The Principal’s Guide to a Powerful Library Media Program

Marla W. McGhee and Barbara A. Jansen

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To my wonderful family who always provides steadfast and unconditional love for me through all my endeavors, and to Mrs. Lorraine Burns, my favorite teacher, who even today continues to teach me new things.—M.M.

To my mother and friend, Marilyn Pinson, for her unconditional love and support, and to Bob Berkowitz, my good friend and mentor.—B.J.
A thank you from Marla…Our collaboration began in 1989 when Barbara stepped into Live Oak as its new librarian. From that point on, learning on our campus was not the same. As a school community, we viewed the library program differently. We viewed collaboration differently. We viewed technology differently. Barbara joyfully and brilliantly worked side by side with teachers and students, facilitating deep thinking, creating meaningful research, and constantly promoting a love of literacy among all. I am so incredibly thankful for the years we worked together and I know I am a better educator today because of Barbara.

I want to extend a sincere thanks to my colleagues at Texas State University—San Marcos for their words of encouragement through this process. And, of course, a most heartfelt thanks to my lovely and supportive family—husband Tim, and daughters Sarah and Paige—for enduring many evenings at home without “Mom.”

A thank you from Barbara…Marla took a chance in hiring me, a first-year librarian, for her two-year-old school, Live Oak Elementary. She showed me that a supportive, collaborative principal provides the library media specialist with guidance when necessary, but allows her the autonomy to develop a library media program that supports the intellectual needs of students and faculty. Under her leadership, I learned about best instructional practices and how to integrate them into the library media program. “How does this affect our students?” If the practice did not yield positive results and meaningful learning, then it did not become part of our methodology.

There are many others who are instrumental in my growth as a professional: Mike Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz, my Big6™ colleagues, for their continued support and friendship, and for giving me opportunities to share effective strategies with others. Also helpful in the making of this book are my brave colleagues at Live Oak Elementary, Forest Creek Elementary, and St. Andrew’s Episcopal School, who through the years, have allowed me to collaborate with them to meaningfully integrate the information search process into their courses of study. Most importantly, to my husband Larry, I owe a huge debt of
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**Marla W. McGhee** worked in the public schools of Texas for 21 years serving as a teacher, an elementary principal, a secondary principal, and a central office curriculum area director. Under her leadership as principal, Live Oak Elementary was named a U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School in 1992. She was selected to represent Texas as the National Distinguished Principal in 1994, and was one of three finalists in the nation for the Principal in Residence position at the U.S. Department of Education in 1995.

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Barbara is committed to collaborating with teachers to fully integrate information problem-solving, content objectives, and technology into the curriculum. In 1994 she studied the Big6 model of information problem solving with Big6 co-authors Mike Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz. They published a book titled *Teaching Information & Technology Skills: The Big6™ in Elementary Schools* available through Linworth Publishing Inc. (www.linworth.com). Barbara is often asked to share her ideas at conferences and professional educational training seminars for state conferences, regional service centers, and local school districts and campuses.
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Those of us who are library media specialists understand the actual and potential impact of library media programs and library media specialists in the teaching-learning process. The problem is that it is not always the case that school administrators do.

This book takes the perspective that principals can make a significant difference in the quality of the library media program in their school through deep understanding and commitment to the importance of the library media program and effective partnership with the school library media specialist. It recognizes that principals can and must be partners in order to make school library media centers work.

The goal of this book is specifically and primarily to help school administrators lead their school community to high quality use of the library media center for teaching and learning. To accomplish this goal, effective principals have to be instructional leaders who understand the importance of quality library media programs; administrators need the skills, ability, and information to:

- Facilitate through design, communication, and implementation, a vision for library media programs that is shared and supported by the school community
- Advocate, foster, and maintain a school climate and instructional program that supports the library media program

This book recognizes that the solution of under-utilized library media centers and under-appreciated library media specialists is deceptively simple. McGhee and Jansen present principles and perspective, and describe strategies that administrators can use to create a climate for successful library media programs. The topic strands addressed in this book: Philosophy, Curriculum Integration and Collaboration, Roles and Responsibilities, and Professional Development are essential vision elements. They provide perspective and direction to improve understanding and advocacy for school library media programs.

This guide can provide principals with a base of understanding about the characteristics of successful library media programs, and successful
library media specialists, so that they can develop the capacity to support quality media programs. Principals must develop an understanding of and value for issues such as integrated information skills instruction, intellectual honesty and copyright, scheduling, program and staff evaluation in order to commit time, talent, and money to ensure that library media program goals are met.

This book should be a highly valuable resource for school principals, at any stage in their professional career, interested in improving their school’s library media program. I trust that this text will be greeted with enthusiasm by principals as an important tool to help meet the challenge of creating, supporting or maintaining successful school library media programs. Marla W. McGhee and Barbara A. Jansen have set out to help school leaders develop a shared sense of direction.

That’s what this book is all about.

- Robert E. Berkowitz
  School Library Media Specialist and
  Co-Creator of the Big6™ Skills Approach

While directing a school-university partnership, one campus I worked with for a number of years was a favorite place to visit. The school looked like a high-end wealthy facility with all the right roof angles, generous corridors, sunny classrooms, and richly woven carpets. However its students were not from wealthy homes—they lived in urban trailer parks and low-income housing projects. My pleasure in visiting was to experience the joy of watching these learners being so much a part of their school. They loved to read, to discuss books, and to ask incessant questions of how and why and when and what to each other and every one else who happened by.

After reading this text, I now understand why students and faculty were so drawn to reading, writing, researching, and exploring. A good part of the attraction was the library media center and an exuberant and skilled librarian. She and her aide and parent volunteers were physically located in the hub of the school, in open view of every person. The library was an inviting and attractive place for students to ask questions, listen to advice, find new information, use various forms of informative technology, and present and display their findings. The rapport between librarian, teachers, students, and parents was extraordinary. If you didn’t
know who was who, you could easily suspect that everyone and no one was in charge, as the hum of productive activity beckoned all into this place.

Marla McGhee and Barbara Jansen have done the profession a true service in writing this book, full of illustrations and real cases showing school principals how steady school improvement and higher student achievement comes about through integrative curriculum planning with teachers, administrators, and library staff; staff development conducted with and by staff; and open and purposeful flow of communication among library media specialists, teachers, students, and parents over classroom, curriculum, and student needs.

Perhaps many school leaders think as I did as a school principal, that the library is an important place but best to be left alone in the hands of competent professionals. I now understand that the result of such benign neglect is terrible underutilization. The authors explain that the culprits are not the librarians or teachers, as in most schools they respect each other. But they simply don’t have the time to make the library media center central to teaching and learning. It takes steadfast and knowledgeable leaders to change this detachment to powerful collaboration. This book will help school principals alter the role of the library media center to be a force for the public purpose of our schools—the advancement of engaged learning of all students—so critical to achieving the next generation of educated, resourceful citizens.

- Carl D. Glickman

President of the Institute for Schools, Education, and Democracy
The number of students enrolled in schools has never been larger and the challenges facing students, educational professionals, school leaders, and parents have never been greater. Schools today are richly diverse places to learn—an amalgam of cultures and languages and an ideal forum for varied thought and opinion. Moreover, in a time when technologies are escalating, communication is immediate, and communities are globally connected—managing, accessing, and making sense of information should be considered a standard or basic skill in a democratic society. Yet matters such as school funding, safety, campus overcrowding, and policies and pressures associated with increased performance and high impact testing are often shaping the way schools do business.

Considering these issues, there has never been a more appropriate time to enable campus professionals to do what they can do best. For the library media specialist, this means:

- Spending time planning and teaching with classroom colleagues across all grade levels and disciplines
- Serving as a member of the school’s literacy learning team
- Leading in technology applications and information literacy and management
- Working with students at time and point of instructional need
- Leading professional development while continuing to learn themselves
- Collaborating in resource planning discussions for the school
- Developing a collection based on student interest and the curriculum
- Creating programming to promote literacy and draw others into the library media center

But few administrative preparation programs actually educate future campus leaders and decision-makers about library-related “best practice” (MacNeil and Wilson). “Principals often leave library potential untapped despite 50 years of research evidence that effective library programs—when led by active, involved teacher-librarians—can have a discernible positive impact on student achievement regardless of student, school and
community demographics” (Hartzell 21). Consequently, countless library media specialists in elementary and secondary schools spend time “covering classes” during teacher conference periods or faculty absences; trapped in a fixed library schedule or rotation, forced to teach skills out of context and disconnected from the classroom curriculum; managing electronic reading incentive programs; distributing and inventorying textbooks; and supervising a program with no paraprofessional to assist with facilitation. Because the administrative team is instrumental in shaping the roles, responsibilities, and tasks of their campus personnel, they must be more aware of the appropriate work of the library media specialist.

That is where this text comes in. This guide is a balance of best practice philosophy and successful application. The intent of this book is not to cover the waterfront of literature on library media programs, nor is it to comprehensively explore all the professional work related to the principalship. Rather, the goal is a balance of both, providing principals with enough substantive information to help them be effective practitioners who understand the impact a well-rounded library media program can have on the learning lives of students and teachers alike. While the primary audience for this book is practicing campus principals and assistant principals, PK-12, it goes without saying that library media specialists at these levels will also have high interest in this text. A secondary group of interested readers may include those in educational leadership preparation programs at universities and in alternative certification centers, professors planning curriculum for principal preservice programs, curriculum directors and other district-level administrators, and students and faculty in Schools of Library and Information Science.

This book provides school leaders with a working knowledge of how to appropriately support the program so that library professionals and their classroom counterparts can practice their expertise, creating a synergistic effectiveness that far exceeds the capabilities of any one person, department, or program.

About Language and Levels of Practice

In this volume there is no differentiation between secondary and elementary school practices except where there is an obvious or marked difference that will then be noted in the text. Best practice philosophies and concepts can, in general, be implemented and practiced across all schooling levels. Having worked as educators in elementary, middle,
and high schools in diverse communities, this appears to be the most
appropriate way to approach the work and to present it here.

The terms librarian and library media specialist, and library and
library media center are intended to mean the same thing. And, although
the title of principal is generally used in reference to the lead
administrator on the campus, much of what is presented here is also
applicable to assistant, associate, or vice principals. Sometimes the term
campus administrator is used when the topic or concept is appropriate
for anyone who assumes a formal school-level leadership role. In
reference to gender-specific language, he and she and him and her are
used interchangeably throughout the text.

What Is Included

Each portion of the text is designed to address a critical component
of library media services. Every chapter focuses on different aspects of
administrator and librarian work and begins with a set of guiding
questions an administrator might ask about the themes in that section.
Examples and anecdotes of best practice application and collaboration
are included throughout to elaborate and illustrate points. After each
chapter summary, a list of suggested action steps is offered in order to
help principals and other campus leaders get started with developing a
quality library media program. Finally, a comprehensive list of
additional resources is provided at the close of every chapter to help
extend learning to other sources and texts.

Chapter one outlines the book’s overarching philosophy rooted in
instructional leadership, research, and best practice. This chapter focuses
on the instructional role of the principal and how that role relates to
library media services. Additionally, there is information about a body
of research indicating that library media programs impact student
performance on a variety of standardized and other learning measures.
Furthermore, to assist school leaders in better understanding the critical
aspects of sound library media practice, leading national and state
standards are also discussed.

Chapter two presents effective practice in library media centers, first
with examples given for several information search process models. The
importance of collaboration among the library media specialist and
teachers is followed by the steps to effective collaboration and obstacles
that may impede the process. Several instructional scenarios show how
teachers and library media specialists work together to deliver quality
instruction that integrates information and technology skills with content
area curriculum using an information search process as the model for learning. Next are issues of copyright and plagiarism, highlighting the librarian’s probable role. Offered, too, are strategies the library media specialist may use in promoting reading, writing, and visual literacy across the school and curriculum.

Chapter three targets the varied responsibilities assumed by the library media specialist to ensure access to an effective and efficient library media center. It focuses on the professional roles of the library media specialist—instructional partner, collection developer, and program creator. Further, the chapter describes how an assistant or volunteer can assume some of these responsibilities under the supervision of the library media specialist. This chapter also includes the responsibilities of campus leaders and library media specialists when dealing with challenged books or materials.

Chapter four offers guidance for administrators in facilitating tasks specifically related to library media services. These include items such as recruiting and hiring library media center personnel, planning for and managing funds, building the schedule for effective library media practice, allocating learning space, and advocating for strong programs in and outside the school.

Chapter five explains the dual role of the library media specialist, as designer and leader of professional development sessions for others and as a professional committed to career-long learning. This section also addresses the characteristics of effective professional development and action research, and the role campus administrators play in shaping, supporting, and sustaining adult learning goals and activities. To assist the library media specialist in improving her practice, a developmental cycle is also included. The GEAR Method (Gather Information, Establish Goals, Apply Strategies and Reflect) can refocus professional practice, help to hone related skills, increase the overall effectiveness of the library media program, and positively impact student performance. The appendix contains a set of planning guide worksheets specific to topics and themes introduced in each chapter.
the Leadership Role in Library Media Centers.” Applied Educational
Overarching Philosophy

Instructional Leadership, Research, and Standards for Best Practice

Guiding Questions
What is instructional leadership?
How do instructional leaders support the library media program?
Can the library media center and the library media specialist impact student performance?
What are the national and state standards for library media programs that help guide best practice?

Introduction
It was the middle of a hot June day, yet learners filled the school library. A middle school principal, the lone administrator in the room, participated in a two-day training seminar alongside the enthusiastic group of teachers and library media specialists from across the district. Participants eagerly learned about the Big6 Skills approach, adding to their repertoire of strategies for teaching information literacy.

On the second afternoon of training, a team of elementary teachers and their library media specialist asked a question of the instructor. They wanted advice on how to convince their principal to allow the use of this information search process in their classrooms and library media center during the coming school year. Because their administrator did not have first-hand knowledge about the importance of using such a process and had never been trained in library media center best practice, they feared
he would not support the use of such strategies or methods. As the middle school principal listened to the group’s comments, she realized just what a significant task it is to hold the title instructional leader. How can a principal assist faculty without similar knowledge and training, she thought. Struck by the irony that principals can (and do) impede professional growth and student achievement by discouraging the use of practices unfamiliar to them, she became even more committed to her own career-long learning. Certainly she needed to know what her staff knew if she had any hope of leading a truly effective school.

Practicing instructional leadership is tough, especially in the current atmosphere of increased student testing and accountability. Yet research suggests that instructional leadership is central to creating and maintaining schools that reach and teach all students effectively. A quality library media program supported by strong leadership can enhance teaching and learning for all students on the campus. This chapter focuses on the instructional role of the principal and how that leadership relates to areas such as library media services. Additionally, there is information about how the library media program impacts student performance and the leading national and state standards that guide outstanding library media practice.

Principals and Assistant Principals as Instructional Leaders

There is little doubt that campus administrators are extremely busy people. From making sure buses run on time to managing hundreds of students to communicating with parents to ensuring a safe, productive, and healthy environment, school leaders have a lot on their plates. Managing the school well is essential to the survival of this complex organization.

While much of the professional literature about campus leadership targets managing, organizing, and leading, a critical question remains. What are school leaders managing, organizing, and leading for? Principals and assistant principals face tough decisions about how to spend their time. Just like the principal in the training session mentioned above, campus leaders have to decide what they are going to value and how they are going to behave as instructional leaders. In such a hectic and demanding atmosphere it is challenging to maintain the primary focus of the school—the focus of teaching and learning.

With the introduction of the Effective Schools Correlates by scholars
such as Edmonds and Brookover, it became clear that the presence of particular factors profoundly impacted the learning success of students, regardless of their life situations or the communities in which they live (Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon).

These factors include the following:

1. A clear, focused mission
2. Strong instructional leadership by the principal
3. High expectations for students and staff
4. Frequent monitoring of student progress
5. A positive learning climate
6. Parent and community involvement
7. An emphasis upon student mastery of basic skills

The phrase *strong instructional leadership by the principal* clearly depicts the role of a principal in pursuit of educational excellence, but achieving this goal takes more than an able principal with solid ideas. It requires, instead, a combination of philosophy, knowledge, and action. Practicing instructional leadership means being knowledgeable about and supportive of instructionally sound practices. It means being armed with enough information to fend off gimmicks, fads, or misguided commercial materials in favor of authentic teaching, learning, and assessment. It means empowering others to lead alongside them as part of the educational team. It also means organizing the school so that all faculty, staff, and students can do their best work. Effective instructional leadership is particularly crucial considering the influence of educational accountability systems that require extensive student testing. Such systems can significantly narrow the curriculum and redirect valuable teaching time toward test preparation.

Consider, for instance, the critical area of literacy, the gatekeeper to all other arenas of learning. The principal who is an instructional leader can be a powerful influence in shaping effective literacy learning. In its *A Blueprint for Literacy Leadership*, Children’s Literacy Initiative® outlined nine areas of content knowledge of principals in fostering literacy on their campuses. These areas are:

- School culture: Principals need to understand the significance of entrenched philosophical and instructional habits that constitute a culture in a school and his or her own power to change that culture. 
• Craft leaders: Principals need to know the thinkers and practitioners in the field of literacy instruction who provide fresh ideas and useful models.

• Children’s literature: In order to create a community of readers, principals must actively read not only professional literature, but also quality children’s literature.

• Instructional models: As the primary filter for new programs, principals must be familiar with a wide range of current instructional models.

• Curricula: The challenge for the principal is to know his or her district’s mandated curriculum and make sure teachers are able to deliver it.

• Options for organizing time and space: As the key decision-maker for the use of time and space, principals must be aware of how the use of time and space affects instruction.

• Assessment/content standards: Principals need to know how best to use assessment data that is based on relevant content standards with teachers, school communities, and parents.

• Special interventions: Principals need to take a close look at how support is delivered to struggling students and how this support is organized.

• Knowledge and research: Principals need to know where to find models, data, and organizations that do useful research and that can serve as allies to answer questions of what works and why.

Principals and assistant principals who model successful instructional leadership, therefore, constantly learn about best practices by reading professional books and articles and from a variety of other sources, such as Web sites or online journals. Likewise, they engage in effective supervision activities by visiting instructional settings often and providing substantive feedback for teachers and other professional staff based on the goals and needs of the individual. They attend professional development sessions and participate alongside teachers and staff. And, they share instructional leadership activities and duties with others including assistant, associate, and vice principals, team leaders, department heads, and other recognized campus leaders.

Translated into terms of the library media specialist and the library media program, principals and assistant principals who successfully model instructional leadership:
• Constantly learn about best instructional practices in information literacy and the information search process by reading professional books and articles or from a variety of other sources, such as Web sites or online journals.
• Practice effective supervision activities by visiting the library media center and observing the library media specialist, providing substantive feedback based on his or her goals and needs.
• Participate in professional development sessions conducted by the library media specialist, host or attend onsite training by outside experts in this field, and occasionally attend a regional, state, or national conference with the librarian.
• Encourage teachers and the library media specialist to collaborate on integrated instruction, providing time and resources for joint planning and teaching activities.
• Educate others about the importance of the library media center in the learning life of the school and share instructional leadership activities and duties with the entire administrative team including assistant, associate, and vice principals, team leaders, department heads, and other recognized campus leaders, such as the library media specialist.

True instructional leaders strive to understand appropriate indicators of practice not only for classroom teachers, but also for other campus professionals such as the librarian, school nurse, counselor, or school psychologist. Understanding the work of these professionals expands the capacity of service on the campus and allows individuals to work more effectively in their trained fields of expertise.

The Library Media Specialist, the Library Media Center, and Student Performance
Educational leaders also need to know how state and local curriculum standards and requirements link to and integrate with library media and information literacy skills. As teachers strive to improve student performance on these and other indicators, there is increasing empirical evidence that students in schools with strong library programs perform better. In the article, “Boosting Test Scores,” media specialist and department chair Deb Kachel states, “It takes a partnership of administrators, librarians, teachers, parents, and community to build a library program that will make a difference with kids. In this case, it can
also help improve reading test scores” (Valenza 6).

Beginning in the early 1990s, an emerging body of research, School Libraries Work!, clearly indicates the significance of library media programs to student learning. “Whether student achievement is measured by standardized reading achievement tests or by global assessments of learning, research shows that a well-stocked library staffed by a certified library media specialist has a positive impact on student achievement, regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the community” (1).

In 1993 the Colorado State Library released outcomes of a study called The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement. This first Colorado study provided evidence that quality school libraries lead to increased student performance regardless of demographic or economic makeup of the school community. Based on the original findings, a follow-up study was initiated. How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards replicated the first inquiry while adding several new perspectives.

In addition to confirming and updating the findings of the first Colorado study, this project expands the original study’s results by measuring the impact on academic achievement of:

- Specific leadership and collaboration activities of library media specialists (LMSs)
- Principal and teacher engagement in LM programs
- Information technology, particularly networked computers offering licensed databases and the Internet/World Wide Web.

(Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell 13)

Results of the second study show that reading scores increase as quality characteristics of the library media program increase. When factors such as program development (staffing, spending, print and digital titles per student), information technology (databases and access to the free Web), collaboration (library media specialists planning, teaching, and professionally learning alongside teachers), and library media center visitations (number of individual visits per student) rise, so do student performance indicators. In an indirect effect, leadership actions and activities of the library media specialist—meeting with administrators, serving on committees, and working with staff at campus-wide meetings—enhance the working relationship among the library media specialist, teachers, and their students.
EGS Research and Consulting published in April 2001 the results of a study (based on the earlier Colorado works) titled *Texas School Libraries: Standards, Resources, Services, and Students’ Performance*. The study had three primary target areas—library resources, services, and use compared to state standards; the impact of school libraries on students’ standardized test performance; and library practices common in high performing schools. Findings indicated that staffing; size of collection; library technology and teacher, student, and librarian interaction have a positive association with standardized test performance at all schooling levels. Specifically, results showed that students in schools without librarians performed less well on the reading portion of the standardized state examination than students on campuses with librarians. The study also revealed that in schools where teachers and the librarian plan and teach together, student performance is positively impacted.

**Guidelines and Standards for Library Media Programs**

National and state standards documents can serve as powerful guides in shaping the work of school library media specialists and in developing and sustaining effective library media programs. *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* prepared by the American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, and published by the American Library Association, is an influential source in best library media center practice. Based on nine information literacy standards, this text targets the work of library media specialists in three primary areas—learning and teaching, information access and delivery, and program administration. “*Information Power* also shows how skills and strategies in collaboration, leadership, and technology support these efforts” (ix).

*Information Power* can help principals and assistant principals better understand the roles and responsibilities of the library media specialist and the impact the library media center can have school-wide. Chapter one—The Vision—describes a philosophical shift around educating students in an information-, image-, and technology-rich world. In this new educational paradigm, the library media specialist, once viewed as a staff member who primarily managed resources, should now be considered an active, indispensable member of the instructional team. This chapter also details the multifaceted nature of the library media specialist’s position. As a teacher, an instructional partner, an
information specialist, and a program administrator, the library media specialist works collaboratively across the campus and the curriculum to help students flourish as learners (For detailed information about instructional partnerships, see chapter three of this text.) “Students must become skillful consumers and producers of information in a range of sources and formats to thrive personally and economically in the communication age. Library media programs must be dynamic, enthusiastic, and student-centered to help ensure that all students achieve this status” (2).

Chapter six of Information Power is organized around 10 principles and sets of related goals associated with program administration. This section of the text outlines, in specific terms, the leadership role the library media specialist should assume in establishing and maintaining administrative (principal) support for the program. These leadership related tasks include:

- Initiate collaboration with the principal and other appropriate administers to develop the mission, goals, and objectives of the library media program.
- Communicate regularly with the principal and other appropriate administrators about program plans, activities, and accomplishments.
- Participate on the school’s administrative team to provide information about financial and other needs of the program.
- Work with the principal and other appropriate administrators to develop assessment criteria and processes for the library media program and personnel.
- Encourage the principal and other appropriate administrators to support the school library media program by communicating to all members of the learning community the program’s contribution to student learning. (106)

The Information Power companion workbook, A Planning Guide for Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning, is designed to lead school personnel through the processes related to establishing and maintaining an exemplary library media program. This planning and implementation guide contains a set of tools useful for developing a mission, goals, and objectives as well as action and evaluation plans. Also included is a set of self-assessment rubrics and descriptive scenarios for programs that function at the basic, proficient, and
exemplary levels. Combined with *Information Power*, this book provides a clear path to planning for and achieving a quality school library media program.

Other excellent resources for sound practice are standards and quality indicator documents published by state departments of education, the state library system, or professional library associations. These publications, generally available via the Internet as well as in hard copy, provide clear direction on topics such as staffing, facilities, resource allocation, collection development, roles and responsibilities, access and uses of technologies, and curricular and instructional methods. Below are several selected examples from the many that are currently available.

The Massachusetts School Library Media Association offers a set of rubrics to use for assessing and improving school library media programs. The instrument provides target indicators under the broad themes of teaching and learning, information access and delivery, and program administration. Each indicator has a set of descriptors across a four-point quality scale from *deficient* on the low end to *exemplary* on the high end. Alongside the library media specialist, campus administrators can use this tool to measure current practice, build on recognized strengths, and target areas in need of improvement. (See the additional resources at the end of this chapter for a retrieval address.)

The Texas State Library & Archives Commission adopted updated school library standards and guidelines in March 2004. The resource packet contains six standards of practice with goals, principles, and a descriptive quality continuum for each standard. Outcome measures and evaluation methods for gauging program effectiveness, a comprehensive glossary of terms, and a list of related professional resources are also included. Principals, assistant principals, and library media specialists can use this document to determine whether their patterns of service are *exemplary* or *below standard*. Likewise, this instrument can serve useful in charting a path to improved practice. (See the additional resources section at the end of this chapter for information and retrieval address.)

Other states such as California, Utah, Ohio, Missouri, New Mexico, and Minnesota make their standards documents available in downloadable format from the Internet. These resources, like those mentioned above, are excellent sources of information for school leaders who want to more thoroughly grasp the elements of a model library media program. (See the additional resources section at the end of this chapter for a retrieval address.)
The importance of understanding and applying appropriate standards of service cannot be overstated. A 2003 study revealed that half of the library media centers in a school district were inadequately staffed and eleven lacked the appropriate number of books in their collections. A primary cause cited by district administrators pointed directly to campus leaders. “Part of the problem is the result of site-based management, which gives administrators the authority to allocate their schools’ budgets. And with the current emphasis on test scores, schools often cut corners on funding for libraries and the fine arts, district officials told the El Paso Times” (“TX School District” 22).

As informed advocates for best practice, campus leaders can help educate others and use their knowledge to positively guide and shape decision making. An elementary principal in a large, diverse urban school district was called to serve on the district-wide budget council—a representative group of teachers, community members, and campus and district leaders selected to hammer out the district’s massive budget and make a recommendation to the school board. In a joint effort with the district’s library media director, this principal lobbied for and won a line item in the district budget dedicated specifically to school libraries. In an agreement with upper level administration, this money—more than one million dollars per year for several years—flowed directly from the district office into campus libraries, bypassing site councils and assuring there would be dollars available to library media specialists. This fund was a critical resource in assisting many under-funded school libraries in collection development and in purchasing supplies and needed equipment.

Chapter Summary

This chapter highlights key factors related to leadership, learning, and effective schools. First and foremost, school administrators should be leaders for learning on their campuses. Moreover, this leadership role should extend to the library media center, its staff, and programs. When the library media center is well staffed, funded, and supported by an informed instructional leader, student achievement is positively impacted. National and state standards documents provide excellent guidance in developing effective library media programs.
Planning for Action and Getting Started

1. Read chapters one, three, four, and six of *Information Power* and discuss these sections with your library media specialist.
2. Find out if there are library media standards or guidelines in your state or district. Secure a copy and read and discuss this information with your librarian.
3. Have a substantive discussion with your library media specialist about his roles, responsibilities, and vision for the library media program.

Works Cited


Additional Resources

Principals as Instructional Leaders


Research Studies about Library Media Programs and Performance Outcomes


**Rubrics Providing Guidance in Assessing Library Media Program Components**


**Examples of State Library Media Standards**


