



American Association of School Librarians
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**LEARNING
4 LIFE**



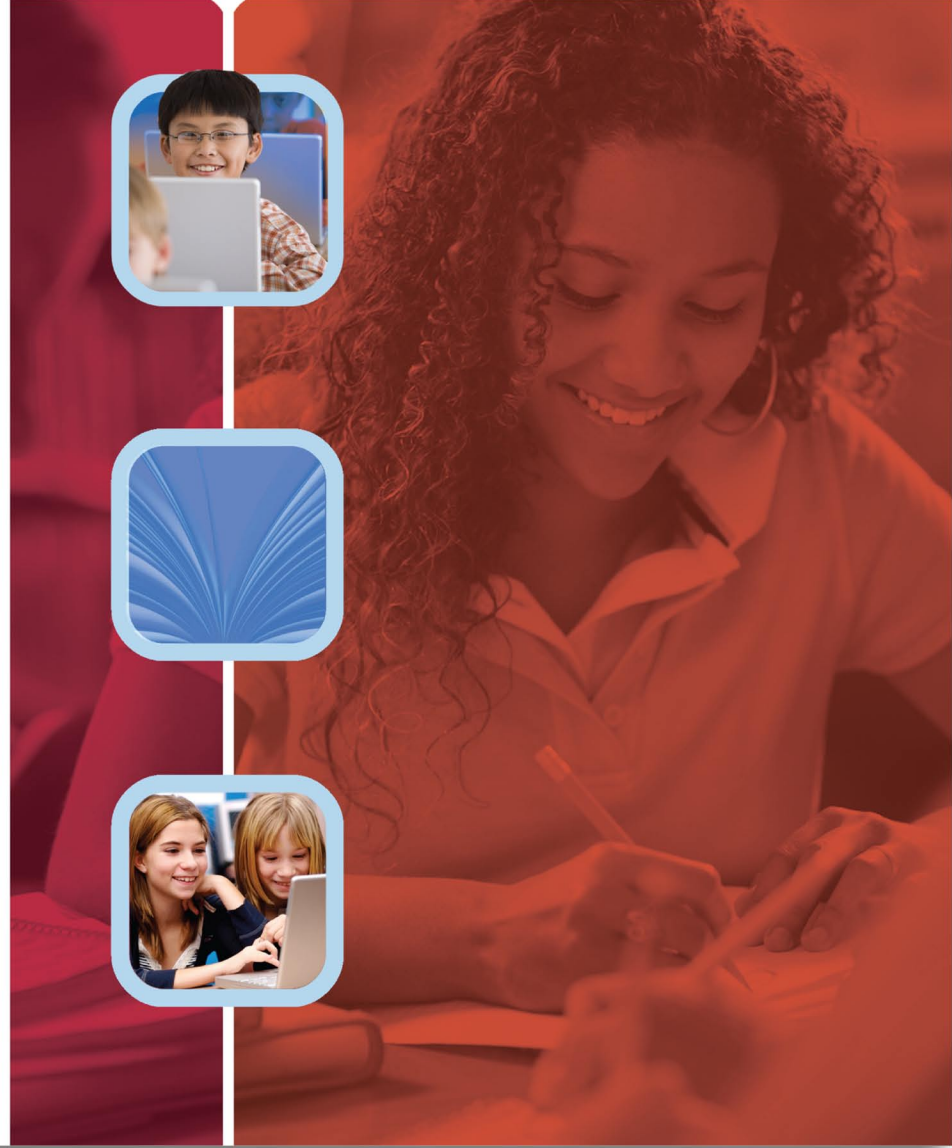
An initiative of the American Association of School Librarians

Learning4Life (L4L) is the American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) national implementation plan created to support states, school systems, and individual schools preparing to implement the Standards for the 21st-Century Learner and Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs

For more information and additional Learning4Life tools and resources, visit www.ala.org/aasl/learning4life.

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SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS
**IMPROVE
STUDENT LEARNING**
P A R E N T S



All parents want their children to succeed in school and get a good education to prepare them for life and work in the 21st-century. Research tells us that when parents are involved in their children's school and education, their children do much better in school. Specifically, "students with involved parents are more likely to:

- + earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- + be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits;
- + attend school regularly;
- + have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school;
- + graduate and go on to post secondary education".¹

Research also shows that quality school library programs under the direction of a certified/licensed school librarian result in higher levels of academic achievement as evidenced by improved standardized reading and writing test scores.² Quality school library programs and librarians help children and teens by teaching them how to find reliable information, think critically, make informed decisions, work productively with others, use the Internet safely and ethically, and communicate ideas effectively.

Using national school library guidelines³ as a foundation, this brochure outlines goals and key questions that detail what you as a parent should expect from your school's library program and ways that you can become involved. In their lifetimes our children will need to solve problems that we cannot yet even imagine. Already they are using new communication and information technologies that make students of today global citizens who will compete internationally for the jobs of tomorrow. Working together, parents, school administrators, and librarians can develop a top-notch school library program that is the hub of learning in the school to give students the necessary tools, instruction, and resources to achieve—now and in the future.

1 Henderson, Anne T., and Karen L. Mapp. 2002. *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Annual Synthesis 2002*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

2 "School Library Impact Studies." 2011. Denver, CO: Library Research Service. <www.lrs.org/impact.php>

3 American Association of School Librarians. 2009. *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs*. Chicago: ALA.

"In a survey of over 13,000 Ohio students, over 99 percent of students in grades 3 through 12 believe school libraries and their services help them become better learners. Over 88 percent say the school library helps them get better grades; almost 75 percent say it helps with homework, and over 92 percent say computers in the school library help improve their overall academic work."

Source: Whelan, Debra Lau. 2004. "13,000 Kids Can't Be Wrong." *School Library Journal* (February 1). <www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA377858.html> (accessed March 1, 2011).

"According to the American Association of School Librarians, students who are information literate can:

- + Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge;
- + Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge;
- + Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society; and
- + Pursue personal and aesthetic growth."

These skills will make your child or teen a lifelong learner.

Source: American Association of School Librarians. 2007. *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*. <http://ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/learningstandards/AASL_LearningStandards.pdf> (accessed March 1, 2011).

"Strong school library programs are essential to create a fair balance between children who have access to books outside of school and those who do not. Not all children have easy access to a public library or can afford to visit bookstores for their reading and research needs. Even for students near public libraries, access to resources has been reduced as public library budgets and hours have been cut."

Source: Baxter, Susan J., and Ann Walker Smalley. 2004. *Check It Out! The Results of the 2004 School Library Media Census*. St. Paul, MN: Metronet. <www.metrolibraries.net/res/pdfs/2004final_report.pdf> (accessed December 15, 2011).

"Research has proven that:

- + The presence of a certified/licensed librarian who teaches students how to find and use information and provides reading support results in higher student reading achievement.
- + Student access to the school library—measured by the number of hours the library is open—is significantly related to standardized reading test scores at elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- + As the staffing, collections and funding of school library programs incrementally increase reading scores also rise."

Source: "School Library Impact Studies." 2011. Denver, CO: Library Research Service. <www.lrs.org/impact.php> (accessed March 1, 2011).

TEACHING FOR LEARNING



BUILDING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

GOAL: The school library program supports your child's reading for learning and personal enjoyment.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the school library program help your child to learn to read?

Does the library program offer promotional activities to encourage and increase reading?

Does the librarian broaden your child's reading interests through exposure to new and interesting authors, genres, and other resources?

Does the librarian help you as a parent to guide your child's reading by providing reading lists or recommended websites?

GOAL: The school library program provides opportunities for your child to become information literate.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the school librarian work with teachers in all subject areas to teach your child to:

- find needed information?
- select and evaluate appropriate information?
- paraphrase information and give credit to authors?
- present and share what is learned?

Does the librarian teach your child a research process that includes posing questions, finding answers, and developing critical thinking and communication skills?

Does the librarian work with teachers to evaluate your child's library-related school assignments?

Does the school library program help your child complete homework assignments and be successful in school?

GOAL: The school library program provides opportunities for your child to seek information for personal growth and learning.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the school provide time for your child to independently explore topics of interest in the library?

Does the library program provide opportunities for your child to ask questions and seek answers from both print and electronic sources of information?

Does the librarian help you as a parent know what library resources are available to help your child explore personal interests?

GOAL: The school librarian provides opportunities for your child to learn to use information safely and ethically.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the librarian teach your child strategies regarding Internet safety and safe uses of social media websites and tools (i.e., blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)?

Does the librarian teach your child appropriate use of computers and information technologies?

Does the librarian teach your child about the ethical and legal issues relating to copying and plagiarism?

Does the librarian inform you how to help your child use information and computer resources safely and ethically?

GOAL: The school library provides equal opportunities for all students to use library resources.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does your child have access to the school library and a full-time certified/licensed school librarian throughout the school day?

Does your child visit the library frequently with his/her class? Individually? In small groups? As needed?

Does the library offer 24-7 remote access to library resources and subscription databases?

Are the library's circulation policies flexible to meet the needs of your child?

Does the school have procedures to allow your child to borrow electronic devices (such as laptops, audio players, etc.) that might be needed to use library resources?

Does the library's website have a parents' section with information and resources?

GOAL: The school library program provides a well-developed and current collection of resources that is financially supported and annually evaluated.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does your child have access to a wide variety of up-to-date books, digital resources, and other materials that support classroom learning, as well as your child's personal interests?

Does the school library have appropriate resources and technology to meet any special learning needs of your child?

Are you as a parent able to donate or request resources to be purchased for the library's collection?

Are you as a parent able to borrow library resources to use with your child?

Savvy parents and educators know that the school library is key to teaching students not just to read but to practice the skills they need to seek, evaluate and use information throughout their lives. In fact, research shows those students from schools with professionally staffed, fully equipped libraries score higher on achievement tests.

Source: American Association of School Librarians. "Quick Links for Parents." <<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aboutaasl/aaslcommunity/quicklinks/parents.cfm>> (accessed March 30, 2011).

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GOAL: The school library is the central learning hub of the school.

KEY QUESTIONS: Is the library an attractive, pleasant, accessible, and friendly place that your child enjoys visiting?

Is there enough room for a class and small additional groups of students to comfortably use the library simultaneously?

Does the library have enough room to encourage the use of computers and other technologies to complete school projects, as well as areas for leisure reading and browsing?

GOAL: The school library is a welcoming and friendly place that students like to visit.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the librarian maximize school-allocated resources to create a library that your child enjoys visiting?

Does the librarian create ways for parents and community members to volunteer in the library?

Are there opportunities for parent and community members to organize fundraising activities with the librarian to support library programs and services?





EMPOWERING LEARNING THROUGH LEADERSHIP

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GOAL: The school library program has up-to-date instructional technologies, and students and teachers are taught how to use them.

KEY QUESTIONS: Do students have adequate access to computers and other technologies for students?

Does the library program include teaching students and staff how to use technology?

Does the school provide opportunities for the school librarian to update his/her technology skills?

Has the librarian offered a parent workshop on technologies or websites your children are using?

GOAL: The school librarian keeps parents and the community informed about the school library and its programs.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the school librarian promote the school library program by publishing articles in the school's newsletters and other local media?

Does the school librarian maintain a library website to keep parents and the community informed?

Do the school and public librarians communicate with one another to offer the best possible library services to students?

Could you help the librarian to promote library services throughout the community?

GOAL: The school recognizes the importance of the school library program and values the school librarian's representation on key decision-making committees.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the librarian serve on curriculum, technology, and/or other leadership committees?

Has a supervisor or administrator been assigned to oversee the school library program?

Are there opportunities for parents to support the school library program through participation on school advisory committees?

GOAL: The school library program is annually reviewed with school and community input to improve learning for students.

KEY QUESTIONS: Does the school library have a mission statement and annual goals and objectives?

Does the school librarian make public an annual library report?

Are there opportunities for parents to provide input in the annual review of the library program?

Developed and distributed through a grant from the Bound to Stay Bound Books Foundation.

