



September 15, 2020

As the new school year begins, it is impossible to ignore the impact of the global pandemic. For many, their “classroom” looks vastly different than years prior. For some, their day is spent in a virtual setting with photographs images of their peers displayed on the screen, for others they enter a classroom with masks on and their desks spread wide, and lastly, for some, there is no classroom to return to because they are no longer employed.

With a \$14 billion deficit and financial assistance uncertain, school administrators and their boards are being tasked with the impossible – balance the budget while providing a comprehensive scholastic experience while making little or no cuts to the staff.

The New York Library Association recognizes that difficult decisions – including additional cuts to programs and staff – lie ahead. As districts navigate how best to serve their students, while marshalling reduced resources, we implore that decision makers consider the tremendous value that their school librarians deliver:

- **Access to learning for all students.** School librarians provide individualized instruction and support to students learning new technology essential for learning.
- **Digital equity for all students.** School librarians work with School Library Systems to negotiate free and reduced priced resources.
- **Coaching in best use of online tools and resources.** School librarians provide ongoing virtual professional development to help educators most effectively implement the right digital tools to meet their instructional goals.
- **Social and emotional learning.** School librarians provide opportunities for students to process and discuss their feelings through literature, giving words to express feelings and taking away the stigma of expressing grief, fear, worry, and other emotions.
- **Increased student engagement.** School librarians integrate choice into formal and informal learning opportunities in order to leverage student interests and motivate self-directed learning.

“School librarians serve as critical instructional leaders, support their colleagues and tie together learning experiences across the curriculum. That role has only expanded as they have stepped up and expanded their role through virtual delivery formats during the COVID 19 pandemic.” Dr. Jen Cannell, Council President – New York Library Association

“Every student deserves to have a school librarian as part of their educational experience. Studies have demonstrated time and again that those who do, have higher test scores and improved learning outcomes. When determining how to best serve our children, we must ensure they are supported by a certified school librarian who can provide them the skills to navigate an ever-growing sea of information.” Jeremy Johannesen, Executive Director – New York Library Association

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