

SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS

IMPROVE
STUDENT LEARNING

TEACHERS



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS



“School libraries help teachers teach and children learn. Children and teachers need library resources—especially books—and the expertise of a librarian to succeed. Books, information technology and school librarians who are part of the schools’ professional team are basic ingredients for student achievement.”

— Laura Bush

Source: Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries. 2002. “Washington White House Conference on School Libraries Checks out Lessons for Success.” (June 4). <www.laurabushfoundation.org/release_060402.html> (accessed April 12, 2011).

“We must understand the fundamental contributions school libraries make to learning outcomes. First, when school librarians collaborate with classroom teachers to enrich curriculum content, they help create more authentic learning experiences. Second, school library collections inform, educate, entertain, and enrich students at all levels....When students are able to explore information that is meaningful to them, they not only learn faster but their literacy skills grow rapidly; they learn how to learn.”

—Dr. C. Beth Fitzsimmons, National Commission on Libraries and Information Science Chairperson, excerpted from a letter to President George W. Bush, February 13, 2006, introducing *School Libraries Work!*

Source: Scholastic Research & Results. 2008. *School Libraries Work!* 3rd ed. <<http://listbuilder.scholastic.com/content/stores/LibraryStore/pages/images/SLW3.pdf>> (accessed April 12, 2011).

“Like elementary schools, high schools tended to have better test results where teachers reported that they initiate collaboration with the library media specialist on the design and delivery of instruction at least weekly or monthly.”

Source: Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Becky Russell. 2007. *How Students, Teachers, and Principals Benefit from Strong School Libraries: The Indiana Study*. Indianapolis: Association for Indiana Media Education. <www.ilfonline.org/units/aime-indiana-study-information> (accessed April 5, 2011).

“According to the American Association of School Librarians, students who are information literate can:

- + Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge;**
- + Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge;**
- + Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society; and**
- + Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.”**

Source: American Association of School Librarians. 2007. “Standards for the 21st-Century Learner” <http://ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/learningstandards/AASL_LearningStandards.pdf> (accessed March 1, 2011).

Classroom teachers, instructional-support teachers, and school librarians make a powerful team to educate today's students. Each educator brings a unique set of skills to the collaborative process of designing and implementing instruction, and jointly assessing the learning needs of students and their academic growth. Classroom and support teachers have an in-depth knowledge of their students and the curriculum needed to prepare students to meet academic targets and to develop skills for lifelong learning.

School librarians as information specialists and program administrators select and provide access to library resources, Web tools and sites, and communication technologies that match student needs, reading levels, and curricular topics. As teachers and instructional partners, school librarians teach students how to search, use, and document sources; how to organize, present, and share information using technologies; and how to maintain personal safety on the Internet and ethically observe intellectual property rights. Through collaboration and shared responsibility, teachers and school librarians employ differentiated teaching strategies to meet the specific learning needs of all students, including English language learners and children with disabilities.

School libraries are extensions of the classroom. Rich with print and electronic resources and the technologies necessary to view, hear, and use them, the school library allows students to delve deeper into classroom subjects and topics of personal interest. Reading as a foundational skill is supported and promoted by the school library program. Research has shown that students' standardized reading test scores are higher when they have access to a well-resourced school library staffed with a full-time certified/licensed school librarian who partners with teachers on student instruction and provides teachers with staff development on resources and information technologies.¹

This brochure outlines goals and key questions for you to consider as you collaborate with the school librarian to improve instruction and learning for students. By pulling together the resources and talents of all educational specialists in our schools, we share responsibility for educating tomorrow's workforce and global citizens. Together we can equip our students with the 21st-century skills and knowledge they will need to succeed.

¹ "School Library Research Summarized: A Graduate Class Project." 2007. *School Library Impact Studies Project*. Library & Information Technologies, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. <<http://library.mansfield.edu/impact.asp>> (accessed February 23, 2011).

TEACHING FOR LEARNING



GOAL: The school librarian collaborates with classroom teachers to provide instruction and authentic learning experiences so students can master critical 21st-century skills in the context of the content curriculum.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the school librarian collaborate with classroom teachers to:

- Plan, teach, and evaluate lessons that integrate 21st-century skills with classroom content?
- Design instruction that builds on students' prior knowledge, provides authentic learning experiences, and is rigorous, thought-provoking, and inquiry-based?
- Teach information-search processes to gather and use information from print and electronic sources?
- Teach students to use information and communication technologies to create and share knowledge with others?
- Embed student reflection and self-assessment strategies?
- Assess library-related student work?

As a teacher and colleague, do you make time to collaborate with the school librarian on instruction?

As a teacher and colleague, do you work with the school librarian to plan student research projects, selecting and using the most appropriate resources and technologies?

GOAL: The school librarian provides opportunities for students to learn to use information safely and ethically.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the school librarian teach students strategies for safely using the Internet, and social media websites and tools (blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)?

Does the librarian teach students appropriate use of computers and information technologies?

Does the librarian teach students about the ethical and legal issues relating to copying and plagiarism?

As a teacher, do you require that students use information and computer resources safely and ethically?

As a teacher, do you require that students give credit to their sources?

GOAL: The school library program promotes reading for learning and for personal enjoyment.

KEY QUESTIONS: Do activities in the school library encourage reading for enjoyment and for learning?

Does the school librarian broaden students' reading interests through exposure to new and interesting authors, genres, and other resources?

Do school library activities support reading and literacy instruction, and enable students to find and use books on their reading levels?

As a teacher, do you provide regular opportunities for students to visit the library to self-select reading materials, supporting their right to read books of their choice?

BUILDING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

GOAL: The school library is the central learning hub of the school for all students and staff.

KEY QUESTIONS: Is the library an attractive, pleasant, accessible, and friendly place that you and your students enjoy visiting?

Does the library have sufficient space to encourage the use of computers and other technologies to complete school projects, as well as areas for leisure reading and browsing?

Is there room enough for a class and small additional groups of students to comfortably use the library simultaneously?

GOAL: The school library program demonstrates and practices the legal and ethical use of information, resources, and technology.

KEY QUESTIONS: Are written selection policies in place that are annually reviewed and shared with teachers? Do the policies include procedures for handling challenged materials?

Do policies, procedures, and guidelines ensure the equitable access to ideas, information, and technologies throughout the school community?

Does the school librarian provide staff development in the areas of copyright and ethical use of information?

GOAL: The school library program provides equal access for all teachers and students to use library resources.

KEY QUESTIONS: Do teachers and students have continuous access to the school library and a full-time certified/licensed librarian throughout the school day?

As a teacher, do you schedule class visits to the library as needed for classroom research projects?

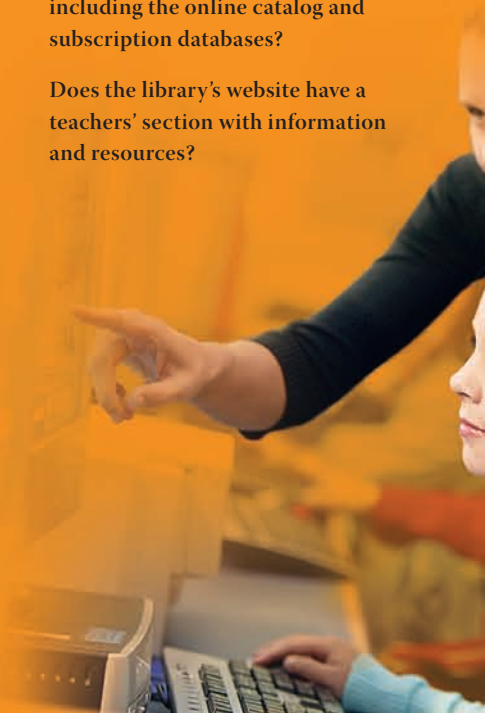
As a teacher, do you send small groups and individual students to the library as needed for research and recreational reading?

Are the library's circulation policies flexible to meet the needs of your class projects and assignments?

Does the library program offer 24–7 remote access to library resources, including the online catalog and subscription databases?

Does the library's website have a teachers' section with information and resources?

Developed and distributed through a grant from the Bound to Stay Bound Books Foundation.





GOAL: The school library program provides a well-developed and current collection of resources to meet curricular and personal-learning needs.

KEY QUESTIONS: Do teachers and students have access to a wide variety of up-to-date books, digital resources, and technologies that support classroom learning as well as personal interests?

Does the school library have appropriate resources and technology to meet any special learning needs of your students?

Does the school library have a wide variety of new books and other print materials that support and supplement classroom reading instruction, and match the personal reading interests of students?

Are you as a teacher able to donate or request resources to be purchased for the library's collection?

GOAL: The school librarian is actively engaged in supporting the school's curriculum, state academic standards, and school-endorsed educational initiatives.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the librarian participate or assist in curriculum writing and textbook selection?

Is the library's written curriculum of research, information, and technology skills aligned and integrated with classroom curriculum?

Does the librarian participate on key decision-making committees and support school-based educational initiatives?

As a teacher and colleague, do you use curriculum mapping or other forms of documentation to share with the librarian the curriculum and topics you teach?



EMPOWERING LEARNING THROUGH LEADERSHIP

GOAL: The school librarian takes a leadership role in ensuring that teachers are aware of new information, media, and technology for learning and teaching.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Does the librarian continually share with the teaching staff new resources, information-use strategies, and technology tools?
- Does the librarian offer staff-development opportunities that improve teachers' information, communication, and technology skills?
- Does the librarian use print and digital communication tools, including a library website, to make library services visible and accessible?
- As a teacher and colleague, do you turn to the librarian, not just for instructional support, but also for technology integration?

GOAL: The school library program is developed collaboratively based on best practices and evidence-based assessments, fostering openness to new ideas and strategies.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Does the school librarian encourage teachers to collaborate with the librarian in student instruction, selection and acquisition of resources, and development of student and faculty library-use policies?
- Do both students and staff view the school library as a learning laboratory where they will be provided with assistance and tools for learning and teaching?
- Does the school librarian read, share, and use research relevant to library programs, student learning, and new developments in education?

“By combining their creativity and expertise, [the teacher and the school librarian] have rediscovered the joy of teaching. Together, they have had more success reaching every learner.”

- Does the librarian, in tandem with teachers, collect and use data from student work and test results to improve the library program?

- Are teachers encouraged to participate in the development of the school library mission, goals, and objectives, and in long-range planning of the school library program?

- As a teacher and colleague, do you share student-assessment results with the librarian and make recommendations for improved, collaborative instruction, and for the improvement of the overall school library program?



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Learning4Life (L4L) is the American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) national implementation plan created to support states, school systems, and individual schools preparing to implement the Standards for the 21st-Century Learner and Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs

For more information and additional Learning4Life tools and resources, visit www.ala.org/aasl/learning4life.