

Advocacy Corner

April 2020 | Hillary Marshall

Despite the plethora of ScLD members' phone calls, emails, and testimony before both the House and Senate Education Committees, and the ScLD members who advocated directly with their statewide legislators on WLA Legislative Day, our School Library bill (House Bill 2637/Senate Bill 6371) was snuffed out during this past Legislative session.

Our original appeal asked for 3 key points:

1. A position at OSPI to represent all WA K-12 librarians that would lead a statewide research study of Teacher Librarian statistical effectiveness to their school community.
2. Clarify written language of current law that school boards must have a school library program, rather than "as they deem necessary".
3. 1.0 FTE certified Teacher Librarian at every school in WA.

Throughout the legislative session, there were various amendments and deletions to this bill and we had strong backing with Representative Pettigrew. However, our bill smoldered out in the Senate. After this defeat, I was emotionally drained and needed time to breathe, reflect, and consider the next steps. Moving government policy into law takes concentrated, consistent work that represents all stakeholders involved. Librarians have an amazing opportunity to shine during this COVID-19 pandemic to be an online light for our patrons and our communities. We had a strong voice during this legislative session, but it was just the librarian's voices. Next legislative session, we need to bring our students, parents, administrators, and legislators who have a first-hand experience with the impact librarians have on their community. So, it's up to us to show them that impact regularly and my Advocacy Call to Action is:

April is [National School Library Month in which school librarians](#) are encouraged to host activities to help their school and local community celebrate the essential role that strong school libraries play in transforming learning. Let's leverage our @WLA_School (WLA ScLD twitter account), @wlasclD (WLA ScLD Facebook account) and @WALIBASSN (WLA twitter account) by sharing all of the ways you are connecting with your community and providing assistance in a time of great stress, worry, uncertainty, and misinformation. Also, mark your calendars for the week of April 19-25 and participate in [#LibrarySnapshot](#) which is a co-sponsored WLA/Washington State Library Snapshot Week of "happenings" (even if they are socially distanced). Now is the time to rally our troops (all stakeholders who use our libraries) and vividly show why school libraries matter!

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