

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5551

As of February 11, 2025

Title: An act relating to school library information and technology programs.

Brief Description: Concerning school library information and technology programs.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Cortes, Harris, Hasegawa, Liias and Slatter.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/11/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that each student must have access to a School Library Information and Technology Program, as determined by the board of directors in a policy and procedure consistent with certain requirements including that it is staffed by a certificated teacher-librarian.
- Allows school districts of the second class to use a noncertificated staff member to oversee a School Library Information and Technology Program if the district has made all reasonable efforts to use a certificated teacher-librarian.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide guidance, analysis, and administrative services to School Library Information and Technology Programs.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Elena Becker (786-7493)

Background: School Library Information and Technology Programs. Under state law, a School Library Information and Technology Program is a school-based program staffed by a certificated teacher-librarian and provides services, resources, and instruction to support

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the implementation of the district's school improvement plan and student mastery of learning requirements and state standards.

Teacher-Librarians. Teacher-librarians are certificated teachers with a library media endorsement. Teacher-librarians collaborate with their schools to perform duties such as integrating information and technology into instruction, creating cultures of reading in the school community, instructing students in digital citizenship, and assisting students and staff to effectively use emerging learning technologies.

The nine library media endorsement competencies adopted by the Professional Educator Standards Board include collection development, information literacy, instructional methodology, reading advocacy, library media program management, and more.

First Class and Second Class School Districts. A school district of the first class is statutorily defined as any school district with an enrollment of 2000 or more students in its public schools. Any school district with less than 2000 students is a school district of the second class.

Summary of Bill: School Library Information and Technology Programs. Each student must have access to a School Library Information and Technology Program, as determined by the board of directors and consistent with certain requirements. By September 1, 2026, school districts must adopt or amend a policy that acknowledges the School Library Information and Technology Program requirement and procedures describing how students can access related instruction, resources, and materials.

Teacher-Librarians and Noncertificated Staff. The duties of teacher-librarians are expanded to include directing classified staff, such as library technicians and library assistants, to implement the School Library Information and Technology Program.

A school district of the second class may use a noncertificated staff member to oversee a School Library Information and Technology Program if the district has made all reasonable efforts to use a certificated teacher-librarian. In such a circumstance, a district is authorized to partner with a nonprofit or government entity such as a library, regional library, or institution of higher education to provide for the School Library Information and Technology Program. In such a case, the School Library Information and Technology Program must remain school-based and may not operate at a satellite location.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is directed to oversee School Library Information and Technology Programs by:

- identifying a single point of contact at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for library information and technology inquiries;
- gathering and analyzing data;
- providing technical and implementation assistance to public schools;
- supporting public schools in evaluating in how they are providing opportunities for

- every student to meet educational technology literacy and fluency goals and identifying measures of student skill;
- producing guidance for school districts on best models and practices for School Library Information and Technology Programs; and
 - facilitating adoption of statewide library standards.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2025.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Librarians are more than books. They are media literacy experts and provide expert training in digital citizenship, media literacy, and reading. Sixty percent of districts in the state do not have a teacher-librarian involved with their program at all. Many administrators, teachers, and students don't know what they're missing because they have never had access to a well-run, well-staffed school library.

OTHER: Librarians are indeed wonderful resources, but there's not enough funding for this directive. There needs to be more clarity on the staffing requirements, this bill would necessitate cuts elsewhere. School districts have finite time and money, and in the past several years a number of additional requirements have been added. There aren't enough hours in the day to meet all these directives.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Carolyn Logue, Washington Library Association; Athena Luccio; Eryn Duffee; Laura Sheppard; Gavin Downing.

OTHER: Alexa Allman, Deer Park School District; Sandy Hayes, Washington State School Directors' Association; Travis Hanson, Superintendent, Mead School District.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.