists. Library Media Specialists are the uniquely qualified and prepared educators who aggressively teach these critical specialized skills to Ohio's students. We are not just beginning this service, it has been part of the duties that we have provided to teachers and students in our schools for many years. On any given day the school library media specialist teaches skills such as the ethical and responsible use of information; problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking and evaluation, technology integration; and the use of INFOhio databases and other content resources assigned by teachers. The School Library Media Specialist accomplishes all of this in collaborative planning with classroom teachers and joint lesson preparation: face-to-face student requests for providing help with student assignments and homework and face-to-face student requests for guidance in assigned and student research projects and exercises.

Today we come to you to ask that you consider the importance of the 4<sup>th</sup> "R" in learning and that is "research." Student's skills in resource search and evaluation of electronic and written literature will lead to the student having the personal ability to deal with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and be better prepared for the Global 21<sup>st</sup> century world in which they are forced to compete. There is an ever growing need for school librarians, who have expertise in the range of the necessary skills required to prepare students for our global 21<sup>st</sup> century society. Students today are inundated with information and need to know how to "drill down" to find credible, accurate and reliable sources.

According to the Department of Labor, 80% of future jobs will require skills in effectively using information. According to Mike Eisenberg and Project Information Literacy (March 2010), the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace will be one where, "...people spend much of their time formulating questions, finding relevant information and drawing conclusions, often working in virtual teams scattered across the globe." School librarians (media specialists) are uniquely qualified to teach these information literacy skills and how to use web 2.0 skills to effectively communicate in a global environment.

We ask that the committee consider addressing two situations that are not being followed as the Code dictates.

1. Section 3301-35-05 (A)(4) includes the library media specialist as one (5 of 8 rule) of five required service personnel (Per 1000 students) a school district must provide. The district may select 5 service personnel from the 8 areas including counselor, library media specialist, school nurse, visiting teacher, social worker, and elementary art, music, and physical education. The number should be commensurate with their ADM.

Section 3301-35-06 (I) (1) Concludes that educational support services are to be "designed to support student progress toward meeting educational performance objectives". These support services may include "...access to library media and information technology programs designed to support student achievement ". Materials and equipment, including library media materials, technology, and other student support services shall support the school district mission, vision and goals, support skills expected under statewide academic content standards and most importantly "are selected according to adopted policies and with the involvement of credentialed staff". Please note here: School librarians have the unique responsibility to provide equipment and materials that support staff and students in achieving both district and state content standards, goals and objectives.

OELMA feels that 3301-35-05, -06 make a good case for careful consideration of having library media specialists on staff at the elementary, middle and high school library.

2. Section 3301-24-05 (I) says the "education aide" may work with learners under the supervision of a fully licensed educator. Because of the financial strain districts are experiencing, school libraries are being manned by (teacher) aides without the supervision of a licensed librarian. Some districts have kept one licensed librarian on staff to supervise aides at the elementary, middle and high school library. This meets the letter of the law, but doesn't provide necessary service to teachers and students. Again, there is no oversight on this practice... it is simply up to the district's administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Subcommittee. We have included a copy of *The Partnership for 21st Century Skills* for your review. Are there any questions?