



LAURA BUSH 21st CENTURY LIBRARIAN PROGRAM

Sample Application RE-259012-OLS-25
Project Category: Community-Centered Implementation

Board of Education of Worcester County (Worcester County Public Schools)

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$99,191

Worcester County Public Schools will advance their school libraries through a Community of Practice model tailored to adapt to their changing student needs. The project will include revising their strategic library plan, implementing continuous improvement cycles, and establishing regular Community of Practice meetings for ongoing professional development and monitoring. The project will empower librarians to proactively meet evolving needs through improved resource allocation, program development, and community engagement. Collaborations with local, state, and national entities will enable them to share outcomes and best practices widely, fostering scalable models for other districts. This sustainable framework will enhance their capacity to support student success in an ever-changing educational landscape.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

Narrative

Introduction

Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS) School Libraries participated in the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Accelerating Promising Practices for Small and Rural Libraries (APP) Cohort. The successful 2019 project used a strategic planning model to unify 12 independent school libraries into a district school library system and developed a common mission, vision, values, and goals. Since 2019, community needs have shifted, but the strategic plan has not. Current data shows an enrollment increase for language learners, Prekindergarten, and Dual Enrollment students; however, there is not a proactive system to prepare school librarians to meet these student needs. WCPS requests \$99,190 to revise our strategic plan and fully implement a Community of Practice (CoP) that incorporates [Johns Hopkins University's \(JHU's\) Dynamic Impact](#) approach to systems change. The goal of the CoP will be to build capacity for serving evolving community needs through collections, programs, curricular collaborations, leadership, and community engagement. JHU's Dynamic Impact will provide school librarians with the tools and protocols to continuously identify, assess, and respond to needs in real-time. As a result of the project, WCPS School Librarians will have the capacity to address current needs and a system to proactively address future needs. The School Librarians will share the outcomes of using CoP to build capacity, Dynamic Impact approach to monitor progress, and Implementation Projects to serve community needs; outcomes will be shared locally with the school community and with the library community through a partnership with Maryland Association of School Librarians (MASL) and presentations to national school librarian networks.

Project Justification

Navigating Change: Strategic Planning and Community Building (2018-2023)

In 2018-2019, WCPS School Libraries operated in isolation, with minimal collaboration among the district's 12 school librarians. This period was also marked by significant turnover, as seven of the 12 school librarians had been hired in 2018 or later, and all had been hired after 2012. Additionally, the Coordinator for School Libraries, Jennifer Sills, assumed her position in 2018-2019, further emphasizing the need for system-wide cohesion. Recognizing these challenges, WCPS pursued funding through the IMLS APP Grant in 2019. The proposal, developed by Sills and librarian Brittany Tignor, sought to leverage strategic planning as a tool to unify individual school libraries into a collaborative, district-wide system (Board of Education of Worcester County).

At the same time, WCPS was undergoing substantial transformation. A new superintendent was appointed in 2017-2018, a district-wide strategic plan was implemented in 2018-2019, and the school system initiated a one-to-one technology program, which required a shift in teaching and learning practices. As these systemic changes unfolded, school librarians needed to redefine their roles to remain integral to the educational landscape. The APP grant provided an opportunity to reposition school librarians as essential contributors to the district's educational vision. Through the APP project, school librarians engaged in the Transforming School Library Practices (TSLP) Community of Practice (CoP), which became a cornerstone for professional growth and collaboration. Initially, the CoP focused on professional development related to 21st Century Libraries and Transformational Teaching and Learning. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced school closures, the CoP evolved into a critical support network, enabling school librarians to navigate unprecedented challenges, including virtual and hybrid learning, technology access, and balancing health concerns with educational equity.

Despite these challenges, school librarians collaborated across grade levels and school sites to achieve strategic goals. During school closures, librarians conducted a stakeholder survey that gathered input from over 600 students, teachers, and administrators. Using this feedback, librarians convened—both virtually and in socially distanced settings—to craft a strategic plan that established a [shared mission, vision, values, and goals](#). These goals outlined priority areas for collections, programs, curricular collaboration, leadership, and community engagement (“School Library Media Programs”).

To implement these goals, school librarians initiated several transformative initiatives, including [adapting in-person programs to virtual formats](#) (Gutsche), revising elementary library curricula to promote collaboration with classroom teachers, and updating school library collection development and circulation policies to enhance student access. The success of these initiatives was highlighted through multiple dissemination efforts. Locally, librarians presented their work to the WCPS Board of Education in [June 2021](#) (Sills et al.). At the state level, they shared their findings at the Maryland Association of School Librarians (MASL) Annual Conference in [April 2023](#) (Sills and Tignor). Nationally, they contributed to professional learning conversations through a [presentation with OCLC's WebJunction](#) (Lensenmayer et al.).

The CoP played a pivotal role in the success of these efforts by fostering ongoing collaboration, problem-solving, and shared learning among school librarians. Without the structured support provided by the CoP, the APP project would not have achieved the same level of impact. This experience underscored the critical need for sustained professional development and continuous strategic planning, serving as the foundation for the proposed CoP initiative and Dynamic Impact framework in this grant application.

Identifying the Gaps: From Success to Sustainability

While the APP project successfully established a unified system of school libraries, it fell short of creating a sustainable, data-driven professional development structure to address evolving community needs. Although school librarians were aligned under a common mission and were making progress toward established goals, they lacked a systematic approach to using data to anticipate future professional development needs. Professional learning primarily occurred informally, with librarians exchanging knowledge organically rather than through a structured process. There was no established mechanism for gathering and disseminating insights from conferences, nor was there a framework for systematically testing, evaluating, and sharing solutions to emerging challenges.

The current approach to professional development remains reactive rather than proactive. When challenges arise, librarians seek support, prompting the development of training sessions on an as-needed basis. In response to recent inquiries, school librarians identified specific concerns, including collection development for Multilingual Learners, early childhood library programming, and support for Dual Enrollment students. These concerns are consistent with significant shifts in student demographics. Between 2019 and 2023, the Multilingual Learner population increased by 11.8%, PreK4 enrollment grew by 19.7%, and the number of students enrolled in at least one Dual Enrollment course rose by 28% (*Maryland School Report Card*). While shifts in Safety, Literacy, Mathematics, and Targeted Support & Improvement are systematically addressed at the school and district levels through JHU's Dynamic Impact Model, adopted in 2021, no parallel structure exists for school librarians to engage in continuous improvement. Without a structured mechanism for professional development, librarians are left without the necessary tools to effectively respond to these evolving demands ("Dynamic Impact").

Addressing Key Challenges: The Need for Strategic Improvement and Professional Development

The need to anticipate and respond to evolving demands has become evident as WCPS embarks on a new strategic planning cycle. This process has revealed two interconnected challenges:

The **first challenge** is an outdated strategic plan that lacks continuous improvement mechanisms based on real-time data. The 2021 strategic plan was based on data collected during the 2020-2021 school year. In preparation for a new strategic planning cycle in Fall 2024, WCPS identified critical gaps in the previous process. Although strategic planning was intended to occur every three to five years, the 2021 plan functioned as a static document rather than a dynamic, continuous improvement model. The plan included Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), but no formal system was established to analyze and apply them to evaluate existing programs. As a result, WCPS lacked the ability to assess whether strategic goals were being met, identify when adjustments were needed, or determine whether school librarians had the capacity to address emerging student needs. To remedy this, the revised strategic plan will incorporate the Dynamic Impact approach, ensuring continuous assessment and improvement through the development of targeted Action Plans.

The **second challenge** is the absence of a sustainable professional development system that enables school librarians to continuously build capacity in response to evolving community and student needs. Since the previous strategic plan did not incorporate a structure for ongoing assessment and revision, school librarians lacked opportunities for training aligned with the rapidly changing educational landscape between 2019 and 2023. While the district allocates two professional learning days for school librarians, this is insufficient to support the level of skill-building required. A structured, collaborative learning system is necessary to ensure that school librarians remain equipped to meet shifting demands effectively. To address this need, WCPS will implement a Community of Practice (CoP) model to create a sustainable, professional learning community that fosters ongoing collaboration and innovation.

Implementing a Community of Practice (CoP) Model

The proposed CoP model builds on Sills and Tignor's previous experience as CoP members in the APP TSLP Cohort 1 and is informed by Wenger-Trayner's Communities of Practice framework. A review of outcomes from the APP program revealed that the CoP model provides the structure missing from the current professional development approach. Despite geographic separation, members of the TSLP CoP successfully built meaningful learning partnerships with school librarians nationwide. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the APP Cohort provided a critical space for sharing concerns, developing solutions, and celebrating progress. Members held themselves accountable not only for their own projects but also to one another, maintaining motivation despite unprecedented challenges. This experience demonstrated that a CoP model is an ideal framework for WCPS School Libraries, as it fosters collaborative decision-making, shared knowledge,

and ownership of professional learning. As the AASL Community of Practice: Omnibus reads, “By engaging each other over time in collective learning, [CoP members] develop a bond that in turn fuels the production of resources to influence their own practices.”

In addition to firsthand experience, the CoP model will be further developed using Wenger-Trayner’s framework, which emphasizes collaborative learning, shared expertise, and iterative improvement. Wenger-Trayner defines a CoP as consisting of three essential components: a domain, a community, and a practice. In this initiative, the domain will be school librarianship, the community will consist of WCPS’s 12 school librarians and the district’s school library coordinator, and the practice will be defined by members based on evolving community needs. Wenger-Trayner notes that members of a CoP “take responsibility for defining the set of challenges they share and structuring a learning process to address them” (Wenger-Trayner et al.). This principle will guide the implementation of a structured professional development framework that enables librarians to proactively address student and community needs.

The CoP will serve as the central structure for professional development, incorporating monthly CoP practice group meetings and Microsoft Teams Workspaces for ongoing collaboration. When librarians attend state and national conferences, the CoP practice group meetings will provide a dedicated space to disseminate insights, discuss innovative strategies, and integrate best practices into school library programs. By embedding these practices into the professional development system, the CoP will ensure that WCPS librarians have the capacity, resources, and structure necessary to sustain long-term professional growth and continuous improvement.

Integrating Dynamic Impact for Continuous Improvement

To address the need for making decisions based on real-time data, we will be leveraging Dynamic Impact’s processes and protocols developed by the Johns Hopkins University School of Education Center for Technology in Education. This provides flexible cycles of improvement, and this model allows WCPS School Librarians to align with the district improvement model as well. WCPS adopted JHU’s Dynamic Impact in 2021 for school improvement because it ensures high-performance teaming, professional learning, and implementation fidelity. It transforms strategic goals into actionable, measurable, and sustainable initiatives (“Dynamic Impact”). While the CoP will serve as a mechanism to drive ongoing professional learning, Dynamic Impact includes protocols that will guide needs assessments, root cause analysis, and action planning. Dynamic Impact builds capacity for our school librarians in multiple ways. Because JHU’s Dynamic Impact is used throughout the school system for improvement, it allows school librarians to be active participants in school improvement teams within the county resulting in school librarian leadership opportunities. It provides a common language with school and district administrators which allows school librarians greater capacity for aligning school library programs with school and district goals.

Designed By Librarians for Librarians

The primary target group will be the 12 school librarians and one district school library coordinator as they will directly engage in CoP meetings, Dynamic Impact cycles, professional development workshops, and conferences. By engaging in these activities, the primary target group will build capacity in both leading the structures in use (CoP, Dynamic Impact) and addressing community needs based on information gained from stakeholder engagement surveys and reviewing data.

Expanding Impact: Beneficiaries and Broader Reach

The primary beneficiaries of this project are members of the school community, with students as the primary patrons of the school library. As school librarians build their capacity through the Community of Practice (CoP), students will gain greater access to high-quality library resources, programming, and instructional support that is designed to meet their evolving needs. By integrating data review into decision-making processes, librarians will be able to proactively identify and address student needs rather than responding reactively.

Teachers will benefit from enhanced collaboration between classroom instruction and library services, leading to more integrated learning experiences for students. Administrators will gain school librarians who can clearly align library initiatives with school and district goals while also serving as leaders in school improvement efforts and professional development opportunities. Parents and caregivers will experience increased engagement with school libraries through targeted outreach initiatives designed to strengthen home-school connections and promote family involvement in literacy and learning.

Beyond the immediate school community, this project will extend its impact to school librarians at the state and national levels. WCPS will collaborate with MASL and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop and present a series of training sessions that will share key insights from implementing a Community of Practice with Dynamic Impact. Additionally, the best practices and strategies developed through this initiative will be disseminated to broader librarian networks, ensuring that school librarians beyond WCPS can apply these approaches to address the unique needs of their own communities.

This project directly aligns with LB21 Goal 2.1, ensuring that school librarians are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to serve their communities effectively. By prioritizing professional development and training, this initiative will establish a structured, sustainable professional learning model that leverages CoPs and Dynamic Impact Cycles to enable librarians to continuously assess, implement, and refine strategies that meet the needs of the students and communities they serve.

Project Work Plan

Project Overview: A Collaborative Approach to School Library Improvement

The WCPS School Library CoP Project is designed to enhance school librarians' capacity to meet evolving community needs through data analysis, professional development, and collaborative strategic planning. Led by Jennifer Sills, in partnership with 12 district librarians, this multi-year initiative will focus on updating the WCPS School Library strategic plan and establishing a sustainable CoP. The strategic plan update will be informed by comprehensive stakeholder feedback and school/district data analysis to evaluate library access, programming effectiveness, and resource utilization. The revised plan will provide a structured, data-driven approach to ensuring that library services align with student and community needs.

To support the implementation of the updated strategic plan, the project will establish a CoP focused on capacity building, strategic goal setting, and continuous improvement. The CoP will engage librarians in structured in-person and virtual meetings designed to facilitate collaboration, shared learning, and problem-solving. Within the CoP, Practice Groups will be developed to apply JHU's Dynamic Impact model, using cyclical assessment, strategy development, implementation, and evaluation to refine library practices in real time.

As part of the CoP, school librarians will co-construct knowledge by engaging in and sharing insights from personalized professional development opportunities, including participation in national and state conferences and workshops. Findings and progress will be systematically disseminated to district leadership, educators, and the broader school library community through professional articles, social media platforms, and conference presentations.

By fostering collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning, this project will strengthen school librarians' capacity to support student learning, engagement, and academic success. Through the integration of continuous professional learning cycles, data-informed decision-making, and collaborative leadership, WCPS School Libraries will be positioned as adaptive, future-ready learning environments that proactively respond to community needs.

Project Leadership and Implementation Team

The project will be planned, implemented, and managed by Jennifer Sills, Project Director and Coordinator of School Libraries for WCPS. She will be supported by Brittany Tignor and Jennifer Beach, who will serve as thought-partners in guiding this initiative.

Project Director: Jennifer Sills

Jennifer Sills brings extensive leadership experience in school library transformation to this project. As the Project Director for the APP initiative, she successfully led the development of a strategic planning model for school libraries and participated in the CoP for the TSLP Cohort 1. In her current role as Coordinator of School Libraries for WCPS, she is responsible for planning and overseeing library programming and professional development for school librarians across the district. Sills also serves on the WCPS Safety Team for school improvement, where she has gained direct experience working within the Dynamic Impact model, a core component of this project.

Project Team Members

Brittany Tignor, high school librarian and Executive Board member of MASL, brings both state and national leadership experience to the project. As a participant in the CoP for TSLP Cohort 1, she has firsthand knowledge of the impact and implementation of professional learning communities. In addition to her experience as a strategic planning leader for MASL, she has provided professional development for MSDE and MASL through webinars, conference presentations, and blog posts. She has also represented Maryland school librarians at AASL and ALA meetings.

Jennifer Beach is a two-time Maryland School Librarian of the Year Finalist, recognized for her innovative programming and work in Makerspaces. She has presented at both MASL and MSET conferences, contributing expertise on library innovation and student-centered programming. As a member of the Pocomoke Middle School Improvement Team, she has experience working within the Dynamic Impact model and brings valuable insight into the intersection of library services and school improvement. Her role as a middle school librarian serving grades 4-8 uniquely positions her to address the needs of both elementary and middle school librarians in the CoP.

Kirsten Danisavich, WCPS School Improvement Coordinator, will provide guidance to ensure alignment with district and school improvement initiatives. Her role will help integrate Dynamic Impact principles across different contexts within the district.

The collective expertise of this leadership team ensures a strong foundation for project success, blending instructional leadership, strategic planning, professional development, and school improvement expertise. Through this collaborative effort, WCPS school librarians will gain the resources, knowledge, and support necessary to sustain long-term improvements in library services and student engagement.

Planned Activities and Timeline

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
School Librarian Capacity Survey	August 2025, August 2026, June 2027	Lead-Jennifer Sills

To assess progress toward capacity-building goals, school librarians will participate in a series of self-assessment surveys modeled after the APP program evaluations (TCC Group). These surveys will serve as the primary evaluation tool for this project, measuring librarians' abilities to facilitate and engage in strategic planning, participate in a Community of Practice (CoP), and adapt to rapidly changing community needs¹.

- Baseline survey (August 2025) to assess initial skills, confidence, and knowledge gaps.
- Midpoint survey (August 2026) to measure growth and identify areas needing further support.
- Final survey (June 2027) to evaluate overall impact and areas for continued professional learning

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
School and District Data Collection	August 2025	Lead-Jennifer Sills with support from WCPS Coordinator of Research & Student Information
Analyze Data from Spring 2025 administration of library survey for students, teachers, administrators, and librarians	August 2025	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach All WCPS school librarians will participate
Create and Administer Library Survey for Parents	April 2026	Lead-Jennifer Sills with support from WCPS Coordinator of Public Relations
Administer library survey for students, teachers, administrators, librarians, and parents	April 2027	Lead-Jennifer Sills with support from WCPS Coordinator of Public Relations
Analyze Data from Spring 2027 administration of library survey for students, teachers, administrators, librarians, and parents	May 2027	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach All WCPS school librarians will participate

In Spring 2025, students, teachers, administrators, and librarians will participate in a follow-up survey on library use, resources, and perceptions, building upon the 2021 stakeholder survey. As the primary method for stakeholder involvement in the planning process, the survey will include multiple-choice questions for ease of response and open-ended questions to capture diverse perspectives and detailed feedback. By Spring 2026, a parent/caregiver survey will be developed and incorporated into future stakeholder survey cycles, further expanding engagement in school library planning².

Additionally, school and district data related to student performance, attendance, mental health, demographics, communication, and behavior will be collected from WCPS data repositories. This readily available data will be analyzed continually to provide critical insights into student needs and inform evidence-based decision-making, ensuring that library initiatives align with broader school and district priorities.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
Establishing a CoP	August-September 2025	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach
CoP In Person Meetings	August, September, January, May-On Going	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach All WCPS School Librarians will participate

¹See attached document Supportingdoc1.pdf.

² See attached document Supportingdoc2.pdf

Establish CoP Practice Groups	September 2025-Groups established and disbanded as needed	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach All WCPS School Librarians will participate
Virtual CoP Practice Group Meetings	Monthly	Each CoP Practice Group will elect a group leader
Microsoft Teams Workspace	Established September 2025, then ongoing	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach

While the overall goal of the CoP is to build capacity for addressing evolving community needs, smaller CoP Practice Groups will be established to focus on specific topics aligned with strategic priorities. To ensure multiple entry points for participation and engagement, the CoP will connect through three formats: In-Person Meetings, Virtual Practice Group Meetings, and a Microsoft Teams Workspace.

In Person Meetings will convene all 12 WCPS librarians and the School Library Coordinator and will primarily focus on implementing JHU's Dynamic Impact approach. These meetings will involve analyzing needs assessment data, conducting root cause analyses, developing strategies, setting goals, and outlining action steps. At mid-cycle, progress will be assessed and adjusted as necessary. The CoP will identify no more than four key topics at a time for Virtual Practice Groups and Microsoft Teams collaboration. All school librarians and the School Library Coordinator will be required to participate in at least one Virtual Practice Group, with potential topics based on emerging needs, such as curating collections for multilingual learners or designing a PreK4 library curriculum.

Virtual Practice Group Meetings will be held monthly to foster collaboration, support ongoing training, and provide structured opportunities for librarians to share insights and refine implementation strategies. These groups will establish a leadership structure³, set agendas, and determine meeting logistics.

Microsoft Teams Workspace will serve as a centralized digital platform for discussions, resource sharing, and asynchronous collaboration. It will house a resource repository where librarians can access and contribute best practices, lesson plans, and training materials over time. Through this multi-modal structure, the CoP will ensure sustained engagement, continuous professional learning, and the integration of best practices into library services.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
Review/Revise Strategic Plan and Establish Strategic Priorities	August-September 2025	Lead- Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach All WCPS School Librarians will participate

To revise the strategic plan, school librarians will review the WCPS district strategic plan, Dynamic Impact school improvement plans, the 2021 School Librarian strategic plan, and data from the Spring 2025 stakeholder surveys, along with student performance, attendance, mental health, demographics, communication, and behavior metrics. They will confirm or refine the Mission, Vision, and Values and establish strategic goals aligned with district priorities. These goals will be converted into objectives that support student learning and integrate with broader district initiatives. To measure progress, school librarians will develop updated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) using real-time actionable data whenever possible, as stakeholder surveys are only scheduled to be administered biennially. KPIs will be embedded into Action Plans and monitored through the Dynamic Impact approach to ensure continuous assessment, adaptability, and long-term impact.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
Community of Practice: Dynamic Impact Cycles	Year 1 Cycle 1-September 2025-January 2026 Year 1 Cycle 2-January-May 2026 Year 2 Cycle 1-September 2026-January 2027 Year 2 Cycle 2-January-May 2027	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach with support from WCPS School Improvement Coordinator All WCPS School Librarians will participate

During CoP In-Person Meetings, school librarians will engage in Dynamic Impact cycles to develop Action Plans based on the WCPS School Improvement Plan (SIP) Template⁴. These Action Plans will integrate CoP Practice Groups as key action steps to ensure targeted, collaborative implementation.

³ Practice Groups will follow leadership structures like those described by AASL ([American Association of School Librarians](#)).

⁴ See attached document Supportingdoc3.pdf

At the outset of each cycle, librarians will assess needs and strategize interventions using established protocols such as TAP-IT and the United, Root, and Change protocols. This process begins with data collection and analysis from surveys, stakeholder input, and existing school metrics to identify critical areas for improvement. By leveraging insights from the Root and Change protocols, the CoP will develop detailed, data-driven action plans designed to address identified challenges. These plans will be flexible and adaptive, incorporating mid-cycle reviews to allow for adjustments based on emerging data and feedback. Each cycle will culminate in a comprehensive review session, ensuring that strategies are evaluated, refined, and continuously improved to maximize impact.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
Community of Practice: Implementation Projects	Year 1 Cycle 1-September 2025-January 2026 Year 1 Cycle 2-January-May 2026 Year 2 Cycle 1-September 2026-January 2027 Year 2 Cycle 2-January-May 2027	Lead- Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach All WCPS School Librarians will participate with support from school thought partners

As part of CoP Practice Groups, school librarians will design Implementation Projects informed by conference learnings, workshops, and shared professional development within the CoP. These projects will directly support action steps outlined in the strategic plan and align with key priorities, including collections, programs, curricular collaboration, leadership, and community engagement. Each librarian will identify the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) impacted by their project and collect data to assess effectiveness and inform future improvements.

Since many Implementation Projects require funding beyond standard school library budgets, school librarians will have the opportunity to submit funding requests to Jennifer Sills. Previously, librarians have worked independently to develop and refine strategies without dedicated funding, often applying for small individual grants or reallocating limited resources. The following examples highlight past innovative initiatives that demonstrate the potential impact of these projects:

At SDHS, in response to a growing Spanish-speaking student population and concerns that families felt disconnected from the school, the librarian collaborated with a teacher, school social worker, and administrator to host a multi-lingual family night. Reallocated funds supported a family dinner (\$400), translator compensation (\$240), and materials for younger siblings (\$100), totaling \$740. This event helped bridge communication gaps, strengthen family-school relationships, and connect families with essential resources.

At SHMS, the librarian identified the need to support neurodivergent learners by enhancing library spaces and resources to foster an inclusive learning environment. A \$10,000 grant funded two inviting quiet spaces (\$2,465.92), sensory tools (\$1,708.03), flexible seating (\$1,559.66), improved lighting and timers (\$983.86), and a curated collection of books, eBooks, and audiobooks (\$3,282.53). This project not only improved the library's accessibility but also educated students about neurodivergence through literature and programming.

At SHHS, collaboration between the librarian and a chemistry teacher addressed low student performance on informational reading on state assessments. They collaborated to incorporate reading and synthesizing information when learning about the Periodic Table of Elements using arts integration. Students found reliable sources, gathered information, and synthesized ideas to create a ceramic tile to display in the science hallway. It was based on similar projects at [UNC](#) and [University of Waterloo](#). A \$500 grant covered tiles, adhesives, and mosaic materials, enhancing both academic engagement and interdisciplinary learning⁵.

All Implementation Projects will be co-developed within the CoP to ensure they align with stakeholder needs, long-term sustainability, and potential for replication. Whenever possible, students, teachers, administrators, and caregivers will be actively involved in the planning and execution of these initiatives. As demonstrated in past projects, family engagement, community partnerships, and school-wide collaboration will be prioritized to maximize impact and accessibility. Findings and best practices from these projects will be shared with the broader school library community to foster continued innovation and improvement.

⁵ Projects like these have been used to estimate the Implementation Project allocations. While the SHMS example would not be funded as a whole, a portion of the project could be funded as an Implementation Project.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
Community of Practice: Professional Learning	Annual In Person Meetings: September, January, May Virtual Practice Group Meetings: October-December, February-April Virtual Workspace: Ongoing Whole Group Training: Summer 2026	Lead-Jennifer Sills All WCPS School Librarians will participate

Professional learning will be integrated into the CoP model, ensuring that school librarians continuously develop skills that align with evolving student, school, and community needs. Once the CoP establishes an Action Plan, each school librarian will submit a Personalized Professional Development Plan detailing training opportunities that support both individual growth and collective CoP goals⁶.

Librarians will select from a variety of professional development options, including national and state conferences, workshops, webinars, and professional reading materials. Each librarian may attend one national conference during the grant period, choosing from AASL, ISTE, FETC, or ALA based on their professional learning goals. Additionally, all librarians will attend one state-level conference, such as MASL, to engage with regional best practices and policy updates. Furthermore, as part of personalized professional development, librarians will receive individual funding to engage in virtual courses, on-site workshops, and webinars that align with their specific interests and professional goals. They can also request professional literature, research articles, and additional resources that support their personalized learning objectives.

New learning will be shared during Virtual Practice Group Meetings and in the Microsoft Teams Workspace, providing a platform for reflection, discussion, and integration of insights into library services. Additionally, the CoP will identify at least one common training need for a whole-group professional development session in Summer 2027, where an expert consultant will deliver customized in-person training for all members. By embedding professional development within the CoP, learning will be collaborative, directly applicable to school libraries, and designed to drive continuous improvement.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
Community of Practice: Information Dissemination to School Library Community	Local: Ongoing State: September 2026-May 2027 National: October 2026-June 2027	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach, and CoP Practice Group Leaders All WCPS School Librarians will participate in information dissemination.

The CoP will actively disseminate findings and best practices at the local, state, and national levels to ensure broader impact. Each participating librarian will be required to document or present their learning on topics related to CoP, Dynamic Impact, or an Implementation Project. Librarians may choose to publish their insights through a MASL Blog Post, an article for the school system Live Feed, or a submission to a school library publication. Alternatively, they may opt to present their work as part of the MASL Webinar Series or at a state or national conference, aligning with their professional development experiences. As part of this effort, MASL has committed to partnering with WCPS to host a three-part blog series and a three-part webinar series, further expanding opportunities for knowledge-sharing and professional collaboration⁷.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Key Staff</u>
Community of Practice: Information Dissemination to School Community	October 2025, June 2026, June 2027	Lead-Jennifer Sills, Brittany Tignor, Jennifer Beach All WCPS School Librarians will participate

To ensure widespread adoption and sustained support for the CoP model, Jennifer Sills and WCPS school librarians will engage administrators and Board of Education members in data-sharing sessions to present library impact data and reinforce the library's role in student success. Throughout the process, all librarians will be expected to highlight their work using WCPS Live Feed Articles and Social Media Updates to increase visibility and engagement.

⁶ See attached document Supportingdoc4.pdf

⁷ See attached document Supportingdoc5.pdf.

Since individual school library budgets are allocated by district and school administrators, these stakeholders play a critical role in the project's sustainability. Jennifer Sills will present the CoP model and Dynamic Impact approach to district and school leadership during Levels Meetings⁸ to demonstrate progress and gather feedback. Jennifer Sills will also conduct annual One-on-One School Administrator Check-Ins to gather leadership perspectives on individual librarian growth and school impact. School librarians will be required to get feedback from school administrators when designing the Implementation Projects. To further strengthen advocacy, school librarians will present annually to the Board of Education to showcase Implementation Project successes and overall library impact. These engagements will serve as opportunities to gather qualitative feedback, which will be reported back to the CoP for review and strategy refinement.

Project Results

Measuring Impact: Enhancing Capacity and Community Response

This project will result in twelve school librarians and one school library coordinator with the capacity and ongoing support to respond effectively to evolving community needs. By updating the strategic plan and adopting a Communities of Practice (CoP) model, school librarians will establish a purposeful and adaptable professional development framework. This approach will leverage JHU's Dynamic Impact approach to drive continuous improvement across our schools.

A Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Project Survey will assess school librarian capacity in strategic planning, community engagement, and participation in a CoP. Using a Likert scale, these surveys will track changes in confidence, skills, and ability to identify and respond to community needs. An increase in scores will indicate improved capacity for data-informed decision-making and strategy implementation.

Quantitative metrics will include participation in professional learning activities, conference attendance, and engagement in Virtual and In-Person CoP Meetings. Qualitative data will track active engagement through meeting agendas, minutes, and contributions to the Microsoft Teams Workspace, ensuring that participation is meaningful and sustained.

Disseminating Results: Sharing the CoP Model and Outcomes

To extend the impact of this project, the CoP will develop presentations and articles to share insights on the CoP model, use of JHU's Dynamic Impact, and Implementation Projects at the local, state, and national levels. Locally, findings will be shared with the Board of Education, administrators, and families. At the state level, dissemination will occur through MASL and MLA/DLA, while at the national level, school librarians may present at AASL, ISTE, and FETC and contribute articles to *School Library Journal* and *School Library Connection*.

Implementation Projects will allow librarians to share real-world applications and iterative improvements, ensuring that strategies, tools, and frameworks are adaptable and scalable. All materials developed during the project will be documented within the Microsoft Teams Workspace and made available under a Creative Commons Share-Alike license. These resources will be shared via WCPS and partner (MASL, MSDE) open-access platforms, broadening reach and facilitating future adaptations by other school librarians and districts.

Sustaining the CoP: Integration, Leadership, and Future Funding

To ensure the sustainability of the CoP beyond the grant period, WCPS will embed CoP structures within district professional development plans and annual budget requests. The CoP will transition to a librarian-led model with rotating leadership, ensuring shared facilitation responsibilities so no one individual is essential for long-term continuity.

By training school librarians in Dynamic Impact, more librarians will be positioned as leaders in school and district-level improvement processes. A Microsoft Teams Workspace will serve as a permanent repository for shared resources and collaboration, while partnerships with MASL and MSDE will support ongoing professional learning and knowledge dissemination. Additionally, WCPS will explore long-term funding strategies, including district allocations and external grants, to sustain conference participation, professional training opportunities, and Implementation Projects that address community needs.⁹

⁸ Levels Meetings are a WCPS initiative where all principals from a given level (Elementary, Middle, or High) meet with executive leadership and district coordinators 4-5 times during the school year to discuss needs.

⁹ See attached document Supportingdoc6.pdf for the complete list of Works Cited associated with this narrative.

2025-2026	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Survey librarians for baseline/pre-project capacity data												
Dynamic Impact Cycle Meetings: UNITED, ROOT, CHANGE Protocols												
Strategic Plan Revision												
Online Microsoft Teams Workspace												
In Person Community of Practice Meetings												
Personalized Professional Development Plan												
Year 1 Cycle 1												
Set Year 1 Cycle 1 Goals												
AASL National Conference												
Monthly Practice Group Meetings (Virtual)												
Present to & get feedback from district leadership and school administrators at levels meetings												
Implementation Project Development												
Implementation Project Execution												
Implementation Project Analysis												
WCPS Live Feed Articles												
WCPS Thrillshare Social Media												
FETC Conference												
Data Analysis for Goals for Year 1 Cycle 1 & Annual												
Set Year 1 Cycle 2 Goals												
Year 1 Cycle 2												
Develop a survey for parents and caregivers												
MLA/DLA Conference												
MLA/DLA Conference												
Administer parent/caregiver survey												
ISTE Conference												
ALA Conference												
MASL Webinar Series												
MASL Blog Posts												
ISTE Conference												
ALA Conference												
One on one meetings with school administrators												

Stakeholder Input
Strategic Planning
Dynamic Impact
Communities of Practice
Personalized Capacity Building
Implementation Projects
Information Dissemination

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