

Preparing A School Library Program Development Plan

A key requirement in the Department of Education standards for school libraries programs is that every school have a Library Program in place. While not specifically required, the development of a Library Program Plan will assure that the standards adopted by the Board of Education (Iowa Administrative Code 12.3(12)) are being addressed. Proper planning is important to success in most endeavors; the school library is no exception. There is an old saying, “If you don’t know where you are going, you are likely to end up somewhere else.” If the resources—both human and material—invested in the school library are to pay dividends in terms of student achievement, the identification of goals and initiatives to implement those goals must be in place.

A stakeholder group with representatives from faculty, administration, parents, students and the community should be identified to work through the entire planning process, so that there is ownership of the process by more than the teacher librarian. The group might read a relevant article or two in preparation for their work, including summaries of the data supporting the impact of school libraries on student achievement. Before planning begins, it is wise to take some time to think about the kind of program you would like to have in your school library. What is your vision for the library program?

A visioning process might include questions such as the following:

- When you walk into the school library, what would you like to see?
- If you could design your ideal library program, what would it look like?
- What is the mission of the school district? How does the library program contribute to that mission?
- What are the most important elements of the school library program?
- What will need to happen to make such a vision a reality?

The above process is meant to be idealistic and farsighted in nature. Try not to be hamstrung by “what is.” Think rather about what “might be” if committed people work toward the shared vision that they hold. This process should result in a vision or mission statement for your library. Such a statement clearly expresses the goals of the program, in brief and motivating language. It is useful for all of us to be able to express in a sentence or two exactly what it is we are trying to achieve in our programs and why

they are so important to student learning. An example of a mission statement is included in the sample plan at the end of this document.

The Library Program Development Plan will be based on the *“Iowa School Library Program Guidelines”* available from the Iowa Department of Education (<http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/959/493>). A typical planning cycle is represented can be thought of as a four step process:

1. Assessing Needs
2. Planning Improvements
3. Implementing Plans
4. Evaluating Progress

The **needs assessment** step will be completed by comparing the existing local program to the Guidelines, which will serve as an auditing tool for the various areas of the library program. Members of the planning group might review this checklist and reach consensus on the current level the local program exemplifies in each area. Areas of greatest initial concern will be those where the library program is not meeting the requirement approved by the Iowa Board of Education. Needs should be documented with data. The School Library Survey completed each spring for the State Library of Iowa provides a ready source of data and the means of comparing local data to that of schools across the state. A summary of quantitative data from the State Library survey has been prepared to correspond with various elements of the Guidelines <http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/school-librarians>. A decision may also be made to gather additional data through surveys, focus groups or other recognized data-gathering means. Data relating library programming to student achievement will be especially useful. While the teacher librarian or district coordinator may do the bulk of the work on the needs assessment, it is critical that principals, teachers, students and parents be consulted and involved in the process.

Once data is gathered and analyzed, **planning for improvements** begins. Prioritizing goals will be critical. Again, in the first stages, meeting requirements will be most important. The teacher librarian and stakeholder team should agree on those areas to be addressed in the initial stages—five years is suggested—of the plan. Goals that will require major funding commitments, such as those for adding staff or improving

facilities, must be carefully outlined and supported. A timeline for implementing improvements, budgetary requirements and responsibility for meeting each improvement goal must be assigned.

The final stage in the cycle is **evaluation**. Some goals in the Library Program Development Plan should be accomplished each year. Many goals will be things that the teacher librarian can implement with little or no assistance, e.g., adding books to support a new curriculum unit in science, rearranging the library to improve access, weeding the collection of dated materials. Other goals may be longer-term and will require a commitment from district administration and the Board of Education. The plan should be reviewed on an annual basis to determine that appropriate progress is being made, and a major review scheduled every five years. Once improvements are in place, data must again be collected to assure that the changes are having the desired effect. At this point, the cycle begins again with comparison to guidelines, data gathering and a new implementation schedule. This cycle should logically follow the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Planning cycle, and goals for the library program should be consistent with and supportive of the CSIP. Progress toward library program development goals should be included in the Annual Progress Report.

A sample Library Program Development Plan follows. Your plan will differ, based upon local needs, but the sample reflects the necessary elements and provides a template for planning. Consulting will be available on Library Program Planning through the Area Education Agencies.

Resource List for School Library Program Planning

- AASL Resource Guides for School Library Media Program Development*. American Association of School Librarians.
<http://www.ala.org/aaslTemplate.cfm?Section=resourceguides>
- Bush, Gail. 2005. "What Board Members Should Know About School Libraries." *American School Boards Journal*, June.
- Donham, Jean. 2008. *Enhancing Teaching and Learning: A Leadership Guide for School Library Media Specialists*. New York: Neal Schuman.
- Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action*. 2009. Chicago: American Association of School Librarians.
- Johnson, Doug. 2009. "13 Point Library Media Program Checklist for School Principals, 2009."
<http://doug-johnson.squarespace.com/blue-skunk-blog/2009/10/23/13-point-checklist-2009.html>.
- MacDonell, Colleen. 2005. *Essential Documents for School Libraries*. Worthington, OH: Linworth Publishing.
- Empowering Learners; Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*. 2009. Chicago: American Association of School Librarians.
- School Libraries Work!* 2008. New York: Scholastic, Inc.

IowaTown Community School District Sample Library Program Development Plan

District Mission Statement

The mission of the IowaTown Community School District is to prepare all students to be life-long learners, independent thinkers and productive citizens in an ever-changing society.

School Library Program Mission Statement

The mission of the school library program is to provide an inviting, dynamic learning environment and services that support and enhance teaching, literacy and learning.

To support this mission, the school library:

- provides all members of the learning community access to a supportive, welcoming and learner-centered environment.
- works in collaboration with teachers, administrators, support staff and parents to provide learning experiences that promote student achievement.
- fosters the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills and provides experiences that expand and reinforce classroom reading instruction.
- promotes life-long learning through information literacy instruction that is integrated with classroom content
- promotes critical thinking, engagement with information in all of its forms and the use of technology to enhance learning.
- contains rich and abundant collections of materials in many formats—both print and electronic—to meet the teaching and learning needs of the school curriculum and reflect diversity and intellectual freedom principles.
- fosters connections with the larger learning community to provide students with access to learning resources and activities beyond the school walls.
- communicates library program plans, needs and accomplishments to stakeholders on a regular basis.

A committee met during the fall of 20XX to develop the library mission statement and review the existing status of district school library programs and make recommendations for improvements based upon the Iowa Department of Education document, *Iowa School Library Program Guidelines*. A copy of the checklist from that document reflecting our group's analysis of where district library programs stand is attached. Based upon this analysis, the committee recommends the following areas be priorities for our library programs for the next five years:

1. Improve professional staffing to 50th percentile level of Iowa schools.
2. Develop and adopt information literacy curriculum.
3. Increase integration of information literacy into content areas with a goal of working with one half of classes.
4. Align the collection with curriculum with emphasis on titles to support reading instruction and classroom collections.
5. Increase wireless access in the library and throughout the building.
6. Support professional development for teacher librarian.
7. Establish "Friends of the Library" group.
8. Collaborate with public librarian on at least one activity yearly

List of Committee Members

Action Plan: School Library Program Development Goals

Goal	Action Steps	Responsibility	Budget Needs	Complete By
1. Improve professional staffing to 50 th percentile level of Iowa schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> During 08-09 school year, increase current half-time high school position to full time. <input type="checkbox"/> For 09-10, add one f.t.e. teacher librarian for elementary.	Superintendent, Principals, Board of Education	\$63,000	<input type="checkbox"/> August, 2009
2. Develop and adopt K-12 information literacy curriculum and identify areas for integration.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fund summer curriculum team to develop curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Present to Board of Education for adoption	Teacher librarian Teachers Administrators Board of Education	\$3000	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall, 2010
3. Increase integration of information literacy into content areas with a goal of working with one half of classes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend areas for integration during curriculum adoption <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and work with teachers with a goal of adding three integrated units per year.	Teacher librarian and teachers	-0-	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring, 2010
4. Align the collection with curriculum with emphasis on titles to support reading instruction and classroom collections.	<input type="checkbox"/> Assess collection <input type="checkbox"/> Weed date materials <input type="checkbox"/> Develop replacement plan <input type="checkbox"/> Begin adding materials	Teacher librarian	Annual library budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring, 2010
5. Increase wireless access in the library and throughout the building.	<input type="checkbox"/> Add 5 wireless routers per year.	District; Board of Education	\$14,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall, 2009
6. Support professional development for teacher librarian.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify areas of need <input type="checkbox"/> Support attendance at two appropriate workshops or conferences.	Principal and superintendent	\$250 (sub and registration fees if needed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall, 2007
7. Establish "Friends of the Library" group.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and invite teachers, parents, and community members. Consider members of planning team. <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct first meeting.	Teacher librarian	-0-	<input type="checkbox"/> Winter 2008
8. Collaborate with public librarian on at least one activity yearly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Contact and meet with public librarian <input type="checkbox"/> Decide upon activity, publicize and conduct	Teacher librarian and public librarian	\$400 (request PTO funding)	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring, 2009 and ongoing