



The Voice of the Library Community

New York Library Association

6021 State Farm Road, Guilderland, NY 12084
518-432-6952 / 518-427-1697 FAX
info@nyla.org
www.nyla.org

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Contact: Mike Neppl, Director of Government Relations / advocate@nyla.org
Phone: (518) 432-6952 x102

THE NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES SCHOOL LIBRARIAN CENSUS DATA

ALBANY, NY – Over the last 18 months, NYLA has worked with its Section of School Librarians (SSL) to develop new legislation that would expand student access to certified school library media specialists (cSLMS). With the help of the School Library System Association (SLSA), NYLA undertook a building-by-building census of New York State’s school librarians. Through SLSA’s incredible effort, NYLA has collected data on 4,316 of 4,502 identified schools – a nearly 96% response rate.

Under the proposed legislation the statewide compliance rates for secondary schools is approximately 54%. There is a significant noncompliance among the “Big Five” school districts (NYC, Yonkers, Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester) and among schools serving “Average Needs” students. Throughout the state compliance rates improve in direct proportion to the relative wealth of a school’s surrounding community.

Most importantly, the census data illustrates the necessity of our proposed legislation: while the disparity in compliance rates between secondary and elementary schools show the requirements of NYSED Commissioner’s Regulation §91.2 have a positive impact, substantial statewide noncompliance with those requirements proves the regulation is not enough.

In 2015, NYLA worked with Senator Hugh Farley to introduce legislation that requires all schools to provide students access to quality school libraries staffed by cSLMS. This legislation (S.3931/A.6784-A), sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages, was developed in close consultation with SSL to best address the needs of each student, in every school building across New York State. This legislation looks very similar to current (Grades 7 – 12) regulations with regard to the requirement based on student population. However, it is looking to change from a “per period” formula to a FTE formula, as the “periods” are not consistent in schools across the state.

Currently, New York State Law fails to guarantee any student will have access to the specialized services provided by cSLMS. Instead, NYSED Commissioner’s Regulation §91.2 requires only limited access to cSLMS services for those students in secondary schools, and wholly ignores elementary school students – children at their most critical stages of educational development.

For more information please visit <http://bit.ly/2b3wAxE>

About NYLA:

The New York Library Association (NYLA) is the voice of the library community in New York. NYLA is the oldest state library association in the country and represents school, college, special and public libraries, library staff, trustees, and students from around the state.

NYLA is the only statewide organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of all libraries and library staff in Albany and serves as the spokesperson on library matters to the media and public policymakers.

For more information contact:

Michael Nepl

General Counsel & Director of Government Relations

New York Library Association

advocate@nyla.org

518-432-6952

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