

Empowered by Libraries



Libraries across the Commonwealth are providing critical services to communities.



MCAS reading scores (English Language Art-ELA) for grades 3 through 10 continue a three-year downward trend.

Third grade reading level is a critical predictor of future educational success and kids who struggle with reading in third grade are less likely to graduate high school. Yet **56% of Massachusetts 3rd graders** are only partially meeting or not meeting expectations on the English Language Arts MCAS. Years of research has shown that good school libraries, ones with licensed school library teachers, lead to greater student achievement.

Attempts to restrict access to books and book challenges are happening at a record number in Massachusetts.

According to the **American Library Association**, there were 37 book challenges in Massachusetts in 2023 affecting 63 titles. Prior to 2019, there were less than 4 challenges a year with some years recording zero challenges. Licensed school library teachers are required to have a master's degree in library and information science or a master's of education in library media. They work with educators to curate collections that support curriculum, provide diverse perspectives, and give students access to experiences that are different from their own. Licensed school library teachers ensure that students are ready to participate in a diverse society.



Research skills and the ability to identify misinformation online are critical in today's world.

Over 95% of parents/caregivers say that it's important/somewhat important for their children to develop research skills and over 90% want their children to understand how to identify misinformation online. * Licensed school library teachers teach research skills, critical thinking and the importance of looking at the context of information. They develop library curriculum and programming that helps students navigate digital privacy and social media. These media literacy skills are critical for children of all ages who are exposed to an online world at a younger age than ever before.

In Massachusetts, students in schools that have Licensed School Library teachers have more access to educational and cultural resources.

Those resources include the statewide Commonwealth eBook Collection for K-12 schools which ranks 1st in New England, 2nd in the nation, and 3rd in the world for checkouts. They also have access to statewide research databases. Last year, there were over 8 million full text downloads from these databases.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the newest technology, but it won't be the last.

Licensed school library teachers teach both staff and students how to use the latest technology. They work with teachers to incorporate emerging technologies into the classroom and familiarize children with meaningful tech skills. Licensed school library teachers are uniquely equipped to respond to the challenge of teaching and learning with AI, from the ethics behind its use, to instruction and impact of use, as well as the detection of AI in assignments and coursework.

**From 2019 library user and non-user survey conducted by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners*