

As a member of the Variances to Standards Review Board, I consistently see requests for variances to the library media specialist requirement. Due to this, I would propose the following changes be considered to Rule 10.55.709 dealing with library media specialists.

(1) The school library shall be housed in a central location, and each school shall have a licensed and endorsed library media specialist at the following ratio:

(a).5 FTE for schools with 126-250 students;

(b) 1 FTE for schools with 251-500 students;

(c) 1.5 FTE for schools with 501-1000 students and 1 full-time paraprofessional;

(d) 2 FTE for schools with 1001-1500 students;

(e) 2.5 FTE for schools with 1501-2000 students and 1 full-time paraprofessional;

(f) 3 FTE for schools with 2001 or more students.

(2) Schools of fewer than 126 students shall employ or contract with a licensed and endorsed school library media specialist.

(3) If a district has fewer than 126 students, the district may utilize a consortium, multidistrict agreement, or interlocal cooperative to secure these services.

The reason for this change would be due to the shortage of teachers available to hire for positions in our school districts. It is VERY difficult to find full-time teachers, making a part-time position nearly impossible. Yes, a school district could choose to hire 2 full-time librarians when a ½ time position is needed, however, this may be at the expense of another teaching position in the District that has more constant and direct student contact. It is more cost effective to use a paraprofessional under the direction of the librarian for non-student contact tasks such as shelving, collection management in the computer systems, and weeding of titles.

Sincerely,  
Shelly Weight  
Forsyth High School  
7-12 Principal