

Library Media Program Supports: ECASD Postsecondary Readiness Standards

Overview

School library media specialists play a crucial role in facilitating student and staff learning in inquiry-based learning, information and technology literacy, and exposure to literature and informational media. Few individuals enjoy our broad vision of the whole school program, recognizing the diversity in students, teachers, programs, curricula, and projects. Fewer still share our insights into individual student and staff backgrounds, cultures, interests, strengths, and needs.

In summary, the ECASD Library Media Program holds a unique position to offer powerful resources in support of the Transitional Readiness Standards, providing and promoting

- a lifelong love of reading
- equity in access to print and technology
- diversity of materials, often student or educator selected
- reading materials and other media for personal, academic, and professional growth for staff and students
- self-selected, self-paced learning, assisted by educators who knows the client and the collection
- continuously updated resources on post-secondary options, including colleges, universities, military, and careers
- test preparation services (ACT, SAT, AP, COMPASS, ASVAB)
- consistency in research methods and documentation, K-12
- connectedness with students, parents, and community
- collaboration with teaching staff to integrate technology standards (ITLS) into the curriculum
- staff development opportunities for instructional support and use of media and technology
- organizational support as members of CIM teams, POS and PBIS committees, curriculum writing groups, diversity training, and other building or district committees

Equality and Equity

We recognize that certain realities create unequal opportunities for many of our students. With our core values of tolerance and individual service, school librarians play a critical role in offering support for individuals who experience those inequalities.

ELL and Special Education

- High-interest materials in a wide range of lexile levels
- Multicultural literature
- Audiobooks, and matched audio and book kits
- Books in multiple languages
- Instructional and media support to teach language concepts
- Assistive technologies

SES

- Books and other media available to all, free of charge
- Technology access and support for students who lack home resources
- Special accommodations with fines, etc.

Learning

In the IMC, students and staff receive support in learning and teaching goals. When selecting IMC media, students control the pace and content of their own education. Since learning is not linear—and considering the noted roles of “timing, opportunity, luck, and exposure”—the IMC will often be the best place for students to learn.

With guidance from a professional library media specialist, students have access to a wealth of materials: broad in lexile, content, culture, world view, even media type.

As outlined in the AASL (American Association of School Librarians) publication, *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*, we believe

- Equitable access is a key component to education
- Inquiry provides a framework for learning
- Reading is a window to the world
- The continuing expansion of information demands that all individuals acquire the thinking skills that will enable them to learn on their own
- Technology skills are crucial for future employment needs
- Learning has a social context
- School library media programs are essential to the development of learning skills

Transformational process

- **Core academics**

A school library media center serves as the hub of learning in the school. The LMC collection spans far beyond the written curriculum, and the library media specialist is a dedicated professional teacher, who knows the educational program and the individuals within the learning community, providing cohesion in the educational program, vertically and horizontally:

Providing instruction on locating and using information to make informed decisions

- to students in accessing material and critical evaluation of sources
- to staff in lesson planning, teaching, and in the building of classroom libraries

Serving on curriculum committees

- materials selection
- inclusion of ITL Standards

Practicing collaborative teaching and learning

- focused learning: projects with measurable standards
- encouraging critical thinking and process

Providing media and technology

- print collection
- online learning resources: ProQuest, Gale, Badgerlink, etc.
- AV media
- tech tools relevant to 21st Century learners
 - hardware
 - software
 - Web 2.0 tools
- adaptive technology and support media
- serving as the first line of technical support for students and staff at elementary schools
- creating and maintaining school web content

- **Career awareness**

The library media program supports career awareness by providing materials and learning opportunities focused on the world of work:

- participate in Programs of Study committee
- provide print materials on work and post-secondary options
- purchase WISCareers with Common School Fund
- collaborate with teachers and students on career projects
- host career days and mock interviews

- **Social/emotional**

The school library is an area for both individual and social learning. As such, opportunities commonly arise for social and emotional learning. The library media program helps students acquire and practice the skills they need to manage emotions, work with others, and handle challenges constructively.

- provide literature to support values and skills
 - self-awareness
 - social awareness
 - appropriate problem solving
- encourage full staff participation in Courageous Conversations
- provide SEL professional development resources to staff
- team teach collaborative student projects
- model appropriateness, courtesy, altruism, and professionalism
- work with administration to set rules and expectations

- **Individual enhancements**

The school library has always been the ideal setting for going outside and beyond the standard curriculum. Likewise, since individual enhancements will usually be unique, in-depth, and spontaneous, the LMC collection naturally provides learning materials for those enhancements. Moreover, with expertise in K-12 media and technology, the library media specialist will be a valuable resource person for identifying appropriate resources for these enhancements.

- provide resources and opportunities for individual learning
 - explore interests
 - develop abilities, including language and technology skills
 - explore emotional needs and responses
- provide resources and space for specific groups of students
 - book and study groups
 - sub-groups supported through culturally diverse collection
 - flexible and timely access to materials through use of current collection, interlibrary loan, and online resources

Culturally Responsive Teaching

In examination of the domains of culturally relevant teaching, one can find a description of the ideal library media specialist: a professional who maintains ongoing relationships over time throughout the learning community to provide rigor, “realness,” and relevance to each individual.

As Culturally Relevant Library Media Specialists, each day we strive to

- demonstrate that all students can achieve
- provide a climate of respect and caring for all
- match media to individual learners based on our knowledge and experience
- maintain ongoing, fluid relationships with students as they grow, year by year
- demonstrate connectedness with students, teachers, administrators, and the community
- believe in shared knowledge throughout the learning community, including students
- help students make connections through reading, research, communication, and service
- offer challenges for students to achieve their highest potential
- use our knowledge of the whole student to integrate new learning
- show diversity in culture, language, and lifestyle through the materials we offer
- demonstrate willingness to learn and participate in students' cultures

Discussing Race: Courageous Conversations

Several of our library media specialists have already experienced the Courageous Conversations workshop provided by the Eau Claire Area School District. Due perhaps to the progressive, inclusive history of our profession, library media specialists often find themselves at the forefront in discussions of race. Often, the materials we select pose questions and start discussions in the community, particularly when we offer a controversial example of counter storytelling.

As a department, we hold the “Four Agreements” of Courageous Conversations as ethical imperatives as professional media specialists:

We will stay engaged by

- reflecting on the role of race in our professional and personal lives
- examining our racial attitudes, beliefs, and expectations, just as we examine the role of race in our LMC collections and in our lessons
- participating in conversations of race, rather than indulging in denial or turning a blind eye

We will speak our truth by

- being honest, while being compassionate and open to the truth of others
- questioning others, free to challenge and disagree when appropriate

We will experience discomfort, recognizing

- discomfort is a part of growth
- our responsibility for presenting diverse ideas makes us a target for certain groups

We will expect and accept non-closure

- our collection will evolve as the discussion of race changes
- with our focus on inquiry-based learning, our goal should be raising new and relevant questions, ideas, and concerns