

Michigan Department of Education

Effective School Library Toolkit for Administrators



Acknowledgments

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Introduction

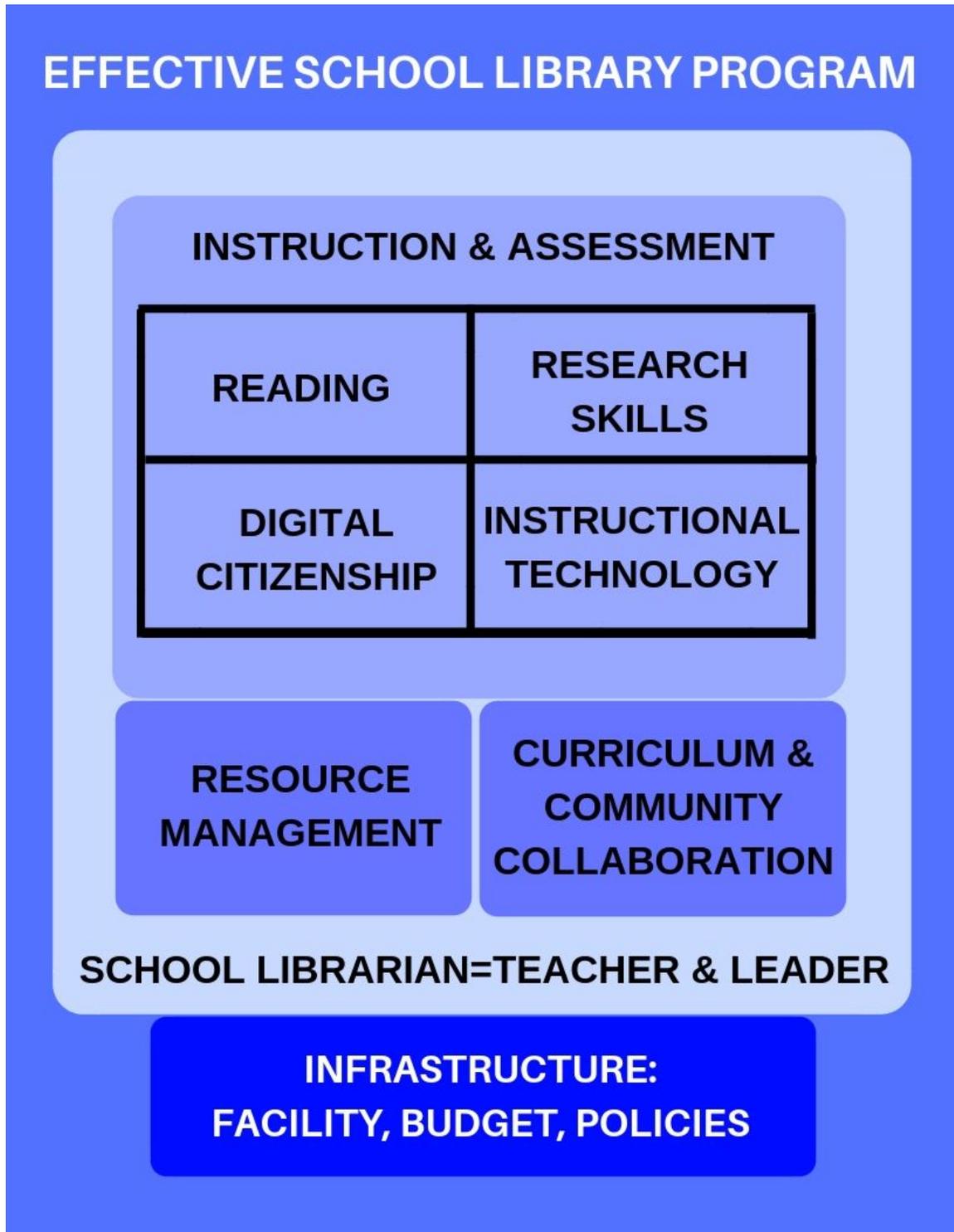
The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) recognizes the critical role that school libraries and librarians play in promoting a positive school culture, information and digital literacy, access to print and digital resources, and academic achievement especially literacy achievement for all students. An effective school library program is staffed by a certified school librarian who is an instructional leader who intentionally teaches and implements information and digital literacy curriculum; teaches and supports reading; collaborates with the community, administrators and other teachers; and selects and manages digital and print resources and instructional technology tools. In order to become a Top 10 education state in ten years, Michigan schools must expand Michigan children’s access to school libraries staffed by certified school librarians.

The Michigan Department of Education Effective School Library Toolkit for Administrators is intended to provide school district administrators and MDE field services personnel with information about the components of an effective school library program in order to expand Michigan students’ access to such programs.

The Effective School Library Administrator Toolkit includes a graphic, descriptions of the “what, why, and how” of effective school library programs, links to short video lessons, references, and additional resources.

Definition: The term school librarian and library media specialist (or media specialist) used throughout this document refers to an individual with Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Library Media (ND) teaching certificate endorsement acknowledging special training to provide school library service.

Effective School Library Program Graphic



Michigan’s Effective School Library Programs

What is an effective school library program?

According to the American Association for School Librarians (AASL) [\(1\)](#):

An effective school library program has a certified school librarian at the helm, provides personalized learning environments, and offers equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student.

As a fundamental component of college, career, and community readiness, the effective school library program:

1. is adequately staffed, including a state-certified school librarian who
 - a. is an instructional leader and teacher,
 - b. supports the development of digital learning, participatory learning, inquiry learning, technology literacies, and information literacy, and
 - c. supports, supplements, and elevates the literacy experience through guidance and motivational reading initiatives;
2. has up-to-date digital and print materials and technology, including curation of openly licensed educational resources; and
3. provides regular professional development and collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians.

An effective school library program is aligned with the mission, goals, objectives, and curriculum of the school. The mission of an effective school library program is to “ensure that all students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The school librarian empowers students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skill researchers, and ethical users of information.” [\(2\)](#) The American Association for School Librarians (AASL) position statement on the Role of the School Library Program states that an effective school library program plays a crucial role in preparing students for informed living in an information-rich society. [\(3\)](#)

In Michigan, the *School Libraries in the 21st Century (SL 21) Program. Qualitative Benchmarks for Michigan School Libraries* [\(4\)](#) provide rubrics to measure the quality of School Library programs within individual school buildings. The SL21 Qualitative Benchmarks are aligned with the AASL *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. [\(5\)](#)

[Link to video](#): Overview of an Effective School Library Program (bit.ly/SLtoolkitoverview)

[Link to video](#): What Does a Certified School Librarian Do? (bit.ly/SLtoolkitlibrarian)

Why do I need an effective school library program at my school?

An effective school library program is critical in supporting reading, information technology, and college and career readiness through teaching of research and digital citizenship skills. An effective school library program positively affects the entire climate and culture of a school and provides services and resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student.

Research conducted in more than 25 states (including Michigan) has documented that effective school library programs staffed by a full-time certified school librarian have a high impact on increasing student achievement regardless of the socio-economic or education levels of the community. In fact, students who are economically disadvantaged, Black, Hispanic, or have disabilities benefit proportionally more than general students from the presence of a full-time certified school librarian.⁽⁶⁾⁽⁷⁾ Studies also confirm that certified school librarians positively impact the achievement of English language learners.⁽⁷⁾

The Michigan Department of Education has recognized the importance of providing equitable access to effective school libraries to all students.

1. The Michigan State Board of Education approved a Statement on School Libraries which calls for “all elementary and secondary students to have ready access to a library in their school with appropriate resources, programming and certified staff.”⁽⁸⁾
2. The *Top 10 in 10 Years* Goal 2.7a states “Ensure that all students have access to libraries and media centers within their school, district, and/or community. Ensure that such resources are appropriately staffed to ensure system integrity.”⁽⁹⁾
3. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) published the document *Library Media Placements* in which it “strongly recommends and encourages schools to staff and assign teachers with the ND [Library Media] endorsement to provide instruction in and administration of a school library.”⁽¹⁰⁾ Additional MDE memos clarifying certification requirements and emphasizing the critical role of school libraries and school librarians are also available. ⁽¹¹⁾⁽¹²⁾
4. In Michigan’s implementation plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), “K-8 Access to Librarians/Media Specialists” is included as part of the ESSA-required “School Quality/Student Success” accountability indicator for all K-8 schools.⁽¹³⁾ MDE clarified that “only staff reported in the Registry of Educational Personnel (REP) with an assignment code of “000ND” [Library Media teaching endorsement] will count in the index system’s K-8 Access to Librarians/Media Specialists metric.”⁽¹⁴⁾

In addition, an effective school library program is part of the essential school-wide literacy practices ⁽¹⁵⁾ developed by the General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force.

[Link to video](https://bit.ly/SLtoolkitwhy): Why Do We Need Effective School Library Programs? (bit.ly/SLtoolkitwhy)

How do I establish or improve a school library program at my school?

The first step in establishing an effective school library program is to hire a certified school librarian. [A sample job description for a school librarian is provided in the list of references. [\(16\)](#)] Certified school librarians are uniquely prepared to provide instruction in and administer a school library as teachers, information specialists, and program administrators. Certified school librarians have specialized skills in the areas of literacy, curriculum and instruction, technology, collection development and management, intellectual freedom and privacy, equity, professional community, community engagement, and professional leadership as seen in the document *A Visual Guideline to Staffing Choices in School Libraries*. [\(17\)](#)

The preparation program for certified school librarians emphasizes the importance of the alignment of school library resources and services with the mission, goals, objectives, and curriculum of the school. Thus, it is important for the school administrators and staff to collaborate with and provide this information to the school librarian.

Then, the school administrator should meet with the school librarian to review, evaluate, and plan for the components of an effective school library program using the SL21 Qualitative Benchmarks [\(4\)](#) as a guide. The components in the SL21 Qualitative Benchmarks are:

1. School and District Infrastructure which includes:
Staffing Levels, Budget, Policies, Program Effectiveness, School Library Curriculum, Professional Development, Facility
2. Building the Learning Environment which includes:
Climate Conducive to Learning, Accessibility, Instructional Materials, Management
3. Teaching for Learning which includes:
Instruction, Reading, Collaboration, Inquiry-Based Research, Citizenship & Social Responsibility, Technology, Learner Achievement
4. Leading the Way to 21st Century Learning which includes:
Curriculum Development, Professional Learning Communities, Local & Global Community Engagement, Advocacy

The SL21 Qualitative Benchmarks provide a rubric for evaluation of the School Library Program. The School librarian is a teacher and should be evaluated following state law for teacher evaluations. The Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching provides a separate framework for the Library Media Specialist [\(18\)](#).

It is important for administrators and school librarians to share the importance of an effective school library program with students, teachers, parents, central administration, and the school board. Please see the additional resources at the end of this document for shareable infographics, articles, and videos.

References

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<http://www.gomaisa.org/downloads/gelndocs/schoolandcenterlevelessentials.pdf>
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- (17) Michigan Association for Media in Education (MAME), *A Visual Guideline to Staffing Choices in School Libraries*, May 2018.
<http://bit.ly/VisLibStaff>
- (18) *Charlotte Danielson Framework for Library Media Specialist*.
http://www.wwps.org/images/departments/personnel/Evaluation_Process/Library_Media_Framework.pdf

Additional Resources

Infographics

- *School Librarians as Learning Leaders: An Administrator's Guide*
http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/advocacy/AASL_LearningLeaders_Admin_V2_FINAL_R2.pdf
An infographic created by the American Association of School Librarians to further administrators' understanding of the key role that strong school libraries and certified school librarians play in student learning.
- *The 21st Century School Library Media Specialist*
<http://bit.ly/21slib>
An infographic outlining the many roles of a certified school librarian (library media specialist)
- *Top 10 Things Your Librarian Can Do For You*
<http://bit.ly/top10libs>
An infographic highlighting things that a certified school librarian can do to support other teachers.

Documents / Articles

- *Libraries: The Heartbeat of Our Schools*
<https://knowledgequest.aasl.org/heartbeat-of-schools/>
Article by Mike Daria, Superintendent of the Tuscaloosa City Schools, about the importance of school libraries
- *Be a Reader Leader – What Administrators Can Do to Promote a Reading Culture*
<https://pernillesripp.com/2018/07/05/be-a-reader-leader-what-administrators-can-do-to-promote-a-reading-culture/>
Article by Pernille Ripp outlining an administrators role in a reading culture including having a full-time certified librarian at their school
- *Librarian as Digital Maven*
<http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=37144>
Issue of AASA, the School Superintendents Association, *District Administrator* magazine devoted to the important role of school librarians
- *Future Ready Librarian Framework*
<https://futureready.org/program-overview/librarians/>
Future Ready Librarians is an expansion of the Future Ready initiative. The Future Ready Librarians Framework (download at this site) aligns the work that School Librarians do with the Future Ready framework.

Documents / Articles (cont.)

- *Interview Questions*
<https://sites.google.com/g.risd.org/hiringlib/interview-questions?authuser=0>
Sets of interview questions to use when hiring a certified school librarian from the Texas Association of School Library Administrators
- *AASL National School Library Standards - Administrators*
<https://standards.aasl.org/administrators/>
Information for School Administrators relative to the AASL National School Library Standards including *A Guide for Administrators* and links to Common Beliefs and to a *District Administrator* article.

Videos

- *Principals Know: School Librarians are the Heart of a School*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bihGT7LoBP0>
Hear what other administrators from many different districts and at all levels have to say about the importance of the school librarian in their schools.
- *School Libraries Matter: The Changing Role of the School Librarian*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eilZjp3_h8
This is not the school library of the past! Principals, publishers, school librarians, and library leaders explain why school libraries of today have evolved and are the heart of the school.
- *We Need Librarians More Than Ever*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUCiFfcAXUk&feature=share>
Animated sketch video on the value of librarians

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