

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5102

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Education

**Title:** An act relating to school library information and technology programs.

**Brief Description:** Concerning school library information and technology programs.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Frame, Hunt, Liias, Saldaña, Trudeau, Valdez and Wilson, C.).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 3/21/23, 3/27/23 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill  
(As Amended By Committee)**

- Requires school district boards of directors to provide resources and materials for the operation of school library information and technology (LIT) programs, and to ensure that each student has access to an LIT program that meets specified requirements.
- Requires school districts to adopt policies and procedures related to district obligations for LIT programs and student access.
- Permits school districts meeting specified requirements to staff LIT programs with noncertificated staff members that are overseen by a certificated teacher-librarian.
- Requires school districts with more than 2,000 enrolled students to employ a minimum of one teacher-librarian for every 1,000 enrolled students.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide data, information, summaries of best practices, and other assistance to school districts for the purpose of implementing LIT

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

program requirements.

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Callan, Eslick, Harris, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, Sandlin, Stonier and Timmons.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Rude, Ranking Minority Member; McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McClintock and Steele.

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

### **Background:**

#### Library Information and Technology Programs.

School district boards of directors must provide resources and materials for the operation of school library information and technology (LIT) programs that they deem necessary for the proper education of the district's students or as otherwise required by law or administrative rule.

An LIT program is a school-based program that is staffed by a certificated teacher-librarian and provides a broad, flexible array of services, resources, and instruction that support student mastery of the state learning standards.

The teacher-librarian, through an LIT program, must collaborate as an instructional partner to help all students meet the content goals in all subject areas, and assist high school students completing High School and Beyond Plans required for graduation.

The teacher-librarian's duties may also include collaborating with schools to:

- integrate information and technology into curricula and instruction;
- provide information management instruction to students and staff about how to effectively use emerging learning technologies for school and lifelong learning, as well as in the appropriate use of computers and mobile devices in an educational setting;
- help teachers and students efficiently and effectively access the highest quality information available while using information ethically;
- instruct students in digital citizenship, including how to be critical consumers of information and provide guidance about thoughtful and strategic use of online resources; and
- create a culture of reading in the school community by developing a diverse, student-

focused collection of materials.

Some funding for teacher-librarian positions is provided in the state prototypical school funding model that is used for traditional public schools, with different funding ratios for elementary, middle, and high schools. With some exceptions, the distribution formulae are for allocation purposes only, meaning school districts have significant discretion over how the provided moneys are used.

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### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

School district boards of directors are expressly directed to provide resources and materials for the operation of LIT programs, with provisions granting districts discretion in determining the amount of provided resources and materials deleted. The boards of directors must also ensure that each student has access to an LIT program that meets specified requirements. Additionally, beginning with the 2023-24 school year, school districts of the first class (school districts with more than 2,000 enrolled students) must employ a minimum of one teacher-librarian for every 1,000 enrolled students.

By September 1, 2024, each school district must adopt or amend:

- a policy acknowledging the requirement for boards of directors to provide every student with access to LIT programs; and
- procedures describing how students can access resources and materials from those programs.

Provisions specifying that LIT programs must be staffed by a certificated teacher-librarian are modified to specify that they must be overseen by a certificated teacher-librarian. The statutory list of delineated duties of teacher-librarians is amended to include overseeing classified staff, including library technicians, library assistants, and others to implement the school LIT program.

A school district with fewer than 2,000 students may staff an LIT program with a noncertificated staff member if the district has made all reasonable efforts to staff the program with a certificated teacher-librarian. In these circumstances, a school district is encouraged to partner with a nonprofit or government entity, including a public library, regional library, or public institution of higher education, to provide staffing services.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must provide data, information, summaries of best practices, and other assistance to school districts for the purpose of implementing LIT program requirements.

### **Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:**

The amended bill changes the engrossed substitute bill by requiring, beginning with the

2023-24 school year, school districts of the first class (school districts with more than 2,000 enrolled students) to employ a minimum of one teacher-librarian for every 1,000 enrolled students.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Society is in the digital age—it is not using card catalogs, but a firehose called the internet and it is helpful to know how to use the information and understand its limitations. A United Nations report speaks to the importance of this issue. The role of the librarian is important. Previous technology changes led to databases with limited accessibility, but they are now widely available. The legislation recognizes the role of librarians, including in small, remote districts. Librarians have the knowledge to put programs into effect and to direct library programs properly.

This bill includes several provisions requested by small school districts, including additional flexibility. School libraries should be staffed by teacher-librarians, but giving smaller districts additional flexibility is helpful. This bill closes an existing loophole of discretion that has resulted in financial support being directed away from libraries.

The support for this bill has increased as it has progressed through the Legislature. Concerns about the original version of the bill have been resolved and the bill should be supported. Teacher-librarians are critical instructional partners. Students deserve equitable access to the services that teacher-librarians provide.

Teacher-librarians are curricular experts. Many students grow up without access to librarians in an increasingly disingenuous and dangerous digital world. The need for teacher librarians has never been greater, but budget cuts are frequently directed at library programs.

Teacher-librarians expand student knowledge, make the day-to-day lives of students better, and are an integral part of every school. Teacher-librarians have an extensive knowledge of literature and texts and make technology and knowledge accessible to students. They also have specialized learning and training that cultivates skills for life-long learning, empower students to think critically, help students access age and skill-appropriate texts, and promote digital learning and citizenship.

Libraries are central gathering hubs for learning and teacher-librarians are the people who make those function. Librarians are an essential part of a student's success and were critical during remote learning. Librarians brought learning home through remote technology and to homes through book delivery. Having regular or daily access to a teacher librarian has significantly improved student performance, as teacher-librarians respond to needs that are not being supported in the classroom.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Lisa Wellman, prime sponsor; Benjamin Kort; Roman Wright; Alisha Doucette; Laura Sheppard; Eryn Duffee, Washington Library Association ; ManChui Leung; Craig Seasholes; Carolyn Logue, Washington Library Association; Jennifer Loughrey; Jacob Burton; Rick Chisa, Public School Employees of Washington; Lisa Layera; and Stacey Ostrin.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.