Administering the School Library Media Center

John T. Gillespie
Diana L. Spirt

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PREFACE

When we began work on the revision of this book, originally published as *Creating a School Media Program* in 1973, we soon discovered that we were adding a great deal of new material but subtracting very little. Not that our prose was ageless, as indeed it was not, but we did find that most of the material written a decade earlier was still valid today. The additions were made primarily to accommodate two contradictory phenomena that we have seen emerge in the past few years. In some library media centers, because of declining financial support, professional personnel are now often asked to perform semiprofessional tasks, such as technical processes that previously may have been handled elsewhere. At the same time, these professionals are exploring and utilizing sophisticated areas in electronic communications. For those reasons, the chapter on acquisition and organization (10) and the chapter on managerial concerns (11) are almost double in size from the first edition, and there are entirely new chapters on computers (9) and networking (12). Additional coverage involves the new Copyright Act and censorship, plus a thorough updating of all material from the first edition.

The information on specific criteria for evaluating materials and equipment has been removed from the appendix, where it was in the first edition, and placed in a separate chapter (8), which now includes lists of basic selection aids. Another new chapter (13), "Beyond the Single School Library Media Center," includes data on key professional organizations, government agencies, lobbying, and important professional tools. All of the material in the four appendixes is new to this edition. Included are directories of state school library media center agencies, relevant associations, and library furniture and supply houses, plus a number of key documents of concern to the school

library media specialist. Instead of a central bibliography, the updated reading list has been divided and placed after each chapter. In compiling these lists, emphasis was placed on accessibility of materials.

As in the first edition, background material on the history of the school library has been included, but the focus of the book is on practical considerations for establishing and operating a library media center within a single school. We have concentrated on recent developments in organizing and administering the center, and in so doing we hope to find an audience that includes both media personnel and library school students, as well as others.

Many people have helped in the preparation of this new edition. In particular, we would like to thank the Research Committee of the C. W. Post Center of Long Island University for their support, as well as the help of Ann Sector, Bette VanderWerf, and our understanding editor, Corinne Naden.

John T. Gillespie
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Diana L. Spirt
Professor, Palmer School of Library and Information Science
C. W. Post Center, Long Island University, New York

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THE ERA OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT LIBRARY

As early as 1740 Benjamin Franklin included a library in plans for his academy. However, the real beginning of the school library movement in the United States did not occur until almost a century later. New York State, under the leadership of Governor DeWitt Clinton, began the pioneer work. In 1835 the state legislature passed a law allowing school districts to use limited amounts of their tax monies to establish and maintain school libraries. When only a few districts decided to use their funds for this purpose, a second act was passed in 1839 to spur further action; it set aside a sum of $55,000 annually to be given on a matching-fund basis for the establishment of school district libraries. The effects were dramatic. During the school year 1841–1842, for example, more than 200,000 books were added to these collections. Several other states followed New York's leadership and passed similar legislation. In 1837, chiefly through the efforts of Horace Mann, Massachusetts enacted its first school district library law to enable school districts to raise funds for libraries. This law was liberalized in 1842 to give $15 per year from state funds to each school district that could supply a similar amount for library purposes. The Michigan law, also passed in 1837, stipulated that school districts that raised $10 maximum in taxes per year for libraries would be returned a proportion of the fines collected for breaches of the "disturbing the peace" laws! Connecticut followed with legislation in 1839, Rhode Island in 1840. By 1876, 19 states had passed some sort of law designed to promote public school libraries.

Yet the movement to build school district libraries during this period is generally considered a failure. The collections were usually

unattractive to children. They contained mainly textbooks or adult materials suitable only for a teacher's use. To capture this new book market, many unscrupulous publishers glutted the market with cheap, poorly written and produced texts, and without competently trained personnel to select library materials, many of these shoddy products found their way into collections. Facilities for housing these collections or the requisite abilities within each school district for organizing and administering them effectively were also insufficient. Consequently, the collections often became scattered; books disappeared and frequently were incorporated into the teacher's personal library. In time disillusionment set in concerning the value of this type of library service, and in many districts the money was diverted into other channels —supplies, equipment, and even teachers' salaries. One evidence of the decline of this movement is that New York State school district libraries in 1853 contained twice as many books as they did in 1890.

Perhaps a more important reason for the demise of the school district library is the growth of public libraries. Legislators as well as many educators began to support the development of a more broadly based agency that would be able to supply library service to more than a small segment of the community. In Massachusetts, for example, the 1837/1842 school library law was repealed in 1850 and replaced the following year by a law providing that tax monies be used to establish and develop public libraries. In time the public library superseded the school district library.

Although the school district library movement was perhaps premature—a phenomenon far in advance of existing social conditions—it is important historically for two reasons: the principle was established that a library facility in a school could have some educational value and a precedent was created for the use of public funds to support these libraries.

THE GENESIS OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

The year 1876 is considered the birth date of the modern American library movement. In that year the American Library Association (ALA) was created by librarians (led by Melvil Dewey) who were attending a series of meetings on national library development during the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. The first issue of *Library Journal* also appeared that year, as well as an extensive report, *Public Libraries in the United States of America: Their History, Condition and Management*, issued by the United States Bureau of Education. The report's title is somewhat misleading because the publication also includes information on other types of libraries. According to the

report, only 826 secondary school libraries were in existence in the United States (no elementary or grammar school libraries were reported) and their collections totaled only a million volumes.

Dismayed at the condition of school libraries in New York State and the seeming inability of local school districts to improve these conditions, Melvil Dewey, then secretary of the Board of Regents and director of the State Library, and Andrew S. Draper, Superintendent of Public Instruction, drafted a bill that the legislature passed in 1892. This law, a pioneering effort, allowed for the growth of school libraries in New York State and also served as a model for library legislation in other states. As in the 1839 school district library law, the new legislation provided that a single school district could receive monies on a matching-fund basis (no more than $500 per year) for the purchase of library books. In time other schemes were used to appropriate this money, and eventually a formula based on the size of the pupil population in the district became the yardstick. Only books approved by the Department of Public Instruction could be purchased with state funds. Lists of recommended titles were issued periodically, and they consisted of reference books, supplementary reading books, books related to the curriculum, and pedagogical books for use by teachers.

To prevent a reoccurrence of the disastrous ending of the school district library, these collections were intended to remain in the school at all times, but teachers, administrators, and pupils were allowed, on occasion, to borrow a single volume at a time for a period not to exceed two weeks.

A classroom teacher was to serve as school librarian, and by annual reports to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, these "librarians" were made responsible for the care and upkeep of the collection. Given these rigid regulations, it is easy to see that many schools were discouraged from applying for state funds. That modifications were necessary soon became apparent, and in time they came. Gradually other states passed similar legislation.

In 1892 New York State also formed its School Libraries Division within the Department of Public Instruction. Annual reports from the department show an increased concern with the development of school libraries, and for the first time, in the report of 1900, a tentative standard was issued for libraries in elementary schools:

> A small library is becoming indispensable to the teacher and pupils of the grammar school. In order to give definiteness to this idea of a small library, suppose it to consist of five hundred to one thousand books, containing the best classic stories, poems, biographies, histories, travels, novels, and books of science suitable for the use of children below high school. . . . It is evident that a carefully selected library of the best books of this character should be found in every grammar school.

Other developments indicated an increasing interest in school library development. In 1896, the National Education Association (NEA) created its Library Section partly because of a petition requesting action circulated by John Cotton Dana, then president of ALA, and partly because of the impassioned speech on the importance of libraries in education delivered by Melvil Dewey at an NEA national convention in Buffalo. ALA created a committee to cooperate with NEA's Library Section. (In December 1914, ALA founded its own School Library Section.) In 1900 the first graduate of a library school in the United States to serve as a school librarian was employed at the Erasmus Hall High School in New York City. Several state teachers' associations began developing sections for school librarians. In 1910 New York State once more led the way, this time by creating the High School Library Section within the New York State Teachers Association. That no mention is made of elementary school librarians reflects the absence of any significant development in this area.

At this time the role of the librarian was considered primarily a clerical one, and in schools that hired professional librarians there developed a struggle for recognition of equal status in position and salary for librarians with teachers. New York was one of the first cities to recognize that librarians were essentially teachers rather than clerks. In 1914 its Board of Education adopted regulations that made salaries of qualified high school librarians comparable to those of teachers and also recommended that prospective librarians should be graduates of a one-year course in an approved library school.

Although library schools were often requested to add courses for school librarianship to their curricula, progress in this area was slow. What little professional training was available was supplied usually through courses taught in teacher training institutions and normal schools or by brief summer workshops and institutes usually sponsored by a state education department or a teachers' association.

The statistics for this period show a gradual and encouraging growth in size of school library collections. The actual sorry state of school libraries was revealed, however, in a *Library Journal* article of April 1913 entitled "Development of Secondary School Libraries," in which the author, E. D. Greenman, comments on the status of these collections:

> Most of them are small collections of reference and textbooks, poorly quartered, unclassified and neither cataloged nor readily accessible for constant use. Of the 10,000 public high school librarians in the country at the present time, not more than 250 possess collections containing 3000 volumes or over.

A further indication of how school libraries lagged behind development in other library areas is the national statistic, revealed by M. E. Hall in the *Library Journal* of September 1915, that only 50 trained librarians had been appointed to schools (all secondary) between 1905 and 1915. The sad conclusion is that, although some foundation had been laid during this period for the development of school libraries, most schools had either no libraries or ones that were inadequate in size, staff, and organization.

In addition to the school library operated as an integral part of the school organization, various other structural patterns for supplying library service to children emerged during this period. These often involved attempts to combine public and school library service. The four most important methods were: (1) In rural and remote areas without even public libraries, the state library agency provided traveling or "package" libraries to schools. (2) In urban areas, students used the public library resources exclusively, and liaison between the school and public library was maintained by such devices as visits to the school by professional librarians and placing loan collections in the schools. (3) A branch of the public library was created in the school to supply library service for both the children and adults in the community. In 1895, for example, a public library branch was established in Cleveland's Central High School, and four years later another was set up in a high school in Newark, New Jersey. Unfortunately, these book collections were usually more suited to adults, and often this division of interests resulted in neither population's being served adequately. (4) A system of joint control was established by which a public library branch to be used exclusively by students and teachers was placed in the school, but organized and administered by the staff of the public library. Once more problems arose involving the divided loyalties of the librarians and the inability of the library to respond immediately to changing curricular needs. More important, under this system of joint control the library was never an integral part of the school program, but was looked on as an outside agency.

Although some of these variant patterns of organization persisted into the middle of this century (and, indeed, in some areas are still in existence), they were gradually found unsuitable, and the prevailing pattern that emerged was an independent library in individual schools under the control of a board of education. Following this development several larger school districts formed central library agencies for supervision and guidance. In the interests of efficiency these agencies later expanded to provide such services as centralized processing, selection centers, and districtwide circulation of special collections.

THE AGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The rapid growth of school libraries following World War I parallels the similar general growth in public education. School population increased tremendously. In the 30-year span between 1900 and 1930, the elementary school population alone rose by 50 percent, and at the secondary level the growth was even more phenomenal.

A general population increase coupled with sustained faith in the importance of a general education were primary factors in producing this situation: less child labor was employed and there was a more stringent enforcement of school attendance regulations. Centralization of schools helped promote the development of larger units that now could afford what was sometimes regarded as the luxury of a library and the services of a qualified librarian.

Teaching systems also changed. The use of a single textbook and rote memorization were often supplanted by other teaching methods that stressed individualized instruction and a recognition of the differences among children. New curriculum structures, such as the Winnetka Plan (1920), the Dalton (Massachusetts) Plan (1920), and the many others that grew from the influence of John Dewey and his progressive education movement, underscored the need in schools for quantities of various kinds of educational materials. The logical source for this material was a well-stocked, well-administered school library.

The beginning of this period also saw the publication of the first national school library standards. In 1915, a nationwide survey on the teaching of English was conducted by the National Council of Teachers of English. Through this report the totally inadequate condition of school libraries in the United States came to light. This prompted NEA to appoint a committee of both librarians and educators under the chairmanship of Charles C. Certain to study secondary school libraries. The committee's final report was submitted to NEA in 1918 and was approved. ALA's Committee on Education also approved the report, and it was published by ALA in 1920. The report's official title is *Standard Library Organization and Equipment for Secondary Schools*, but it is commonly known as the "Certain report."[1]

The Certain report begins by painting a gloomy but truthful picture of the status of the post-World War I school library: "There are few well-planned high school libraries in the U.S. Sometimes there is a large study hall for the library—generally just one room with no workroom or conveniences of any kind for the staff."[2] Specific quantitative standards are given for secondary school libraries in schools of various sizes and grade levels. Included are liberal recommendations for physical facilities (the library should accommodate 5 to 10 percent

of the school population), qualifications of librarians (an undergraduate degree, one year of library science, and a minimum of one year of library work with young adults), size of book collections (6–8 books per student), as well as details on equipment, supplies, and budget.

The report is adamant on standards for the professional role of the librarian: "Clerical work of the high school of the nature of office work should not be demanded of the librarian." The standards are forward-looking and even prophetic in their espousal of the media center concept long before the term came into existence:

> The Library should serve as the center and coordinating agency for all material used in the school for visual instruction, such as stereopticons, portable motion picture machines, stereopticon slides, moving picture films, pictures, maps, globes, bulletin board material, museum loans, etc. Such material should be regularly accessioned and cataloged, and its movements recorded, and directed from the library.[3]

The Certain high school standards (and their supplement of 1932) had a beneficial effect on school library growth. They provided the first yardstick to evaluate local libraries and also created a framework from which other accrediting agencies—library departments, regional, state, and local—could develop other sets of standards.

A second Certain report, *Elementary School Library Standards*, appeared in 1925 and received once more the endorsement of both NEA and ALA. In these standards the integrated media approach was restated:

> There is need, therefore, of a new department in the school whose function it shall be to assemble and distribute the materials of instruction. . . . In its first purpose, that of school library service, it may be thought of as the one agency in the school that makes possible a definite systematic manipulation and control of the materials of instruction. . . . [The collection should include] moving picture films, pictures for illustrative purposes, post cards, stereopticon slides, stereography, victrola records. This material shall be recorded by the librarian and distributed from the library.[4]

Once more these standards were exhaustive in the amount of specific detail given. For example, included in the extensive supply lists are the length of the ruler needed in the library office (18 inches), the brand of paper clips to buy (Gem), the color of bookends to be purchased (olive green). There is also appended a list of 212 basic books for the elementary school library. The twelve fiction titles include *Peter Pan*, *Heidi*, and *Water Babies*. Because most elementary schools had no libraries and the need for them was still generally unrecognized, the impact of these standards was not as great as that of the 1920 standards.

In 1924 the North Central Association developed the "Score Card

for School Libraries," a set of standards that began concentrating attention on programs or qualitative standards rather than on quantities of materials. In 1927 this association required each member high school to score its library.

That the Certain standards overemphasized the quantitative aspects of school library programs was criticized in other areas as well, and when the Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards was formed in 1933, a new study was begun. This resulted in the publication of a numerical scoring technique to evaluate the secondary school (including the school library). Through numerous revisions, this publication has evolved into the *Evaluative Criteria*, an instrument still widely used by many accreditation associations and by schools for self-evaluation.

Other documents of the period focused attention on school libraries. In 1932, a national secondary school library survey was conducted by B. Lamar Johnson as part of the National Survey of Secondary Education sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education. The resultant publication, *The Secondary School Library*, supplied data on 390 libraries as well as special information on exemplary programs. Athough no specific recommendations are given, indirect guidance for library program development is suggested. The Department of Elementary School Principals of NEA entitled its twelfth annual yearbook *The Elementary School Library (1933)* and in 1943 the second part of the forty-second yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education was called *The Library in General Education.* Many monographs also appeared that supplied, for the first time, guidance on how to establish and maintain a school library. Lucille F. Fargo wrote an ALA publication, *The Library in the School*, that had a publishing history of several editions and became the standard textbook on administering school library services. A detailed and sophisticated evaluation device for gathering data and measuring a school library's development appeared in 1951. The authors were Frances Henne, Ruth Ersted, and Alice Lohrer; the title, *A Planning Guide for the High School Library* (ALA). Other important administrative texts for various types of libraries and levels of professional competencies were written by Hannah Logasa, Azile Wofford, Mary Peacock Douglas, and Jewel Gardiner.

The second set of national school library standards, *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow*, appeared in 1943. This was one of a series of documents on standards that was developed under the leadership of the ALA Committee on Post-War Planning. This publication represents the cooperative efforts of school library specialists then prominent in the field. The work is primarily descriptive. It contains

separate chapters on the purposes of school libraries and the various services that can be offered through the school library. Quantitative standards are presented throughout the text and summarized in chart form in appendixes. The standards reflect a progressive and forward-looking view concerning the role of the school library in relation to the school's objectives and the equal importance of both elementary and secondary libraries. They are, however, less definite about the place of nonbook materials in the library than were the Certain standards. For example:

> The wide use of many books, periodicals, prints, maps, recordings, films and other audio-visual aids has made it imperative that information regarding all materials in the school be available from some central source. The school library appears to be the logical place for this information even when some of the materials are housed outside the library.[5]

Requirements for certification of school librarians improved and became more rigidly codified during this period. A U.S. Office of Education study conducted in 1940 showed that some provision for certifying school librarians existed in every state. Eight states provided this by specific state laws, 24 states allowed their education departments to provide their own certification requirements, and 16 states allowed local school boards to certify their librarians. The requirements varied considerably. For example, while one state required only two years of college and eight hours of library science, another required a bachelor's degree. New York State had the highest certification requirements, followed closely by California. By regulation effected in 1930, New York State required for permanent certification as a school librarian an undergraduate degree, 36 hours of library science (the maximum and minimum number of semester hours in each area of course work was specified), and 18 hours in education, including student teaching. In 1925, New York State mandated the appointment of a secondary school librarian (or, when necessary, a classroom teacher to serve in this capacity) for all but very small secondary schools in the state.

Although these certification requirements were written down, in many states, school districts often ignored them simply by not creating positions for school librarians. In most schools the library was still administered on a part-time basis by volunteer help or by classroom teachers who were given released time for this function.

The amount of statewide supervision of school librarians increased markedly during this period. In 1939 only 13 states employed full-time supervisors, but by 1960 more than half the states had developed these positions. Primarily because of increased federal spending for school