



Position Statement on the Value of Library Media Programs in Education

The mission of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' library media program is to stimulate the power of knowledge within each student by strengthening the relationship between the student and the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Miami-Dade Media Specialists Association (MDMSA) embraces this mission statement and pledges to fulfill its goals with the support of administrators, teachers, students and parents. The organization endorses the contributions of the professional library media specialists, particularly in the areas of student achievement and life-long reading.

School library media specialists must have a master's degree, or its equivalent, from a program that combines academic and professional preparation in library and information science, education, management, media communications theory, and technology. Library media specialists are active participants in both the planning and implementation of outcomes-based education in their unique roles as information specialist, teacher, instructional partner, and program administrator. Media specialists promote student achievement by encouraging independent thinking and assisting with information gathering needed to manage the vast amount of knowledge in our rapidly changing, technologically oriented world.

School library media centers in the 21st century are the gateways to a world of connectivity for increased student achievement and school reform by:

- bridging the gap in the digital divide;
- ensuring intellectual freedom;
- providing opportunities for success.

Recent studies, such as *The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement*, show a strong positive correlation between library media programs and student achievement:

- Dr. Robert Martin, Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, noted "Research shows that reading scores for students in schools that focus on improving their library programs are, on average, 8% - 21% higher than similar schools without such development. This holds true even when other factors like community demographics are taken into account."

- According to the Colorado Study of 1992, "When school libraries have higher levels of professionals and total staffing, larger collections of print and electronic resources, and more funding, students tend to earn higher scores on state reading tests." The highest achieving students come from schools with good library media centers (Lance et al., 2000).
- Results of additional California studies (Krashen, 1993 and McQuillan, 1998); Texas study (Ester G. Smith, 2001); Alaska study (Lance et al., 1999); and Pennsylvania study (Lance et al., 2000) all concluded that strong library media programs make a difference in academic achievement and that there is a positive relationship between library media collection size and student test scores.
- The Colorado study, *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards* (Lance et al., 1993), and *The Impact of the School Media Specialist on the Development of Literacy Skills* (Magnus, 2002, Central EXPRESS) state that reading scores on standardized tests increase as individual student's visits to the library increases.

The primary goals of the library media specialist's program must be to create lifelong readers by:

- teaching students how to access extensive collections and information;
- being a positive reading role model who demonstrates enthusiasm for reading;
- providing opportunities to engage young people in reading;
- valuing independent reading.

According to the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), as an information specialist, the library media specialist:

- provides leadership and expertise in acquiring and evaluating information resources;
- models strategies for locating, accessing, and evaluating information;
- masters sophisticated electronic resources and maintains a constant focus on the nature, quality and ethical use of information.

As a teacher, the library media specialist:

- collaborates with students and other members of the learning community to analyze learning and information needs, locate and use resources that will meet those needs, and understand and communicate the information the resources provide;
- is skilled in applying research findings to a variety of situations, assisting students to access, evaluate, and use information from multiple sources in order to learn, think, create and apply new knowledge;
- uses teaching and learning research in order to work effectively with all stakeholders to provide them with specific opportunities to develop sophisticated skills in information literacy and technology.

As an instructional partner, the library media specialist:

- cooperates with teachers and others to utilize a wide variety of information resources and to achieve desired learning outcomes;
- takes a leadership role in developing policies, practices, and curricula that guide students to develop the full range of information and communication abilities;
- actively collaborates with individual teachers in designing authentic learning tasks and assessments, integrating information, and communicating abilities required to meet state and district standards.

As a program administrator, the library media specialist:

- works collaboratively with members of the learning community to define the policies of the library media program and direct all related activities;
- advocates for the library media program and provides the knowledge, vision, and leadership to steer it creatively and energetically in the 21st century;
- is proficient in the management of staff, budgets, equipment, and facilities;
- evaluates the program to ensure its quality both at a general and on a day-to-day basis.

MDMSA is a pro-active organization that wishes to make known our positive impact on students and the community served by the M-DCPS system.

"A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life." Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887)