



*Learning through Books,  
Media and Technology*

DATE: March 12, 2014

TO: Debra Thacker, Regulations Coordinator  
Administrative Support and Regulations Adoption Unit  
California Department of Education

FM: Janice Gilmore-See, President  
California School Library Association

RE: Recommendations on LCFF Regulations

Thank you for the opportunity to comment during the written comment period on the recently approved regulations for the Local Control Funding Formula.

The California School Library Association (CSLA) strongly supports the intent of the LCFF to ensure that new funds are directed for the purposes outlined in Section 422238.07. This section states that the regulations shall require a school district "to increase or improve services for unduplicated pupils."

### **Requested Amendments to the Regulations**

CSLA believes that the regulations appropriately require districts to prioritize the expansion of crucial academic programs that have been reduced or that need to be expanded in order to ensure the academic progress of English learners, students on free/reduced lunch and/or Foster Youth. However, CSLA would make the following suggested changes:

**Reference Requirements to Provide School Library Services** - CSLA believes that the template should be changed to include specific references to the requirement to provide school library services. Education Code section 18100 specifically requires that all school districts provide school library services. This requirement should be specifically referenced in the regulations given its importance in student literacy and achievement. In referencing this library requirement, the regulations should reference the Model School Library Standards which were approved by the State Board of Education in September 2010.

**Add Language to "Conditions of Learning"** – Under State Priorities on page

*"Doing research on the Web is like using a library assembled piecemeal by pack rats and vandalized nightly."*  
Roger Ebert

*"School libraries help teachers teach and children learn. Children and teachers need library resources--especially books--and the expertise of a librarian to succeed. Books, information technology and school librarians who are part of the schools' professional team are basic ingredients for student achievement."*  
First Lady Laura Bush.

*"Strong School Libraries build Strong Students"*  
CA Campaign for Strong School Libraries

*"...the benefits associated with larger [library] staffing and collections and increased access to technology, databases, and to the library itself are proportionally greater for students who are poor, black, Hispanic, and disabled."* Pennsylvania Study

8 of the Template, CSLA urges that an additional bullet be added between “Basic” and “implementation of State Standards.” While the current template addresses content standards and the need to improve pupil achievement of these standards, it does not ensure that the underlying skills needed for this achievement will be addressed. As a result, an additional bullet should be added that states the following:

**Libraries, Literacy & Research:** Ensure that all students have access to access to instruction in high quality literacy, information content and digital literacy skills, a quality school library, online student safety, and professional development for teachers in using 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology as it allies to learning and teaching.

### **Rationale for the Requested Changes**

School libraries, digital literacy and online safety are critical for the success of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A quality school library and teacher librarians bring a wealth of resources, administration and curriculum to all students in a school, as well as providing needed professional development to faculty and administrators.

**Research Shows the Value of School Libraries** - There is a growing body of research that shows the correlation between a strong school library and student achievement. Yet in California, many school library doors have closed or have had services dramatically reduced. While not all districts have closed their libraries or drastically reduced their library programs, it is this disparity between districts and even schools within the same district that speaks directly to the need for funds to be appropriately targeted. We urge the State Board to firmly address the need for districts to ensure that programs that have been severely reduced during the recession to be expanded and restored.

This research supports the correlation between the presence of the library team (a credentialed teacher librarian and support staff) and higher student achievement. While these data have been confirmed through numerous state studies across the nation, school librarians and the libraries they administer are disappearing. California has consistently led the nation in this downward trend and has the lowest teacher librarian to student ratio in the country.

**Common Core Standards Require Technology and Information Literacy** - With the introduction of the Common Core State Standards, students are required to read more critically, write more persuasively, and interact with information more knowledgeably utilizing the many applications we call “21<sup>st</sup> Century tools.” While we know that students show an incredible affinity for and apparent facility with these tools, librarians and teachers have discovered that students are not adept in using them within an academic environment and the growing number of concerns for student safety support the need for instruction and student support for learning how to behave well online.

Classroom teachers are expected to provide this instruction as a part of their content-specific curriculum and many are discovering that there is little time to prepare for this additional shift alone. Teacher librarian pedagogy specifically addresses these topics and can provide the direct instruction as well as the professional development and support that create a robust 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment.

**Students Have Less Access to School Libraries** – Just as the LCFF is an effort to ensure educational equity for our poor and non-English speaking students, policymakers need to be concerned that most students across California have no access to a strong school library. This major inequity is not addressed by the current requirements in the regulations. California, one of the richest states in the nation and home to the creative genius that thrives in Silicon Valley and other cities across the state, is dead last in

school library services to students. The dismantling of school libraries has shut the door to many students of poverty. This problem of access creates a huge disparity between those who have money to purchase books and computers and those who cannot. The library fills that gap for those students.

Again, thank you again for the opportunity to make our recommendations on the recently approved LCFF regulations. If you would like additional information on the points that I have outlined above or if you have any questions about our recommendations please contact our legislative advocate, Jeff Frost, at (916) 447-8420.

cc: State Board of Education members  
Superintendent Tom Torlakson  
Karen Stapf Walters, Governor's Education Advisor  
Nick Schweizer, Department of Finance  
Chris Ferguson, Department of Finance  
Rich Zeigler, Chief Deputy, Department of Education  
Deb Sigman, Deputy Superintendent, CDE  
Chris Swenson, Accountability Division, CDE  
Tom Adams, Curriculum Frameworks & Instructional Resources Division, CDE