Research Findings Briefing

PA’s New School Library Impact Study on Student Achievement

From
Assessing the Infrastructure Needs of 21st Century School Library Programs
An IMLS National Leadership Grant research project
Welcome

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• Introductions

• Expectations
PA School Library Project Overview

• The Partners in the Project
  • Pennsylvania School Librarians Association
  • Education Law Center
  • Health Sciences Library Consortium

• The Purposes of the Project

• The Participants in the Project
  • Advisory Board
  • Professional Judgment Panel
  • Focus Groups
  • Survey Participants: Librarians, Teachers & Administrators
State of School Libraries in PA

Dr. Mary Kay Biagini
Associate Professor & Director, School Library Certification Program, School of Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh

• PA State Board of Education, Pennsylvania School Library Study, 2011

Key Findings

PA State Library Study
• More than half of the 1.8 million students (56%) in PA publicly-funded schools do not have access to a full-time librarian at their schools.

PSLA Surveys
• In 2011-2012, 198 PA schools (7%) eliminated or severely curtailed library services to their students.
• In 2012-2013, 117.5 librarian positions eliminated (5.8% decrease)
Questions Researched for the School Library Impact Study

• **Quantitative study:** What components do 21st-century school library programs need to improve student learning and academic achievement?

• **Qualitative study:** What are the perceptions of administrators, teachers and school librarians about the school library programs in their schools?

• **Investments:** What are key investments of school library infrastructure in every school?
Critical Components in Students Scoring Higher on PSSA Reading & Writing Tests

• Full-time, certified librarian and support staff

• Access to library beyond school day

• Library resources in variety of physical formats (e.g., print, audio & video)

• Up-to-date, Internet-accessible computers and access to digital resources (e.g., databases, eBooks)

• Annual funding for library resources
Academic Standards Related to Library Practices, Activities and Librarian Roles

Standards for the 21st-Century Learner

- Inquiry-based Learning
- Informed Decision-Making
- Knowledge Sharing
- Pursuing Personal Growth

PA Common Core Standards

- English Language Arts
- History and Social Studies
- Science and Technology
- Business, Computer and Information Technology
Educator Perceptions and Academic Standards

• Excellence in Librarian’s teaching of Standards for 21st-Century Learners is associated with:
  • Flexible scheduling and librarian-teacher instructional collaboration
  • Librarians as in-service providers, school leaders and technology instructors (all 4 standards)
  • Librarians as co-teachers, reading motivators, teachers, instructional resources managers & instructional support (1+ standards).

• Educators’ assessments of librarian’s teaching Standards for the 21st-Century Learner & PA Common Core Standards is highly correlated.
Student scores on the PSSA Reading & Writing Tests tend to be higher where:

- Educators consider “excellent” librarian contributions to teaching Standards for the 21st-Century Learner.

- Librarians self-assess as “excellent” their contributions to teaching PA Common Core Standards.
PSSA Writing Test Scores for Student Subgroups

Among subgroups of students who are minorities as defined in the PSSA testing program, the PSSA Writing Test scores of students with access to well-resourced and staffed libraries are dramatically higher than those same students who do not have access to well-resourced and staffed school libraries:

• More than three times as many students who are Hispanic and who have access to electronic databases scored “Advanced” on the PSSA Writing Test as those students who are Hispanic and do not have such access.

• For students who are Black, the outcomes are similar; nearly three times as many students who are Black and who have access to electronic databases scored “Advanced” on the PSSA Writing Test as those students who are Black and who do not have such access.
School Library Investments Needed for Student Achievement

Background:
• State share of funding for public education in PA has decreased.
• Local districts are bearing the burden, and school libraries have become targets for budget cuts. (See Slide 5.)

Smart Investments Pay Off:
• Half of all middle school students whose school district invested $21 or more per student annually for library resources scored “Advanced” on the PSSA Reading Test.
• Nearly twice as many students whose school district invested $21 or more per student annually for library resources scored “Advanced” on the PSSA Writing Test than those students whose district invested less.
What’s Being Accomplished?

Debra Kachel
Project Director and Co-Chairperson, Legislation Committee, Pennsylvania School Librarians Association

• 2010 – PA House Resolution requesting a comprehensive study
• 2011 – PA State Board of Education completes the study
• 2011 – PSLA implements a staffing survey
• 2011-2012 – IMLS National Leadership research implemented
• 2012 – School Library Advisor position at PDE restored
• 2012 – A statewide model information literacy curriculum embedded with Common Core Standards being written
• 2012 – PSLA implements second staffing survey
• 2012 – PA House Education Hearing on School Library Funding
• 2012 – Requests for PDE to collect annual data about school library programs
What Needs to be Accomplished?

- Increase awareness about school library programs and the lack of equity and adequacy for students.

- Strengthen the need for school libraries and full-time, certified librarians for all students in state legislation, regulations, and codes.

- Work more closely with other education-related organizations to build support for school library programs.
What Can You Do in Your District and School?

• Learn about & share research & evidence from Project website: [http://www.paschoollibraryproject.org](http://www.paschoollibraryproject.org)

• Ask administrators to make school libraries integral to the School Improvement plan if your district or school has not made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP).

• Ask how school librarians can work collaboratively with Title I services to improve teaching and learning.

• Learn how school librarians work with students in Advanced Placement classes and students who have Individualized Education Program (IEPs) and are gifted or have special needs.
What Can You Do in Your Community?

- Be visible, ask questions, speak out at meetings and contact legislators when budgets are being prepared.

- Build a network of advocates and champions:
  - Join PSLAN—a moderated listserv for school library advocates.
  - Ask your existing organizations to adopt resolutions and platforms supporting school library programs for all students.
Thoughts from Respondent Panel

• Carol Heinsdorf  President, Assn. of Philadelphia School Librarians (APSL)

• Karen Lash  President, Friends of Holmesburg Library

• Ludy Soderman  Director, Multilingual Family Support Office, School District of Philadelphia
Thank you

- Thank you for your support of school libraries for all of Pennsylvania’s public school students.

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