
Policy: Empowering School Libraries

James Henri, Theme Editor

It could be argued that robust information policy underpins effective information practice and that it is, therefore, a suitable topic for investigation. Indeed this was the premise taken by the organizers of the Open Session conducted by the IFLA Section of School Libraries and Resource Centers at the IFLA conference in Oslo in August 2005. It was the success of this open session that led to the idea of making information policy the theme of this issue of *School Libraries Worldwide*. Originally, Anne Clyde, the then Chair of the IFLA Section of School Libraries and Resource Centers, was invited to edit the theme issue. Following her tragic and untimely death, the Editor asked me to step into the breach, a task I was delighted to take up.

Readers who are familiar with the literature on information policy as it relates to libraries will be well aware that the profession has long held the position that information policy is important. It is somewhat surprising that this topic has not been fruitful ground for research and that even the professional literature on the topic is rather threadbare. This issue, therefore, addresses this issue.

The first article, by Pru Mitchell, examines the *Standards of Professional Excellence for Teacher Librarians* and their effect on school librarians in Australia. This document was developed by the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Both organizations have a strong history of developing policy documents. Mitchell tells the story that lies behind policy development.

The second article reports on the role of national policy in Norway and its effect on school library development. This article, by Elisabeth Tallaksen Rafste, Tove Pemmer Sætre, and Ellen Sundt, reports on the "Make space for reading!" initiative that aims to stimulate a love of reading and the development of reading skills. The article will find resonance among school librarians in countries that are embarking on national campaigns to improve reading.

The third article, by Richard Turner, shifts the focus from national policy to local school policy and in particular to the development of school library policy. Turner examines reports on a research project that covered schools in England and Wales. He describes the library policy as "the foundation for a professional school library service."

The fourth article, by Yoon-ok Han, provides a fascinating historical overview of the effect of policy development on school library services in Korea. The role that NGOs have played in this is particularly interesting.

Much can be learned from this article about what is possible when a strong vision is pursued with dedication.

The final article, by James Henri, Sandra Lee, and Alan Chan, reports on a small-scale, exploratory study into information policy development in government schools in Hong Kong. This study will form the basis for a large-scale comparative international study.