

**Louisiana Reading Association
Position Paper**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

Approved April 2023

The Louisiana Reading Association supports the position that an effective school library plays a central role in preparing students for life in a modern, information-rich world. The school library provides access to a wide wealth of digital and non-digital resources in an environment in which teaching and learning are the primary emphases. Under the direction of a qualified school librarian/media specialist, school libraries are instrumental in fostering literacy and teaching critical thinking skills to support lifelong learning and conscientious digital citizenship. In addition, a welcoming school library can provide students with a joyful and safe space within the school community. School libraries are no longer quiet environments with old-fashioned card catalogues, dusty shelves, and hushing librarians behind the check-out desk.

Many studies over the last decades on the impact of school libraries have documented that schools with strong library programs produce students with better standardized test scores in reading, stronger information literacy skills, and higher graduation rates. These studies also show that strong school library programs are most effective when certified library media specialists work closely with the instructional staff. Successful librarians and library programs focus on three fundamental principles: the process of inquiring and problem-solving, reading for pleasure and purpose, and becoming a dutiful citizen by using information responsibly.

It is critical that the students in Louisiana schools have the necessary opportunities and experiences to build the information and literacy skills they need to conduct research, gather information, and critically evaluate the information they read and hear. Therefore, it is essential that all schools in Louisiana have an effective school library program with qualified school librarians/media specialists.

Resources:

Role of the School Library and *The School Librarian's Role in Reading* by the American Association of School Librarians, www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/resources/statements

The Importance of Having a School Library by Rachel Nobel, April 3, 2019. United Federation of Teachers, <https://www.uft.org/node/111172/printable/print>