

To whom it may concern:

Teacher-librarians are an essential aspect of a student-centered school. **Elise Artzen's recommendation for removing a required librarian-student ratio in Montana schools should be avoided at all costs.** The negative impact on students cannot be overstated, impacting overall literacy as well as research/information literacy skills.

The way I see it, Artzen's proposal will effectively change the position of librarians from teachers to administrators. The last thing our schools need is more administrators: what we need are skilled teachers on the ground teaching students to love reading AND the skills to find valid and reliable information.

The Information Literacy / Library Media standards that teacher-librarians are charged with teaching is one of the most important skills that a person needs upon graduating from high school. Second only to literacy, being able to find valid and reliable sources about a variety of topics is essential to informed participation in a democracy.

I do recognize the need for change in the current standards, as our district has been applying for variances to the accreditation standards for each of our four schools. To this end, **I would like to see Task Force suggestion (as quoted below) adopted:**

(1) The school library shall be housed in a central location, and each school **system** shall have a licensed and endorsed library media specialist(s) 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;~~

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

~~(e) 2.5 FTE for schools with 1501-2000 students;~~

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

1. A minimum equivalent of one full-time library media specialist for each 500 (K-12) students shall be provided. The library media specialist/student ratio shall be prorated.

(2) Schools **systems** of fewer than **426 250** students shall employ or contract with a licensed and endorsed school library media specialist.

(3) If a **district school system** has fewer than **426 150** students, the **district school system** may utilize a consortium, multidistrict agreement, or interlocal cooperative to secure these services.

Please contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

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(she/her)  
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