



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.

School Libraries: Fighting Mediocrity

BY JAMES ENOCHS, SUPERINTENDENT

As a superintendent I would rather have great school libraries than championship football teams. I doubt that that places me in a majority. There are lots of administrators in high places and a fair number of school boards that still think the axis of the earth passes through the fifty-yard line. This attitude would be a relatively harmless prolongation of adolescence if California was not, once more, faced with an educational budget that requires grownups to make some very important choices.



It is a disgrace that each year the book lovers must beg and fight to save what we cannot live without. In too many places libraries, if they have survived previous cuts, seem always to rise to the top of the latest cut list. And when the time comes to make the final decisions, few there are who come forward to protest that libraries are the very soul of schools and are cut away at great risk. Frances Clarke Sayers understood the risk when, in her tribute to libraries and librarians, *Summoned by Books*, wrote: “Somewhere, somehow, there has got to be an institution which belligerently attacks the mediocre, the slick, the sentimental, the commercial, that is typical of the mass culture of our day.”

The problem, I fear, is that we have too many people who do not read and, as a result, cannot be expected to value books. That is, in part, a failing that can be traced back to us, educators at all levels. It starts with parents who deliver to us culturally malnourished children who, rather than having been read to, have been turned over to the flickering blue light in the living room. And then we give them a dreary, steady diet of many elementary school reading programs that are at once politically correct and bland. In the basal reader most widely used in public schools, less than 10 percent of the content is classic children’s literature. In high school we give students anthologies ground out by the great textbook machine that is carefully tuned to every special interest group in America – except people who believe in the perpetuation of the culture. It is enough to say of the colleges that it is possible to graduate from Stanford or Harvard without ever having exposure to Shakespeare.

It is not a hopeful picture, but perhaps the answer lies in Sayer’s call for librarians as “belligerent” professionals who, “radiated by a fierce and beautiful love of books,” make the fight we must all make.

Editor’s Note: James Enochs was one of the top three selected for the *School Library Journal’s* Administrator of the Year Award for 2005. He was selected from more than one hundred school administrators nominated nationwide.

JAMES ENOCHS is the superintendent of Modesto City Schools.

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Learning through
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Eighth Graders Hit All Bases in Learning Research Standards

LA ENTRADA SCHOOL

Library media teacher **Patricia Skjervheim** and English teacher Heather Amanatullah apply the information literacy standards and indicators from California School Library Association's (CSLA) *Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries* (2004) to a project on American authors. The two teachers from La Entrada School in Menlo Park collaborate to instruct students in Grades 4–8 how to do research efficiently, accurately, and honest-



Patricia Skjervheim checks for student understanding.

ly (Reading Standards 3.0, Writing Standard 1.4, and Listening and Speaking Standards 1.0 for Grade 8).

The students each read two works by one American author. They also learn how to:

- access and take bulleted notes on their author from print, online database, and Web sources
- evaluate sources
- prepare MLA-format source cards
- word process a paper that includes biographical information, description of author's writing style,

author's works, and a conclusion plus parenthetical citations and works cited

- write a summary and critical review of the two books read
- prepare and orally deliver a PowerPoint presentation, which the student narrates as though the author were speaking

The teachers do not allow students to use Web sources until after taking notes from library books and literary databases. By that time students have a better understanding of how to judge the reliability of Web sites. The teachers have observed that having students learn how to take notes from reliable sources virtually eliminates plagiarism in the final products.

After writing their papers, the students give copies to an outside editor who could be any adult, such as a parent or other teacher. Editors then make comments and suggestions for improvements. Skjervheim and Amanatullah then have an opportunity to give students additional focused help.

These library media and English teachers collaborate to put together a project that integrates reading, writing, oral, listening, speaking, technology, and information literacy standards. How is that for hitting all the bases?



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STANDARD 5: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.

- Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries (CSLA, 2004)

Resourceful Arcata HS Freshmen Create Social Issues Fliers

ARCATA HIGH SCHOOL

The character, Melinda Sordino, in *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, enters her high school freshman year unable to articulate and barely coping with the trauma she has recently experienced. Unfortunately she is representative of many of California's students today. **Mary Ann Harlan**, library media teacher (LMT) at Arcata High School in Arcata, and the freshmen English teachers have collaborated on a research unit/product that teaches and produces student-friendly resources (fliers) that reach out to other students who may face the same sort of social issue that Melinda had to endure. In the process, they also learn about the social issue itself, li-



Mary Ann Harlan (left) evaluates student projects.

brary resources, and the importance of evaluation and citation. After reading *Speak* in their English classes, students generate research topics on current social issues, such as rape, suicide, AIDS, abuse, bullying, alcohol, drugs, teen pregnancy, etc. Harlan teaches students about library resources and the need for evaluation, and she provides the grading rubric. The English teachers review the features of a technical document (ELA Standard 2.1), and bibliography

for reference materials (ELA 2.2). Finally the computer teacher and the LMT help students design and publish documents with the publishing software, MS Publisher (ELA 1.8).

▼
“...lets teens know that...there are available resources on campus – particularly the population who struggle with issues such as abuse and addiction.” –Mary Ann Harlan

The final products are fliers on social issues that include annotated bibliographies of resources (books, Web sites, magazine articles, and organization/hotline phone numbers). Students are assessed on the use of multiple sources, evaluation of resources for relevancy and authority, and self-evaluation papers on what they would do differently in their next research projects. However, the importance of the real world application – the fliers themselves – is what makes this project a Good Ideas! recipient.

Not only do Arcata High School's freshmen English students read *Speak*, but they also create useful, timely, informative fliers on social issues that directly impact their peers. What a valuable individual learning experience – *and* school/community resource!

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STANDARD 7: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.

– Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries (CSLA, 2004)

Traveling to Ancient Egypt?

LINDERO CANYON MIDDLE SCHOOL

“They spin around and they cross the floor.
Walk like an Egyptian.”

– *Walks Like an Egyptian*, L. Sternberg

Jane Lofton of Lindero Canyon Middle School is encouraging her sixth-grade students to walk in the footsteps of ancient Egyptians. In collaboration with teacher Sandra Porter, Lofton designed a research project that has students write a travel guide for foreign parents visiting ancient Egypt with their children. Their research focuses on games, sports, clothing, hairstyles, food, places of interests, and other information related to the social life and customs of the ancient Egyptians (H/SS Standard 6.2.5). To guide students’ research, Lofton and Porter limit the students to using selected library research books, the British Museum Ancient Egypt Web site, and the Greenwood Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians database. Their goals in limiting the resources is to introduce the stu-



Travel back in time with Jane Lofton.

dents to high quality resources that they evaluate in an annotated works-cited page, to guide the note-taking process, and to ensure successful outcomes for all students (ELA Standards 2.3.b and 2.3.c for grade 6).

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“Jane is a tremendous advocate for the library program. Students can see the value of life long learning due to her influence. She is continually collaborating with the language arts teachers and is making new inroads with the social studies and science departments.”
–**Ronald Kaiser, Principal**

Lofton, who has the MLS, began working as an LMT in 2002. She originally worked in a public library, then became a technical writer for an online database service. She amazes her principal, Ronald Kaiser, with her ability to guide gently the school community to see the vision of the school library as central to the educational program.

They’ve got the moves. They’re walking like Egyptians.

▼
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STANDARD 1: *The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively.*

STANDARD 2: *The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.*

STANDARD 3: *The student who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively.*

– Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries (CSLA, 2004)

Beth Heisey: Supporting the Learning of ALL Students

Creating a library media center (LMC) where literacy and access to information take place in a warm and inviting environment requires special efforts. **Beth Heisey**, library media teacher at Chipman Junior High School in Bakersfield, has what it takes to make that happen. Heisey works many long hours and goes beyond the nature of her assignment to help the students she serves. Her efforts have been recognized by the students, parents, teachers, and administration.



Literacy is a top priority for Beth Heisey.

Literacy is one of Heisey's top priorities. She brings together on-site library materials, up-to-date books for pleasure reading, and technology that allows access to information, thus making the LMC the information center of CJHS. She has a book club that meets once a month, and she annually coordinates the visit of an author. The LMC is open to students and teachers before school, at recess, during lunch, and after school. Parents come by on a regular basis to volunteer. Students appreciate that she stays and helps them with their homework until they understand it and that she is always respectful of them.

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“Beth has made it her mission to cultivate a warm, inviting, creative, and energetic atmosphere that welcomes and attracts students and teachers to have access to and ultimately consume the product of intellectual freedom and access to information. She is one of our school’s most prized possessions!”
–Russ Taylor, Principal

Collaborative teaching is a regular occurrence at CJHS. Taylor states that Heisey's collaboration with teachers enables the school to develop curricular content that integrates information literacy skills, instructional planning activities, and the ability to identify resources that support and enhance the classroom curriculum.

Heisey not only teaches the students at Chipman, but she also provides teachers after-hours staff development in the use of online resources. In addition to providing staff development to the teachers at her site, she is an adjunct professor at two universities, teaching children's literature and coordinating a literacy clinic for students in the reading master's program.

It is little wonder why the school principal says that Heisey is one of Chipman Junior High School's most prized possessions.

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HIGHSMITH INNOVATION AWARD

“Spread the Words”

Five years ago the Santa Clara High School Literacy Committee concluded that many students did not have the skills, background, information, or incentive to select books for pleasure, to satisfy curiosity, or to supplement curriculum assignments.



Mim Ostenso sells students on reading.

Marie (Mim) Ostenso, the school’s library media teacher, suggested to the committee that giving book talks to all students would address these issues. Thus began the annual “Spread the Words” week when every English class is given book talks in the library. In 2005 65 presenters – including

teachers from all departments, classified staff, counseling staff, students, library staff from other schools, administrators, and government officials – book-talked 100 different titles from many genres.

“Spread the Words” lasts only one week, but students continue requesting books throughout the school year, illustrating the impact of adult and student book recommendations. The word is out about Ostenso and her library’s successful “Spread the Words” book-talking celebration!



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SAGEBRUSH TECHNOLOGY AWARD

A Passion for Technology

Oxnard High School and the Oxnard Union High School District are ahead of the educational technology curve largely due to the efforts of **Catherine M. Lewis** (LMT), so say her administration and colleagues. She is committed to helping students learn how to use technology effectively.



Catherine Lewis: Technology Pioneer



“Catherine has had a major influence on technology at Oxnard High School, as well as the entire district.” –Yvonne Peck, Assistant Principal

Because student access to technology is crucial to Lewis, the numerous computers at Oxnard High’s library media center are not only available during instructional periods; but students

may also use them before school, at lunch, and after school. Knowing access is just the beginning, she collaboratively plans and teaches with teachers in all departments, developing lessons to teach standards and incorporating the use of technology.

As a leader in technology in her school and district, Lewis goes beyond her responsibilities as an LMT and enthusiastically provides staff development in all areas of technology.



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ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP AWARD

The School Library Change Agent

Marie Scigliano, director of Educational and Informational Technology in the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD), provides the necessary leadership to make possible a Library Media Program that prepares students to become literate and life-long learners and teaches them to be effective users of information.



Modern and well-staffed LMCS – Marie Scigliano makes it happen.

Many would assume a district in a well-educated and high-tech community like Palo Alto would have always had state-of-the-art school libraries. Not so. Prior to the arrival of Scigliano in 1998, PAUSD school libraries were dependent on the site for resources, technology, staffing and support; the books were out of date; technology was patchy at best; and many of the facilities were old, tired, and ugly.

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“Without Marie our technology and library programs would not be where they are.” –Susan Scott, District Librarian, PAUSD

Scigliano provides leadership at the cabinet level, representing the library media centers and the staff to the

superintendent, board, and administrators. At every opportunity she includes the library media centers and library media teachers as essential components of the technology plan. Since 1998 five state-of-the-art library media centers were opened and 12 existing LMCS were completely remodeled.

Palo Alto Unified is not the only district in which Scigliano has provided leadership for the library program. While serving in Moreland School District, she also supervised the development of a vibrant library program and the building of new libraries.

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“Marie was the driving force behind the modernization of our school libraries. Marie had the vision and then she had the ability, to make her vision a reality.” –Karen Ott, Moreland School District

Scigliano writes, “Integrating the library program and its services into the total instructional program is a documented strategy for improving student performance. There is a growing awareness among educators that library media centers are integral to the quality and diversity of reading and information resources. The newly published *Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries*, California School Library Association (2004), used academic research studies to develop standards.”

Every school in Palo Alto Unified has a credentialed library media teacher and state-of-the-art library media centers. Now that is leadership!

▼
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Vision in Action

Even with a declining enrollment in the Rio Linda Union School District (RLUSD) in Northern California, the library media program continues to grow. How is that possible? It's because of the vision and belief of **John Baggett**, director of Educational Services.



John Baggett = strong school library program.

In November 2003, Baggett, in conjunction with Superintendent Frank Porter and Assistant Superintendent Deborah LaVoi, envisioned the creation of a powerful library program in the RLUSD. Baggett worked tirelessly in the development and passage of a bond measure that set aside \$7 million toward the renovation/conversion of 19 libraries into library media centers (LMCs). Twelve of these facilities were completed in fall 2005, and the remaining seven are slated for completion in fall 2006.

Approximately 2,000 additional square feet were planned for each LMC, as were modern technology: wireless laptops, new wireless networks, multimedia projectors, and much more.

Baggett recognized that improved facilities were not enough to improve the teaching and learning in the renovated LMCs. Using money from grants, Title II funds, and site funds, Baggett and John Vereyken (RLUSD district librarian) worked to hire three credentialed library media teachers to work with teachers and students at six school sites. LMC schedules have been made flexible, classroom teachers and LMTs collaboratively teach in the LMCs, and staff development for teachers and library staff is conducted at school sites, including the first ever library summit within the district. Baggett envisions and coordinates all of these endeavors with an eye toward one goal – **improving student achievement**.



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Books, Media and Technology*

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is published by the Curriculum Committee of CSLA, an association of library media teachers, classroom teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and others whose mission is to provide leadership to ensure that California educators and students are effective users of ideas and information. The association promotes the effective use of learning resources, including print and nonprint media, and technology in the teaching/learning process.

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Back issues of *Good Ideas!* are available at www.csla.net

To nominate a school library and a library media teacher for *Good Ideas!* recognition, contact Susan Scott, suscott@pausd.org, 650-856-1726 x124.