

IFLA School Library Manifesto (2021)

The Vision of the School Library Program

The school library program improves and enhances teaching and learning for the entire school community through its qualified school library professionals, collections and, and active collaborations for literacies, thinking, and global citizenship in inclusive and equitable education.

The Mission of the School Library Program

The school library program and its qualified school library professionals focus on student growth by providing equitable access for learning experiences, resources, and learning spaces that enable all members of the school community to become engaged critical thinkers, effective readers, and responsible users, evaluators, and creators of information in multiple formats.

Equitable access to the learning commons in primary and secondary school library environments, resources, and differentiated instructional opportunities for all learner needs and abilities must be ensured, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or identity, disability, nationality, language, professional, economic, or social status. Specific access must be provided for those who are unable to use mainstream library services and materials.

Access to school library program services and collections should be based on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and should not be subject to any form of ideological, political, religious censorship, or to commercial pressures.

School libraries link to public libraries and the wider information network, in accordance with the IFLA Public Library Manifesto.

Funding Legislation and Networks

The school library program is essential to every long-term education strategy, including literacies, information provision and creation, and economic, social, and cultural development. It is the responsibility of local, regional, and national authorities to support school library programs through specific legislation and policies which ensure adequate and sustained funding for qualified school library professionals, materials, technologies, facilities, and life-long professional learning. School library programs must be free of charge to students and school staff.

The school library program is an essential partner in local, regional, national, and international library and information networks.

Where the school library shares facilities and/or resources with another type of library, such as a public library, the unique aims of the school library must be acknowledged and maintained through an active partnership with a qualified school library professional.

Qualified Professional Library Staff

The school librarian is a professionally qualified, and motivated and dedicated staff member responsible for planning and managing the school library program, working together with all members of the school community, and liaising with the public library and others in the wider community. S/He is should be a member of a library association. The school librarian should be supported in the school library routine by adequate clerical staff trained in school library procedures, and can be helped by well-trained volunteers.

The qualifications and role of the school librarian and clerical staff will vary according to the budget, curriculum, and teaching methodology of the school, within local and national legal and financial frameworks.

In an increasingly networked environment, qualified school library professionals must be good leaders, competent in planning and teaching evolving literacies and digital competencies, operating and managing the school library facility and program, and responsible to both teachers and students.

Goals of the School Library Program

The school library is a common learning environment where the school librarian teaches and works collaboratively with the school community to:

- ensure expert instruction and guidance for all learners as their qualified school library professional;
- support and enhance educational goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum;
- support and enhance cultural and social goals as planned with the local community;
- ensure a safe learning environment for all learners where their quest for knowledge is respected and supported and personal information protected;
- curate and utilize a broad range of relevant and responsive learning resources and instructional strategies that meet all learners' needs and abilities while exposing learners to diverse ideas, experiences, and opinions;

- co-design active inquiry and discovery learning experiences in physical and virtual spaces
- foster independent reading for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment;
- stimulate and enhance reading literacy and enjoyment through a wide range of resources and strategies, including reading aloud at all ages;
- instruct learners in becoming ethical users and creators of information and knowledge;
- Influence learners to adopt the use of libraries throughout their lives;
- organize learning activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity;
- promote and involve the whole school community and beyond in the work of the school library;
- provide services and activities during the whole school day and beyond;
- apply and defend the concepts of intellectual freedom and access to information as essential for effective and responsible citizenship and participation in a democracy;
- facilitate professional learning opportunities for teachers and staff, especially related to new resources and technologies, curriculum, and instructional strategies;
- engage in continuous review and renewal of all school library program goals and activities;
- overcome the digital divide and other forms of exclusion.

The school library program fulfills these goals by developing equitable policies and instructional programs, selecting and acquiring high-quality resources and technologies, providing physical and intellectual access to diverse sources of information, providing participatory physical and virtual learning environments, and employing qualified school library professionals and trained clerical staff.

Operation and Management

To ensure effective and accountable operations, the school library program must:

- have administrative support for the role of a school library learning commons in order to realize the full benefit of a school library program;
- include policies on school library services that are formulated to define goals, priorities, and services in relation to the school's curriculum ;
- have administration-endorsed policies regarding learning resources development and preventing censorship;
- be organized and maintained according to professional standards;

- be accessible to all members of the school community and operate within the context of the local and global community;
- collaborate with teachers, senior school management, administrators, parents, other librarians and information professionals, and community groups;
- be accountable, through an ongoing monitoring, evaluation and accountability process, whose data are discussed and shared with the school and local community members and stakeholders;
- be visible in the school prospectus and webpages.

Promoting and Disseminating the Manifesto

Every child deserves the benefits of a School Library Program as described in this *Manifesto* in support of UNESCO Sustainable Goal 4 of UNESCO: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>

Governments, through their Ministries and Departments responsible for education, are urged to develop strategies, policies, plans and ongoing reviews which implement the principles of this *Manifesto*.

Principals of schools and local school administrative boards are encouraged to adopt this *Manifesto* in their strategic documents in order to help the students to become responsible citizens.