



January 10, 2018

Good morning/afternoon. My name is J'aimé Pfeiffer and I am the School Library System Director at WSWHE BOCES in Saratoga Springs. Dr. Jennifer Cannell, the School Library System and Arts Coordinator at Capital Region BOCES and Vice President for Advocacy of the School Library Systems Association (SLSA) of New York State, the organization that I am here to represent today, was originally slated to present but was unable to be here today so I will share her original testimony.

Our organization is comprised of the school library systems which are housed in the 37 BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services), the "Big Five" city school districts, and the New York City Department of Education. Together, we provide services and supports primarily to school librarians, but also to educators and administrators in all public and non-public schools in New York State. Our mission is to strengthen, support and advocate for our members as they foster quality school library programs with the aim of ensuring that all students gain the information literacy skills taught through a strong school library program.

"Research shows that one of the chief characteristics of a high performing school is a quality Library Media Program" (New York State Education Department, 2010d). This quote, from the New York State Education Department's website, succinctly summarizes decades of research. School Library Systems were established in 1984 to provide a statewide approach to delivering effective library services across New York including leadership in the areas of information literacy, digital literacy, collaboration and partnerships, professional development, and consortium purchasing (New York State Education Department, 2016g). State Aid funds are utilized in many different ways, all with the goal of increasing student achievement.

Funding provided through state aid for libraries and library systems directly supports School Library Systems. This funding is then used for many essential initiatives including the following:

School Library Systems provide continuous learning. The field of education is constantly changing as evidenced through changing standards. We are currently implementing revised English Language Arts and math standards, new social studies, science, and arts standards, as well as new national school library standards. School librarians are responsible

for partnering with every content area teacher to co-teach and provide resources that address these new standards. School Library Systems provide the continuous learning opportunities that allow school librarians to fully embrace and understand these standards and their implications to the curriculum. In addition, school library systems provide funds that allow school librarians to attend state and national conferences so that librarians are at the forefront of learning how to implement these standards.

School Library Systems provide innovation. In a culture where known outcomes are valued, School Library Systems provide the structure to safely pilot new initiatives before individual schools and districts heavily invest time and money. Through our services, school librarians have access to materials and training to understand the shifts in pedagogy necessary to develop coding and computer science initiatives, makerspace learning, video production, and much, much more. We help librarians move students from being passive learners to co-creators of new knowledge.

School Library Systems provide equity. From small rural school districts to the largest urban districts across the state, all students deserve access to high quality educational experiences. School Library Systems work to ensure that every student, no matter their district, has access to fundamental resources and services. Through our statewide network, School Library Systems work to negotiate best pricing on resources, leverage funding through consortium purchases, and provide access to system purchased materials that are available at no cost to schools. By working together, systems provide schools across New York with the best quality resources at the most cost-effective pricing. These resources are no longer thought of as “library resources.” Instead, we consider them to be “student resources”, meeting the needs of students wherever they may be... in the classroom, on the school bus, at home, and perhaps even in the library.

School Library Systems provide leadership. Librarians, in their unique position of working with all faculty, staff, and students and having a broad view of the curriculum that spans all content areas, are called on to be teacher leaders. To assist librarians in fully preparing for this role, Directors of School Library Systems in turn provide leadership to school librarians. This leadership takes many forms, from mentoring new librarians or more

experienced librarians who find themselves working in new situations, to information sharing about the newest educational trends. Besides building the knowledge base of school librarians, systems also create opportunities for librarians to develop leadership skills. This too takes many forms, from regional professional development to presentations at statewide conferences.

School Library Systems provide inspiration. Every day we see examples of extraordinary librarians working in our schools. While we see their leadership potential, often times school librarians see themselves as “just doing their job.” Directors of School Library Systems work to actively identify these teacher leaders and provide the provocation needed for them to see themselves in a new light. This provocation leads to individuals intentionally engaging in leadership actions. When working in collaboration with administrators and other teacher leaders, distributed leadership allows for schools to make lasting change towards improving student success.

And finally, **School Library Systems provide systems thinking.** While individual librarians are creating dynamic programs in their schools, School Library Systems operate to provide links between and among the different buildings. Again, this is all with the goal of providing each of the items I’ve spoken about: continuous learning, innovation, equity, leadership, and inspiration.

The School Library Systems across New York State support the students, faculty, and staff of all public and non-public schools through the funding provided by the State of New York. Through our consortium model, we leverage each dollar to ensure that it is maximized to its fullest. The focus always remains on how best to support the learning needs of all students! Thank you.

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