



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony
House Education Committee
Informational Meeting on School Library Funding
Alice Lubrecht
Secretary, Office of Commonwealth Libraries
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Responses to the Recommendations for the Pennsylvania Department of Education

1. Restoring the Division of School Library Media Services in the Office of Commonwealth Libraries and appointing a director with appropriate education and library credentials to provide leadership and professional development for school librarians through publications and workshops for professional development and to provide guidance to school districts and to librarians attempting to assess the effectiveness of their school library programs.

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries plans to hire a qualified School Library Advisor to work in conjunction with the other advisors in our Bureau of Library Development. This position will be funded through our federal Library Services and Technology Act funds and will have the primary responsibility of advising with the district school administrators and the K-12 school librarians throughout the state.

The Bureau of Library Development has been working with the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association to insure that professional development appropriate for school librarians is offered through the Bureau and that school librarians are made aware of the available resources.

2. Spearheading a working committee of PDE staff, school librarians, and officers of state professional associations to develop a model information literacy curriculum for school library programs to help align the 2007 *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* of the American Association of School Librarians with the 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts* and any additional standards that Pennsylvania may add to the *Common Core*. (The former Division of School Library Media Services played a leadership role in the early 2000s in helping librarians develop a model information literacy curriculum for their school districts. Now that new academic standards are being implemented and new information literacy standards are in place the need for an updated model information literacy curriculum is a high priority.)

The Bureau of Library Development has been working with a group of school librarians, faculty from one of the Pennsylvania graduate library schools, and national consultants to develop a Pennsylvania model school library curriculum based on the Common Core standards. This group began meeting in April 2012 and has met several times. The draft curriculum is not yet complete but the goal is to have the project complete by the end of 2012.

3. Encouraging district and school participation in the assessment of school library programs on an annual basis. This can be accomplished most easily by becoming an official state partner in *Libraries Count!*, the longitudinal survey of the status of school libraries sponsored annually by the American Association of School Librarians.

Collection of additional data is prohibited pursuant to Act 24 of 2011. However, local districts and schools may complete this assessment on their own.

4. Distributing to chief school administrators through Penn*Link the 2011 *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* published by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries. The *Guidelines* provide each administrator benchmarks to use as guidance in assessing the effectiveness of the district's K-12 library program.

The document is currently on the Department's website at the [School Library Advisory Services](#) page. A communication to school administrators about the location of the document will be sent in Fall 2012.

5. Providing specialized guidance and assistance to school districts on adaptive technologies needed for students with visual disabilities to access library resources.

PATTAN is responsible for these services to school districts. In addition, Pennsylvania has two Regional Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (located at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Free Library of Philadelphia). As they develop their outreach plans for the coming fiscal year, Office of Commonwealth Libraries will ensure that school districts and school librarians receive information about the services they offer as partners with the National Library Services for the Blind. Representatives from the two libraries presented at the Pennsylvania School Librarian Association annual conference in April 2012 and an article about their services appeared in the Spring 2012 issue of *Learning & Media*.

6. Providing specialized guidance and assistance in identifying and evaluating resources in languages other than English for English Language Learner students.

The Division of Curriculum within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's Bureau of Teaching and Learning has several staff members who are responsible for working with the English Language Learners. More information and links to other resources on this topic can be found [on their webpages](#).

The School Library Advisor will work with the English Language Learner staff within the Department to insure the school libraries receive up-to-date information on resources available for these students.