

Suzanne Peerenboom  
16425 SW Cornelian Way  
Beaverton, OR 97007  
suzannepeerenboom@gmail.com

Rep. Chris Gorsek  
House Committee on Education Members  
RE: HB 3263

Hello Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso León and Helt, Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Suzanne Peerenboom, I am a Library and Instructional Technology Teacher in the Beaverton School District, and I am here to ask for support to place HB 3263 into legislation. I am a Certified teacher with my Master's degree in School Library Media. I am not the librarian in my building as my school district only employs 3 district librarians to serve our 53 schools. I work to support teachers and their use of technology in classrooms and because of my degree I spend some time working on information literacy skills, though the focus of my position is to support the technology.

I am here today to share with you the vital importance of having a certified librarian in our schools. I have been a middle school teacher in 5 schools, in 3 states over the last 15 years. Some schools had certified librarians some did not. In the schools that did have librarians I knew that I had an ally for students who needed a safe place. I had help finding students a book to see themselves in or a book to help them learn about the world outside their experiences. I had someone who could support me in helping students know the value of good research and a positive and permanent online presence.

In 2007 as a middle school math teacher I was assigned to teach a literacy class that met daily as part of my duties. I was not prepared for this assignment but I knew that our librarian had my back. I was able to collaborate with her to create a non-fiction literacy class where students read narrative non-fiction, talked about it and wrote about what they learned. Without the help and support of our librarian I would have had a class full of students staring at me waiting for something. Later that year I was able to collaborate and co-teach with that same librarian as the students worked on research about a college. Students learned about databases and places to find reliable information. With the help of the librarian they took the information and created a poster to share their knowledge. The students and I both had the support of a professional to guide us on our research and evaluation of the information.

When I was later hired into a school without a certified librarian I felt the difference in the atmosphere of the library and the building. The library in this new school was not a welcoming, safe place for students who didn't fit elsewhere. This space was not open for collaboration or support. The function of the space was to check out reading books and textbooks, nothing more. At this point in my career I had started working on my Masters in School Library Media

and so I asked questions of the language arts teachers, I wanted to know how the library served them. Some teachers told me that they only used the library for book check out, or a quiet place for students to make up a test. Others said they never took their classes to the library as they didn't see the need or value in the space. Those teachers taught some research skills, using Google and hoping for good results. There were few lessons on reliable sources, citing sources, digital citizenship, or information literacy. Those teachers missed out on the opportunity to collaborate and learn from a certified librarian. Those students went on to high school and college without many of the 21st century skills they needed to help them succeed.

I am again working in a school where there is not a certified librarian. In my first 2 years as a classroom teacher I could see that there was not support for information literacy and digital citizenship. Our humanities teachers did the best they could along with teaching all of their state requirements with no librarian support. The collection of books in our library did not reflect the students who spent their time in the space. The books that should be both windows and mirrors were all windows. Students were not choosing to read for pleasure because they weren't finding books with characters and places they could relate to in our library. They were not using the space because they did not see value in it. The past 3 years I have been the Library and Instructional Technology Teacher and I have worked hard to build our library into a collection of resources for students and teachers. I, however, am not the librarian and my time is not focused completely on the library program, My collaboration with teachers is limited to using the technology available to them in a meaningful way in their content focused lessons. My students need more support to maximize the value of their available resources and to help them succeed.

Oregon students and teachers deserve to have opportunities to collaborate with, and be supported by a certified librarian. They deserve to have a professional in the building every day giving them a safe place to be and a diverse selection of books that allows them to see themselves. They deserve time to learn from an expert about research, information literacy, and digital citizenship. The experiences that open up for everyone when there is a certified librarian are immeasurable and irreplaceable.