

Resources Lost when Licensed School Librarian are Cut

When schools cut costs by eliminating a librarian position, they not only lose a partner for collaboration in student research and learning, they lose their connection to valuable resources, as well. The state of Massachusetts through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) provides, to schools that retain licensed School Library Teachers, resources in many forms: databases, ebooks, grants, professional development, and more. To see MLS's detailed requirements for a school's eligibility to access resources, please link to membership requirements by clicking on this [link](http://guides.masslibsystem.org/membership): (<http://guides.masslibsystem.org/membership>) and open the "membership forms" eligibility document.

These requirements make sense, as someone without a librarian's education and licensure would not have the knowledge and skills to deliver the resources offered by the state library system. Students, whose schools employ licensed School Library Teachers, have access to the following:

- **Databases** such as *Gale U.S. History In Context*, *Gale World History In Context*, *Gale Science In Context*, *Opposing Viewpoints*, *Britannica Encyclopedia Online* (all levels, K-12), and many more. A certified librarian, in addition to making these resources easily accessible on a school's website, also teaches students and faculty how to identify and evaluate the information in the databases and how to conduct effective searches.
- **EBooks & Audiobooks**: Thousands of audiobooks and ebooks at greatly discounted prices.
- **Digital Commonwealth**: A state organization dedicated to preserving institutional archives. Many school librarians have, through the Digital Commonwealth, digitized yearbooks, for example.
- **MBLC Grants** ranging from \$7,500 to \$30,000 for projects related to improving accessibility, STEM Learning, Civics, Financial Literacy, health literacy, innovative ideas, and more.

According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), during the 2017-2018 school year there were 1,847 schools (of all levels) in Massachusetts. However, MLS had approximately 900 schools enrolled in its programs that year, about half of all MA schools (see data at this link: <http://guides.masslibsystem.org/membership>).

Isn't it time to provide equity across the state for **ALL** our students and give them the access and skills to Massachusetts' quality resources by requiring that schools employ certified school librarians?