

(AASL Position Statement) [site]

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST IN SITE-BASED MANAGEMENT

Many schools, committed to excellence through reform and restructuring, use the site-based management model. In these schools, the library media specialist is an important member of and a contributor to the building-level, decision-making team.

As a member of the team, the library media specialist:

- *shares decision-making with administrators and other teachers as a partner in instruction, budgeting, program planning, and collection development.
- *collaborates with classroom teachers throughout the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating instruction.
- *accesses a broad network of information resources within and outside the school to provide information and relevant research to help guide the school staff in making informed decisions.

The contributions that the library media specialist can make to site-based managed schools are particularly valuable because he or she:

- *works cooperatively with and understands the needs of many groups, e.g., teachers, students, administrators, parents, and community members.
- *views the school's curriculum with a broad perspective.
- *works with students at all ability and grad levels across all curricular areas.
- *understands technology and its uses in teaching and learning.
- *designs the library media facility in relationship to the space needs of the total school programs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SITE-BASED MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PERSONNEL

Just as business has re-examined traditional management styles in recent years, education is focusing reform and restructuring efforts on those closest to the students. Library media programs at the school building level can be positively affected by site-based management.

INFORMATION POWER: GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAMS (American Library Association, 1988) encourages shared decision making and involvement on the part of all stakeholders in the development of quality library media programs. It validates the role of the library media specialist in site-based management schools. As the initial planning for site-based management begins, it is the library media specialist who can provide information, relevant research and a common vocabulary to help guide the school staff in making informed choices.

As a model for schools, site-based management directly impacts four major areas of decision making: personnel, curriculum, budget and facilities. All four are of vital importance in the development of library media programs, and the library media specialist should provide leadership as policies are developed in these areas.

*Personnel. The success of a site-based management system depends on the extent to which teacher, library media specialists, administrators and others who contribute to student learning know their roles and responsibilities. The library media specialist as a teacher, instructional consultant and information specialist has the expertise to function as a building leader, thus playing a critical role in decision making.

*Curriculum. To achieve support at the building level, it is important that the library media program is fully integrated into the curriculum and is viewed as an essential component to student achievement. As an instructional consultant, the library media specialist is a member of the instructional team throughout the process of designing, implementing and evaluating instruction.

Curriculum and instructional developments are influenced significantly by major, ongoing technological advancements. Library media specialists must be aware of new developments, recognize those appropriate for the instructional goals of

the school site, and provide the leadership and expertise for their incorporation into the instructional program of the school.

*Budget. Site-based management requires that the library media specialist plan and defend the building-level library media budget. The budget request should indicate the resources necessary to accomplish a given set of goals and objectives which are tied closely to the instructional program. Aligning budgetary and instructional priorities is a sound practice that will win support for the library media program. A vehicle for establishing priorities for purchasing must be in place, and it must address the budgetary relationship to other departments in the school. Documentation of present needs and long-range planning for future needs should be an ongoing process.

*Facilities. The library media staff must be actively engaged in the entire facility planning process, working with teachers and administrators to determine how the library media facility relates to the overall school program. The arrangement of facilities should create an environment that encourages the use of various media, motivates students to use materials and services necessary for learning, and provides the design flexibility needed to accommodate new technologies.

Site-based management demands the participation and commitment of all stakeholders: faculty, administration, school services personnel, parents, students and community members. Library media specialists, having a broad perspective of the school's curriculum and a cooperative relationship with many working groups, are in a unique position to collaborate with each of the stakeholders.

The changes inherent in site-based management require ownership and are accomplished gradually over a period of time. It is a complex process involving new expectations and changes in traditional roles. An optimistic and pro-active library media specialist will be informed about the site-based management process and the potential for involvement. This library media professional must take a leadership role in helping administrators and other teachers recognize and value the library media program as an indispensable part of the student's learning experience. A nation of lifelong learners depends on it.