

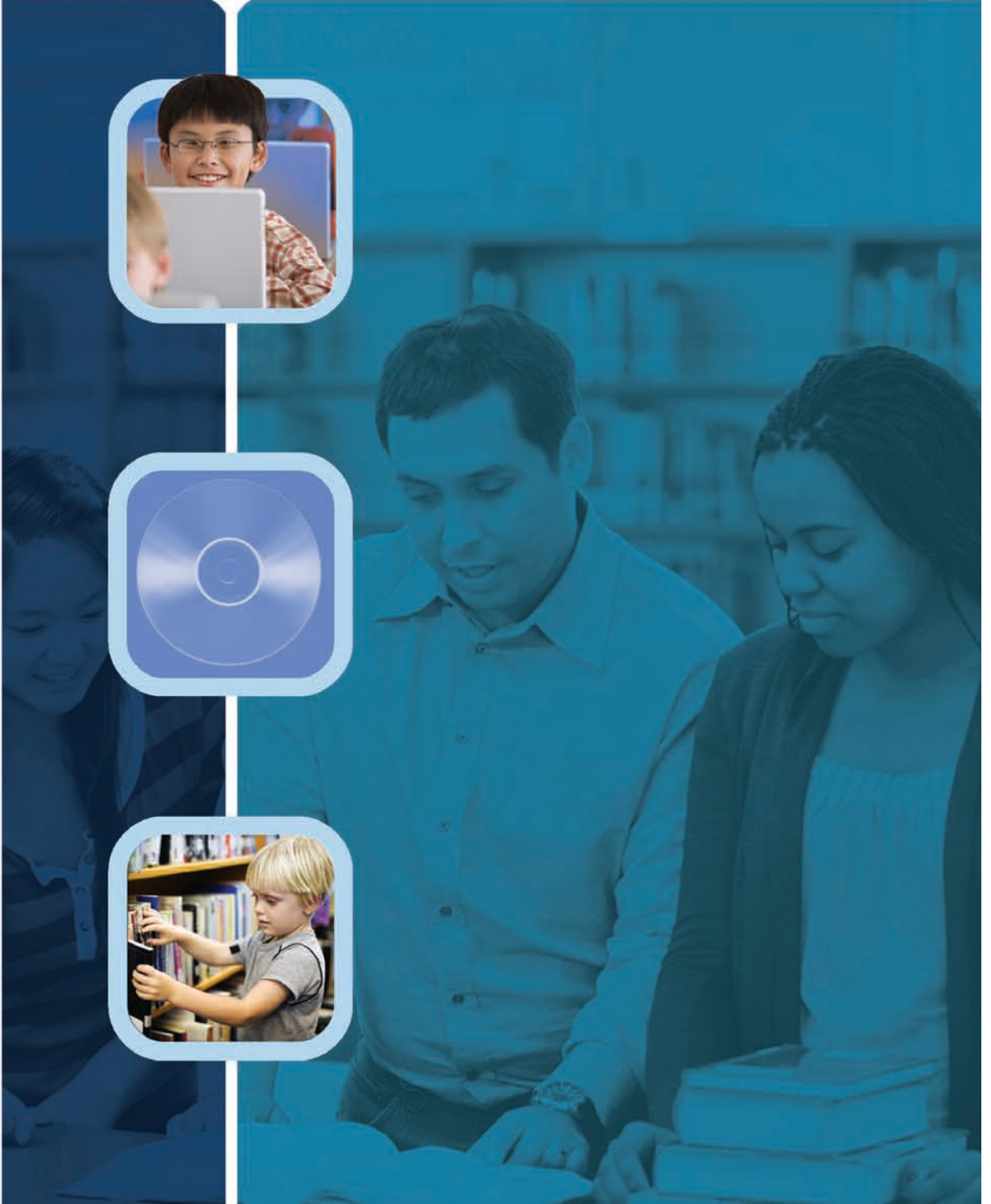
SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS

# IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

ADMINISTRATORS



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS



**“Students in better-staffed programs scored as much as 22 percent higher on standardized English tests and as much as 17 percent higher on standardized reading tests compared to students in schools where library programs had less staff and fewer hours.”**

Source: Smith, Ester G. 2006. *Student Learning Through Wisconsin School Library Media Centers: Library Media Specialist Survey Report*. Austin, TX: EGS Research and Consulting. <[www.dpi.wi.gov/imt/pdf/finallmsurvey06.pdf](http://www.dpi.wi.gov/imt/pdf/finallmsurvey06.pdf)> (accessed February 9, 2011).

**“Better-funded school library programs help to close the achievement gap for poor and minority students, and for poor and crowded schools.”**

Source: Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. 2005. *Powerful Libraries Make Powerful Learners: The Illinois Study*. Canton, IL: Illinois School Library Media Association. <[www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/illinoisstudy/TheStudy.pdf](http://www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/illinoisstudy/TheStudy.pdf)> (accessed February 9, 2011).

**“School libraries can be a very effective tool in closing the achievement gap. Although all students can benefit from effective libraries, students who suffer most because of the achievement gap benefit the most from the resources and services offered by libraries and librarians.”**

Source: Francis, Briana Hovendick, Keith Curry Lance, and Zeth Lietzau. 2010. *School Librarians Continue to Help Students Achieve Standards: The Third Colorado Study* (2010). Denver, CO: Colorado State Library, Library Research Service. <[www.lrs.org/documents/closer\\_look/CO3\\_2010\\_Closer\\_Look\\_Report.pdf](http://www.lrs.org/documents/closer_look/CO3_2010_Closer_Look_Report.pdf)> (accessed February 9, 2011).

**“Where administrators value strong library programs and can see them doing their part for student success, students are more likely to thrive academically.”**

Source: Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Bill Schwarz. 2009. *The Idaho School Library Impact Study—2009: How Idaho Librarians, Teachers, and Administrators Collaborate for Student Success*. RSL Research Group: <<http://libraries.idaho.gov/files/Full%20rpt.pdf>> (accessed February 9, 2011).

**SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ARE PIVOTAL IN FOSTERING SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING. AS THE INSTRUCTIONAL AND MANAGERIAL LEADERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ARE THE KEY DECISION-MAKERS IN ALLOCATING RESOURCES TO MEET THE DISTRICT PRIORITIES IN EDUCATING STUDENTS.**

Research conducted in over 20 states has documented that leveraging the school library program can increase students' standardized test scores and help to close the achievement gap.<sup>1</sup> The most universal finding among the studies is that the presence of a certified/licensed school librarian is a strong predictor of student achievement regardless of socioeconomic or education levels of the community. Studies also correlate higher test scores with:

- + Collaboratively planned instruction integrated with classroom curriculum and library resources that is taught and assessed by the librarian and teachers
- + More hours and increased usage of the library by students
- + Larger budgets and up-to-date collections of print and digital resources
- + Leadership activities of the librarian (serving on decision-making committees, providing professional development to teachers, and meeting regularly with the principal).<sup>2</sup>

Based on national guidelines, this brochure outlines goals and key questions for you and your school librarian to think about when setting goals and maximizing the potential of a valuable asset—the school library program. By setting high expectations and establishing a school culture that values reading, research, and inquiry, you can boost student achievement and empower teachers with a resource proven to increase student learning. Schools that support their library programs give their students a better chance to succeed, enabling students to become “critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information”<sup>3</sup> ready for 21st century life and careers.

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1 Achterman, Douglas L. 2010. *Haves, Halves, and Have-Nots: School Libraries and Student Achievement in California*. Diss. University of North Texas, 2008. UNT Digital Library. Web. <<http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc9800/>> (accessed March 8, 2011).

2 “School Library Impact Studies Chart.” 2011. *School Library Impact Studies Project*. School Library & Information Technologies, Mansfield University. <<http://libweb.mansfield.edu/upload/kachel/classchart.pdf>> (accessed March 8, 2011).

3 American Association of School Librarians. 2009. *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs*. Chicago: ALA.

# TEACHING FOR LEARNING



**GOAL:** The school library program promotes collaboration.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Does scheduling allow the school librarian to collaborate with classroom teachers to plan, teach, and evaluate lessons that combine information skills with classroom content?

Does the school librarian have opportunities to work with parents, public libraries, and other community resources to enhance learning experiences for students?

**GOAL:** The school library program promotes reading as a foundational skill.

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

Do school library activities support reading instruction in the school?

**GOAL:** The school library program provides instruction on information literacy and technological literacy.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Is a planned curriculum of research and information skills taught by a certified librarian?

Are students taught to use:

- an information-search process to gather and use information from print and electronic sources?
- information and communication technologies to create and share knowledge with others?
- information and technology ethically and responsibly?

**GOAL:** The school library program promotes critical thinking and problem solving.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Are learning activities facilitated with library resources rigorous, thought-provoking, and inquiry-based?

Do learning activities in the library program build on students' prior knowledge and provide authentic learning experiences?

**GOAL:** The school library program is structured to allow for collaborative assessment of student learning.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Are teachers and librarians collaboratively using appropriate assessment strategies to improve instruction?

Do students engage in self-assessment during resource-based learning activities?

Are student-assessment data used to improve the library's instructional program?

# BUILDING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

**GOAL:** The school library program has strong administrative support.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** How do district administrators and the building principal support library staffing, funding, scheduling, and teachers' and librarians' collaborative planning time?

Is at least one full-time certified/licensed school librarian (with a qualified support staff) available to meet the school's mission?

Does the school librarian participate in both education- and library-related professional growth activities?

**GOAL:** The school library program provides students and teachers with access to information.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Does the program provide access to resources that support the curriculum and meet the diverse needs of all learners?

Does an up-to-date automated circulation and online catalog system optimize access to the collection?

Are all library resources and technologies accessible to all students and teachers before, during, and after the school day?

Can students, parents, and teachers access the collection remotely 24–7?

**GOAL:** The school library program is supported by ongoing collection development and evaluation.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Does the school library budget include sufficient funding for up-to-date print and electronic resources to meet the program's mission, goals, and objectives?

Do the school librarian and teachers consider student input and work together to develop a collection representing diverse viewpoints and cultures to meet student and staff needs?

Is the collection annually reviewed and weeded to provide only the most relevant and useful resources?

*Successful student-centered library programs depend on strong administrative support, flexible access, and collaboration with teachers.*





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

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Do written policies for selecting print and electronic resources, and for handling challenged materials exist? Are these policies followed? Reviewed annually?

Do policies, procedures, and guidelines ensure that all students have equitable access to ideas, information, and technologies?

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

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Is the library program represented on school-improvement and leadership committees?

Is the written curriculum of research and information skills aligned and integrated with the learning of



# EMPOWERING LEARNING THROUGH LEADERSHIP

**GOAL:** The school library program is developed in a participatory environment with an atmosphere of respect and rapport among students, staff, and the community.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Is input from students, staff, and the community considered in the development of the school library program?

Does the school librarian initiate contacts to build rapport and develop partnerships among the staff and community?

Do students and staff view the school library as a learning laboratory where they will be provided with assistance and tools for learning and teaching?

**GOAL:** The school librarian engages in community-outreach activities, creating awareness and building support for the school library program.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Is the school library website used to communicate to parents and the community, as well as to access library resources and information?

Do school officials and the school librarian seek community partnerships to improve the library program?

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

**GOAL:** The school librarian takes a leadership role in ensuring that students and staff appropriately use instructional technologies to access, produce, and communicate ideas and information.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Is the school library program represented on building and/or district technology-planning committees?

Are the school librarian's technology skills continually updated through professional development opportunities?

Does the library program include teaching students and staff how to integrate technology skills into their work and studies?

**GOAL:** The school librarian continually assesses the library program based on evidence and best practices to improve learning for students and instructional services for teachers.

**KEY QUESTIONS:** Does the school librarian read, share, and use research relevant to library programs, student learning, and new developments in education?

Does the librarian collect and use data from assessments of library lessons to improve the library program?

Is the school library program built on a long-term strategic plan that is annually reviewed and reflects the mission, goals, and objectives of the school?



An initiative of the American Association of School Librarians



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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](http://www.ala.org/aasl/learning4life).**