



LAURA BUSH 21st CENTURY LIBRARIAN PROGRAM

Sample Application RE-259045-OLS-25
Project Category: Community-Centered Implementation

School Board of Orange County, Florida

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$100,000

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) will address the shortage of qualified media specialists by recruiting candidates from within the district's instructional workforce and providing comprehensive professional learning through a cohort model and mentorship. Intended project results are to 1) improve OCPS media specialist recruitment and retention, 2) develop and implement a replicable aspiring media specialist preparedness program with coursework, shadowing, and cohort activities, and 3) create a replicable shadowing program. Key deliverables include a course shared on the LMS Commons accessible to other institutions and a toolkit featuring recruitment strategies, communication materials, cohort activities, and other resources to support replication of the project both within OCPS and by other school districts.

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.

IMLS LB21-FY25 Grant Full Proposal: As Aspiring Media Specialist Cohort Project

INTRODUCTION

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), the lead applicant in Orlando, FL, and the 8th largest school district in the nation, seeks to address the shortage of certified, qualified media specialists in its 214 elementary, middle, K-8, and high school buildings. These buildings serve more than 209,000 students. To meet this need, OCPS requests **\$100,000** in IMLS funding for *the **Aspiring Media Specialist Cohort (AMSC)*** project, a two-year Community-Centered Implementation project focused on building the capacity of the district's purposeful and student-centered media specialist workforce through collaborative professional learning. (*IMLS Agency-Level Goal 1; Objective 1.2*). This two-year initiative will focus on recruiting, developing, and retaining media specialists to ensure that all students have access to the highest quality library resources to contribute to their foundational literacy skills, essential communication and critical thinking skills, and workplace readiness.

The AMSC project will develop a replicable AMSC program toolkit which will include artifacts and outcomes that can be used by school systems in other communities throughout the nation to improve media specialist recruitment, development, and retention efforts. The project aims to prepare AMSC cohort participants to be hired into an OCPS media specialist role with the goal of developing a media specialist pipeline and improving long-term retention rates.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

OCPS faces a critical challenge in ensuring all students have access to a certified, qualified media specialist. Annually, OCPS hires 20 to 40 new media specialists but faces an average 12% turnover rate, with many new hires leaving the role due to insufficient preparation. Currently, six low-performing OCPS schools have media specialist vacancies due to a lack of certified, qualified applicants. These vacancies not only highlight the shortage of applicants, but the absence of a qualified media specialist pipeline within the district.

While the district provides essential resources, such as rich library collections and technology, the lack of adequately prepared media specialists undermines the potential of these resources to inspire a lifelong love of reading and learning among students. Studies show that media specialists significantly impact student achievement; for example, OCPS' Hunter's Creek Middle School, which has an [award-winning media center program](#), saw a 9% increase in sixth-grade literacy proficiency due to the strong instructional support of its media specialists. However, many media specialists enter the role without a deep understanding of its purpose to impact student achievement and lack practical preparation and experience, straining district resources and leading to lower retention rates.

The ***Aspiring Media Specialist Cohort (AMSC)*** project addresses the need for a more robust preparation process for OCPS media specialists, building upon existing models such as [Wayne State University's Restoring Urban School Libraries project](#) and cohort-based learning from programs like the [University of Florida's Educational Technology Ed.D. Cohort](#) program. Grounded in the [American Association of School Librarians National School Librarian Standards](#) and [Florida's K-12 Library Program Evaluation tool](#), this project aims to equip aspiring media specialists with the knowledge and practical experience necessary to thrive. By offering a cohort-based learning experience, including professional learning, mentorship, and shadowing, the project aligns with the LB21 program goal of recruiting and educating future library and archives professionals, faculty, and staff.

The project focuses on building the capacity of the OCPS media specialist workforce through professional learning by recruiting potential media specialist candidates from the current instructional workforce. The district's current instructional workforce, including media specialists, consists of 13,909 employees. As shown in Figure 1, a quarter of the workforce has 0-2 years of experience working for OCPS, but only 10% have 3-5 years of experience working for OCPS. While this is a snapshot of the workforce in time, the AMSC could provide teachers with less than 5 years of district teaching experience an option for professional career growth. As shown in Figure 2, the district instructional workforce has an even age distribution, primarily between 25 and 55 years of age.

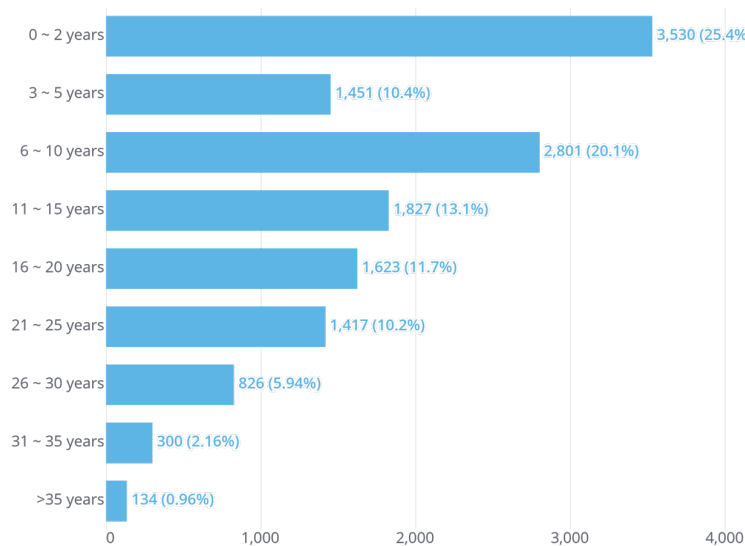


Figure 1: Instructional workforce count by district teaching experience.

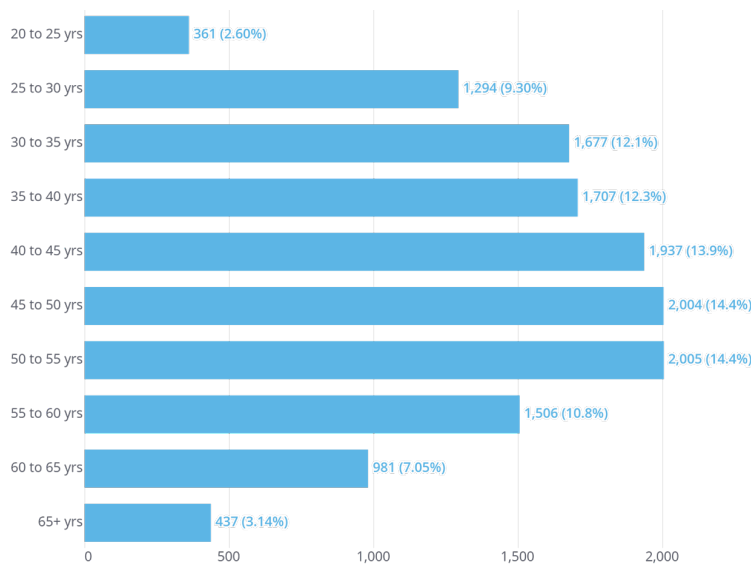


Figure 2: Instructional workforce count by age.

While media specialists represent just 1.5% of the district's instructional workforce, they play an evolving and essential role as the district navigates an increased focus on student reading data, library media center collections, and library-related legislation. The district's school-based media specialist workforce comprises 205 employees. As shown in Figure 3, 79 media specialists have at least 21 years of experience, while 137 media specialists are between the ages of 45 and 65, which increases the likelihood of potential turnover in the coming years due to retirement. In comparison to the district-wide instructional workforce, men are unrepresented in the district's media specialist workforce, as are media specialists under the age of 40.

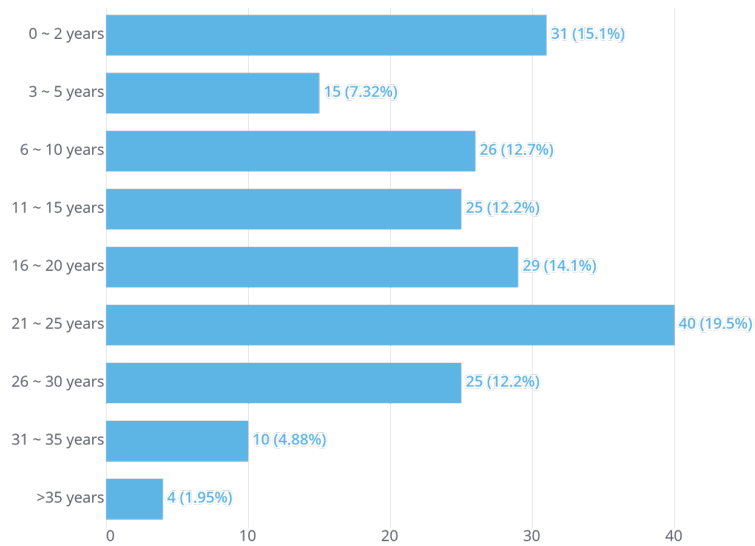


Figure 3: Media specialist workforce count by district teaching experience.

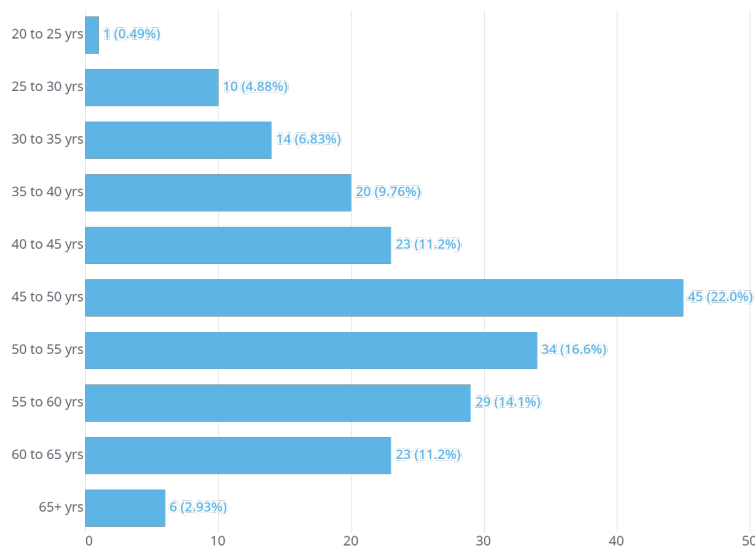


Figure 4: Media specialist workforce count by age.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

The AMSC project addresses the need for certified and qualified candidates to successfully serve as OCPS media specialists. The project will be developed and implemented by OCPS's Instructional Technology and Library Media (ITLM) team, including:

- Allison Kibbey, Director, Ed.S. in Educational Technology, 14 years of experience as a teacher, media specialist, and district-based administrator
- Lillie Adkins, Program Specialist, M.A. in Instructional Design and Technology, 9 years of experience as a teacher, media specialist, and district-based administrator
- Sarah Kate McGuire, Program Specialist, M.A. in Library and Information Science, 13 years of experience as a teacher, media specialist, and district-based administrator
- Jessica Scheff, Program Specialist, M.A. Curriculum & Instruction with a Concentration in Digital Teaching and Learning, 21 years of experience as a teacher, media specialist, and district-based resource teacher and administrator
- Margie Wells, Program Specialist, M.A. in Instructional Technology and Media, 31 years of experience as a teacher, media specialist, and district-based administrator
- Jennifer Norton, Resource Teacher, M.Ed. in Instructional Technology and Media, 25 years of experience as a teacher, media specialist, and district-based resource teacher

The ITLM team brings expertise in creating high-quality professional learning to support the development of aspiring media specialists. All members of the team will contribute to the design, development, and implementation of all AMSC

program activities. They will also be instrumental in supporting retention efforts of cohort members through 1:1 coaching and ongoing professional learning.

To address the critical shortage of media specialists, the AMSC project work plan proposes an accelerated timeline to design and develop the program beginning as early as June 2025. Developing the content for the AMSC program activities is in the existing scope of work for the ITLM team, so funding is not required for development and design purposes. Funding is, however, critical to the implementation of the program, which is set to begin in Fall 2025 and conclude at the end of the 2026-27 school year.

The AMSC program is inspired by elements of the Wayne State University Project RUSL, Restoring Urban School Libraries program. Project RUSL removes barriers to becoming a school media specialist by providing tuition remission, stipend, embedded mentorship, and professional development in a cohort model. While the AMSC is not providing tuition reimbursement, cohort participants will receive stipends as they complete program components including a professional learning course and shadowing components that include embedded mentorship elements. Similarly, the program applies the cohort model implemented by the University of Florida's Educational Technology Ed.D. program which utilizes in-person cohort activities to foster a community of practice. The AMSC program will utilize in-person cohort activities, collaborative assignments, and discussion boards for cohort members to learn and share with each other, build expertise and trust.

June - July 2025:

Needs Assessment

If selected, the ITLM team will begin conducting a needs assessment in June 2025. To assist in designing the AMSC program's course, the ITLM team will conduct a multi-faceted needs assessment. Conducting a needs assessment to determine professional development needs is an annual practice for the ITLM team and does not require funding.

The ITLM team will pull existing resources, such as presentations, documents, and professional resources, from previous media specialist professional development sessions aligned to the American Association of School Librarians National School Librarian Standards and Florida's K-12 Library Program Evaluation tool. All media specialists will be invited to complete an optional survey to rank topics extracted from the American Association of School Librarians National School Librarian Standards and Florida's K-12 Library Program Evaluation tool in order of importance. The survey will also feature an open-ended response question that prompts media specialists to share what they wish they knew about skills or knowledge before becoming a media specialist.

In addition, the team will review participant feedback from the previous three years of professional development sessions geared toward beginning media specialists. This approach will allow the ITLM team to select and revise existing professional development resources based on the experience and expertise of beginning (<3 years) and established (>3 years) media specialists to design the course component of the 12-week AMSC program.

AMSC Program Design and Development

The ITLM team will begin designing and developing components of the AMSC program during June and July 2025 based on the needs assessment results and the American Association of School Librarians National School Librarian Standards and Florida's K-12 Library Program Evaluation tool. Components will include in-person cohort activities, the 10-week course, and shadowing plans. Each program component would be proposed as a draft to ensure opportunities for improvement based on feedback from colleagues in other districts and from media specialist mentors. Designing and developing professional learning programs is part of the scope of work for the ITLM team and does not require additional funding.

In-Person Cohort Activities

The ITLM team will design and develop two in-person activities, including an agenda, slide deck and any handouts for the launch and end-of-course celebration events. The target audience for both events is cohort participants and mentors to be facilitated by the ITLM team. Possible learning objectives for the in-person cohort activities, pending feedback from media specialists and colleagues, could be:

- *By the end of the first session, Aspiring Media Specialists will be able to:*
 - *Understand the overall goals and structure of the program, including key milestones and expectations.*
 - *Connect with fellow cohort participants and mentors to build a supportive learning community.*
- *By the end of the second session, Aspiring Media Specialists will be able to:*
 - *Share experiences and insights gained during the program with peers and mentors.*
 - *Reflect on personal growth and learning achieved throughout the program.*

Course

The ITLM team will design and develop a 10-week course using existing internal resources (e.g., presentations) based on the professional resources that cohort participants will receive. The course may include videos, reading, articles from professional resources such as *Knowledge Quest* or *School Library Journal*, discussion board prompts, independent and collaborative assignments with corresponding rubrics, and/or quizzes. Topics may include designing instructional programs to support student literacy, communication, critical thinking and workplace readiness; collection development and management; library programming and services; technology integration; and building a culture of reading. The ITLM team will also build a draft course calendar and any corresponding facilitator resources throughout the design and development process. The course itself will be created within Canvas, the district's Learning Management System (LMS), by a University of Central Florida Master of Instructional Design and Technology program intern. Possible learning objectives for the course, pending feedback from media specialists and colleagues, could be:

- *By the end of this course, Aspiring Media Specialists will be able to:*
 - *Understand the role of the media specialist as an instructional leader.*
 - *Utilize library media resources to support student learning.*
 - *Develop skills in collection development, including selection and deselection.*
 - *Identify effective strategies to implement a collaboratively planned instructional program.*
 - *Advocate for the media center and its essential role in the school community.*

Shadowing

The ITLM team will design and develop a shadowing plan, which may include what cohort participants should observe while shadowing, an observation log, and reflection questions. Cohort participants will shadow two AMSC media specialist mentors at two schools throughout the program to expose them to different situations. Possible learning objectives for the shadowing, pending feedback from media specialists and colleagues, could be:

- *By the end of the shadowing activities, Aspiring Media Specialists will be able to:*
 - *Identify and describe the diverse roles and responsibilities of a media specialist in a school setting.*
 - *Understand the challenges and opportunities faced by media specialists in different school environments.*
 - *Observe and analyze effective communication and collaboration techniques used by media specialists when working with teachers, students, and administrators.*
 - *Identify and evaluate different resources (print, digital, and online) used by media specialists to support curriculum and instruction.*
 - *Recognize different models of library programming and services offered by media specialists.*

Summer Shadowing

The ITLM team will design and develop a summer shadowing plan to be completed by cohort participants during the summer of 2026 and 2027. The summer shadowing will be facilitated by a school-based AMSC media specialist mentor. The draft plan may include what activities cohort participants must complete under the supervision of their mentor, an activity or observation log, guidelines for a summer shadowing artifact, and/or reflection questions. Possible learning objectives for the summer shadowing component, pending feedback from media specialists and colleagues, could be:

- *By the end of this summer shadowing opportunity, Aspiring Media Specialists will be able to:*
 - *Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted roles and responsibilities of a school media specialist.*
 - *Explain the connection between library programs and services and the overall school curriculum and learning goals.*
 - *Identify and describe best practices in library management, including collection development, resource organization, and circulation.*

Mentor Training

The ITLM team will design and develop an in-person training session for all AMSC mentors, including an agenda, slide deck and handouts. The training aims to equip mentors with the necessary knowledge and skills to serve as course instructors with a full understanding of the course's content. The course will be designed to include units, with each unit being facilitated by different groups of mentors based on their interests, expertise, and availability. During the training, mentors can practice tasks in a demo version of the AMSC Canvas course. They will be provided

with a reference guide for any actions they will take in the course (ex: responding to discussion boards, grading assignments, etc.). Possible learning objectives for the mentor training, pending feedback from media specialists and colleagues, could be:

- *By the end of this training, mentors will be able to:*
 - *Understand the roles and responsibilities of the mentor, including facilitating discussions, grading assignments, and providing support to cohort participants.*
 - *Collaborate with other mentors to ensure consistency and quality throughout the duration of the program.*

Overall Program Evaluation by Other District Colleagues

By mid-July, once the AMSC program has been fully designed and developed, the ITLM team will provide colleagues in other districts an opportunity to evaluate the draft program. Evaluators will be prompted to consider the project's alignment with the American Association of School Librarians National School Librarian Standards and Florida's K-12 Library Program Evaluation tool, that the course does not require more than two hours per week to accommodate participants' current instructional duties, and that opportunities for collaborative learning are purposeful.

Fall 2025 and Fall 2026

Overall Program Revisions

The ITLM team will review and consider feedback from colleagues in other districts by mid-September. Based on this feedback, complete any AMSC program revisions.

Mentor Media Specialist Recruitment

The ITLM team will recruit and select up to 24 media specialists to serve as subject matter experts, course instructors, and shadowing supervisors. Ideally, mentors would have at least two full years of media specialist experience and classroom teaching experience. Recruiting will involve developing selection criteria, creating marketing materials, identifying recruitment channels, launching the recruitment process, and selecting candidates.

In August, to begin the mentor media specialist recruitment process, the ITLM team will develop a set of criteria for selecting candidates. The application will be developed to actively seek representation in various forms, including but not limited to years of teaching and media specialist experience, work history, and areas of certification. The selection criteria would also assess a mentor candidate's interest in the field, experience with mentorship, and commitment to helping others grow. This may include a statement of intent, a letter of recommendation, and/or an interview.

To support the recruitment process, the ITLM team will collaborate with HR to craft an email to current media specialists explaining the AMSC program and emphasizing opportunities for professional growth, collaboration, and stipends.

In early September, the ITLM team will use existing internal communication channels to promote the AMSC mentor role to current media specialists. The ITLM team will email all media specialists about the opportunity to serve as a mentor for the AMSC. A short blurb and link to the informational session and application will be shared throughout the application window in the weekly Media Center Recap email sent to all OCPS media specialists every Friday. In addition, an AMSC information page would be created for the Media Center Hub, a Canvas LMS course.

In mid-September, the ITLM team will facilitate a 30-minute informational session for interested mentor media specialists. The informational session will introduce potential mentors to the AMSC program, the application process, and the project goal. It will emphasize the district's commitment to building the capacity of its existing instructional workforce by reducing professional development and financial barriers to becoming a media specialist. The session will detail the involvement of mentor media specialists in reviewing the course content before it is implemented, facilitating the course, in-person cohort activities, and shadowing supervision. Furthermore, it will highlight important deadlines and time commitments.

By mid-October, following the previously developed selection criteria, the ITLM team will select up to 24 applicants to mentor the cohort and up to 10 alternates. Selected mentors will be notified via email and have five business days to accept their invitation. If an applicant does not accept, their spot will be offered to an alternate candidate, who will have five business days to accept their invitation.

Overall Program Evaluation by Media Specialist Mentors

Allow mentors to evaluate the program before the November Thanksgiving break. Mentors will be prompted to consider the project's alignment with the American Association of School Librarians National School Librarian Standards and Florida's K-12 Library Program Evaluation tool, that the course does not require more than two hours per week to accommodate participants' current instructional duties, and that opportunities for collaborative learning are purposeful.

Cohort Recruitment

The ITLM team will recruit up to 12 cohort members from the district's instructional workforce during the 2025-26 school year and up to 12 cohort members during 2026-27. This will involve developing selection criteria, creating marketing materials, identifying recruitment channels, launching the recruitment process, and selecting candidates.

To begin the recruitment process, the ITLM team will develop a set of criteria to select candidates for the AMSC cohort in partnership with the district's Human Resources (HR) department in August. This could include striving to select a cohort representative of the district's instructional workforce, which would improve the diversity of the district's media specialist workforce. The application will be developed to actively seek representation in various forms, such as years of teaching experience, work history, and areas of certification. The selection criteria would also assess a candidate's interest in the field, potential, and commitment to learning. With guidance from the HR department, this may include a statement of intent, skills assessment, letter of recommendation, and/or an interview. Human Resources will guide the development of a committee, including ITLM team members, HR team members, a school-based administrator, and media specialist(s) to review applications and/or conduct interviews. Any media specialist

In September, the ITLM team will collaborate with HR and the Communications department to develop marketing materials highlighting the benefits of participation in the cohort and the media specialist profession. The materials may include fliers, social media messages, and email campaigns. They will emphasize opportunities for professional growth, collaboration, mentorship, and stipends. Ideally, the materials would include testimonials from current media specialists.

The ITLM team will use the existing internal and external communication channels to promote the AMSC to potential candidates within the district's current workforce. Large initiatives, such as the AMSC, are announced through the Deputy Superintendent's Newsletter, an internal platform for distributing memorandums. In October, the ITLM team would collaborate with the HR team to publish a memo announcing the AMSC, including a link to the application. The target audience for the memo would be instructional staff, including teachers, instructional coaches, media specialists, etc.

Immediately following the publication of the memo, the ITLM team would email current media specialists about the AMSC, encouraging them to share the email with instructional colleagues interested in becoming media specialists. The email will include the memo released through the Deputy Superintendent's Newsletter and a promotional flier to be posted in high-traffic areas for instructional staff, such as the mailroom, workroom, teacher's lounge, etc.

By the end of October, through the support of the HR department, the AMSC cohort and application will also be announced on the district's LinkedIn page, which 44,000 LinkedIn members follow, including 19,000 current employees. The HR department will also request that the Classroom Teacher Association's leadership team distribute AMSC information to its members via their email, website, and social media platforms within one week of the memo's release date.

By the end of October, the ITLM team will contact Florida State University's Master of Science in Information and the University of South Florida's Master of Library and Information Science programs to inquire about promoting the AMSC cohort application to its current students and alumni employed at OCPs.

The informational session, facilitated in early November, will introduce potential candidates to the AMSC project, the application process, and the project goal. It will emphasize the district's commitment to building the capacity of its exciting instructional workforce by reducing professional development and financial barriers to becoming a media specialist. Furthermore, it will highlight important deadlines and time commitments and explain that program completion does not guarantee a media specialist position but makes one a stronger candidate.

Following the previously developed selection criteria, the committee will select up to 12 applicants each year to participate in the cohort and up to 3 alternates. Selected participants will be notified via email in early December and have five business days to accept their invitation. If an applicant does not accept, their spot will be offered to an alternate candidate, who will have five business days to accept their invitation.

Spring 2026 and Spring 2027

The ITLM team will implement AMSC program components in January, including mentor training, in-person cohort activities, the course, and shadowing activities.

Mentor Training

In January, the ITLM team will facilitate an in-person training session for all AMSC mentors. In addition to gaining a deeper understanding of their role, mentors will identify their preference for a communication and collaboration channel to use with each other and members of the ITLM team. This channel will provide ongoing support and encouragement throughout the program. Finally, mentors will learn of their role and expected level of participation

during the in-person cohort activities. Mentor participation and task completion will be monitored throughout the program.

AMSC mentors will evaluate training by completing the district's standard Professional Development Evaluation Feedback form. The ITLM team will evaluate mentors' responses to identify opportunities for improving the training.

In-Person Cohort Activities

In January, the ITLM team will facilitate the in-person AMSC launch event, which will be attended by cohort participants and mentors. The launch event aims to build excitement around the cohort, allow cohort participants and mentors to get to know one another, and gain a deeper understanding of the media specialist role.

In early May, the ITLM team will facilitate the AMSC end-of-course celebration event, which will be attended by cohort participants and mentors. The end-of-course celebration event aims to build excitement around the summer shadowing component and provide cohort participants and mentors with an opportunity to reconnect, reflect on their learning, and complete a collaborative hands-on learning experience.

For both events, cohort participants and mentors will evaluate training by completing the district's standard Professional Development Evaluation Feedback form. The ITLM team will evaluate mentors' responses to identify opportunities for improving the training.

Course

The AMSC course will open in January and conclude in May. While mentors will be assigned to facilitate the cohort, the ITLM team will consistently monitor the AMSC Canvas course to ensure that mentors engage with cohort participants and grade assignments in a timely manner. Additionally, the ITLM team will monitor cohort participant engagement and, as necessary, reach out to participants individually to ensure their success.

Cohort participants will evaluate their course-based learning experience by completing the district's standard Professional Development Evaluation Feedback form. Mentors will evaluate their course facilitation experience by completing a separate feedback form. The ITLM team will evaluate responses from cohort participants and mentors to identify opportunities for improving the course.

Shadowing

Cohort participants will sign up for two shadowing sessions at two different schools based on their preferences for grade band (e.g., elementary, middle, high, K-8) and location. Each mentor will host only one cohort participant at a time to provide individualized mentorship and will host no more than two cohort participants throughout the program. The ITLM team will implement and monitor a shadowing sign-up process. Shadowing activities will take place in February and April each year.

Cohort participants will evaluate their shadowing experiences by responding to reflection questions in the Canvas Course as either an independent assignment or collaborative discussion. Mentors will log their mentorship hours and shadowing experience on the AMSC mentor log. The ITLM team will evaluate responses from cohort participants and mentors to identify opportunities for improvement.

Job Posting Announcements

Beginning in March, the ITLM team will monitor "intent to return" forms submitted by media specialists to their principal. This will help the team become aware of possible job openings. In collaboration with HR, the ITLM team will publish a memo in April encouraging principals to consider AMSC participants for available media specialist positions. Cohort participants will be informed via email of available media specialist positions as they become available.

Summer Shadowing Placement

At the beginning of April, the ITLM team will facilitate a virtual meeting with mentors to determine summer shadowing placements. Cohort participants and mentors will be "matched" as best as possible based on location, grade level preference, and mentor insights. Summer shadowing placements will be announced at the final in-person cohort activity.

Exam Registration

Participants must register for the Florida Teacher Certification Exam—Educational Media Specialist PK-12 exam by the end of April and submit their registration verification to the AMSC Canvas course. The ITLM team will continuously monitor that all participants have signed up. To be reimbursed, participants must take and pass the exam by the end of June.

Substitute Reimbursement and Stipend Payout

The ITLM team will complete the substitute reimbursement process necessary to support the program's school-year shadowing activities by the end of May. In addition, the ITLM team will complete the stipend payout process for cohort participants and mentors by the end of May.

Summer 2026 and 2027

Summer Shadowing

Throughout the June shadowing window, the ITLM team will monitor the AMSC cohort participants and mentors to ensure the expected shadowing activities occur as described.

Cohort participants will evaluate their shadowing experiences by responding to reflection questions in the Canvas Course as either an independent assignment or collaborative discussion. Mentors will log their mentorship hours and shadowing experience on the AMSC mentor log. The ITLM team will evaluate responses from cohort participants and mentors to identify opportunities for improvement.

Job Posting Announcements

During June and July, the ITLM team will continue to email cohort participants about media specialist positions as they become available. Cohort participants will be celebrated via email and social media as they are hired for media specialist roles throughout the district.

Exam Vouchers

Cohort participants will receive exam vouchers to cover the cost of registering for the Florida Teacher Certification Exam - Educational Media Specialist PK-12 exam. ITLM team members will monitor registration and exam results.

Shadowing Stipend Payout

The ITLM team will complete the summer shadowing stipend payout by the end of June, pending that cohort participants have completed all necessary elements.

Fall 2026 and Fall 2027

Job Placement and Retention Efforts

Beginning in August, the ITLM team will monitor if and where AMSC program graduates were hired into media specialist roles. As part of the team's regular responsibilities, they will schedule an in-person visit with all newly hired media specialists, including AMSC program graduates, to improve retention outcomes.

Overall Program Evaluation

In September, the ITLM team will send cohort participants and media specialists a survey of closed-ended and open-ended questions to seek their feedback on the overall AMSC program experience. The results of this survey and all evaluations from throughout the program will be analyzed by the ITLM team to identify holistic improvements to the program. Opportunities for improvement will be documented for the sake of the AMSC toolkit.

AMSC Media Specialist Monitoring

The ITLM team will monitor the impact that AMSC graduates hired into media specialist roles have had on their schools. This may include monitoring AMSC graduates in lessons taught, facilitating class checkout visits, print and electronic circulation of library resources, facilitating professional development for instructional colleagues, reading minutes logged by students and staff, collection quality, etc.

Cohort 2

Begin the cohort participant and mentor recruitment process to assemble the group for Cohort 2 and plan for implementation of the program components that take place in the spring.

Ongoing

Evaluation

Continuous evaluation of project activities is integrated into the AMSC program, enabling an iterative improvement process. Following program completion, the ITLM team will synthesize all gathered feedback to identify both program strengths and opportunities for refinement.

Retention Efforts

As part of the ITLM team's regular responsibilities, they will try to retain AMSC graduates hired into media specialist roles by offering continued and regular opportunities to engage in high-quality professional learning. In addition, each AMSC graduate will be assigned to an ITLM team member who will act as a direct line of support to answer questions and offer coaching. Beyond this, the ITLM team will explore methods to continue fostering connections among cohort graduates and mentors, including ensuring the opportunity to attend the FAME conference.

AMSC Media Specialist Monitoring

The ITLM team will continue to monitor the impact that AMSC graduates hired into media specialist roles have on their schools. This may include monitoring AMSC graduates in lessons taught, facilitating class checkout visits, print and electronic circulation of library resources, facilitating professional development for instructional colleagues, reading minutes logged by students and staff, collection quality, etc.

Sustainability

Once developed, some components of the AMSC program will be sustainable. The ITLM team will advocate for funding to sustain the financial aspects of the program using available funding. The AMSC toolkit will be in place to train future media specialists alongside volunteer mentors.

PROJECT RESULTS

AMSC intended project results are to 1) improve OCPS media specialist recruitment and retention, 2) develop and implement a replicable aspiring media specialist preparedness program with coursework, shadowing, and cohort activities, and 3) create a replicable shadowing program. Key deliverables include a course shared on the LMS Commons accessible to other institutions and a toolkit featuring recruitment strategies, communication materials, cohort activities, and other resources to support replication of the Aspiring Media Specialist Cohort. These resources will help other school districts enhance their efforts to recruit, educate, and retain a diverse media specialist workforce.

AMSC Toolkit

By the end of October 2026, the ITLM team will assemble a web-based AMSC toolkit using a platform such as Google Sites to provide streamlined access to all resources. It will include artifacts and outcomes from all program components. For example, cohort recruitment artifacts may include selection criteria, the application, marketing materials, and communication materials. In contrast, cohort recruitment outcomes may include the total number of applicants, the number of selected applicants, and the retention rate throughout the program (e.g., completion of in-person events, course, shadowing, etc.). By the end of December 2027, the toolkit will be updated to include the impact that AMSC graduates hired into media specialist roles have had on their schools. The toolkit will be updated to include any revised materials implemented during the second year of the program.

AMSC Toolkit Awareness

To promote the toolkit, the ITLM team will contact the Florida State University's Master of Science in Information program, the University of South Florida's Master of Library and Information Science program, and the Florida Association of Supervisors of Media to see if they would share the resource with their ListServ members.

Conferences

The ITLM team will endeavor to disseminate results and lessons learned through presentations at state and/or national educational and library association conferences. Specifically, the ITLM team will apply to present the program at the 2026 and 2027 Florida Association of Media in Education (FAME) conferences, an annual conference for media specialists and library media supervisors. The presentation would provide a brief overview of the program and feature several cohort members sharing how their experience as AMSC participants has impacted their success as media specialists. FAME registration costs will be covered for all cohort participants and mentors to ensure access to learning and networking opportunities. Cohort participants and mentors will also be encouraged to apply to present at the FAME.

The ITLM team will apply to present at the 2027 American Association of School Librarians conference, highlighting the program's development, implementation, and outcomes to reach an audience of library media supervisors facing similar challenges in recruiting media specialists. Any presentations will include a link to the final AMSC toolkit.

