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**HOUSE BILL 1609**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Eslick, Jacobsen, Dent, Pollet, Graham, and Leavitt

AN ACT Relating to school library information and technology programs; amending RCW 28A.320.240; adding new sections to chapter 28A.320 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that students with access to school library information and technology programs staffed by qualified teacher-librarians have improved school and life outcomes, including academic achievement, graduation rates, and readiness for career and college. These programs and staff are critical in supporting the equitable and successful use of educational technology, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts with robust programs and qualified staff were better able to respond to the remote learning needs of teachers, students, and families.

(2) The legislature recognizes, however, that not all students have access to these programs or staff. Despite continued support from the legislature, students in many areas of the state do not have access to school library information and technology programs staffed by qualified teacher-librarians.

(3) Lack of access to these programs and staff disproportionately impact low-income families and families of color. Furthermore, findings show that access to high-quality school libraries is one of the most significant factors in closing the literacy gap for students experiencing poverty.

(4) Additionally, the increase in internet misinformation and disinformation necessitates instruction for all students in information literacy, digital citizenship, and media literacy by a qualified teacher-librarian.

(5) The legislature, therefore, intends to support and strengthen access to high-quality school library information and technology programs with qualified teacher-librarians for all students and staff while acknowledging the value of having school district directors determine how to effectively implement the programs for their schools.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.320.240 and 2015 c 27 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The purpose of this section is to identify quality criteria for school library information and technology programs that support the student learning goals under RCW 28A.150.210, the ((~~essential academic learning requirements~~)) state learning standards under RCW 28A.655.070, and high school graduation requirements adopted under RCW 28A.230.090.

(2) Every board of directors shall provide resources and materials for the operation of school library information and technology programs ((~~as the board deems necessary for the proper education of the district's students or as otherwise required by law or rule of the superintendent of public instruction.~~

~~(3) "Teacher-librarian" means a certificated teacher with a library media endorsement under rules adopted by the professional educator standards board.~~

~~(4) "School library information and technology program" means a school-based program that is staffed by a certificated teacher-librarian and provides a broad, flexible array of services, resources, and instruction that support student mastery of the essential academic learning requirements and state standards in all subject areas and the implementation of the district's school improvement plan.~~

~~(5)~~)). The board of directors shall also ensure that each student has access to a school library information and technology program that is consistent with the requirements of this section.

(3) The teacher-librarian, through the school library information and technology program, shall collaborate as an instructional partner to help all students meet the content goals in all subject areas, and assist high school students completing high school and beyond plans required for graduation.

((~~(6)~~)) (4) The teacher-librarian's duties may include, but are not limited to, collaborating with his or her schools to:

(a) Integrate information and technology into curriculum and instruction, including but not limited to instructing other certificated staff about using and integrating information and technology literacy into instruction through workshops, modeling lessons, and individual peer coaching;

(b) Provide information management instruction to students and staff about how to effectively use emerging learning technologies for school and lifelong learning, as well as in the appropriate use of computers and mobile devices in an educational setting;

(c) Help teachers and students efficiently and effectively access the highest quality information available while using information ethically;

(d) Instruct students in digital citizenship including how to be critical consumers of information and provide guidance about thoughtful and strategic use of online resources; and

(e) Create a culture of reading in the school community by developing a diverse, student-focused collection of materials that ensures all students can find something of quality to read and by facilitating school-wide reading initiatives along with providing individual support and guidance for students.

(5) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Teacher-librarian" means a certificated teacher with a library media endorsement under rules adopted by the professional educator standards board.

(b) "School library information and technology program" means a school-based program that is staffed by a certificated teacher-librarian and provides a broad, flexible array of services, resources, and instruction that support student mastery of the state learning standards and the implementation of the school district's school improvement plan, if applicable.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.320 RCW to read as follows:

By September 1, 2024, each school district must adopt or amend: (1) A policy acknowledging the requirement for boards of directors to provide every student with access to school library information and technology programs as required by RCW 28A.320.240; and (2) procedures describing how students can access resources and materials from those programs.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.320 RCW to read as follows:

The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall provide data, information, summaries of best practices, and other assistance to school districts for the purpose of implementing RCW 28A.320.240 and section 3 of this act.

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