Introduction

School libraries face major challenges: aging collections, decreasing budgets, fewer school librarians, and the increasing need of students for information literacy skills. School and community leaders created the Colorado Power Libraries Program in 1998, to meet those challenges.

The Colorado Power Libraries Program believes a good library program is one that is integrated into the curriculum of the school and impacts student achievement through collaborative, standards-based instruction.

The success of the program shows through:
- More than 131 schools that have participated in program training in teams of a principal, teacher, and librarian,
- Principals and librarians who established a common vision for integrating information literacy into the curriculum,
- Hundreds of teachers who planned collaborative programs, and
- Thousands of students who benefited from improved information literacy skills.

From 1998 through 2005, key points consistently arose in school visits, surveys, and discussions with teachers, school librarians, and principals. A summary of these points appears inside this brochure.

Additional Support

A recent study shows that strong library programs are an important component of student achievement. "How school librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards— the Second Colorado Study," from the Library Research Service of the Colorado State Library, Colorado Department of Education, demonstrates that student scores on standardized tests are **ten to eighteen percent higher** at schools with outstanding library programs and staff.

The study found that CSAP reading scores are higher in schools whose library programs closely resemble the characteristics of Power Libraries participants. The research took into consideration school differences. The relationship between library media factors and test scores is not explained away by other community conditions. Similar recent studies for twelve different states also support these findings.
www.lrs.org/impact.asp

www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/powerlib/

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COLORADO POWER LIBRARIES PROGRAM: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

How school library programs, including professional staff, impact student achievement.

A cooperative program of the Colorado State Library & the Colorado Department of Education

Colorado State Library

cde Improving Academic Achievement

School librarians feel

- They have effected systemic change as a result of staff development and mentoring received from the program.
- Students are prepared with information literacy skills for lifelong learning.
- Information literacy skills are making a difference in student achievement and student performance.
- They greatly value the mentoring component of the grant and onsite visits to other schools.
- They plan to continue to share ideas with other schools and librarians in their own districts.

In schools with power libraries

School librarians:
- Regularly analyze and evaluate their roles and refocus their efforts;
- Shift their focus from management to instruction;
- Reflect on tasks and priorities and make deliberate choices;
- Share their expertise in information literacy and the research process with other teachers;
- Participate in school-wide initiatives, curriculum committees, and study groups;
- Provide leadership in the school;
- Establish a library advisory committee to apply the best thinking of the school.

Principals are a critical element. They:
- Provide strong leadership to establish the instructional goal of preparing all students for life-long learning;
- Cultivate a school-wide collaborative culture;
- Provide a unique communication link for the library program to both the community and the school district administration;
- Supply ongoing resources necessary to create an effective library (i.e. books, online subscriptions, technology);
- Justify a staffing plan with a full time school librarian and clerical support;
- Establish a flexible library schedule;
- Recognize those teachers who integrate information literacy into their classes and collaborate with others.

Teachers believe effective information skills are important and want their students to develop such skills (research skills; life-long readers; independent learners; utilize a process to complete a quality product).

Basic tenets of management

- ✓ **Recurring staff development** opportunities and sufficient planning time are critical elements in promoting successful library collaboration and experiences with information literacy skills.

- ✓ **Inquiry-based research** engages students, provides authentic learning experiences, and limits plagiarism.

- ✓ **CSAP items, content standards, and information literacy** skills are closely aligned.

- ✓ **Collaborative planning** improves student achievement. Students benefit by receiving instruction and practice in both information literacy standards and content standards; having more time on task; receiving more accurate and specific help from the school librarian; having access to two teachers with different experience and expertise who know assignments.

- ✓ **Library advocacy** becomes more effective when expressed by students, teachers, administrators, and parents.

- ✓ **Incentives** (such as needed materials, planning time, displays, and teacher support) increase collaboration and promote good collections.

- ✓ The learning community recognizes there are **challenges to integrating information skills into curriculum**, such as the need for clerical staff; flexibility in schedules; adequate resources to support increased use; mentoring new teachers; balancing the demands of increasing achievement with learning and a love of reading.