

## **Canadian Library Association / Association canadienne des bibliothèques Position Statement on Effective School Library Programs in Canada**

***Approved by Executive Council ~ November 25, 2000***

A major goal of education in Canada is to develop students who are informed, self-directed and discriminating learners. To be effective citizens in a society rich in information, students need to learn skills which will allow them to locate and select appropriate information, to analyze that information critically, and to use it wisely. With the demands growing from across society for information-literate and technologically-competent citizens, there is a strong need for an educational program, which emphasizes the information literacy skills that are crucial to the processes of critical thinking and problem solving.

The school library, and its instructional program, are essential components of the educational process, contributing to the achievement of these educational goals and objectives through programs and services that implement and support the instructional programs of the school. The role and responsibility of the school library lies in the development of resource-based programs that will ensure that all the young people in our schools have the opportunity to learn the skills that will enable them to become competent users of information. The school library also houses and provides access to resources in a variety of formats and in sufficient breadth and number to meet the demands of the curriculum and the varied capabilities and interests of the students. These materials provide the essential support for resource-based teaching and learning.

The school library program is most effective when it is an integral part of the instructional program of the school and when information and media literacy skills are integrated in a developmental and sequential way with subject-specific skills and content. The program is developed jointly by teachers and teacher-librarians, who work collaboratively to plan, implement and evaluate resource-based units of study. Through such planned and purposeful activities, students learn how to retrieve, evaluate, organize, share and apply information objectively, critically, and independently. As well, they are given opportunities to grow intellectually, aesthetically and personally.

The school library exists within a particular context and is shaped by policy set at national, provincial and local levels, by professional standards and research, by educational objectives and curriculum requirements, and by the expectations of the

administration, the staff and the community. Basic levels of support are required in order to develop library programs and services that are congruent with the educational goals of the school, the curriculum and the needs of the learners. Support from the provincial ministry of education, from the local school district, and from the administration and teaching staff of the school are all important to the success of the program. This support involves the development of policies and procedures related to the school library, and the provision of qualified personnel, multi-functional facilities, diverse learning resources, and an adequate annual budget. Each of these factors has an impact on the richness of the program that can be offered. As the number of qualified teacher-librarians increases, services and programs become more extensive, and they affect the educational goals of the school more significantly. As collections of resources increase in quantity, size and scope, students' individual learning styles and needs are met more effectively. Adequate and consistent budgets ensure that school library collections remain current and capable of meeting diverse learning needs. The provision of provincial and district services support the program in the local school by enabling library personnel to spend more of their time working with teachers and students.

The role of the school library program in the education of our young people is a crucial one. As support increases, more effective program development is possible. As programs expand, the impact of resource-based learning on student achievement is more pronounced. All students in our schools should have access to effective school library programs. All our young people must have the opportunity to develop the information and media literacy skills they require to reach their fullest potential, to become independent, lifelong learners, and to live as active, responsible members of society.