SASKATCHEWAN School Boards ASSOCIATION

Research REPORT

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School Libraries in Saskatchewan

An Advisory for School Boards

by
Loraine Thompson

This report provides a guide for boards of education regarding school library responsibilities and decisions. Included in the report are:

- ✓ The legal obligations of school boards
- ✓ How library services link to student learning
- ✓ Considerations for policy and planning, and
- ✓ Key questions for school boards

Research Report #09-01

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The School Board and School Libraries – An Overview

The Education Regulations, 1986, Clause 37.5(a), require that school boards provide school library services.

This overview summarizes *School Libraries in Saskatchewan: An Advisory for School Boards*, a larger and more comprehensive document that was developed to help school boards plan and deliver those services.

Goals for School Libraries in Saskatchewan

School libraries in Saskatchewan have three important goals:

- **To realize the achievement of curriculum learning outcomes** – Inquiry learning is one of the foundations of Saskatchewan's renewed curriculum. The school library is an important resource for students and teachers engaged in inquiry. The teacher librarian works with classroom teachers to develop units of study in which students use resources to answer questions linked to curriculum content and outcomes and to transfer their new knowledge and skills to new situations. The teacher-librarian brings students and resources together and supports students in using those resources to construct deep understanding of topics and issues related to curriculum outcomes.
- **To prepare students for the future** – School libraries build literacy skills – skills that are needed every day at school, at work, at home and in the community. School libraries also equip students to use information appropriately and responsibly. The importance of this ability will continue to grow in the future as the amount of information available becomes even greater.
- **To broaden students' horizons** – School libraries take students beyond their classroom, school and community to spark students' imaginations and introduce them to a world of new ideas.

The Role of the School Board

The school board's role is to provide direction and supervision for the education program of the school division it governs.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association encourages and supports school boards to pursue a strategic approach to governance.

With a strategic approach to governance, the school board:

- Defines and articulates its vision and goals
- Aligns resources to attain goals
- Adopts policies to support achievement of goals
- Authorizes the director of education to determine the means of achieving the goals
- Establishes monitoring systems to assess progress toward achieving goals. Monitoring includes both collection of data and regular reporting by the director of education to the board.
- Adjusts budgets, policies and plans as required in order to more fully realize vision and goals.

The development and implementation of policies is an important aspect of strategic governance. *The Education Regulations, 1986* (Subsections 37.1 to 37.5) require that school boards establish four types of policies:

- a selection policy
- a challenged materials policy
- a policy on access to learning resources
- policies and standards concerning school libraries

Division-Wide School Library Planning

Some school library functions lend themselves to centralization at the school division level. For example, a single automated library system used throughout the division makes possible a union catalogue of all the school division's real and virtual resources. Ordering, cataloguing and processing of materials can be done centrally and a divisional school library consultant can coordinate school library operations throughout the school division. Centralization yields many efficiencies in terms of more effective use of teacher-librarian time, financial savings on purchases of resources, better access to technologies, and better coordination of resources and staff time across the division.

Every school division needs a comprehensive, division-wide school library plan. Such a plan can help ensure that all the school libraries in the division operate as part of a coordinated, division-wide system rather than in isolation. "Co-ordination of services at the school division level has the potential to improve school library programs, as well as increase efficiencies in delivery of service" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 1).

A comprehensive, division-wide plan can address the following:

- **Planning for equity** – Saskatchewan has many small schools with enrollment of less than 200 students. Innovative approaches are needed in order to ensure that all students, no matter where they go to school, have access to quality school library programs and services.
- **Technology infrastructure** – Contemporary libraries, including school libraries, operate upon a technological foundation. Computers are used to keep track of orders placed, the library's collection of materials, and items loaned to users. They are used to create catalogues of the library's collection and enable libraries to share cataloguing resources and other information. The school division's role includes creating a technological infrastructure that is sufficiently robust to support the use of a single division-wide automated integrated library system in every school of the division.
- **Staffing** – Quality school library services require two types of staff: qualified teacher-librarians and non-instructional staff. A qualified teacher-librarian has a valid Saskatchewan teaching certificate, successful teaching experience, and a university major in school librarianship or a degree in library science (with courses relevant to school librarianship).

  The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education recommends that each school be staffed with 1.0 full-time equivalent qualified teacher-librarian per 500 students, with no less than 0.5 full-time equivalent qualified teacher-librarian per 200 students.

  A sufficient complement of non-instructional school library staff frees the qualified teacher-librarian to focus on the instructional program and student learning and to spend her/his time working with students and teachers. Non-instructional staff includes library technicians and library assistants/clerks.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education does not recommend specific numbers of non-instructional school library staff. Rather, the Ministry recommends that the combined allocation of staff to non-instructional roles for the school library should be commensurate with the allocation of teacher-librarians.

- **Facilities** – Every school division needs a long-term plan for school library facilities. The plan should address renewal of existing facilities and planning for new facilities when schools are renovated or built. The plan can prioritize libraries for renewal according to need. Generally, libraries in older schools or schools with growing student populations are more in need of renewal than libraries in newer schools or those with declining student populations.

  A school library typically has a core instructional area where the collection is located and students do their work, ancillary instructional space such as seminar rooms, and professional space such as library office and work room. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education recommends that the core instructional area include enough space to house the entire collection plus seating space for two classes or 10 percent of the student body, whichever is greater.

- **Learning resources –** Every school library has a collection of learning resources that supports the instructional program. School library collections are developed in accordance with the school division's selection policy to ensure the collection is comprised of quality items with educational value.

  The school library collection:
  - supports curricula and provides for independent reading and research by students
  - offers a variety of formats including print (books, magazines and newspapers), non-print (DVDs and CDs), electronic (computer programs) and virtual (online databases, e-books, and e-journals)
  - responds to students' interests and reflects the cultural backgrounds, learning styles, ages and ability levels of students.

  The school library collection includes the equipment needed to access non-print, electronic and virtual resources. For example, it includes DVD players, listening stations, and computers.

  The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education recommends that the book collection in each school contain at least 4,000 items or 20 items per student, whichever is greater and that at least 70 percent of the collection has copyright dates within the last 10 years.

The School Library Program

The school library program takes place in the school library and classrooms of individual schools. A qualified teacher-librarian promotes provincial curriculum outcomes and supports student-directed inquiry by bringing students and resources together, and by teaching students to use those resources.

In a well-developed school library program, the teacher-librarian has three roles. The teacher-librarian is:

- **An instructional leader** who collaborates with other teachers to integrate resources into the instructional program and teaches students to locate information appropriate to their needs, assess its relevance, share it with others and integrate it with what they already know to create new knowledge

- **An information specialist** who is responsible for locating, acquiring, evaluating, using and sharing information in all its forms for a variety of purposes.
- **A manager** who manages the school library program and all activities related to it.

A school library program has four focus areas:

- **Provincial curriculum learning outcomes** – "The teacher-librarian assumes a lead role in developing a collection of learning resources to support curricula" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 22) and works with teachers and students to support curriculum outcomes.
- **Literacy development** – School library programs focus on "developing capabilities in all areas of language learning: viewing and representing, listening and speaking, and reading and writing" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 22). They do this by providing a rich collection, both real and virtual, because the development of literacy skills comes, at least partially, through interaction with a range of texts in all formats provided by a rich collection. The school library also provides leadership for programs that focus specifically on literacy skills.
- **Information literacy competencies** – The school library program assists students and teachers to "access, evaluate, analyze and use information for a variety of purposes in a respectful and ethical manner" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 23).
- **Technology integration** – The school library program assists both students and teachers to use communication technologies effectively and to apply communication technologies to learning activities. For example, the teacher-librarian could:

Continuous Improvement of School Libraries

School library programs and services, like all other aspects of the educational program, strive for continuous improvement.

Saskatchewan's Continuous Improvement Framework provides a common strategic planning mechanism for the Ministry of Education, school boards and school community councils. Goals and priorities for school library programs and services can be incorporated into the division-level Continuous Improvement Plan and the school-level Learning Improvement Plan which are part of this Framework.

Continuous improvement of school libraries has three elements:

- **Assessment** to collect information about the current status of school library programs and services across the division and in individual schools.
- **Goal setting** in which the school board sets goals for school library programs and services and determines the level and type of service they would like to offer.
- **Monitoring** which involves establishing systems to collect data about school library programs and services and regular reporting by school division staff to the board, so the board can measure progress toward achieving its goals.

The continuous improvement process is cyclical as the board may adjust budgets, policies and plans in order to better achieve its goals.

1. Introduction

Purpose of This Advisory

Why do school libraries matter?

What role does the school library play in the instructional program?

How can school libraries enhance student learning?

School Libraries in Saskatchewan: An Advisory for School Boards was written for Saskatchewan school board members and senior administrators as they seek to answer questions such as these.

The Education Regulations, 1986, Clause 37.5(a), require that school boards provide school library services. This document is intended to help school boards plan and deliver those services. It provides information and ideas that will help school boards develop policies to promote student achievement through quality school library programs and services.

This document is called an "advisory" because it presents school boards' legal obligations in regard to school libraries, describes important aspects of school library services and then raises issues, asks questions and presents options for school boards to consider. It is not intended to provide definitive answers or solutions, because in many cases there are no definitive answers. Rather, there is a range of approaches, each of which may work best within particular communities, situations or contexts.

Summary

Introduction

Saskatchewan school boards are required to provide school library services under *The Education Regulations, 1986*.

This advisory was written for Saskatchewan school board members and senior administrators to assist them in planning for school library programs and services in their school divisions. It raises issues, ask questions, and presents options for school boards to consider. It provides a range of approaches rather than definitive answers, because different approaches and solutions will be appropriate for different communities.

This advisory is designed to be used along with two other documents that provide provincial and national school library standards and guidelines:

- *Connections: Policy and Guidelines for School Libraries in Saskatchewan*. (2008). Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.
- *Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Libraries in Canada*. (2003). Canadian Association for School Libraries.

Although the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, the school board and the individual school all play roles in enhancing student achievement through quality library services, this advisory focuses primarily on the role of the school board and the school division.

Companion Documents

This advisory is designed to be used in concert with two other documents that provide provincial and national school library standards and guidelines:

- ***Connections: Policy and Guidelines for School Libraries in Saskatchewan*. (2008). Saskatchewan Ministry of Education –** Provides vision, goals and principles for school libraries in Saskatchewan, outlines responsibilities of the province, the school division and the school, and addresses continuous improvement.
- ***Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Libraries in Canada.* (2003). Canadian Association for School Libraries –** Defines eight information literacy outcomes and accompanying indicators that students can be expected to achieve through a quality school library program. Also provides a series of rubrics which define the characteristics of a below standard, acceptable and exemplary school library.

Jurisdictional Responsibilities

This advisory focuses on the role of the school board and the school division in enhancing student achievement through quality school library programs. But the school board does not act alone. The Ministry of Education and individual schools also play important roles in the school library program.

> Each jurisdiction within Saskatchewan's education system – the province, the school division, and the school – has responsibility for certain aspects of school libraries. These essential and interdependent areas of responsibility all contribute to the development and operation of quality school library programs. Within all three jurisdictions, action focuses on supporting student achievement of the provincial curriculum outcomes – the heart and centre of the school library program. (*Connections*, 2008, p. 6)

The **Ministry of Education** creates legislation, policy and guidelines to support a province-wide system of school libraries, facilitates province-wide library cooperation, and provides school divisions with funds, advice and information (*Connections*, 2008).

The **individual school** is where students and library services come together – where the school library makes a difference in students' lives. Schools are responsible for maintaining up-to-date, well-organized collections that reflect the curriculum and for integrating school library services into the learning program at every grade level and every subject area for the benefit all students. Individual schools are also responsible for creating policies and procedures that facilitate this integration (*Connections*, 2008).

Terminology Used in This Advisory

Three terms used throughout this advisory are explained below:

Qualified teacher-librarian – A qualified teacher librarian is a person who has a valid Saskatchewan teacher's certificate, successful teaching experience, and a university major in school librarianship or a degree in library science (with courses relevant to school librarianship).

School library program – The school library program is an instructional program in which a qualified teacher librarian works as a teacher on the instructional team of the school. In the school library program, a qualified teacher-librarian brings students and resources together through planned learning activities which support the school curriculum and contribute to the

development of lifelong learners and decision-makers (*Connections*, 2008; *School Libraries for Lifelong Learning*, 1999).

School library services – School library services encompass the infrastructure that supports the school library program. School library services include collections of resources, cataloguing of resources, facilities, technology, and the staff roles related to these services at both the school and school division level.

Organization of This Advisory

The advisory is organized into nine parts.

1. **Introduction** – which describes the purpose of this advisory, identifies companion documents that support this advisory, outlines jurisdictional responsibilities related to school libraries, and explains terminology used in this advisory.

2. **School Libraries and Student Learning** – which outlines the goals for school library programs and services.

3. **The Role of the School Board** – which describes the process of strategic governance through which school boards provide direction for school library programs services.

4. **The Legislation** – which outlines the actions that *The Education Regulations, 1986* require school boards to take regarding resource materials and school libraries.

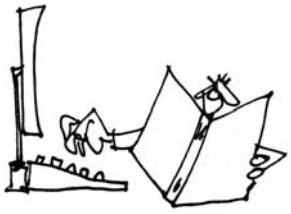
5. **Division-Wide School Library Services** – which describes the benefits of centralizing some school library services and emphasizes the importance of having a division-wide plan for school libraries.

6. **The School Library Program** – which emphasizes that a teacher-librarian has three roles: instructional leader, information specialist and manager, and identifies the elements of a quality school library program.

7. **School Library Facilities** – which provides information about the room in which the school library is located and the furniture and equipment required.

8. **Continuous Improvement of School Library Programs and Services** – which describes a cycle of assessment, goal setting and monitoring in order to facilitate the continuous improvement of school library programs and services.

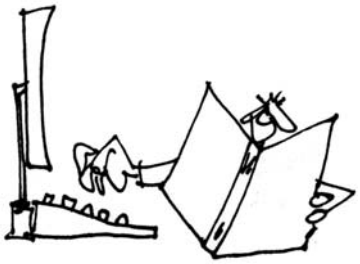
9. **School Board Action** – which provides a checklist that will help school boards plan for school library programs and services within their division.



Each section of this advisory concludes with a topic called "Taking Action" which is identified by the graphic that appears on the right. "Taking Action" includes questions to stimulate thought and discussion, and suggestions for actions that school boards can take to promote student achievement by providing quality school library programs and services.

This advisory concludes with a section called "For More Information" which offers an annotated list of publications, websites and organizations that will expand upon and enrich the ideas and suggestions in this document.

Taking Action



1. What actions can your school board take to ensure that all board members and senior school division administrators are familiar with:

   - The guidelines in the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's policy document, *Connections: Policy and Guidelines for School Libraries in Saskatchewan*?

   - The information in this advisory which supports implementation of *Connections*?

   - The national standards outlined in *Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Libraries in Canada*?

2. School Libraries and Student Learning

What are the goals of school library programs?

What impact do school libraries have on student learning?

Part 2 "School Libraries and Student Learning" addresses one topic:

- Goals for School Libraries

Summary

School Libraries and Student Learning

Goals of School Library Programs

- To realize curriculum learning outcomes.
- To prepare students for the future.
- To broaden students' horizons.

Goals for School Libraries

Connections (2008) identifies the following three broad goals for school libraries in Saskatchewan.

To realize the achievement of curriculum learning outcomes – Inquiry learning is one of the foundations of Saskatchewan's renewed curriculum. Inquiry learning builds on students' natural curiosity. "The inquiry process focuses on the development of compelling questions, formulated by teachers and students, to motivate and guide inquiries into topics, problems, and issues related to curriculum content and outcomes" (*Mathematics 2*, 2008, p. 21).

The school library is an important resource for students and teachers engaged in inquiry. The teacher librarian works with classroom teachers to develop units of study in which students use resources to answer their compelling questions and to transfer their new knowledge and skills to new situations. The teacher-librarian brings students and resources together and supports students in using those resources to construct deep understanding of topics and issues related to curriculum outcomes.

Both Canadian and international research shows that students in schools with adequately staffed and stocked school libraries score higher on standardized achievement tests (Haycock, 2003; Klinger, 2006) – 10 to 20 percent higher according to some studies (Lance & Loerstscher, 2003). The positive relationship between school libraries and student achievement is seen in mathematics and science as well as language arts and social studies (Haycock, 2003).

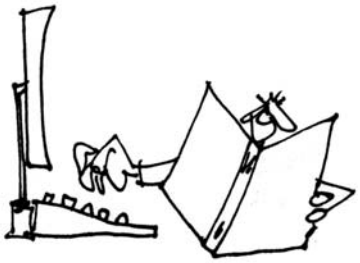
To prepare students for the future – School libraries build literacy skills – capabilities in all areas of language learning, "viewing and representing, listening and speaking, reading and writing" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 22). Literacy skills are needed every day – at school, at work, at home and in the community. In today's knowledge economy, there are few jobs that do not require literacy skills. There is a huge body of research which shows a positive relationship between students' ability to read and school libraries that are staffed by teacher-librarians and stocked with quality collections (Haycock, 2003).

School libraries equip students to use information appropriately and responsibly. In the years ahead, the amount of information available will become even greater, as communication technologies become more diverse. Students need to be able to assess the reliability and

accuracy of information from a multitude of sources and to distinguish between sources that are credible and sources that are promotional or deceptive. They must be taught to "gather and use information ethically, and use social tools responsibly and safely" (American Association of School Librarians, 2007, p. 2). School libraries can play an important role in equipping students with the skills they need to locate, evaluate, use, and share information for a variety of purposes. *Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Libraries in Canada* identifies the information literacy student outcomes to be developed through the school library program. These appear in Appendix B of this advisory.

To broaden students' horizons – "School libraries engage students in the wide world beyond their school by presenting the cultural, literary, and artistic heritages of societies, past and present; by sparking the imagination; by introducing new ideas; and by stimulating curiosity. School libraries enable students to understand the interdependent nature of physical and social environments, and to build an appreciation of the diversity of worldviews" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 3).

Taking Action



1. What policy direction can you give to ensure that school libraries contribute effectively to student learning?

3. The Role of the School Board

How can the school board provide leadership for school library programs and services?

How does strategic governance promote student learning through quality school library programs and services?

Part 3 "The Role of the School Board" addresses two topics:

- The School Board's Legal Responsibilities
- Strategic Governance

The School Board's Legal Responsibilities

The school board's role is to provide direction and supervision for the education program of the school division it governs.

School boards are responsible for specific aspects of the education program as defined in *The Education Act, 1995* (see Figure 1 on the next page).

School boards have a legal responsibility to create an environment within the division that facilitates teaching and learning. They have a responsibility to "administer and manage the educational affairs of the school division" in a manner that promotes success for all students and makes schooling a productive and positive experience for all students.

Summary

The Role of the School Board

School boards are responsible for education in the school divisions they govern and they have a legal responsibility to create an environment within the division that fosters teaching and learning.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association encourages and supports school boards to pursue a strategic approach to governance – to focus on the ends they want to achieve and to leave the means to achieving those ends to the director of education and other staff.

Figure 1: *The Education Act, 1995*: Duties of the Board of Education

The Education Act, 1995

Duties of the board of education

85(1) … a board of education shall:

(a) administer and manage the educational affairs of the school division in accordance with the intent of this Act and the regulations;

(b) exercise general supervision and control over the schools in the school division and make any bylaws with respect to school management that may be considered necessary for effective and efficient operation of the schools;

Strategic Governance

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association encourages and supports school boards to pursue a strategic approach to governance.

This document presents ideas for actions that school boards can take to enhance student achievement by providing quality school library services. These ideas are presented within the context of strategic governance.

With strategic governance, the school board focuses on the "ends" it wants to achieve, the goals it wants to attain and the results it wants to see. The "means" to achieve these ends are the responsibility of the director of education and other staff. Within the policy framework created by the board, the director of education has broad freedom to determine the means for achieving the ends identified by the board. The board monitors and holds the director of education accountable for compliance with board policy (McDonough, 2002).

The strategic governance approach contrasts with the traditional approach in which school boards govern with a high degree of hands-on involvement in the day-to-day management of the school division.

School boards are adopting a strategic approach to governance because the traditional hands-on approach has many limitations. It can result in unclear channels of communication, ambiguous decisions, inconsistent treatment of staff and students, and governance by intuition rather than in accordance with established, clearly defined principles and policies (Renihan, 1991). Moreover, the traditional hands-on approach is simply not practical or possible with today's large school divisions.

Figure 2: The Strategic Governance Approach

Strategic Governance

With strategic governance, the school board:

- Defines and articulates its vision and goals
- Aligns resources to attain goals
- Adopts policies to support achievement of goals
- Authorizes the director of education to determine the means of achieving the goals
- Establishes monitoring systems to assess progress toward achieving goals. Monitoring includes both collection of data and regular reporting by the director of education to the board.
- Adjusts budgets, policies and plans as required in order to more fully realize the vision and goals.

Each of these elements of the strategic governance approach is described below.

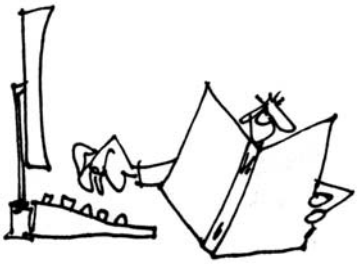
- **Defines and articulates its vision and goals** – Saskatchewan's Continuous Improvement Framework provides a structure and planning process to advance both provincial and school division priorities. Goals and priorities for school library programs and services across the division can be incorporated into the annual or multi-year Continuous Improvement Plan. Goals and priorities for the school library programs in individual schools can be incorporated into the individual schools' Learning Improvement Plans.
- **Aligns resources to attain goals** – The school board's budgetary responsibilities include budgeting for the overall operation of the school division's school library programs and services, and providing funds to individual schools for the development and maintenance of effective school libraries (*Connections*, 2008, p. 8).

  Funds are needed for staff, learning resources, the technological infrastructure upon which so many school library functions depend, and facilities. Funds are needed for both an initial investment and ongoing renewal, as the resource collection and technology need regular updating and the facility may need replacement of furniture and regular maintenance.

  If school library programs and services fall significantly short of the goals established by the school board, a one-time investment may be needed in order to bring them up to an acceptable standard. Once quality services have been achieved, the annual budget can focus on keeping the collection up-to-date, renewing outdated technology, and maintaining the facility.
- **Adopts policies to support goals** – The policies that school boards are required to develop under *The Education Regulations, 1986* are described in detail in the next section of this advisory.
- **Authorizes the director of education to determine the means of achieving the goals** – After the board has set goals – identified the "ends" it wants to achieve – the director of education defines and implements the means of achieving those ends.

- **Establishes monitoring systems** to assess progress toward achieving the goals – monitoring of school library programs and services is described more fully in Part 8 of this advisory, "Continuous Improvement of School Library Programs and Services".
- **Adjusts budgets, policies and plans** as required in order to more fully realize the vision and goals – The strategic governance process is cyclical, not static. The board may need to adjust budget and policies in order to achieve goals, and as one level of goals are achieved the board may set new goals and establish new priorities.

Taking Action



1. What is your school board's vision for school libraries across the division? In individual schools?

2. To what extent does your board have budget lines for specific aspects of school library service such as staffing, resource collections, technology, and facilities?

4. The Legislation

What does the legislation say about school libraries and resource materials?

What policies is the school board required to establish?

Part 4 "The Legislation" addresses one topic:

- Requirements of *The Education Regulations, 1986*

Requirements of *The Education Regulations, 1986*

The Education Regulations, 1986 (Section 37) describe the actions required of school boards in regard to resource materials and school libraries. These regulations appear in Figure 3.

The regulations address three topics: school library services, school library policies, and resource materials.

School Library Services

School boards are required to provide school library services (Clause 37.5(a) of *The Education Regulations, 1986).* However, the extent of those services and the manner in which they are organized is up to individual school boards.

Summary

The Legislation

Section 37 of *The Education Regulations, 1986* defines school boards' responsibilities for resource materials and school libraries.

School boards are required to provide school library services, although the extent of those services and the manner in which they are organized is up to individual school boards.

School boards are required to establish:

- a selection policy
- a challenged materials policy
- a policy on access to learning resources
- policies and standards concerning school libraries

Figure 3: ***The Education Regulations, 1986*****: Learning Resources and School Libraries**

The Education Regulations

PART VIII
Textbooks, Library Books, Reference Books and Other Learning Resources

Selection policy and library services

37(1) A board of education and the conseil scolaire shall establish policies concerning:

(a) subject to subsection (2), the selection of textbooks, library books, reference books and other learning resources;

(b) the procedure by which a person may challenge the inclusion or exclusion of specific textbooks, library books, reference books and other learning resources; and

(c) the procedures to be used to ensure that pupils have access to the textbooks, library books, reference books and other learning resources that they need to complete their course requirements.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), if the ministry has prescribed textbooks, library books, reference books or other learning resources, a board of education and the conseil scolaire shall ensure their use in schools.

(3) If a board of education or the conseil scolaire requests an exception to the prescribed textbooks, library books, reference books or other learning resources, the minister may approve its use of alternative textbooks, library books, reference books or other learning resources.

(4) A board of education or the conseil scolaire may, in accordance with policies established pursuant to clause (1)(a), approve other textbooks, library books, reference books or other learning resources to be provided at the expense of the school division or the conseil scolaire, as the case may be.

(5) A board of education and the conseil scolaire shall:

(a) provide school library services; and

(b) establish policies and standards governing school libraries.

3 Nov 2006 SR 102/2006 s19.

School Library Policies

The Education Regulations, 1986 require that school boards:

Establish a selection policy – A selection policy provides guidelines for school division staff in their role as selectors of materials. It also serves to acquaint the public with the principles used to select library materials. The selection policy provides guidelines for the selection of instructional materials including library resources and textbooks. It should relate to and include all types of materials: books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, posters, computer programs, online resources, and others.

A selection policy helps to ensure that materials are accurate and current, appropriate for student use, relevant to the instructional program, and reflective of students' cultural backgrounds. It helps to ensure that the library collection covers all key instructional areas and that there are neither gaps nor overlaps in the collection.

A selection policy typically identifies the individuals who are responsible for selection, describes the process used for selection of materials, provides selection guidelines and guidelines for weeding the collection. A framework for development of a selection policy is provided in Appendix A.

Most school boards will establish a single, division-wide selection policy that applies to all schools in the division. In addition, some school boards may allow individual schools to develop supplementary selection policies that address the specific needs of their school.

Establish a challenged materials policy – A challenged materials policy defines the procedures an individual must use to challenge the inclusion or exclusion of resources in the collection. The challenged materials policy is usually part of the selection policy, rather than a separate document.

Establish a policy on access to learning resources – The school board will define in policy the procedures through which students will access resources. These procedures may "include the provision of textbooks and other learning resources, a website for access to online learning resources, and policies on Acceptable Use of the Internet and use of social software" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 12).

Establish policies and standards concerning school libraries – Two key policies – a selection policy and a challenged materials policy – are required by legislation. Other policies may address matters such as acceptable use of Internet resources and use of social software (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.). School boards may also establish policies that are technical in nature, for example a cataloguing policy. A cataloguing policy helps to ensure that cataloguing is consistent no matter which staff member does it and that it reflects accepted standards.

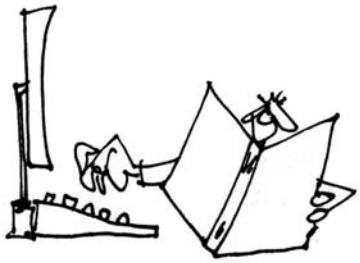
"Standards define expectations for specific aspects of school library services across the school division and in individual schools. For example, the board of education might indicate the staffing formula that would be applied for placing teacher-librarians in schools, or the requirements for the renewal cycle for facilities" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 12).

Resource Materials

School boards are required to ensure that provincially recommended or prescribed learning materials are used (Subsections 37.2 and 37.3 of *The Education Regulations, 1986*). The Ministry of Education recommends the use of specific instructional resources in each curricular area and may, in some situations, prescribe the use of resources. The school board can best ensure the use of provincially recommended resources by developing policy requiring the use of these resources and charging the director of education with developing procedures to make all staff aware of the recommended resources.

In some special circumstances, a school board may consider provincially recommended learning resources to be unsuitable for their needs. In these cases, the board may apply to the Minister for an exemption and may request approval for the use of alternate materials.

Taking Action



1. *The Education Regulations, 1986* require that school boards provide school library services.

   What is your school board doing to meet this requirement?

2. *The Education Regulations, 1986* require development of several policies relating to school libraries and learning resources. What is the status of each of these required policies in your school division?

	Have Up-to-Date	**Have Out-of-date**	**Under Development**	**Don't Have**
Selection policy				
Challenged materials policy				
Policy on access to learning resources				
Policies and standards re school libraries				

3. If your school board does not have one or more of the required policies (or has only an outdated version) can you create a plan to develop the policies? In the plan consider:
   - Who will be consulted during development of the policy?
   - What review stages will the draft policy go through?
   - How will you make the policy known to everyone who will be affected by it?
   - What is your timeline for development of the required policies?

5. Division-Wide School Library Services

How much centralization of school library services is desirable?

What should a division-wide plan for school libraries include?

How can school boards ensure equitable access to school library services for schools of all sizes?

Part 5 "Division-Wide School Library Services" addresses two topics:

- Centralized School Library Services
- Division-Wide School Library Planning

Centralized School Library Services

Some school library functions lend themselves to centralization at the school division level, so each school board will need to determine the degree of centralization that is desirable for its particular situation.

At the very **low end of centralization** is a situation where policies and procedures exist to ensure an appropriate technological infrastructure supports the school libraries of the division, but school libraries function independently, for the most part. Each library is responsible for ordering, cataloguing and processing its own materials, there is no union catalogue which lists all the school division's holdings, nor any sharing of resources between school libraries.

At the **high end of centralization** is a situation in which there is a central school division resource centre staffed with a library consultant and one or more library technicians and clerks. In this situation:

Summary

Division-Wide School Library Services

Some school library services lend themselves to centralization at the school division level.

Centralization of technical tasks such as ordering, cataloguing and processing of materials relieves individual schools of this responsibility and yields cost and time efficiencies. Centralization includes the use of a single automated library system across the division which facilitates sharing of resources. It also helps to coordinate resources and school library staff across the division.

A comprehensive division-wide school library plan can ensure that all school libraries in the division operate as part of a system.

At a minimum, the division-wide school library plan should address:

- Planning for equitable services to small schools
- Technological infrastructure
- Staffing
- Facilities
- Learning resources

- The library consultant coordinates school library operations throughout the school division, and provides leadership and support for school library programs.
- Technical functions such as ordering, cataloguing and processing of materials are done centrally. Individual teacher-librarians send in lists of materials they need for their libraries – the library technician and library clerk at central office order them, catalogue them, process them, and send the new resources to individual schools ready to be shelved.

- A single automated library system is used throughout the division which makes possible a union catalogue of all the school division's real and virtual resources.
- The library consultant may negotiate licences for commercial databases, e-books and e-journals for inclusion in the virtual collections of all school libraries of the division.
- The school library consultant organizes meetings and inservice for the teacher-librarians of the division to enhance their knowledge and to ensure that similar processes are handled in a consistent manner across the division.

With a centralized approach, there is a small collection of resources at central office consisting of professional resources for use by teachers and expensive items such as high-cost kits that can be rotated among schools, depending upon need.

Although there are costs involved with a high degree of centralization, centralization yields many efficiencies in terms of more effective use of teacher-librarian time, financial savings on purchases of resources, better access to technologies, and better coordination of resources and staff time across the division.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's recommendations (*Connections*, 2008) emphasize a centralized approach to school library services and the Ministry provides a role description for a division-level school library consultant.

Division-Wide School Library Planning

A comprehensive division-wide school plan can help ensure that all the school libraries in the division operate as part of a coordinated, division-wide system rather than in isolation. "Co-ordination of services at the school division level has the potential to improve school library programs, as well as increase efficiencies in delivery of service" (*Connections*, 2008, p. 1).

At a minimum, a comprehensive division-wide plan should address planning for equity of service to small schools, technological infrastructure, staffing, facilities, and learning resources.

Planning for Equity

It is appropriate that school boards identify policies and procedures which will promote equitable access to school library services for schools of all sizes. Saskatchewan has many small schools. Although these tend to be concentrated in rural and remote areas, some city schools also have fewer than 200 students. Innovative approaches are needed in order to ensure that all students, no matter where they go to school, have access to quality school library programs and services.

Technological Infrastructure

Contemporary libraries, including school libraries, operate upon a technological foundation. Computers are used to keep track of orders placed, the library's collection of materials, and items loaned to users. They are used to create catalogues of the library's collection and enable libraries to share cataloguing resources and other information. Computers allow school divisions to create union catalogues – that is, comprehensive catalogues that combine in alphabetical sequence the contents of all school libraries in the division.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education says:

> An automated integrated library system (ILS) is a single system that is used to manage interrelated library functions including acquisition, cataloguing, and circulation of material. The automated library system also provides an online catalogue for patron use. It is desirable that school divisions use a single automated library system across the division, and that the system meet national and international standards in order to facilitate interoperability with other libraries.
>
> …
>
> There are efficiencies to be gained when a school division has a single integrated automated library system. The system is based on centralized web applications and is a component of a comprehensive division-wide technology plan. The learning environment is enriched through equity of access and effective resource management. (*Connections*, 2008, p. 16)

The school division's role includes creating a technological infrastructure that is sufficiently robust to support the use of a single division-wide automated integrated library system, with its range of applications, in every school of the division. Creating this infrastructure means addressing issues relating to platform, hardware, and software. The school division's role also includes providing technical support to keep the technological infrastructure operating efficiently. Technology specialists are needed to manage the infrastructure, troubleshoot problems, install new hardware and software systems, and train staff in the use of new systems.

Staffing

A division-wide school library staffing plan will ensure that every school has library staff to support the instructional program. A division-wide school library staffing plan will also ensure that school division human resources are used effectively.

Quality school library services require two types of staff: qualified teacher-librarians and non-instructional staff.

Qualified teacher-librarians – A qualified teacher-librarian has a valid Saskatchewan teaching certificate, successful teaching experience, and a university major in school librarianship or a degree in library science (with courses relevant to school librarianship). More information about the educational and professional role of the teacher-librarian is provided in Part 6 of this advisory "The School Library Program".

Recommendations from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education concerning teacher-librarian staffing appear in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Recommendations re Qualified Teacher-Librarian Staffing, Per School

- 1.0 full-time equivalent qualified teacher-librarian per 500 students, with no less than 0.5 full-time equivalent qualified teacher-librarian per 200 students.
- Alternate arrangements for staffing to provide the services of a qualified teacher-librarian in schools with enrollments of fewer than 200 students or more than 500 students.

Source: *Connections*, 2008, p. 28.

Access to teacher-librarian training is limited in Saskatchewan. In past years, the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan offered courses which allowed Bachelor of Education students to take a major or minor in school librarianship. These programs have been discontinued, but many of their graduates are working in Saskatchewan's education system. Today, most Saskatchewan teachers who wish to specialize in school librarianship take the *Teacher-Librarianship by Distance Learning Program* offered by the University of Alberta, School of Library and Information Studies. The U of A offers both a Diploma and a Master of Education in Teacher-Librarianship.

Some school boards may decide to offer bursaries or release time to teachers who wish to complete the *Teacher-Librarianship by Distance Learning Program* in order to increase the number of qualified teacher-librarians on staff.

Non-instructional staff – A sufficient complement of non-instructional school library staff frees the qualified teacher-librarian to focus on the instructional program and student learning and to spend her/his time working with students and teachers. Non-instructional staff includes library technicians and library assistants/clerks.

Library technicians are responsible for tasks such as cataloguing materials, identifying publishers and Canadian distributors from which materials may be ordered, managing and customizing online databases, and the like. Library technicians are typically graduates of the Library and Information Technology Program at Kelsey Campus, SIAST or a similar program in another province.

Library assistants/clerks shelve materials, process orders and invoices, do routine word processing, check in returned materials, process overdue notices, apply labels and jackets to books, and the like. There is no formal post-secondary education program to train library assistants/clerks. Thus, it is the school division's responsibility to ensure that library assistants/clerks have the training needed to do an effective job.

Every school library needs some support from a non-instructional staff member, but the amount of support needed will be less if ordering, cataloguing and processing of material are handled by centralized school library services.

Non-instructional staff play an important role in managing the collection of resources that supports the school library program. However, their roles are technical and neither a library technician nor a library clerk can substitute for a qualified teacher-librarian.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education does not recommend specific numbers of non-instructional school library staff. The Ministry's recommendations concerning non-instructional staff appear in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Recommendations re Non-Instructional Staff

> The combined allocation of staff to non-instructional roles for the school library should be commensurate with the allocation of teacher-librarians.

Source: *Connections*, 2008, p. 28.

Staffing for equity of service – School divisions will take a variety of approaches to providing school library staff in small schools.

Possibilities to ensure that every school has access to a qualified teacher-librarian include:

- a teacher-librarian who works part-time in the library and part-time as a classroom teacher
- an itinerant teacher-librarian who works at two or three small schools in the same geographic area
- increased allocation of teacher-librarian services at a large school, so this staff member can work with a nearby small school.

Large schools with more than 500 students also need appropriate access to qualified teacher-librarians. Typically this means hiring more than one qualified full- or part-time teacher-librarian, although one or more of these staff members may be shared with other smaller schools.

Every school also requires some support by non-instructional staff. Small schools may not need to have a library technician on-site, if cataloguing and other technical functions are done centrally. However, every school library requires the support of a library assistant/clerk.

Possibilities to ensure that every school library has access to a library assistant or clerk include:

- a staff member who serves as school secretary as well as library clerk
- a part-time library clerk – a person with family responsibilities, farm responsibilities, or other employment may be interested in a part-time position
- a library clerk who is managed through the school division's centralized library services to work at several schools in rotation.

Facilities

Every school division needs a long-term plan for school library facilities. The plan should address renewal of existing facilities and planning for new facilities when schools are renovated or built. Because facilities represent an expensive, enduring commitment they are addressed in detail in Part 7 of this advisory, "School Library Facilities".

Learning Resources

Every school library has a collection of learning resources that supports the instructional program. School library collections are developed in accordance with the school division's selection policy to ensure that the collection is comprised of quality items with educational value.

The school library collection:

- supports curricula and provides for independent reading and research by students
- offers a variety of formats including print (books, magazines and newspapers), non-print (DVDs and CDs), electronic (computer programs) and virtual (online databases, e-books, and e-journals)
- responds to students' interests and reflects the cultural backgrounds, learning styles, ages and ability levels of students.

The school library collection includes the equipment needed to access non-print, electronic and virtual resources. For example, it includes DVD players, listening stations, and computers.

A summary of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's recommendations concerning learning resources appears in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Recommendations re School Library Collections, Per School

- That the book collection [in each school] contain at least 4,000 items or 20 items per student, whichever is greater.
- That at least 70 percent of the collection has copyright dates within the last 10 years.
- That general reference materials such as encyclopedias be no older than five years and that atlases, almanacs and specialized encyclopedias be current.
- That the school library provides access to a comprehensive collection of virtual resources focused on provincial curriculum outcomes.
- For all schools, the ratio of fiction to non-fiction, including reference, is 15-30 percent fiction and 70-85 percent non-fiction/reference.
- In schools with Pre-K to Grade 3 programs, the ratio may be adjusted to provide more fiction in the picture book collection.
- In schools with Grade 6 to 12 programs, the number of non-fiction materials in physical formats may be decreased when there is access to a significant collection of virtual resources.

Source: *Connections*, 2008, p. 32.

The Canadian Association for School Libraries (Achieving Information Literacy, 2003) provides highly specific recommendations which identify appropriate numbers for each of a dozen or more different types of resources. Their recommendations for books are provided in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Canadian Association for School Libraries Recommendations re Size of School Library Book Collection, Per School

School Size	Below Standard	Acceptable	Exemplary
Less than 300 students	Less than 4,500 items	Minimum of 4,500 items or 30 items/student whichever is greater	Minimum of 5,000 items or 35 items/student whichever is greater
300-499 students	Less than 10,000 items	Minimum of 10,000 items or 25 items/student whichever is greater	Minimum of 15,000 items or 35 items/student whichever is greater
500-999 students	Less than 15,000 items	Minimum of 15,000 items or 22 items/student whichever is greater	Minimum of 25,000 items or 30 items/student whichever is greater
More than 1000 students	Less than 30,000 items	Minimum of 30,000 items or 20 items/student whichever is greater	Minimum of 40,000 items or 25 items/student whichever is greater

Source: *Achieving Information Literacy*, 2003, p. 28.

Organization of learning resources – Learning resources in a school library need to be organized in a manner that makes them readily accessible to students and teachers. All items should be listed in the library catalogue and the physical collection neatly shelved. In the interests of efficiency and cost effectiveness, some school divisions centralize cataloguing at central office rather than asking each school to be responsible for its own cataloguing than by a qualified teacher-librarian.

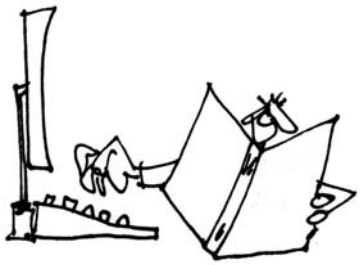
After a catalogue number and subject headings have been assigned to an individual item that item must be processed for use. The catalogue number must be affixed to the item, plastic jackets placed on books, spines taped on magazines, etc. This work is usually done by a library clerk.

Learning resources for small schools – The divisional school library plan can address providing an adequate supply of learning resources for small schools. Regardless of the size of the school, the collection must support the instructional program, provide for independent reading by students, and respond to the cultural backgrounds, ages, interests, and abilities of the students.

Some ways of providing a rich collection for small schools include:

- Increasing the availability of virtual resources by providing more computer access, thus making it possible for more students to go online at the same time.
- Creating blocks of 40-50 fiction or easy reading books and rotating them among schools every three or four months – thus there will always be new and interesting books in the school for student use.
- Creating baskets of resources on specific curriculum topics and rotating them among schools according to a predetermined schedule.

Taking Action



1. What actions does your school board need to take in order to develop an up-to-date division-wide plan for school library services?

2. The Ministry of Education recommends 1.0 FTE qualified teacher-librarian per 500 students with no less than 0.5 FTE qualified teacher-librarian per 200 students. What is the qualified teacher-librarian target for your school division?

3. The Ministry of Education recommends that the book collection in each school contain at least 4,000 items or 20 items per student, whichever is greater, and that at least 70 percent of the collection be less than 10 years old. What is the book target for your school division?

4. Providing teacher-librarian services and adequate resource collections for small schools, may require innovative approaches. What can your school division do to ensure quality school library programs and services for small schools?

5. To what extent are school library programs and services centralized in your school division? Where would you like to be in terms of centralization?

6. The School Library Program

What is the teacher-librarian's role?

How does the teacher-librarian work with students and teachers?

What are the elements of a quality school library program?

Part 6 "The School Library Program" addresses two topics:

- The Role of the Teacher-Librarian
- Elements of a School Library Program

Summary

The School Library Program

In a school library program, a qualified teacher-librarian supports student-directed inquiry by bringing students and resources together.

The teacher-librarian role has three dimensions:

- instructional leader
- information specialist
- manager

A quality school library program has four areas of focus:

- provincial curriculum learning outcomes
- literacy development
- information literacy competencies
- technology integration.

The Role of the Teacher-Librarian

The school library program takes place in the school library and classrooms of individual schools. A qualified teacher-librarian promotes provincial curriculum outcomes and supports student-directed inquiry by bringing students and resources together and teaching students to use those resources.

In a well-developed school library program, the teacher-librarian has three roles. The teacher-librarian is:

- **An instructional leader** who collaborates with other teachers to integrate resources into the instructional program. The instructional leader role also teaches students to locate information appropriate to their needs, assess its relevance, share it with others and integrate it with what they already know to create new knowledge
- **An information specialist** who is responsible for locating, acquiring, evaluating, using and sharing information in all its forms for a variety of purposes. The information specialist role also includes working with IT staff to ensure effectiveness of the technological infrastructure used to access and share information
- **A manager** who manages the school library program and all activities related to it. The management role includes implementing policies, developing procedures, managing budgets, supervising staff, and planning for evaluation of the school library and its program (*Connections*, 2008, p. 50).

Elements of a School Library Program

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (*Connections,* 2008) recommends that a school library program have four focus areas:

Provincial curriculum learning outcomes – "The teacher-librarian assumes a lead role in developing a collection of learning resources to support curricula" (*Connections,* 2008, p. 22) and promotes the efficient use of resources by collaborative planning and teaching with other teachers in the school. For example, the teacher-librarian could:

- work with other teachers to identify resources in the collection that address particular curriculum topics and note new resources that are needed
- collaborate with individual teachers to identify resources related to specific topics and develop lesson plans that use those resources to best advantage
- help individual students locate real and virtual resources related to inquiry-based questions, to assess the accuracy and appropriateness of resources, and to use resources in a way that promotes learning and creation of new ideas.

Literacy development – School library programs focus on "developing capabilities in all areas of language learning: viewing and representing, listening and speaking, and reading and writing" (*Connections,* 2008, p. 22). They do this by providing a rich collection, both real and virtual, because the development of literacy skills comes, at least partially, through interaction with a range of texts in all formats provided by a rich collection. The school library also provides leadership for programs that focus specifically on literacy skills. For example, the teacher-librarian could:

- "promote literature, including picture books, novels and non-fiction, throughout the school with book talks, displays, and author visits" (*Connections,* 2008, p. 23)
- work with human service agencies in the community to create a family literacy program, in which children and youth, parents and grandparents develop literacy skills together
- provide leadership for projects in which students master literacy skills concurrent with subject content, for example, students can be taught the research process, steps in writing a report, and approaches to making a class presentation, even as they learn about the topic of their research project (*Connections,* 2008).

Information literacy competencies – The school library program assists both students and teachers to "access, evaluate, analyze and use information for a variety of purposes in a respectful and ethical manner" (*Connections,* 2008, p. 23). (See Appendix B for a comprehensive listing of information literacy student outcomes.) For example, the teacher-librarian could:

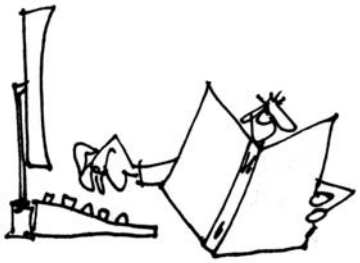
- help students develop criteria for the evaluation of websites and use the criteria to evaluate several websites related to a topic currently being studied (*Connections,* 2008)
- "provide direct instruction on a specific competency, for example using electronic databases to find information on a topic currently being studied" (*Connections,* 2008, p. 23)
- Use questioning to help students assess whether specific information is relevant to their particular question or inquiry (*Achieving Information Literacy,* 2003).

Technology integration – The school library program assists both students and teachers to use communication technologies effectively and to apply communication technologies to learning activities. For example, the teacher-librarian could:

- provide guidance and instruction for an activity in which students collaborate online with students in another school to do a shared project (*Connections,* 2008)

- assist teachers to use tools such as podcasts, online resources and PowerPoint presentations in their teaching (*Connections*, 2008)
- support students participating in a "distance learning course by guiding them to appropriate resources in both the virtual and physical" school library collection (*Connections*, 2008, p 24)
- assist both students and teachers to display learning in technological formats such as audiofiles and web pages.

Taking Action



1. Does your school division have a job description for teacher-librarians that defines the three aspects of this role: instructional leader, information specialist and manager?

2. Has your school board established standards for the elements of a quality school library program?

3. Has your school board established standards for collaboration between teacher-librarians and teachers? For the elements of a quality school library program?

7. School Library Facilities

How much space is needed for a school library facility?

How should the facility be organized?

What shelving and furniture is needed in a school library?

Part 7 "School Library Facilities" addresses two topics:

- Key Aspects of the School Library Facility
- Long-Term Facility Planning

Key Aspects of the School Library Facility

> Each school has a facility that is designed for and dedicated to the school library functions. The facility is centrally located and easily accessible for all students and staff. The school library has sufficient space, furniture, and equipment necessary for efficient operation and implementation of the school library program. (*Connections*, 2008, p. 33)

Renovating or constructing a school library facility represents a significant financial investment and structural elements in the library cannot easily be changed once construction has been completed. Thus, careful planning is very important when designing a school library facility.

Summary

School Library Facilities

Every school has a library facility which is centrally located and easily accessible, and has the space, furniture and equipment needed for implementation of the school library program.

There is no single floor plan which is appropriate for all situations. It depends on the footprint of the space available and on the age and size of students. In all situations, the principle "form follows function" is paramount – the organization of the library should reflect the way it will be used.

Every school division needs a long-term plan for renewal of existing facilities and construction of new facilities. Because renovating or constructing a school library facility represents a significant investment and because once built a school library facility is not easily changed, careful planning is extremely important.

Involve teachers and students in planning for the school library, consider the functionality of each aspect of the plan, and make paper mock-ups of floor plans when appropriate. It is worth putting time and energy into the planning process in order to create a facility that is functional and attractive for the long term.

There is no single floor plan which is appropriate for all school libraries. The floor plan and other features of the library depend on the footprint of the space available, and the age and size of students. The floor plan of a library in a Pre-K to Grade 4 school would be very different from the floor plan of a library in a high school or a Pre-K to Grade 12 school.

In all situations, however, **the principle of form follows function is paramount – the organization of the library should reflect the way it will be used**. The school library should provide space for the collection, accommodate all instructional activities, provide room for private reading and study, and provide for the safety and security of students and resources.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's publication *Pre-K to 12 School Facilities Funding Guidelines* provides some guidelines for the development of school library facilities.

A school library typically has a core instructional area, ancillary instructional space, and professional space. The Ministry of Education's recommendations for these three types of spaces are summarized in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Recommendations re School Library Facilities

Core Instructional Area
• enough space to house the entire collection in shelves and cabinets appropriate for size/age of students and type of resources • student seating for two classes or 10% of the student body, whichever is greater • separate storytelling area (in PreK – Grade 6 school) • space for a circulation desk and electronic research
Ancillary Instructional Space
• two seminar rooms that can each hold 7-8 people (with interior windows to facilitate supervision) • one production area (with interior windows) that contains scanner, digital camera, and computer with graphic and desktop publishing software
Professional Space
• library office • workroom for library staff • workroom for teachers • storage for audiovisual and other equipment

Source: *Connections*, 2008.

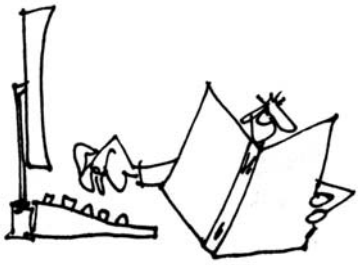
Long-Term Facility Planning

It is appropriate that every school division have a long-term plan for renewal of existing school library facilities and construction of new facilities when appropriate. The plan can prioritize libraries for renewal according to need. Generally libraries in older schools or schools with growing student populations are more in need of renewal than libraries in newer schools or those with declining student populations.

Renewal can involve changing the size and footprint of the library, but more frequently it involves interior renovations, such as adding (or removing) seminar rooms and workrooms, or creating a storytelling area. Renewal may involve the acquisition of new furniture because equipment, chairs, tables and study carrels occasionally need replacing. Good quality shelving usually has a long lifespan, however, shelving should be regularly inspected for safety. Shelving that wobbles or shelves that fall down represent a safety hazard and must be replaced.

Providing for technological change is another dimension of school library renewal. Technological change can affect the type and size of furniture and equipment needed in the library; the size and type of space needed for listening, viewing and working; and the electrical or other wiring in the library. It is difficult to predict the shape that technological change will take in the future. The school board's best approach is probably to recognize that a certain amount of budget will be needed to accommodate technological change on an ongoing or intermittent basis.

Taking Action



1. What actions does your school board need to take in order to develop an up-to-date division-wide plan for school library facilities?

2. What procedures does your school division have in place to ensure that teachers and students are involved in planning school library renovations or construction? To ensure that the principle "form follows function" is paramount?

3. The Ministry of Education recommends that a school library provide space to house the entire collection, plus seating for two classes or 10 percent of the student body, whichever is greater. What is the school library space target for your school division?

8. Continuous Improvement of School Library Programs and Services

How do we know if school library programs in our division are making a difference to students' learning?

How can we assess the quality of our school library programs and services?

What data should we be collecting to assess school library programs and services?

Part 8 "Continuous Improvement of School Library Programs and Services" addresses two topics:

- Saskatchewan's Continuous Improvement Framework
- Continuous Improvement of School Libraries

Saskatchewan's Continuous Improvement Framework

School library programs and services, like all other aspects of the educational program, strive for continuous improvement.

Saskatchewan's Continuous Improvement Framework provides a common strategic planning mechanism for the Ministry of Education, school boards and school community councils. The Framework is a multi-year cycle which includes annual planning strategies to advance provincial and school division priorities, annual reporting to describe the extent to which strategies were implemented and learner outcomes achieved, and bi-annual conferences between the Ministry of Education and school divisions.

Summary

Continuous Improvement of School Library Programs and Services

Saskatchewan's Continuous Improvement Framework provides a common strategic planning mechanism for the Ministry of Education, school boards, and school community councils. Goals and priorities for school library services can be incorporated into the division-level Continuous Improvement Plan and school-level Learning Improvement Plans which are part of this Framework.

Continuous improvement of school libraries has three elements:

- **Assessment** to collect information about the current status of school library programs and services across the division and in individual schools.
- **Goal Setting** in which the school board sets goals for school library programs and services and identifies the level and type of service they would like to make available to students and teachers.
- **Monitoring** which involves establishing systems to collect data about school library programs and services and regular reporting by school division staff to the board, so the board can measure progress toward achieving its goals.

This continuous improvement process is cyclical as the board may adjust budgets, policies and plan in order to better achieve its goals, or set new goals and priorities when appropriate.

School divisions are required to develop an annual or multi-year Continuous Improvement Plan. Individual schools are expected to develop annual Learning Improvement Plans – school-level planning documents that follow the format of the division's Continuous Improvement Plan.

Goals and priorities for school library services at the division level can be incorporated into the school division's Continuous Improvement Plan and school-level priorities can be incorporated into individual schools' Learning Improvement Plans.

Continuous Improvement of School Libraries

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education says:

> Planning provides a foundation for continuous improvement. School divisions and schools develop a vision that illustrates the way the school library contributes to student learning and the realization of provincial curriculum learning outcomes, and they create a plan for achieving the vision. The plan includes short- and long-term goals that serve as indicators of success and benchmarks for monitoring. Reporting tells the school community about progress toward achieving the vision and goals. The process is cyclical, as monitoring leads to changes in plans and goals in order to more fully realize the vision. (*Connections*, 2008, p. 37)

Continuous improvement of school libraries includes assessment, goal setting and monitoring.

Assessment

Continuous improvement of school libraries begins with an assessment which considers the board's policies, division-level services, and programs and services at individual schools. The assessment might consider questions such as:

- Does the board have up-to-date versions of all the policies required by *The Education Regulations, 1986*.
- Does the school division have an up-to-date division-wide plan for school library services?
- How do the division's school library programs and services compare to the provincial standards set out in *Connections: Policy and Guidelines for School Libraries in Saskatchewan* and the national standards set out in *Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Libraries in Canada*?
- How do the division's school library programs and services compare to those in the rest of Saskatchewan? In 2008, the Ministry of Education completed a survey of school libraries in this province which provided statistical information about staffing, resource collections and other aspects of school libraries. Information from this survey will enable school boards to determine where their school library programs and services stand in comparison to those in other parts of Saskatchewan.

Three aspects of the school library can be considered during an assessment:

- **School library services** – For example, the size and currency of resource collections, the appropriateness of facilities, the extent to which a technological infrastructure and a single automated library system supports all the school libraries in the division.
- **School library programs** – The extent to which qualified teacher-librarians work with their fellow teachers to integrate resources into curriculum and with students to support student-directed inquiry and to teach students to locate, use, evaluate, and share information.

- **Student achievement** – The extent to which students' knowledge, skills or behaviour has been impacted by the school library program. For example:
  - Are students able to independently undertake research in the library?
  - Are students able to transfer research and study skills between different subject areas?
  - Do students enjoy reading?
  - Are students able to modify, revise or transform information to create a media product?
  - Are students able to assess the authenticity of information from different sources? (*Achieving Information Literacy*, 2003; *Improve Your Library*, n.d.)

Goal Setting

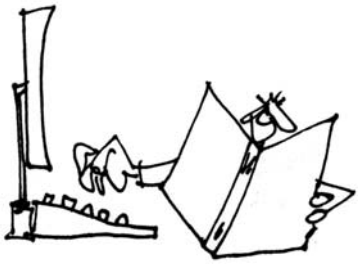
An assessment will provide baseline data. It will tell you where you are now. The next step is goal setting – deciding where you would like the school division as a whole and individual school libraries to be. Within a strategic governance context, it is the school board's responsibility to establish a vision for school libraries, to set goals, and to provide appropriate budget and other resources. It is the responsibility of the director of education and other staff to take action to achieve the goals identified by the board.

Monitoring

After goals have been established, the school board works with the director of education to establish monitoring systems to measure progress toward achieving the goals. Monitoring involves both data collection and reporting. School division staff collect data relating to the goals established by the board and regularly report on results to the board. The board can compare these results to baseline data collected during the assessment of school libraries and to the goals for the future it has established.

Systemic data collection and reporting allows school boards to make decisions about budget allocations and programming on the basis of evidence rather than intuition or hearsay. In short, data collection and reporting tells the board whether existing programs are effective in achieving goals the board has established for school library services or whether new directions are needed. The board may need to adjust budgets, policies and plans in order to more fully realize its vision and goals, and as one level of goals are achieved the board may set new goals or establish new priorities.

Taking Action



1. Has your school board established baseline data regarding school libraries through an assessment of school library programs and services?

2. To what extent has your school board defined the goals it wants to achieve for school libraries?

3. To what extent have monitoring systems been set up to assess progress toward achieving the results to be achieved through school library programs and services?

4. What data do you regularly collect about school library programs and services in your division?

5. What types of reports has your board asked the director of education to provide concerning the effectiveness of school library programs and services?

9. School Board Action

The checklist below will help school boards plan for school library programs and services within their division.

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Working On It
1. Does your school board provide school library services to the students and teachers of the division as required by *The Education Regulations, 1986*?			
2. Has your school board established the school library policies required by *The Education Regulations, 1986*? These are:			
a. Selection policy?			
b. Challenged materials policy?			
c. Policy on access to learning resources?			
d. Policies and standards concerning school libraries?			
3. Are each of the required policies up-to-date?			
4. Have procedures been established to ensure that school division staff are aware of these policies?			
5. Does your school division have a division-wide school library plan?			
6. Does your school division have an appropriate degree of centralization of school library services?			
7. Is there an active school library program in each of the schools in your division in which a qualified teacher-librarian brings students and resources together and assists teachers to integrate resources into the instructional program?			
8. Has your school division established processes to provide equitable access to school library programs and services for small schools?			
9. Does your school division have a long-term plan for renewal and construction of school library facilities?			
10. Has your school board done an assessment of the school library program and services in the division and considered:			
a. Teacher-librarian staffing?			
b. Non-instructional staffing?			
c. Resource collections?			
d. Technology infrastructure?			
e. Automated library system?			
f. School library facilities?			

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Working On It
11. How do the school library programs and services in your division compare to the standards and guidelines in the Ministry of Education's document *Connections*?			
12. Has your school board set goals for school library programs and services in you division?			
13. Has your school board aligned resources with the goals for school library programs and services?			
14. Has your school board established monitoring systems to assess progress toward achieving your goals for school libraries?			
a. Are the school division's data collection activities closely linked to the board's goals for school library programs and services?			
b. Do the reports you receive from the director of education provide you with the information you need to assess progress toward your goals for school library programs and services in the division?			

References

Full bibliographic information for all of the publications cited in the body of this advisory appears below. URLs are given where these are available. Please note that some URLs do not begin with www.

Achieving information literacy: Standards for school library programs in Canada. (2003). (Edited by M. Asselin, J. L. Branch & D. Oberg). Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association for School Libraries. (Order for $23.00 from Canadian Library Association, 328 Frank Street, Ottawa, ON, K2P 0X8).

American Association of School Libraries. (2007). *AASL standards for the 21st century learner*. Chicago, IL: Author. www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/learningstandards/standards.cfm

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Klinger, D. K. (2006). *School libraries and student achievement in Ontario*. Ottawa, ON: Queen's University and People for Education for the Ontario Library Association. www.accessola.com/osla/bins/content_page.asp?cid=630-639-923

Lance, K. C., & Loertscher, D. V. (2003). *Powering achievement: School library media programs make a difference: The evidence*. 2nd Edition. San Jose, CA: Hi Willow Research and Publishing.

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McDonough, K. (2002). *A pathway to effective board policy development*. (Saskatchewan School Boards Association Research Centre Report #02-09). Regina, SK: Saskatchewan School Boards Association. www.ssta.sk.ca/research/governance/02-09.htm

Pre-K to 12 continuous improvement framework, version III. (2008). Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.

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Renihan, P. J. (1991). *School board self-assessment: Principles and processes*. (SSTA Research Centre Report #91-13). Regina, SK: Saskatchewan School Boards Association. http://saskschoolboards.ca/research/governance/91-13.htm

School Libraries for lifelong learning: A handbook for administrators. (1999). Charlestown, PEI: University of Prince Edward Island. www.upei.ca/~fac_ed/projects/handbook/program.htm

For More Information

Publications

AASL Standards for the 21st Century.
www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/learningstandards/standards.cfm

An eight-page booklet that outlines the desired student outcomes of a school library program. Published by the American Association of School Librarians.

Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Libraries in Canada. (Available for $23.00 from Canadian Library Association, 328 Frank Street, Ottawa, ON, K2P 0X8)

Defines eight information literacy outcomes and accompanying indicators that students can be expected to achieve through a quality school library program. Published by the Canadian Association for School Libraries.

Connections: Policy and Guidelines for School Libraries in Saskatchewan.
www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=24424

Provides vision, goals and principles for school libraries in Saskatchewan outlines responsibilities of the province, the school division and the school, and addresses continuous improvement. Published by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.

The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries: The Case for Reform and Re-investment (by Ken Haycock). www.cla.ca/slip/final_haycock_report.pdf

Provides a very complete summary of the research which demonstrates the link between quality school library programs and reading proficiency, overall educational attainment and academic achievement in subject content areas.

The Medium. www.ssla.ca/medium.htm

A digital journal published by the Saskatchewan School Library Association. Includes articles on topics such as information literacy, collaboration between teachers and teacher-librarians, and technology, as well as news from the world of school librarianship.

School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario.
www.accessola.com/osla/bins/content_page.asp?cid-630-639-923

A study by Queen's University and People for Education which draws from Ontario data and illustrates a positive relationship between professionally staffed school libraries and student achievement. Also found that reading enjoyment is strongly and positively linked to student achievement.

School Libraries – An Under-Resourced Resource?
www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-004-x/2005002/8051-eng.htm

A 2008 summary by Statistics Canada of Canadian studies relating to school libraries. Concludes that in recent years there has been a deterioration in the resources available for libraries in many Canadian schools.

School Libraries in Canada: A Journal of the Canadian Association for School Libraries.
www.cla.ca/casl/slic/slicindex.html

Includes articles on the theory and practice of school librarianship and on philosophical issues relating to the role of school libraries in education and society.

Websites

Saskatchewan Libraries www.lib.sk.ca

A large, complex website that provides links to most libraries in Saskatchewan; access to many e-books, online databases and articles; announcements and news; job postings; much information for library staff and trustees; and many links to reference sources and library organizations.

School Library Information Portal (SLiP) www.cla.ca/slip/standards.htm

SLiP is a large comprehensive portal which provides many links to information about school library policy and standards, programs, management, research, professional development and advocacy. Operated by the Canadian Library Association.

Organizations

American Association of School Librarians www.ala.org/aasl

A division of the American Library Association. Advocates excellence, facilitates change, and develops leaders in the school library field.

Canadian Association of School Libraries www.cla.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CASL2

A division of the Canadian Library Association. Promotes school library programs nationally, publishes a regular journal and holds conferences.

International Association of School Librarianship www.iasl-online.org

A worldwide organization that provides an international forum for promotion of effective school library programs as viable instruments in the educational process. Also provides guidance and advice for the development of school library programs and the school librarian profession.

Ontario School Library Association www.accessola.com/osla/bins/index.asp

Aims to further the development of school library programs and teacher-librarianship and to unify the voice of teacher-librarians as curriculum leaders in Ontario. OSLA's website contains links to many publications and news from the world of school libraries.

Saskatchewan School Library Association www.ssla.ca

A special subject council of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Provides leadership for development, promotion and improvement in school libraries in Saskatchewan. Publishes a magazine and a newsletter and organizes conferences and workshops. SSLA's website includes blogs and wikis from practicing teacher-librarians, media reviews and links to other library organizations.

Appendix A: Selection Policy Guidelines

Section 37 of *The Education Regulations, 1986* requires that boards of education and the conseil scolaire establish policies and standards governing school libraries. The legislation specifically states that a selection policy and a policy for challenged materials must be established.

Most boards of education address both selection of materials and procedures for challenged materials in one policy, rather than developing separate policies for each topic. Some boards of education include an Internet acceptable use policy as part of their selection policy. General guidelines for policy writing and a description of the elements in a selection policy are provided below. Once the selection policy has been developed, it should be reviewed regularly to ensure it continues to be relevant. Changes in the provincial curriculum, in student population, and in technology might necessitate changes to the selection policy.

Legal Reference	**Section 37 of *The Education Regulations, 1986***
Purpose of Policy	Selection policies are developed to guide the selection, retention, and weeding of quality school library collections that support student achievement of provincial curriculum outcomes, students' independent reading and research needs, and teachers' professional needs.
Application of Policy	The policy applies to all materials in the school library collection in all formats. All materials are evaluated according to the same basic criteria. Additional criteria are sometimes provided for specific types of materials (e.g., size and readability of type for print materials; sound quality for audio materials; quality of cinematography for video materials; functional links and ability to move around easily in websites).
Selection Criteria	Basic selection criteria apply to all types of materials in the collection. A few examples of possible selection criteria include: • relevance to the curriculum • age appropriateness for the intended audience • quality and durability of format • accuracy and currency of information • credibility, reputation, and significance of author, producer, publisher • artistic/literary quality • freedom from bias and stereotypes • accurate portrayals of First Nations and Métis peoples.
Procedures	Steps in the selection process from initial screening to final selection should be included.
Gift Materials	Gift materials are usually evaluated according to the same criteria as purchased materials to ensure that only quality items go into the collection.

Responsibility for Selection	Usually a qualified teacher-librarian is responsible for selection. Other people such as students, teachers, consultants, parents, and First Nations and Métis Elders may advise on the selection of particular types of materials. Some school library policies outline the process that is followed for selection under various circumstances. For example: • when a student, teacher, or community member suggests an acquisition • when the teacher-librarian is initiating selection to fill gaps in the collection or to update the collection • when materials are being acquired to support a particular curriculum.
Weeding the Collection	Items that no longer meet selection criteria or are in poor physical condition are removed from the collection. Many school divisions use date ranges for certain sections of the collection. Some school library policies include a description of the methods that will be used to dispose of weeded school library materials, and a rationale for the disposal methods chosen.
Procedures for Challenges to Learning Resources	A process for challenges to the inclusion or exclusion of resources in the collection might include: • a description of the steps for action to be taken beginning with the first contact with the person expressing the concern • a description of the timelines for action • information regarding the levels of responsibility of people involved in the reconsideration process • examples of appropriate forms • a description of steps to be taken in an appeal process.
Access to Learning Resources	Procedures for students to access resources: • provision of textbooks and other learning resources • accessing online learning resources • policies for Internet use
References	This statement lists the references to external and internal documents which are the basis of the policy statements.

Source: *Connections: Policy and guidelines for school libraries in Saskatchewan*. (2008). Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, Instructional Resources Unit. Used with permission. www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=24424

Appendix B: Information Literacy – Student Outcomes

Outcome 1:	**Uses Information With Aesthetic Appreciation –** Students will demonstrate an appreciation of the creative arts, literature, various media formats and other aesthetic representation, and of the value of lifelong learning.
Indicator 1:	Appreciates various forms of creative and scientific expression including multimedia, the visual and performing arts, the beauty in the world around them, and all imaginative forms of expression.
Indicator 2:	Reads a wide range of material, writes for various purposes, views visual materials and performances, and participates in other literacy activities.
Indicator 3:	Demonstrates well-developed personal interests and a willingness to participate as an avid learner.
Indicator 4:	Demonstrates an understanding of the (sic) Canada's cultural resources such as galleries, museums and libraries, as well as an understanding of the contribution of the arts to the Canadian society.
Outcome 2:	**Uses Information Responsibly –** Students will use information responsibly and ethically for individual and collaborative learning activities.
Indicator 1:	Understands and honours intellectual property rights and copyright laws.
Indicator 2:	Understands and honours privacy rights when accessing and using information and media resources.
Indicator 3:	Records all information sources accurately and uses the information found responsibly.
Indicator 4:	Demonstrates good work habits and follows safety rules while using information tools.
Outcome 3:	**Uses Information Respectfully –** Students will use information from diverse perspectives and values with respect.
Indicator 1:	Respects the ideas, values, and cultural backgrounds of all information sources.
Indicator 2:	Recognizes the contribution of diverse points of view for learning and personal inquiries.
Indicator 3:	Creates information products that are balanced, and diverse in perspective.
Outcome 4:	**Uses Information Critically –** Students will use information critically to evaluate the relevance, authenticity, and validity of information and its source.
Indicator 1:	Determines the relevancy of information to the learning or personal inquiry.
Indicator 2:	Identifies the authority behind the information source.
Indicator 3:	Validates the information as authentic.
Indicator 4:	Assesses the moral and ethical implications involved in personal inquiry.

Outcome 5:	**Uses Information Strategically –** Students will use information strategically to process, organize, and select information to meet an individual or collaborative learning need.
Indicator 1:	Demonstrates strategies in reading, listening, viewing, interpreting, and processing information to answer questions, solve problems, and discover new information.
Indicator 2:	Uses effective strategies to organize and structure information into useful forms for communication.
Indicator 3:	Selects information based on the criteria needed to complete a learning task.
Indicator 4:	Applies information literacy strategies independently or collaboratively to complete a learning task.
Outcome 6:	**Uses Information for Decision-Making –** Students will consciously use information for making personal and group learning decisions.
Indicator 1:	Recognizes the need for information in problem-solving situations.
Indicator 2:	Knows how information is organized in all information and media resources.
Indicator 3:	Indicator 3: Applies information to solve a wide variety of learning and personal inquiries.
Indicator 4:	Works collaboratively with others to make informed decisions and to solve group problems.
Outcome 7:	**Uses Information Expressively –** Students will use information expressively to modify, revise, and transform information and to communicate their newly created information with an intended audience.
Indicator 1:	Modifies, revises, and transforms information to create information and media products.
Indicator 2:	Applies principles of design to create information and media products.
Indicator 3:	Recognizes the requirements to create different forms of information and media products.
Indicator 4:	Tailors an information presentation or product to an intended audience.
Indicator 5:	Uses effective communication skills to share information with an audience.
Outcome 8:	**Uses Information and Media Tools with Technical Competence –** Students will demonstrate competence and proficiency in the technical uses of traditional and digital information and media tools.
Indicator 1:	Uses traditional and digital tools effectively and efficiently to access all information and media formats.
Indicator 2:	Knows the purpose and capability of all information and media tools.
Indicator 3:	Demonstrates the basic operational skills for all information and media tools.
Indicator 4:	Uses traditional and digital tools to create and present a variety of information and media products.

Source: *Achieving information literacy: Standards for school library programs in Canada*. (2003). (Edited by M. Asselin, J. L. Branch & D. Oberg). Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association for School Libraries. Used with permission.