



IV. Guidelines

The **Library Program** is the driving force behind decisions made for Facilities, Collection, Equipment and Staffing. Learner-centered is the driving force for local decisions that incorporate the guidelines and standards.

In accordance with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and its Commission on Public Schools (CPS) (<https://cps.neasc.org/>) it is vital that the schools and districts provide resources that support library services and technology.

Specifically, the Standards (Elementary, Middle and High School) effective in 2020 require that Library/information services:

- have adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff
- ensure personnel and staff are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum and instructional practices
- include a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
- are available for students and staff before, during, and after school
- are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
- include a physical setting that encourages collaboration among students, opportunities for inquiry, and authentic learning.

(Printed with permission from NEASC)



Facilities

Many factors come into play when designing or redesigning the Library Media Center facilities. Current trends and research show that school libraries are evolving. School libraries have long ago ceased to be merely a warehouse of books. They are a vibrant, essential instructional component of a school and must reflect the increasing importance and need for library and information skills and resources for students and staff in the 21st century.

Ask your students and fellow teachers for feedback. Consider creating a survey to determine what your clientele needs. While you are in the space most of the day, your impressions may not match those of your clientele. The facilities either invite or turn off your patrons. Find out what works well for them and what doesn't. The library program should drive the design and arrangement of the school library facility.

However, budget constraints, building limitations, usage by small groups, classes, individuals, etc. all affect configuring the LMC space to the best advantage.

Take stock of what works and what doesn't work. Are the tables too large? Do you need a separate area for classroom instruction? Is there an area of the LMC that is specifically designated as a "quiet zone?" Is there sufficient staff to monitor students if there are several sections to the LMC? Does the patron traffic flow well? Is there adequate shelving space for your collection? Can you shelve your collection in a way that makes sense to the patrons? Do you need to have a separate, more secure area for certain sections of your collection? Is there a space where patrons can comfortably, leisurely read for enjoyment? Does your library accommodate different learning styles? Is there a separate space for processing library materials that also has visual access to the rest of the library? Is the facility and its resources available before and after school? Visit other school libraries to compare.

The facility offers a variety of spaces suited to individual, small group and large class groups. The facility should support the widest variety of space uses possible, driven by the needs of your specific school community (e.g. classrooms, quiet reading, small group study).

Some general considerations:

- Flexibility.
 - Make sure that you can easily rearrange the furniture as situations demand it. For example, do not cut the carpet around shelving that is in the middle of the room. If you want to move the shelves, there will be a blank hole in the floor!
 - Select tables that can be combined to offer seating for larger groups of students
 - Have chairs that are lighter weight to move around easily
 - Ensure that shelving is adjustable according to the size of the materials shelved there; consider moveable shelving if possible
 - Ensure that there is adequate access to power for laptops, projectors, and other electronic devices throughout the space
 - Support the widest variety of space uses possible, driven by the needs of your specific school community (e.g. classrooms, quiet reading, small group study)



- Lighting
 - Ambient natural light as much as possible
 - Overhead lighting for general work
 - Task lighting for smaller tasks
 - Ensure that the lighting can be easily changed for various needs
 - Windows have shades or coverings that allow protection from glare, heat/cold filtering and provide darkening for projection needs.
- Internet access
 - Wireless access throughout
 - Desktop workstations for working with patrons and for use by people who do not have laptops
 - Computer labs where appropriate
- Display areas
 - Visible and easily accessed exhibits for highlighting new or special groups of reading materials
 - Visible and easily accessed exhibits for highlighting student work
 - Wall-mounted monitors for displaying electronic projects
 - Bulletin boards and space for posting important school information
 - Special exhibits from outside the school
- Storage
 - Books and periodicals: ensure that browsing and stacks areas are not blocked by seating or displays
 - Audio visual materials (DVD, CD, etc.): May need additional security such as storing the disc in a staffed area with the case in a public area
 - Library supplies: Store securely and out of reach
 - Equipment: Patron workstations should be easy to access and supervise; stored equipment must be safely secured and out of reach
 - Historical (yearbooks, scrapbooks, etc.): Special collections are best accessed in a supervised area and their use may be restricted to the library
- Security
 - Visibility: ensure that there is a clear line of sight to all parts of the room so that staff can supervise, eliminating any blind spots
 - Egress: Minimize barriers for exiting each space or room wherever possible to ensure a quick and safe exit in case of an emergency
 - Signage: Ensure that all exits are appropriately marked and unblocked

Libraries that serve multi-grade populations have unique challenges. Do separate spaces need to be created for different age groupings? Should some of the library materials be shared by all students? If so, where will the shared space be? Do some library materials need to be separated by age groups? This is particularly pertinent when considering the fiction collection. Most fiction works that are enjoyed by middle or high school students are not appropriate for elementary students. How will you separate and provide signage for this?



From time to time, school library spaces are renovated. Keep in mind some potential uses for the Library facilities such as:

- Transform the Library space into a Learning Commons that may incorporate makerspaces, tutoring services, and STEM or STEAM activities.
- Provide student space for socializing before and after school.
- Host events such as movie nights, parent groups, co-curricular activities.
- Allow students to self-check library materials.
- Provide space for Information Technology repair and assistance.



Essential Areas of the School Library

Learning Commons

A *school library* supports the curriculum and the leisure interests of the clientele. A *Learning Commons* goes further than this. A Learning Commons encourages experimentation, creating, thinking and collaborating **as well as** supporting the curriculum and leisure interests of the clientele. The National Forum on Information Literacy (2014) defines Learning Commons as "In 21st-Century Schools, a school library is the physical and virtual learning commons where reading, inquiry, discovery, thinking, imagination, and creativity are central to students information-to-knowledge journey, and to their personal, social, and cultural growth." Many school libraries in Maine are transitioning to this model.

Entrance

The entrance to the School Library is accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For more information on compliance visit:

<https://www.access-board.gov/>.

The entrance is welcoming and visible from the circulation desk and/or the Librarian's office. Traffic is able to enter and exit easily. The entrance door is locked when unattended. Some libraries may need a second entrance for fire regulations.

Circulation

This section of the School Library may include self-checkout stations and/or library staff checkout stations. Ensure that the height is correct for the age of your students and at least one section is the correct height for wheelchair needs. A book drop section and a shelf or cabinet section may be included.

General reading, browsing, study area

This is the main area of the Library. Furnishing is comfortable, lightweight to make it easier to reconfigure seating. Furnishing is age-appropriate. Elementary school libraries should consider having a dedicated, carpeted story-reading area. Middle and high school libraries should consider study carrels or small group workspaces to limit distractions.

Group instruction/meeting

Ideally, this is a separate room to allow classroom or small group instruction without intruding on the patrons in the general library area. It is equipped for visual projection.

Reference collection

The Reference Collection is one particular area in which standard reference resources are located. Reference resources are meant for relatively quick location of information and are not necessarily read through. This includes, but is not limited to encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, etc. While some school libraries are phasing out their Reference Collection, some are not. This is a local decision that is dependent on many factors. If you have a Reference Collection, consider having slant shelves on the tops so patrons can easily look through resources.



Storytelling

Locate the story telling space in an area of the library where the sound of the stories does not disturb others. Locate this area adjacent to the picture book collection.

Circulating collection

This includes fiction, non-fiction and non-print portions of the Library collection that students and staff may borrow for a specific amount of time.

Shelving

Shelving is more than just functional in a school library. The shelving sets a “tone” for the space. If the placement is open and welcoming, so will the school library be perceived that way. If it is closed and inconvenient to use, the school library will be perceived as closed and inconvenient to use.

Shelving is predominantly either wood or metal. Regardless of its construction, it is vital that the shelving be stable. Tall shelving in the middle of the room should be anchored for safety.

Shelving that is attached to the wall is “frozen” in place limiting any functional change. Give consideration to having some or all bookcases on wheels to allow for easy rearranging of the room as needed.

The age of the students is important to consider when shelving library materials. Library shelving comes in heights of 42”, 48”, 62”, 72” and 82” Each shelf that contains books, etc. should be able to be easily reached by the students. Elementary students cannot reach the top of a 6’ shelf! Shelving is sturdy to hold the weight of books. Ideally, each shelf is no more than 3’ in length. Shelving is at least 8” deep. Oversized books require a deeper shelf.

To be compliant with ADA, aisles between shelving units are at least 36” wide with a preference of 42”. There is a t-shaped space or a 5 foot circle for wheelchair turnarounds at the ends of shelving sections. For more specifics on ensuring that your Library is ADA compliant, please visit [ALA tools for ADA compliance](#)

The shelving is adjustable by height. The typical distance between shelves is 10” for middle and high school libraries although that can vary depending on the size of the materials being shelved. The distance between shelves at the elementary school level is higher (12”) to accommodate the size of the picture books. Shelving height for Reference materials is dependent on the height of the material - generally 12” - 14”. Shelving units are open-faced, not closed with doors and impeded by overlapping trim.

Leave space on each shelf to accommodate new additions to the collection and/or front facing display of materials. Allow about 15-25% on each shelf.

Picture books may also be shelved in bins or mobile book organizers for ease of student access.



Library materials may also be filed according to the **genre**. This is known as “genrefication.” (more in the Collection section of this chapter)

Erikson (2007) has provided the following general information on shelving:

- A. Shelving section width: 3 feet
- B. Shelving heights (in inches)
 - a. 42-48 3 shelves
 - b. 60-66 4-5 shelves
 - c. 72-82 6 shelves
 - d. 84-90 7 shelves
- C. Shelving depth (in inches)
 - a. 10 Standards
 - b. 12 Reference and picture books
 - c. 15 Multimedia
- D. Shelving capacity estimates (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ full)
 - a. Nonfiction 8 books per linear foot
 - b. Fiction 10 books per linear foot
 - c. Reference 6 books per linear foot
 - d. Juvenile fiction
and non-fiction 13 books per linear foot
 - e. Picture books 20 books per linear foot
 - f. Children’s
reference 8 books per linear foot

Knowing the numbers of books in each section of the collection, you will be able to determine how many shelving units you need.

Electronic access

Wifi internet is accessible in all areas of the library. Electrical outlets are placed so the shelving does not cover them and are adequate for all areas of the library. The library web site passes accessibility standards. <https://www.ascladirect.org/resources/website-accessibility/>

Online public access catalog

The online public access section of the catalog is freely accessible everywhere in the school and on the web for home access. The staff section of the catalog is accessible on the web with password protection.

Online database access

The online public access section of the library’s webpage includes links to the subscription databases as well as the free MARVEL! databases.

Periodicals

Periodicals (either print or online) are age appropriate and align with the school curricula as well as the pleasure reading for the clientele. The periodical collection may also include Professional Development resources for the teachers and staff.



Audiovisual

As the name suggests, these are materials that use both audio (hearing) and visual (sight). In school libraries, these have traditionally referred to VHS tapes or CD/DVD disks. The *tangible* items of the collection should have a separate physical space. They should also be reflected in the catalog of the library.

The explosion of Internet access to information and tools has changed this platform. Audiovisual materials may also be *intangible* or accessible *electronically*. These material should also be readily accessible to the school library clientele and be reflected/ linked in the catalog of the library. Intangible AV materials includes videos created by and owned by the school or district, streaming videos by school/district subscription, streaming videos that are accessible with no charges, online public access/subscriptions such as Hulu, Netflix, YouTube, SchoolTube, etc. **Please remember to read the fine print for subscription services.** Most paid subscriptions do not allow usage that is not “personal”. *Using a personal paid subscription may violate your agreement with the provider.*

Vertical files

At least one filing cabinet is available for storing local materials and/or curriculum driven projects. If posters are part of the collection, a poster size file is available.

Professional

Provide a separate area or group of shelves to house teacher resources.

Production/processing

The production/processing area should be a separate space and contain a large table or counter sufficient for preparing materials for entry into the Library’s collection. There should be sufficient space for tape dispensers, ink pads, ink stamps, glue, scissors, etc. Though vendors provide processing for a small, if any fee, there is still a need to mark the material as belonging to a particular school, place any identifiers such as genre, special collection, etc. This area of the library may also be used to repair damaged materials. Access to a sink is needed to repair damaged books. The workroom should be located adjacent to the circulation desk.

Administration

The administrative section of the School Library should be a separate room within the library. This is used for consultation and planning with teachers and administration. It may also be used to meet with vendors. There should be a door to the Administrative space to ensure privacy.

Display

Displays are a major tool for promoting reading. Make sure that there is a variety of display spaces and fixtures. Display areas could include the top of low shelving, endcap brackets, front facing some books in the collection, bulletin boards, etc.

Signage

Just as the placement of shelving and furniture, signage sets the tone for the School Library. Signage welcomes everyone to the School Library. It is used to highlight certain parts of the collection and the usage of certain spaces in the School Library. It is used to highlight different



types of library materials - periodicals, audio-visual, maps, etc. The signage can be on the doorway to the Library, atop shelves, on individual shelves, next to computers and on bulletin boards. It is also used to delineate subsections of the collection - alphabetical and by Dewey Decimal number. Consider including some signs in lay language especially in the non-fiction area and for younger students. “Animals”, “Games”, “Automobiles”, etc. If your collection has some sections that are by genre, make sure there is a sign to identify that as well. Include the same language on the library website that is used in the library.

Color

Color is also important in a School Library. Countless studies have documented the effect of color in particular spaces. Yellow, Red, Orange are very powerful colors and be too busy for your clientele. Consider using these as accent colors rather than main colors. Deep blues and greens can encourage drowsiness and sleepiness. These studies have also shown that colors affect children in different ways at different ages. Investigate what colors work best for what areas of your library space

Examples of facilities in Maine school libraries:

Pre-K - Gr. 2



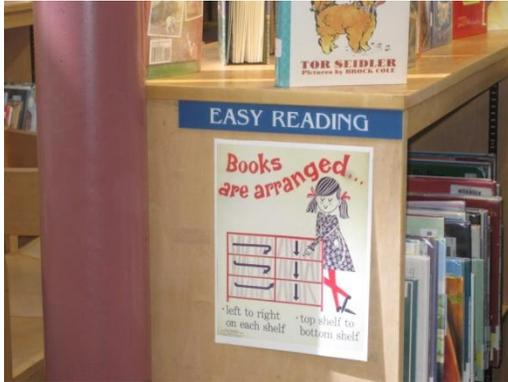
Elementary

Shelving



Elementary (cont'd)

Signage



Instruction



Elementary (cont'd)

Circulation
(note height)



Middle School

Shelving



Instruction



Circulation (Note height)



Display



High School

Shelving and seating



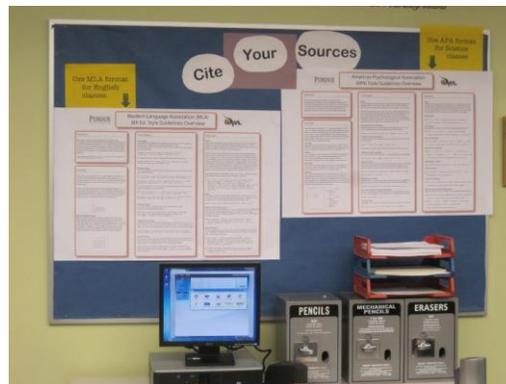
Signage



Circulation desk (note height)



Display



Other Facilities Options

Story Steps



Electronic Bulletin Board



Green Screen



Professional Collection with Workspace



Work space with sink



Telephone



Makerspace



Portable makerspaces





Useful websites

<http://www.designinglibraries.org.uk/?PageID=89>

Designing Libraries. Although based in Great Britain, the ideas and insights are appropriate for us as well.

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/21st-century-libraries-learning-commons-beth-holland>

With links to many schools that have redesigned their library spaces.

<https://www.k12blueprint.com/success-stories/rethinking-library-media-center>

Learn about how one school library transformed its space.

<http://www.slj.com/2011/04/industry-news/divine-design-how-to-create-the-21st-century-school-library-of-your-dreams/#>

School Library Journal article.

<https://www.wbdg.org/building-types/libraries/school-library>

Whole Building Design Board

Resources

Erikson, R. and Markuson, C. (2007). *Designing a School Library Media Center for the Future* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Sullivan, M. (2013). *Library Spaces for 21st Century Learners*. Chicago, IL: American Association of School Libraries.

A MASL survey was conducted in the fall of 2017 regarding Collection, Facilities, Equipment and Staffing. See what other schools in Maine have for Facilities here. goo.gl/X9rWmy Click through the tabs on the bottom of the sheet to view all sections.