A Framework for School Library Programs in the 21st Century

Produced by the Henry Grube Education Centre
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I am very pleased to present this document appropriately titled “A Framework for School Library Programs in the 21st Century.”

The teacher librarian has always been an important component in our ability to improve student learning. With the advances in technology and the resultant proliferation of information, the teacher librarian is now a focal point and integral support in establishing the school cultures we will need to ensure every student reaches their potential.

The relationships described in this document will help produce the academic press that will support learning for all. The teacher librarian will be at the center of these relationships. The role will require individuals who will be life long learners and who will continue to develop professionally as the role becomes more complex and demanding. It will be a challenging role but it will also be professionally rewarding as the critical nature of the role expands as this century progresses.

Congratulations and thank you to members of the committee who put this document together. It is clear to me from reading the document that the role of the teacher librarian will be one of the most demanding and fulfilling roles in our system.

Terence S. Sullivan, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the 2006-07 year a District Library Committee was struck to develop a library framework for School District #73. The committee included representatives from administration, classrooms, and teacher librarians. Many hours were spent researching and identifying best practices that would form the framework for an exemplary library program in Kamloops/Thompson school district. Dr. Terry Sullivan, District Superintendent and Karl deBrujn, Assistant Superintendent – Elementary, promoted and supported this endeavour. Thank you to the following people for the dedicated effort they put into researching and producing this document.

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ILLUSTRATOR

A special thank you to Sue Morris, District Fine Arts Coordinator, for the original artwork on the front cover. The goal of the school library program is to support individuals and help them become independent, information literate learners capable of conducting their own inquiries. Exemplary library programs integrate these skills into the instructional program, and use strategies that increase student interest and improve the process of learning.
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FOREWORD: THE EVOLVING WORLD OF INFORMATION

The library program is an integral part of the academic and cultural life of a school. An exemplary program is one that encourages students to make connections with past and present knowledge, culture and leisure. The information students need to acquire is no longer contained within the physical walls of the library. With the digital revolution, information access, use, and communication has changed along with the definition of literacy. Accessing and collecting information is easier, but effectively using it has never been harder.

The recognized expert in information literacy is the teacher librarian who has combined a Bachelor of Education Degree and classroom teaching experience with a Diploma or Masters degree in Library Education. The expanding world of information means that the challenging position of teacher librarian is suitable for educators who embrace lifelong learning.

A key focus of the library program of the 21st Century must be teaching the skills necessary to cope with the explosion of information. Students born after 1990 have grown up electronically multi-tasking and using digital tools to retrieve, manage, store, protect, and communicate information. These students expect the library will provide information sources that are readily and immediately available in multiple formats. Many people are most comfortable when connected to graphical web browsers, databases, cell phones, video games and other technological tools.

The definition of a literate person has also changed and evolved. As recently as the late 20th Century, literacy focused on the ability to read, write and respond to printed material. Today, “in the literacy literature, a significant focus . . . concerns the unique ways of reading and writing with the new technologies of information, communication, and multimedia.” (Asselin 2005). The teacher librarian provides explicit instruction on the processing skills needed to use the plethora of new information sources and tools, such as web browsers, blogs, word processors, spreadsheets, and presentation software. In 2002, UNESCO published a world curriculum, Information and Communication Technology in Education: A Curriculum for Schools and Programme of Teacher Development identifying information and communication technology as “one of the basic building blocks of modern society”. The challenge of developing information literacy is daunting but cannot be avoided if our students are to take advantage of the opportunities available to them in the 21st Century.

While a main focus of the library program is the teaching of information literacy skills needed to access, use and communicate information effectively, the teacher librarian must continue to promote reading and good literature, and support the curriculum. Promoting an exemplary library program is a demanding job that requires the teacher librarian to take a leadership role in co-operating and collaborating with all of the partners – the students, staff, administration, parents, and greater community, to build excitement and enthusiasm for lifelong learning.

REFERENCES

American Association for School Librarians (AASL) and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning: Standards and Indicators.


VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision
School District #73’s school library program provides all students with the skills needed to navigate, access, evaluate, and utilize a variety of resources in an information-rich society. It supports and enriches the curricula by being fully integrated into the instructional program. School library programs develop a love of literature and reading, and teach students to become independent, information literate, lifelong learners.

Mission
School District #73’s school library program will positively impact student achievement by ensuring students become competent, critical, and ethical users of information. It is our mission to prepare literate, lifelong learners who are not afraid to challenge themselves to use their problem solving skills to conduct real-life inquiries and communicate their findings to others.

PARENTS
Parents have a vested interest in partnering with all school personnel to help their child gain the most from their school programs. Partnerships with parents are mutually beneficial. As parents learn more about the library program, they become more able to effectively support their child’s acquisition of literacy and information skills.

The parents:
- Serve as role models by demonstrating the value of literature by reading to their children and reading themselves.
- Provide opportunities for their children to enjoy learning and to become lifelong learners.
- Recognize and support the integration of information literacy as a necessary ability for students of the 21st century.
- Support the ethical use of information.

COMMUNITY
Partnerships with the community enrich the educational experience of students. In an exemplary library program, community groups, associations and businesses can help students transfer the skills they have learned into real-life situations. Community groups also act as a valuable resource to students by providing authentic, expert information and resources in their particular field.

The community:
- Provides expertise in specialized areas.
- Develops connections and shares resources.
- Promotes school and community reading programs and literacy development.
LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The library assistant is an important partner in the delivery of an exemplary program, providing the clerical foundation and fulfilling the tasks that keep the library functioning smoothly. While the teacher librarian's focus is on delivering the library program, the library assistant's focus is on ensuring that the library operates in an efficient manner so staff and students can locate the resources they want and need. The library assistant looks after clerical and routine tasks as outlined in the Library Assistant job description available from SD73 Human Resources Department (7-2).

The library assistant:

- Manages resources going to and from the SD73 Cataloguing Centre.
- Performs duties that assist with day-to-day maintenance and operations of the physical facility and resources.
- Provides direction and service to students and teachers.
- Communicates and maintains effective working relationships with the public, students, teachers, Principals and other employees of the Board.
- Assists with supervision as directed.

SD73 CATALOGUING CENTRE

The Cataloguing Centre is the backbone for library management and resources. All school district resources are catalogued according to internationally accepted cataloguing standards. The staff is comprised of qualified library technicians.

The Cataloguing Centre staff:

- Ensures professional cataloguing of all school library resources.
- Standardizes and maintains the SD73 District Catalogue
- Catalogues all school library resources in a reasonable turnaround time.

THE LIBRARY PROGRAM

The library program is multi-dimensional with four main strands. The teacher librarian devotes the majority of his or her time teaching students in the Literature and Information Literacy strands. In Leadership and Curriculum Support the teacher librarian works with teachers and other school personnel, guiding them in their use of new informational sources and resources. Additionally, Library Management ensures efficient organization of the physical space, resources, and dedicated library staff and volunteers, which are essential for a successful program.

LITERATURE

The library program provides students with resources and strategies that help them to become competent readers who develop an appreciation and understanding of language and literature.

INFORMATION LITERACY

Information literacy is the ability to acquire, critically evaluate, select, use, create and communicate information in ways that lead to knowledge and wisdom. The library program delivers a comprehensive information literacy program to teach students the skills and attributes they need to become independent life-long learners.

LEADERSHIP AND CURRICULUM SUPPORT

The teacher librarian stays current in learning about resources and how to integrate them into the library program. The teacher librarian assumes a leadership role in sharing this knowledge with the staff.

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

It is imperative that the library be managed efficiently so staff and students can access the resources they seek for curriculum support, research and recreational reading.
LITERATURE

LITERATURE: The library program provides students with resources and strategies that help them to become competent readers who develop an appreciation and understanding of language and literature.

An exemplary library program:

- Nurtures a love of reading through literature.
- Supports the attainment of learning outcomes as stated in curriculum guides.
- Supports and promotes School District 73 literacy programs that develop reading skills and strategies.
- Provides reading incentive programs such as Stellar, Red Cedar, Battle of the Books and book clubs.
- Provides access to a quality literature collection, including a variety of genres at different reading levels that reflect the diversity and interests of the student population.
- Provides access to informational literature that entices students to explore interests and conduct inquiries.
- Delivers explicit instruction to raise the desire of students to read quality literature.
- Encourages students to make personal connections with literature through the selection of high quality, high interest materials.
- Promotes reading and language development through literacy activities including: book talks; displays; participation in school and district events; author visits; book fairs and clubs; poetry readings.

TEACHER

The delivery of an exemplary library program requires the partnership of the teacher and teacher librarian. The teacher brings expertise in specific curriculum and knowledge of the students to the planning sessions and the teacher librarian brings expertise in resource selection, information skill development and the use of research tools. Planning cooperatively results in a curriculum that is relevant to students' knowledge and skill development.

The teacher:

- Recognizes and promotes the school library program as integral to the success of students becoming readers and life long learners.
- Promotes cooperative lesson planning with the teacher librarian integrating literature and information literacy into subject areas and units of study.
- Plans with the teacher librarian to ensure that prescribed learning outcomes are met.
- Teaches in partnership with the teacher librarian.
- Provides the teacher librarian with information about the abilities, learning styles and interests of students that affect the kinds of resources they need for optimum learning.
- Attends inservices, trainings and workshops that develop his/her individual knowledge of the new technologies and the literacies required to effectively use them.

STUDENT

The focus of the program is the development of a positive attitude towards learning now and in the future. Statistically, a rise in student achievement is frequently observed in schools with an exemplary library program taught by a qualified teacher librarian. Students are partners in developing a plan for learning, executing the plan and evaluating it.

The student:

- Participates in decisions regarding resources that best suit his or her style of learning.
- Respectfully participates in using different learning tools, activities and programs designed to increase skills and abilities.
- Shares knowledge of learning resources, information and presentation formats freely with others.
- Learns and respects the social and ethical considerations with respect to information and its use.
- Participates in problem solving activities in order to develop the skills necessary to conduct their own inquiries and become independent lifelong learners.
TEACHER-LIBRARIAN

Teacher librarians develop strong partnerships within the school and community, but none is more valuable in delivering an exemplary library program than the one with classroom teachers. This is the partnership that directly impacts student’s learning. Together they share responsibilities for ensuring that students have opportunities to develop the literacy and information literate skills and aptitudes they will need throughout their lives. The administrator enables this to happen by sharing the vision, creating the opportunities in planning and timetabling, and participating in evaluating the program.

The teacher librarian:

- Recognizes and promotes the school library program as integral to the success of students becoming readers and life long learners.
- Develops cooperative lesson plans with classroom teachers that integrate literature and information literacy skills into subject areas.
- Encourages partnerships with outside agencies, including the public library system, to support the program.
- Supports personal and group professional development, particularly in the area of information literacy strategies.
- Provides teaching and instruction in the process of learning using a resource-based constructivist approach rooted in the Principles of Learning as outlined in the Ministry IRP documents.
- Models best practice planning and teaching strategies.
- Provides opportunities for the integration of Information and Communication Technologies into cooperative lessons and units of study.
- Develops and shares district and community resources.
- Promotes personal connections with students, which assists them in choosing resources that promote reading.
- Implements strategies for networking and staff collegiality.
- Trains and works with library volunteers.

INFORMATION LITERACY

INFORMATION LITERACY: Information literacy is the ability to acquire, critically evaluate, select, use, create and communicate information in ways that lead to knowledge and wisdom. The library program delivers a comprehensive information literacy program to teach students the skills and attributes they need to become independent life-long learners.

An exemplary library program:

- Provides explicit instruction along a systematic K-12 continuum of skill development focussing on accessing, evaluating, using and presenting information attained using a variety of resources.
- Provides opportunities to introduce, practice, maintain and refine information literacy skills and abilities.
- Provides instruction in the strategies and techniques for evaluating the legitimacy and authenticity of digital information.
- Provides explicit instruction and opportunities for students to demonstrate that they understand their social and ethical responsibilities when using information.
- Integrates the use of Information and Communication technology to learn and communicate on a local and global basis.
- Develops critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making skills through student inquiries based on a constructivist learning model.
- Provides online access and explicit teaching of information databases, particularly those that are evaluated and purchased for district-wide use.
- Instils in students the confidence, skills and knowledge to use current and emerging technologies and learn how to transfer their learning to different situations.
- Personalizes resources to match the student’s current ability and skill set.
LEADERSHIP AND CURRICULUM SUPPORT

LEADERSHIP AND CURRICULUM SUPPORT: The teacher librarian stays current in their knowledge of resources and how to integrate them into the library program. The teacher librarian assumes a leadership role in sharing this knowledge with the staff. The academic collection supports and extends the curriculum and school goals and learning outcomes.

In an exemplary library program, the role of the teacher librarian is to:

- Devote the majority of their assigned F.T.E. time to partnering with classroom or subject area teachers to cooperatively teach literature and information literacy skills to classes.
- Plan and model teaching lessons and units that reflect the Principles of Learning as outlined in Ministry Integrated Resource Package (IRP) documents.
- Support the attainment of learning outcomes as stated in the IRPs and in Locally Developed Curricula.
- Promote program objectives through both formal and informal meetings.
- Select resources that meet recognized standards for authenticity and currency and provide curriculum support.
- Seek input from staff and students on curricular resource needs.
- Participate in regular professional development to keep current on educational research related to literacy acquisition and information skills.
- Provide leadership by offering professional development and training opportunities for all school library partners.
- Provide knowledgeable vision and leadership in advocating for the library program.
- Participate in school, district and provincial committees, and professional organizations.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The leadership of the school administrator is crucial to the implementation and success of the library program. The administrator leads in communicating the vision to school staff that the library program is an integral part in achieving learning outcomes.

The administrator provides support and guidance by:

- Understanding and communicating the importance of the library program to staff and the school community.
- Understanding, communicating and providing implementation support for cooperative lessons and units between teachers and teacher librarian.
- Supporting in-service training as required to implement an exemplary program.
- Ensuring that timetabling provides opportunities for equitable access to the library program for all students. This may mean flexible or set schedules or a combination of flexible and set timetabling.
- Facilitates collaborative planning time between teacher-librarian and classroom teachers on a regular basis.
- Ensuring that trained library assistants are in place to perform clerical duties and supervision.
- Supporting a K-12 Information Literacy continuum.
- Evaluating the library program in conjunction with the teacher-librarian using evaluation tools that focus on exemplary program development. (See appendix)
- Promoting the use of selection criteria and management that develop a vibrant, dynamic resource collection geared to student and curricular requirements.
- Promoting the library collection as the key source for recreational reading and research resources.
- Developing a school atmosphere that supports risk-taking for staff and students.
LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT: It is imperative that the library is managed efficiently so staff and students can access the resources they seek for curriculum support, research and recreational reading.

In an exemplary library program, the teacher librarian:

- Provides orientation to familiarize students and staff with library organization, policies, procedures and resources.
- Ensures that organization and management processes promote the accessibility of the library’s resources, teacher librarian and related personnel to the whole school.
- Manages and maintains a flexible timetable that allows for scheduled lessons and the ability to meet immediate individual or class research needs.
- Promotes the library resources by communicating library programs and general information to the school and community such as: school website; school newsletter; local media; book talks, and other advertising in and around the school.
- Promotes the library’s instructional and curriculum program and resources.
- Maintains a well designed, current website that provides research and resource links to the school catalogue and other relevant information sources.
- Regularly evaluates the collection, updating and selecting resources according to recognized standards.
- Ensures that procedures and routines are in place for effectively managing the school library budget.
- Works cooperatively with clerical staff and volunteers to ensure the library is well managed.
- Organizes the physical library space to create a welcoming atmosphere, encourage recreational/leisure use, facilitate teaching and academic use.
- Liaises with community organizations on literacy/library related projects, in particular, the public library system.
- Communicates on a regular basis with the school administrators, this includes: submitting qualitative and quantitative reports; sharing sample units; inviting administrators to events.
PARTNERS IN AN EXEMPLARY LIBRARY PROGRAM

An exemplary program is designed to inspire a love of literature and integrate information literacy across the curriculum to develop independent, life-long readers and learners. A systematic K-12 program that continually reinforces and builds students' skills and develops positive attitudes to learning is the backbone of the program. Supporting students as they strive to meet their academic and curriculum goals requires the collaborative partnership of many people.

At the district level, the Superintendent, senior administration and trustees' vision of a strong library program is essential in communicating the district's direction to the schools and community. At the school, key partners in ensuring the delivery of the program are the administrators, teacher librarian, and teachers. The teacher librarian plans the integration of the program components in partnership with classroom or subject area teachers. Together they teach the lessons so students develop literary and information literacy skills and aptitudes in conjunction with their subject knowledge and skills. Students contribute to the total program by actively participating as program builders, users and evaluators. Parents' encouragement and support creates a positive attitude for their children's learning. Partnerships with pertinent community groups and organizations make students aware of the connections between their learning and real life applications of information skills.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

The support of the Superintendent, senior administration, trustees, District Library Coordinator, and other district personnel is essential to the development of an exemplary school library program.

Their responsibilities include:

- Providing a framework for the library program.
- Developing and clarifying descriptions of the professional role of teacher librarians and other partners.
- Providing support and direction through the District Library Coordinator for the school library program.
- Designating support services at the Cataloguing Centre and the District Resource Centre.