

This resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on Tuesday, June 28, 2016

Resolution on Equity for All in School Libraries

Whereas equity of access is one of five key action areas adopted by the American Library Association to fulfill its mission of providing the highest quality library and information services for all people;

Whereas the American Library Association values our nation's diversity and strives to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to everyone in the communities we serve (ALA Policy 53.9 Libraries: An American Value);

Whereas the American Library Association has recognized the role of school libraries and librarians in the academic success of K-12 students in its 2012 resolution, "School Libraries and Librarians Are Critical to Educational Success";

Whereas high-quality instructional materials for students and teachers, including print and digital learning materials, textbooks, and other materials, promote rigorous engagement with the curriculum;

Whereas school districts providing these resources should ensure that students have equitable access to them without regard to race, color, socioeconomic status, gender identity, national origin, or disability;

Whereas there is an inequity of resources in school libraries with a widening of gaps between collections in affluent districts versus those in lower-income areas;

Whereas closings of libraries, and reductions in services, collections, and staffing, particularly staffing by certified librarians, occur in disproportionate numbers in areas with more African-American and other minority students, low-income populations, and in rural areas;

Whereas there is a widening of the digital divide in areas where state coalitions of digital resources are losing funding;

Whereas more than 60 studies in two dozen states show that the "levels of library funding, staffing levels, collection size and range, and the instructional role of the librarian all have a direct impact on student achievement." (Gretes 2013, page 2).

Whereas The Every Student Succeeds Act, signed into law by President Barack Obama on December 10, 2015, includes provisions that specifically support school libraries, school librarians, and the role they play in academic achievement, literacy, and digital citizenship, and reflects our national commitment to providing educational opportunities to "every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live";

Whereas this critical role of school librarians is underscored by the recent announcement from the U.S. Department of Education that half of all Innovative Approaches to Literacy grants will continue to be awarded to school libraries;

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Whereas the American Association of School Librarians has adopted the position statement that an effective school library program has a certified school librarian at the helm, personalized learning environments, and equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. endorses the idea that every student have access to a well-funded, effective school library program;
2. advocates for equitable access to effective school library programs with a certified school librarian, personalized learning environments, and equitable access to resources;
3. works with ALA research committees to document the impact on students of minorities, low-income, and rural communities when cutting resources;
4. advocates for equitable access to well-curated, high-quality, and accessible electronic resources;
5. encourages state departments of education and coalition partners to establish and maintain funding of digital databases and shared resources to provide greater equity of access in all states and regions; and
6. continues to encourage school librarians to apply for Innovative Approaches to Literacy grants.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, June 28, 2016, in Orlando, Florida



Keith Michael Fiels
Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council