

Library Media Services

Providing service and leadership for the 21st Century

San Diego County Office of Education, 2011

ABSTRACT

This is a white paper outlining the need for renewed and re-envisioned library media services for San Diego County Schools. The mandates, research and recommendations for school library services and new opportunities to receive information technologies via the Digital Content Portal are presented.

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TRANSFORMING LIBRARY MEDIA SERVICES: THE NEED, THE CHALLENGE

- California ranks 51st in the nation with regard to ratio of teacher librarians to students.
- Research has shown that access to school library services under the direction of a librarian or library teacher increases student achievement.
- California *Education Code (EC)* Section 18101: “The State Board of Education shall adopt standards, rules and regulations for school library services.”
- County offices are asked to support school libraries by providing access to library materials and the services of a professional librarian or library teacher for those districts that can’t afford to support their own library program.
- Need for alignment of services to Common Core State Standards, Model School Library Standards, and National Educational Technology Standards.
- The nature of library services is changing—the question is what to change and what to retain.
- Funding for school library services has decreased significantly in the past 20 years.
- San Diego county schools need library programs that will support the Common Core Standards.
- Limited funding combined with changes in technology have led to a plan of updating how SDCOE cost effective and current library services are provided.

California ranks 51st in the nation in the ratio of teacher librarians to students

Approximately 24 percent of California schools have a credentialed teacher librarian on campus part time or longer; the majority of professional staffing is found at the high school level. A teacher librarian has both a California teaching credential and a California teacher librarian services credential. Although the average national ratio of teacher librarians to students in the fall of 2004 was 1:916, California ranks fifty-first in the nation with a current ratio of 1:5,124 (2006-07 CBEDS Report and Digest of Education Statistics Tables and Figures 2006, [National Center for Education Statistics](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/digest2006)).

In 2006-07, 89 percent of the schools in California reported classified staff in the library rather than certificated staff. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/schoollibrstats08.asp> These statistics highlight the dire situation for library media services in California. San Diego County shares this profile. A recent survey of C&I administrators in San Diego indicated that **none** of the responding districts had certificated teacher librarians at the elementary level and **only 21%** had a certificated district librarian or library teacher.

Providing access to skilled librarians

Electronic media now make it possible for San Diego County Office of Education to offer the services of trained teacher librarians more widely than in the past. Through web casts, online training opportunities, literature blogs, and other professional development services, the county schools library staff can help teachers and library clerks around the county develop their own library programs as well as their own expertise in library services. This requires sufficient county schools library staff to do the job of library professional development as well as collection development and maintenance.

County offices support school libraries by providing access to library materials. In addition, the County Librarian provides the services of a professional librarian or library teacher for those districts that don’t otherwise have a credentialed individual to operate their library programs.

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Funding for school library services significantly lower in the past 20 years

The primary source of library funding for 44 percent of California schools comes from the School and Library Improvement Block Grant. The second-most important source of funding comes from fund-raising activities. In its first year, only 5 percent of the block grant was invested in school libraries.

In San Diego County a survey of C&I administrators found 75% use a combination of state and federal funds and local district funds to support school libraries. Half rely on parent fundraising efforts and 25% have private grants. More than 75% indicated their **primary concern** was **insufficient funds** to support the library services and programs they would like to have.

Research shows access to school library services under the direction of a certificated librarian increases student achievement for all

Conclusions from a series of research studies over the past ten years have shown unequivocally that student achievement is higher in schools that have school library programs provided by trained librarians and teacher librarians. In 2003 the California Department of Education reported on the School Library Media Impact Studies based on research done in Alaska, Colorado and Pennsylvania which concluded “students performed better on standardized tests when they had access to a well-stocked school library staffed with certificated school library media teachers” published by Colorado Library Research Studies and available online.

(www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/lpinfo2003.asp),

Evidence has continued to gather and at latest count over 60 research studies have determined that students in schools with good school libraries “learn more, get better grades, and score higher on standardized tests than their peers in schools without libraries” (California State Board of Education, Draft: Model School Library Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2010).

Another study found that the presence of a school library program had a positive correlation with student achievement on both the language arts and mathematics portions of the California Standard Tests for both elementary and middle schools. (Sinclair-Tarr, S. and Tarr, W. Jr. Using Large-Scale Assessments to Evaluate the Effectiveness of School Library Programs in California. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 88 (9), May 2007, pp.710-711.)

With this growing body of evidence why are library media services in such dire straits? This is likely to some degree due to the constrained economic climate and insufficient funds. For too long, however, library media services have not been viewed as a necessary part of the curriculum. With the current emphasis on Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History Social Studies, Science & Technical Subjects—including the heavy emphasis on research skills—this could change. Finally, the plight of library services across the nation is also due to the changing nature of library services and the real question of what to retain and what to eliminate in the new information age.

Alignment of Services to Common Core State Standards, Model School Library Standards, and National Educational Technology Standards

California has recently adopted new **Model School Library Standards for CA Public Schools, K- 12**. (September, 2010). These standards support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English- Language Arts & Literacy in History Social Studies, Science & Technical Subjects. In particular, they support the CCSS in developing students’ “ability “to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer

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questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms, old and new.” Librarians, working together with teachers of all content areas, have the opportunity to establish new curricula integrating reading, writing, and research and using the reference tools now available through online services, such as World Book, ProQuest, SIRS, and other information databases.

The **National Educational Technology Standards (NETS)** for Students promote the need for students to:

1. demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology
2. use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others
3. apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information
4. use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources
5. understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior
6. demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations

There is a need to provide students with a venue to explore and apply the technical skills outlined in each of these sets of standards as we transition to an ever increasing digital world.

The nature of library services is changing—the question is what to change and what to retain.

The Internet does not replace the need for books and often increases the demand for up-to-date library materials. Library resources come in various formats—both print and electronic—and are selected based on the best format for the intended user and use. (CDE Online School Library Survey for 2006-07)

Effective school libraries are much more than books. They are learning hubs, each with a full range of print and electronic resources that support student achievement. Today’s school libraries must be gathering places for people of all ages and all interests to explore and debate ideas. The library is especially important for children of poverty, because they have very little access to books at home and in their communities. The library is often their only source of books. Unfortunately, children of poverty are the least likely to have access to quality libraries, and are less likely to attend schools that have libraries with credentialed librarians (Krashen, 2009).

School libraries have the most significant impact on learning outcomes when they are supervised by a credentialed library media specialist, working collaboratively with teachers, to help all students develop a love of reading, become skilled users of ideas and information, and explore the world of print and electronic media resources. (Scholastic Research and Results Foundation Paper. 2008. *School Libraries Work!* New York: Scholastic Library Publishing)

Where some would conclude that the transition into electronic media would make books and libraries obsolete, what it really does is add to the services a good library must provide. Many media formats have emerged and disappeared in the past 50 years. School libraries have offered their clients 33rpm records, filmstrips, 8mm tapes, audio cassettes, beta max video, VHS, and now DVDs and CDs. This march of progress has created library media collections that need to be purged regularly because one format or another is no longer supported. The one format that has

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endured through all of this is the book. It is still the most portable, most easily used, and least dependent on a power connection. Libraries are about intelligent access to information and literature. All formats, whether electronic or paper-based, must be offered to students and teachers. The question becomes how to do it affordably.

The studies on school library effectiveness point out two essential components of a good school library program: (1) the presence of trained teacher librarians, (2) access to current, well-selected library resources.

Expanding access to resources

Fortunately, the Internet and electronic media have made it much easier to provide current information via online subscriptions, research databases, and reference collections online. Subscriptions such as California Streaming, World Book Online, ProQuest, SIRS, and TeachingBooks.net provide a variety of resources for students and teachers that have been selected for age appropriateness and interest. These resources don't eliminate the need for library collections, but they do reduce the need for encyclopedia type reference books.

The advent of eBooks and eReaders is making print that was formerly available only in paper versions now available electronically. Good collections of books and literature for children have yet to be developed in eBook format, however. And despite the draw of eBooks, print books are often the most economical and durable format for school libraries.

The need for library services in San Diego County Schools

The recent survey of C&I administrators reiterates the need for libraries and library services to support the Core Common State Standards:

The following library programs were ranked as either **extremely important** or **essential** by **80%** of the respondents. They are listed in priority order:

- 1) Research and writing programs—helping students locate and use information
- 2) Motivational reading programs—helping students become enthusiastic readers
- 3) Literature awareness programs—helping students understand good literature

Over **85%** of respondents rated these services **essential**:

- 1) Current up-to-date library book collection
- 2) Controlled online access to ensure safe and appropriate content

85% of respondents rated these services **extremely important** or **essential**:

- 1) Research and reference materials online, appropriate to grade level
- 2) Online access to current video material to support the curriculum

Over half of respondents rated the following services extremely important or essential:

- 1) Big books and easy readers in class sets
- 2) Multimedia kits to support the curriculum
- 3) Access to current events online
- 4) World Book online
- 5) DVD/VHS collection to support the curriculum

From these results it appears there is a clear need for **up-to-date library book collections** and **online access to research tools and material in a controlled environment**. Maintaining SDCOE's library book selection services appears to be extremely important, as well as expanding

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the offerings of online research and references resources appropriate to students' grade levels. The SDCOE Digital Content Portal is a cost effective, efficient delivery system that provides students and teachers with web-based tools, maximizing access to essential learning resources. The use of a Digital Portal and its resources would provide a venue in which teachers can address the technical skills outlined in the CCSS, the Model School Library Standards, and the National Educational Technology Standards.

Expand digital content and utilize group buys

As a way of maximizing effort and delivering content economically, continue to build out the Digital Content Portal and act as an agent to secure low vendor prices for all San Diego districts. This will allow the county library services team to supply up-to-date content to districts, as well as timely professional development. Using the Digital Content Portal to supply **research tools and databases that are appropriate to grade level** will support the **Common Core State Standards**. It will also allow SDCOE to provide a good research skills curriculum delivered through the portal. This was the primary concern and need expressed by C&I administrators who responded to the library media survey in September 2010.

Offer library professional development online

The Digital Content Portal will allow the county certificated library media services staff to easily and quickly create professional development materials to serve school libraries and library staff members across the county. Some of the professional development offerings will include Book-talks, Book Review meetings online, Young Reader Medal in-service online, Authors' Fair interviews online, Authors visits online, Research Tools online, and Professional Growth Day online for 24/7 access for county library media staff.

Align Library Media Services with Core Content State Standards

Good library media services have been shown to positively impact literacy levels and student test scores. In order that the SDCOE Library Media Services have maximum impact on both literacy and student academic performance, it is necessary to coordinate and align the library services with Core Content State Standards. Every effort will be made to coordinate the SDCOE programs related to language arts and other content areas with library media services. For example, curriculum development projects will include a link to online resources and professional development available in the Digital Content Portal.

Continue school library media services for small districts in need

Small and remote districts continue to need the traditional School Library Services. First, they need the services of a professional librarian to be their librarian of record and to guide the development of library media services in the schools. Services provided include professional book selection by a committee of librarians and SDCOE Board approval of the book list. An update of these services would include alignment of these books with the Common Core-State Standards at time of selection. Districts would still receive 15 new books each month, augmented by the large amount of nonfiction content that will now be delivered across the Digital Content Portal.

In addition to digital content, schools and students still need good library books to support their reading programs and the rest of the core curriculum. Districts will be charged one fee per ADA for services that would include: library collection service-and the resources in the Digital Content Portal,-providing quick access at home and school to high quality grade-appropriate research materials.

Services offered and annual subscription prices

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The SDCOE librarian will serve as the librarian of record for these schools. Very small districts will receive circulating library privileges, audiovisual library privileges, and Digital Content Portal at the same low price. Districts will be charged a flat fee of \$20.00 per ADA. It includes library book service and lending library, all kits, plus Digital Content Portal and traditional AV delivery.