



# PRACTICAL ADVOCACY

## Lead to Empower Learning

By Ann M. Martin

*Second in a series of ongoing articles by guest authors*

### THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Jell-O and quicksand are more stable than today's education environment. We are in the midst of an educational revolution demanding sweeping change. This creates instability. It is this volatile climate of educational reform that necessitates visible active leadership in the school. Communicating and then directing a meaningful vision restores stability. This is leadership.

An important addition to the national school library program guidelines, *Empowering Learners*, released by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) is the guideline on leadership. It notes that the leadership role of the school librarian is critical to meeting local, state, and national goals. School library leadership takes advocacy to the next level. Leadership challenges librarians to extend their role of advocacy beyond influencing outcomes to directing educational initiatives in the school.

When revolutions occur leaders direct the path of change. In today's educational climate terms such as 21st Century Skills and Common Core State Standards are the new buzzwords. It is important to know and understand what these initiatives mean for the students and staff at the building level. More importantly it is critical to be able to communicate how the role of the library program is vital to meeting the demands generated by these initiatives. Accomplishing school program change is dependent on providing solutions and relevance to these new concepts. Leaders become experts on new ideas and implement the initiatives by gaining support and cooperation from decision makers. The school librarian who understands and adapts the latest educational trends provides relevance for the school community. This is how best practice is implemented and leadership is modeled.

### SEEING THE POSSIBILITIES

If every school librarian will lead efforts to effectively infuse the vision of the 21st century library program into their building level educational agenda; then, the relevance of the school library program will be clear. Defining and clarifying the role of the school library program begins with understanding where the library program intersects with the school's annual goals. Schools develop objectives based on requirements to meet local, state, and national achievement standards. Successful library leaders embed the library program into the building level goals and objectives. When teachers and students are directed to the library as a source to achieve their benchmark goals then the

### EMPOWERING LEARNING THROUGH LEADERSHIP

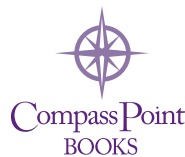
**GUIDELINE:** The school library media program is built by professionals who model leadership and best practice for the school community.



school library program is actualized and viewed as critical to the school. School librarians who accomplish this are leaders because they empower learning for their students and teaching staff.

So there you have it. In this unstable quicksand-like educational climate library leaders must guide the instructional revolution by communicating and directing a meaningful vision to their school community. This is leadership. Consult *Empowering Learners* and put into action the leadership target indicators. Begin to lead your library today. 🌈

*Ann M. Martin is Educational Specialist, Library Information Services, at Henrico County Public Schools in Henrico, Virginia and is the Immediate Past President for the American Association of School Librarians.*



Supporting strong school library programs