



INSPIRING EXCELLENCE
IN LIBRARIANSHIP
IN LEARNING

**Testimony to the New Jersey State Board of Education
Presented by Ewa Dziedzic-Elliott, NJASL President
Certified School Library Media Specialist
January 11, 2023**

Hello members of the New Jersey State Board of Education. My name is Ewa Dziedzic-Elliott and I was a School Library Media Specialist for 10 years and currently I am an Education Librarian at The College of New Jersey.

As the President of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), representing almost 600 members of the professional organization of school librarians in our state, I would like to thank the State Board of Education for accepting suggestions to the proposed amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B, State Board of Examiners and Certification. These regulations govern the preparation, licensure, and professional development of educators including School Library Media Specialists (SLMS).

We are very happy that the Department of Education has agreed to amend N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-14.14(e)4i(1) to allow a Commissioner-approved mentoring program to provide a SLMS mentor if no experienced SLMS is available within the school district to mentor the candidate. The Department is also proposing the same amendment at recodified N.J.A.C. 9B14.15(f)3i(1).

(1) A school administrator, principal, or supervisor shall provide supervision during the candidate's provisional year. [[Where possible, [the candidate shall be mentored by] an]] *An* experienced school library media specialist shall mentor the candidate throughout the residency. *If no experienced SLMS is available within the school district to mentor the candidate, an experienced SLMS may be provided by a Commissioner-approved mentoring program. *

As NJASL has a history of working with the New Jersey Department of Education with the NJASL mentoring program and furthermore is considered a Commissioner-approved mentoring program, we feel that this amendment will provide more support for new school library media specialists. An experienced SLMS is able to provide appropriate professional support for a new SLMS rather than a classroom teacher or other educator with no school library experience. Experienced SLMS are able to assist with how to develop instructional activities and units for a school library and have the knowledge of how to develop a successful school library media program that benefits not only the students but also the entire school community. Thank you for agreeing to NJASL's suggestion to provide mentoring support for new school library media specialists.

NJASL is also appreciative of the acceptance of the suggestion to allow the Associate School Library Media Specialist (ASLMS) certificate as listed in N.J.A.C.6A:9B-14.15 to sunset. The ASLMS endorsement is the only endorsement with a subset and by only requiring 18-credits in school library students, it shortchanges students, school districts and even ASLMS as they do

not have the full-set of knowledge that is required for the full SLMS endorsement. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding of the difference in duties for SLMS and ASLMS. Phasing out this redundant endorsement will eliminate that confusion and provide clarity for districts as well as providing for better school library media services for NJ students.

I would also like to inform the State Board of Education that legislative bill, S588, which would require an information literacy standard to be created by the NJ Department of Education was signed by Governor Murphy on January 4 becoming P.L. 2022,c.138 ([Governor's Press Release](#)). NJASL has supported this bill since 2016 and our organization was able to garner bipartisan support for the bill as well as the support of all the NJ educational organizations. Having Information Literacy (IL) as a NJ Student Learning Standard gives strength to the need for the instruction and implementation of Information Literacy. As stated in *#S588: Information Literacy" means a set of skills that enables an individual to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy.* Passing the bill, and incorporating it into NJ law, affirms the role school librarians play in our schools and validates their strong presence in the fabric of the NJ education system.

New Jersey students will be the beneficiaries of this important standard so that all students will have equitable access to how to navigate and evaluate the masses of information which they face everyday. NJASL looks forward to working with the Department of Education in creating this new standard.

On behalf of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians, I appreciate the opportunity to present this testimony. If you would like to discuss anything related to this testimony, please contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

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