



To: The Read to Lead Task Force
From: Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) and
Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association (WEMTA)
Date: July 8, 2011

As statewide associations of librarians, we are excited to see the Governor convene the Read to Lead Task Force. We thank him and all of you for your efforts thus far. As we are sure you know, school and public librarians provide effective literacy programs to children on a daily basis. We believe it would be valuable for the task force to consider the perspective of librarians as you conduct your work. This document illustrates ways Wisconsin children benefit from interactions with these professionals through early literacy programming, summer reading programming and curriculum-related programming. Please let us know if our associations can be of assistance to the task force as you move forward.

Early Literacy Programming: Librarians involved in these programs incorporate the elements of the *Early Childhood Initiative for Wisconsin Public Libraries* and work with parents/caregivers and children from birth through about age five to instill in these young children the skills they need to be ready to learn to read.¹ To do this, librarians:

1. Provide educational training opportunities and programming resources on infant and child learning and development through age five for parents, child care providers and early childhood educators;
2. Model and teach ways to read to infants and children that provide parents/caregivers with the skills they need to encourage children's developing literacy skills in a safe, enjoyable and non-threatening environment; and
3. Use research and evidence-based methods to devise and deliver developmentally appropriate programs that help develop phonemic, vocabulary and print awareness.

Summer Reading Programming: Public and school librarians work collaboratively to encourage school-aged children to participate in summer reading programs. General programming by Wisconsin public libraries attracted over 1.5 million participants in 2009, including nearly 500,000 children and young adults who took part in public library summer reading programs.² These summer programs:

¹ One example of the impact of early literacy programming can be found in "Improving Early Literacy and School Readiness" in *Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development*. Chicago, IL: Urban Libraries Council, 2007.

² Research on the impact of summer reading programs is described in: Roman, Susan, Deborah T. Carran, Carole D. Fiore, *The Dominican Study: Public Library Summer Reading Programs*

1. Help to close the achievement gap as evidenced by a positive impact on student reading test scores;
2. Help to keep reading skills honed for the students' return to school in the fall; and
3. Provide access to a wide variety of reading materials in many formats that might not otherwise be available to school children, especially those children in rural and at-risk communities.

Curriculum-related Programming: While both public and school libraries provide a wide range of reading materials in all formats that provide children with a choice of reading materials vital to literacy success, school librarians are specially educated to link library programming to the larger school curriculum.³ School librarians:

1. Collaborate with classroom teachers to provide literacy experiences connected to the curriculum;
2. Provide access to a wide variety of curriculum-relevant and recreational reading materials in all formats and for all reading interest grade levels; and
3. Provide instruction on safe and responsible use of information.

Respectfully submitted by

Sandra Heiden
President
Wisconsin Educational Media &
Association

Rhonda Putney
President
Wisconsin Library Association

Close the Reading Gap. River Forest, IL: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Dominican University, 2010.

³ An extensive review of the teacher/librarian literacy connection can be found in: Moreillon, Judi. *Collaborative Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension: Maximizing Your Impact.* Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2006.