

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. School Library Services – Information Item

DRAFT POSITION PAPER: SCHOOL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Given the library community's past efforts and experience in trying to create a state requirement (legislatively, through rule, and through accreditation) to have a certified teacher-librarian in every public school, Commission staff met in January to articulate our current approach to school library development.

We believe that, in the current fiscal and political environment, a proposal for a new state requirement would have minimal support among state and local policymakers, and perhaps create negative political capital.

- The emphasis on local control in education is strong.
- The price tag is high, \$26,625,000 based on 750¹ schools and a minimum teacher salary of \$35,500.
- The point made by legislators during an earlier ILA effort to require teacher-librarians is still true today: if a teacher-librarian is a high priority at a local school, the administration has the ability to hire one.

Our current development approach involves smaller, incremental efforts to improve school library services and to increase the awareness of the important role of a good school library program in higher student achievement. Over time, improved library services will gain increased visibility and be valued and used by classroom teachers, administrators, students, and their parents.

Rather than pursuing a statewide requirement, we are building capacity by:

- Providing professional development opportunities for school library staff, both certified and non-certified.
- Continuing to articulate the benefits of a good school library program to relevant audiences (including school administrators, boards, classroom teachers, parents):
 - the teacher librarian role in curriculum planning aligned with Idaho Core Standards,
 - strengthening resource collections especially in STEAM content,
 - integration of education technology,
 - providing professional development for classroom teachers, and
 - other benefits as documented by a number of studies (including a 2009 Idaho study).

- Creating/providing online resources in support of school library services (The Scoop newsletter, Low Hanging Fruit newsletter, LiLI databases, and ICfL website sections for RTM, School Libraries, and Teens & Tweens).
- Continuing RTM early literacy (ages 0-8) programs and staff training in public and school libraries.
- Promoting programs that support school library services (Teen Tech Week, Teen Read Week, Letters About Literature).
- Including school library representation on Commission task forces and in pilot projects.
- Providing opportunities and platforms for school library staff to share innovations and best practices.
- Encouraging public library-school library and library-local partner collaboration.
- Collaborating with ILA and other organizations when we identify an opportunity to advance the development of school library services.

More details are laid out in the Commission's [School Library Action Plan, 2014-2017](#).

¹(http://www.localschooldirectory.com/state-schools/ID#state_information_for_public@overview, accessed 2/26/2015)

DRAFT POSITION PAPER: PUBLIC LIBRARY AND SCHOOL COLLABORATION

The Commission for Libraries encourages collaboration between/among public libraries and schools. They have a large population base in common: K-12 students, teachers, and parents.

Public libraries have statutory responsibility to serve their entire community – city residents for city libraries (IC 33-2601, 33-2607(3)) and district residents for district libraries (IC 33-2720(f)).

- As part of that charge, public libraries offer a variety of out-of-school education programs and resources for K-12 students, including homework help, summer reading programs, and content to support home-schooling and extra-curricular interests.

We believe school districts have the responsibility of providing primary support for school library services – qualified staff, technology, materials and access to content that support the school curriculum for both students and teachers as well as independent reading.

- We believe that many Idaho school districts do not provide this support at an adequate level (see our 2012 survey of elementary school libraries as one example).
- Idaho has no statutory or accreditation requirements for school library services, and has not adopted standards for school library services.

Idaho Code no longer authorizes formation of a school-community library district as a taxing entity. However, collaboration and partnerships, ranging from very informal to contractual agreements, are used for cooperative projects and longer-term relationships between public libraries and schools. We believe these options are preferable to school-community library districts because they offer the most flexibility in meeting specific local needs for library services that are likely to evolve over time. Decisions about the extent and conditions of collaboration and shared services between/among public libraries and schools are made at the local level.

Co-location of public and school library services exists in several Idaho communities, and new co-location agreements are in development consistent with what may be an emerging national trend (see Nashville, Hartford, and other examples in Urban Library Council's [Leadership Brief: Partners for Education](#)).

Advantages:

Co-location of public and school library services (and with other services) has the potential to:

- Reduce duplication of facilities, overhead, materials and licenses for access, staff, and programming.
- Foster higher level resource sharing, including collaborative collection and program development.
- Result in better coordination of services and programs, with more effective outcomes.
- Offer convenience for students and parents (1-stop).
- Offer service outlets in underserved areas of the community.

Challenges:

Co-location requires consideration of a number of issues that, once negotiated, should be documented in a written agreement. Issues include:

- Purpose (the WHY): have the parties articulated and agreed upon shared goals?
- Roles: have the parties clearly defined and agreed upon their respective roles?
- Governance: who has ultimate responsibility and decision-making authority?
- Funding: how will costs be shared – for overhead, materials and licenses, staff, and programming?
- Audiences: how will the needs of different audiences be addressed – school students and teachers/the public, minor children/adults in terms of access to content and technology?
- Facilities: can the shared space be designed collaboratively, or is one entity being added into the existing space of another?
- Policies: how will policies address subjects that typically are handled very differently by public libraries and by schools – weapons, registered sex offenders, homeless people, and expelled students may not be allowed in school facilities but are/may be in public libraries?

- Use of tax funds: how will concerns about tax funds collected for public library services (defined in IC 33-2702(6) being used for school library services, or vice versa, be addressed?
- Partnership: do the parties have a sense of fairness about the agreement, that responsibility is shared equitably?

Context from the Urban Library Council's Leadership Brief: Partners for Education, (Winter 2015):

Overview:

“Traditional education systems cannot meet today's learning and skill development needs alone. Like many modern challenges, education takes a village - a well-coordinated network of government, business, and formal and informal education institutions committed to improving education outcomes. While awareness of the need for new approaches to education is widespread, strategic collaboration among key players is often lacking, leading to missed opportunities, community confusion about available resources, disconnected outcomes, and competition for public and private resources.”

21st Century Education:

“Our understanding of education has changed dramatically over the last decade. Research shows that an integrated and continuous approach to learning that begins early, draws on a variety of resources, extends beyond traditional classrooms, and is interest-driven enables children, youth, teens, adults, and seniors to succeed in school, careers, and life.”

“Local government officials recognize that educational opportunities play a key role in quality of life, economic development, and public safety and have made education a top priority, whether or not they have authority over the school system.”