

THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL LIBRARY STUDY:
EQUITY AND ACCESS FOR STUDENTS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Logic Model for Strategic Planning to Support and Fund School Libraries

1.0 IMPROVE ACCESS TO SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

Recommendation 1A. Every public school in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a school library and a certified school librarian.

| How? | Who? | When? | Why? |
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| Action 1A. 1. Develop and administer a compulsory audit to identify schools without school libraries and/or school licensed librarians and to determine a quantitative baseline of school library staff, information resources, technology, and funding. | DESE, Superintendents, School administrators | Year 1 | While this study reports valid and reliable findings, there are no recent quantitative school library statistics available for school libraries. A compulsory audit of all schools is needed to provide baseline data that informs goals and benchmarks for recruitment and allocation of funds to guarantee equitable access to the benefits of school libraries to all students in the Commonwealth. |
| Action 1A. 2. Use data from the school library audit to identify funding sources, budgeting procedures and guidelines, policies that ensure equitable and sustained access to school libraries, and reasonable timelines that enable school administrators to make timely hiring decisions. | DESE; Superintendents, School administrators | Year 2 | Urban school libraries have significantly lower budgetary allocations for school libraries than suburban libraries. There were no significant differences in between rural school libraries and suburban school libraries. However, given the budgetary trends across school libraries [fig. 69], a finding of no significant difference between rural and suburban and between rural and urban libraries indicates consistently low budgetary allocations regardless of district type, with only 13.8% receiving budgets of \$10,000 or more. |
| Action 1A. 3. Create a model per capita budget formula calculated by student population and calibrated in percentages that indicates adequate funding for at least one licensed school librarian, a facility proportionate to student population, adequate resources, technological infrastructure, and devices that support instruction in digital literacy and citizenship. | DESE | Year 1 | While funding allocations on local levels are "at will" and it is difficult to effect change, this study strongly indicates that funding for school libraries is a question of priorities at the local level. For this reason the Special School Library Commission strongly recommends that DESE consider guiding the districts in setting their priorities through strategic planning and offering strong professional development that can influence the allocation of funding for school library facilities, resources, staffing, and technology. In addition, the recommendations made to mandate school libraries with licensed school libraries could be a funded mandate that establishes school library resources and services as essential to a 21st century education. |

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| Action 1A. 4. Introduce legislation that mandates a school library and licensed school librarian in every school with provisions for ensuring funding and compliance in all schools. | Legislature, DESE | Year 2 | 43% of states have passed legislation that mandates a school library and/or licensed school librarian in every school. Over 60 school library impact studies conducted in U.S. public schools control for variations in socio-economic factors to demonstrate that the school libraries, staffed by certified school librarians, correlate with higher scores on standardized tests. Private schools in the U.S. and international schools worldwide have school libraries. |
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Recommendation 1B. Establish the position and responsibilities of School Library Specialist at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

| How? | Who? | When? | Why? |
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| Action 1B. 1. Create a job description for the position of School Library Specialist [SLS] at the DESE that is informed by the MA school library research study. | DESE | Year 1 | Since the elimination of directors for school libraries on district levels school libraries have been eliminated, and the position of school librarian has been de-professionalized. Consequently, existing school libraries have been inadequately funded, school library facilities have been misappropriated, and school librarians have been denied the professional development they need to stay current in the dynamic field of information and technology services. School library statistics have not been formally collected and preserved since 2007. These actions have resulted in lack of evidence-based decision-making and accountability. |
| Action 1B. 2. Secure funding to hire the DESE School Library Specialist. | DESE, School Library Specialist | Year 1 | |
| Action 1B. 3. Develop a strategic plan focused on using information technology to establish equitable access, as recommended in this report. | DESE SLS, IT Specialist, | Year 1 | To improve access of school communities to the school library and librarian, resources, including instructional IT, information literacy instruction, and funding school librarians need a coordinated plan that is feasible. |
| Action 1B. 4. Develop a working relationship between the SLS and IT Specialist at DESE. | DESE SLS, IT Specialist | Year 1 | This is a critical partnership needed to improve cost-effective coordination of information technology, resources, staffing, instruction, and funding. |

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| <p>Action 1B. 5. Develop and implement Standards, Curriculum Frameworks and benchmarked outcomes for the school library instructional program that are consistent with AASL standards.</p> | <p>DESE School Library Specialist [SLS]</p> | <p>Year 1,2</p> | <p>The American School Library Association [AASL], a branch of the American Library Association [ALA], released updated national information literacy standards in November, 2017 and AASL Guidelines for implementing the standards. These standards can be aligned with state frameworks, e.g., ELA, Social Studies, and the Digital Literacy and Computer Science Frameworks to create crosswalks to AASL national standards. This alignment will provide powerful advocacy and incentivize for districts to highlight curricular collaboration with their building-based, licensed, school librarian. Creation of benchmark outcomes with a schedule for ongoing review and revision will provide districts with clear guidance for local curriculum development.</p> |
| <p>Action 1B. 6. Design and disseminate professional development for school librarians, relevant to instruction for teachers and IT staff in collaboration with DESE IT Specialist, regional educational collaboratives, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners [MBLC], the Massachusetts Library System [MLS], the Massachusetts School Library Association, [MSLA] and the New England School Library Association [NESLA].</p> | <p>DESE School Library Specialist [SLS], IT Specialist, Content area specialists, School administrators</p> | <p>Year 2,3</p> | <p>The school library profession is highly dependent on IT practice and information management research, and best practice in multimodal literacy development and inquiry/resource-based teaching and learning. For example, Open Education Resources [OER] is an innovative and cost-effective initiative to support the school librarians' selection and curation of free, high quality information resources. This is why it is critical that school librarians are encouraged and supported to attend conferences, read journal articles, and network in the Commonwealth and New England regions to secure cost-effective resources.</p> |
| <p>Action 1B. 7. Develop and apply a performance evaluation instrument relevant to the school librarians' job description that reflects best practices of the profession such as reflection, self-evaluation, and action research.</p> | <p>DESE School Library Specialist [SLS] in collaboration with School administrators</p> | <p>Year 3</p> | <p>The dynamic nature of school librarianship demands continuous change and improvement in order to remain cost-effective and productive. DESE and MSLA collaborated to develop the Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) rubric for school librarians' performance evaluation. [http://www.maschoollibraries.org/dese-rubric.html]</p> <p>DESE provides links to the model rubric for school librarians. [http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/rubrics/]. A concerted effort is needed to prepare school principals to use the rubric.</p> |
| <p>Action 1B. 8. Schedule and execute the revision cycle of the School Library Curriculum Framework in all schools.</p> | <p>DESE School Library Specialist [SLS], IT Specialist</p> | <p>Year 3</p> | <p>The SLS identifies information skills implicit in MCAS assessments to provide explicit and equitable opportunity for all students to develop information skills. Such a framework addresses multiple literacies through curated school library collections that include diverse collections, free-choice reading practices, alternative reading material, and adaptive technologies.</p> |

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Recommendation 1C. Support a culture of inquiry in schools that sustains inquiry and resource-based learning, collaborative teaching, and the integration of digital technology to improve access for all students.

| How? | Who? | When? | Why? |
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| Action 1C. 1. Adjust the interim deadlines of the fiscal year to accommodate timely notification of positions to be filled or eliminated in order to maintain a balanced workforce of early, mid- and late career school librarians. | DESE, Superintendents, School administrators | Year 1 | Only 24.8% of school librarians are mid-career, yet research shows mid-career employees tend to be productive and innovative workers who sustain a high level of expertise as well as a high level of commitment and involvement in their jobs [Hall, 2002]. Due to a high retirement rate, only 4.6% of school librarians are “late career” (15+ years in the profession), compared with a high number of early career librarians who need mentoring and professional development. There are as many school librarians retiring [21.2%] as librarians not returning to their positions because of an unstable fiscal climate. 12.9% of school librarians are not returning because their positions have been eliminated. This highly unstable workforce disrupts the cumulative process of building strong school libraries staffed by experienced school librarians. |
| Action 1C. 2. Provide professional development/mentorship program for early career school librarians. Adapt DESE guidelines to require mentors have school library licensure. | DESE SL Specialists | Year 3 | |
| Action 1C 3. All grade levels in all schools implement schedules and teaching methods to accommodate sustained inquiry in face-to-face and virtual environments in the school library and classroom through collaborative teaching. | School administrators, IT staff, School librarians | Year 2,3 | 41.9% of school libraries have fixed scheduling that inhibits sustained inquiry that develops reading comprehension, critical thinking, and information and technology skills. Elementary schools struggle with time on task, especially when fixed scheduling of library instruction is used to meet contractual obligations for teachers to have a preparation period during the school day. |
| Action 1C 4. Expand school library hours by eliminating all closings of school libraries during school hours, especially for testing and special events. Hire substitute teachers when the school librarian is absent. | Superintendents, School administrators | Year 1 | Urban and rural schools have statistically significantly less access to school libraries than suburban school libraries. Rural school libraries were closed significantly more days per year than suburban school libraries. Fig. 22 shows that over 63.7% of respondents cited standardized testing as the reason for library closings during school time. 18.6% identified book sales, school photos; fire safety instruction; dental screening; classroom misplacement; speech instruction and tutoring; parent meetings, and 22% identified lack of staff as the most cited reason for library closings in school librarians’ comments. School librarians reported that there are no substitute personnel when the librarian is absent. |

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| <p>Action 1C. 5. Using the DESE approved SISP rubric for school librarians, create universal job descriptions for elementary, middle, and high school librarians that can be used to structure their performance evaluation.</p> | <p>DESE SLS</p> | <p>Year 1</p> | <p>Some schools have job descriptions; many do not. This is often dependent on school administrators or school librarians so job descriptions vary, resulting in variations in expectations and performance evaluation resulting in inappropriate allocation of school libraries and librarians. Nearly 50% of respondents reported daily or weekly assigned non-library related duties resulting in the library closure. Utilize the DESE approved SISP rubric for school librarians to develop district-based job descriptions and for performance evaluation.</p> |
| <p>Action 1C. 6. Establish a guideline in the school librarian's job description that minimizes the amount of time a school librarian is assigned to non-library related duties. The library is the sole duty of the school librarian.</p> | <p>DESE SLS</p> | <p>Year 1</p> | |

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2.0 Access to Information Resources in School Libraries

Recommendation 2A. Increase access to print resources in school libraries.

| How | Who? | When? | Why? |
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| Action 2A.1 Determine metrics to measure equitable guidelines for the ratio of cataloged library materials to student population. All school librarians would conduct an electronic inventory of their collections every year and report the results, as well as other statistics, to the DESE School Library Specialist who would develop the metric. | DESE; SLS; School administrators; School librarians. | Year 1 | Urban and rural schools have significantly fewer catalogued print materials than suburban school libraries. This is a high priority recommendation to ensure equitable access in collection size and curricular areas that requires a DESE guideline, which is the responsibility of the DESE School Library Specialist oversight role. |
| Action 2A.2. A statewide minimum budgetary guideline is set for materials added to the catalogued print collection. | DESE, School Library Specialist | Year 2 | Fig. 29 shows an uneven distribution of added materials, which consist of replacements for lost books and addition of new titles. Statistical analysis showed no significant difference among district types for books added. Given that 73.3% of school libraries [fig. 29] added less than 400 books annually, the finding is interpreted as a low acquisition rate of added materials across school libraries regardless of district type. In addition, school libraries with larger budgets are more likely to purchase e-books, which usually are not included in the library catalog. |
| Action 2A.3. The DESE SLS coordinates the sharing of school librarians' updated lists of added cataloged print materials, including research guides, pathfinders, and annotated reading lists in their virtual libraries on the school library website. | School librarian | Year 1 | |
| Action 2A.4. School librarians receive professional development to promote the positive impact of free choice reading, alternative materials, and evidence-based strategies to improve reading comprehension outcomes for all students, especially reluctant and struggling readers. | DESE SLS and English/LA Specialists, IT Specialist | Year 1 | Fig. 33 shows that 23.8% of school libraries have no alternative reading materials. 35.9% have only 1-10 alternative materials while 11.2% have 41 or more alternative reading materials. Urban and rural schools have significantly fewer alternative reading materials than suburban libraries. [Alternative materials are magazines, newspapers, young adult novels, easy reading, high interest/low level books for reluctant and struggling readers] |
| Action 2A.5. School librarians receive professional development to increase their knowledge and awareness of Interlibrary Loan services to increase the quantity and diversity of library materials for their school communities at no cost. | DESE SLS Specialist | Year 2,3 | Fig. 36 shows that over two-thirds [67.9%] of school libraries do not participate in interlibrary loan, a shared resource practice that could alleviate inequity in library collections at no cost. This is an example of the need for professional development for school librarians and for raising the awareness of school administrators who conduct performance evaluations of their librarians. |

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Recommendation 2B. Increase access to electronic resources in school libraries.

| How | Who? | When? | Why? |
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| Action 2B. 1. Establish an official relationship between DESE School Library Specialist and the Massachusetts Library System [MLS] and collaborate to develop a plan to ensure student access to databases, encyclopedias, e-books and e-journals in all school libraries. | DESE SLS, DESE IT Specialist, MLS Director | Year 1 | The Massachusetts Library System [MLS] provides the Commonwealth eBook Collections program in partnership with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners [MBLC] invest substantial funds and personnel resources provide access to an extensive online collection/database of journals, magazines, newspapers, and encyclopedia (often referred to “statewide databases”). The cost for libraries to duplicate these resources locally is impossible for the vast majority of schools. These state-supported resources are used most heavily in schools with licensed professional librarians. Many libraries do not use these resources, which are available and supported at no cost to the members of MLS. Only 56.1% of school librarians said that they use these state-supported resources. 71% of respondents reported that they did not participate in the Commonwealth e-Book Collection [fig. 77]. Significantly more rural school libraries participate in the Commonwealth e-book collection than suburban school libraries. Significantly fewer urban school libraries participate in the Commonwealth e-book collection than rural librarians. |
| Action 2B. 2. School librarians from all district types receive professional development in purchasing electronic collections with their budgets and using subsidized electronic resources, particularly in databases, encyclopedias, Commonwealth e-book Collections and other subsidized electronic resources. | DESE SLS, DESE IT Specialist, MLS Director | Year 2, 3 | |
| Action 2B. 3. DESE and MBLC, the two key state agencies that work with schools and libraries (in collaboration with MLS) conduct discussions to explore joint funding of statewide databases, e-books/e-text books, and/or other e-content to build on the success of existing programs which capitalize on statewide purchasing power to provide statewide equity of access to a wide range of electronic content to support K-12 curricula throughout the Commonwealth. | DESE SLS, MBLC Director | Year 1, 2, 3 | MBLC focus is achieving meaningful accessibility to online environments for all users, including those with disabilities. For example, MBLC has expertise in Commonwealth enterprise standards, designed to meet the needs of disabled citizens. These standards are based on Federal government standards for technology accessibility for the disabled, and web content accessibility guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). This expertise can help school libraries develop or adopt adaptive technologies and strategies that improve accessibility to electronic resources for disabled students. |

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| <p>Action 2B. 4. School librarians receive professional development to enable them to provide a school library website, i.e., virtual school library that gives all members of the school community electronic access to the library catalogue, resources, and the school librarian through email and/or social media and e-tutorials.</p> | <p>DESE SLS and IT; School librarians; Principals</p> | <p>Year 1</p> | <p>There are rural schools without automated systems. Although 93.3% [fig. 23] of libraries have automated circulation systems, significantly fewer urban and rural school libraries have remote access to their libraries than suburban school libraries. Most suburban school library users can access the library catalogue and library resources 24/7 while most urban and rural library users cannot.</p> |
| <p>Action 2B. 5. School librarians have access to professional development that enables them to provide links to e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, subscription databases, free and subsidized resources, particularly digital resources curated by the school librarian from Open Education Resources available through Creative Commons licensing.</p> | <p>DESE, SLS; School administrators, School librarians.</p> | <p>Year 2</p> | <p>Fig. 79 shows that 45.7% of respondents purchase no electronic collections with their library budgets. 36.3% purchase one to four electronic collections. This is a missed opportunity to level the playing field for students since these collections could be accessed through the school library website. Significantly fewer rural libraries regularly use state-funded electronic resources in the curriculum than suburban libraries.</p> |
| <p>Action 2B. 6. School libraries receive professional development to develop their capacities for fund development, grant writing, and fundraising.</p> | <p>DESE SLS</p> | <p>Year 2,3</p> | <p>Only 30.9% of school librarians reported they engage in grant writing. 56.1% reported they receive donations and 11.7% of school librarians reported their out-of-pocket contributions. 46.6% conducted book fairs to raise money to purchase resources.</p> |

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3.0 Access to Information Technology

Recommendation 3A. Improve access to internet and digital devices in school libraries.

| What? | Who? | When? | Why? |
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| Action 3A. 1. Increase access to the internet in school libraries guided by an audit that identifies schools with inadequate IT infrastructure and bandwidth to support instruction. | DESE, SLS, IT Specialist | Year 1 | <p>Only 64.5% of school librarians report that the bandwidth in their schools is sufficient to support instruction. Significantly fewer urban school libraries have adequate bandwidth than suburban school libraries.</p> <p>Significantly fewer urban school libraries have simultaneous access to the internet than suburban school libraries.</p> <p>68.1% of school librarians report they do not have video streaming and rely on outdated analog modes. A statistically significant number of rural school libraries have less access to video streaming [fig. 49] than rural and suburban schools.</p> <p>Data indicate a wide disparity among schools for student access to computers in the library. 72.4% of school librarians reported no policy exists in their schools to ensure every student has 24/7 access to a computer.</p> <p>Significantly fewer urban school libraries reported student access to information technology in their school libraries than suburban school libraries. Although 95.2% of school libraries have internet access, internet access for almost 40% of students is poor. Only 25.6% of librarians said that 41-80% of students had access.</p> <p>Fig. 55 shows 72.4% of respondents said their schools do not have a one-child-one-computer policy. Only 10.4% are actively planning to implement it. 16.3% of respondents responded “not applicable.”</p> |
| Action 3A. 2. Seek partnerships and funding, subsidies, and in-kind donations in the public and private sectors of communication and IT industries to fund the installation of state-of-the-art technological infrastructure in all schools. | DESE, SLS, IT Specialist | Year 2 | |
| Action 3A. 3. Develop strategies and phase out reliance on analog media and devices in school libraries and replace them with digital media, digital devices and video streaming. | DESE, SLS, IT Specialist | Year 2 | |
| Action 3A. 4. Identify school libraries that are not adequately equipped to provide access to computers and other digital devices. | DESE, SLS, IT Specialist≈ | Year 3 | |
| Action 3A. 5. Design and apply a metric for existing and desired number of computers and other devices to student population and create targets that represent an adequate number of computers/devices for elementary, middle, and high schools. The metric includes a one-to-one computer policy for economically disadvantaged students. | DESE, SLS, IT Specialist | Year 3 | |

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| <p>Action 3A. 6. Seek funding through budgeting and ESSA [Every Child Succeeds Act], e-grants, foundations, and other sources to improve access to an adequate number of computers and mobile devices to support instruction.</p> | <p>DESE, SLS, IT Specialist</p> | <p>Year 3</p> | <p>ESSA funding should be prioritized for early-grade literacy.</p> |
| <p>Action 3A.7. Develop needs assessment and funding guidelines through collaborative initiatives with English Language Learners [ELL], Special Needs personnel, and MBLC, for the installation of adaptive technologies, core collections, funding, and advocacy that accommodate diverse special needs of disabled students.</p> | <p>DESE SLS IT, Special needs personnel, MBLC</p> | <p>Year 3+</p> | <p>A low number of librarians reported the acquisition of adaptive technologies [fig. 60] to accommodate learning difficulties of special needs students and struggling readers. A typical comment: <i>“We do not have appropriate materials and technology for English Language Learners and Special Education learners.”</i></p> |

Recommendation 3B. Increase access to Information Technology through staffing.

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| <p>Action 3B. 1. Develop guidelines that distinguish between educational and administrative technology and define the role and responsibilities of the school librarian in educational, not administrative technology.</p> | <p>DESE SLS</p> | <p>Year 1</p> | <p>Fig. 64 shows that 60.7% of school librarians sometimes have responsibility for technology hardware within and outside of their school libraries.</p> |
| <p>Action 3B. 2. Establish procedures and guidelines for DESE funded technology director positions in every school district.</p> | <p>DESE SLS and IT Specialists</p> | <p>Year 1</p> | <p>DESE already has a line item for funding the position of Technology Director. However, Fig. 62 shows that only 43.7% of school libraries have a Library or Technology Director. In 39% of school districts this position never existed; in 15% the position was eliminated.</p> |
| <p>Action 3B. 3. Every school library district has an Information Technology Director who works with DESE Technology and School Library Specialists.</p> | <p>DESE; Superintendent</p> | <p>Year 1</p> | <p>Significantly fewer urban and rural school libraries have a library director or technology director who oversees the district school libraries than suburban school libraries.</p> |

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4. Access to Instruction and Help

Recommendation 4A. Improve access to instruction and help services in the school library.

| How? | Who? | When? | Why? |
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| Action 4A. 1. Adopt the newly updated National School Library Standards released by the American Association of School Librarians in November 2017. | DESE SL Specialist, School Librarian | Year 1 | The updated national standards address critical information and thinking skills for 21 st century learners, including literacy in English/LA, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics. |
| Action 4A. 2. Provide guidelines, materials, and professional development for integrating AASL learning standards in content area teaching [e.g., Next Generation Science Standards] to develop information literacy through disciplinary core ideas, disciplinary practices, and crosscutting concepts. | DESE SL Specialist, School Librarian. DESE Content Specialists | Year 2 | The Next Generation Science Standards are highly compatible with the National School Library Standards. |
| Action 4A. 3. Establish a state-wide building-based guideline and funding for one full-time school librarian and one full-time support staff to manage multi-school libraries. Coverage of multiple school sites by a one librarian is not recommended, but when it is the case a full-time support person must be at each library to maintain access during the school day. | DESE SLS Specialist, School administrator | Year 2 | School libraries are inaccessible at an increasing rate, even when the school librarian is present. Fig. 20 shows 20.5% of school librarians reported they were closed 0–1 day a year. 45% said they were closed 2-10 days per year, and 31.7% were closed 11-21 days per year. 11.9% were closed more than 22 days per year. This is an inefficient use of state and district resources. |
| Action 4A. 4. Establish a state-wide building-based guideline for hiring a substitute teacher when the school librarian is absent to maintain access to the school library facility and its resources for the school community. | DESE SLS Specialist School administrator | Year 2 | |
| Action 4A. 5. Identify school library instruction at the kindergarten level as an area for future study. | DESE SL Specialist, School administrator | Year 1 | Kindergarten is reported as the grade level least taught. A study to determine the impact of school library programs on emerging literacy and long-term learning outcomes for young children is recommended. This is particularly urgent for children who are not reading ready when they enter kindergarten. |
| Action 4A. 6. DESE establishes a guideline in school library job descriptions that school librarians maintain a | DESE SL Specialist | Year 3 | Urban and rural school libraries are significantly less likely to have school library websites. |

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| library website that is the virtual component of the physical library, providing access to the school library and other catalogs, e-resources and instructional support. | School administrator | | |
| Action 4A. 7. Coordinate with MBLC, MSLA, and statewide educational consortia to provide ongoing professional development to DESE partners with MBLC, MSLA, MLS, and statewide educational consortia to develop professional development for school librarians to expand and enhance specialized programming to support Title I students. Coordinated by the DESE School Library Curriculum Coordinator, Programming would provide small group and individual instruction in information literacy, reader's advisory for the purpose of reading improvement, digital literacy and citizenship, and inquiry learning support. | DESE SL Specialist, Literacy Specialist | Year 2 | <p>Fig. 94 shows that 51.6% respondents have zero to ten Title I students; 19.9% have 21 to 40; 10.2% have 41 to 60; 5% have 61 to 80; and 10% have 81 to 100. Because these numbers vary greatly Title I students do not enjoy a high profile in their schools but they warrant specialized programming that would provide small group and individual instruction in information literacy, readers' advisory for the purpose of reading improvement, digital literacy, and inquiry learning support.</p> <p>Such training strengthens the role of the librarian as a "teacher of teachers" adds value to the investment of resources in continuous training for school librarians to help them stay current in the dynamic field of information and technology.</p> |
| Action 4A. 8. Collaborate with MBLS, MSLA and statewide educational consortia to provide ongoing professional development to school librarians in the instructional domains such as collaborative teaching, information skills, e-technology resources, reading motivation and comprehension, inquiry and critical thinking skills. | DESE School Library Specialist | Year 1 | This recommendation can be coordinated with other recommendations for professional development to construct a multi-dimensional, ongoing program of training for school librarians. |
| Action 4A. 9 Raise principals' awareness of the role of the school librarian in teaching and learning so that school librarians are included in all curriculum committees and attend all faculty meetings and as many department and grade levels meetings as possible. | DESE and School Super-intendents | Year 3 | About one-third of school librarians do not spend time on faculty committees, and about 33% spend one to four or more hours per week on committee work [Fig. 100]. Only one-quarter of those committees are academic or curricular. |
| Action 4A. 10. Establish a guideline that school libraries have at least one support staff position who is responsible for non-instructional tasks. | DESE, SLS | Year 1 | Data indicate the majority of school librarians spend about half their time each day on non-instructional tasks. |

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5.0 Improve Access to Funding for School Libraries

Recommendation 5.A.Guidelines for Budget Allocation and Expenditure to Support Recommendations 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0

District spending requirements

The Commonwealth imposes a strictly enforced total spending requirement called net school spending which is an integral component of the Chapter 70 state aid formula. Net school spending includes local appropriations, Chapter 70 aid, and special education circuit breaker monies, but not grants or revolving funds. Because of this, net school spending is slightly lower than a district's total expenditure. Reports showing each district's actual and budgeted net school spending, compared to what is required, are available on the DESE website. [See [detailed compliance reports](#) and the [Chapter 70 district profiles](#).] Aside from the single maintenance spending provision administered by the [Massachusetts School Building Authority \(CMR 2.07.6\)](#), there are no spending requirements for specific functional areas imposed by the Commonwealth.

| How? | Who? | When? | Why? |
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| Action 5A. 1. Use data from the school library audit to identify funding sources, budgeting procedures and guidelines, policies that ensure equitable and sustained access to school libraries, and reasonable timelines that enable school administrators to make timely hiring decisions. | DESE; School administrators | Year 1 | Urban school libraries have significantly lower budgetary allocations for school libraries than suburban libraries. There were no significant differences between rural school libraries and suburban school libraries. However, given the budgetary trends across school libraries [fig. 69], a finding of no significant difference between rural and suburban and between rural and urban libraries indicates consistently low budgetary allocations regardless of district type, with only 13.8% receiving budgets of \$10,000 or more. |
| Action 5A. 2. Establish compensatory guidelines for school library budget allocation that is equitable, taking into account school libraries in underfunded districts and schools. | DESE School Library Specialist | Year 1 | Urban and rural school libraries have significantly lower budgetary allocations than suburban libraries. |
| Action 5A. 3. Establish universal guidelines for budgetary allocations and expenditures per student for print and electronic resources, including materials for Title I, special education, and ELL students. | DESE School Library | Year 1 | There is not a consistent, universal way of funding and budgeting school libraries in the Commonwealth. School librarians depend on soft funding, such as grants, book sales, bake sales, personal funds, and volunteers to provide essential resources and services. |

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| | Specialist | | This requires legislation that adjusts existing compensations [e.g., “cherry sheets”] aimed at mitigating inequities due to property tax-based funding. |
| Action 5A.4. Develop policies and procedures that monitor and enforce fiscal guidelines so that budgetary allocations for school libraries and technology align with DESE budgetary line items. | DESE SLS | Year 2 | |
| Action 5A.5. Review and adjust the current flow of funding from external sources such as ESSA to ensure school libraries receive funding that is commensurate with the delivery of services that ensure students have equitable access to information, information technology, and instruction. | DESE | Year 1 | School libraries play an important role in the expected learning outcomes of grants yet do not receive funding from those grants. For example school librarians contributed to the planning stages of ESSA yet Massachusetts school libraries have a “no mention” status in the implementation of ESSA. |
| Action 5A.6. School librarians receive professional development to develop their capacities for fund development, grant writing, and fundraising. | DESE SLS | Year 2,3 | Only 30.9% of school librarians report they engage in grant writing and 56.1% reported they receive donations. |

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Summary of Actions for Recommendations 1-4 that Require Funding

In addition to the funding actions stated in Recommendation 5.0, there are funding implications for Recommendations 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0. These actions are summarized below.

1. Fiscal recommendations for improving access to school libraries and school librarians.

Action 1 A. 3. Create a model per capita budget formula calculated by student population and calibrated in percentages that indicates adequate funding for at least one licensed school librarian, a facility proportionate to student population, adequate resources, technological infrastructure, and devices that support instruction in digital literacy and citizenship.

Action 1A. 4. Introduce legislation that mandates a school library and licensed school librarian in every school with provisions for ensuring funding and compliance in all schools.

Action 1B. 2. Secure funding to hire the DESE School Library Specialist.

Action 1B. 6. Design and disseminate professional development for school librarians, relevant to instruction for teachers and IT staff in collaboration with DESE IT Specialist, regional educational collaboratives, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners [MBLC], the Massachusetts Library System [MLS], the Massachusetts School Library Association, [MSLA] and the New England School Library Association [NESLA].

Action 1C. 1. Adjust the interim deadlines of the fiscal year to accommodate timely notification of positions to be filled or eliminated in order to maintain a balanced workforce of early, mid- and late career school librarians.

Action 1C. 2. Provide professional development/mentorship program for early career school librarians.

Action 1C 3. All grade levels in all schools implement schedules and teaching methods to accommodate sustained inquiry in face-to-face and virtual environments in the school library and classroom through collaborative teaching.

2. Fiscal recommendations for improving access to information resources.

Action 2A 2. A statewide minimum budgetary guideline is set for materials added to the catalogued print collection.

Action 2A.4. School librarians receive professional development to promote the positive impact of free choice reading, alternative materials, and evidence-based strategies to improve reading comprehension outcomes for all students, especially reluctant and struggling readers.

Action 2A. 5. School librarians receive professional development to increase their knowledge and awareness of Interlibrary Loan services to increase the quantity and diversity of library materials for their school communities at no cost.

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Action 2B. 2. School librarians from all district types receive professional development in purchasing electronic collections with their budgets and using free or subsidized electronic resources, particularly in Commonwealth e-book Collections and other free and subsidized electronic resources.

Action 2B.3 Review and adjust the current flow of funding from external sources such as ESSA to ensure school libraries receive funding that is commensurate with the delivery of services that ensure students have equitable access to information, information technology, and instruction

Action 2B. 4. School librarians receive professional development to enable them to provide a school library website, i.e., virtual school library that gives all members of the school community electronic access to the library catalogue, resources, and the school librarian through email and/or social media and e-tutorials.

Action 2B. 5. School librarians have access to professional development that enables them to provide links to e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, subscription databases, free and subsidized resources, particularly digital resources curated by the school librarian from Open Education Resources available through Creative Commons licensing.

Action 2B. 6. School libraries receive professional development to develop their capacities for fund development, grant writing, and fundraising.

3. Fiscal Recommendations for improving access to information technology in school libraries.

Action 3A. 1. Increase access to the internet in school libraries guided by an audit that identifies schools with inadequate IT infrastructure and bandwidth to support instruction.

Action 3A. 6. Seek funding through budgeting and ESSA, e-grants, foundations, and other sources to improve access to an adequate number of computers and mobile devices to support instruction.

Action 3A.7. Develop needs assessment and funding guidelines through collaborative initiatives with English Language Learners [ELL], Special Education personnel, and MBLC, for the installation of adaptive technologies, core collections, funding, and advocacy that accommodate diverse special needs of disabled students.

4. Fiscal Recommendations for improving access to instruction and help in school libraries.

Action 4A. 2. Provide guidelines, materials, and professional development for integrating AASL learning standards in content area teaching [e.g., Next Generation Science Standards] to develop information literacy through disciplinary core ideas, disciplinary practices, and crosscutting concepts.

Action 4A. 3. Establish a state-wide building-based guideline and funding for one full-time school librarian and one full-time support staff to manage multi-school libraries. Coverage of multiple school sites by a one librarian is not recommended, but when it is the case a full-time support person must be at each library to maintain access during the school day.

Action 4A. 4. Establish a state-wide building-based guideline for hiring a substitute teacher when the school librarian is absent to maintain access to the school library facility and its resources for the school community.

Action 4A. 5. Provide guidelines, materials, and professional development for integrating AASL learning standards in content area teaching [e.g., Next Generation Science Standards] to develop information literacy through disciplinary core ideas, disciplinary practices, and crosscutting concepts.

Action 4A. 10. Establish a guideline that school libraries have at least one support staff position who is responsible for non-instructional tasks.

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Timeline for Planning and Implementation of the Recommendations

