“Students in better-staffed programs scored as much as 22 percent higher on standardized English tests and as much as 17 percent higher on standardized reading tests compared to students in schools where library programs had less staff and fewer hours.”

Source: Smith, Ester G. 2006. “Better-funded school library programs help to close the achievement gap for poor and minority students, and for poor and crowded schools.”

“School libraries can be a very effective tool in closing the achievement gap. Although all students can benefit from effective libraries, students who suffer most because of the achievement gap benefit the most from the resources and services offered by libraries and librarians.”

Source: Francis, Briana Hovendick, Keith Curry Lance, and Zeth Lietzau. 2010. “Where administrators value strong library programs and can see them doing their part for student success, students are more likely to thrive academically.”

“School administrators are pivotal in fostering school library programs as a strategy to improve student learning. As the instructional and managerial leaders, school administrators are the key decision-makers in allocating resources to meet the district priorities in educating students.”

Research conducted in over 20 states has documented that leveraging the school library program can increase student’s standardized test scores and help to close the achievement gap. The most universal finding among the studies is that the presence of a certified/licensed school librarian is a strong predictor of student achievement regardless of socioeconomic or education levels of the community. Studies also correlate higher test scores with:

- Collaboratively planned instruction integrated with classroom curriculum and library resources that is taught and assessed by the librarians and teachers
- More hours and increased usage of the library by students
- Larger budgets and up-to-date collections of print and digital resources
- Leadership activities of the librarian (participating in decision-making committees, providing professional development to teachers, and meeting regularly with the principal)

Based on national guidelines, this brochure outlines goals and key questions for you and your school librarian to think about when setting goals and recognizing the potential of a valuable asset—the school library program. By setting high expectations and establishing a school culture that values reading, research, and inquiry, you can boost student achievement and empower teachers with a resource proven to increase student learning. Schools that support their library programs give their students a better chance to succeed, enabling students to become “critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information” ready for 21st century life and careers.


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The school library program promotes critical thinking and problem solving.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Are learning activities facilitated with library resources, expertise, thought-provoking, and inquiry-based?
- Do learning activities in the library promote students' prior knowledge and provide authentic learning experiences?

**GOAL:**
- The school library program promotes critical thinking and problem solving.

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The school library program is a vital part of the curriculum of research and technological literacy.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Can students access the collection remotely 24–7?
- Can students, parents, and teachers optimize access to the collection?
- Does an up-to-date automated circulation system provide up-to-date print and electronic resources to meet the diverse needs of all learners?

**GOAL:**
- The school library program provides access to ideas, information, and technologies.

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The school librarian continually seeks to communicate to parents and the community about the value of the school library program.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Are student-assessment data used to improve the library's instructional program?
- Do school officials and the school library program build on students' prior learning experiences?
- Do teachers and librarians have opportunities to work with parents, public libraries, and other community resources to enhance learning experiences for students?

**GOAL:**
- The school librarian engages in community-outreach activities, creating awareness and building support for the school library program.

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The school library program promotes a strong administrative support, flexible access, and collaboration with teachers.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Does the school librarian read, disseminate, and use research relevant to instructional services for teachers.
- Does the school librarian support the school’s instructional services for teachers.
- Does the school librarian continually assess the library program based on evidence and best practices to improve the learning for students and instructional services for teachers.

**GOAL:**
- The school library program is supported by ongoing collection development and evaluation.

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The school library program is supported by ongoing collection development and evaluation.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Are the school librarian's technology skills continually updated through professional development opportunities?
- Are the school librarian’s instructional technology skills continually updated through professional development opportunities?
- Does the school library program actively seek community partnerships to share, plan, and meet the diverse needs of all learners?

**GOAL:**
- The school library program is supported by ongoing collection development and evaluation.

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The school librarian promotes collaboration.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Does the school librarian participate in school-improvement and leadership committees?
- Does the school librarian have opportunities to work with parents, public libraries, and other community resources to enhance learning experiences for students?

**GOAL:**
- The school librarian promotes collaboration.

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The school library program promotes students' and teachers' with access to information.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Does the school library program build on students' prior learning experiences?
- Do school officials and the school library program build on students' prior learning experiences?
- Do teachers and librarians have opportunities to work with parents, public libraries, and other community resources to enhance learning experiences for students?

**GOAL:**
- The school library program promotes students' and teachers' with access to information.

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The school library program provides instruction on an information literacy and technological literacy.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Is the curriculum revised periodically to integrate technology skills into all subject courses?
- Are students taught in an information literacy process to gather and use information from print and electronic sources?
- Are instructional and communication technologies in the library and these liaisons with other institutions and technology experts and librarians?

**GOAL:**
- The school library program provides instruction on an information literacy and technological literacy.

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Successful student-centered library programs depend on strong administrative support, flexible access, and collaboration with teachers.

**GOAL:**
- The school library program is actively engaged in supporting the school’s curriculum, state academic standards, and school-endorsed assessment.

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The school library program is developed in a participatory environment with an atmosphere of respect and support among students, staff, and the community.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
- Does the school librarian engage in community-outreach activities, creating awareness and building support for the school library program.
- Is the written curriculum of research and technological literacy.

**GOAL:**
- The school library program is developed in a participatory environment with an atmosphere of respect and support among students, staff, and the community.

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The school library program supports the school’s instructional services for teachers.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
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The school library program promotes critical thinking and problem solving.

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- Are learning activities facilitated with library resources, expertise, thought-provoking, and inquiry-based?
- Do learning activities in the library promote students' prior knowledge and provide authentic learning experiences?

**GOAL:**
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