



LOW HANGING FRUIT

Because School Libraries Empower Students

By Jeannie Standal

April is [National School Library Month](#)! And it's kind of a big deal. During School Library Month, an annual celebration from the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), school librarians hold events and activities to demonstrate the essential role of the school library for the education of every student. This year's theme is "Because School Libraries Empower Students," which plays well with [ALA's Libraries Transform campaign](#).

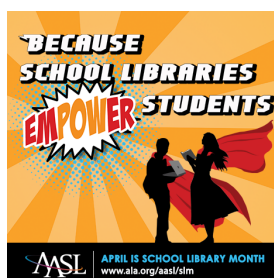
Why do we have school libraries? School libraries had a slow start in public education. Although the first school librarian was hired in 1900, it wasn't until 1957, when the Soviet's Sputnik beat the US into space, that things changed for school libraries. The U.S. realized it's students were behind in science and math, and started investing more in education, including developing school libraries. Congress recognized the value in having high quality resources available for teachers and students at school.

Nowadays, in addition to the usual content, teaching students the skills to sort reliable information from sketchy (called information literacy), and how to stay safe and behave online (digital citizenship) is more important than ever. The age of fake news and alternative facts is upon us, and we can't believe everything we read.

The school library exists as a technology resource, an information hub, a learning space, a sanctuary, a collaboration center, and the great playing field leveler. Not to mention the go-to place for print, electronic, and audio books. The school librarian makes sure the digital and print collection provides access to what users want and need, and s/he knows how to find it.

An effective school library program is truly the heart of a school. With proper support, it can be molded to suit the specific needs of each school. Do students and teachers need space and resources for independent study? The library is a learning commons. Working on design thinking, problem solving, and grit? The library is a maker space. Taking on projects requiring access to tools that can accommodate big ideas? The library becomes a collaborative workspace.

Considering a small appreciation for your librarian? One great gift is to support the library and librarian. When rumors of cuts in the library circulate, make your opinion known to decision makers that the library is necessary. When library hours are trimmed, demand access for students! No book budget? Suggest one. Most important, use your school library and librarian! And chocolate is awesome, too.



LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



School Library Impact Studies

<https://www.lrs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/>

School Libraries & Student Achievement Infographic

<https://www.lrs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/>

There is a version for online viewing, and one for printing.

School Libraries Work! from Scholastic

Get the free report at

<http://www.scholastic.com/SLW2016/>

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



Nominate your School Librarian As a STAR

In honor of National Library Workers Day on April 11, nominate your school librarian to recognize his/her hard work for students! Go to the [NLWD website](#), click on the blue Submit a Star! button at the upper right, then click "Nominate a stellar library worker" at the box in the middle of the screen. That will take you to a short questionnaire where you can describe why your nominee is a star.

Submit your star librarian today!

DIGITAL TOOLS



LiLI has a number of tools that meet K12 curriculum needs. In the **Tools for Schools** (<http://guides.lili.org/ToolsForSchools>), you can learn about the LiLI tools used by educators.

The **Database Comparison Chart** lists all the school databases and lists which features or content each has.

Each page listed on the site includes an explanation of a tool covering:

- What is it?
- Why use it?
- Try it!

Any materials can be reproduced for use in the classroom.



