



Written Testimonies

Presented to

Pennsylvania House of Representatives

House Education Committee

on

School Libraries in Pennsylvania

August 22, 2012

As Collected by the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association

Our suburban high school is about five blocks away from the Philadelphia city border.

A couple of years ago a group of 12 students from a nearby Philly high school, visited our well-funded, well-staffed library.

The students were working with their generous alumni association to build a library at their own school. My job was to give the group a tour and to make suggestions for their new space and their new program.

I was impressed with these young men and young women.

Nearly all were planning on college. They were *serious* about building a library. Because they were juniors and seniors, their library would be a legacy.

As our time together passed, I watched their faces. They listened and responded politely.

But it was apparent that something else was happening. What they saw was not our pretty library, or my connections with our students, or our stuff.

What they saw was inequity. My suburban learners had access to information and communication tools and skills they had never even heard of.

I showed them some of the products our students created and published as the result of their research—the blogs and wikis; the digital stories created with web-based creation and publishing tools.

I told them all these tools were available to them free of charge. They looked at me stunned.

I asked them how they communicated the results of their research. Universally they responded: *term papers*. No other channel had been suggested for their creative work.

We showed them the things we loan: among them digital cameras and flash drives and headsets and audiobooks and green screens. They were impressed.

We talked about research strategies.

These students had never seen an online library guide to steer them through thoughtful research.

What floored me most was that *they'd never heard of databases*. They went nuts over some of the ones we subscribe to, the ones our own students take for granted.

And here's the real shame. They knew NOTHING about our State Library-funded [Access PA POWER Library](#).

Most of the students had computer access at home, but no school library page led them to this free resource. No librarian had been there to build it. As we toured the available databases with their fulltext access to magazines, newspapers, ebooks, transcripts, primary sources,

video, and more, I watched as jaws dropped. *You mean we had this stuff available to us all along?*

What else did they NOT have?

And those students didn't have:

- Someone to teach them to ask important questions.
- Someone to teach them how to search effectively, how to critically evaluate, how to triangulate authority and assess the relevance of information and media messages in all formats.
- Someone to organize the information world for them. To help them efficiently access the content and tools and instruction they need through guides and pathfinders. Someone to model how they might organize their own information worlds and networks for the future.
- Someone to help them build knowledge from the information they gather—to analyze and synthesize and make meaning. So that they can use information to solve problems and make decisions and participate and make a difference.
- Someone to work with their teachers to build instruction, projects and assessments that focus on creativity and making meaning using the information tools and strategies of our time.
- Learners need someone to help them become writers and producers and storytellers and networkers and sharers of new knowledge. Someone to point them to the best tools for notetaking, storyboarding, digital storytelling, video production.
- And while they are producing and remixing, they need someone to show them how respect intellectual property, attribute credit, understand fair use, and to embrace Creative Commons resources and to assign Creative Commons licensing to their own work as participants in democratic society.
- Someone to teach them how to become solid and proud digital citizens--to be kind bloggers and tweeters and networkers, to understand how to build proud academic digital footprints.
- Someone to ensure that all students have equitable access to the tools they need to learn and create. Access to these tools is an intellectual freedom issue.

The world outside of our schools is not reading term papers. There are multiple ways to read and write. Our learners must be transliterate.

What I saw that day was a new digital divide: those who can effectively find, use and create information in all media formats, and those who cannot.

Library is not merely a place to *get* stuff. It is a place to invent, to create, to make stuff, to collaborate on stuff and to share stuff. It is more kitchen than grocery store--more transformational than transactional.

Libraries attack the literacy divide. Libraries attack the transliteracy divide.

Every child deserves a school library program and a professional school librarian.

I don't know why so many children grow up without libraries. I don't know why we are leaving so many children behind.

Joyce Kasman Valenza, Ph.D
Springfield Township High School Library
Erdenheim, PA

For someone who has spent her entire career deeply involved with school libraries, I was especially saddened when the School District of Lancaster (SDL) basically eliminated their school library program in 2011-12. As a taxpayer of that city, I witnessed hours of students, parents, business and community people standing in long lines that went out the door of the high school into the street in order to reach a microphone to testify against these cuts to the School Board. Students were in tears, parents were appalled, business people testified that they needed literate employees able to reason and think. However, the Board members, who listened in stony silence, ignored the appeals. 20 librarian positions were slated to be eliminated; only a few were later maintained.

I met a parent of three SDL students recently who told me how much her children missed the lessons and stories the elementary librarian had taught and shared with her children in previous years. She said she, as a mother who works part-time outside the home, was able to take her children to the public library for story times and other activities, but she worried about those children who no longer had such opportunities. "Those children who need libraries and librarians the most no longer have them in our district," she said. I couldn't agree with her more.

As a former school librarian and current adjunct instructor of online graduate courses in the School Library & Information Technologies Graduate School, Mansfield University, I know the research on the impact that school libraries have on learning and the academic success of students. A class I taught recently reviewed all the existing studies about school library programs and student learning. What struck me as most interesting is the impact of school library programs on at-risk student populations. The "silver bullet" we are all looking for to help our neediest students could be right down the hall in the school library if it is adequately staffed and supported. (I encourage you to review our research booklet at <http://libweb.mansfield.edu/upload/kachel/ImpactStudy.pdf>.)

I am astounded that our state requires and funds libraries and professional librarians for prisoners, but not for our public school students. It is inexcusable that so many children will grow up without books to inspire them and librarians to motivate them. We are at a point in education where we only fund what is mandated and only teach what is tested.

It's time to re-examine our priorities. Handicapping our future generation by denying them the basic tools and resources they need to learn is not the way to build a robust economy and a strong Commonwealth.

Debra Kachel, Instructor
School Library & Information Technologies Graduate School, Mansfield University
Co-Chairperson, PSLA Legislation Committee

A Letter to the Editor, Springfield Press, and submitted for the House Education Committee Hearing on School Libraries, August 22, 2012, with permission of the author

Are school libraries vanishing?

Friday, May 18, 2012

To the Press: It surprised me that our public does not know there are only two certified school librarians in the Springfield/Morton School District's five schools.

Within the coming school year (commencing probably in September, 2012), according to a new policy, the high school will not be staffed with a certified librarian. The only librarians in our entire district will be in the elementary schools teaching digital and information literacy.

No one is questioning the importance of iPhones, iPads and computer literacy in the 21st century, but certified librarians are trained in the latest technology -- vetting databases, sources and also on how to stimulate interest with students of various abilities to further their research capabilities.

If new policies are being implemented in the elementary level, why not see how they unfold before eradicating the high school library for our classes of 2013, 2014, 2015...

The library, whether we call it a learning materials center or an inquiry center, is still a vital part of student empowerment and teacher curriculum development and enrichment.

Let us look forward, but perhaps not so quickly that we eliminate the present high school structure. The library is more than the books and computers that fill it -- the essence is the person trained to coordinate and deliver its many aspects.

Do we as Springfield/Morton residents care? If we do, then action is imperative now to call district administrators and/or attend a school board meeting and ask about your school libraries before they vanish.

Joan Wider, Ph.D., Anthropology-area studies-Southeast Asia
Docent at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology
Past chairperson of the Springfield Community Education Council
Past coordinator of the Focus on Museum Series and East/West Day Program
Past member of the Springfield School District Strategic Planning Committee
Member of the Community Education Multicultural Sub-committee

URL: http://www.delconewsnetwork.com/articles/2012/05/18/springfield_press/opinion/doc4fb682d67deaf336893315.prt

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Students in Philadelphia public schools have limited or no access to a certified school librarian and adequate and current school library resources throughout their 12-13 years in the system. In 2011-12, there were only 46 librarians for over 250 schools in the School District of Philadelphia. Our students are, therefore, on an uneven playing field with their fellow students in the nearby suburbs, affecting their equitable access to college and legitimate employment. These academic deficiencies can result in drag on the city and state economy through lower tax revenues. Society as a whole is affected by increased crime leading to adjudication and detention of individuals, higher birth rates among the young, and inadequate care for our elderly by under-educated individuals. No one in the state of Pennsylvania is untouched by these societal afflictions.

School libraries with certified school librarians prepare students to meet the challenges of an uncertain future.

Support adequately funded and resourced school libraries with certified school librarians. Our future democracy depends upon it.

Thank you.

**Carol Heinsdorf, President
Association of Philadelphia School Librarians**

285 Inglewood Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15228
August 14, 2012

Dear Education Committee Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives,

As a lifelong resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, having worked in the Upper St. Clair School District, Pittsburgh, for thirty-five years as a school librarian/Library Curriculum Leader K-12, International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Coordinator and for the last ten years serving as the Practicum Supervisor for the University of Pittsburgh's Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) Program/School Library Certification Program, I applaud House Resolution 987, which encouraged the State Board of Education to undertake a quantitative study of state school libraries K-12, measuring and comparing funding, facilities, access to print and electronic resources, and the impact of recent budget cuts on school libraries in our State for ALL students.

Working in school libraries for over forty-five years, I have had the wonderful opportunity to be a part of and observe exemplary library programs for students. Numerous studies have clearly shown that fully staffed and equipped school libraries do have a positive impact on students' achievement and on learning. Whether student achievement is measured by standardized

reading achievements tests or by global assessment of learning, research points out that a well-stocked library, of print and electronic resources, staffed by a full time certified librarian, and support staff, has a positive impact on students' achievement regardless of the education levels of the community and that students perform better on Standardized tests.

When library programs are cut by staff and/or resources, as has happened in so many of our school districts, it is the students who suffer the most. School libraries and school librarians do make a difference in the education of our students. School librarians cannot perform their jobs to teach the 21st Century Information Skills unless they have adequate resources, support staff that can release them from the routine tasks and enable them to partner in a variety of profession collaborative works. Effective school librarians are members of the teaching teams and are educational leaders in their schools.

Learning just doesn't happen in classrooms; it needs to be encouraged, supported, directed and inspired-through collaborative efforts of school librarians and teachers with administrative support. These things happen in strong school library programs, but unfortunately, not all students in Pennsylvania experience such quality programs as the study results have shown!

I thank the PA House of Representatives for adopting House Resolution 987 that encouraged the State Board of Education to undertake a quantitative study of the state school libraries K-12, measuring and comparing funding, facilities, access to print and electronic resources. We can all learn from the study results and hopefully take the necessary steps to insure that all students will be provided with quality school library programs. We owe this to our future generations.

Please know that I recognize and appreciate how difficult it is in these times of budget cuts, at all levels, and how these impact decision making, but I encourage the PA House of Representatives to consider further supporting quality school libraries for ALL STUDENTS IN PENNSLVANIA.

Thank you for your concern and dedication to this most important issue that impacts student learning.

Sincerely,
D'nis L. Lynch
Dll16@pitt.edu dlynch5654@aol.com

School libraries help support student learning by teaching students how to search databases in the most effective manner to find the data needed for school projects. As a case to illustrate, consider the Chambersburg Area Senior High School 11th grade student this past spring who wanted as a topic for the state-mandated English "Junior Project" to look at the historical fiction book *The Help*, by Kathryn Stockett, and determine whether the author's portrayal of the lives of 1960's household workers in the South was accurate. She wanted to know if typical middle class households had maids, if the maids were predominately African-American, how much they typically earned, whether the relationships with males in the households had any throwback to master-slave traditions in the South, and in general whether

it was an accurate portrayal of the history of the times. After trying for 2 weeks to find this information, and failing, the English teacher told the student to go see the librarian and ask for help. The student was told that if the librarian was not able to guide the student to how to find this information within available resources, the student would have to change her research proposal the next day. The librarian was able to work with this student to try a variety of searching strategies using EBSCOhost databases in POWER Library, and the student was able to find about a dozen printouts of articles with the data needed. Without the school library and librarian's help, the student would have not been able to research the topic that most appealed to her. Authentic learning requires interest and commitment from students, and librarians help support that every day of their working careers.

Joanne K. Hammond
Head Librarian, Chambersburg Area School District
Librarian, Chambersburg Area Senior High School
joanne.hammond@casdonline.org

Testimony for House Education committee Hearing, August 22, 2012

As a school librarian for 26 years, I can testify to the essential nature of school library programs for student growth and achievement. At Kutztown Senior High School, the library is a 21st century learning commons where students read, study, collaborate and create products evidencing their learning. This highly interactive atmosphere transcends the physical space of the library, extending into our virtual space and beyond. Offering a 1:1 computing learning environment demands that our learners be able to seamlessly move among text and media formats spanning traditional print to Web 2.0 domains. Schools have a responsibility to prepare our learners to live and work in the global participatory culture of the 21st century. Libraries play a central role in this responsibility. Since becoming a 1:1 school nearly ten years ago, Kutztown has seen an expansion of student research as inquiry takes an increasingly heightened place in learning. Our growth is evidenced by increases in use of online research tools and databases, the amount of formal and informal teaching happening in the library, and increased use of the traditional print collection, as well as anecdotal evidence from graduates who return to express how prepared they have been for the challenges of academic level research. Our transition has only served to intensify the librarian's roles in teaching research and information literacy skills (such as digital citizenship, critical evaluation of information, and ethical use of information) as well as broadening the librarian's traditional role in providing reading guidance. These roles will continue to expand as Common Core State Standards further direct the path of learning in the Commonwealth.

Brenda Boyer, Kutztown Senior High Librarian

As the librarian at Stroudsburg High School, I have the opportunity to observe on a daily basis the variety and depth of benefits the school library provides to our students. Stroudsburg High School, located in a small town just off Interstate 80 in eastern Pennsylvania, is home to a diverse student population. A significant number of Stroudsburg students began their school years in New York City and urban New Jersey schools that offered few, if any, library services. It is extremely gratifying to observe these students become enthusiastic library users as they become acclimated to Stroudsburg High School.

Over the past decade, the publishing market for Young Adult fiction has experienced unprecedented growth. Today, teenagers of nearly all socioeconomic and ethnic origins have the opportunity to read about fictional characters with whom they can personally identify. From my observation as an educator of thirty-three years, I have never seen a higher interest level in high school students reading for pleasure and personal enrichment. The correlation of pleasure reading with academic achievement has been well documented and should be seriously considered by both local school boards and state legislators when making budget decisions. Funding must be available for school libraries to keep their collections up to date and to purchase new books that appeal to today's readers.

Legislators should also be aware that the market for print materials—good old-fashioned *books*—remains significant and needs continued funding. Electronic reading devices such as the Kindle and iPad, while rapidly gaining popularity, remain a distinctly second choice for most readers. This is especially true for students who stand to benefit most by reading for personal enrichment—students coming from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Technology, of course, also plays a significant part in the role served by our high school library. Students who do not have access to computers at home rely on library resources to do research and complete assignments. I am extremely proud when I observe underprivileged students working diligently and aspiring to continue their education on the college level. It is clear to me that if the resources and support provided by our school library were not available, many of these students would not go on to college.

Funding and staffing are the heart of successful school library programs. It is essential that our legislature provides adequate funding for books, technology, and for certified school librarians. In recent years there has been a discouraging de-emphasis on funding the essentials necessary for school libraries to continue playing their critical role in our children's education. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the most recent in a series of studies by Keith Curry Lance. His work demonstrates the many ways school libraries benefit individuals, communities, and our larger society.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my remarks. Your openness to this information provides encouragement that libraries can continue to benefit all of our citizens.

Students Benefit from Action Research

Researchers have shown the importance of a student's ability not only to simply read, but also to interpret and analyze nonfiction text in order to be successful both in and out of school. In support of this belief Mrs. Candy Blessing and Mrs. Jane Englert, Ephrata High School librarians selected this essential skill to be the focus of the 2011-2012 library department instructional goals.

Ninth grade is a pivotal year as a student transitions into the demands and expectations of high school academics. At EHS, the library curriculum is heavily embedded into the content areas of the educational program. Librarians are in a unique position because our instruction can span core content across all disciplines, including science, social studies, and language arts. Because of this advantage we are able to design lessons that both meet content curriculum and require student interaction with nonfiction text when analyzing and interpreting are necessary in order to complete the assigned task.

To address this goal, EHS librarians were committed to coaching 9th grade students who scored basic or below basic on the PSSA tests in 8th grade so that their reading skills would improve. We did not work with these students in isolation, but instead instructed classes throughout the year in the science, social studies, and language arts disciplines. We concentrated on the specific skills of interpreting and analyzing non-fiction text, which are of critical importance when learning through textbooks, printed library materials, online database articles, and free web sources. In science we facilitated an activity in which students used a reading strategy called "write-on reading." In this activity students became actively involved as they read text by writing their thoughts and reactions in the margins as they read. In social studies, students began with a question concerning a major event in modern history. In order to understand the issue at hand, they connected to prior knowledge and explored the issue within its historical context through reading nonfiction text in a variety of sources. This process enabled students to compose a well-researched, thoughtful paragraph answering their research questions. In language arts, students used inference skills as they interpreted biographical articles to make connections between notable Elizabethan figures and Shakespeare's writings.

Through the process of action research, we validated our instructional impact on students' reading comprehension skills as the data revealed that 74% of our focus group improved their test scores for the skill of interpreting and analyzing nonfiction text. After evaluating all of our instructional efforts and interpreting the data of the 4Sight test scores for our 9th graders, it can be determined that working with our struggling readers in 9th grade across three disciplines made a favorable impact on increasing reading comprehension skills. Moreover, school librarians teach reading and writing across all subject areas to all students and definitely make a difference in how students access, use, interpret, and communicate information.

Candy Blessing and Jane Englert

As a language arts teacher at Ephrata High School for the past 19 years, I can personally attest to the crucial and interconnected relationship our department has with our school's library and media center specialists. First, we have multiple courses that rely heavily on both the media center resources and our media center specialists' teaching skills. Our Techniques of Research course utilizes a team teaching approach to best meet the needs of our students in a world of ever changing technology and resources. In addition, so many of our other courses rely on our library for important units of study. From recommending the newest young adult literature to assisting students with researching historical topics as well as current events, we could not serve our students, our curriculum, or the common core standards without our library. As a teacher, our school without the integral connection we have with our Media Center would suffer.

Jennifer Eshleman
Language Arts Department Supervisor, Ephrata High School

In Penn Manor School District, elementary librarians support teachers in every content area. But we feel that our greatest achievement is in being the "levelers" in the schools, aiming to level the differences in background information and technology experience between our students from higher socio-economic groups and those from lower socio-economic groups. We create lessons that teach information literacy skills while at the same time exposing students to things like the Renaissance era, Shakespearean days, The Great Depression, World leaders, and multiple cultures. We believe we help build schema upon which much other learning depends.

*Kathy Ashworth
Central Manor Library and Eshleman Library
Penn Manor School District*

Due to their positive experiences in the library, my students often call or email me from college asking for help finding sources or citing their sources. It makes me very proud of what I do when I receive these correspondences. I may not hear "thank you" very often but these requests for help let me know that my students trust and value my knowledge and help. I've even had a student call me with a call number from the card catalog and ask me where to locate the book!

Respectfully submitted by Heather Henry, Berwick High School Librarian

My name is Katherine Miller and I am a librarian at Chambersburg Area Middle School North, in the Chambersburg School District, in Franklin County. This school year will be the start of my 7th year as a school librarian. So much has changed in my job since I started in 2006;

but one thing has remained the same, I love what I do. Currently, I have 1,026 students in grades 6 through 8 and serve 50 teachers. Students frequently use the library for a variety of purposes and reasons. Most students come to the library with their classes. Teachers collaborate with me to do projects that incorporate technology and literacy into their curriculum. Many teachers love using the library, because the library provides technology that will accommodate all of their students. Additionally, teachers have an instructional partner in which they can team teach with to help incorporate 21st century technology skills that many of them do not feel comfortable teaching on their own. Students enjoy using the library because they learn new technology skills and complete projects that are fun and engaging.

Several years ago, I received one of the last LSTA (Library Services Technology Act), grants that provided a cart of laptops for school libraries. Receiving this LSTA grant has been revolutionary for my students and teachers and has made a huge impact in how they use the library. Previously, my library only had 20 desktop computers and the average class size was 30. Since receiving the LSTA laptops, I can have two classes use the library, every student who needs a computer gets to use one and the projects that I develop are so much better because every student can use a computer.

A lot of people do not see the library as playing an important role in technology, but technology is an important part of my job as a librarian and it impacts just about everything that I do with my students. Technology has even impacted the way my students read. With the help of various grants, school improvement, and stimulus monies, my library has been able to purchase Amazon Kindles and iPads. The Kindles and iPads are used to help English Language Learners, learning support and special needs students increase their literacy skills by using these devices to help them become better readers.

I have seen a huge difference in my student's learning outcomes because I am fortunate enough to have enough up to date pieces of technology to help serve all of my students. I can't imagine what would happen if my students did not have all of these great things to help them achieve their best.

Dear Representatives,

Our libraries have been instrumental in teaching research skills, computer skills, and most of all creating a love of reading through varied and special activities. One such activity is our devoted reading period for our middle schools where everyone, staff included, put work aside and read for pleasure for about 40 minutes. It is called "flex-in-the-lex" since students names are put into a raffle to be drawn at the end of the year for a ride in a Lexus limo to Barnes and Noble to select gift books and also enjoy a nice lunch. The teachers and library staff encourage

students to read through many activities and we believe that our Reading test scores have improved because of the combination of curriculum instruction and the creation of a personal interest in reading.

Unfortunately, due to the recent budget cuts, several of our librarians have retired and have not been replaced. From 1993 until 2011 I was a single middle school librarian. Last year, I managed three middle school libraries (2 days at each per 6 day cycle). This year, the high school librarian (who had 2 schools) and myself (3) had our secondary library positions eliminated. There is a greater need for us to fill the open positions at the elementary level, since Library is a special class like Physical Education and Art. Therefore we cover core-teacher plan periods. I am actually serving two different elementary libraries this year. The secondary libraries are continuing to stay open with only a secretary running them. Our secretaries do an excellent job, but we need librarians. An analogy to the library situation could be opening a swimming pool for kids, but removing the life guard and swim instructor, leaving only the one person at the front desk at the pool entrance responsible for running the office, teaching kids to swim, and keeping everyone safe.

Without professionally trained librarians, the services provided and the collections will begin to suffer which will directly impact the students negatively. I'm not just referring to test scores either, but the lost interaction between a librarian and student when they're looking for that book that may just create or continue their love of reading.

The ironic thing this year is that our district was just awarded a \$1 million Literacy grant, but cannot hire new librarians to replace the staff who left. As with most grants, the grant has specific rules about how it can be applied. This is not a decision our district wants to make, but is forced to make, due to the lack of funds provided from state and federal sources. Please listen to our concerns, properly fund our schools. Libraries and other school programs are being slashed, schools are underfunded, yet our state test scores are required to rise. Please investigate the ramifications of what is happening in our schools! We desperately need your support of school libraries in Pennsylvania.

John Auberzinsky, Librarian
Coatesville Area School District

The students at Chestnutwold Elementary School in Ardmore, PA (School District of Haverford Township) experienced an enriching library program that allowed them access to the library's resources every hour of the school week. In addition to their scheduled library classes, they could come in at any time during the week to check out a book or look for research materials, and use the computers. A student always had the librarian right there to help suggest and find another "just right" book to read for personal enjoyment or for a class assignment. A student also always had a librarian available to explain how to use the library catalog, how to search for information on a particular subject, and how to find that particular book or how to find a website. The student had a librarian to explain how to evaluate the website to be sure it would be useful to use for research. These students are 6 to 10 years old. They need a librarian to teach them these research skills and to show them the possibilities in the world of information.

Each class of students in the school (grades kindergarten through 5th grade) were involved in several research projects throughout the year. The librarian worked with the classroom teacher to create projects that were an integral part of the curriculum. The teacher was the expert on the curriculum for that grade and the librarian was the expert on using the research model, to instruct students on how to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively and efficiently and on how to use technology for finding information and how to use various presentation tools. Several days in succession would be scheduled to work on a research project. Students were able to delve into their note taking, resource finding, evaluation, and finally their presentation. Students had a classroom teacher and a librarian to guide them. Current studies show how this greatly impacts a student's academic achievement and his or her test scores. We saw firsthand how positively this impacted our students at Chestnutwold.

Last year because of the budget cuts to schools, our district had to eliminate 2 of the 5 elementary librarians. I now instruct library classes in 3 different elementary buildings. The budget for books and library resources has been greatly reduced. I no longer have scheduled kindergarten classes. I only have first grade classes every other week for 30 minutes. I still meet with grades 2-5 for one class a week for 45 minutes. Students learn critical research skills and they can take out books during their scheduled class but I am no longer available to them at other times. I can no longer plan research projects with teachers. The students no longer have full access to the library or to the expertise of the librarian when working on research. There is an assistant available to check out books for part of the time, but not all of the time, that I am not in a building. Because of the budget reduction, we have to limit the purchase of books, impacting the ability to provide a wide range of current materials for the students. If this continues, I am sure this will impact the academic achievement of our students and their test scores. I hope that this access gap that is impacting the lives our students will be restored so that our current students will have the same access to information and literature and the same access to the expertise of a full time librarian in their school as our previous students have greatly benefitted from during their elementary years.

Sincerely,
Jayne Dambman, Library Media Specialist
Chestnutwold Elementary School (School District of Haverford Township)

The second grade teachers at Cynwyd Elementary school in the Lower Merion School District and I recently implemented a library program to boost standardized test scores. Last fall, the teachers mentioned that they saw a need for improvement on a multiple choice assessment they administer periodically. We worked together to plan SMART board review lessons based on specific student needs. We developed interactive games and SMART board activities to target

weaker areas. Each teacher brought their class to the library once a week (in addition to their regular library time and a research period) and all the students who attended had a chance to interact with the game or activity. We emphasized test taking strategies while working on the content questions which included reading comprehension, grammar, etc. Assessment data was collected throughout the year and student performance improved greatly by the end of the school year.

Natalie Thibault, School Library Media Specialist
Cynwyd Elementary School, Lower Merion School District

As a school librarian, my students have gone to college and contacted me with stories full of pride because they knew how to locate valuable information on college databases, articles on the web using advanced search options and even locate information from a variety of countries using country codes on search engines. Not only were they able to locate the articles but because of their education in information literacy, they were able to accurately cite the information, sometimes knowing more about the most current edition of MLA than their professors.

Students that are prepared for college through good information literacy skills are able to lessen the anxieties of freshmen expectations because they are confident.

Shirley LeClerc, Librarian
Bayard Rustin High School (West Chester Area SD)