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Illinois School Library Media Association

December 22, 2016

Dear Superintendent Smith, Chairman Meeks and Members of the Illinois State Board of Education,

As educators, school librarians are concerned with the development of the Whole Child and want to see a state ESSA Plan that is focused on equity between schools and districts, as well as among services for populations. As the state ESSA Draft Plan is being considered by leadership in Springfield, the Illinois School Library Media Association would like to emphasize the following library and librarian focused opportunities to support student achievement and more equitable education across the state:

1. We ask that ISBE retain the statutory required component in the second draft "How the LEA will identify and address disparities in library resources."
2. We ask that ISBE require licensed school librarians in the IL Administrative Code.
3. We ask that ISBE adopt the *Linking for Learning* guidelines as the framework for measuring effective school library programs.
4. We ask that ISBE use a small portion of its federal MTSS (multi-tiered system of support) funding to maintain a "statewide support liaison" dedicated to school libraries.

The school library is the largest classroom in the school, allowing children to explore interests, problem solve, and build information literacy skills. School libraries promote and encourage well-rounded, collaborative, lifelong learners. Licensed school librarians provide a wide variety of programs for students to participate and are trained to select high-quality materials and literature that support student interests, as well as Common Core. Illinois school librarians are equipped to help students navigate digital media and become socially responsible users of information in our fast-paced world and help foster an appreciation of literature and a love of reading in our students.

We thank you for continuing the dialog and for taking the time to listen to feedback from the Illinois stakeholders who have a vested interest in our students and their education.

Sincerely,

Patti Fleser  
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