

Dear Senator Dembrow, Senator Weber, Senator Anderson, Senator Frederick, Senator Gelser-Blouin, Senator Robinson, and Senator Wagner, I write today in favor of SB 1075.

I have worked in elementary school libraries for 17 years. Though I do have a college degree, I am not a licensed librarian. I am a classified employee. My district has 13 classified library managers and no licensed librarian. My job is part time. I am employed for 30 hours per week, which is one half-hour per day less than the 32 hours that would provide me with full benefits. None of our library managers work full time at their library jobs.

During my tenure, our district has employed three licensed librarians sporadically, and all on temporary contracts where their work hours totaled a few days per month. Those few days were wonderful. We were able to ask questions and to be trained in areas where their expertise was invaluable. It has been several years since we had even that part-time librarian.

We library managers are a tight, dedicated, and earnest cadre. We share tips and tricks, purchasing recommendations, fundraising strategies, and morale boosts. When a new employee is hired, we rally to help them figure out how to turn on their computer, open the software, and check books in and out. Most of what we know we learned by doing.

Though we are paraprofessionals, without a licensed librarian we are tasked with many of the administrative duties of librarianship. In addition to circulation and book processing, I am responsible for cataloging, weeding, and fundraising." Most everything I do beyond that for the benefit of my students is voluntary and on my own time. My budget for books has been \$300 for years now. I have managed to add \$2,000-\$5,000 worth of books each year by grant writing, fundraising, and spending hundreds of dollars of my own money. I study state standards, participate in training whenever and wherever I can find it, I read from my collection. I volunteered at my community library so that I could learn to catalog books and pass that knowledge on to my peers.

We do what we can to align our collections with curriculum. For example, I immersed myself in SB 13, Tribal History/Shared History to supplement the lessons and make certain that my collection aligns with the curriculum.

Having a dedicated School Library Education Specialist position at ODE would serve districts like my own - with no licensed librarian - by staying on top of changes to curriculum and library best practices, interpreting how those changes can be harnessed to serve students in school libraries, collaborating with Education Specialists in other subjects to increase cross-disciplinary learning, and communicating that information statewide. Right now, this happens purposefully in districts with licensed librarians, but is lacking in those that don't, which leads to inequities in the services that students receive statewide.

Classified library media personnel do great work with the tools that we have and can find for ourselves. We could do so much more to ensure that our Oregon students have the quality education they deserve. A full-time School Library Specialist at ODE will begin to correct some of the inequities in Oregon schools and provide desperately needed guidance to our dedicated library paraprofessionals.

Thank you for your service and your consideration to pass SB 1075.

Sincerely yours,

Constance Palaia
Fruitdale Elementary School

