

School Librarian's Impact

Throughout March, April and May, our CSL K-12 library staff facilitated approximately 20 bi-weekly virtual connecting/networking meetings. At the end of May, our CO Teacher Librarians and library staff shared with each other the many ways they impacted their students and educators during the first months of COVID-19.

Both teacher librarians and library managers (support staff) shared their impact in ways such as:

- technology support
- technology training to staff/parents
- compiling e-resources for teachers and students
- virtual story times, sometimes in person, sometimes recorded, or both,

Those schools with teacher librarians (TL) took the lead to provide even deeper impacts. Below is just a sampling of what was shared with us.

Student Agency/Learning Skills Specialists

- One teacher librarian is her school's "Learning Skills Coach." She works with a cohort of teachers in her high school to provide strategies for deeper learning and also helps them incorporate lessons that embeds student voice/agency as a part of the lessons.
- Several TL's worked with teachers to have the students create mini-tutorial technology tips for staff, students, and parents.
- An area middle school TL led virtual book clubs that met three times a week. Students listened to her read aloud, engaged in peer discussions, and participated in book-related activities, such as emailing authors, recording a video of them reading to their pets, and making origami bookmarks.

Equity Impact

- Several TLs of color are spearheading equity work with their district staff and students as well as nationally. For example, last summer, one of the TL's founded Afro & Books partnered with Black Child Development Institute and Project Proud Fatherhood to host an early literacy boot camp for African-American boys and girls. She also led a wellness course for African-American girls at Martin Luther King Jr. Early College, which included book sharing, mindfulness and self-care practices, and mentorships. During the Covid-19 school closure, she partnered with BCDI to sponsor an online book fair for the Park Hill Pirates youth sports league and the Conscious Curls Teen Book Club. Students self-selected titles from diverse collections and the books were mailed directly to their homes.
- A DPS librarian hosted a remote haiku challenge during the month of April, created "Five Minute Read Aloud" recordings of culturally responsive texts to share on her website, and developed an online process for providing students with personalized book recommendation lists.
- Another TL created "Take and Make Science Kits" and distributed them to students at free/reduced meal sites.
- At another area high school, the TL's provided outreach and made individual phone calls to families. They elicited parent feedback on remote learning, listened to challenges families are facing, and connected parents with the school staff who can best support their needs. *"It's been a truly powerful experience...we witness appreciation and a desire*

to connect from the families we're able to reach. Whether it's technology issues, mental health support, access to our food pantry, or just someone to talk to, it makes sense that librarians are the ones connecting families to the appropriate resources. The outreach program has been a wonderful way to connect with the larger community."

- Numerous TLs worked one on one with students who were struggling, whether emotionally or academically. One common approach is designated student buddies they check in with each week.
- Cheltenham Elementary librarian Nick Bleckley created the YouTube channel Mr. B and Friends Read Aloud so that his students could once again enjoy this important part of their school-life routine. The response from families was immediate; Bleckley's videos received more than 350 views within the first two weeks, and more than 670 views during the months of April and May. *"The unique and joyful candor of Mr. B's read aloud draws my kids in instantly,"* says Cheltenham educator Mike Cammilleri. *"It's hard to remember that they are watching YouTube instead of sitting on Grandpa's lap reading stories together."*
- The DPS Sora collection of e-books and audiobooks offers more than 30,000 titles, including more than 2,000 #OwnVoices titles and thousands of books in languages other than English. The week prior to the March school closure, current ETLs director led the work to plan and provide digital tools training for 3,260 teachers, coaches, and school leaders, including training on the Sora ebook and audiobook and impact was instant: e-book circulation increased from 34,000 checkouts in February to more than 51,000 checkouts in April. Sora digital library will continue to be a critical equity service for youth who live in book deserts, students with special needs who benefit from listening to text read aloud, and English-language learners who are developing literacy in both their first and second languages. They have access to it year-round.

Teacher Librarians Supporting Literacies (technology literacy, reading literacy, media literacy, etc.)

- TLs are posting social media notices for students and families that include information about digital resources to support remote learning and online literacy opportunities, such as the Denver Zoo's virtual field trips and the Denver Public Library's Maker Challenge.
- TLs are organizing virtual D.E.A.R. Day with recorded and live read alouds with community leaders.
- Several TLs hosted Battle of the Books for their school.
- TLs led research units with grade levels, general tech support for all, including hard to reach students
- TLs often create virtual Book Clubs at the elementary, middle, and high school level, some of which continued into the summer to reduce summer slide.
- TLs launch Google Classroom for educators to add updates. Then the TLs curate these collected resources into categories for ease of findability.

Tonini, Suzanne. ["Librarians in the Field: Stopping the Covid Slide."](#) Publisher's Weekly, June 5, 2020.