



Effective School Libraries Essential to Student Success

The academic success of students corresponds with the presence of an effective school library program, led by a certified librarian. School libraries support all learners and have changed with technology integration. Qualified teacher librarians educate students on how to navigate information, and they collaborate with fellow teachers in integrating print and digital resources into classroom and e-learning instruction.

What are the issues?

The pandemic underscored the critical need for school librarians. Teachers, students, and parents rely on school librarians for eResources and digital tools in the eLearning, hybrid, and socially distanced learning environments. School librarians support the social emotional learning needs of students, which were exacerbated by the pandemic.

Indiana's K-12 schools operating without a certified school librarian on staff and without adequate funding to purchase and maintain school library materials are creating barriers for students. Employers and policymakers expect K-12 schools to ensure Hoosier children have the 21st Century skills required to succeed in college, career, and life. Yet, schools struggle to meet requirements for library staffing and materials as required in the Indiana Administrative Code (511 IAC 6.1-5-6).

What is Indiana Library Federation's position?

Indiana Library Federation (ILF) advocates for schools to develop and maintain effective school library programs with qualified teacher librarians supported by library assistant paraprofessionals. ILF supports the recognition and appropriate compensation of certified school librarians as educators, alongside classroom teachers. ILF advocates for \$2 million from the State budget to be distributed to schools to support an increase of \$2 per student per year specifically for school library resources-now which includes more digital resources.

What is the potential impact?

A modern school library is a bustling in-person and digital learning commons where project-based learning takes place and print and digital resources are a part of a student's routine. At all grade levels, students develop reading fluency and empathy for others, as well as the critical thinking skills to navigate the rapidly changing world around them through research, problem-solving, and media literacy. Access to library materials bridges the achievement gap, most significantly for children of color and children in poverty.



The funding requirement for \$8 per student per year for school library materials has not increased since 1989, while the cost of print and digital resources has more than doubled.

What is a teacher librarian and what do they do?

A teacher librarian, also called a school librarian or media specialist, is a licensed teacher who qualified to add school librarian certification to their teaching license.

Most Indiana teacher librarians hold a Master of Library and Information Science degree, which includes graduate courses in information and data systems, library management, ethics, and ways to measure learning growth in information literacy.

Within a school, teacher librarians often assume leadership responsibilities in the areas of instructional design, technology integration, distance learning, testing support, instructional coaching, co-teaching, support for E-Learning, and support for high-need and high-ability students. Teacher librarians with these skills have played important roles in the transition students and teachers have faced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Restoring school library services during a teacher librarian shortage and a pandemic

Indiana is facing a teacher librarian shortage much like other specialty areas of STEM and special education teachers. Half of Hoosier students have no certified school librarian at their school. This professional void is most often found at the elementary level, a critical time for students learning to read, using print and digital resources, and navigating the internet.

The lack of qualified librarians jeopardizes the effectiveness of school libraries, which in turn impacts student success. Some schools with declining enrollments have blended responsibilities of teacher librarian and instructional coach. Positive progress includes a number of school districts recently restoring certified school library positions. Highly effective teachers are being recruited to study and test into school library certification.

1/2 of Indiana students have no certified teacher librarian in their school.

Libraries Transform® Indiana

Indiana Library Federation believes that libraries, with all of their modern amenities and innovations, are a smart investment, with the potential to transform communities and create a passion for lifelong learning.

Our approach to advocacy

- *Indiana Library Federation is a statewide nonprofit association that is dedicated to advancing library services for the benefit of Indiana residents.*
- *Indiana Library Federation is nonpartisan and reflects the core values of the library field, including lifelong learning, freedom of ideas and civil discourse.*
- *Indiana Library Federation monitors public policies that affect all types of libraries and the people who work in and support them. ILF engages its members and stakeholders to be positioned for action in library advocacy.*

Indiana's K-12 schools by the numbers*

1,135,194 students enrolled in 2019-2020

Income eligibility: **40%** free lunch **7%** reduced-price

Ethnicity: **67%** White **13%** Hispanic **12%** Black **5%** Multi-racial **3%** Asian

1:1 device adoption: **83%** districts

