



January 29, 2020

Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee
Utah State Legislature
State Capitol
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear Subcommittee Members,

The Utah Academic Library Consortium (UALC) represents the libraries of the state's accredited public and not-for-profit college and universities. We work together and with statewide partners to support Utah's educational goals. Robust school libraries, staffed by certified librarians, are essential for the success of our students. We therefore express our collective endorsement of the proposal for a legislative appropriation to fund "Teacher Librarians Closing the Gap: A Demonstration Program/Impact Study."

Numerous independent studies across the US document the demonstrable impact of professional school librarians and well-resourced libraries on students' achievement scores. These studies show a direct correlation between high-quality library media programs in elementary schools and improved student achievement and test scores. Smaller studies conducted by Weber State University, Utah State University, Southern Utah University, and the University of Utah confirm these results in Utah. Yet only three of Utah's 41 school districts employ professionally-trained teacher librarians in all K-12 schools.

The ability to use information effectively to think critically, solve problems, and make wise decisions is essential for success in higher education, employment, and in our local communities. These skills are essential for the kinds of work required for a healthy economy, including advances in research and development in science, technology, and health care. Information literacy is also a necessity for promoting widespread social well-being across the state. When students enter higher education without a solid foundation in these essential skills and practices, they are at a disadvantage. Too many of our students require basic, remedial information literacy instruction when they enter our colleges and universities.

We can change that. All Utah K-12 students should have access to robust school libraries and the rich educational experiences that only well-trained, certified school librarians can provide. Critical thinking and information literacy are the key skills that will enable our students to continue to learn across their lives. Support for the school libraries teacher librarians who make this happen is a lifelong investment. We encourage you to make such an investment through an appropriation in support of the "Teacher Librarians Closing the Gap" study.

Sincerely,

Wendy Holliday

Weber State University
UALC Chair

Jon Glenn

Salt Lake Community College
UALC Past Chair

Lesli Baker

Utah Valley University
UALC Incoming Chair