

Introduction

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We are all aware that today's kindergarten to grade 12 students, often referred to as "Millennials" or "Net Geners," come from a profoundly different world than did previous generations of students. Today's students are heavily influenced by information technology and have never known life without computers, the Internet, video games, cell phones, high-speed networks, instant messaging, social networking sites, iPods, YouTube, and Google. In this first decade of the 21st century, schools are responding in various ways to the twin challenges of this new generation of learners and the rapidly changing information environment. As part of the conversation about how schools need to change in order to teach 21st-century skills to 21st century learners, specific questions need to be asked about the role of school libraries:

- What is the place of the school library in a 21st-century school?
- How should the school library be responding to the needs of today's students?
- What type of program should exist in the 21st-century school library?
- How can the school library program become the center of teaching and learning?

This book's purpose is to provide some answers to these questions and to help you as teacher librarians move your school library's program forward so that it serves the needs of 21st-century students. The articles (previously published in *Teacher Librarian* with a few added from *VOYA*) in this book all promote the following philosophy of school libraries and the leadership roles of teacher librarians:

- The school library exists to provide a learning program and resources to improve student learning and student achievement.
- The school library focuses on teaching information literacy skills that are essential to student success in the 21st century and provides students and teachers with a framework for the research and inquiry process.
- The school library is a vital part of the school's overall literacy efforts by providing support for reading instruction and by developing and promoting the love of reading for learning and for pleasure.
- The school library exists beyond its four walls and provides real and virtual access to appropriate, high-quality resources on a 24 hours per day/7 days per week basis.
- Teacher-librarians are learning leaders and participate actively in curriculum development and delivery through collaboration with other teachers in the design of rich and relevant tasks, and through instructional interventions to help students learn.
- Teacher-librarians are leaders in technology integration and infuse information technology and its appropriate use into their school library programs. This includes the use of various tools of the interactive web, commonly known as Web 2.0.
- Teacher-librarians are educational leaders who are facilitators for professional learning in their school community.

With this overall philosophy in mind, *Toward a 21st Century School Media Program* is organized into chapters on collaboration, curriculum design and assessment, technology integration, 21st-century skills, literacy and reading, partnerships, and issues and management. Each chapter comprises visionary, provocative, and practical articles written by experts in the school library field. It is the editors' hope that this book is used by practitioners to make the school library essential and central to learning and teaching in the 21st-century school.

Teacher Librarian: The Journal for School Library Professionals, a highly respected

publication serving teacher librarians, has been in publication for more than 30 years. It is published five times per year and contains peer-reviewed feature articles on various aspects of school librarianship, professional book reviews, and regular columns on technology, literacy, authors, best books for various age groups, best web sites, along with a variety of other special elements.