

## Position Statement on the School Librarian's Role in Reading

**Rationale:** Reading is a foundational skill for 21st-century learners. Guiding learners to become engaged and effective users of ideas and information and to appreciate literature requires that they develop as strategic readers who can comprehend, analyze, and evaluate text in both print and digital formats. Learners must also have opportunities to read for enjoyment as well as for information. School librarians are in a critical and unique position to partner with other educators to elevate the reading development of our nation's youth.

Reading skills involve thinking skills. The extent to which young people use information depends upon their ability to understand what they read, to integrate their understandings with what they already know, and to realize their unanswered questions. To this end, school librarians model and collaboratively teach reading comprehension strategies: assess and use background knowledge, pose and answer questions that are appropriate to the task, make predictions and inferences, determine main ideas, and monitor reading comprehension as well as the learning process.

In addition, 21st-century learners must become adept at determining authority and accuracy of information, and analyzing and evaluating that information to synthesize new knowledge from multiple resources. School librarians model and collaboratively teach these skills and strategies.

With a deep knowledge of the wide variety of authentic reading materials available in the school library media center and beyond, the school librarian has a key role in supporting print and online reading comprehension strategy instruction in collaboration with classroom teachers and reading specialists. School librarians co-design, co-implement, and co-evaluate interdisciplinary lessons and units of instruction that result in increased student learning.

While the responsibility for the successful implementation of reading promotion and instruction is shared by the entire school community, school library programs serve as hubs of literacy learning in the school. The following components of school school library programs position school librarians in leadership roles in developing reading comprehension strategies and in promoting free independent reading:

- Library media centers provide students, staff, and families with open, non-restricted access to a varied high quality collection of reading materials in multiple formats that reflect academic needs and personal interests.
- School librarians practice responsive collection development and support print-rich environments that reflect the curriculum and the diverse learning needs of the school community.
- School librarians take a leadership role in organizing and promoting literacy projects and events that engage learners and motivate them to become lifelong readers.

- Classroom teachers, reading specialists, and school librarians select materials, promote the curricular and independent use of resources, including traditional and alternative materials, and plan learning experiences that offer whole classes, small groups, and individual learners an interdisciplinary approach to literacy learning.
- Classroom and library collaborative instruction is evidence-based, using research in librarianship, reading, English-language arts, and educational technology in order to maximize student learning. School librarians partner with classroom teachers, specialists and other literacy colleagues to make decisions about reading initiatives and reading comprehension instruction, and to develop all learners' curiosity in, and intellectual access to, appropriate resources in all formats and media.
- When learners follow an inquiry process they assess and use reading comprehension strategies. The skills identified in the Standards for the 21st-Century Learner align with the reading process.
- Opportunities for planned and spontaneous library use best serve learners as they identify, analyze, and synthesize ideas and information by using a wide range of materials in a variety of formats and media. Availability of library resources and professional staff at point of need develops intellectual behaviors that transfer to future academic pursuits and lifelong academic and public library use.
- Along with classroom and reading specialist colleagues, school librarians provide and participate in continual professional development in reading that reflects current research in the area of reading instruction and promotion.