

N · J · A · S · L

New Jersey Association of School Librarians

Fact Sheet: The Value of School Libraries

New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) believes that every student in every school in New Jersey deserves to be served by a resource-rich school library program that is staffed by a State certified full-time School Library Media Specialist in order to enhance learning and fully prepare students to excel in college and the workplace. All students will be empowered to achieve through active, collaborative library programs guided by credentialed School Library Media Specialists who are recognized as educational leaders and indispensable resources in their school communities.

The New Jersey Study of School Libraries: One Common Goal - Student Learning

Although numerous studies of school libraries in other states have proven that well-funded, well-staffed school library programs have a positive impact on student achievement, a 2008 meeting with Lucille Davy, then NJ Education Commissioner, prompted NJASL to commission a New Jersey study to clearly answer the following questions:

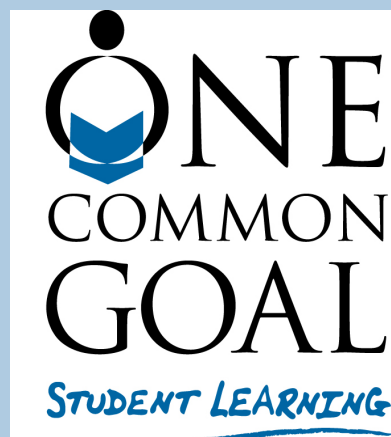
- **What does a good school library look like?**
- **What role does a good school library play in educating NJ students?**

A team of researchers from the Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries (CISSL) at Rutgers University undertook an intensive two phase study of the place of school libraries in the New Jersey educational program. The lead researcher in the study, Dr. Ross Todd, reported “the findings show that New Jersey school libraries and school librarians contribute in rich and diverse ways to the intellectual life of a school, and to the development of students who can function in a complex and increasingly digital information environment.”

The complete report, *The New Jersey Study of School Libraries: One Common Goal - Student Learning* is available on the NJASL Website:

www.njasl.org

and see the next page for highlights from the Study.



Observations From...

A Principal

“We’re still in a time where (the public) doesn’t believe our information centers are as powerful as our educators believe. Our librarian is a powerful educator.”

A Teacher

“We have fantastic media specialists who continue to keep up, to keep abreast with all of the new innovations in technology which is not always easy because things are happening so quickly...”

A Science Teacher

“Our school librarian makes it less intimidating as a teacher to try new resources...That’s true inquiry.”

A Special Education Teacher

“And it is a place where they (the students) are safe to ask questions.”

A Social Studies Teacher

“It [the library] really is the heart of the school because every department, and every teacher, every administrator, at some time, uses it for something. It’s one of the few areas of the school that everyone actually utilizes...that’s why it is so invaluable.”

Phase 1 Highlights

The findings of phase 1, a detailed survey of over 700 librarians from around the state, released in September, 2010, show that NJ school libraries and school librarians make key contributions to student success including:

- Meeting core curriculum standards;
- Mastering of information literacy competencies;
- Developing familiarity of the research process;
- Modeling ethical use of information;
- Nurturing responsible use of technology;
- Promoting greater interest in reading; and
- Fostering reading for learning.



Phase 2 Highlights

The findings of phase 2, a series of focus groups with administrators, teachers, and school librarians representing schools from all geographical regions of NJ as well as various economic and educational levels, offered an in-depth look at the strong administrative and teacher support that exists for effective library programs. A few of the common factors were:

- The school library supports the school's mission to produce literate and informed learners who can thrive in a digital, knowledge-based world;
- The school library is a 21st century classroom that provides an understanding of the information and technology students will confront as digital citizens;
- The school library sets the stage for student-initiated inquiry; and
- The school librarian is primarily a co-teacher who undertakes an active role in engaging in shared instruction.

The complete Report and Executive Summaries from each Phase of *The New Jersey Study of School Libraries: One Common Goal - Student Learning* are available on the NJASL Website:

www.njasl.org

For further details or information, please contact Pat Massey, NJASL Communications Chair, at:

pmassey6@yahoo.com

Call To Action

As legislators and school boards across New Jersey and the country consider new measures to implement the new Common Core Standards, NJASL is working to ensure that all schools have strong library programs. The New Jersey Study provides strong proof that effective school library programs positively impact student learning and strengthen the educational climate of the schools. To this end NJASL is advocating for regulation and dedicated funding to require all schools to have credentialed School Library Media Specialists who possess the core competencies needed to deliver effective school library media programs. Our students' futures depend on it.

About NJASL

The New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) is the professional organization for school librarians in the state of New Jersey. NJASL advocates high standards for librarianship and library media programs in the public, private, and parochial schools in New Jersey to ensure that students and staff become effective users of information. Learn more about NJASL by visiting www.njasl.org,