



August 11, 2014

Oregon State Board of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310-0203

Dear Members of the Oregon State Board of Education:

The Oregon Association of School Libraries (OASL), a division of the Oregon Library Association (OLA), is seeking endorsement of the Oregon School Library Standards by the State Board of Education. Representatives from OASL's Executive Board, and the Library Standards Committee would like to make a presentation about this matter at your October board meeting.

The Library Standards Committee was formed in 2010 to update the association's standards for Oregon's school library instruction. The ten members came from all over the state representing private and public schools as well as an educational service district. Together they reviewed many standards, including the guidelines set forth by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), before developing new standards for Oregon school libraries that cover information literacy, reading engagement, social responsibility, and technology integration. In addition, the committee took the extra step of completing a crosswalk between the library standards and the power standards in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects (WHST). The crosswalk is a comparison between the standards in the Oregon School Library Standards and those in the Common Core that use very similar language complement each other and/or support each other. The culmination of that work and other materials related to the library standards can be seen at: <https://sites.google.com/site/oregonschoollibrarystandards/>.

As required by the State Board of Education, classroom teachers work toward a defined set of standards related to their discipline. Licensed teacher-librarians endeavor to work toward standards germane to their curriculum. It makes sense that licensed librarians be held accountable to library standards. The case for standardizing library instruction for all students is, addressed within district Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP).

Two CIP indicators address the need for districts to provide a strong library program with an instructional component. This is one of the indicators:

“The district provides all students and staff in each school with equitable access to a comprehensive library program which provides instruction in information literacy and research proficiencies, promotes integration of digital learning resources, advances reading engagement, and creates collaborative learning opportunities with teachers.” (DTL5.5).

It is the position of OASL that this indicator underscores the need for school library standards endorsed by the state.

Like other educators, licensed teacher-librarians are required to write student goals that target specific standards. Data demonstrating student progress toward meeting the goals is collected. Often school librarians are directed to teach to standards from other disciplines – to find something *related* to library instruction (e.g., ELA & WHST) – because those standards are mandated. At that point, it becomes difficult to connect student learning to library instruction. When licensed librarians collaborate with classroom teachers to teach lessons that target learning standards from their assigned disciplines, students benefit from the reinforcement of similar skills that have cross over from one area to another.

OASL has been dedicated to students and the operation and governance of school libraries for decades. The organization is made up of well-educated individuals who want to provide and commit to standards that will empower students for decades to come. Presently, many of us teach to our non-endorsed library standards, but a stamp of approval from the State Board of Education would support the role of the strong school library program in bolstering reading, literacy and technology skills in students as they learn to access and synthesize information and to use it responsibly and creatively.

The Oregon Department of Education’s webpage about the State Board of Education states that you work “to ensure that every Oregon public school student has equal access to high quality educational services that promote life-long learning and prepare students for their next steps following high school graduation including college, work, and citizenship.” OASL shares this goal, and we believe the library standards play an important role in achieving it.

We look forward to the opportunity to share more information with you at your October meeting,

Sincerely,

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