

Fully funding libraries  
**via a dedicated source of funding**  
is the best bargain and gets the  
best results for Georgia's schools.



# The Biggest Classroom in School

**D**igital literacy is only increasing in importance, and 83% of teachers agree that the amount of information available online today is overwhelming for most students.<sup>1</sup> Media specialists teach students how to navigate the digital landscape—effectively and *safely*.

**H**aving a certified, highly-qualified library media specialist has repeatedly correlated with increased student achievement in decades of studies of both quantitative and qualitative measures.<sup>2</sup>

**M**edia specialists are teacher librarians: they are research experts with master's degrees who teach students how to access, evaluate, and use information and technology to build knowledge.

**T**hey know the latest technologies and which devices are most cost-effective when it comes to maintenance, operating costs, and versatility. They also ensure that expensive equipment is being used effectively instead of gathering dust.

**A** huge part of the teachers' support system:

- Each librarian spends an average of 14.5 hours each week instructing students, teachers, and staff,<sup>3</sup> and is an invaluable member of the collaborative instructional team.
- They also work individually with teachers developing research tools and lesson plans to augment the current curriculum.
- The librarian can be a principal's best resource for affordable, ongoing professional development for the entire faculty.

- A school's library media program is the **great equalizer**: it provides media materials and guidance to all students and all teachers regardless of demographics.
- Studies in 14 different states (including Florida, North Carolina, and Texas) show that a strong library media program helps students learn more and score higher on standardized achievement tests than their peers in library-impooverished schools.<sup>4</sup>
- A robust, well-funded media program provides targeted resources to address learning deficits in children who are falling behind their peers. It is also where students who are *ahead* of their peers can continue to be academically stimulated and stay engaged in their schoolwork.
- A fully funded library is the ideal environment for the enhancement and growth of existing government initiatives like the Governor's Grade Level Reading program, and our state's current emphasis on STEM and CTAE education.
- No matter how poor or rich a community is, students tend to perform better on reading tests when their library programs are in the hands of trained library media specialists.

**A Media Specialist is like an iceberg:**  
when you visit the library you only see 10% of what  
they do. The most important parts of a trained  
librarian's role are hidden underneath the surface.

<sup>1</sup> AASL Infographic School Librarians Transform Learning, ALA's American Libraries Magazine, Sep/Oct 2014

<sup>2</sup> The Biggest Classroom in the Building, Phi Delta Kappan April 2014 95: 65-67

<sup>3</sup> School Libraries Count! National Longitudinal Survey of School Library Programs, American Library Association, 2012

<sup>4</sup> School Library Fact Sheet, American Library Association