Handbook for Planning

Joint Use School/Public Libraries

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The Questions

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide for communities interested in establishing a joint use school/public library.

Why is it important for a community to have a public library? As more adults continue their education beyond high school, college, and working careers, the library plays a critical role in providing educational opportunities for people in all walks of life. As budget constraints affect the average citizen, the "free" public library offers everything from books to DVDs, from computers with on-line capability, to programs and services for limited English speaking populations.

Why is it important for a school to have a library? The important role that school libraries play in contributing to student achievement has been delineated through research in many states, including Texas. These studies clearly indicate that schools with good library resources, librarians who collaborate with teachers, and up-to-date resources reflect higher student achievement on statewide tests.

How can communities stretch tax dollars? As tax dollars become limited, taxpayers may ask questions about duplication of services. School boards and city council members are looking for alternative ideas that will save taxpayer's money, maximize resources, and expand usage of existing facilities. Combining school and public library facilities, staff, resources, and services may save valuable tax dollars.

Is your community underserved? Does your community have a public library? Do your schools have libraries? Does each have adequate resources, facilities, and staff to serve the needs of public and school library communities? If not, your community may be underserved.

Can the missions of public and school libraries be successfully joint use? Although the mission of the *public* and *school library* may differ, with proper planning and resolution of issues, a combination of services at a single facility can be achieved.

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One Possible Answer: Joint Use School/Public Libraries

A community that is seeking ways to save some tax dollars, while also meeting the mission of both school and public libraries, may want to consider the feasibility of a joint use school/public library.

> "Economic factors are **not** the most important measure of success for joint use libraries, as we have come to learn. We're excited about how joint use libraries allow us to touch people's lives. These libraries improve the quality of life for residents who live near them. Our positive reaction to joint use libraries is based on one simple thing: the community is responding to us."[1]

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[1] Miller, William and Rita M. Pellen, editors, _Joint Use Libraries_, Haworth Information Press, 2001.

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The mission of the school library is to

"…provide essential materials and technology for curricular and instructional needs. School library media specialists teach information literacy skills essential for academic achievement and prepare students to be lifelong learners.

"Public libraries are centers for community life and learning, offering people of all ages, free and open access to information resources, programs, technology and meeting space to support a broad range of educational and leisure interests. Public libraries must offer all members of the public full and open access with few permissible restrictions, and are usually open from 9:00 am until 9:00 pm on weekdays and also on weekends."[2]

"Joint use libraries are more than a shared building. Libraries generically have the function of providing access to resources, information and services to meet the needs of their target clientele, by collecting, organizing, preserving and making available collections of books and their materials, and by temporarily acquiring or accessing resources. Collections and information held in other libraries."[3]

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Steps To Determine How Services Can Be Joined

The steps outlined below can be initiated either by interested citizens, librarians, city officials, or school administrators.

Step 1: **Invite Stakeholders.** Participation should include a range of community members who can contribute or who have an interest in the initial assessments. If community members initiate this process, community officials, the school superintendent, and principals should be informed that a working organization is being established. At the beginning of the process, obtain suggestions of names of other people in the community who might be interested in the project. Extend invitations to stakeholders in the community, interested citizens, librarians, and officials from city or school administrations. Include administrators, teachers, and parents from elementary, middle and high schools, and representatives from the public library if one already exists. Invite all stakeholders to the initial meeting.

Step 2: **Solicit School/Public Library Input.** Contact representatives from both school and public libraries, if they already exist, to discuss the mission of their library. Use the chart in Table A of this document as a basis for dialogue about public and school library missions. Participants must come to an understanding of the roles of school libraries, public libraries, and joint use school/public libraries.

Step 3: **Arrange Initial Meeting**. Schedule the meeting date, time, and location, and establish a meeting agenda that includes beginning and ending times for initial meeting. Explain the objective for the meeting to attendees. This Handbook may be provided to participants. Prepare a list of all meeting attendees and solicit volunteers prior to the meeting to take notes.

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[2] *"School/Pubic Library Joint Use Facility Standards"* Developed by the Educational Media Association of New Jersey, the New Jersey Library Association, The New Jersey State Library, 2003.
[3] *Queensland Government, Guidelines for the Development of Joint use School-Community Librarie*s

Step 4: **Establish Commitment of Interest.** Determine if the timing and climate are right for a partnership. Consider a community survey. Solicit city, county, school, and public administrators and employees, business people, Chamber of Commerce representatives, representatives from ethnic groups, newspapers, and civic groups. Discuss the "Key questions to consider in the establishment and operation of a joint use school/public library" in Section 4 of this handbook.

Step 5: **Establish A Steering Committee.** If the group decides to move forward with the joint use library project after the initial dialogue and community survey, a steering committee should be elected. This committee will determine specific functions for subcommittees, establish a timeline, set meeting dates, and begin to shape the vision of the project. The steering committee can gather information in Section 5, "School Library Current Facts Checklist" and "Public Library Current Facts Checklist."

Step 6: **Set Goals.** Use the acronym S.M.A.R.T. to establish goals. Goals should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**imely. As committees begin their work they should concentrate on short-term goals. If a SMART form is used committees will be working in a uniform manner.

Step 7: **Identify Legal Issues.** Legal issues include the requirements of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission for establishment of a library, and also involve school and city governance. These issues are not complicated; however, there is a sequence that must be followed. The committee should request sample contracts, memoranda of understanding, and examples of documents from existing joint use school/public libraries in Texas. The Library Development Division of Texas State Library and Archives System (TSLAC) can provide these documents.

Step 8: **Compare Established Projects.** The Library Development Division at TSLAC can provide a list of all Texas joint use school/public libraries, contact names, and telephone numbers. It is recommended that committee members visit some of these libraries and take photographs. When the visitation report is presented to the entire group, the photographs will increase understanding of joint use school/public libraries.

Step 9: **Identify Funding Options.** Funds may be available for planning as well as for the development of the facility and library program. One committee should investigate funding sources that may be available locally or from the state and federal government.

Step 10: **Establish Formal Communication Process**. In this age of technology, committee members may communicate by telephone, fax, newsletters, web sites, discussion lists and groups, and e-mail. Develop a communication plan that establishes frequency and responsibility for communication. Consider a newsletter so the community can track efforts. Discuss a progress report that can be included in the local newspaper. Remember, establishing a library is a change that may affect all community members.

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Key Questions to Consider in the Establishment and Operation of a Joint Use School/Public Library

• Are both the time and climate conducive to develop a partnership?

• Are there community, grassroots support, and individuals who can commit time to spark the project?

• Are there community members who have the time and ability to conduct a survey?

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- Can leaders be identified for the project?

- Are both school and city officials positive about the project?

- Will the partnership concept work equally in rural, suburban or inner-city neighborhoods?

- Are there members of the committee willing to develop a long-range plan that will be mutually beneficial to all partners?

- Who will identify legal issues?

- Who will assist in developing a contract (memorandum of understanding or written document) that outlines the role each partner will play?

- Can library collections reflect the demographics and interest of the community **and** support the school curriculum?

- Are student reading achievement scores meeting state standards?

- Are community needs being met, i.e., needs of senior citizens, children and families, speakers of languages other than English, etc.?

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School Library Current Facts Checklist

A good school library is a central collection of books and other resources that all the children in a school may use whenever needed. The school library is the heart of the teaching program, and it is a place for discovery. The librarian is *not* a mere custodian of books. The librarian is a dynamic force, working with teachers to provide books and resources needed to support the curriculum. More importantly, the librarian is a professional guide to help young people find *pleasure* in reading.

	What is the status of the school library now?	What must be improved?
Number of books in the collection		
Average age of the collection		
Annual amount spent on library books		
Annual amount spent on other library materials		
School enrollment (average daily attendance or enrollment)		
Size of school library (square feet)		
FTE professional staff		

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FTE clerical staff		
Total computer work stations		
Part time staff		
Total computers with internet connection		
Databases available		
Goal for 2007-08		
Goal for 2008-09		
Goal for 2009-10		
Goal for 2010-11		

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Public Library Current Facts Checklist

The primary role of a public library is to provide access to books, information and programming that support community needs and interests. Public libraries need additional public meeting room space and areas for public programming. The collection should meet the broadest spectrum of community needs and interests.

	What is the status of the library now?	What must be improved?
Number of books in the collection		
Average age of the collection		
Annual amount spent on library materials		
Size of library (square feet)		
FTE professional staff		
FTE clerical staff		
Total computer workstations		
Total computers with internet connection		
Data Bases available		

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Goal for 2007-08		
Goal for 2008-09		
Goal for 2009-10		
Goal for 2010-11		

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Co-location: Criteria for Success

Advice/Resources: Participants must commit time for brainstorming, time to create a vision, and time to establish goals. Decisions will be made for the community on the commitment of joint use library services. Review the *Texas Public Library Standards* and *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas*. Contact the Library Development Division staff of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) for advice and assistance. Seek advice from staff at existing joint use school/public libraries.

Planning: The words "careful planning" hold the key to success both initially and throughout the project. Discussions should be held on issues such as finances, staff, and legal documents required. The commitment of planning time and conflict resolution are essential to success.

Funding: Will there be costs for preparation of legal documents? Planning for a project of this size takes time, people and money. Consider grant applications, or special funding for a feasibility and planning study for the project.

Legal Documents: See Section Twelve of this handbook for information about documents needed.

Joint use Mission: Library planners should consider the facility as one library serving two missions in one building. They should establish a joint use school/public library mission statement that supports the mission of both the public and school library. Consideration should be given to the *Texas Public Library Standards* and the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas.*

Governing Body: The library board should include membership from both school and public community. Library board meetings should be held on a regular basis, and should provide an opportunity for community input as well as reports from the librarians. This governing body will approve the joint use school/public library mission statement and policies and procedures for the library program. Annual library reports will be submitted to this governing body.

Financial Support: A clear delineation of how financial support will be divided between the city, the public school, and possibly the county must be considered and agreed upon by the governing body. Consideration should be given to funding levels recommended in both the *Texas Public Library Standards* and in the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas.*

Staffing: A standard for sufficient accredited, professional staff and clerical assistance will ensure success. One professional certified librarian from an accredited library school program should be designated to direct the overall library program. Consideration should be given to staffing levels recommended in both the *Texas Public Library Standards* and in the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas.*

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Facility Considerations: Plans should include accessibility for all users meeting the codes for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), separate areas for children and adults, outside entrance and parking; separate restroom facilities, meeting room spaces, adequate signage, furniture and shelving for school and public library users, space for evolving technology, and office and storage areas. Consideration should be given to facilities as described in both the *Texas Public Library Standards* and in the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas.*

8 Factors for Long Range Success

- Continued communication and commitment between the community, city, school officials and library staff.

- Regular meetings scheduled for planning, interaction, and evaluation.

- Continued involvement of all important stakeholders and governing bodies.

- Continued evaluation and acceptance of a community vision to meet both the needs of pre-school parents, youth of all ages, business interests, plus senior citizens.

- Encouragement of the unique role of the librarian within the community.

- Continued search for community needs that match library services.

- The library program should maintain connections and networks with schools of education, schools of library and information studies, professional organizations, and local and state agencies.

9 Attributes Of Successful Joint Use School/Public Libraries

What factors contribute to success? This section includes "best practices" for successful joint use school/public libraries.

Facilities & Accessibility

Successful facilities have separate areas for children and adults, and sufficient space, furniture, shelving, and technology resources to accommodate both school and pub*lic library users simultaneously. Meeting rooms are available equally to both the school and public library. The library décor is welcoming to both the school and public library communities. There is adequate, convenient parking for public library users. Consideration is given to recommendations for facilities in both the *Texas Public Library Standards* and the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas.*

Signage

Outside signs identify the facility as a public library. If the library is located within a school, appropriate signage directs the public library community to the library.

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Hours of Operation

Successful joint use school/public libraries are open to the public during and beyond the school day. They are open on weekends, during the summer, and maintain schedules similar to public libraries during holidays.

Staffing

Adequate professional and non-professional staff serve both the school and public library communities during and beyond the instructional day, on weekends, and during summers and holidays. Consideration is given to both the *Texas Public Library Standards* and the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas* in determining staffing levels.

Collection

Collections support the needs of both the school and public library communities. Selection is based on board-approved collection development policies that include specifications for the percentage of the collection for school curriculum support and juvenile and adult collections. TexShare and other online databases are available to both the school and public library community. The collection includes resources for all ages, including best sellers and award winners, and fiction and non-fiction curriculum support. The collection size per capita, circulation per capita, age of collection, and weeding are within guidelines recommended in the *School Library Programs: Standards for Texas* and the *Texas Public Library Standards*.

Programs and Services

Successful joint use school/public libraries offer a wide variety of services to both the school and public library communities, as described in the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas* and the *Texas Public Library Standards*. These include reference assistance, collaboration with teachers, database training, programs for children and adults, reading promotion, and instruction on the use of the library.

Publicity and Communication

Programs and services are promoted to both the school and public library communities through a variety of mediums, both within and outside of the library. Within the library, there are web sites, bulletin boards, brochures, flyers, and calendars of events that either separately or collectively include programs and services for the school and library communities. Library programs and services are publicized outside of the library through newsletters, newspapers, radio, cable TV, flyers, posters, signs and retail marquis, the Internet, and participation in community events.

Funding Level, Source, and Budget Considerations

Total operating budget is sufficient staff, resources, services, and operating expenditures to support both the school and public library communities. Consideration is given to recommended funding levels in the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas* and the *Texas Public Library Standards.*

Mission Statement

The library has a mission statement that has been formally approved by both the school and public library administration. The school and public library administration and all library staff support the joint mission.

Governance Structure and Administration

Governing organizations responsible for successful joint use school/public libraries have executed contracts outlining the responsibilities of each partner. Governing organizations approve policies and procedures, including collection development and reconsideration policies, circulation policies, library card application policies, and acceptable use policies. Governing organizations approve annual budget. Library staff has copies of policies and procedures and administer day-to-day activities in accordance with policies and procedures.

Library staff in successful joint use school libraries evaluates their library programs in accordance with the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas* and the *Texas Public Library Standards.* Administration and boards of all partner agencies receive annual reports. Texas State Library receives an annual statistical report.

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Characteristics of Successful Librarians in Joint Use School/Public Librarians

Enthusiasm: For a library program to be successful, the librarian must be dedicated and enthusiastic about the library program and its effect on the community. The librarian is flexible and welcomes change.

Change Agent: The librarian is a catalyst for the community and welcomes guidance from all aspects of the community and all agencies. Librarians who take advantage of staff development through the Education Service Centers, TSLAC, and the ten Texas Library Systems gain knowledge and skills that enable them to serve as a catalyst. Resistance toward change is not found in the successful library.

Community Involvement: The librarian is involved in the community and expresses community awareness, pride in the community, and awareness of the needs of the community to library visitors.

Library Service: Librarians have a complete understanding that the library serves both the school and public library communities. The designated name of the facility may be joint use school/public library, however, the basic premise is that of a public library.

Public Relations and Programs: Libraries include many resources, but the most important aspect of a successful library is the human factor. The library of today is engaged in many activities that were not considered in years past. Providing second language classes, programs for students attempting to complete education requirements, and service to an aging population, are just a few of the needs for today's library. The library director and staff are committed to an expanding array of services and to communicating the services to both the school and public library communities.

Technology: The ability to welcome and implement new technologies for accessing information is an essential factor in the successful library. These include distance learning and other new avenues for communication and learning. In the successful library, librarians identify the need, the use, and secure funding for technology that improves library service.

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POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES OF JOINT USE SCHOOL/PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Improved collection of resources

- Less duplication of resources and services

- Additional databases available for student and public users

- Year-round utilization of school library resources

- Enhanced library services

- Maximization of financial resources

- Availability of school resources throughout the summer

- Creation of a community focal point for adults and young people

- Availability of new technology for community

COMMON PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED WITH JOINT USE SCHOOL/PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Conflicts in management, leadership, or ownership

- Failure of governing board to define responsibilities

- Failure to establish and approve policies and procedures that serve both school and public library communities

- Reluctance of adults to use the "school"

- Space limitations

- Funding may be unequal between city and school

- No clear definition of mission of public or school library services

- No cost savings

- Unequal service to school and public library communities

- Failure to spend adequate time planning

- Restricted circulation

- Censorship

- Misunderstanding by citizens of professional librarian's role.

- Differences in basic understanding of purpose of joint use school/public library operation

- Lack of access for adults during school day

- Inadequate facilities including space, furniture, parking, restrooms, and Internet capability

- Geographic location and potential re-location

- If schools are a distance from the facility, students do not have easy access

- No allowance for facilities growth

- Inadequate parking for public library users

- Inadequate budget (staffing, resources, equipment)

- Lack of public interest, knowledge, and support

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Cooperative Efforts

Key planning and implementation processes that will support cooperation and collaboration efforts include the following:

- Communication through both informal and formal planning meetings.

- Advisory community groups with representatives from all related constituents.

- Community analysis/assessment.

- Joint planning to define various roles and to establish and refine both long-term and short -term goals and objectives.

- Continuous monitoring through a clearly defined evaluation process.[4]

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[4] *Fitzgibbons, 1989, 30*

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Background Resources

Committee members, including members from various backgrounds, may better understand both school and public library missions and goals by reviewing the following information prior to the first committee meeting.

- The role and function of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) and the Library Development Division.

- The role of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines*, state curriculum or Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the statewide testing program for all students.

- Reading motivation programs provided by the Library Development Division of TSLAC.

- Reading motivation programs provided by the Texas Library Association (Bluebonnet Book Award Program, 2 X 2 List of Books for ages two through second grade, and TAYSHAS and Lone Star reading lists for Young Adults)

- National (American Library Association) and state standards (TSLAC) for school and public libraries.

- Major awards for literature for children of all ages developed by the American Library Association, the Association for Library Service for Children, and the American Association of School Librarians.

- The technology and information literacy skills needed by all young people and citizens.

- The potential of networking within the scope of the library's mission to enhance information for all users.

- Community groups that work with youth (school and public library personnel, juvenile justice and social welfare organizations, youth advocacy groups and youth advisory councils.)

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Library Sites to Visit

It is highly recommended that communities considering a joint use school/public library project visit several existing facilities as part of the planning process. Texas has many outstanding examples of joint use school/public libraries in a variety of locations. The following brief list includes the area and city. Contact information may be obtained from TSLAC.

Panhandle area: The cities of Wellington and Olney

North Texas – Dallas area: The cities of Forney and Celina

Central Texas The city of Marion

Trans Pecos The city of Rock Springs

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Documents/Legal Requirements

The TSLAC Library Development Division can provide information on the requirements for the establishment of a joint use public/school library. Legal requirements may change and each community has a different set of circumstances.

The following statute in Vernon's Civil Statutes, Library Laws of Texas authorizes a contract between a school district and city or county.

§ 33.022. CONTRACT WITH COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY.

(a) A school district may enter into contracts with a county or municipality in which the district is located to provide joint library facilities.

(b) The board of trustees of the school district and the commissioners' court of the county or governing body of the municipality must conduct public hearings before entering into a contract under this section. The hearings may be held jointly. Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

A public library shall be established to render general library services as a department of a city or county government by charter, resolution, or ordinance; or by contract as provided for in the Government Code, Chapter 791; or as a library district established under the provisions of Local Government Code, Chapter 326, Library Districts; or as a non profit corporation chartered by the Office of the Secretary of State for the purposes of providing free public library services, and having a current contract with a city, county, school district, or library district to provide free public library services for the city, county, school district, or library district.

Joint use school/public libraries must file the following documents with the Texas State Library:

A statement certifying that no person shall be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of the services of that library on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, Assurance of Compliance – Nondiscrimination;

Interlocal agreement for the establishment of a joint use school/public library;

Assurance of Compliance with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Regulation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;and

Articles of Incorporation.

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Selected Bibliography – Joint Use School/Public Libraries

Additional titles on this subject can be supplied by the Library Science Collection of the Library Development Division of TSLAC. 512-463-5494.

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TABLE A: Roles of School and Public Libraries		
Role	**School Library**	**Public Library**
Formal education curriculum resources and service center.	• Provides resources in a variety of formats and services to meet curriculum needs for teachers and students.	• Provides resources for curriculum support for students in elementary, middle school, high school, higher education, for adult learners, and for teachers. Provides assistance in locating and instruction in utilizing resources. • Assists individuals of all ages in meeting continuing and adult educational needs through a collection in a variety of formats, including print and electronic. • Contain resources a wide range of formats for all ages, including manuscripts and pamphlets, posters, photographs, motion pictures, and videotapes, sound recordings, and computer databases. • Provides reference and readers' advisory service and Interlibrary loan for children and adults.
Resource-based teaching and learning media center	• Teachers and librarians collaborate to provide students with an opportunity to integrate library resources with classroom curriculum. • Teachers and librarians collaborate to select appropriate information resources and learning activities appropriate to the learning needs of students	• Provides resources and programs such as English as a second language, adult literacy, early literacy, and parenting classes, for community members of all ages and with special learning needs. • Provides instruction in the use of library resources such as online databases and library catalog. • Collaborates with teachers to provide resources to support assignments for students of all ages.
Early childhood	• Encourages students, either in preschool or early childhood classes, to develop an interest in reading and learning through resources and activities targeted to their interests and developmental stage.	• Provides programs and resources to assist young children in acquiring early literacy and pre-literacy skills. Provides family literacy and parenting programs. • Partners with child care centers, head start centers, and other community agencies that serve young children and

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		families.
Professional development	• Supports teachers in formal and informal professional development.	• Supports library staff in formal and informal professional development. May provide professional development opportunities to library staff.
Independent learning	• Supports students through independent inquiry and study, either as a part of curriculum requirements or through interests	• Supports individuals of all ages pursuing a sustained program of learning independently of any educational provider. • Provides summer reading program to support students in maintaining or improving reading skills.
Popular materials	• Supports development of literacy skills and literature appreciation by including current, high-demand, high-interest resources appropriate to the age and ability range of the students in the school	• Provides current, high-demand, high-interest resources in a variety of formats for community members of all ages. • Provides award books to children to encourage a love of reading, such as Caldecott, Newbery, Bluebonnet, and Lone Star books.
Reference	• Provides access to timely and accurate reference resources to support TEKS or state curriculum, research topics in all subjects.	• Actively promotes timely, accurate, and useful information on a variety of topics (health, business, finance, education, genealogy and local history, etc.) for community members.
Community Activities	• Provides a central focus site within the school for student work displays and special events.	• Is a community center or central focus point for community activities and meetings. • Provides outreach services to many community organizations such as child care centers, schools, and head start agencies.
Community Information		• Serves as a clearinghouse for current information on community organizations, issues, and services. Assists with Interlibrary Loan and genealogy services.
Public workplace	• Provides facilities outside the classroom for students and teachers to read, think, plan or work.	• Provides a comfortable place for community members who need a place outside their own home to read, think, or work.
Access to global	• Provides access for students and	• Provides access to members of the

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electronic resources	teachers to electronic resources (Internet, a wide variety of databases) to support curriculum needs. Provides instruction for students in methods of research using electronic tools.	community for information from a wide variety of databases, and the Internet, either independently, or with assistance from the librarian.

This example of a flow chart was developed by the Queensland Department of Education and may be used in to identify steps in the development of a joint use school/public library. Queensland Department of Education, Queensland, Australia, 1996.