Melissa Gaeta, Kate Mills, Hannah Ricci, Lindsey Weaver

Professor Mona Kerby

SLM 501

19 February 2011

**Part I: AASL Rubric Evaluation**

On Friday, February 11, a middle school librarian and I sat down to examine the rubric from [*A Planning Guide for Empowering Learners with School Library Program Assessment Rubric*](http://www2.mcdaniel.edu/slmonline/SLM_501_sp11/pdf/aasl_empowering-planning_v6_spreads.pdf). The librarian looked at each category of the rubric and discussed each one step-by-step, rating herself and the media program based on the included criteria. She was very interested in the assessment rubric, stating that she appreciated the thoroughness of the information being evaluated and expressed a desire to have a copy for herself. This librarian has many years of experience and is someone who truly demonstrates what it means to have initiative and be an agent of change. She is always pursuing opportunities for professional development and often takes time for self-reflection to identify strengths and weaknesses. Her comment concerning the overall evaluation was that every librarian should meet the dimensions for comprehensive, but that it is an ideal. The reality is that it is a work-in-process and, at any given time, there is room for growth and improvement.

The assessment rubric was designed to align with Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs which describes the fifteen national guidelines. The guidelines were categorized within four major school media center components:

* developing visions for learning
* teaching for learning
* building the learning environment
* empowering learning through leadership

  The fifteen guidelines were then analyzed and "descriptions of implementation" were developed at three levels (A Planning Guide for Empowering Learners with School Library Program Assessment Rubric, 47.

  There are components of this rubric that I believe could be incorporated into the Maryland evaluation system. I liked the four main categories under which the guidelines were sorted and that each part of the component had clear descriptions and wording for the requirements. However I believe that the rating system could have been less specific to each category, and that consistent scores of comprehensive, basic, and in-progress could have been used instead. The librarian that I interviewed with this evaluation tool shared that she thought it was very useful in terms of providing a checklist of the numerous aspects and responsibilities of a school librarian. This could be extremely helpful for a first-year librarian and could be used to provide guidance and serve as a self-reflection piece. The rubric will "provide input for goals identification and clarification to support continuous program improvement." (A Planning Guide for Empowering Learners with School Library Program Assessment Rubric, p.48)

I. Developing Visions for Learning

          In the areas of Statement, Alignment, and Publication the librarian felt that she and her program were a combination of comprehensive and basic. She indicated that she is continually working towards achieving and maintaining the highest level.

II. Teaching for Learning

          For Collaboration, Reading, and Multiple Literacies the overall rating was comprehensive, but the librarian did qualify that various factors can influence these areas at any given time. For collaboration, she is a strong advocate for herself, her skills, and her services, but truly successful collaboration depends on staff cooperation. Staff turnover, newly implemented changes within curricula, and other issues are just some examples. In terms of reading, the librarian stated that the students frequented the library often and book check-outs were consistent and steady. She did feel that many of the students did well in this area because of the requirements set by the language arts teachers, not necessarily out of a personal desire to read. The school itself is very involved in stressing the importance of reading and literacy.

           Under the categories of Inquiry and Assessment for Learning, the librarian felt that her score fell under basic. The inquiry process is very dependent on the students themselves. The example given was that this year her school experienced a significant increase in population due to redistricting. Many of the transplanted seventh and eighth graders do not seem to have effective inquiry and research abilities and the focus has been to improve these skills. However the opinion is that the school does has a very comprehensive and consistent process in place for establishing strong inquiry learners, one that most of the staff supports and integrates daily. As for assessing learners, the librarian shared that she engages in more casual, formative assessments in which she monitors how students are performing as they are working in the media center. She will sometimes assist with creating rubrics for collaborated lessons and occasionally grades assignments for bibliographic accuracy.

III. Building the Learning Environment

         In terms of Planning and Evaluating the overall rating was basic for the Planning Process, Strategic Plan, and Stakeholder Participation. The librarian expressed again that she is continually striving to be comprehensive and searching for ways to improve in these areas, which highlights that she is comprehensive in professional development. She would definitely like to involve the stakeholders more in the library program, especially the school staff and parents. She rated herself as collaborative overall in communication and establishing partnerships mostly because she does not consistently pursue connections outside of the school community.

          The librarian felt that the evaluation system was comprehensive and certainly data-driven. She is continually evaluating the collection and surveying staff and students to best meet the needs of the learning community. This librarian is very organized and efficient with acquiring data and showed      examples of her filing system. She maintains both print and digital copies of her information and shares her reports with stakeholders annually.

        Under the component of Staffing, this media program was comprehensive. There is a full time, certified school librarian and a full time media assistant. The school community is very involved and there are several parent volunteers who assist with simple tasks in the library. There are also numerous student assistants that work in the library during lunch shifts and other scheduled times. All of the volunteers, especially the students are trained on appropriate  procedures and expectations for working in the library.

          For the categories of Learning Space, Budget, Collection Development, Ethical Use, and an Advocacy Plan, the library was rated as comprehensive, although the budget rating did have some qualifiers. The librarian felt that the funding level was only basic but is something that she cannot control.          Budget allocations are decided based on the student population (quantity) and, while sufficient for meeting many of the program's needs, the amount of money is not usually adequate for updating or supplementing the collection.

          The remaining categories of Access, Website, Technology Infrastructure, and Policies were all basic. As stated before, the stakeholder involvement is at a collaborative level, but not inclusive yet. Collection Development and Information Access are areas that also need improvement in terms of offering alternate formats, especially to meet the needs of diverse learners and cultures. As the school population itself does not have a wide representation of different cultures, the request for multicultural materials and information is not great. Students are encouraged to access the Culturegrams database though and there are some print resources available.

IV. Empowering Learning Through Leadership

          As a leader, the librarian found herself to be comprehensive. She frequently takes the initiative to volunteer for committees and leadership teams within the school and pursues opportunities for innovative educational practices. This librarian is a member of the STEM and SIT committees and the school leadership team, she often leads staff development workshops that focus on new technologies to assist with student achievement, and has presented at county meetings for various curricular areas.

           The librarian is outstanding in terms of school and community relationships. She has worked in this particular middle school for at least 8 years and is greatly respected by staff, administration, and students. She and the principal have a shared vision and work together to meet the technology objectives of the school to help our students become 21st-century learners. This librarian is also held in high regards by the school staff and the community and is often sought out to discuss ideas for lessons, useful resources and materials, and instructions for incorporating and using technology.

VII. Reflection

This opportunity to discuss the various components of a school library program with the librarian herself was a very informative experience. The idea was demonstrated that a truly effective librarian is one who meets all of the indicators and standards, but is not content with simply maintaining at this level. A highly effective librarian is someone that recognizes that there is always new information to acquire, new and innovative methods to implement, and continual opportunities to develop as a professional.

**Part II: MSDE Standards for SLM Programs**

On Wednesday, February 16, a middle school librarian evaluated her program according to the MSDE Standards for School Library Programs in Maryland. The school librarian provided a folder for each of the seven standards: **Mission, Goals and Objectives, Instruction, Staffing, Resources and Resource Services, Facilities, and Program Evaluation**. She placed within each folder her self-evaluation for that standard and artifacts supporting her answers. Her sincerity and love for her work was evident in her willingness to discuss the profession and in her preparation for the visit. Her helpful example of what a mentor should be was a learning experience in itself.

  The school librarian scored herself as “Implemented” on **Mission**. It is obvious that the school librarian spent significant time crafting a mission statement that aligned with county and state requirements, considered the school improvement plan, and was mindful of the county SLMP Philosophy. She commented that the development of the mission statement and the evaluation using MSDE standards focused her early work as a school librarian. She also mused that it was probably time to take another look at her mission statement as there is now a greater focus on technology. In addition, the goals of the school have changed to include more focus on the MSAs. She concluded her reflections on the mission statement by affirming that the mission of the program changes as the needs of students change.

Although the librarian scored herself as “Working Toward” on **Instruction** and **Staffing**, it is evident to any observer that she is “Implemented” in those two areas. As evidence that the some of the **Instruction** indicators are being met, the school librarian’s folder was filled with sample lesson plans, assessments, student examples, evaluations of the lessons by administrators and teachers, and even copies of her weekly planner. Her schedule was full of collaboration with teachers and cooperative library projects. The final area of implementation, **Staffing**, was supported by copies of her annual state report and summaries of in-service programs, which are both indicators of a fully realized program. The combination of the thoughtfully completed evaluation sheets and the models for each indicator exemplified the implemented status of these three items.

For the remainder of the standards, including **Goals and Objectives**, **Resources and Resource Services**, **Facilities**, and **Program Evaluation,** the school librarian modestly scored herself as “Working Toward.” Two specific areas of her program that she identified as needing work are **Goals and Objectives** and **Program Evaluation**. In the Goals and Objectives section, she would like to do more with the eighth indicator, which is to *ensure opportunities for collaborative planning and partnerships with school library media staff and higher education, business and community stakeholders.* While she is fully collaborative within her school, she feels she has not done enough to reach out to colleges, businesses, and community members. She noted that she would be doing some thinking about this indicator. In the Program Evaluation section, she commented that she needed to work on the third indicator, which states that *the plan is a continuous process involving school staff in data collection and analysis activities carried on throughout the year, focusing on the extent to which learning outcomes have been met.* She commented that with the amount of money each library program in the county receives, school librarians should have some data to demonstrate that the money is directly impacting student achievement. The only data she has to point to are the MSAs. In her discussions with the county supervisor, they have agreed that this is an area of weakness. She ended our discussion of this indicator by stating:

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| As for what assessment piece should be put into place that I can't answer, but now is the perfect time to do it.  The role of the school librarian or media specialist is changing and changing rapidly.  So why don't we take control of the change and make it a good one.  Why don't we change our program from being one of the least rigorous programs to one of the most rigorous programs?  I think our role is changing into one of being Information Technology Specialists and I think that's were the assessment could be. (Bauleke 2011) |

At the conclusion of the interview, the school librarian stated that she was observed once by the county supervisor using the teacher evaluation form. Since her tenure, she has been observed by her principal on an annual basis using no formal evaluation form. She has never been observed or evaluated by the state. While the school librarian is confident in her program, she is constantly working to update and improve it. She stated that she has seen the role of the librarian change significantly throughout her career and noted that highly effective librarians evaluate themselves constantly while planning ahead for the changes that are coming in the future.

**Part III: Librarian Evaluation Instrument**

**Maryland State Department of Education**

**School Librarian Annual Evaluation**

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The Maryland Annual Evaluation includes two evaluation instruments:

* The School Librarian Self-Evaluation – to be used by school librarian to self-assess before formal observation.
* The School Library Supervisor Evaluation Form – to be used by school library supervisor

**The School Librarian Self-Evaluation**

The first portion of the evaluation instrument is a tool for personal use by the school librarian. The results from the self-evaluation can be used in three ways:

* to identify which roles of the school librarian are in need of improvement.
* to compare personal perceptions of performance with the results from the Evaluation Summary Conference.
* to develop a strategic action plan for the following school years.

**The School Library Supervisor Evaluation**

The second portion of the evaluation instrument is the formal instrument used by the librarian’s supervisor. The supervisor uses this form to evaluate the librarian’s effectiveness in the six roles of the school librarian.

**The Evaluation Summary Conference**

After the formal observation, the supervisor and the school librarian will meet for an Evaluation Summary Conference. Prior to the conference, the school librarian may choose to

* submit written responses about the six sets of evaluative indicators.
* collect representative artifacts to serve as justifications of aforementioned responses.

During the conference, the supervisor and school librarian will review the distinctions for each indicator. Any indicator not directly addressed during the supervisor’s observation may be discussed during the Conference.

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Scoring Distinctions:

**E – Demonstrates Excellence:** The school librarian performs at an exemplary level in this indicator. No area of improvement is needed.

**S – Area of Strength**: The school librarian consistently meets the expectations for performance in this indicator. Current practices are acceptable, but can be improved.

**W – Working Toward**: The school librarian attempts to address the indicator; however, the school librarian performance in this position is in need of improvement.

**U – Unsatisfactory**: The library media specialist’s performance in this position requirement is not acceptable. Improvement activities must be undertaken immediately.

**School Librarian Self-Evaluation**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Domain One | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Leader | | | | | |
| 1a | Participates in system-wide and school curriculum development to integrate information literacy and technology literacy skills into all content areas. |  |  |  |  |
| 1b | Advocates for school library program by linking all aspects of library to student learning and empowerment. |  |  |  |  |
| 1c | Conducts in-service activities to provide information for teachers about educational media and technology. |  |  |  |  |
| 1d | Advocates for student learning by promoting knowledge and available resources. |  |  |  |  |
| 1e | Exhibits professional commitment and thorough knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing the profession. |  |  |  |  |
| 1f | Participates as an active member in the learning community by building relationships with community organizations and stakeholders. |  |  |  |  |
| 1g | Provides information about and complies with copyright law. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |

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| Domain Two | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Instructional Partner | | | | | |
| 2a | Facilitates access to instructional materials that support all curricula. |  |  |  |  |
| 2b | Develops assignments that match academic standards and include key critical thinking skills and information literacy skills. |  |  |  |  |
| 2c | Provides instruction to address multiple literacies and cultural understandings. |  |  |  |  |
| 2d | Collaborates with members of the school community to develop policies, practices, and curricula to guide student learning. |  |  |  |  |
| 2e | Evaluates content value of media as relating to instructional objectives. |  |  |  |  |
| 2f | Communicates with teachers and students within virtual and face-to-face learning environments. |  |  |  |  |
| 2g | Advocates for reading for pleasure and supports reading comprehension skills across all disciplines. |  |  |  |  |
| 2h | Maintains a physical environment conducive to all types of learning. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |

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| Domain Three | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Information Specialist | | | | | |
| 3a | Builds a collection that reflects a variety of backgrounds, cultures, ability levels, and aspirations. |  |  |  |  |
| 3b | Serves as an information specialist to teachers and students through reference and research services. |  |  |  |  |
| 3c | Provides specific information and resources in response to student and teacher request. |  |  |  |  |
| 3d | Informs teachers about new materials and emerging technologies. |  |  |  |  |
| 3e | Encourages teachers to integrate emerging technologies into lesson and unit plans. |  |  |  |  |
| 3f | Provides on-site access to information for both teachers and students. |  |  |  |  |
| 3g | Demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness. |  |  |  |  |
| 3h | Demonstrates knowledge of trends in library media practice, information technology, literature, and student information needs. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |

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| Domain Four | | E | S | W | U | |
| School Librarian as Teacher | | | | | | |
| 4a | Ensures a quality collection of instructional materials through a system-wide selection and evaluation process. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4b | Tracks and integrates trends in popular children’s and young adult literature and student interests. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4c | Empowers learners to become critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4d | Provides a variety of media resources and activities to present information that accommodates various learning styles |  |  |  |  | |
| 4e | Creates lesson and unit plans illustrating the integration of library media skills into classroom activities. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4f | Establishes and maintains standards for student work and behavior. |  |  |  |  | |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  | |

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| Domain Five | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Program Administrator | | | | | |
| 5a | Collaborates with teachers and other school librarians in the development of the program mission, strategic plan, and school library policies and procedures. |  |  |  |  |
| 5b | Maintains an accurate inventory of school library materials and equipment; efficiently weeds collection to provide current information for users. |  |  |  |  |
| 5c | Ensures that all members of the school community have access to resources that meet a variety of needs and interests. |  |  |  |  |
| 5d | Manages the school library budget and develops a collection to best meet the needs of all users. |  |  |  |  |
| 5e | Addresses educational issues with other educators in the school community and professional associations. |  |  |  |  |
| 5g | Establishes an effective schedule for use of the school library. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |

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| Domain Six | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Program Evaluator | | | | | |
| 6a | Regularly participates in own reflective practice by maintaining instructional artifacts, cross-curricular unit plans, professional development documents, financial records, and a collection development plan. |  |  |  |  |
| 6b | Evaluates program effectiveness through regular formative and summative assessments. |  |  |  |  |
| 6c | Establishes strategic plan for school library and shows evidence of working towards plan throughout school year. |  |  |  |  |
| 6d | Shows evidence of professional growth. |  |  |  |  |
| 6f | Uses ideas from books, professional journals, websites, Internet dialog with colleagues, and professional organizations to improve teaching. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |

*\*\*It is the school librarian’s option whether to share the results of the self-assessment with his/her supervisor during the Evaluation Summary Conference.*

**School Library Supervisor Evaluation Form**

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| **Librarian’s Name:** | **Employee ID:** | **School:** |
| **Librarian’s Assignment:** | **Observer/Evaluator:** | **Date:** |
| **Tenured:** Yes No | **If Nontenured:** Semester 1 2 3 4 5 6 | |

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| Domain One | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Leader | | | | | |
| 1a | Participates in system-wide and school curriculum development to integrate information literacy and technology literacy skills into all content areas. |  |  |  |  |
| 1b | Advocates for school library program by linking all aspects of library to student learning and empowerment. |  |  |  |  |
| 1c | Conducts inservice activities to provide information for teachers about educational media and technology |  |  |  |  |
| 1d | Advocates for student learning by promoting knowledge and available resources. |  |  |  |  |
| 1e | Exhibits professional commitment and thorough knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing the profession. |  |  |  |  |
| 1f | Participates as an active member in the learning community by building relationships with community organizations and stakeholders. |  |  |  |  |
| 1g | Provides information about and complies with copyright law. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |
| Observer Comments: | | | | | |

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| Domain Two | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Instructional Partner | | | | | |
| 2a | Facilitates access to instructional materials that support all curricula. |  |  |  |  |
| 2b | Develops assignments that match academic standards and include key critical thinking skills and information literacy skills. |  |  |  |  |
| 2c | Provides instruction to address multiple literacies and cultural understandings. |  |  |  |  |
| 2d | Collaborates with members of the school community to develop policies, practices, and curricula to guide student learning. |  |  |  |  |
| 2e | Evaluates content value of media as relating to instructional objectives. |  |  |  |  |
| 2f | Communicates with teachers and students within virtual and face-to-face learning environments. |  |  |  |  |
| 2g | Advocates for reading for pleasure and supports reading comprehension skills across all disciplines. |  |  |  |  |
| 2h | Maintains a physical environment conducive to all types of learning. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |
| Observer Comments: | | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Domain Three | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Information Specialist | | | | | |
| 3a | Builds a collection that reflects a variety of backgrounds, cultures, ability levels, and aspirations. |  |  |  |  |
| 3b | Serves as an information specialist to teachers and students through reference and research services. |  |  |  |  |
| 3c | Provides specific information and resources in response to student and teacher request. |  |  |  |  |
| 3d | Informs teachers about new materials and emerging technologies. |  |  |  |  |
| 3e | Encourages teachers to integrate emerging technologies into lesson and unit plans. |  |  |  |  |
| 3f | Provides on-site access to information for both teachers and students. |  |  |  |  |
| 3g | Demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness. |  |  |  |  |
| 3h | Demonstrates knowledge of the school’s program, trends in library media practice, information technology, literature, and student information needs. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |
| Observer Comments: | | | | | |

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| Domain Four | | E | S | W | U | |
| School Librarian as Teacher | | | | | | |
| 4a | Ensures a quality collection of instructional materials through a system-wide selection and evaluation process. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4b | Tracks and integrates trends in popular children’s and young adult literature and student interests. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4c | Empowers learners to become critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4d | Provides a variety of media resources and activities to present information that accommodates various learning styles |  |  |  |  | |
| 4e | Creates lesson and unit plans illustrating the integration of library media skills into classroom activities. |  |  |  |  | |
| 4f | Establishes and maintains standards for student work and behavior. |  |  |  |  | |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  | |
| Observer Comments: | | | | | | |

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| Domain Five | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Program Administrator | | | | | |
| 5a | Collaborates with teachers and other school librarians in the development of the program mission, strategic plan, and school library policies and procedures. |  |  |  |  |
| 5b | Maintains an accurate inventory of school library materials and equipment; efficiently weeds collection to provide current information for users. |  |  |  |  |
| 5c | Ensures that all members of the school community have access to resources that meet a variety of needs and interests. |  |  |  |  |
| 5d | Manages the school library budget and develops a collection to best meet the needs of all users. |  |  |  |  |
| 5e | Addresses educational issues with other educators in the school community and professional associations. |  |  |  |  |
| 5g | Establishes an effective schedule for use of the school library. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |
| Observer Comments: | | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Domain Six | | E | S | W | U |
| School Librarian as Program Evaluator | | | | | |
| 5a | Regularly participates in own reflective practice by maintaining instructional artifacts, cross-curricular unit plans, professional development documents, financial records, and a collection development plan. |  |  |  |  |
| 5b | Evaluates program effectiveness through regular formative and summative assessments. |  |  |  |  |
| 5c | Establishes strategic plan for school library and shows evidence of working towards plan throughout school year. |  |  |  |  |
| 5d | Shows evidence of professional growth. |  |  |  |  |
| 5f | Uses ideas from books, professional journals, websites, Internet dialog with colleagues, and professional organizations to improve teaching. |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Domain Score | |  |  |  |  |
| Observer Comments: | | | | | |

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| Did the school librarian submit artifacts as evidence of effectiveness? YES NO |
| Description of submitted artifacts and the indicators met: |

Observer/Evaluator’s Library Media Specialist

Signature Signature Date:

The Library Media Specialist’s signature on this observation/evaluation is an indication that the teacher has received the observation/evaluation and has had an opportunity to discuss it with the observer/evaluator, the signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the content.

**Evaluation Instrument Rationale**

We wanted to base our evaluation instrument off of the MSDE subcommittee’s drafted school librarian’s five roles and 10 standards. The layout of our final product looks similar to the FCPS form (we are all Frederick teachers). However, it expands many of the form’s vague indicators. Based on readings and blackboard discussions, we understand the importance for librarians to have specific evaluative indicators to work towards completing. Our final product’s indicators reflect 21st century learner needs.

We began writing the indicators by determining how best to match ten standards drafted by the MSDE subcommittee to the five roles. For example, the sixth standard is “Integration of Technologies” which we identified as reflective of the leader but also the informational specialist. We had to decide how best to state “Integration of Technologies” as an indicator so that it was applicable to both roles. We also added a sixth role, librarian as evaluator. As discussed throughout the module, librarians must constantly assess student learning and library and librarian effectiveness to determine areas for improvement.

We adopted a scoring distinction from the current *Standards for School Library Media Programs in Maryland*. The *Standards* provided a distinction for “Working Toward.” Many elements of the school library are works in progress; they should not be deemed “unsatisfactory” simply because they are not finished. We wanted our evaluation instrument to reflect the constant evolution of an effective library.

We used elements of the Alabama evaluation instrument because it encompassed both a librarian self-evaluation and an official state evaluation form. The Alabama evaluation process ends in a conference between the librarian and the supervisor at which point the school librarian may provide further evidence of effectiveness. Our evaluation form provides a place for the supervisor to note artifacts the school librarian may have provided during the conference to support the indicators on the form. Our indicators for all six roles came primarily from MSDE’s drafted school librarian roles; however, we also modified ideas from the Alabama evaluation and AASL’s *Empowering Learners* Assessment Rubric.

Group Members: Melissa Gaeta – melissa.gaeta@fcps.org

Kate Mills – katherine.mills@fcps.org

Hannah Ricci – hannah.ricci@fcps.org

Lindsey Weaver – lindsey.weaver@fcps.org *Saturday, February 19, 2011*

**Part IV: Questions on Student Growth**

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| ***Question 1:***  *How would you identify and go about measuring reasonable growth, in school librarianship, at various levels (4-8)?* | Recent budget cuts have caused many school districts to make decisions about eliminating jobs within their school systems. Several states, such as California, Texas, and New York, have decided to eradicate the position of the school library media specialist in attempts to save funds (Annette). As a replacement for the highly qualified school librarians, New York began filling those positions with uncertified personnel (Buzzeo 21). School librarians must show the school community how vital positions are by provide evidence that they have a highly effective program which measures growth among the students and schools. Jobs are at stake!  The first step to providing this effective program is to identify how reasonable growth is measured. Summative assessments, such as state assessment test scores and TRAILS assessment tool, can determine the overall growth within the school. The Maryland Middle School Assessment and High School Assessment contain questions evaluating information literacy skills. If we are doing our job effectively as certified school librarians, then test scores should measure this growth. According to Lynn Barrett’s publication in *School Librarian*, “Effective School Libraries: Evidence of Impact on Student Achievement,” a number of states, including North Carolina, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania, saw significant impact on standardized tests in correlation with a strong school library program.  The TRAILS assessment, Tool for Real-time Assessment of Information Literacy Skills, also can be valuable in measuring growth in the school library. This tool is used by school librarians and teachers to determine student strengths and weaknesses in knowledge of information literacy skills. Melissa noted her findings from the MCPS study, “Outcome Evaluation of the Library Media Program on Information Literacy Skills,”  LMS gave the TRAILS assessment to students in grades 5, 8 and 11 and the results were examined in connection with MSA reading scores. The TRAILS scores showed that students met the benchmarks for literacy skills as a whole, except for in the area of using information legally, responsibly, and ethically. The overall results indicated that students with better information literacy skills had higher reading scores.  The summative assessments must be used concurrently in order for the school librarians to fully measure the student growth within the school. By using TRAILS, they are able to see this growth every three years.  Although this type of assessment is effective in showing overall student achievement, a challenge arises when relating this data to the library media program. The state assessments do not show concrete evidence that point directly to instruction and use of the school library. |
| ***Question 2:***  *Can you identify multiple measures that can fairly assess student growth in school librarianship while taking into account teaching and student diversity?* | Since summative assessments do not provide enough concrete evidence of measurable growth, school librarians must provide students with formative assessments as well. By doing so, school librarians will be able to use multiple measures for fair evaluation, taking in to account teaching and student diversity. By using this kind of assessment, as opposed to summative, librarians can determine the direct influence of the library and information literacy instruction on student achievement. Melissa’s post draws attention to an AASL *Standards for the 21st Century Learner* statement, “that formative assessment can be ‘easily integrated into any lesson because when students produce work, it can be assessed for understanding and quality,’ (9).”  There are a variety of formative tools that can be used in the school library that can reach multiple learning styles and effectively show student achievement.  Trish mentioned using a comprehensive rubric “that students can target individual areas of improvement, and the teacher can tailor instruction to meet those needs.” This falls into line with keeping a student portfolio, which is a great way to see student year-long growth by collecting artifacts between the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Along with these two tools, allowing the student to express themselves, allowing them to find their voice, through conferencing and journaling help them understand the learning process better (Jen).  Using some of these assessments to complete self-assessment is an important type of assessment that gives “students a choice [and] helps them to take ownership of their own learning” (Cristi). These self-assessments do not have to be very long, and can be something as simple as a checklist. Other useful tools to make sure to jot down include: mind-maps, graphic organizers, peer-reviews, and entrance/exit tickets.  Using some of these tools and tests do present some challenges. In her post, Laurie highlights a few:  It can be found that not all tests are similar and that some teachers came out looking ‘better’ simply because their version of the test was slightly different. Also no two students are alike and some teachers who have the struggling readers cannot be compared to teachers who have students who come in already reading on/above grade level.  Formative assessments are more effective in measuring student achievement. When using the formative tools, it is important to work with teachers as well. |
| ***Question 3:***  *How can school librarianship instruction be beneficial to the growth of students in other fields of instruction and how is that measurable?* | As effective school librarians, it is imperative to collaborate with teachers in other fields of instruction. By doing so, instruction becomes beneficial and meaningful.  Toni Buzzeo and Stephanie Wilson provide insight into a very effective type of collaboration in the article, “Data-Driven Collaboration in Two Voices.” They look at how data collection can prove how student achievement is affected in the library. This must be done in collaboration with teachers in other fields of instruction to be truly effective. The process works by gathering data through various types of formative assessments: rubrics, conferencing, journaling, portfolio, etc. The librarian and participating teacher learn how to interpret this data. From the gathered information, the collaborators will be able to identify areas for development. The create units and lesson plans around the strengths and weaknesses of the students.  Once the planning stages have been completed, then the librarian and teacher will continue to collaborate in the delivery of the lesson/unit and assess upon completion. The data can then be used for more data collection. Wilson notes that “…in order to boost student achievement, an ongoing teacher/librarian collaborative partnership reinforcing student skills in areas of deficiency is more important than just an isolated lesson in the library” (22). Through dad-driven collaboration librarians can finally have a more direct tool to assess student growth.  The challenges arise when a school librarian finds that they do not have much support from the administration, there is a lack of planning time, and teacher unwillingness to collaborate. These obstacles can be overcome if the librarians become highly effective members of the school community. |
| ***Question 4:***  *How would you define effective and highly effective school librarianship? Of the items you identified, how are the outcomes measurable?* | What is a highly effective school librarian? Using evidence from observations, interviews, articles, and the discussion board, the conclusion has been drawn that a highly effective school librarian is one who is not simply content to "meet the needs of her patrons." (Kate) The highly effective go above and beyond what is necessary to be merely successful and transform the program into something that is integral, exciting, visible, vital, and stimulating to students, teachers, administrators, and the larger community. This idea is supported by the words of our peers below.   |  | | --- | | Laurie:  The difference between the effective and highly-effective librarian is that the effective librarian runs a program which works in practice and on paper (the left column of the rubric), whereas the highly-effective librarian is truly seen as a leader in the tangible, measurable sense and also in the intangible perceptions of the community around him or her. | | Kate:  A highly-effective librarian is known. She is in and out of classrooms to help support collaborative efforts away from the library: she wants to bring the library's resources to the students. She is on the announcements, recognizing certain students for meeting goals or recognizing classes for completing successful media literacy projects. She is begging for time at meetings throughout the year to present effective collaborative lessons, or to share new websites and online learning with all curricula. She meets regularly with the administration to advocate for her library. She learns the students names, and keeps track of their time in the library, both personal and academic.  And her high effectiveness is measured, certainly, by data surrounding collection circulation, data collected through collaborative projects and data, teacher and student evaluations of the library, and the librarian's own self-evaluations. But, in a slightly-less concrete manner, the effectiveness of a school librarian can easily be measured by observing how much the teachers and students (and the administration and parents) rely on the school librarian to help them find information or develop high-tech lessons. Is the librarian sought-out often for instructional purposes? If so, and if teachers are compelled to return and work with the librarian time and time again, she is highly-effective. | | Kathy:  *They had high expectations for student learning. They provided clear and focused instruction.* *They closely monitored student learning progress. They retaught using alternative strategies when children didn’t learn. They used incentives and rewards to promote learning. They were highly efficient in their classroom routines.* *They set and enforced high standards for classroom behavior* Many of these items could easily be seen by an administrator. They could easily be turned into a checklist that could be used during informal or formal observations. |   As school librarians become highly effective, the programs become highly effective as well. A highly effective program is well-developed, exhibits collaboration, utilizes information literacy skills, introduces the newest technologies, and demonstrates leadership. |

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