

SCHOOL LIBRARIES CHANGE LIVES

Declaration for the Right to School Libraries

In the spirit of the United States Declaration of Independence and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we believe that libraries are essential to a democratic society. Every day, in countless communities across our nation and the world, millions of children, students and adults use libraries to learn, grow and achieve their dreams. In addition to a vast array of books, computers and other resources, library users benefit from the expert teaching and guidance of librarians and library staff to help expand their minds and open new worlds.

As school libraries are essential to 21st-century education, we declare and affirm our right to quality school libraries.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES EMPOWER THE INDIVIDUAL.

Whether developing skills to succeed in school, looking for a job, or exploring possible careers, members of the school community turn to libraries for instruction, support, and access to computers and other resources to help them lead better lives.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES SUPPORT LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING.

Many children learn to read at their school libraries via storytimes, research projects, summer reading, tutoring and other opportunities. Others come to the library to learn the technology and information skills that help them answer their questions, discover new interests, and share their ideas with others.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES STRENGTHEN FAMILIES.

Students and their families find a comfortable, welcoming space and a wealth of resources to help them grow, play, and share lifelong learning experiences together.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES ARE THE GREAT EQUALIZER.

School libraries serve members of the school community of every age, education level, income level, ethnicity and physical ability. For many, school libraries provide resources that they could not otherwise access, resources they need to live, learn and work.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES BUILD COMMUNITIES.

School libraries bring people together, both in person and online, to have conversations and to learn from and help each other. School libraries provide opportunities for students with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds as well as for those with special needs.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES PROTECT OUR RIGHT TO KNOW.

Our right to read, seek information, and speak freely must not be taken for granted. School libraries and school librarians actively defend this most basic freedom as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES STRENGTHEN OUR NATION.

The economic health and successful governance of our nation depend on people who are literate and informed. School libraries support this basic right for the next generation of voters and civic activists.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES ADVANCE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP.

Knowledge grows from knowledge. Whether doing a school assignment, seeking personal enrichment or learning how to share and create information ethically, scholars of all ages depend on the knowledge and expertise that school libraries and school librarians offer.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES HELP US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.

Students and teachers from all walks of life come together at school libraries to discuss issues of common concern. School libraries provide programs like book clubs and author visits, carefully selected collections, meeting spaces, places to gather with friends and safe havens to help us share and learn from our differences.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES PRESERVE OUR NATION'S CULTURAL HERITAGE.

The past is key to our future. School libraries provide instruction, strategies, and practice in using the essential learning skills needed to help us to better understand our past, present and future.

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