

Return to Learn: Launching Instruction for PK-12 Libraries

A digital version of this document can be found at <https://sde.ok.gov/covid19-instruction-support>.

This guidance is designed to support school librarians as they plan for and support student learning in response to varied modes of instruction (in-person, blended, and distance). School librarians should be responsive to their local context and student needs as they plan for and operate during the 2020-21 school year. Therefore, **please note that this document's guidance and resources are not meant to be a directive or limitation, but rather a tool.** Additional guidance about the planning schools may undertake in preparation for this school year can be found beginning on page 39 of the [Return to Learn Oklahoma: A Framework for Reopening Schools](#).

According to the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), school librarians fulfill five essential roles: instructional partner, teacher, leader, information specialist, and program administrator. In traditional years, school librarians work with their colleagues to co-plan and co-teach lessons, develop collections of resources, support students in selecting interesting and relevant reading materials, and teach students critical digital literacy skills. The [expertise of school librarians](#) allows them to be uniquely qualified to support teachers and students with unique teaching and learning challenges in the 2020-21 school year.

Recently, AASL published an extremely informative document, [School Librarian Roles in Pandemic Learning Conditions](#), which outlines the various roles school librarians can play to support student learning this school year. **Librarians and school administrators should review this guidance and consider how to utilize librarians' expertise best to support the unique challenges of teaching and learning in the 2020-21 school year.** In addition to the guidance provided by AASL, consider the following steps when planning for and supporting instruction this year.

1. **Co-Plan with Teachers** - Review [School Librarian Roles in Pandemic Learning Conditions](#) and [What Can Collaboration with a Teacher-Librarian Look Like](#) and discuss ways in which you may collaborate with fellow teachers this year.
 - o Be intentional about setting up times to meet with teachers in your school building to find out what they may be teaching in the coming weeks and determine how you might assist them with co-planning or co-teaching lessons or compiling resources to support students.

2. **Support Teachers and Students with Digital Tools** - Review [Return to Learn: Launching Instruction with Digital Tools](#) and determine how best to support teachers and students with distance learning this year.
3. **Provide Instruction on Digital Literacy and Citizenship** - The skills needed for digital literacy and citizenship are skills school librarians possess and teach to students. With nearly every student engaging in digital spaces in new ways in the 2020-21 school year, [librarians play a crucial role](#) in [promoting digital citizenship](#) and teaching digital literacy skills.
4. **Identify Literature that Supports Students with Social-Emotional Learning** - Students will return to school this fall amid two profound crises: an unprecedented global pandemic and social upheaval as the nation reckons with its legacy of systemic racial oppression. For this reason, it will be critical to prioritize student well-being.
 - Read about ways that [children's literature](#) can strengthen social-emotional learning.
 - Consider collaborating with the school counselors to provide [bibliotherapy](#)¹; a therapeutic approach that uses literature to support good mental health.
 - Use age-appropriate lessons to help students find a balance between media and well-being. Here are a few examples for grades [K-2](#) | [3-5](#) | [6-8](#) | [9-12](#).
5. **Ensure Equity and Inclusion are Central to Collections** - School librarians can be a primary voice in supporting equity for all students. Consider reviewing [Culturally Responsive Leadership in School Libraries](#) and identifying steps that can be taken to promote diversity and cultural awareness in school libraries and collections.
6. **Ensure Spaces and Materials are Safe** - The REALM Project (REopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums) is actively testing how the virus behaves on various surfaces and sharing the results via the [REALM Information Hub](#). Stay connected to the latest guidance on the hub and consider the following key takeaways when planning for 2020-21:
 - **Scheduling of the library space** may need to be required and should include sufficient time to disinfect between sessions properly.
 - **Provide adequate spacing of students and staff.** The spacing could be encouraged through markings on tables and floor, and the placement of desks. Clear signage should be placed in high profile areas. Partitions that can be sanitized can be placed between workstations.
 - **Reduce contact** with online checkout plans that allow students to put books on hold to deliver them to students directly.
 - **Provide adequate ventilation**, including exhaust fans and the opening of windows.
 - **Plan for the sanitation of surfaces (desks, partitions, doorknobs, etc.), equipment, and materials.** Be sure to sanitize items before being used by another student. Have hand sanitizers and wipes available. Cleaning products should not be used near children and with poor ventilation. The use of liquid disinfectants and powdered cleaners is damaging to library books and is not recommended. UV ray exposure as a means of sterilization is also not recommended. Placing materials in a microwave oven is not

¹ American Library Association. (2020). [Tools, Publications, & Resources: Bibliotherapy](#). Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

recommended and may result in fire. Additionally, the use of fogging disinfectants of any kind in spaces with collections is not recommended.

- **Reduce the sharing of materials** (e.g., writing instruments) by encouraging students to bring their items when feasible. Remove unnecessary items that could need sterilizing. According to CDC guidelines, if the library has a makerspace still being used, plastic robotics and devices such as iPads can be cleaned between uses. However, the use of consumables such as cardboard and assigned sets of reusable tools are encouraged.²
- **Consider the use of outdoor spaces** for instruction. In addition to the learning advantages of working with real-world environments, there are health and psychological benefits of outdoor settings. There may also be more opportunities for physical distancing or students.

Circulation and Collection of Library Books

At the time this guidance was published, a **minimum 4-day quarantine of collection items** is the most effective way to disinfect texts after handling by staff and students. Because some studies have found that a 7-day period is required - and because of the small number of studies overall - some institutions may opt to continue with a 7-day quarantine, which REALM recommended in an earlier publication. A 7-day quarantine is appropriate for any collection item about which a curator is uncertain.^{3,4}

- Consider creating a collection space outside the library in coordinating days of the week bins to ensure books have sat for the correct amount of days before returning to circulation.
- Suppose a dedicated quarantine space cannot be established for collection items. In that case, staff can place items in bags until the quarantine period is over so that staff do not accidentally handle the items. It is not advisable to tightly seal the bags because this can create potentially-damaging microclimates.
- Wear gloves while handling circulated materials and reference CDC guidelines for recommended removal and disposal procedures for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).⁵

As the Covid-19 situation continuously develops, consult the current Oklahoma Department of Health (MDH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) health guidelines.

² Bowie, L. 2020. [School Libraries: Your Planning Guide for Reopening](#).

³ Northeast Document Conservation Center. (2020). [3.5 disinfecting books and other collections](#).

⁴ REopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums. (2020). [REALM Information Hub: A COVID-19 Research Project](#).

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). [Coronavirus disease 2019: Using personal protective equipment](#). Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services.

For additional strategies school librarians can use to support learning in the 2020-21 school year, review [COVID-19 and the School Library](#), [Back to School in the Library During COVID-19](#) and [School Libraries: Your Planning Guide for Reopening](#).

Ongoing Support for Instruction

OSDE will continue to provide ongoing support for instruction during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Professional Learning Opportunities

- [Tech Tool Tuesday Recordings](#) - Learn about different education technology tools for instruction.
- [EngageOK Sessions](#) - Access videos on various topics by going to the EngageOK website.

OSDE Hosted Virtual Meetings

Join OSDE staff and librarians around the state for monthly professional learning opportunities during the 2020-21 school year.

Library Media Specialist Virtual Meetings

- Starting September 23rd, meetings will be held on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 4:30-5:30.
- Register for the meetings [here](#).

Contact Information

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To provide feedback or make suggestions or requests for future guidance, please consider [completing this survey](#).