



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM AND NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND



“School library media centers can contribute to improved student achievement by providing instructional materials aligned to the curriculum; by collaborating with teachers, administrators and parents; and by extending their hours of operation beyond the school day.”

—“Close Up: NCLB— Improving Literacy through School Libraries,” *NCLB The Achiever*, September 15, 2004, Vol. 3, No. 13

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF NCLB AS A TEAM

As building leader, meeting the demanding requirements of No Child Left Behind falls most heavily on you, the principal. Are you aware that you have a powerful ally in your school library media specialist?

A variety of credible studies prove that schools with good library programs have students who do better academically as measured by standardized test scores.¹ So does common sense. As administrators, you should not be asking yourselves if you should be devoting resources to improving test scores or to improving library programs. Improved library programs do equal improved test scores—and more.

You may never meet the ambitious NCLB literacy goal of 100% by 2013, but effective library programs will get you closer to that goal. The school library program is your effective partner in helping create those changes. Read on to discover how well supported library programs can specifically and effectively advance your building's NCLB goals.

HELPING ENSURE ALL STUDENTS ARE LITERATE BY 2013.

Short-term fixes like adopting a new basal reading series, teaching students test-taking skills, giving practice tests, and making sure everyone is well-fed and rested on test day are popular. But smart schools are discovering that simply increasing standard reading instruction and “test prep” do not work with many children nor do they have a long-term impact, and they are looking for other strategies. Your school library media program can be a critical partner in implementing strategies that not only improve test scores, but actually increase the reading abilities of all students.

It's unarguable that children who like to read, who read willing and joyfully also tend to read better.² Good library programs bolster the efforts of the classroom teacher and reading teacher whose responsibility it is to teach students *how* to read by helping students *want* to read.

Classroom reading instruction often requires students to read fiction and narrative non-fiction. But many tests ask students to interpret factual exposition. Your school library media center has a wealth of good materials that have interesting expository writing; newspapers, magazines, and interesting non-fiction books. Your school library media specialist, as an expert in children's and young adult materials, knows the resources that are of high interest to reluctant readers and how to get those materials into the hands of students through book talks, reading promotions, and collaborative projects with classroom teachers. The school library media specialist can design motivational reading programs and provide materials especially for the subgroups that may be causing a school to be identified as not making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress).

Work with your school library media specialist to make sure your school library program:

- Provides accessible reading materials for a wide range of interests on a wide range of topics.
- Promotes reading across the curriculum by providing teachers with bibliographies and classroom collections aimed at specific content and exciting to read.
- Promotes reading through specially designed activities and programs.

HELPING ENSURE ALL STUDENTS PASS STATE TESTS.

All students, especially those living in poverty, need assignments that are relevant, applicable to everyday life, and personal.³ A school library media program's well-designed research and information literacy projects meet the needs of those

students. Many educators have long observed that actually applying skills leads to deep understandings that result in well-remembered learning.

Many state tests ask students to apply skills as well as recall facts. School library media specialists, by designing teaching information literacy units tied to the classroom curriculum, help all students learn to not only memorize information, but also to use it in meaningful and memorable ways. Which, of course, leads to higher test scores. We want to produce critical readers, real-world math users, and passionate, effective writers. Project-based learning that is planned, co-taught and assessed by your school's school library media specialist will always ask children to go beyond the minimum, and in doing so, they will have no difficulty in passing tests that measure just the minimum.

Work with your school library media specialist to make sure your school library program:

- Has an articulated information literacy curriculum and grade-level benchmarks that include research and technology skills that are aligned to your state's standards.
- Teaches these skills in collaboration with the classroom teacher in projects tied to the content area curriculum.

HELPING ENSURE ALL STUDENTS ARE TECHNOLOGICALLY-LITERATE.

Students from less affluent families are much less likely to have home access to computers and the Internet.⁴ Yet NCLB will soon require that all students be technology-literate by the end of eighth grade. The library program can help your school meet this ambitious goal.

Technology skills are an integral part of the information literacy curriculum. School library media specialists teach children how to use information technologies to answer questions and solve problems.⁵ When computers are used only for drill and practice instruction on low-level reading and math skills, students do not learn the powerful productivity and communications programs that they will use as "information age" workers.

The library also provides ready computer and Internet access to all students before, throughout, and after the school day. The school library media specialist offers computer-using students both training and supervision.

Work with your school library media specialist to make sure your school library program:

- Provides ready access to computers and other information technologies for all students, especially those who may not have home access.
- Has integrated technology skills into its information literacy curriculum.
- Provides guidance to students using technology to complete school assignments and explore personal interests.

HELPING ENSURE TEACHERS HAVE THE RESOURCES AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO BE DEEMED "HIGHLY QUALIFIED."

NCLB is creating a greater need for effective teacher staff development. Teachers may need additional formal instruction to receive the certification that makes them "highly qualified." Online courses often provide a convenient means for practicing teachers to obtain certification. The school library media specialist can both provide information about such courses and also help teachers master the technology skills needed to do the coursework.

When implementing new and more effective pedagogies, teachers seek out collaborative partners. Again, the school library media specialist is a willing partner in new approaches to instruction. The school library media specialist also serves as the staff reference expert, helping teachers and administrators find the lesson plans, advice and

fellow educators needed to make instructional change effect, and thereby raising the achievement level of all students.

Work with your school library media specialist to make sure your school library program:

- Serves as a resource for all staff development efforts.
- Finds sources of information about new instructional strategies.
- Teams with classroom teachers when moving to a more constructivist approach to teaching and learning.

HELPING ENSURE SCHOOLS REMAIN COMMITTED TO GOOD EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES THAT GO BEYOND THE REQUIREMENTS OF NCLB.

One aspect of NCLB is its use of standardized tests as a measurement of both student and school performance. Such tests often measure only a few basic skills and penalize students who are poor test-takers. Teaching strategies and assessment tools that assess higher level thinking skills and the application of skills are also necessary.

The school library media specialist is an advocate for and creator of assessments that give parents and communities measures of abilities and efficacies. Library programs lead in the development of methods that measure and report the mastery of many different kinds of learning assessments, including critiqued portfolios of work that show growth, reports of abilities to work collaboratively, evidence of the skill of self-assessment of work, and use of skills to make a thoughtful difference in society.

The library program can also contribute to an improved school climate. By providing a safe, nurturing and productive space, the school experience for all students improves. A good school library is an asset many parents look for when choosing a school for their children.⁶

Work with your school library media specialist to determine if he/she:

- Shares their expertise in project-based learning and authentic assessment.
- Serves on building leadership teams, curriculum committees, and in other leadership functions.
- Communicates regularly with parents and the community about the library program and participates in the public relations efforts of the district.

SOURCES:

1. A compilation of these studies can be found in *School Libraries Work* (2004), http://www.scholasticlibrary.com/download/slw_04.pdf
2. These writers emphasize the importance of practice reading:
 - Krashen, Stephen D. *Every Person a Reader: An Alternative to the California Task Force Report on Reading*. Culver City, CA: Language Education Associates, 1996.
 - Trelease, Jim. *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, 4th Edition. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.
3. Ruby Payne makes this compelling argument in her important book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (Highlands, TX: aha! Process, Inc., 2003).
4. Kaiser Family Foundation, "Children, the Digital Divide and Federal Policy," September 2004, <http://www.kff.org>
5. Michael Eisenberg and Doug Johnson, "Learning and Teaching Information Technology—Computer Skills in Context." September 2002 ERIC # ED465377
6. SchoolMatch, <http://www.schoolmatch.com>

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1998. These standards can be applied to state and national learning standards. Covers general aspects of student learning as well as information literacy standards. Available as a PDF at http://www.ala.org/aasl/ip_implementation.html

Broad Foundation and Thomas B. Forham Institute. *Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto*. 2003.

Profiles people in school leadership positions who are making a difference. Available as a PDF at <http://www.broadfoundation.org/med-pubs/BetterLeadersforAmericasSchools.pdf>

Farkas, Steve, Jean Johnson, Ann Duffett, Beth Syat and Vine Jackie. *Rolling Up Their Sleeves: Superintendents and Principals Talking About What is Needed to Fix Public Schools*. New York: Public Agenda and the Wallace Foundation, 2003. Surveyed school principals and superintendents comment on various issues from Money and Mandates to NCLB. Available as a PDF at http://www.publicagenda.org/research/research_reports_details.cfm?list=9

International ICT Literacy Panel. *Digital Transformation: A Framework for ICT Literacy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 2002.

A report from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) that convened an international panel to study the growing importance of existing and emerging Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and their relationship to literacy. The focus of the panel's deliberations was to examine the need for measures of ICT literacy, and develop a workable framework for assessing and studying ICT literacy. Available as a PDF at <http://www.ets.org/research/icliteracy/icreport.pdf>

National Endowment for the Arts. *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*. Washington D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2004.

This report presents the results from the literature segment of the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, conducted by the Census Bureau in 2002 at the NEA's request. Available as a PDF at <http://www.arts.gov/pub/ReadingAtRisk.pdf>

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. *Learning for the 21st Century: A Report & Mile Guide for 21st Century Skills*. Washington, D.C.: Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004.

Articulates a collective vision for learning in the 21st century and learn how a framework for action can be created. Available as a PDF at http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/downloads/P21_Report.pdf

SchoolsMovingUp: A WestEd Initiative that addresses the immense challenge of raising student achievement in low-performing schools and districts. More information can be found at <http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/cs/wested/print/htdocs/home.htm>

Technology Standards for School Administrators Collaborative. *Technology Standards for School Administrators*. Technology Standards for School Administrators Collaborative, 2001.

A national consensus (facilitated by TSSA) on what P-12 administrators should know and able to do to optimize the effective use of technology. Available at <http://cnets.iste.org/tssa/>

U.S. Department of Education. *e-learning: Putting a World-Class Education at the Fingertips of All Children*. Washington D. C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2000.

The second national technology plan of the U.S. Department of Education. Available as a PDF at <http://www.nationaletechplan.org/resources.asp>

Web-Based Education Commission. *The Power of the Internet for Learning: Moving from Promise to Practice: A Report to the President & the Congress of the United States*. Washington D.C.: WBEC, 2000.

This final report of the Web-Based Education Commission (WBEC) was published on 19 December 2000 and urged the new Administration and 107th Congress to make E-learning a centerpiece of the nation's education policy. Available as a PDF at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/AC/WBEC/FinalReport/index.html>

The White House Conference on School Libraries Proceedings. Washington D.C.: Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2002.

Laura Bush, her co-host, Dr. Robert Martin, Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services and education, library, government and philanthropic leaders from across the country met in 2002 to discuss the latest research on libraries, student achievement and successful local programs. Experts and panelists offered compelling stories of the power of school libraries to make a difference in student achievement. Available at <http://www.imls.gov/pubs/whitehouse0602/whitehouse.htm>

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. *Information & Technology Literacy: A Collaborative Planning Guide for Library Media & Technology*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2002.

Provides schools and districts with guidelines for collaborative planning and ideas for a unified approach to the delivery of information and technology programming. For ordering information go to <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/imt/index.html>



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