

ASSEMBLY, No. 1712

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:

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SYNOPSIS

Requires certain ratios of school library media specialists to students in public schools.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/16/2024)

1 AN ACT concerning school library media specialists employed in
2 public schools and supplementing chapter 27 of Title 18A of the
3 New Jersey Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. a. (1) In each public school having an enrollment of less
9 than 300 students on October 15 of the prior school year, the board
10 of education shall employ, at a minimum, one half-time staff
11 member who holds an educational services certificate with a school
12 library media specialist endorsement.

13 (2) In each public school having an enrollment of between 300
14 and 1,499 students on October 15 of the prior school year, the board
15 of education shall employ, at a minimum, one full-time staff
16 member who holds an educational services certificate with a school
17 library media specialist endorsement.

18 (3) In each public school having an enrollment of 1,500 or more
19 students on October 15 of the prior school year, the board of
20 education shall employ, at a minimum, two full-time staff members
21 who hold an educational services certificate with a school library
22 media specialist endorsement.

23 b. The Commissioner of Education may, upon application by a
24 board of education, waive the staffing requirements established
25 pursuant to subsection a. of this section for up to one school year if
26 the application demonstrates that the school was unable to find a
27 certified school library media specialist and that an offer of
28 employment was made to a certified school library media specialist.
29 The commissioner may not grant more than two waivers within a
30 period of five school years.

31 c. In addition to the staffing requirements established pursuant
32 to subsection a. of this section, a public school having an
33 enrollment of 500 or more students on October 15 of the prior
34 school year shall employ, at a minimum, one full-time staff member
35 to serve as a library clerk, and shall employ one additional full-time
36 staff member to serve as a library clerk for each additional 500
37 students enrolled in the school.

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39 2. a. A school library media specialist employed pursuant to
40 section 1 of this act in a secondary school in the district shall:

41 (1) in a secondary school having an enrollment of less than 100
42 students on October 15 of the prior school year, devote at least one
43 period in each school day to school library work;

44 (2) in a secondary school having an enrollment of between 100
45 and 299 students on October 15 of the prior school year, devote at
46 least two periods in each school day to school library work;

1 (3) in a secondary school having an enrollment of between 300
2 and 499 students on October 15 of the prior school year, devote at
3 least one-half of each school day to school library work;

4 (4) in a secondary school having an enrollment of between 500
5 and 699 students on October 15 of the prior school year, devote at
6 least five periods in each school day to school library work; and

7 (5) in a secondary school having an enrollment of 700 or more
8 students on October 15 of the prior school year, devote the full
9 school day to school library work.

10 b. As used in this section, “school library work” means the
11 delivery of instruction in information literacy skills; the
12 development and coordination of school library media programs
13 and resources; and the delivery of instruction in the evaluation,
14 selection, organization, distribution, creation, and utilization of
15 school library media.

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17 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first be
18 applicable to the first full school year following enactment.

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STATEMENT

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23 This bill establishes minimum ratios of school library media
24 specialists to students required in school districts. The ratios are:

25 • in each public school having an enrollment of less than 300
26 students on October 15 of the prior school year, the board of
27 education is required to employ, at a minimum, one half-
28 time staff member who holds an educational services
29 certificate with a school library media specialist
30 endorsement;

31 • in each public school having an enrollment of between 300
32 and 1,499 students on October 15 of the prior school year,
33 the board of education is required to employ, at a minimum,
34 one full-time staff member who holds an educational
35 services certificate with a school library media specialist
36 endorsement; and

37 • in each public school having an enrollment of 1,500 or more
38 students on October 15 of the prior school year, the board of
39 education is required to employ, at a minimum, two full-
40 time staff members who hold an educational services
41 certificate with a school library media specialist
42 endorsement.

43 The bill specifies how much time in each school day the school
44 library media specialist is required to devote to school library work
45 in public secondary schools, which is dependent upon the
46 enrollment in the school.

47 The bill also requires a public school having an enrollment of
48 500 or more students on October 15 of the prior school year to

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1 employ a minimum of one full-time staff member to serve as a
2 library clerk, and to employ one additional full-time staff member
3 to serve as a library clerk for each additional 500 students enrolled
4 in the school.

5 In order to be college- and career-ready in the twenty-first
6 century, students must be able to use a wide range of information
7 resources including books, media, technology, and the Internet. All
8 students must be able to locate, evaluate, and interpret information
9 accurately for academic and professional success.

10 A qualified school library media specialist is uniquely suited
11 through educational training and professional development to
12 provide this educational foundation for all students. Many states
13 currently require school library media specialists in their schools
14 and most use student enrollment to determine the number of school
15 library media specialists the schools employ.