

Letter from a parent

Dear Senator _____,

I am writing to ask that you support Senate Bill # 6380 that will provide much-needed funding for our school libraries. Libraries are an essential part of every school, and when library programs are cut back, everyone suffers – children, teachers, and communities.

I know this because the librarian at my daughter's school was cut back to half time this year. Last year my 7 year old surpassed what I know about PowerPoint because of the training her teacher-librarian gave her. This year she has yet to use the library computers once, unless looking at the card catalog counts. Last year, for example, a dinosaur unit being studied in the classroom was brought to life by her teacher librarian, who not only pushed them to learn the geologic periods but also laid the foundation for university-level research practices. I know, because I was there helping to hand out the research manuals and tools that the teacher-librarian had selected for them to use. But that was last year. This year, halfway through the school year, my daughter has done no research whatsoever. Last year I watched the teacher librarian train the children how to help each other and to work as a team in the library; whether it be searching the internet, using computer programs or finding materials, the teacher-librarian empowered them and inspired them to be independent learners, she stimulated their curiosity, and gave them the freedom to learn by themselves. All that productive and transforming energy is now dormant, unable to prosper because the library is closed.

Please do everything you can to bring funding to our school libraries in this session so that more children won't be relegated to a supermarket system come September 2008. The stakes couldn't be higher. My daughter is a voracious reader, and under the stewardship of her full-time teacher-librarian last year her passion for reading was nurtured and augmented. This year early on she got excited, really excited, about a book she'd heard about and made plans to check it out at the library. Later that day she reported, with some despondence, 'Mom, the card catalog said it should be there but it wasn't. The librarian doesn't have time to help us anymore.' Now, she brings home books she read two years ago. She's lost a guide, a guide to the skills she will depend on to succeed in school, work and life.

Please support this bill.

Sincerely,