



May 3, 2017

[SB 196](#) by Sen. Sylvia Garcia (SD 6, Houston): relating to a notification requirement if a public school, including an open-enrollment charter school, does not have a nurse, school counselor, or librarian assigned to the school during all instructional hours

### Background

This is a parental notification bill only, it **DOES NOT require or mandate** that schools hire full time, certified, librarians, nurses, or counselors. It does ask schools to be transparent about their decision.

Sen. Garcia asked TASLA, TASL and TLA for feedback on the original bill as filed. We asked that language defining a librarian be added, and she agreed.

The Senate Education Committee's substitute version of the bill:

- Requires public schools, including open-enrollment charter schools, to inform parents if the school does not have a nurse, school counselor or librarian assigned to the school during all instructional hours
- Defines "librarian" as a librarian licensed under Chapter 21, Subsection A, Section 21.003 (a), Texas Education Code  
Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Subsection A, Section 21.003(a): CERTIFICATION REQUIRED. (a) A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.
- Defines the equivalent of a full-time librarian (and nurse and counselor) as having two or more librarians, as applicable assigned to the school, and at least one librarian to cover all regular student instructional hours during a regular school day

Schools can comply with the notification requirement by posting the information on their websites.

There is precedence for schools to provide parental notification when schools staff classrooms with inappropriately certified or uncertified staff.

Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Sec. 21.057. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION. (a) A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom.

The bill was heard by the Senate Education Committee on April 11. Becky Calzada, TASL chair, testified in favor of the bill on behalf of TASLA, TASL and TLA. The bill passed the Senate on May 2.

The House sponsor is Rep. Garnet Coleman (HD 147, Houston). He substituted the SB 196 language into his bill **HB 1847** (*originally just addressed nurses on campus*). The bill was heard by the Public Education Committee on May 2 and left pending.

### **Talking Points**

Ask your Representative to vote in favor of the House Public Education Committee's substitute version of HB 1847 by Representative Coleman.

This bill **does not mandate or require** school districts to hire certified staff. It **only** asks them to be transparent about their decision.

*Many times, school libraries are staffed by paraprofessionals who are mistakenly called "librarians" because they are attempting to keep up with or deliver library services. This leads to confusion and an incorrect parent / community assumption that their child's school is providing an effective school library program.*

Students without access to a full-time, certified school librarian on campus during all instructional hours are missing curriculum instruction in research skills and information literacy. This instruction is needed for success in our global society.

Parents have a right to know when their child does not have access to a critical teacher, like the school librarian, because they deliver instruction in research and information literacy. They hold a specialized certification to teach these skills.

School librarians are critical to student learning and achievement on a campus. There is research supporting this instructional need, which only a certified school librarian can provide.

To earn certification, school librarians must hold a master's degree, pass a graduate-level exam on library media functions and supporting school curricula, plus have two years of classroom teaching experience.

Studies show improved test scores when a school has a full time, certified librarian.

It's not just about checking out books! School librarians are teachers. As such, checking out books is a very minor role. School librarians are instructional leaders, program administrators, and information specialists. Every student on campus is on their class list.

They work with every student in the school, teaching them to think critically, nurturing creativity, and providing resources and support. Students who develop research skills are better problem solvers.

Librarians provide instruction in research, reading, and information/ digital literacy. This instruction is both direct and indirect, which supports students and teachers when they are in the library and back in their classrooms.

As teachers, school librarians collaborate with the other teachers on campus to support curriculum standards across every content area.

Librarians partner with classroom teachers by providing resources and materials to meet diverse needs, develop curriculum and connect educators to current trends.

**Sample call:**

*Hello my name is Mary Martinez and I live at 123 Main Street, zip code 76145 in Senator Smith's district. I'm calling to ask her to support Senate Bill 196 by Senator Sylvia Garcia. The bill is currently pending in the Senate Education Committee.*

*This bill requires a school to notify parents if there is not certified school librarian, nurse or school counselor present on their child's campus during all instructional hours. Parents have a right to this information.*

*Students without access to a full-time, certified school librarian on campus during all instructional hours are missing curriculum instruction in research skills and information literacy. This instruction is needed for success in our global society.*

*Parents have a right to know when their child does not have access to a critical teacher, like the school librarian, because they deliver instruction in research and information literacy. They hold a specialized certification to teach these skills.*

*As a constituent of district 7, I'd like her to support this important bill so that parents are informed about the services available to their students when making educational choices about schools. I'd be happy to discuss this further with Senator Smith if she or anyone on the staff would like to know more.*

Additional information about making the call, or sending a fax or email--feel free to identify yourself as a librarian. You can change up the wording to meet your own situation. Most of the time, they are just tallying results. The most important thing is to get at least two other people to call. If they just hear from one constituent, it's easy to assume it's not a widespread opinion. When it approaches several in a day, they start to pay attention.