

## To all Principals and Superintendents:

Times are hard, and finances even tougher. But we all want our students to reach their potential. To provide the knowledge, research skills, and pathfinders to help them get there, all signs point to the necessity of excellent school libraries and professional school library media specialists!

The **Student Requirements for Graduation** promulgated by the Rhode Island Department of Education tell us that:

"... students must demonstrate the application of knowledge through the following applied learning skills: Critical Thinking; Decision Making; Problem Solving; Interpreting Information; Research; Analytic Reasoning; Communication, Personal or Social; and Responsibility."

Students must also "demonstrate deep content knowledge and advanced proficiency in an 'Area of Specialized Interest'. This area should be identified by the student and provide the student with an opportunity to do extended work in an area of great interest. The 'Area of Specialized Interest' is intended to infuse personal relevance – and thus, personal investment – into students' high school experience." The library provides the resources, access and expertise to support this requirement.



The Rhode Island Library Information Network for Kids (RILINK) was founded to, and is based upon, sharing materials and expertise. This is a professional partnership among schools, their libraries, and their librarians.

Our Member agreement requires:

**LORI Membership.** RILINK member schools agree to be members of the statewide library network that provides interlibrary loan and delivery services known as the Library of Rhode Island (LORI).

Standards for Members of the LORI Statewide Interlibrary Loan System, promulgated by the Office of Library and Information Services state that all members must have "a qualified paid staff to manage the collection and provide access to it, with a minimum of one staff member holding a Master degree of Library and Information Services from an ALA accredited school."

Your School Librarian must be a teacher. The new **Basic Education Program**, G-13-1.3.11. Library and Media, requires:

**Information Literacy.** At the heart of every successful school library-media program is the teaching of effective learning strategies and information literacy skills integrated into classroom curricula. The ability to find and use information, (information literacy), is the key to lifelong learning. A successful LEA library-media program has as its goal the development of capable, creative, and responsible lifelong learners. Rather than simply disseminating information, library-media programs shall be collaborative and centered on the process of learning.

**Independent Learning.** An effective LEA library-media program shall assist all students in becoming active and creative locators, evaluators, and users of information to solve problems and to satisfy their own curiosity. Accessing, evaluating, and using information is the authentic learning that any successful school library-media program seeks to promote.

**Social Responsibility.** An effective library-media program teaches students to seek information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures; to respect the principles of equitable access to information, intellectual freedom, and intellectual property rights; to use technology responsibly and ethically; to share knowledge and information collaboratively with others; and to respect others' ideas and backgrounds and to acknowledge their contributions."

**The Rhode Island Standards for Reading** specify that all students need to:

- Read Widely and Extensively (R-14)
- Read for Research Across Content Areas (R-15)
- Participate in a Literate Community (R-17)

What better place to accomplish these than in a library? Who provides the expertise to make all this happen? **Your School Library Media Specialist.**

March 8, 2010

"The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change." Carl Rogers on Education