



# Good Ideas!

*Compelling Ideas for  
Administrators, Teachers, the PTA,  
and the School Board*

CSLA is proud to present "Good Ideas" for creating information literate students.

## Quality School Library Programs Make a Difference in Student Achievement

BY JACK O'CONNELL

"Show me a school with a good school library and I'll show you a good school." I felt strongly when I said that in 1999 and believe it carries even more portent today.



Today library media teachers serve as teachers of students and in-service providers for teachers. A virtual roll call of state research studies, points to school libraries that can and do tangibly impact student performance. Recent studies from Alaska to Florida conclude that credentialed, professional library media teachers positively affect student achievement. The studies also confirm the necessity of clerical staff if a library media teacher is really to teach, and the importance of principal and teacher support if the school library program is to succeed. Quality school library functions have come a long way since I was a classroom teacher.

As a legislator, I worked to retain funding for the California Public School Library Act. The funding continues, albeit greatly reduced, but the evolution from *the school library apart from instruction* to *the school library as an integral part of the learning community* requires more than funding. It requires rethinking the role of the school library media center within the context of helping all students achieve. I salute the schools recognized in this issue of *Good Ideas!* for moving toward school library programs that can make a difference in the academic achievement of California's over six million students.

Jack O'Connell is State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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# Libraries Rule! Seventh-Grade Language Arts Students Agree

## CARLSBAD VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Should cell phones be allowed at school? Should humans be cloned? Should college athletes be paid? Students at Carlsbad Valley Middle School researched these and other important issues as part of a collaborative project with their seventh-grade language arts teachers and **Peggy Hodge**, library media teacher.

The product of the five-day information literacy project was a persuasive, five-paragraph essay and a



Collaborating teachers Chrissie Lukasiewicz, Suzanne Conleton, Sarah Milam, and LMT Peggy Hodge review new books purchased with California State School Library Protection Act funds.

▼  
***“Peggy Hodge is a dedicated teacher, librarian, and educator who dramatically impacts the lives of the students with whom she interacts. This impact is seen in the large number of students who regularly use our school library.... It is a pleasure to work with a colleague and a friend like Peggy. She brings many dimensions to our school’s library and the library’s relationship to the students and classroom teachers.”***  
– **Kim Marshall, Principal**

speech with a visual aid. Hodge and the teachers collaborated to plan the basics of the project. Later she met with each teacher individually to refine the plans for individual needs.

Each day Hodge planned a mini-lesson to introduce information literacy skills. Students learned the steps of the Big6™ research process and implemented them each day of research. Students learned about key words and Boolean searching, and how to use notesheets. They were introduced to Electric Library and were taught how to create a bibliography. After writing the essay, the students created a visual aid: a poster, brochure, video, or PowerPoint presentation to use with their persuasive speech.



Peggy Hodge was impressed with students’ persuasive speeches and visual aids. She said, “I could hear them use the data they had collected to persuade their audience.”

As a result of the project, students seem to view the library as a friendly place to work and the place to find answers to their questions. In the weeks following the project, many more seventh graders came to use the library on their own time. These seventh graders agree that Libraries Rule!

▼  
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# Reading and Research: A Recipe for Success

## SUTTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Take one sheltered, physical-science class of twenty-eight seventh- and eighth-grade English Language Development (ELD) students learning about coal and coal mining. Combine with two dynamic educators: **Maria Rangel**, library media teacher, and **Polly Kiner**, science teacher. Add current, language-appropriate magazine articles (printed from the SIRS Discoverer database purchased with school library funds), photographs of coal miners and coal mining from nonfiction resources, and other pictures from reference books. Mix thoroughly and simmer several days in the library media center using reciprocal reading as



Rangel and students practice reciprocal reading as they study coal mining.

the main instructional mode. When completed, sprinkle lightly with music and lyrics from Tennessee Ernie Ford's "16 Tons." Accent with student-created artwork and stories. Display and serve at a culminating program to an enthusiastic audience of guests, including key administrators and teachers. Voilà! You have a recipe for a collaborative, student-centered research unit that guarantees success for English learners.

Early in the research unit, Rangel and Kiner realized that student success would hinge on reading. Before coming to the library, students were paired so that one was a stronger reader and speaker of English. After Rangel and Kiner modeled reciprocal reading technique, the student pairs worked together to access

information from three articles. The pairs spent three days reading, discussing, retelling, drawing, comparing, and contrasting and writing information and stories about coal and coal mining. When word got around about the magnificent job they were doing, Principal Mike Smith came to observe. Rangel states, "This was a pivotal point in how our new principal sees my role as an LMT at Sutter!"

▼  
*"I have long been a proponent of collaboration between the library media teacher and classroom teachers. Validation of my belief ... was my observation of the result of a wonderful project developed and created by Maria Rangel and Dr. Polly Kiner."*

— **Marian Reimann**,  
*Assistant Vice Principal*

Preparation for the culminating program for this unit was exciting. Students rehearsed their parts, which included reading stories about coal miners, teaching the audience about coal and its use, providing details on child labor in coal mining, and sharing their personal artwork. The finale was a sing-along to "16 Tons" with refreshments of homemade biscuits and apple cider to wash down the coal dust.

These ELD students, using the reciprocal reading technique, were able to address several information literacy standards, and the incorporation of science, language arts/reading, and social studies state content standards throughout this project, provided a successful, cross-curricular experience.

Bon Appetite for Reading!

▼  
Sutter Middle School (grades 6–8; 1,542 students)  
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# At-Risk Students Appreciate Poetry, Learn Respect for Others

LONG BEACH POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL

Preparing students for their futures is a priority at Long Beach Polytechnic, a comprehensive high school that includes several specialized academies. This is especially challenging for the staff of the Pacific Rim Academy with its focus on at-risk stu-



Students enjoy publishing poems to the Favorite Poem Project website.

dents. English teacher **Regina Chaney** and library media teacher **Kay Tortorice** are giving Pacific Rim students an opportunity to develop life skills, such as listening attentively and respectfully by embedding the development of these skills in an academic unit on poetry.

Chaney designs literature units that address language arts content standards as students deliver reflective presentations which explore personal experience: students listen attentively and actively to group members' contributions, and they learn to recognize and understand the significance of various literary devices and explain their appeal. After formal study of poetry, her students select and share a favorite poem. They then have an opportunity to see their work as a part of

the larger literary community by publishing their reading on the Favorite Poem Project, an online project of Boston University ([www.favoritepoem.org](http://www.favoritepoem.org)), the Poetry Society of America, and the Library of Congress.

Tortorice enters the collaboration by supplying the print and Internet resources. With the recent infusion of state library funds, Tortorice has developed the library collection into a powerful resource to meet student and curricular needs. Initially, Tortorice introduced students to a variety of poetry book and Internet poetry sites, but the two teachers soon realized that they were more powerful as a team to motivate students toward success.

For the culminating project, students chose a poem that they liked and told each other why that poem is important to them. After sharing, they entered their poem into the Favorite Poem Project database. On the day the students shared their poems, Chaney and Tortorice were delighted to see that every student participated. Each student read the selected poem and delivered a thoughtful message about the poem and its meaning. Pacific Rim students were successful in not only completing their assignments, but also in participating in a respectful and sensitive group-listening activity. Tortorice and Chaney note that this type of experience helps students achieve at a higher level in academic settings, as well as in their personal relationships, while meeting state and national content and information literacy standards.



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Long Beach Unified School District

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# The Masque of the Red Death Unleashes an Epidemic of Learning

## EL DORADO HIGH SCHOOL

Comparing a historic epidemic of their choice to the black plague of the Middle Ages, allows students at El Dorado High School to bring English, science, and information literacy together in the media center. **Jo Avery**, library media teacher (LMT), successfully collaborated with sophomore English teacher **Linda Norce**, a member of the Health Careers Academy, to unleash learning on epidemics.

In this cross-curricular and multidisciplinary assignment, students in the Health Careers Academy read *The Masque of the Red Death* in their English class while studying the Middle Ages in world history and contagious diseases in science. The students then used their school library to research another epidemic in history. The final product required the students to integrate their knowledge into an essay that would compare and contrast the two epidemics.

Avery created a PowerPoint presentation to teach the research process using the Big6™ research model. She instructed students in the use of library resources and electronic subscription databases. She also guided them in the use of links from the library's Web site which she had created prior to the student's library visit. Many of these valuable resources and services

were purchased with funds from the California School Library Protection Act of 1998.

The Inspiration software program was introduced, and Avery taught the students how to use a template to organize their information to create an outline for their essays. Norce was responsible for the written assignment requirement, creating the rubric, and grading the final essays. With such a dynamic collaboration, content standards were met in language arts, social studies, and science.

Avery reports that since embarking on this assignment there has been an increased awareness of her role as LMT at El Dorado High School. This unit has served as a model for the rest of the English department and has subsequently been repeated for classes in other disciplines as well. It is standard procedure these days to find Avery sitting down with other content area teachers to plan new units of instruction.



El Dorado High School (grades 9–12; 1,372 students)  
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## SAGEBRUSH TECHNOLOGY AWARD

### Kathy Pinasco: Tenacious for Integrating Technology with Information Literacy Skills



“**Kathy Pinasco** is brilliant in the way she has helped students to take California content standards far beyond expectations. She is a shining example of commitment to excellence in the teaching field as well as a pioneer in the field of project based learning and information literacy,” says Liddell Elementary Principal Gloria Christiansen. “She has turned our library media center into the hub of learning in our school.”

In addition to being the library media teacher (LMT) at Liddell Elementary, Kathy serves as the school webmaster, History Day coordinator, and Horticulture Club advisor. She is a CSLA Northern Section representative, as well as a cohort leader for twenty fifth-grade teachers as part of the Fresno County Teaching American History grant.

“Kathy is an outstanding example of an exemplary library media teacher as she integrates technology in all curricular areas and works closely with her teachers to incorporate information literacy through the use of the Big6™ strategies,” adds Central Unified District technology resource teacher Gaye Lewis.

With testimonials such as these, it is easy to understand why the vivacious Kathy Pinasco, LMT in Central Unified School District in Fresno County, has earned the California School Library Association's Technology Award sponsored by the Sagebrush Corporation.



**Kathy Pinasco**, Library Media Specialist  
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Gloria Christiansen, Principal

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## CSLA PRESIDENT'S AWARD

# Wendy Chason: Library Media Teacher Extraordinaire!

How does she manage it all? **Wendy Chason**, this year's recipient of the CSLA President's Award, serves a dual role as the library media teacher (LMT) at Patwin Elementary School and Holmes Junior High School.



**Wendy's enthusiasm for reading is absolutely contagious.**  
– Kate Bowen, Sixth-grade Teacher

Additionally, Chason is an instructor in the Library Services Program at California State University, Sacramento. In her overlapping roles as teacher, information specialist, and instructional partner, she has served on CSLA conference committees and presented at section meetings and at state conferences. As a program administrator, Chason provides staff development training at all levels of learning and was the first LMT to be recognized as a mentor teacher in her district. In addition, Chason has also been a recipient

of her district's outstanding teacher award. Currently, she is planning the remodel of her junior high school library as well as coordinating plans for a new junior high in her district.

“Wendy's enthusiasm for reading is absolutely contagious,” says Kate Bowen, sixth-grade teacher at Patwin Elementary School. She enthusiastically promotes reading not only to her students but also co-chairs a teacher book-discussion group for her district. Karen Moore, social studies teacher at Holmes

▼  
***“I am frequently amazed by Wendy's ability to operate effectively in many arenas.”***  
– **Mark G. Cary, Principal**

Junior High states, “Her leadership has made the Holmes library a hub for many students' learning and for many teachers' teaching.” Chason's amazing level of outreach to her students, fellow teachers, and community make her a true collaborator and role model for our profession.

▼  
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## HIGHSMITH INNOVATION AWARD

# With Helen Cox, All Students Can Become 'Distinguished Scholars'

Distinguished Scholars, the signature program of the Lindbergh Middle School library in Long Beach, is designed to “promote reading and to expose students to a culture of literacy extending beyond the confines of their school and community,” says **Helen Cox**, Lindbergh’s library media teacher and winner



Distinguished Scholars at Huntington Library.

of this year’s Highsmith Innovation Award. This large, urban middle school of 1,460 students has a diverse population, with many families who are not fluent readers in any language. The Distinguished Scholars program offers students opportunities to visit and observe educational and commercial institutions in their community and beyond.

High achievers, English language learners, special education, and average students are all invited to document ninety minutes of independent, self-selected reading in the school library, known as The Reading Room. Completion of those ninety minutes gives them a certificate, a laminated lunch pass, and recognition in the school bulletin. They are also eligible for special activities such as field trips to museums, libraries, and universities that allow the students to visualize themselves in scholarly settings and to see how reading and writing are used in the real world.

Cox is excited by the long-term results the scholars are demonstrating. For example, as they move on to high school, many are enrolling in advanced placement classes and SAT preparation courses because these boys and girls begin to see themselves as successful learners.

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*“Once students get into The Reading Room and involved in our programs, they begin to hang out there before and after school,”*  
– **Helen Cox, Library Media Teacher**



Chess draws Distinguished Scholars to the media center.

“Once students get into The Reading Room and involved in our programs, they begin to hang out there before and after school,” Cox says. “Often times they pick up a book or a magazine. They can’t help it. There are so many seductive materials just shouting to be picked up and read!”

▼  
**Helen Cox**, Library Media Teacher  
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Avery Hall, Principal  
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## CSLA ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP AWARD

# Evergreen Elementary School District Administrator Honored for Longstanding Support of LMTs

**Maryann Cavallo**, deputy superintendent of Evergreen Elementary School District, will receive the prestigious California School Library Association's Administrative Leadership Award for her continual recognition of the importance of credentialed library media teachers (LMTs). At a school board meeting last year, Cavallo related her personal philosophy toward school libraries: "Anyone who has studied the standards movement knows that for children to be good readers they must read often at their level of independence. District leaders are dependent on our high-quality libraries if we ever hope to approach the No Child Left Behind goal for all children to become proficient readers. To have high-quality libraries, we need to retain quality librarians. Libraries and librarians are as crucial to our children's success as effective classrooms."



Cavallo recognizes the importance of school libraries for student success.

As a district administrator for thirteen years, Cavallo has helped ensure that credentialed LMTs and classified media assistants continue their important roles at each school site. Currently, the district provides two- to three-days per week of certificated LMT staffing per elementary and middle school, along with six- to eight-hours per day of a paraprofessional media assistant at each site.

According to O. B. Whaley Elementary School library media teacher Sheila Gurtu, Cavallo provides time and resources for LMTs to meet in order to develop information literacy lessons that model the best teaching practices and that integrate the California Language Arts Content Standards with other content area standards. She encourages LMTs to work collaboratively with the classroom teachers, participate in school and district instructional staff development, and attend district or school meetings, committees, and special events that keep LMTs integrated into the total instructional program of the school and district.

Even though California is suffering from a current budget crisis, Cavallo's recognition of the importance of LMTs, information literacy standards, and student learning is demonstrated by this year's expansion of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students' library periods from nine to eighteen hour-long sessions. What a model for others districts to follow!



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**To nominate a school library and a library media teacher for *Good Ideas!* recognition, contact Carolyn Wilke, [cwilkecat@aol.com](mailto:cwilkecat@aol.com), 805-499-1561.**