



ITEM Statement in support of HF 950

The Information and Technology Educators of Minnesota (ITEM) firmly support HF 950 . I want to draw your attention to article 7 section 2 which offers a change to the definition of a school library media center which states one should employ a licensed library media specialist, in alignment with the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) position on [staffing](#) and [an effective school library](#). Enacting this definition and level of staffing ensures all MN students and staff will have access to the following:

Licensed School Media Specialists provide:

- “Literacy leadership” as school librarians are positioned to elevate the importance of reading as well as reading proficiency to support all learners’ academic success. Decades of research indicate that there is a positive correlation between learners’ attending schools with full-time, state-certified school librarians and higher scores on standardized reading tests (Gretes 2013)” ([AASL](#)).
- Developmentally appropriate print and digital resources tailored to the school program that will further students’ personal and academic goals, curated by a licensed school library media specialist.
- Instructional leadership which “plays a prominent role in instructing learners, faculty, and administrators through literacies, including print, textual, visual, information, media, news, and digital literacies” and is “uniquely positioned to teach every student and the school community through traditional, blended, and distance learning” ([AASL](#)).
- Crucial staff professional development on current and ever evolving digital learning and literacy resources. SLMS are uniquely positioned to co-teach and collaborate with educators across all K-12 content areas, as the [ITEM standards](#) are embedded in every MN content area.

An Effective School Library Media Center provides:

- “An effective school library that plays a critical role of preparing learners for life in an information-rich society” ([AASL](#)).
- The school library focuses on accessing and evaluating information using a variety of engaging and relevant resources; providing training and experiences for digital learning; and developing a culture of reading.([AASL](#))
- Statistically significant positive impacts on student learning regardless of socioeconomic status, with a higher impact on students of color and students in poverty ([School Libraries Work!](#) pgs 16 and 9).
- An effective school library plays a crucial role in bridging digital and socioeconomic divides. School libraries staffed with state-certified professionals provide an approachable, equitable, personalized learning environment necessary for every learner’s well-rounded education.([AASL](#))

“First and foremost, effective school library programs are led by certified school librarians who actively participate in the instructional programs of their schools,” said AASL President Audrey Church. “This collaborative instruction between classroom teachers and school librarians is then supported by collections of up-to-date materials in a variety of formats.”