

April 29, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

In so many ways, school librarians are the best bargain in a school district. We provide school-wide ROI. We provide access. We provide equity. Our mission is to transform teaching and learning. We continue to evolve and lead as the tools of the information and communication landscapes emerge and evolve.

An antidote to the frequently narrowed curricula we see in modern school culture, school librarians introduce young people to a rich world of books and literature, options they can select themselves. We lead in building a school's reading culture, acknowledging whatever containers stories may take.

School librarians scout and evaluate emerging technologies and introduce them to the entire learning culture, often leading a school's professional development efforts.

In the largest classrooms in our schools, we work with teachers to develop both traditional and emerging literacies. With our classroom teacher partners, we build instruction; we build projects and assessments that focus on creativity and knowledge building using the information tools and strategies of our time.

School librarians build collections to support formal and informal learning across grade levels and disciplines, curating tools for information discovery, organization, synthesis and creative communication. These new collections support new literacies and leverage the new bounty of open educational resources (OER) supported by the White House's #GoOpen initiative, as well as streamed media, and software for creating and sharing powerful, effectively, ethically produced digital stories. These new collections also involve developing connections and opening our libraries to web-based experiences with experts and authors and classrooms that live outside the walls of our schools.

School librarians curate collections of quality content, as well as the tools learners need to effectively and ethically create and tell their stories. They also ensure ROI on purchased curricular content and the wealth of curricular resources invested in by our states. Without this access, students ignore thousands of dollars of content their parents' tax dollars support. Without physical and intellectual access to these resources, students will not be prepared for the similar high quality academic content they will encounter at the university.

We curate new forms of digital texts. When schools introduce their 1:1, BYOD, Chromebook or iPad roll-outs, it is the librarian who is best positioned to ensure that quality resources and apps are curated on those screens.

School librarians encourage learners to explore their interests and to ask meaningful questions. Through our makerspaces, we engage learners in creative, collaborative STEAM activities, coding, problem solving and in the larger design thinking process, that research tells us is highly valued in the workplace.

We guide learners in inquiry. We ensure that when they ask questions, they exploit rich search toolkits that include high quality databases and ebooks and that they can evaluate sources that include blogs and tweets and magazines and newspapers and wikis, as well as scholarly journals and primary sources and media of all sorts.

As it continues to shift, school librarians teach and model strategies for digital workflow. Through their websites and guides, school libraries organize the information worlds of their schools.

We guide our communities in understanding information ethics. We teach about the growing Creative Commons movement and how to attribute Creative Commons licenses to students' own work. We know the rights and the limits of Fair Use. We guide learners in understanding how to attribute credit, how to cite, how and when to quote regardless of the format of the product.

Teacher librarians are often the only professionals in the building who address the development of proud digital citizens and leaders. We teach learners to be kind bloggers and tweeters and networkers, to understand their digital footprints, to build academic digital footprints and to respect the intellectual property of others when they remix and engage in new forms of communication and storytelling. We move learners from digital citizenship to digital leadership--to participation, ethics, agency

Library is not merely a place to *get* stuff. It is a place to invent, to create, to make stuff, to collaborate on stuff, and to share stuff. It is more kitchen than grocery store--more transformational than transactional.

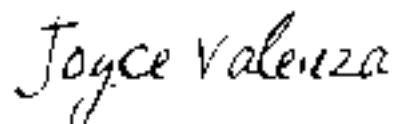
We know and support the whole child, his/her interests and needs that reach beyond solving for X. We offer safe haven when school is a hard place to be.

School librarians ensure that our kids become information and media literate citizens. School libraries are vibrant, central elements of a school's learning culture.

While research shows correlation between school library programs and student achievement, well beyond the kind of intellectual activity measured on high stakes tests, school librarians guide students in building knowledge from the information they gather, analyze and synthesize. We help learners use information to solve problems and make decisions and communicate and collaborate using the tools of their time. We help them become writers and producers and storytellers and networkers and sharers of new knowledge. We help learners discover that what they create should have meaning and audience. That it should make a difference.

School libraries ensure learners have the tools they need to learn, create, think, and share. School librarians ensure that all students have equitable access to these tools. Access to these tools is an intellectual freedom issue. Every child deserves a robust school library program led by a professional, credentialed school librarian.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce Valenza". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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[NeverEndingSearch](#) (*School Library Journal*)