

ELEMENTS – A Quality School Library

Element

What is a quality school library?

Every school must provide school library services to meet the teaching and learning needs of the school community. A quality school library media center is an integral part of a balanced reading program. In a balanced reading program, students develop literacy skills and extend these skills to develop information literacy by accessing, evaluating, and using information from a variety of resources. A quality school library media center is essential to student success in meeting District and State Standards.

Every School should have a library media center. A functional library media center has appropriate staffing, a collection of resources, and established policies to support reading and standards-based instruction.

The Library Media Center components include:

Facility – A facility capable of supporting the book collection and the daily learning activities of the student population.

Staff – A Library Leadership Team that includes a Library Media Teacher or a Faculty Library Chairperson and a Library Aide who has successfully completed the Library and Information Services Certificate Program.

Collection – A collection of 18 books per student with 80% of the books published in the last 10 years. Schools must budget to replace 5% of the collection each year.

Policies – Policies for the hours, rules and operations of the library media center that maximize the access for students, parents, and teachers. Students must be able to take books home if they are to achieve reading fluency and success.

Rationale and Research

Why are quality school libraries important?

Research shows that a quality school library results in greater access to books, and students who read more achieve more, especially those involved in free voluntary reading, which is the single most valuable activity for developing reading comprehension.

For English Learners: Library and Information Services carefully identifies books which meet the specific criteria for English learners. These selections address specific content areas to develop grade-level concepts and skills in language arts, math, science, and the social sciences. Library Services also identifies appropriate Development. Books are identified in *Focus on Books* publications by Library and Information Services.

For Students with disabilities: Many students with disabilities may require modest or no assistance to access the library while others with disabilities may require books-on-tape, Braille or large print books, video or computer adaptations, the assistance of a librarian, peer, or teacher, and other learning resources to meet their needs.

Presentation

How can schools present a quality school library?

Publish information on the facility, staffing, collection, and policies as part of the school Accountability Report Card.

A sample Accountability Report Card

Facility – Our school library is capable of shelving 10,000 books and accommodating two classes at the time for instructional purposes

Staffing – Our school library is staffed by one Library Media Teacher and one 3-hour Library Aide.

Collection – Our book collection is now at 12 books per student with 60% published in the last 10 years.

Policies – Our school library is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to provide parents the opportunity to check books out with their children and to take the books home. All children may check books out to take home as long as they have a consent form on file. Students may have up to 4 books out at any one time. Our school library hosts a family literacy night each Wednesday from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Assessment

What tools are available to assess the quality of the school library?

The District's publication *Focus on Books*, also available on CD-ROM, can assist schools in generating statistics and graphs to assess their school library. By inputting information into the CD-ROM version of *Focus on Books*, schools can obtain the following information about their own school.

- Collection balance
- Collection recency
- Number of books per student
- Linear footage of shelving
- Annual maintenance budget
- Budget to increase book collection by one book per student

Schools may call Library and Information Services for further assistance in assessing the quality of the school library.