



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
School Librarians

FROM: Kristi D. Austin, PhD
Director, Office of Assessment and Standards

DATE: April 23, 2024

RE: Introducing the New Education Associate for School Libraries and Librarians

We are pleased to share an important update from the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Assessment and Standards. For the first time in over a decade, we have appointed a dedicated education associate for school libraries and librarians, Dr. Mark Y. Herring.

This role is crucial for supporting our educational goals, and Dr. Herring's vast experience across various library types positions him well for this task. Dr. Herring has 42 years of experience in the field and has contributed significantly to library science literature, including works such as "Fool's Gold: Why the Internet Is No Substitute for a Library" and "Are Libraries Obsolete? An Argument for Relevance in the Digital Age." He has also written over 100 articles on the impact of libraries on society.

SCDE believes that school libraries are uniquely positioned to build strong future readers. Accordingly, Dr. Herring will provide key support to the Agency's [strategic priority of early literacy](#) and its foundational importance to growing life-long learners. His work to assist librarians across the state is grounded in three key tenets:

- School libraries must encourage and promote library services grounded in a shared vision and mission to serve the educational, informational, and recreational needs of students.
- School libraries must respect their role as stewards of taxpayer resources and parental trust by fully complying with established guidelines and organizing the contents of their libraries in ways that are age-appropriate and educationally suitable.

- School libraries must promote and defend ideological neutrality, open inquiry, and the individual freedom of readers by selecting and acquiring materials that do not tell students what to think—either explicitly or implicitly—but rather, help them learn how to think critically, providing a window to the wide and wonderful world around us.

Specifically, his work will include a focus on professional development, continuing education, standards development and policy implementation, and ADEPT evaluation specific to librarians.

To connect with Dr. Herring or learn more about his work, you can reach him at 803-734-2322 or mherring@ed.sc.gov. This appointment marks a positive step toward enhancing our state's education system, particularly in elevating and supporting the vital role of our school libraries and librarians.