

## **Accomplished Libraries: Exploring Student Centered Programs**

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### **Introduction**

How will school librarians successfully impact student learning today and in the future?  
How will school librarians respond to challenging times and prepare for the unknown future?  
How will school librarians be flexible, innovative, and transformational?

In 1983, a landmark report titled “A Nation at Risk” focused on a “rising tide of mediocrity” in education as a threat to America’s future. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy responded with a task force of policymakers, educators, teacher associations and business leaders. The task force advocated for standards in teaching and professionalizing the teaching workforce. In 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was established as a **voluntary** advanced professional certification for PreK-12 educators. Decades of research from across the country confirms: Students taught by Board-certified teachers learn more than students taught by other teachers. The positive impact is even greater for minority and low-income students.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards focuses on five key principles. Using these five key principles, school librarians can explore programs, projects and ideas that are student centered and support student learning.

### **Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning**

Know your students, who they are and what they are interested in: do you work with recent immigrants, students who are in foster care or group homes, teen parents? Every school has unique, diverse student populations. The teacher librarian researches and applies information about students, curriculum and community for collection development, to plan programs and to support ALL student learning. Kay: Easy low/no cost programs that can be tailored to any school library, like the annual IASL bookmark exchange. Every year, students can design and create bookmarks to send to a school in another country. When bookmarks arrive from the overseas school library, students can learn and share these unique international bookmarks. This is an easy and fun project for every age group and population. Students ReBuild <https://www.studentsrebuild.org/> includes free lessons and a simple art challenge for students to create as they learn about global issues to support stewardship with matching funds for every art project submitted. For school libraries that enjoy presenting STEAM programs, check out We Share Solar <https://wesharesolar.org/curriculum/> At our school that serves pregnant and teen mothers, students have created a Solar Suitcase for several years and sent the completed project to Africa annually. As they design and build their solar suitcase, students are problem solving using math and science.

**Nancy:** In the past, students have traditionally come into the library media setting as consumers, reading the works of published authors. Of course, I am committed to continuously finding titles and resources related to students' experiences and shifting the narrative from single to multiple perspectives. In addition, I am providing opportunities and the tools for students to tell their own stories. Students are thus shifting from, not only being consumers of the library, but creators as well. By oral storytelling, or documenting his/her story, students are sharing what truly matters to them, their experiences, their dreams, hopes, fears, and so much more.

### **Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students**

School librarians develop important lessons about information and media literacy. Helping students become digital citizens is essential in today's school libraries. Nancy: With the guidance of Common Sense Media <https://www.commonsense.org/education>

students from Kindergarten through 5th grades, their classroom teachers and parents receive age appropriate lessons, recommended vetted apps and websites, parent tips and current topics such as digital literacy and/or digital footprint.

**Kay:** We can explore and extend library subjects with service learning and student leadership in the library. I was coordinating a K-5 student council and we were brainstorming a reward for the class with outstanding participation. After suggestions of pizza, I had to let students know there was no funding! Then a kindergartener raised her hand and said, “Let’s reward the class with extra recess!” Students can enthusiastically learn all subject areas with a wide variety of library books and programs including cooking, school gardening, grant writing, buddy reading, bookmaking/cartoons, chess, and hip hop culture!

### **Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Students Learning**

Students are extra excited to find surprises in a treasure box, especially books of interest to read and keep. Even in today’s high-tech world, traditional hard copy books still have the amazing ability to offer inspiration, excitement and so much more. When books are shared, we allow the opportunity to let those books have new life and magically become a new book for new readers. Having a place like a treasure box in the library is a perfect place where students can go and select a book for themselves, adding to his/her home library collection.

**Nancy:** Introducing Genius hour has been an incredible way for students to pursue their passion and become a genius on his/her topic of choice. Students begin with an essential question that requires research from trusted sites. Their resources have included primary sources such as interviews, documents, articles, images, and/or maps. Students not only choose the topic they wish to learn more about, but also are given the option of how they are documenting and who will be their audience.

Everyone has a story to tell. My students come into the library and love to read stories that published authors have written, but they too can be empowered by seeing themselves as writers and/or illustrators. With writing paper, blank journals and the various writing tools at the writer’s station, students can not only write their story but illustrate their work as well. Story writing has been an authentic way of helping my students improve their writing skills

AND writing their own stories has encouraged creativity and imagination. They are exploring their own ideas, emotions, and thoughts.

Story writing helps ALL students share their stories. Immigrant students write in their first language and students have options when documenting his/her story. I am providing a space where students can share their challenges, strengths, resilience, and voice. Allowing students to choose what and how they record, and share has proven powerful. There is no right or wrong. Each chose how their voice/story is to be recorded and with whom this information can be shared. I provide a learning experience platform for my students where they are in control of their work. Ruth, who had never received formal education due to the pandemic, lockdowns, then migration, now finds herself in 3rd grade here in the U.S. Regardless of her literacy level, she enthusiastically documented her story via an interview.

#### **Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically About Their Practice and Learn from Experience**

Currently we are looking at the school library and working to decolonize the collections. We analyze and research why, when, how books are added or removed to the collection to best serve our students. Nancy: As teacher librarians, it is crucial to promote the history and important contributions of diverse cultures, traditions, voices, perspectives in the community and beyond. Milton, a 5th grade student, was looking for a book about Frida Kahlo in the Art collection. We had a book about the Mexican artist, but only in biographies. As students looked closer, we realized that our Art collection only included Van Gogh, Jacob Lawrence, Michelangelo, da Vinci, Monet, Picasso, Rembrandt, and Georgia O'Keefe. All great artists indeed, but surely not diversified enough with only 1 black artist, and 1 white woman amongst 6 white dead men. In the various sections of our collection we had a very limited selection of resources. Without different voices being represented, students were at risk of not understanding the whole picture or worse, perpetuating biases. I follow scholars like Yvette DeChavez and Karen Jennsen.

<https://thehellebore.com/decolonize-your-syllabus-an-interview-with-yvette-dechavez/>

They are advocates and trailblazers in the field of decolonizing the library. Both provide what, why, and how of re-thinking the library media center. As an active member of the American Library Association, I receive professional development opportunities on

various topics and am kept abreast on the latest topics of equity and diversity that elevate my professional capacity. The Howard Zinn Project website <https://www.zinnedproject.org/> is an invaluable source that provides people's history lessons from multiple perspectives. This project helps me to think outside of the box about my own teaching.

### **Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities**

Zoom around the world for school libraries, conferences, and museums! Some outstanding examples: Exploratorium <https://www.exploratorium.edu> The Best Online Museum Tours [https://www.questionsanswered.net/lifestyle/what-are-the-best-online-museum-tours?utm\\_content=params%3Ao%3D740012%26ad%3DdirN%26qo%3DserpIndex&ueid=b2b55bc0-fe4c-4190-8900-5e72bc9443ff](https://www.questionsanswered.net/lifestyle/what-are-the-best-online-museum-tours?utm_content=params%3Ao%3D740012%26ad%3DdirN%26qo%3DserpIndex&ueid=b2b55bc0-fe4c-4190-8900-5e72bc9443ff) Museum of African Diaspora <https://www.moadsf.org/> National Japanese American Historical Society <https://www.njahs.org>. School librarians can contact and participate in local cultural resources to gain resources, lessons, speakers, field trips for students and focus on local history and culture!

## **Conclusions**

Every school librarian can be an accomplished teacher. School librarians successfully impact student learning today and in the future with student centered learning. This can include local cultural programs, ideas from students, and collaboration with educators and fellow school librarians.

School librarians respond to challenging times and prepare for an unknown future by focusing on the students in front of them. What do our students need and how can the school library support student learning? Each school librarian can be flexible, innovative, and transformational by developing student centered programs then sharing with fellow school librarians (and other educators) at conferences and school library publications.

## Leading Research From States and Districts Across the Country

Ø Washington State (2015): “[Board-] certified teachers are more effective than non-certified teachers with similar experience.” Their findings suggest NBCTs produce gains of up to “nearly 1.5 months of additional learning.”<sup>4</sup>

Ø Chicago, IL and Kentucky (2014): “We found evidence that Board certification is an effective signal of teacher quality [based on student test scores]...across locales, test types, and subject areas.”<sup>5</sup>

Ø Los Angeles, CA (2012): “National Board Certified teachers outperform other teachers with the same levels of experience by 0.07 and 0.03 standard deviations in elementary math and English/language arts (ELA) respectively...roughly equivalent to two months of additional math instruction and one month of additional ELA instruction.”<sup>6</sup>

Ø Gwinnett County, GA (2012): “National Board Certified teachers outperform other teachers with the same levels of experience.”<sup>7</sup>

Ø Hillsborough County, FL (2012): “The district found that NBCTs rank higher than non-NBCTs on written evaluations and value-added measures. Fifty-eight percent of NBCTs received the Merit Award Program (MAP) bonus, indicating they were among the top 25 percent of teachers in their subject area.”<sup>8</sup>

Ø Florida (2011): “Certification by the National Board is correlated with achievement in math and reading in both elementary and middle school.”<sup>9</sup>

Ø Charlotte, NC (2010): “We found that NBCTs were significantly more effective...than their non-NBCT counterparts in several EOC tested courses: Algebra II, Biology, Civics and Economics, Chemistry, and Geometry.”<sup>10</sup>

Ø Los Angeles, CA (2008): “The difference in impacts [on student achievement] between [Board-certified teachers] and unsuccessful applicants was statistically significant.”<sup>11</sup>

Ø North Carolina, Ohio, and the Washington, D.C. area (2008): “Seventy-four percent of student work samples in the classes of NBCTs were judged to reflect a level of deeper understanding... [compared] with 29% of the work samples of [students] of non-NBCTs.”<sup>12</sup>

Ø North Carolina (2007): “We find consistent evidence that [Board certification] is identifying the more effective teacher applicants and that National Board Certified Teachers are generally more effective than teachers who never applied to the program.”<sup>13</sup>

Ø North Carolina (2007): “The positive and statistically significant coefficients...indicate that the Board does indeed confer certification on the more effective teachers, as would be appropriate to the extent that the policy goal is to reward effective teachers.”<sup>14</sup>

Ø Arizona (2004): “Effect size...informs us that the gains made by students of Board-certified teachers were over one month greater than the gains made by the students of non-Board

certified peer teachers.”<sup>15</sup>

Ø Miami-Dade, FL (2004): “We find robust evidence that [National Board Certification] is an effective indicator of teacher quality.”<sup>16</sup>

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## Biographies

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**Nancy Ana Lucero** is a NBCT teacher librarian at a Spanish speaking newcomer elementary school. Nancy embraces the twenty-first century learning environment and is passionate about providing opportunities to help students as learners and leaders.

**Kay Hones** worked in K-12 San Francisco school libraries between 1987-2020. She volunteers every week at Hilltop Pregnant Minor High School. She currently mentors school librarians at Montana State University. Kay presents workshops locally, at state and national library & teacher conferences, as well as at international conferences such as IASL.