



**Testimony to the New Jersey State Board of Education  
On N.J.A.C. 6A:30 Evaluation and Performance of School Districts  
Presented by Fran King, NJASL President - elect  
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:30, Evaluation and Performance of School Districts (NJQSAC). The purpose of these regulations is to provide an in-depth assessment of school district effectiveness, practices, and capacity in five areas, including Instruction and Program, to determine the extent to which a thorough and efficient education is being provided for students. The proposed amendments attempt to capture the factors recommended by the NJQSAC Task Force that most affect student achievement and college and career readiness.

The New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) believes that school libraries staffed by certified school librarians are essential for students to achieve their full potential as 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. However, school library programs and resources are not mentioned in the proposed revisions to NJQSAC. Research shows that school library programs and resources have a positive impact on student achievement and therefore are key indicators of a school district's ability to provide a thorough and efficient education accordingly; NJASL recommends that they be included in NJQSAC.

## **School Library Media Programs Promote Learning**

School libraries support early literacy, a priority of New Jersey, by promoting a love of reading, the foundation of all learning, which will serve our students throughout their lives. As students progress through school, the school library media program helps them develop essential information literacy skills necessary for success in college and in the workplace. In the 21st century, information is changing at such a rapid pace, that for today's students the ability to locate, evaluate, synthesize, and communicate information is essential. School library media specialists are among the most important technological leaders in schools, and are uniquely educated to instruct students and school staff in the use of technology for information retrieval as well as organization, knowledge creation, and communication. Additionally, school library collections are professionally selected by information specialists to support the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and the school district's curriculum, and include a variety of materials to insure that students have access to high quality resources that reflect diverse viewpoints, as well as the most authoritative information available. Students need these kinds of resources to help them verify the accuracy of the web-based information from which they learn.

### **Research Demonstrates: School Library Media Programs Have a Positive Impact on Student Achievement**

Since 1999, 16 different states have conducted empirical studies documenting the positive impact school libraries have upon student learning and achievement. The results of these studies are summarized in a publication entitled "School Libraries Work!" that is included with this testimony and can also be viewed at [http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral\\_resources/pdf/s/slw3\\_2008.pdf](http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/s/slw3_2008.pdf). The studies show that a resource-rich school library that includes adequate print and technological resources and is staffed by a certified school library media specialist has a direct positive impact on student learning. The early findings of the on-going New

Jersey study of school libraries, conducted by the Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries at Rutgers University, confirm that school libraries staffed by state certified school librarians who collaborate with content area teachers have a positive impact on student learning and achievement in New Jersey's public schools.

[http://cissl.rutgers.edu/docs/NJASL\\_Phase\\_1.pdf](http://cissl.rutgers.edu/docs/NJASL_Phase_1.pdf)

**The research is clear. Resource-rich school libraries, staffed by state certified school library media specialists, equal high student achievement, and academic success.** A quality school library media center is much more than a collection of books. It is a unique learning space where students establish a love of reading and learn to become effective users of information, ideas, and resources. These are priceless outcomes that must not be sacrificed in an effort to consolidate the monitoring regulations.

As you review the proposed amendments, I urge you to recognize the value of school library media programs in educating students on how to access high-quality information that goes beyond the use of Google. Students need to be taught search strategies that will enable them to be productive learners in a rapidly changing global society. A dynamic school library program is a cost effective and essential means to prepare students to become reflective learners who are capable of locating, evaluating, and creating knowledge from information found in a variety of formats.

Therefore, NJASL recommends that indicator number twenty in the District Performance Review Instruction and Program section of Appendix A be amended to include school library resources as follows: (\* additions are bold and underlined)

20. The district requires and verifies that instruction for all students is based on the district's curriculum, instructional materials, and technology, [and] media **and school library resources** and includes instructional strategies, activities, and content that meet individual student needs including Individual Education Plans (IEP). "All students" include those student with disabilities,

English Language learners, gifted and talented students and students in alternative education programs.

Documentation should include the addition of **K-12Library Skills/Information Literacy/Library Media Curriculum**

These changes in the monitoring regulations will provide some accountability to encourage school districts to comply with N.J.A.C. 6A:13-2.1(h) which requires districts to provide school library media services under the direction of a certified School Library Media Specialist. However, more than that, this amendment will help school districts in their efforts to improve learning for all of their students and insure that the districts' investments in school library resources are put to effective educational use.

On behalf of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians, I appreciate the opportunity to present information to you on the importance of resource-rich and properly staffed school libraries to all students and staff in New Jersey public schools and for your attentiveness to our request for additional language in indicator number twenty in the District Performance Review Instruction and Program section of Appendix A of the NJQSAC regulations.