

## Public Libraries' Outreach Role in Reading and Support of Student Learning

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### **Public libraries generally have a number of attributes of great potential benefit to the K-12 community:**

- Public library buildings/facilities are open to all.
- They are open evenings, weekends, and summers, and are accessible to parents whose work hours limit the times they are available to visit the school and communicate with teachers.
- They provide a language-rich environment and programming for 0-5 year olds
- Many children's librarians can supply basic early literacy education for parents and caregivers. The public library can be a literacy lifeline for families not participating in early learning and development programs, and a solid supplemental service for families who are.
- Out-of-school enrichment offerings include summer reading programs, afternoon/weekend school-age programs, a physical environment that encourages independent reading and exploration, and staff dedicated to youth services.
- Summer reading programs encourage students to practice reading skills during out-of-school time and maintain proficiency.
- Public librarians refer library users to appropriate services and resources both in and out of the library.
- Public libraries offer robust technology services, including free internet access, computer programs, and electronic resources (office tools, online encyclopedias and journals, e-books, etc.). The [Ohio Web Library](#) offers reading and research tools freely to all Ohio residents via all Ohio public libraries. These tools include World Book Kids, Early World of Learning, EBSCOhost databases, Learning Express Library, and more.
- Public librarians have wide knowledge of children's books (including access to professional reviews, best-books lists, publishing trends, and new/forthcoming publications).
- Public libraries have large collections of texts in various media for all levels, continually purchase new materials, and have access (through consortiums and interlibrary loan) to much more.
- In particular, public libraries have broad, current collections of informational texts for children.
- Public librarians can teach information literacy skills, including how to evaluate websites and other information sources, how to use multiple sources.
- Public librarians can collaborate with school librarians to develop seamless supports for students in and out of school. Many schools and public libraries across Ohio already partner to provide activities and resources benefitting students and parents.

### **Examples from the field: how public libraries support and contribute to student learning**

*These practices and initiatives are reported by individual public libraries in Ohio. They may be replicated or modified to fit local needs in other communities.*

- Local school district provided public library with a list of titles they plan to use in their Common Core curriculum. Library purchased additional copies of the materials, and added a subject heading to the library catalog that identifies the materials as "Common Core Exemplary Text"

and the appropriate grade level as identified by the school. This makes the material easier for teachers and families to locate in the library catalog.

- Public library collaborates with schools, churches and other community groups on a program targeting families with children entering kindergarten. In 3 sessions over the summer, classroom teachers present activities that children and parents can do together at home. Library staff members provide a storytime for the preschoolers while the parents hear presentations on subjects including nutrition, what to expect when your child enters school, and literacy at home.
- Public library conducts a program each April for children entering kindergarten, including an informal screening based on the KRA-L, including colors, shapes, letter and number recognition, rhyming, comprehension, letter sounds, and representing numbers with tokens. The library gives a book to every child that participates in the screening so they can share stories at home, and encourages parents and caregivers to take the time before kindergarten starts to work with their children, share stories, and make opportunities to build language.
- Public library makes monthly visits to all public school preschool programs in its service district (5 school districts). The library provides a storytime and sends home a handout promoting various library services. At one school, the library registered all the children for library cards and is lending library books to the children at school.
- Public library runs a book club for PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students featuring a different thematic nonfiction book each month and extension activities that build STEM skills, technology skills, and reading.
- Public library has compiled a list of guided reading leveled books that are available in the library collection. This list is being shared with teachers and is available to students and parents, and will be kept updated. The library also purchased additional books from educational publishers to expand the collection of guided reading leveled books.

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