

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY**

**Library Media Center
and
Information Skills
Program Evaluation**

Secondary Level (6-12)

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Committee

The committee for the Library and Information Skills program evaluation consisted of:

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The Program Evaluation began in the fall of 2004 and continued through the end of the 2004-2005 school year. This period of time was approximately ten months. All faculty listed above were involved in the gathering and analysis of data and worked to prepare a list of recommendations based on this information.

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Library Information Skills Program Philosophy

The school library media center is a vital and integral hub of the school and as a result reflects the philosophy and goals of the school and the district. In an age of information, acquiring information literacy skills and a commitment to lifelong reading and learning become paramount. In the school library media center, students develop critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills as they use a variety of resources to meet the demands of today's curriculum.

A library media program does not exist in isolation. The school library media specialist works in partnership with students, teachers, administrators, Board of Education members, and the school community to develop the library media program. Through collaboration, the library media program also incorporates the goals and objectives of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) and the National Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning as prepared by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). The combined vision supports the goal for educational excellence and the concept of intellectual freedom.

“The mission of the library media program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. This mission is accomplished:

- by providing intellectual and physical access to materials in all formats

- by providing instruction to foster competence and stimulate interest in reading, viewing, and using information and ideas

- by working with other educators to design learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students.”

--*Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (1988), p.1

The school library media program is a combination of the following resources and services:

PERSONNEL

Certified staff with the appropriate technical and clerical assistance to organize and operate a school library media program

Central office leadership

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

A comprehensive and organized collection of judiciously selected materials

Computers and equipment of all types and formats

Access to outside information services, including community, government sources, Internet, and other online computer services

FACILITY

A readily accessible area

An environment that is conducive to learning and that houses library media resources and accompanying services

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

A consistent program of information literacy skills integrated through cooperative planning with content area teachers at each grade level

Goals for Information Literacy

Information and technology literate students are competent, independent, and creative learners. They know their information needs and actively engage in the world of ideas. They display confidence in their ability to solve problems and know what is relevant information. They manage technology tools to access information and to communicate. They hold high standards for their work and create quality products. Information and technology literate students are flexible, can adapt to change, and are able to function independently and in groups.

Information and technology literacy objectives provide all students with a process for learning that is transferable among content areas and from the academic environment to real life.

Continuing to adapt the information skills curriculum based on electronic access requires a major change from previous library skills instruction. The emphasis focuses on integration of skills within the total curriculum and allows for infusion of new technology. Skills cannot be taught in isolation; they must be linked directly to the need for information and infused into all content areas. In addition, they must be focused on helping each student learn to satisfy his or her information needs in the broadest possible manner.

Changes Since 1997

The library and information skills program was first evaluated in 1997. At that time, the department at William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School consisted of one media specialist at each school, one of whom served as a district coordinator of K-12 media programs. A single full-time assistant and part-time technology aide supported the media specialists. The district coordinator of K-12 media programs was a stipend position. This individual served as a liaison between the department and the administration at the building and district level. In 2000, the coordinator responsibilities were transferred to the supervisor of technology and the coordinator position was eliminated.

In September 1999, new media center facilities opened at both middle and high schools that provided access by as many as three classes per period. Additional computers and labs were added as part of each media center facility. The “Cybrary” at William Annin Middle School is used for information skills instruction, and two labs at Ridge are available for classes. Student enrollment at both William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School has nearly doubled since the 1997 evaluation.

Current Status

Currently the libraries at both William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School are staffed with one professional and two assistants. The media centers are also responsible for the function and scheduling of several computer labs and laptop carts. At the middle school, the media specialist also serves as the school webmaster. At the high school, the media specialist also serves as one of two school technology specialists as a stipend position.

The media centers in both schools are constantly used to teach technology and information skills. Average school usage shows that more than one class per period utilizes the media center for every day of the school year. Media specialists also maintain the library material collections, manage technology resources, create and teach lessons for and with classroom teachers, create and update media center and class project websites, teach research methods,

and supervise the traditional circulation and cataloguing of books and other media. Both media services professionals in the district hold advanced degrees in their fields with one holding a PhD.

Current Instructional Programs

Grade Six

Information literacy skills are implemented through regularly planned, consistent activities in reading, English, and science. Students review the location and use of a variety of media center resources. Online databases are introduced and used. Students learn to evaluate Internet resources by considering the author. The construction of basic keyword searches is emphasized. Note taking in research continues, with a focus on note sheets and index cards. The *Annin Report Style Manual* guides the student in the completion of a written report with proper citations for sources used. Reading for pleasure is promoted through the school wide Drop Everything And Read program.

Grade Seven and Grade Eight

Activities in communication arts, English, social studies, and science prepare the students for more detailed information retrieval. Motivating research activities require students to make use of online databases and Internet research as students locate and evaluate information for projects. Continued emphasis on developing effective search strategies is stressed. Assignments in elective areas such as computers, art, health and world languages require students to make use of information effectively. Independent use of the media center is encouraged.

Grade Nine

Students in grade nine are introduced to resources in the high school media center through planned class activities, especially English and social studies classes. Students are taught to locate, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources to create reports, papers, and oral presentations.

Grades Ten through Twelve

Throughout the remainder of their high school career, students continue to build on the research expertise gained in previous years. Students use a variety of information sources to prepare papers, reports, and debates. Students are introduced to both the resources and research strategies necessary to complete their assignments. They are also encouraged to use online resources to identify materials in other collections and to take advantage of interlibrary loan.

Curricular Alignment

The desired outcomes for information literacy instruction are based on New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. The instruction integrates these state standards with the Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning as prepared by the American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology.

For media and information skills, four state standards are directly related to instruction within the schools media centers:

- **Standard 8.1** (Computer and Information Literacy) All students will use computer applications to gather and organize information and to solve problems.
- **Standard 3.1** (Reading) All students will understand and apply the knowledge of sounds, letters, and words in written English to become independent and fluent readers, and will read a variety of materials and texts with fluency and comprehension.
- **Standard 3.2** (Writing) All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- **Standard 3.5** (Viewing and Media Literacy) All students will access, view, evaluate, and respond to print, nonprint, and electronic texts and resources.

The curriculum in the Information Skills program is unique in the fact that the program serves in its strongest capacity as an “information problem solving process” for the core curriculum. The above referenced state standards are achieved by this integration. To this end, the majority of instruction focuses on research skills at the secondary level. The district program uses the following process for research instruction:

THE BIG 6 SKILLS: INFORMATION PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH

1. Task Definition

- 1.1 Define the information problem
- 1.2 Identify information needed in order to complete the task (to solve the information problem)

2. Information Seeking Strategies

- 2.1 Determine the range of possible sources (brainstorm)
- 2.2 Evaluate the different possible sources to determine priorities (select the best sources)

3. Location and Access

- 3.1 Locate sources (intellectually and physically)
- 3.2 Find information within sources

4. Use of Information

- 4.1 Engage (eg. read, hear, view, touch) the information in a source
- 4.2 Extract relevant information from a source

5. Synthesis

- 5.1 Organize information from multiple sources
- 5.2 Present the information

6. Evaluation

- 6.1 Judge the product (effectiveness)
- 6.2 Judge the information problem-solving process (efficiency)

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Eisenberg, M. B. & Berkowitz, R. E. Information Problem-Solving: The Big6™ Skills
Approach to Library & Information Skills. Ablex Publishing Corp., 1990.)

Results of Previous Program Evaluation (1997)

Recommendation	Result
<p>1. We recommend increased communication among media specialists, the media coordinator, principals, and supervisors for the purpose of developing and articulating excellent media center programs in each building.</p>	<p>Meetings occur on an "as needed" basis. No evidence of increased communication. Since June 2000 there have not been formal minutes of media department meetings, which were previously shared with all district administrators and participants. Monthly meetings of district media specialists ceased in 2000, replaced by K-5 and 6-12 meetings that also included computer teachers.</p>
<p>2. We recommend increased involvement of media specialists in curriculum planning activities. This planning will facilitate the integration of information skills and enable media specialists to more effectively provide useful instructional materials to support the curriculum.</p>	<p>Increased instructional responsibilities due to growing class sizes make planning time scarce in both middle and high school. Collaborative curriculum writing opportunities have not been consistently available. Additional professional staffing in the media centers has not been provided to facilitate planning opportunities, instruction, library administration, and additional class use of library facilities.</p>
<p>3. We recommend the development of minimum expectations for each grade level in the area of information skills.</p>	<p>Minimum expectations for each grade level have not been formally developed.</p>
<p>4. We recommend that media center budgets be improved so that an adequate variety of current, quality instructional materials and equipment can be provided to support meaningful instructional activities.</p>	<p>Although budgets had been maintained at an acceptable level from 1998-2005, they were severely cut for the current year (2005-06) due to the defeated school budget in April 2005.</p>
<p>5. We recommend that adequate professional and support staff be provided in each media center.</p>	<p>Due to population increase, additional professional staffing was not implemented. In addition, the technology aide at both high school and middle school was cut in the 2003-04 school year.</p>

<p>6. Larger facilities for media services are needed to accommodate increased numbers of students and class sections. We recommend investigation into expanding existing facilities.</p>	<p>New media center facilities were built at both middle and high schools, opening in September 1999.</p>
<p>7. Maintain regular out-of-district staff development opportunities for media specialists so that they may keep abreast of information technology (hardware and software) and its application to information access.</p>	<p>Staff development opportunities have been regularly approved when requested.</p>
<p>8. We recommend that media specialists continue to be considered a valuable staff development resource.</p>	<p>Media specialists provide formal and informal staff development as needed, when time permits.</p>
<p>9. We recommend the reestablishment of summer work time for media center personnel, so that essential responsibilities can be accomplished.</p>	<p>No summer work was reinstated.</p>
<p>10. We recommend the continuation of the media coordinator position to facilitate program needs of the K-12 library media program.</p>	<p>The coordinator position existed from September 1995-June 2000, when the Director of Technology replaced it. This position was later changed to Supervisor of Technology in 2002-03. The position changed again in 2004-05 to Supervisor of Science and Technology.</p>

Survey Comparison to Other Similar Districts

William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School were compared to seven other middle schools and high schools with similar socioeconomic status. The committee focused their attention on the staffing and job function. The results are as follows:

STAFFING RESULTS - Middle School Media Centers

DISTRICT	<i>Student Pop.</i>	<i># Professional</i>	<i># Assistant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
William Annin Middle School	1245	1	2 full-time (10 month positions)	11 classes per day flexibly scheduled. Media Sp. teaches 5 classes daily, actively collaborating with teachers and teams. Library is open before and after school, and during lunch for students.
Holmdel	608-grades 7-8 750-grades 4-6	1 1	1 - 12 month 1 - 12 month	Flexible in gr. 7-8 Fixed in gr. 4-6
Chatham	725	1	1.5	Flexible schedule. All instruction is integrated into the curriculum. A required reading program brings the children into the library twice a month.
Princeton	650	1	0	No teaching - also has AV responsibilities
Livingston	800-grades 7-8 436-grade 6	1 1	0- requesting support help 0	Flex schedule, skills are integrated through cooperative planning with teachers. No after-school hours.
Millburn	1200	1	1	Considering adding second professional.
Hillsborough	1250	1	2	Research instruction provided by teachers.
Montgomery	1200	1 2005-06- an additional librarian will be hired to serve in a new school serving grades 5-6	1	Flexible scheduling. Media specialist teaches 5 classes a day. Library is open for after-school help an additional hour 3 times a week.

STAFFING RESULTS – High School Media Centers

DISTRICT	<i>Student Pop.</i>	<i># Professional</i>	<i># Assistant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Ridge High School	1517	1	2 full-time (10 month positions)	Media Specialist also serves as one of two tech specialists (a stipend position) for the school.
Holmdel	1250	1	0	
Chatham	867	1	2	
Princeton	1300	1	1 Assistant 1 Secretary	
Livingston	1589	2 Librarians 1 A/V	3 Assistants	
Millburn	1288	2 Librarians	2 Secretaries	
Hillsborough	2400	1	2 full-time	
Montgomery	1400	1	1	

Perception of the Program

Teacher Survey

During the spring of the 2004-2005, teachers at William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School completed a survey about their perception of the Media and Information Skills Program. The survey was designed by the committee to evaluate the perception of the classroom teachers at both schools. The following are the survey results for William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School.

William Annin Middle School						
No.	Question	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
1	The library media program is fully integrated into my curriculum to promote student achievement of learning goals.	25	43	8	0	5
2	I collaborate with the media specialist to:					
2A	Develop curriculum	8	38	18	13	11
2B	Plan lessons	8	33	23	11	8
2C	Teach students	11	42	16	11	5
2D	Assess student progress.	4	18	28	22	11
3	The library media program encourages and engages students in reading, viewing, and listening for personal interest and enjoyment.	72	14	1	0	3
4	The library media program fosters individual, small group, and whole class inquiry.	65	26	2	0	1
5	The library media program integrates the uses of technology for learning and teaching.	72	18	0	0	
5A	I know I can get help using technology from Media Center staff.	77	9	2	0	2
6	Access to computer resources is adequate for instructional purposes	43	39	9	0	2
7	The collections of the media library program are developed and evaluated collaboratively to support the school curriculum and to meet the diverse learning needs of students.	43	12	0	0	1
7A	I have been offered opportunities to preview new materials	72	12	2	1	1
7B	I have been asked for suggestions about the purchase of new materials.	64	16	4	1	4
7C	Reserve collections have been set aside at my request.	48	23	1	0	19
7D	Resource lists have been prepared for my use.	42	25	3	2	13
7E	I am regularly informed of additions to our collection	67	17	1	0	1
7F	I access a variety of media center materials and web links in my daily planning and teaching.	24	49	13	1	2
7G	I use the following resources:	3	21	17	34	8
	<i>Brainpop.com – interactive videos and quizzes on many subjects</i>	3	5	12	52	13

No.	Question	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
	<i>Countrywatch – information on nations of the world</i>	4	41	16	21	5
	<i>Ebsco - Eric, Searchasaurus, Middle Search, Primary Search, Novelist, animal and general encyclopedia.</i>	4	41	16	21	5
	<i>Facts on file – includes science, history, geography, career, forms, and curriculum topics.</i>	3	31	15	28	10
	<i>Junior Reference Collection – provides biographies, authors, cultural and geography articles</i>	5	21	14	36	11
	<i>Contemporary Authors – author information</i>	1	18	16	42	7
	<i>Infotrac Student Edition – index to magazines, news, encyclopedia and reference articles.</i>	5	41	6	26	6
	<i>News Current Online</i>	5	28	11	33	7
	<i>Proquest Newspaper Articles</i>	5	28	12	32	6
	<i>Cobblestone Magazine Online</i>	5	21	11	47	5
	<i>SIRS Discoverer – articles and general information on a variety of topics</i>	6	33	15	33	7
	<i>Today’s science – current science articles</i>	2	13	12	41	14
	<i>World Book Online</i>	6	27	17	33	4
	<i>Web Links on the School Internet Page</i>	31	45	4	9	1
8	The library media program provides a climate that is conducive to learning	72	17	1	0	0
9	The media center has an adequate level of professional staff to meet the needs of our instructional programs, students and teachers.	48	31	8	0	0
10	The media center has an adequate level of support staff to meet the needs of our instructional programs, students and teachers	51	35	3	0	0
11	I have received prompt and courteous help from media center staff.	82	9	0	0	0
12	How often do you use the media center (for any reason)?	16 (Weekly)	52 (Biweekly)	20 (Monthly)	0 (Never)	0

Ridge High School						
No.	Question	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
1	The library media program is fully integrated into my curriculum to promote student achievement of learning goals	10	14	6	0	3
2	I collaborate with the media specialist to:					
2A	develop curriculum	0	3	8	11	8
2B	plan lessons	0	11	9	6	4
2C	teach students	3	17	6	2	6
2D	assess student progress	0	2	8	11	9
3	The library media program encourages and engages students in reading, viewing, and listening for personal interest and enjoyment. (Consider availability of current fiction, recorded books, DVDs and videos, reading appreciation programs, displays, book selection time, etc.)	23	6	0	0	5
4	The library media program fosters individual, small group, and whole class inquiry. (Consider facility space, availability of media center staff, etc.)	17	10	0	0	3
5	The library media program integrates the uses of technology for learning and teaching.					
5A	I know I can get help using technology (computers, cameras, software) from Media Center staff.	34	0	0	0	1
5B	I know I can get help from the Media Center staff in the productions of materials such as posters, transparencies, or laminated items for my program	31	0	1	1	1
6	Access to computer resources is adequate for instructional purposes (student research, final projects, etc.)	18	11	5	1	1
7	The collections of the library media program are developed and evaluated collaboratively to support the school curriculum and to meet the diverse learning needs of students. (Consider online resources, print, and non-print collections.)					
7A	I have been offered opportunities to preview new materials.	13	12	2	7	4
7B	I have been asked for suggestions about the purchase of new materials.	15	11	3	3	3

7C	Reserve collections have been set aside at my request.	16	6	0	0	9
7D	Resource lists have been prepared for my use.	18	7	2	0	6
7E	I am regularly informed of additions to our collection.	19	8	1	3	2
7F	I access a variety of media center materials and web links in my daily planning and teaching.	11	13	8	0	3
7G	I use the following online resources:					
	<i>Encyclopedia Britannica Online</i>	2	6	8	12	5
	<i>World Book Encyclopedia</i>	1	6	8	13	5
	<i>EBSCOHost - ERIC, Masterfile Premier, Primary Search</i>	1	11	10	9	3
	<i>PROQUEST - Magazine and newspaper articles</i>	0	12	6	12	3
	<i>PROQUEST Historical Newspapers - New York Times back to 1851</i>	0	8	5	14	5
	<i>Books in Print</i>	2	9	4	15	5
	<i>Columbia Granger's World of Poetry Online - 51,000 full-text poems</i>	0	3	4	14	13
	<i>Contemporary Authors - Author information</i>	1	7	6	11	13
	<i>Literature Resource Center - Criticism and biographical information on 120,000 authors</i>	0	5	5	13	14
	<i>LitFinder - Full-text poems, essays, and short stories</i>	0	3	4	12	11
	<i>Novelist - Information on 120,000 fiction titles</i>	0	5	4	12	9
	<i>CountryWatch - Information on nations of the world</i>	0	6	5	14	8
	<i>Opposing Viewpoints - Articles, links, statistics, primary documents</i>	2	4	3	15	7
	<i>Facts on File - Includes Science, History, Geography Career, Forms, and Curriculum topics</i>	1	7	8	12	4
8	The library media program provides a climate that is conducive to learning	27	17	1	0	0
9	The media center has an adequate level of professional staff to meet the needs of our instructional programs, size, and numbers of students and teachers. (We currently have 1 full-time media specialist. Consider instructional planning, teaching, selection of material, etc.)	20	13	0	0	2

10	The media center has an adequate level of support staff to meet the needs of our instructional programs, size, and numbers of students and teachers. (We currently have 2 full-time instructional aides. Consider clerical responsibilities such as ordering, processing, circulation and overdue books, supervision of students, assistance to faculty, etc.)	21	14	0	0	3
11	I have received prompt and courteous help from media center staff.	39	0	0	0	0
12	How often do you use the media center (for any reason)? If rarely or never, why?	12 (Weekly)	22 (Biweekly)	3 (Monthly)	0 (Never)	0

Survey Analysis

The results of the survey show all teachers do not collaborate to the same extent with the media specialists at both William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School. While the results tell us it is being done, we would like to see an increase in the frequency of this type of interaction. Unfortunately, with our current staffing levels this may be the best we can achieve. Teachers feel that the technology resources available to them in the media center are adequate for most tasks and that the media staff provides excellent support for these services. Teachers in both buildings reported that the media centers house an adequate and appropriate collection of media resources and they feel that they have some say in what goes into this collection. Teachers reported mixed results at both schools when asked about each online database on an individual basis. This may result from a teacher's lack of exposure to the resource as well as lack of training on how to use the databases or inadequate technology available when in the regular classroom. Teachers at both William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School feel the media center is a place that is conducive to learning and that the media center staff is helpful.

Areas of Strength

The media services departments at William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School have done an excellent job handling the increased school populations and corresponding increased usage and strain on resources. The media specialists are extremely knowledgeable and willing to work with teachers to achieve true integration of the information skills curriculum. The media specialists supply the faculty with information on the media services available in the building and make themselves available to develop new projects with teachers. The library and media curriculum includes a solid research component and follows state and national standards. We have the benefit of media specialists who also teach research techniques, which takes some of this instructional burden from the classroom teachers and provides consistency from class to class.

Areas Needing Improvement

The staff has done a good job of maintaining and even increasing the level of service since 1997, even in the face of rapid student population growth. With the parallel increase in technology usage, the media staff has reached a point of saturation with the tasks they can complete. If we hope to maintain and increase the current productivity in the media center, additional staffing must be considered. This is critical if media specialists are to collaborate effectively with teachers to provide essential information literacy instruction in each grade level throughout the curriculum. In addition, increased staffing will allow media specialists to assist with often overlooked tasks like helping our students find appropriate and entertaining books to foster a love of reading.

The current OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog) system is dated and only provides access within the building. This limits the ability for schools to share resources and allows students to search the collection only while in school. New versions leverage the power of the Internet to allow twenty-four hour connectivity via an Internet connection and web browser.

The online resources available to teachers are excellent but underutilized; more time needs to be spent helping teachers understand and make use of these materials.

Recommendations

Recommendations	Timeline for Implementation
Provide one full-time media specialist for every 600 students at the middle and high school to more effectively meet the needs of students and faculty, and to better address the integration of information literacy skills across the curriculum.	2006-07 – Hire one media specialist to be shared between middle and high school. (Subject to budget approval) 2007-08 – Hire an additional specialist to achieve the recommendation. (Subject to budget approval)
Conduct separate department meetings for media specialists to more effectively address curriculum, media, and technology issues specific to the media center.	2005-06 School Year
Upgrade the current OPAC system to provide 24/7 access to media resources for students, parents and faculty.	2005-06 School Year
Develop a form to more effectively record and track staff requests and facilitate collaboration between classroom teachers and media specialists.	Fall 2005
Develop handouts and conduct training for faculty on databases and web-based resources, including new OPAC.	Spring 2006