

University of North Texas College of Information/Department of Information Science
Grant Proposal: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program/Planning Grant/Masters-Level/Community Anchors
Preparing School Librarians for Data Literacy Leadership (LB21-FY18-1)

Statement of Need

The University of North Texas College of Information (UNT) and Texas Woman's University School of Library and Information Studies (TWU) request funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to plan the design of a school librarian preparation program that develops leadership in data literacy. The school library preparation program is now part of the master's level library education program at both institutions, preparing school librarians to be curriculum leaders and instructional partners in K-12 schools across the State of Texas, and across the country. School librarians are perfectly poised, but not consistently trained, to fill a critical need in school-based data-driven decision-making. Federal, state, and district imperatives are driving efforts to implement data-driven frameworks in K-12 education; while data is being collected in schools, there is little evidence that it is being applied to improve instructional effectiveness.¹ Administrators and classroom teachers are inadequately or inconsistently trained in using data to inform instructional decisions that lead to improvements in student achievement and school improvement. This type of expertise has been conceptualized as data literacy. Yet, schools of education have not yet prioritized the teaching of data literacy.²

The member of the school staff perfectly poised to immediately provide leadership in the management of a school-based, data-driven decision-making framework is the school librarian, as evidenced by isolated cases across the country.³ This planning initiative explores the potential for the school librarian to provide data literacy leadership through the systematic development of competencies in the master's level preparation program. Currently, school librarians completing programs at UNT and TWU are prepared to assume multiple leadership roles: curriculum, instruction, reading literacy, technology integration, and digital citizenship. These preparation programs may provide additional training to address the necessary components for data literacy development: collegial relationships, access to an expert resource, a clear set of guidelines, and training that is closely linked to classroom instruction.⁴ There are few examples of LIS education programs training school library professionals to assume this leadership. The master's level school library preparation programs at UNT and TWU are the largest in the State of Texas, and are both located in Denton, TX; together they may prepare more school librarians for service than any other single institution in the United States. The implementation of a preparation program to develop data literacy competencies in a systematic way at both institutions would have a profound impact on the need for this type of leadership, enable investigations of pedagogic and practical efficacy, and provide a model for national implementation. This planning initiative addresses the goals of the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program (LB21) grant category through the development of data literacy competency, collaboration, and leadership skills in the next generation of school librarians to meet the demand for data-driven decision-making in K-12 schools.

Performance Goals and Objectives

The planning initiative team seeks to prepare school librarians through the master's level preparation program for providing data literacy leadership to improve student learning and school improvement. The goals of this collaborative planning initiative include: 1) establish collaborative partnerships, 2) identify competencies related to data literacy leadership, 3) design curricula to develop identified competencies, 4) determine appropriate content pedagogy, 5) design and implement pilot studies that will inform program redesign, 6) develop a plan for restructuring the school librarian preparation master's level program to address the need for data literacy leadership, and 7) review alignment with the [AASL National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries](#).⁵

¹ Means, B., Padilla, C., DeBarger, A., & Bakia, M. (2009). Implementing Data-Informed Decision Making in Schools: Teacher Access, Supports and Use. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development.

² Mandinach, E., Friedman, J. M., & Gummer, E. (2015). How Can Schools of Education Help to Build Educators' Capacity to Use Data? A Systemic View of the Issue. *Teachers College Record*, 117(4).

³ Lansford, T. (2017). Growing Through Data: Improving Practices and Impacting Student Achievement. *Knowledge Quest*, 46(2), 72-79.

⁴ Dunlap, K., & Piro, J. S. (2016). Diving into Data: Developing the Capacity for Data Literacy in Teacher Education. *Cogent Education*, 3(1). doi:10.1080/2331186x.2015.1132526

⁵ American Association of School Librarians, author. (2018). National school library standards for learners, school librarians, and school libraries. Chicago: ALA Editions, an imprint of the American Library Association.

Project Design

To achieve these goals, we propose a planning process that will establish critical partnerships, yield the necessary data to make informed design decisions, and produce a preparation program model. The planning initiative team is comprised of six faculty members, three from each institution, and all instructors in master's level school librarian preparation programs. The proposed planning process is comprised of three phases:

- 1) An initial **summit** to be convened on the TWU campus in the fall of 2018, bringing together local leaders: faculty, K-12 school administrators and educators, school library directors, school librarians in practice, and preservice school librarians. This summit will follow the principles of participatory design in identifying necessary competencies, providing input on planning the redesign of preparation programs at both institutions, and generating a report for submission to the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) for use during the current review process of new standards for the preparation of school librarians.
- 2) From the data collected at the summit, the planning initiative team will meet periodically at each campus to design a series of **pilot studies** that will investigate the competencies identified for data literacy leadership, pedagogical strategies for competency development, applicable theories of learning, and training delivery systems. Pilot studies will be conducted during the spring semester of 2019, recruiting participants from the largest pool of preservice school librarians in the state.
- 3) The planning initiative team will analyze data generated from prior phases, seek input from two consultants, and design a curricular **model** for the master's level preparation program that continues to meet standards for professional certification and prepares students for leadership roles as a school librarian, includes training in data literacy leadership, and is ready to be implemented at both institutions in the summer of 2019.

Diversity Plan

While school districts across the country are making attempts to implement data-driven decision-making frameworks to guide instructional interventions and school improvement plans, the absence of school-based data literacy leaders impacts rural more than urban schools, and less-affluent more than affluent schools; these schools face greater challenges in accessing external resources to support at-risk learners. A plan to prepare the school librarian for this leadership addresses these school diversity challenges.

Broad Impact

This planning initiative addresses a critical need in K-12 schools for leadership in data-driven decision-making by positioning the school librarian as the solution. Anticipated outcomes include the establishment of a network of stakeholders who will participate at various stages in the design of a model for the systematic preparation of school librarians to fill this role, the development of effective strategies in data literacy leadership training, and the design of a curricular model with the potential to fill an immediate and critical need in K-12 schools across the state, and to serve as an example for school librarian preparation programs across the country.

Estimated Budget

We request a total budget of \$46,937, inclusive of fringe benefits and indirect costs, to support the activities described in this planning initiative. This request includes \$800 for the initial summit (room, technology, food), \$5000 for a 2-day consultation meeting with innovative school library expert (Mike Eisenberg, Dean and Professor Emeritus at University of Washington), \$2000 for a one-day consultation meeting with school librarian currently practicing data literacy leadership (Teresa Lansford, school librarian in Norman, OK, and author of related Knowledge Quest article), \$13,985 in salary support for members of the planning initiative team (\$3000 each), \$1667 in fringe benefits, and \$23,442 in indirect costs. Alternative funding streams will support graduate student assistants supporting planning initiative activities.