

INTRODUCTION

“In a nutshell, librarians help learners learn and librarians help teachers teach.”

Joyce Kasman Valenza, School Librarian at Springfield
Township High School in Erdenheim, Pennsylvania

Our students are coming of age in the age of information. Every day they need good information to solve problems, make important decisions, contribute positively to society, and enjoy life. From the simple question of where to eat tonight to the momentous decisions of what treatment to seek for a life-threatening condition or what vocation to pursue, they are constantly seeking information. Students often have easy access to great amounts of information, far more than they can effectively use, and yet are stymied in finding appropriate information. Plagiarism is like child’s play today with the ability to copy and paste entire documents with a few keystrokes. In order to use information effectively, students need to develop skills of information literacy, the ability to access, evaluate, analyze, organize, document, and communicate information in effective and ethical ways.

In recent years, studies done by Keith Curry Lance in Colorado (1993, 2000), Alaska (1999), Pennsylvania (1999), and Oregon (2001) and other studies done in Texas (2001) and Massachusetts (2000), have repeatedly shown that school librarians and school libraries positively impact learner outcomes regardless of the socio-economic background of the students. These studies build on over fifty years of research that has shown that school librarians and school libraries are vital components of strong schools.

The school librarians and media specialists of the Archdiocese of Denver share the high ideals and aspirations of the teachers, principals, and the Office of Catholic Schools in wanting our students to be well prepared to function in a democratic country and in the world community and to positively impact those around them with the message of Jesus Christ. They are committed to providing students and teachers with the tools they need to learn and to teach more effectively. They are a key component in the success of Catholic schools. To that end, this document is provided to guide principals and teachers in utilizing their services and to librarians and media specialists in achieving a higher level of services to their schools.

Smaller elementary schools have a difficult time providing paid staff for libraries / media centers. This document is provided as a resource for administrators and those who work in libraries part-time or as volunteers. It is also a challenge and a source of encouragement to help the school community realize how such a resource may best be used. It is our dream that one day every school may have a fully operative media center to enhance the learning experience of our Catholic school students.

Many thanks to the committee for the hours of input, editing, and discussion that went into the development of this curriculum guideline.

Stephanie Brown
Carol Ann Sass
Brother Charles Miller
Sally Ott
Anna Marie Berger
Joan Saindon
Joanne Spiessbach
Betty Doyle
Sr. Mary Dolores
Sr. Elizabeth Youngs

Holy Family High School
Bishop Machebeuf High School
Mullen High School
Our Lady of Fatima School
Sacred Heart of Jesus School
St. Bernadette School
St. Mary's School – Littleton
St. Thomas More Parish School
St. Vincent de Paul School
Office of Catholic Schools