

School Librarians Are Critical to TUSD Students' Education

School librarians are students' school-based literacy teachers. When school libraries are staffed by effective state-certified school librarians, students, classroom teachers, specialists, and families have access to print and online resources that impact student success. School librarians collect resources that align with the required curriculum as well as providing independent reading and learning resources for students. Librarians help classroom teachers teach by providing resources and co-planning instruction, coteaching, and co-assessing student learning. School librarians also provide one-on-one informal and formal professional development for colleagues that supports the initiatives of principals and builds capacity for success (see Every Student Succeeds Act information below).

TUSD Statistics

There are 86 schools in TUSD and three programs (TAPP, Project More, and Mary Meredith). Only thirteen of them are served by state-certified school librarians. 70% percent of TUSD students are classified as Title 1 meaning they are living at or below the poverty line; 72% percent are federally categorized as students of color. This group of students, in particular, are in need of librarians and library services because they are more likely to lack access to literacy resources in their homes and neighborhoods. Equity for library services is a critical issue in TUSD.

From the Arizona Center for Economic Progress: <https://www.azeconcenter.org/>

One of the center's four key priorities for empowering all Arizonans with better jobs and economic opportunities is quality public schools in every neighborhood.

National Statistics (Lance and Kachel 2021)

“Districts with higher levels of poverty, more minority students, and more English Language Learners were less likely to have librarians. Majority Hispanic districts were more than twice as likely to have no librarians and less than half as likely to have the highest level of librarian staffing” (Lance and Kachel 2021, vi).

School Libraries Fast Facts from American Library Association Advocacy

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advocacy-university/quotable-facts-about-americas-libraries>)

- Cutbacks in school librarians may be yielding unintended consequences. According to a recent study by Stanford University, more than 80% of middle schoolers cannot tell the difference between sponsored content and a real news article.
- Research shows the highest achieving students attend schools with well-staffed and well-funded school libraries.
- Students make almost 1.3 billion visits to school libraries during the school year, the same as attendance made to movie theaters in 2014, or four times as many visitors to national parks.
- Americans spend 22 times more on home video games (\$16.7 billion) than they do on library materials for their children in public schools (\$758,408,000).

School Librarian Research Compiled by Keith Curry Lance and Debra Kachel

<http://tinyurl.com/slresearch18>)

Given the emphasis on literacy and reading in many schools and districts, it makes intuitive sense that students' reading and writing scores would be better in schools with a strong library program. In a Washington state study, graduation rates and test scores in reading and math were significantly higher in schools with high-quality libraries and certified librarians, even after controlling for school size and poverty (Coker 2015).

Reading and writing scores tend to be higher for all students who have a full-time certified librarian. The Pennsylvania study (2012) found that reading scores for Black students (5.5%), Latino students (5.2%), and students with disabilities (4.6%) were higher when the school had a full-time librarian. Even higher academic gains were evident among student subgroups if their schools had more library staff, larger library collections, and greater access to technology, databases, and the library itself. The 4th-grade NAEP reading data supported the Pennsylvania findings. In states that gained librarians between 2004-05 and 2008-09, average reading scores for poor students, Black students, and Latino students improved more than in states that lost librarians. In states that lost librarians, English language learners' scores dropped by almost 3% (Lance and Schwartz 2012).

Every Student Succeed Act (U.S. Department of Education 2015)

School librarians and effective school library programs “positively impact:

- student achievement;
- digital literacy skills;
- and school climate and culture” (Title I).

School librarians “support

- rigorous personalized learning experiences supported by technology;
- and ensure equitable access to resources for all students” (Title IV, Part A).

School librarians are responsible for:

- “sharing professional learning for colleagues; and disseminating the benefits of new techniques, strategies, and technologies throughout the district” (Title IV, Part A).

All TUSD students, educators, principals, and families need and deserve effective school librarians and fully resourced school libraries.

References

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