Using funding in the right way: School Librarians.

Oct 10, Published in the Los Angeles Times.

Response to: “Tests scores don’t matter to students’ grades, so of course they haven’t improved enough” (Editorial)

To the editor: The Times asks the right question: Are schools using funding the right way to help disadvantaged students? Research gives us a clear direction.

Reading achievement is strongly related to how much pleasure-reading students do, which in turn is strongly related to access to books, which in turn is related to school and public library quality. For students living in poverty, libraries often provide their only access to books.

School libraries in California have improved in the last decade, with increased numbers of books per student, but there is one area where they need help. Research shows that presence of credentialed school librarians makes a strong contribution to improving reading achievement. Only 9% of California school libraries have credentialed librarians, compared with the national average of 66%.

Stephen Krashen, Los Angeles
The writer is a professor emeritus of education at USC.

Sources (not included with the published letter)
66%: Library/Media Centers in U.S. Public Schools: Growth, Staffing, and Resources (National Education Association)