

April 23, 2019

Testimony regarding HB 3263

To Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, and Members of the House Committee on Education:

My name is Miranda Doyle, and I'm the District Librarian for Lake Oswego School District. I am also an adjunct faculty member in the library media endorsement program at Portland State University (PSU) and have taught the "School Library Instructional Programs K-12" course since 2016. I have also served as the supervising teacher for two library practicum students in the PSU program.

Previously, teachers who desired the credential that is required to work as a Teacher-Librarian had several in-state choices for their coursework. Then, a few years ago, George Fox University ended their library credential program. PSU was the only available program in Oregon. Now, when the current cohort of students finish their coursework in 2019, that program will end.

PSU's decision came because the university believes that the library credential program is "no longer sustainable from a business standpoint." It's likely that lower enrollment is because teachers hesitate to enroll for courses when the career opportunities for Teacher-Librarians in Oregon are so limited, as districts continue to cut licensed library staff. According to the State Library of Oregon, the number of full-time equivalent licensed school librarians in the state has declined by 80 percent since 1980, from 818 to just 159. In the 2017-18 school year, that averages to one Teacher-Librarian per 3,652 students.

Of course, this means that students no longer receive instruction on information literacy and other key topics, and that schools no longer maintain strong school library programs. The remaining Teacher-Librarians -- often covering entire districts -- are stretched too thin to provide instruction to meet standards. I train and support classified library staff at 10 school libraries, and I am responsible for the library collections and services for all of those schools. While I do visit classes and teach students at every grade level, I am not able to reach all students or ensure that library standards are consistently met. Unfortunately, even districts with less than one full-time credentialed librarian can be considered "in compliance" with the Library Media [OAR, 581-022-2340](#), regardless of the districts' size. However, that does not mean that one Teacher-Librarian, who may be less than full time and expected to support libraries districtwide, can provide meaningful instruction to students.

In my role as adjunct faculty and as a supervising teacher for practicums, I have had the privilege of working with teachers seeking library credentials who then become my colleagues in Oregon schools. Through the PSU library media endorsement program, I am able to help ensure that these students learn the values of the library profession -- from intellectual freedom and privacy to ethics and the importance of access to books and information. Through my involvement in the PSU program, I have been able to communicate best practices to my students and make sure they uphold professional standards. Teachers

seeking library credentials learn to collaborate with classroom teachers on both curriculum content and library standards such as evaluating information, ethical use of technology, and much more.

Classroom teachers are able to share ideas and join professional learning communities in their own buildings. However, since we are often the only Teacher-Librarians in our buildings or districts, we need to find professional peers in other ways. Students who have gone through a cohort program like Portland State's are able to connect with each other and with their instructors to build that community. Our profession is constantly changing, and we are always learning from each other; taking part in a local endorsement program is key to this process and to learning about educational resources specific to Oregon. For example, we have access to certain databases and other electronic resources through the Statewide Database Licensing Program. Closing the last remaining program will be a blow to Oregon's school library community.

With no program in Oregon, it will be more difficult for teachers to add the library media endorsement that allows them to work as Teacher-Librarians. There are some online options available through out-of-state universities, but this means that students must determine whether Oregon's Teacher Standards and Practices Commission will accept their coursework, and they may also have to arrange their own practicums in local school libraries. Because it will be more challenging to earn the library media credential, districts who want to hire Teacher-Librarians will have more trouble finding qualified staff.

Numerous studies have shown that students in schools with credentialed librarians perform better on state tests. We know that Teacher-Librarians increase student achievement and provide access to books, information literacy skills, and much more. However, most students in Oregon do not receive instruction from a credentialed school librarian, and it will likely become increasingly difficult for districts to find qualified candidates to employ as school librarians. This situation is a result of years of low expectations and vague laws that are inadequately enforced. I urge you to make changes that will remedy this.

Thank you for your time and your support for strong school library programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miranda Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Miranda Doyle

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