
SENATE BILL 5551

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Wellman, Cortes, Harris, Hasegawa, Lias, and Slatter

Read first time 01/28/25. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to school library information and technology
2 programs; amending RCW 28A.320.240; adding a new section to chapter
3 28A.320 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.30 RCW; and creating
4 a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that students with
7 access to school library information and technology programs staffed
8 by qualified teacher-librarians have improved school and life
9 outcomes, including higher academic achievement, increased graduation
10 rates, and increased preparedness for college or career pathways.
11 Unfortunately, not all students have access to these programs
12 statewide, leading to disparate outcomes. According to recent data
13 collected by the Washington library association, nearly 60 percent of
14 school districts in Washington have no certified teacher-librarian
15 running their school library information and technology programs.
16 Lack of access to these programs disproportionately impacts low-
17 income families and families of color. Recent findings show that
18 access to high-quality school libraries was one of the most
19 significant factors in closing the literacy gap for students
20 experiencing poverty. Additionally, the legislature finds that the
21 rise of misinformation and disinformation available through the

1 internet necessitates comprehensive instruction by a qualified
2 teacher-librarian in information literacy, digital citizenship, and
3 media literacy for all K-12 students. The value of these programs was
4 apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. School districts with
5 qualified teacher-librarians and strong school library information
6 and technology programs were better able to support teachers,
7 students, and families during remote learning.

8 The legislature has shown support for school library information
9 and technology programs through the passage of legislation clearly
10 defining both programs and teacher-librarians. These programs have
11 been acknowledged as critically important to supporting state-
12 mandated learning goals, essential academic learning requirements,
13 and high school graduation requirements through inclusion of both
14 teacher-librarians and library materials as part of basic education
15 in the prototypical school model. Teacher-librarians are seen as
16 critical partners in the education of our students including in the
17 equitable and successful use of educational technology. Despite this
18 continued support from the legislature, data shows large areas of
19 Washington where students do not have access to school library
20 information and technology programs staffed by qualified teacher-
21 librarians.

22 The legislature intends to provide access to high-quality school
23 library information and technology programs with qualified teacher-
24 librarians for students and staff at all K-12 levels while also
25 recognizing the value of allowing local school boards to decide how
26 to most effectively implement these essential programs for their
27 schools and students.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320
29 RCW to read as follows:

30 By September 1, 2026, each school district must adopt or amend:

31 (1) A policy that acknowledges the requirement for boards of
32 directors to provide every student with access to school library
33 information and technology programs as specified in RCW 28A.320.240;
34 and

35 (2) Procedures that describe how students can access school
36 library information and technology instruction, resources, and
37 materials.

1 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.320.240 and 2015 c 27 s 1 are each amended to
2 read as follows:

3 (1) The purpose of this section is to identify quality criteria
4 for school library information and technology programs that support
5 the student learning goals under RCW 28A.150.210, the (~~essential~~
6 ~~academic learning requirements~~) state learning standards under RCW
7 28A.655.070, and high school graduation requirements adopted under
8 RCW 28A.230.090.

9 (2) Every board of directors shall provide resources and
10 materials for the operation of a school library information and
11 technology program(~~s as the board deems necessary for the proper~~
12 ~~education of the district's students or as otherwise required by law~~
13 ~~or rule of the superintendent of public instruction~~). Each student
14 shall have access to a school library information and technology
15 program, as determined by the board of directors and consistent with
16 the requirements of this section.

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

20 (4) (a) "School library information and technology program" means
21 a school-based program that is staffed, except as provided under (b)
22 of this subsection, by a certificated teacher-librarian and provides
23 a broad, flexible array of services, resources, and instruction that
24 support student mastery of the (~~essential academic learning~~
25 ~~requirements~~) state learning standards and state standards in all
26 subject areas and the implementation of the district's school
27 improvement plan.

28 (b) A school district of the second class, as described in RCW
29 28A.300.065, may use a noncertificated staff member to oversee a
30 school library information and technology program if the district has
31 made all reasonable efforts to use a certificated teacher-librarian.
32 In such a circumstance, a school district is authorized and
33 encouraged to partner with a nonprofit or government entity to
34 provide for the requirements of the school library information and
35 technology program including, but not limited to, a library or
36 regional library as defined in RCW 27.12.010, or an institution of
37 higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016. The school library
38 information and technology program must remain school-based and may
39 not operate at a satellite location.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (f) Direct classified staff, including library technicians,
29 library assistants, and others, to implement the school library
30 information technology program.

31 NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 The superintendent of public instruction shall oversee school
34 library information and technology programs, as defined in RCW
35 28A.320.240 by, at a minimum:

36 (1) Identifying a single point of contact at the office of the
37 superintendent of public instruction to respond to library
38 information and technology inquiries;

- 1 (2) Gathering and analyzing data related to the implementation of
2 school library information and technology programs and the assessment
3 of students' educational technology literacy and technology fluency;
- 4 (3) Providing technical assistance on establishing school library
5 and information technology programs within existing resources to
6 schools that do not have school library and information technology
7 programs, beginning with schools receiving funding under Title I,
8 part A of the federal elementary and secondary education act of 1965,
9 20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.;
- 10 (4) Assisting public schools with the effective implementation of
11 school library information and technology programs;
- 12 (5) Supporting public schools in evaluating how they are
13 providing opportunities for every student to meet educational
14 technology literacy and fluency goals under RCW 28A.655.075;
- 15 (6) Identifying and sharing assessments and other measures of
16 students' knowledge and skill in the areas of educational technology
17 literacy and technology fluency, under RCW 28A.655.075;
- 18 (7) Producing, in consultation with the Washington state school
19 directors' association, guidance for school districts on the best
20 models and practices for school library information and technology
21 programs; and
- 22 (8) Facilitating adoption of statewide library standards using
23 American association of school librarians and international society
24 for technology in education standards as the basis.

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