Quality **School Libraries** Lead to Higher Student Achievement

Summary of findings from the *Delaware School Libraries Master Plan*, August 2016

Research

More than 60 state-level school library impact studies have been conducted in 22 states over the past two decades. They all conclude that quality school library services result in higher student achievement. Findings show that quality school libraries result in:

- **Higher graduation rates**
  (Washington State)[1]

- **Higher proficiency in reading, math, science, history, and writing**
  (Kansas)[2]

- **Higher performance on standardized tests among economically challenged students**
  (Pennsylvania)[3]

- **Lower percentage of students scoring "unsatisfactory" in reading**
  (Colorado)[4]

- **Higher test scores in English Language Arts**
  (South Carolina)[5]

- **Improved writing skills (content and organization) and research abilities**
  (South Carolina)[5]

- **Improved ability to find, evaluate, use, and integrate diverse information resources**
  (South Carolina)[5]

Reality in Delaware

Librarian to Student Ratio[6]

2005–2006   1:942
2015–2016   1:1,026

Median Expenditure per School on New Materials

2004–2005[7] $6,000
2015–2016[8] $3,000

Out-of-Date Collections

Of books in STEM categories, 89.97% were more than 5 years old.[9]

School libraries in Delaware must improve in order for students to achieve the correlated benefits.

Disparity in Number of Librarian Positions per District

From 2005 to 2016, the ten districts with more than 40% of students from low-income households lost 16 librarian positions while the nine districts with less than 40% gained 13 librarian positions.[6]

Librarian Positions in Delaware School Districts, comparing 2005–2006 to 2015–2016 school year

66

70
Districts with **less than 40%** of students from low-income households

57

50
Districts with **more than 40%** of students from low-income households

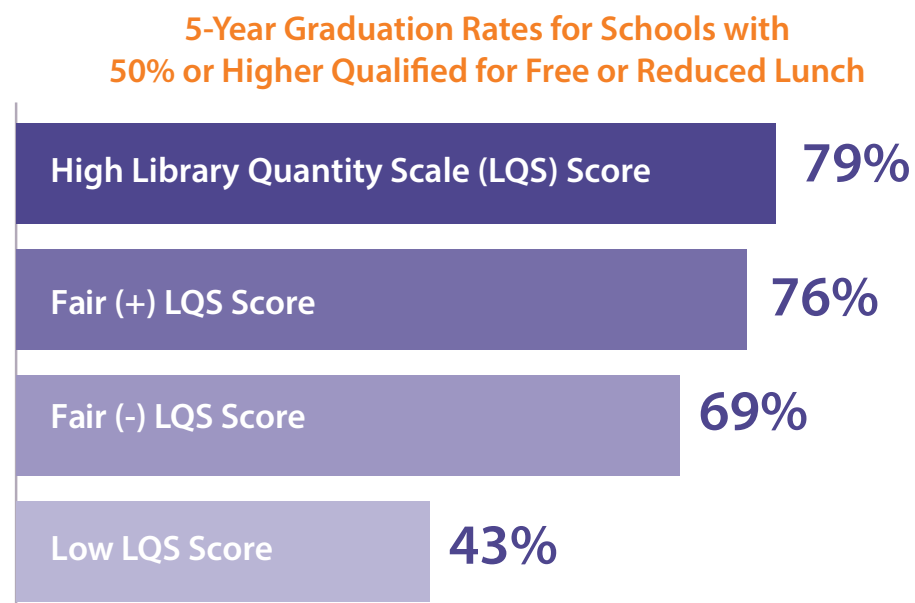2005–2006   2015–2016
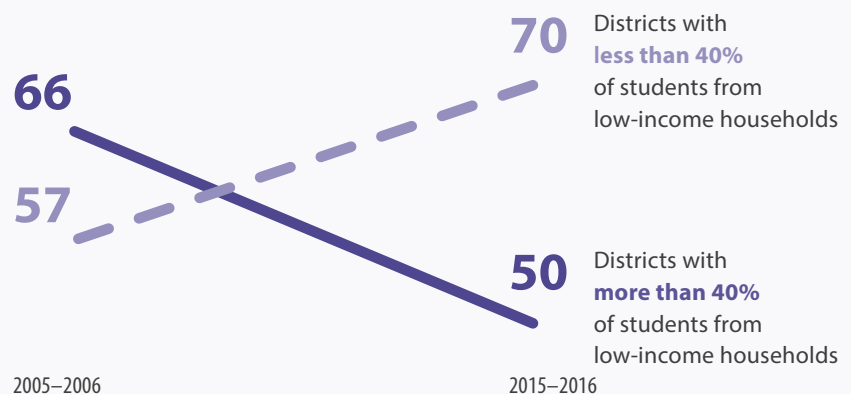
Requisites

Virtually every one of the more than 60 school library impact studies conducted over the course of the past two decades cite the same or similar factors as being correlated with positive student performance. Frequently identified factors include:

- **A full-time certified/qualified librarian at the building level** (Washington)[1], (Colorado)[4], (Kansas)[2]

- **Adequate support staff to enable the librarian to perform professional duties** (South Carolina)[5]

- **Adequate expenditure for new resources to ensure student access to recent, relevant content** (South Carolina)[5], (Colorado)[4]

- **High level of collaboration between librarians and teachers and librarians and students** (Pennsylvania)[3]

- **Flexible scheduling that enables the librarian to interact with teachers and students** (Pennsylvania)[3], (South Carolina)[5]

- **Access to up-to-date technological infrastructure and online resources** (South Carolina)[5], (Pennsylvania)[3]

- **Access to professional development and networking opportunities for library staff** (Colorado)[4], (Washington)[1], (NCATE)[10]

Student Success

Resource Sharing Technological Infrastructure & Tools

Supportive Operating Environment

Quality Library Resources

Certified Professional Librarian

Rates

The Washington Study created a nine-factor Library Quality Scale (LQS) and applied it to measure the impact of the quality of libraries on student performance and graduation rates.[1]

5-Year Graduation Rates for Schools with 50% or Higher Qualified for Free or Reduced Lunch

High Library Quantity Scale (LQS) Score	**79%**
Fair (+) LQS Score	**76%**
Fair (-) LQS Score	**69%**
Low LQS Score	**43%**

Recommendations

- **Staffing**
  - Require a school library, a certified librarian, and an appropriate level of support staff in every school.
  - Seek funding for and implement a pilot project in nine schools to determine the impact that quality school libraries have on student learning outcomes.

- **Content and Access**
  - Expand student access to "e-content."
  - Expand the Delaware Library Consortium to include all school libraries.

- **Governance and Infrastructure**
  - Establish specific governance responsibilities for the coordination and oversight of school libraries.
  - Examine and address systemic issues that inhibit the development of high-quality school library programs.
  - Leverage Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funding to strengthen school libraries.
  - Implement flexible scheduling for school libraries.

- **Assessment and Accountability**
  - Design and implement an ongoing program of data collection, management, and assessment for school libraries.
  - Create a Delaware School-Library Quality Index to facilitate the tracking of student performance and investment in school library services.

What Delaware School Librarians Say

"The lack of a flexible schedule is a huge factor that impacts my ability to offer quality services."

"Having a principal that values literacy and the library's role in student learning has made a tremendous difference in the last year!"

"I sometimes feel as if I'm just a caretaker for students during teacher professional learning community (PLC) meetings when I should really be part of that team."

"For two years we had an open schedule and teachers were excited to work with me and it translated into more involvement with students. We now have a fixed schedule and I have very limited contact with the teachers."

Resources

Recent school-library impact studies and other sources:

1. Coker, E. *Certified Teacher-Librarians, Library Quality and Student Achievement in Washington State Public Schools.* Edmonds, WA: Washington Library Media Association, 2015. https:// wala.memberclicks.net/assets/WLMA/Advocacy/wslitreport_final%20revised7_14_15.pdf

2. Dow, M., and J. McMahon-Lakin. 2012. "*School Librarian Staffing Levels and Student Achievement as Represented in 2006–2009 Kansas Annual Yearly Progress Data*", American Association of School Librarians. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ994364

3. Lance, K., and B. Schwarz. *How Pennsylvania School Libraries Pay Off: Investments in Student Achievement and Academic Standards.* PA School Library Project. HSLC, Oct. 2012. Web. 1 June 2013. http:// paschoollibraryproject.org/research

4. Lance, K., and L. Hofschire. *Change in School Librarian Staffing Linked with Change in CSAP Reading Performance, 2005 to 2011.* Denver, CO: Colorado State Library, Library Research Service, 2012 http:// lrs.org/documents/closer_look/CO4_2012_Closer_Look_Report.pdf

5. Lance, K., B. Schwarz, and M.J. Rodney. *How Libraries Transform Schools by Contributing to Student Success: Evidence Linking South Carolina School Libraries and PASS & HSAP Results.* Columbia, SC: South Carolina Association of School Libraries, 2014. http://www.scasl.net/the-south-carolina-impact-study

6. Delaware Department of Education. (2016). In *Delaware School Profiles*. Retrieved from http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/schoolprofiles/State/Default.asp

7. Todd, R., and J. Heinstrom. *Report of Phase Two of Delaware School Library Survey: Student Learning Through Delaware School Libraries.* Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University, Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries, 2006. http://www2.lib.udel.edu/taskforce/study/phasetwo.pdf

8. Wilson, B., Kelly, C., and Sherretz, K. (2016). *Appendix B: Delaware School Library Study Survey* in *Delaware School Library Master Plan.*

9. Delaware School Libraries Council. (2013). *Annual Report*. Delaware School Libraries Council. Retrieved from http://libraries.delaware.gov/planning/pdfs/COSLAnnualReport2013_web.pdf

10. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE]. (2010, October 24). *ALA/AASL standards for initial preparation of school librarians (2010)*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aasleducation/schoollibrary/2010_standards_with_rubrics_and_statements_1-31-11.pdf

View the **Delaware School Libraries Master Plan** *online at* **www.ipa.udel.edu/publications/delaware-school-libraries-master-plan2016.pdf**

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