
SCHOOL LIBRARY ADVOCACY GUIDE

This guide is designed to help school librarians make a compelling case for certified library staffing at every school level. With the growing needs of students in literacy, research, digital citizenship, and information management, the role of a certified librarian is more essential than ever. This guide will equip you with strategies, resources, and evidence to advocate for the certified librarian positions needed to support students, educators, and the wider school community.

Let's start with a list of resources with tools, articles, and websites to support school library advocacy efforts. These materials cover studies, toolkits, and templates for effective advocacy.

- [School Library Advocacy](#)
- [Pump Up the Volume: Boosting the Signal of School Librarians](#)
- [AASL School Library Advocacy](#)
- [School Libraries Are Important To Student Success](#)
- [School Libraries Transform Learning](#)
- [Video Library: The Impact of School Libraries on Student Achievement](#)
- [School Library Impact Studies](#)
- [Library Advocacy Starter Kit](#)
- [Libraries Create Lifelong Learners](#)
- [ALA Frontline Advocacy Toolkit For School Libraries](#)
- [IFLA School Library Advocacy Kit](#)
- [Knowledge Quest: 5 Ways to Advocate for Your School Library](#)
- [Knowledge Quest: The Importance of Advocacy at the State Level](#)
- [Knowledge Quest: The District Library Newsletter-An Advocacy Tool](#)
- [Advocacy at the State/District Levels](#)
- [What School Librarians Make](#)
- [Knowledge Quest: Advocacy Mindset](#)
- [Pa. Requires Libraries in Prison. But not in Prisons. Why?](#)
- [10 Ways To Advocate for Your School Library](#)
- [The Heart of the School: The Library](#)
- [Research Links from Dr. Steve T's Website](#)
- [Plan for the Future Using Strategies and Reports](#)
- [The School Librarian Investigation – Decline or Evolution? \(SLIDE\) Project](#)
- [Overdue: The Value of School Librarians](#)
- [Live Oak Middle Library Resources](#)

The rest of this guide is set up to give ideas and actionable steps that can be taken when advocating for the school librarian and the school library.

1. The Case for School Librarians in Every School

Research & Statistics

Certified school librarians have a proven impact on student success. Research shows that:

- **Higher test scores:** Schools with certified librarians see significant improvements in reading and literacy scores, particularly in grades where reading proficiency is critical.
- **Increased engagement:** School libraries foster a culture of reading, with students in library-supported schools demonstrating more enthusiasm for reading and learning.
- **Enhanced information literacy:** Librarians teach students to critically evaluate sources and use information effectively, skills essential for success in the digital world.

For example:

- A 2013 study by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) found that students in schools with full-time librarians scored 7.6% higher in reading proficiency on standardized tests.
- Data from Library Research Service highlights that students in schools with certified librarians consistently outperform those without them.

Actionable Step: Consider conducting a survey to gather data on student engagement, literacy skills, and research proficiency that could be positively impacted by a dedicated librarian.

“What a school thinks about its library is a measure of what it feels about education.”

~Harold Howe

2. Understanding Your Audience: Key Stakeholders to Engage

To effectively advocate, consider the goals and concerns of each stakeholder group:

School Administrators

Administrators prioritize student achievement and budget efficiency. Present the ways librarians contribute to these goals:

- Support teachers by co-teaching and developing curriculum-aligned resources.
- Contribute to higher reading scores and information literacy.
- Offer specialized support in research skills, especially important for high school and middle school students preparing for college and careers.

School Board Members

School boards seek to improve overall educational quality and community satisfaction. Librarians enhance the school's reputation by:

- Building a strong library program that attracts and retains families in the district.
- Providing resources that support a variety of learning needs and interests.

Teachers and Staff

Librarians support teachers by:

- Curating resources that enhance lesson plans.
- Assisting with research projects and reading programs.
- Providing professional development on information literacy and digital resources.

Parents and Community Members

Parents value a well-resourced library that provides students with academic, social, and personal benefits, from digital citizenship to lifelong reading habits.

Actionable Step: Create a document that highlights each benefit above to use in your communications with each audience. This could include statistics, success stories, and an outline of expanded library services with additional staffing.

3. Advocacy Strategies for Securing Library Staff

Create a Needs Assessment

Develop a clear outline of what additional certified librarians would provide at each level (elementary, intermediate, middle, and high). Here's a sample outline:

- **Elementary:** Storytime programs, early literacy development, foundational research skills.
- **Intermediate/Middle:** Research skill development, digital citizenship, reading engagement.
- **High School:** College/career readiness, advanced research support, access to a broad range of materials for various content areas.

Actionable Step: Gather feedback from students, teachers, and administrators on current library services and areas that could expand with more staffing.

Gather and Present Evidence

Highlight data from library and education research that connects certified librarians to student achievement. An infographic summarizing these data points would be a powerful visual aid.

Sample Talking Point: "With a certified librarian, students improve critical literacy skills and develop research strategies essential for academic and personal success."

Propose a Staffing Plan

Recommend specific staffing needs based on district size, student population, and school levels. Consider proposing a phased approach, starting with one additional librarian for the new elementary school and a district-wide plan for each school level.

“School libraries are the foundation
of our culture, not luxuries.”

~Laurie Halse Anderson

4. Building Community and Administrator Support

Advocacy Templates and Letters

Use pre-made templates to simplify outreach. Here's a sample template for a letter to school administrators:

Dear [Administrator's Name],

I am writing to share the impact that certified librarians make in our district. Certified librarians support literacy, foster critical thinking, and contribute to student success at all grade levels. I would love the chance to discuss how additional library staffing would positively impact our district.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Social Media Advocacy

Share student successes, literacy events, and new resources on social media to build public awareness. For example:

- Post images of students engaging in a library program.
- Share a short post about a book club or digital citizenship program in action.

Collaborate with Colleagues

Connect with other librarians in your district or state to share advocacy resources and strategies. Presenting a united, collaborative front can be compelling when advocating for district-wide changes.

Annual Report

If you don't already create one, consider developing an annual report to track and communicate your library's impact on the school community.

By presenting clear evidence and demonstrating the positive impact of library programs, you can strengthen your case for a well-staffed library that meets the needs of all students.