



## **Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates**

June 13, 2017

Dear Commissioner Wagner and ESSA Planning Team,

I am writing as Chair of Rhode Island's Coalition of Library Advocates, a grassroots library support group that seeks to improve the quality of life for all Rhode Islanders. I behalf of COLA, we request that RIDE's Draft ESSA State plan be revised to incorporate grants in Title IV, Part A, to support increased student achievement with innovative programs and resources in school library media programs. RI's Basic Education Program (BEP) requires all schools and local education districts (LEA) to provide a high-quality education for all RI public school students K-12 and requires all schools to provide effective high-quality school library media programs with equitable access to school library media resources and instruction in information literacy standards (BEP Chapter 13, G-13-1.3.11) Unfortunately, the current draft RIDE Plan for ESSA funding does not identify innovative school library media programs for grant funding at a time when LEA's financial support for resources and instruction to enhance student learning in school libraries is decreasing.

Effective school library media programs have school library media specialists who empower students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information and who ensures all students have equitable access to resources and receive instruction in information literacy with opportunities: 1. to read widely for lifelong learning; 2. to access, evaluate, use, and share new knowledge using a variety of information resources (print, visual, media, and digital); 3. to problem-solve using diverse sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultural perspectives; and 4. to use information ethically by respecting others' ideas and acknowledging their contributions. (RI BEP G-13-1.3.11)

RIDE's ESSA plan should provide grants for School Library Media Activities in Title IV Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Funds with "Activities for well-rounded educational opportunities" and "Activities for Effective Use of Technology." RIDE's plan should provide opportunities for grants for Title IV for LEAs to improve the use of technology with digital literacy instruction and activities in school libraries. The school library media specialist in each school can increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by instruction in technology and providing equitable resources for all students including digital media information literacy skills. Thus, it is essential to ensure all students have equitable access to library media resources and instruction by a library media specialist. ESSA can provide innovative grant funding for creative library media programs. Please add School Library Media resources, activities, and programs to ESSA Title IV Part A to provide the stimulus for innovative grants to create new opportunities to increase student achievement and success.

During these critical budget times, it is imperative that RIDE incorporate ESSA Title IV, A, grant funds for student success with access to resources in school libraries, instruction, and programs by certified school librarians with innovative activities to enhance learning.

Thank you in advance for consideration of this request to add school library media programs to ESSA.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Cheryl A. McCarthy, Chair

RI Coalition of Library Advocates

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