

# **MINNESOTA STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAMS 2000**

**Developed by a Committee of the  
Minnesota Educational Media Organization**

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# Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs

## INTRODUCTION

### Origin:

The Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) appointed a committee in August 1999 to develop standards for the state's school library media programs. Assistance for this project came from an award by the state library agency, Library Development and Services (Department of Children, Families & Learning) under the Library Services and Technology Act.

A preliminary draft of the standards was distributed in the registration packets to all participants attending the MEMO Conference in October 1999. Further input from MEMO members was taken at the MEMO Midwinter Conference, February 2000, from MEMO regional meetings, and through a website.

Revised draft standards were published for the entire MEMO membership through its journal, *Minnesota Media* (Spring 2000).

The MEMO Board at its July 21, 2000 meeting, passed the following motion:

The Minnesota Educational Media Organization endorses the draft *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs* as a tool for development of library media services in the state and recommends to its membership ratification of these standards at the October 2000 annual MEMO Conference business meeting.

The Minnesota Library Advisory Council to Library Development and Services at its September 8, 2000 meeting, passed the following companion motion. The Council represents a cross-section of the library profession and of users of library services.

The Minnesota Library Advisory Council endorses the draft *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs* as a tool for development of library media services in the state.

At its annual membership business meeting, October 6, 2000, MEMO accepted and adopted the standards.

### Further Action:

The Council of Cooperating Libraries, representing the seven regional multitype library cooperation systems in the state, at its meeting, October 18, 2000 endorsed the standards. The Council of Regional Public Library System Administrators, by a poll of its 12 members, endorsed the standards, November 15, 2000.

The MEMO Board at its February 4, 2001 meeting, affirmed its intention to continue promoting the standards, to seek the endorsement of other education bodies and to make the standards known to the Minnesota public.

On March 20, 2001, Christine Jax, Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families & Learning, issued a statement to Minnesota schools and communities recommending the standards and encouraging the pursuit of the standards in each school.

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# Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000

## OVERVIEW

### Basis of the Standards:

Standards development and promotion are characteristic hallmarks of professional organizations. The Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) represents school library media specialists in the field, graduate library science and media educators, and their co-workers and colleagues. MEMO through its standards committee developed this document for the aim presented in the title: *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*.

Standards are a professional tool for assessing one's own situation against outside measures of performance. Professional standards are proposed for local application so that individual institutions can see where they are, decide where they want to improve, and measure their progress.

The *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000* are based on current thinking on school library media programs that are integrated into their schools. In short, as supported by research, school library media programs succeed when their resources are folded in and related to the school's curriculum and teaching and to the students' learning.

At the national level, these standards stem from *Information Power* (1998) and its emphasis on information literacy. On the state level, the standards articulate the school library media component of Minnesota's graduation standards. They support the graduation standards' emphasis on student involvement in their own learning, on the critical pursuit of information for inquiry, problem solving, decision-making, and on the student's demonstration of learning.

These standards also benefit from a time of increasing research on effective school library media programs nationwide and standards-setting by other organizations nationally and in other states. Therefore, MEMO tested its proposed standards against current research and other contemporary standards. Where the Minnesota standards logically follow from *Information Power*, making common sense to media specialists, they also consistently parallel what research finds and what other organizations seek.

The standards have been checked against current research on program effectiveness, recent national, regional and state standards appropriate to the school library media program, and the most recent state level standards. This examination found no gaps in the Minnesota standards and that this standards document is in harmony with research, standards, and other current state efforts.

### Levels of the *Standards*:

These standards list 26 elements of a library program, with a minimum, standard, or exemplary level to each element. Standard and exemplary levels build upon and encompass the previous level(s). Use of levels provides a wide range of choices to schools and media programs. Schools will likely find through their own assessment that they have achieved differing levels throughout the various elements. Likely, no one is at or exceeds the exemplary level in all elements. Every program can improve; no program should be in a position of lowering its own standards to a lesser level.

However, by implication, some schools are likely to be below the minimum level in some elements. Some schools may have no media program at all. These standards provide a means for any school to examine its own situation and start to work toward the results important in their educational objectives.

### Quantitative and Qualitative Measures:

The *Standards* offer levels with a mix of both quantitative and qualitative measures. Minnesota school library media specialists want quantitative standards; they and their administrators often ask for them. Since Minnesota does not collect school library media program statistics in any manner sufficient to establish norms, Committee members have used their best professional judgment in offering both quantitative and qualitative measures where each is appropriate.

### Implementation of the *Standards*:

Presumably schools will vary greatly in how they achieve these standards. Media programs are likely to range element by element among the various levels. Perhaps some may exceed the standard level in all respects, but none will be at the exemplary level in each element. The standards provide some place for each program to improve should its media specialists, school administrators and Boards so choose.

The standards have multiple uses. Principally they provide a framework for self-assessment and strategic planning. A final section of the document provides an action-oriented checklist. With this tool at the individual school level, library media specialists with other teachers, their administrators, Board members, parents and community members or students can examine the local situation and decide where and how they want to move to a further level of program support and activity. The standards also allow for a comprehensive approach to how Minnesota schools compare overall against these measures.

MEMO advances these standards in the absence of any Minnesota statute, state-sponsored program, or rule that calls for school library media programs. MEMO will work with its colleagues in education and with the public to achieve these standards school by school. Individual school library media specialists have begun this process within their schools already even when these standards were in draft form.

MEMO also seeks and welcomes the assistance, endorsement and support of other state organizations and of the Department of Children, Families & Learning in implementing these standards

# Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000

## SUMMARY

The 2000 standards originate amidst continuing attention to effective schools, results-oriented learning and accountability to the public for its investment in education. These same aims are current in the school library media field, expressed most strongly at the national level in *Information Power* (1998). MEMO has actively promoted *Information Power*'s guide and information literacy standards among its members. Minnesota's media specialists recognize that the principles and service roles advocated in *Information Power* parallel the state's own efforts in the graduation standards for resource-based and inquiry-oriented lifelong learning, informed decision-making, cooperative learning, and higher order thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.

MEMO expresses these standards within 26 elements that are the building blocks of a comprehensive and effective program for student learning and development. Each element identifies possible quantitative and qualitative measures to achieve standards among three levels—minimum, standard, and exemplary. The minimum level presents measures that are basic starting points for a good program; the standard level continues these measures with recommended increased efforts at which schools can aim; the exemplary level builds upon the basic and standard achievements in further areas of excellence.

Nine elements treat learning and teaching. Effective school library media programs articulate and deliver on deliberate curricular integration of resource provision, instruction and service. Library media specialists and other teachers actively share in the learning of students. Specifically, effectiveness results when the program:

1. is essential to the school and fully integrated into the curriculum.
2. includes information literacy skills and habits embedded into the curriculum.
3. is collaboratively developed and taught by media specialists and other teachers.
4. makes available and promotes the full range of information resources and services.
5. promotes reading, viewing and listening skills in making full use of resources.
6. meets diverse learning needs, abilities and styles.
7. fosters both individual and collaborative inquiry.
8. integrates technology for educational objectives.
9. links to the larger learning community outside the school and locality.

Seven elements relate to information access and delivery. Effective school library media programs achieve information literacy through comprehensive and skill-building curricula. Access to resources and services is actually present, attractive, timely, appropriate, and open. Specifically, effectiveness results when the program:

10. provides intellectual access to information and to ideas.
11. provides physical access to a variety of information and learning resources.
12. operates in an atmosphere that invites and appeals to learning.
13. provides flexible and equitable access to learning resources when students need them.
14. ensures these resources and media collections support the school curriculum.
15. commits to everyone's right to intellectual freedom.
16. adopts and follows policies, procedures and practices that reflect legal guidelines and professional ethics.

Ten elements are part of overall program administration. Effective school library media programs base their success in the continuous, day to day administrative commitment of the school. The school ensures all students are knowledgeable, skillful and practiced in making information work for them. Specifically effectiveness results when the program:

17. supports the mission and goals of the school.
18. provides professional staff in each building.
19. provides adequate support staff for each building.
20. has on-going administrative support.
21. has a long-range, strategic plan for the program.
22. continues on-going assessment of the program.
23. is funded to achieve the objectives of the school.
24. provides for media specialist and support staff to receive needed staff development.
25. meaningfully communicates its mission, goals, functions and impact.
26. its human, financial and physical resources are accountably managed.