

ONTARIO SCHOOL LIBRARY IMPACT PROJECT

SCHOOL LIBRARIES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Thirty years of international research has established that **the active presence and participation of qualified library staff make a positive and significant difference in student academic achievement***.

However, **hundreds of thousands of students across Ontario have lost access to school libraries and school library staff over the past two decades**, along with the critical resources they provide. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this troubling trend and has put this critical resource at immediate risk for nearly every student in Ontario.

School libraries are critical to successful online learning, ensuring students achieve curriculum objectives, and curating the digital and print resources students need to succeed. With the continuing shift to e-learning and digital resources, school library professionals and resources are more essential than ever to long-term student success.

MEASURING THE INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS GAP

School and academic library professionals in Ontario have observed **significant gaps in the information literacy skills of high school students transitioning to post-secondary education**. With the increasing reliance on e-learning and online resources, ensuring that all students have well-developed, practical information literacy skills is critical to their college and university success and career transition.

To better understand these gaps and how to address them, the Ontario Library Association (OLA) initiated the Ontario School Library Impact Project (OSLIP) to investigate the impact of school libraries on the information literacy skills and abilities of students entering post-secondary education in Ontario.

WHAT IS INFORMATION LITERACY?

Information literacy refers to multiple competencies that allow students to find, critically assess, process and create information.

This research was designed to examine the 12 key information literacy skills as defined by the Ontario Model of Discovery and Inquiry**.

*Lance, K. C., & Kachel, D. E. (2018). [Why school librarians matter: What years of research tell us](#). *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99(7), 15-20.

**See page 23 of [Together for Learning](#), for the Ontario Model of Discovery and Inquiry

KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

SCHOOL LIBRARIES IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Thirty years of international research has established that **the active presence and participation of qualified librarians makes a positive and significant difference in student academic achievement.** Most Ontario students surveyed had no access to information literacy skills instruction from a teacher-librarian in their critical final year of high school.



ENSURE THAT LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS LEAD

All students must have access to **school library professionals** to help develop the information literacy skills they'll need after they graduate. Ensure that school library professionals are **empowered in all Ontario schools to lead the school strategy on information literacy.**

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Students interviewed reported **feeling overwhelmed by the library's vast digital and physical collections,** as well as differences in instructor expectations between high school and university research requirements.



DEVELOP STUDENT RESEARCH SKILLS

To adequately prepare secondary students for the college and university environment, **high schools must provide access to and training on a broad range of quality databases and other information sources.**

ALIGNED INSTRUCTION

First-year students lack the information literacy skills needed to meet the demands of college and university course assignments. **Students noted that the research and selection strategies applied in senior high school are not as sophisticated as what is expected in a university environment.** Academic libraries and librarians often are not adequately prepared or resourced to address academic skill deficiencies.



INCREASE COLLABORATION

Increase **collaboration between secondary school library professionals and academic library professionals** to better support students bridging the gap.