

Rationale for Format and Content of MSDE School Library Media Voluntary Curriculum

The challenge is to create a document that does the following:

- Uses language that communicates to other educators as well as school library media specialists
- Uses the format of the content area voluntary curriculum documents
- Can be applied to instruction at all grade levels Pre K – 12
- Incorporates the content of Information Power and Maryland School Library Media Learning Outcomes (see attached matrix)
- Incorporates use of technology as presented in the Maryland Technology Literacy Student Standards (matrix will be created when Technology Standards Document is available)

Given the realities of the teaching/learning environment of schools the development of information literate high school graduates must be viewed as a responsibility shared by all members of the learning community; i.e., media specialists, content area teachers, administrators, parents and students. The language used in the Voluntary Curriculum document addresses the component processes associated with becoming information literate. Generic, rather than technology or content specific, applications have been identified in order to facilitate integration across content areas and grade levels. For clarity, and to facilitate assessment, each goal is comprised of a single facet of the overall process. While this gives the appearance of steps to be followed in a linear sequence, it should be viewed more as a cyclical process with facets being revisited as many times as necessary to successfully complete a given task.

The format and terminology used in this document; (i.e., content standard, topic, indicator and objective) is patterned after the content area Voluntary Curriculum documents. By using the same format and generic expectations, indicators and objectives, it is intended to enhance the likelihood of the Information Literacy Curriculum being integrated into a wide range of content area instruction. An objective such as “Identify patterns and relationships” or “Identify evidence of bias or point of view” has potential for application in varied content area units of study. Specific Methods, where included, are intended to serve as suggestions of how the related objective might be accomplished.

Many of the content specific Voluntary Curriculum documents address content to be covered at one specific grade level. In contrast the School Library Media Voluntary Curriculum must address age appropriate applications of identical content for all grade levels Pre K – 12. The process of interacting with information (locating, collecting, organizing, interpreting and sharing) remains constant whether students are in primary grades or high school. What does change is the level of expectation and sophistication of resources used to produce final products. For this reason the curriculum is structured with shared Content standards, Topics and Indicators for all grade levels paired with age appropriate objectives demonstrating increasing levels of expectation as students progress through the grades.

Information Power and the Maryland School Library Media Learning Outcomes are largely parallel documents providing guidelines for teaching students to interact with information in efficient and effective ways. Our responsibility as School Library Media Specialists is three fold: 1) to develop students' appreciation of literature and reading, 2) to develop students' ability to use information efficiently and effectively to understand and communicate ideas and 3) to develop students' ability to use technology as a tool for interacting with data, text and digital/sound files. Our focus is on providing the necessary skills and strategies to design and implement assignments in the content areas that require students to interact with and use information in meaningful ways.

In the context of the School Library Media Voluntary Curriculum technology is viewed as a tool for interacting with information. References to specific programs, resources, formats or navigational skills are omitted in favor of more generic statements related to "developing ability to evaluate, interpret, and generate information displayed in a variety of formats". There are obvious opportunities to integrate use of technology while locating, collecting, organizing, interpreting and sharing information. Listing selected specific examples will tend to limit rather than expand the potential integration of technology across the grades and content areas. The document "Technology in the Maryland Content Standards" which provides selected examples for integrating technology into English/language arts, math, science and social studies, goes on to say, "There are many other areas where technology can be a valuable tool to support learning". The inference is that no list will contain all potential links. It is important that the School Library Media Voluntary Curriculum communicates the role of technology as one of being a tool for interacting with (locating, collecting, organizing, interpreting and sharing) information in order to understand and communicate ideas rather than use of technology being viewed as an end in and of itself. As fast as technology changes identification of specific programs or formats will soon become dated.