IMLS National Leadership Research Grant  
Supporting Infrastructure Needs  
for  
21st-Century School Library Programs  

Professional Judgment Panel (PJP) Notes  

January 10, 2012  
Hummelstown, PA  

Grant Staff Present: Deb Kachel, Project Director; Keith Curry Lance, RSL Research Group; Sandy Zelno, Education Law Center; Mary K. Biagini, University of Pittsburgh  

Participants: See attached list.  

Overview: Project Director Deb Kachel presented an overview of the IMLS grant.  

Dr. Keith Curry Lance described the purpose of the 2012 survey of PA school libraries being conducted as part of this grant to the participants: The RSL Research Group study of PA school libraries will be conducted in Spring 2012, will build on the 2011 study conducted by the PA State Board of Education and will focus on how libraries are doing at teaching 21st-century information literacy skills to students (using empirical data). From the results, RSL will begin to determine what it will cost for school libraries to accomplish this task based on where school libraries are now and where they want to be.  

Dr. Lance then proposed a series of seven discussion questions to the participants to frame the discussion of their professional judgments. Members of the PJP brainstormed responses and then posted individual responses on Post-It notes and placed them in related areas on the wall of the meeting room so that the group could begin to discuss and develop areas of consensus. The group as a whole then began to develop consensus based on a discussion of the responses.  

Over-arching concerns:  
- How can evidence of the positive effects of school library programs on student learning and academic achievement be presented to stakeholders and decision makers most effectively?  
- How do librarians make the case in the present poor economic environment?  
- How can this evidence be presented most understandably and effectively to stakeholders?  
- How can school librarians as a group be better than our weakest librarian?  
- Change in school library programs must be official, state-wide and public.
These are the questions and responses from the participants:

1. What existing resources support teaching of 21st-century learning skills to Pennsylvania students?

Prompts: staffing levels, training, collections/formats/info resources, databases and other common resources, training and resource sharing networks, technology (at the building, district, intermediate unit, and state levels)

Staffing Levels:
- Some school districts employ a Library Science K-12 certified librarian for each building
- Some school districts provide support staff for the librarian in each library
- Some districts employ a district-level coordinator of library services

Support for librarians to carry out professional responsibilities:

At the state level:
- ACCESS PA and POWER Library are provided to all 500 school districts by Commonwealth Libraries
- The 2000 Lance Study of PA Libraries provides benchmark data on a sample of PA school libraries (Measuring Up to Standards)
- Commonwealth Libraries published Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs in 2011
- Benchmark data on school libraries is available from the 2011 PA School Library Study for more than 2,000 schools
- PSLA has actively supported advocacy efforts and professional development for librarians

At the district level:
- Many administrators allocate time for the library to be open for use by students and staff
- Some administrators allow for flexible scheduling or a mix of fixed and flexible scheduling at the elementary level
- Some administrators allocate time for the librarian to collaborate with teachers
- Many districts allocate time for professional development time for librarians
- Much of the decision making in PA public schools is at the district level and some decision making is site-based at the building level

Information technology is available to support teaching/learning and library program administration:

At the state level:
- Access PA and a POWER Library (reduced in content) are available through Commonwealth Libraries
- Federal funding has made LSTA grants available to school libraries over several years
At the district level:
- Some districts are providing access to current and emerging technologies and are formulating policies that support these technologies
- More districts now have librarians who serve as leaders to develop and sustain information technologies
- Some districts have IT support staff to assist faculty and students
- More districts have IT infrastructure, including networking and class sets of computing devices
- Some districts provide access to databases beyond POWER Library

Statewide and national leadership for school libraries:
- PSLA provides robust communication to constituents through a listserv, website, Facebook and annual conferences
- Commonwealth Libraries provides robust communication to constituents through the ACCESS PA listserv
- 27 Intermediate Units offer regional structure and professional development opportunities
- 3 ALA-accredited and 2 AASL/NCATE-recognized programs educate librarians at the graduate level.
- PA has an increasing number of National Board Certified librarians

Working relationships with other professional organizations and institutions have been formed to promote the importance of school library programs in student learning and academic achievement:
- Local partnerships are built by school librarians with public libraries and university libraries in their areas
- Librarians are connected by partnerships with professional organizations:
  - PTA/PTO
  - PSEA/ PFT
  - Nine regional affiliates of PSLA across PA
  - PSLA affiliation with American Association of School Librarians
  - PAESSP (Principals)
  - PASA (School Administrators)
  - PSBA (School Boards)
  - PETE & C (technology)
2. What additional resources would be useful in teaching 21st century learning skills to ensure equitable access to resources by all PA school districts?

Support from constituencies:
- Support of administrators
- Support of teachers
- Buy-in by students
- Support of community members, especially parents
- Support from PDE Commonwealth Libraries: (e.g., POWER Library at full strength, negotiating for and funding licenses for needed Web 2.0 tools, restoration of school library position)

Staff: (Quality control)
- Mandated Library Science K-12 certified librarian for each building, regardless of enrollment
- Support staff for the librarian in each library
- District library coordinator in each district
- Restoration of PDE Commonwealth Libraries state-wide school library coordinator to provide leadership
- Designated library support staff member at each Intermediate Unit

Support needed for librarians to carry out professional responsibilities:
- Time allocated for the library to be open for use by students and staff within and beyond the student school day for students to have better access to resources and services
- Widespread use of flexible scheduling at the elementary level
- Time allocated by the principal for the librarian to collaborate with teachers in the library and classroom
- Professional development time allocated and budgeted for librarians, including time allocated for out-of-district conferences/ workshops and/or online workshops
- Development of an integrated K-12 information literacy curriculum correlated to the Standards for the 21st-Century Learner and the Common Core State Standards (using the model of the 2003 Toolkit for Implementing Information Literacy Skills in (PA) Schools that was correlated to the PA Academic Standards supported by Commonwealth Libraries)
- Mandated assessment of student information literacy skills on state-wide basis

Information technology to support teaching/learning and program administration:
- Efforts to bridge the digital divide among school districts and often among buildings within a district

At the state level:
- Restoration of POWER Library to its former strength and beyond through Commonwealth Libraries
- Statewide negotiated subscriptions to Web 2.0 tools (e.g., WebEx) and LIB Guides and eBooks
• Wide-spread access to adaptive technologies to serve all students, including those with special needs

At the district level:
• Access to current and emerging technologies
• Development of policies for the use of information technology, especially in the areas of social media, currency of equipment and software, wireless access in school and remotely
• Leadership at the building and district levels to develop and sustain information technologies
• IT support staff to assist with infrastructure and networking
• Adequate infrastructure, including networking and 1:1 ratio of computing devices to students and faculty
• More reasonable filtering policies to allow students to use current tools
• Access to all digital resources remotely in addition to access at school

Awareness efforts based on evidence of success of library program in helping students learn and achieve academic success:
• Longitudinal evidence of student academic success with school library program
• Wide-spread use of e-Portfolios to demonstrate student achievement of 21st-century skills
• Standard assessment of student information literacy skills
• Identification of model library programs throughout PA that librarians, teachers and administrators can visit for inspiration

Closer working relationships with related organizations and institutions for awareness of the importance of library programs in student learning and achievement:
• Strengthen relationship with PDE and Commonwealth Libraries
• Strengthen relationships with other professional and parent and community groups; make them robust working relationships
• Forge relationships with PAECT and PASCD
• Promote a common message aligned with PDE’s Standards Aligned System (SAS)
• Forge stronger working relationships with public and academic libraries, especially for advocacy initiatives

Expansion of collections, especially electronic and digital resources
• Greater emphasis on use of digital resources, especially eBooks, especially eBook licenses negotiated and funded by Commonwealth Libraries
• Development of pro-user policies to support downloadable eBook purchases and use
• Additional funding for eBook devices

Facilities
• Dedicated classrooms in the library
3. Of these additional resources, which ones are especially needed to teach students with specific needs (urban, rural, poor, English language learners, special education)

- Strive for equity among and within districts (statewide minimum)
- Provide access to adaptive technologies and resources in the library and the school and remotely to students with specific special needs
- Provide information and training opportunities on emerging adaptive technologies and resources for students with special needs, especially from PDE
- Provide professional development for librarians on how to make information literacy lessons more accommodating to students with special needs
- Provide appropriate facilities that meet ADA specifications
- Provide appropriate resources for English Language Learners (ELL)

4. Which additional resources are essential, and which are desirable?

(The PJP did not prioritize these resources within the two categories.)

**Essential:**
What benefit does the school library program bring to student learning and achievement? What value-added service does the school library program bring to teachers?

- Administrative support within building and district
- Library Science K-12 certified school librarian in each school
- Designated district coordinator for school libraries
- Component about the essential role of the library program in student learning and achievement in pre-service education and professional development for teachers and administrators
- Statewide negotiation, funding, and acquisition of electronic/digital resources (eBooks, POWER Library, LibGuides, wikispaces, WebEx, other licenses)- same resources adapted and available to students with special needs
- access policies
- Provide professional development and advocacy for librarians and teachers
- Define role of school librarian carefully (can't be all things and be effective)
- Require a mandated assessed information literacy curriculum taught by a Library Science K-2 certified librarian

**Desirable:**

- State funding for school library programs: school librarians, resources, technology infrastructure
- More open membership on SCHOOLS listserv to allow broader participation (e.g., pre-service school library students)
- Middle States accreditation
- Strategic planning
5. Which essential resources should be made available statewide?

This question was not considered because of time limitations but the following points were made in answer to other questions.

- Funding and negotiating licenses for databases and commercial Web 2.0 tools
- Professional development

6. Which of these needed resources are more familiar to librarians and others in the education community, and which do librarians and others need to learn more about?

This question was not considered because of time limitations.

**Question 7: What would be the most efficient and effective means of introducing librarians and others to needed resources?**

In general for all:

- Use multiple modalities for delivery
- Provide live webinars and archived webinars that are easily accessible through a central clearinghouse to both librarians and teachers
- Use Train-the-trainer model for in-person professional development because fewer librarians can attend in-person conferences (districts are discouraging attendance on school days)
- Promote credits from higher education rather than potpourri of local offerings
- Promote Act 48 and use Act 48-approved providers (“carrot” approach)
- Promote offerings through the 27 IUs
- Use Website with links to social media tools (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)

For administrators and teachers:

- Include information about the role of the library program in student learning as part of their pre-service, induction and professional development
- Include questions about using the library as part of the interview process and as part of the annual evaluation
- For student teachers: Librarian should arrange time to meet and to explain library services; offer to collaborate; collaboration should be stressed as preparation for student teaching

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Professional Judgment Panel – IMLS National Leadership Research Grant
“Supporting Infrastructure Needs for 21st Century School Library Programs”

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