

Peter Langella

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With Supporting document; Excel Spreadsheet

Testimony for the Working Group on the Status of Libraries:

Focus on Staffing, July, 22, 2022

Dear Committee,

From 2007-2008 to 2018-2019, school librarian FTE statewide went from 220 to 197, or a ~10% decrease. Unfortunate, but, other than a few schools that aren't in compliance with the EQS 300 language (full text below), it's my opinion that the decrease is mostly due to an overall decrease in student enrollment.

From the Vermont Agency of Education's Education Quality Standards, 2121.2. Staff:
"The services of a certified library media specialist shall be made available to students and staff. Schools with over 300 students shall have at least one full-time library media specialist and sufficient staff to implement a program that supports literacy, information and technology standards. Schools with fewer than 300 students shall employ a library media specialist on a pro-rata basis."

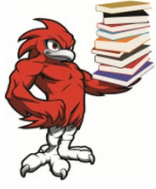
In the same period of 2007-2008 to 2018-2019 (the most recent data I could find), school library support staff FTE statewide went from 136 to 71, a decrease of ~47%. The implications for our profession are huge. And these numbers are before the pandemic. That "and sufficient support staff" from EQS is being ignored in a big way. Half of our school library support staff FTE has been cut in a decade.

The data are on Table 1, rows 264-287, attached.

It is my guess that districts who educate higher percentages of low-income and rural students, as well as districts who have the highest percentages of English Language Learners, have been impacted the most heavily by this inequity. I advise your committee to ask for the most recent AOE data for school library staffing, down to the building level, and I think strict staffing baselines -- and equity goals -- need to be established.

Best,
Peter

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