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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 987 Session of  
2010

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INTRODUCED BY LONGIETTI, OCTOBER 5, 2010

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, OCTOBER  
5, 2010

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A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the State Board of Education with the Department of  
2 Education to conduct a study of the Commonwealth's public  
3 school library services for students in kindergarten through  
4 grade 12, measuring and comparing access to print and  
5 electronic resources, professional support and instruction in  
6 the use of information and research among this Commonwealth's  
7 public school entities and evaluating how funding and  
8 resources are allocated for school library services in  
9 relation to student and community circumstances.

10 WHEREAS, Up-to-date school libraries include printed  
11 materials, computers and technology, video and audio materials,  
12 research tools and professional instruction and support for  
13 students; and

14 WHEREAS, Effective school libraries include a variety of  
15 instructional and educational programs designed to meet the  
16 needs of all students, including gifted students, students with  
17 disabilities, English as a second language students, students in  
18 poverty and students from different racial and cultural  
19 backgrounds; and

20 WHEREAS, Students and teachers need high-quality school  
21 library services and related educational resources in order to

1 meet this Commonwealth's academic standards for research and  
2 learning in all core academic subjects, specifically addressing  
3 competencies in Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System that  
4 require students to be able to "analyze and evaluate information  
5 from a variety of sources for relevance to the research  
6 question, topic or thesis"; and

7 WHEREAS, In a study of this Commonwealth's school libraries  
8 conducted in 1999-2000, a significant correlation between  
9 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment reading test scores of  
10 students and schools with quality school library programs and  
11 staffing proved the impact of school libraries on improved  
12 student achievement; and

13 WHEREAS, Similar studies in 19 other states conducted over  
14 the past 16 years have supported the findings of this  
15 Commonwealth's study and demonstrated the role that school  
16 libraries play in student learning; and

17 WHEREAS, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has  
18 identified information, media and technology skills necessary  
19 "to ensure that students emerge from our schools with the skills  
20 needed to be effective citizens, workers and leaders in the 21st  
21 century"; and

22 WHEREAS, Not all of this Commonwealth's students attend a  
23 public school that has a school library, and this is  
24 particularly true in impoverished rural and urban communities  
25 with larger numbers of at-risk children; and

26 WHEREAS, Access to and instruction by a certified school  
27 librarian is also nonexistent in many schools or limited in  
28 school districts where librarians serve in multiple buildings,  
29 thus reducing hours the school library is open and available to  
30 students and teachers; and

1       WHEREAS, This Commonwealth does not have any requirements for  
2 public schools to operate a school library or to have certified  
3 staffing, although the Public School Code does require school  
4 libraries and staffing for private schools; and

5       WHEREAS, This Commonwealth does not provide or require  
6 dedicated funding for school library services, such as New York,  
7 which provides \$6.25 per student for school library resources  
8 and, therefore, this Commonwealth is at a disadvantage compared  
9 to neighboring states, a disadvantage which results in school  
10 library resources and school library conditions that vary widely  
11 across this Commonwealth; therefore be it

12       RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the  
13 Department of Education be urged to conduct a study of public  
14 school library resources and services in this Commonwealth for  
15 students in kindergarten through grade 12, measuring and  
16 comparing funding, facilities, access to print and electronic  
17 resources, professional support and programming and instruction  
18 in the use of information and research among this Commonwealth's  
19 public schools and districts and evaluating how these elements  
20 are allocated in relation to student and community  
21 circumstances, such as poverty, disability, race and English  
22 language ability; and be it further

23       RESOLVED, That, in addition, the study is urged to include an  
24 analysis of the following for this Commonwealth, measured and  
25 quantified, when possible, per student, per school, per district  
26 and Statewide:

27           (1) The number of public schools without a centralized  
28 school library collection in the building under the  
29 administration of a certified school librarian assigned full  
30 time to that building.

1           (2) The ratio of certified school librarians to  
2 students.

3           (3) The assignment of other support staffs to work in  
4 school libraries, the number of such other staffs and their  
5 qualifications.

6           (4) The number of hours that students have access to the  
7 school library in their building per day.

8           (5) The amount of up-to-date and useful print and  
9 electronic resources to which students and teachers have  
10 access through school library services.

11           (6) The average age and condition of books and  
12 technology in school libraries.

13           (7) The amount of funding from all sources being spent  
14 annually over the past ten years for school library resources  
15 and services.

16           (8) The availability of up-to-date, functional,  
17 Internet-connected computers for student use in school  
18 libraries.

19           (9) The kinds of other library services and programs  
20 provided by school libraries to support students and  
21 teachers.

22           (10) Additional aspects of school libraries related to  
23 the overall purpose of this study;

24 and be it further

25       RESOLVED, That the Commonwealth libraries provide available  
26 support for this study as requested by the State Board of  
27 Education with the Department of Education; and be it further

28       RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the  
29 Department of Education be urged to request the assistance of  
30 the following organizations in conducting this study: the

1 Education Committee of the Senate, the Education Committee of  
2 the House of Representatives, the Pennsylvania School Librarians  
3 Association, the Pennsylvania State Education Association and  
4 the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers; and be it further

5       RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the  
6 Department of Education be urged to provide recommendations  
7 necessary or desirable to improve and update public school  
8 library resources, services and facilities for all students in  
9 this Commonwealth, including recommendations for appropriate  
10 levels of resources, staffing and hours of access; and be it  
11 further

12       RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the  
13 Department of Education be urged to provide recommendations  
14 necessary or desirable to provide all students with the school  
15 library resources, facilities, programs and instruction to  
16 enable them to become successful readers, learners, researchers  
17 and consumers and producers of information; and be it further

18       RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the  
19 Department of Education be urged to provide recommendations  
20 necessary or desirable to address school library inequities or  
21 insufficiencies affecting disadvantaged students and  
22 communities; and be it further

23       RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the  
24 Department of Education be urged to conduct at least three  
25 public roundtables to receive input about a draft of the study  
26 and its recommendations; and be it further

27       RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the  
28 Department of Education be urged to report to the House of  
29 Representatives the result of its study and recommendations  
30 regarding the status of this Commonwealth's school libraries and

1 student access to them and file the report with the Chief Clerk  
2 of the House of Representatives no later than June 30, 2011.