



# Learning Commons Program Evaluation Report 2018-2019

## Introduction

In the Fall of 2013 we began our journey of the Learning Commons model. We started by combining technology and library resources into one space and reorganizing staff to fit the new model. Next, we developed an action plan to meet the needs of the “21st Century Learner.” That plan included:

- *Develop a curriculum combining standards from state standards, National School Library Standards and ISTE Standards (International Society for Technology in Education).*
- *Create opportunities for using the Learning Commons in interdisciplinary ways.*
- *Use the space in multiple ways, during the school day and for after-school programs*
- *Create a welcoming space for learning opportunities.*
- *Cultivate understanding/perceptions of the Learning Commons model.*
- *Develop relationships and teaching partnerships that extend beyond the physical space of the Learning Commons.*

## Program Context (History)

Prior to the Fall of 2013, the elementary schools operated with both a library and a computer lab in each school. Across the district there were a total of four elementary library media specialists, one elementary technology integrator, three educational technicians (ed techs) supporting library lessons and management, and three ed techs maintaining the computer labs and weekly technology integration lessons in collaboration with the classroom teacher. The district also had one elementary technology lead person who maintained the repairs of hardware beyond the ed

techs capabilities. There was no district-wide curriculum for either library skills or technology integration with the exception of digital citizenship units for grades K-5.

Before the Learning Commons Plan was implemented in 2013 both the high school and middle school computer rooms were each staffed by one full time IT support leader and two full time ed techs. Each library was staffed by a full time library media specialist and two full time ed techs.

As part of the review in 2012-2013, a decision was made to adopt a Learning Commons model tying library skills and technology integration together and providing a consistent model throughout the district. A curriculum was developed using three sources of standards: Common Core State Standards (CCSS), American Association of School Libraries Standards (AASL), and International Society for Technology in Education Standards (ISTE).

Because the Learning Commons was to be the hub for collaborative teaching and learning, it was decided that each elementary Learning Commons would be staffed by the same ed tech five days per week. There would be one library media specialist, one technology integrator and one IT support leader to support the five schools. Most lessons would be taught by the ed tech, though the library media specialist and/or the technology integrator could be called upon to support as needed.

Both the high school and middle school Learning Commons would each be staffed by a library media specialist and two ed techs. Both schools would each have an IT support leader and share a technology integrator.

The job of the library media specialist and the technology integrator would go beyond the walls of the Learning Commons, collaborating with classroom teachers on projects related to standards across the various curriculums.

This current review is our first chance to evaluate the Learning Commons model and how this change in staffing and curriculum has impacted the teaching and learning of our students.

## **Review Process**

- The Learning Commons Program Review Committee examined the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) standards and Maine Effective School Library Program (MASL) standards alongside our action plan to meet the needs of the “21st Century Learner.” See appendices.
- The committee completed the AASL standards evaluation checklist for each of the three levels: elementary, middle school and high school. See appendices.

- In addition, staff members from all seven schools were surveyed regarding the effectiveness of our programs. See appendices.
- The committee formulated the current program overview at each level.
- Synthesizing all of the above information, the committee generated proposals.

## Current Program Overview

### *Elementary*

At the elementary level, some **successes**:

- More consistent curriculum being provided across our five elementary schools
- Increased instruction in the area of digital citizenship
- More focus on research skills at the 3-5 grade levels
- Restructuring of spaces so that they are welcoming and more optimal for learning
- Coding and robotics lessons across the grade levels
- Critical thinking skills through collaborative games (Breakout EDU) in grades 3-5 and some K-2 classes
- Clubs during the day, before school and after school using the space

### Elementary Circulation Statistics

School	No. of Students	Circulation 2017-2018
BCS	216	7800
BHM	185	4391
HCS	155	8242
WCS	287	8321
WES	320	7036

Some **challenges** we face at the elementary level:

- Instead of a collaborative model, students have “Learning Commons” classes lasting 40-45 minutes. During that time, students return their books and also select books leaving only 20-30 minutes for an actual lesson. Though this model works for our K-2 classes, it is difficult to effectively teach a lesson to grades 3-5.

- Learning Commons ed techs have many demands on their time: teaching all of the classes, supporting teachers' technology and book-related needs, repairing books, prepping new books for circulation, shelving books, managing the space, fixing technology glitches, and additional duties unrelated to the Learning Commons.
- We are experiencing some turnover in the ed tech position.
- HCS and BHM are staffed four days a week, instead of five, due to two ed techs being pulled to cover larger schools (WCS, WES).

School	Ed Tech Hours	Days LC Staffed	No of Classes per week	Min of Duty or Non-LC work per week
BCS	31	5	12	240
BHM	31 (7 hr at WES)	4	12	No scheduled duty at BHM (except standby); 25 at WES
HCS	31 (6 hr at WCS)	4	10	90
WCS	35	5	16	275
WES	35	5	18 (4 additional 20 min alternative ed classes seen by Mrs. Suthers at the request of Mr Dedek)	50

- The library media specialist only works in each elementary school one day per week which limits the ability to collaborate with staff and peers.
- Because the technology integrator works on the model of classroom support, she is not always available to provide support to the LC as needed.
- The current curriculum was designed in 2013-2014; there is a need to revise that curriculum.
- Before the Learning Commons model, students had two periods: one was "library" and one was "computer." With the combining of both, we have lost some of the basic skills that were taught during the "computer time."
- Collaboration with elementary teachers continues to be a challenge. Time is a key factor, but also staffing. With only one library media specialist and one technology integrator, it's difficult to meet the needs of five elementary schools grades K-5. The learning commons ed techs do not have the time to collaborate given their schedules and the demands of the current position.
- Our robotics program is in its third year. With only one set traveling to all elementary schools, they are reaching the end of their life. (We started with 18 Ozobots and are now

down to only ten.) Without some sort of maintenance of effort, we will be forced to eliminate this program.

## *Middle*

At the middle school, some **successes**:

- Designating the Learning Commons Media Specialist as an Exploratory Teacher has allowed for a consistent curriculum for the critical skills of information literacy, digital literacy, and research for all of our 6th and 7th grade students
- The combination of a fixed and flexible schedule
- Use of space by students and teachers throughout the day -- a welcoming and inviting space
- Furniture and large space allow for flexibility for classroom and meeting and activity space
- Space for clubs during school day and after school including Book Clubs, iTeam, Creative Makerspace, Crochet & Sewing, Battle of the Books Tournament, etc.
- Co-locating library and computer support in one space and having all support go through the Learning Commons for technology issues for students and staff
- Technology support we receive is top-notch and timely.
- High circulation: 7,900 checkouts during 2017-2018 (609 students) -- almost 13 checkouts per student
- Having all Technology support (inventorying, deploying, coordinating repairs, supporting, and collecting) in one place has been helpful as we support 6th grade ChromeBooks, 7th and 8th grade MacBook Airs, teacher MacBook Airs, staff ChromeBooks (shared), a few desktop devices, and printers.
- Having all A/V support (inventorying, deploying, maintaining, coordinating repairs, supporting, purchasing, and storing for summer) in one place has been helpful as we support Apple TVs, projectors, document cameras, speakers, portable DVD players, and television/DVD/VCR carts.

Some **challenges** we face at the middle level:

- It is a double-edged sword having the Learning Commons Media Specialist teach for  $\frac{2}{3}$  of each school day as it is very difficult to find time to collaborate with classroom

teachers and to visit classrooms. This can result in duplication of assignments between Learning Commons and ELA/Target classes.

- Scheduling time to work with the middle and high school technology integrator can be challenging for staff.
- With new standards from AASL, MASL, and ISTE, it is time to update our curriculum.
- There is a need for more focus on basic technology skills, e.g., organizing files, keyboarding, etc.
- Learning Commons furniture is starting to age and is not easily moved.

### *High School*

At the high school, some **successes**:

- Customer service team-work of library media specialist, ed techs, technology integrator, and IT Lead
- Flexible schedule for all students and teachers, open 7am-4pm
- Use of space by students and teachers throughout the day -- a welcoming and inviting space
- Furniture and large space allow for flexibility for classroom and meeting and activity space.
- Space for guest speakers and clubs during school day and after school including Book Club, iTeam, sign language club, and Lab Rats gaming club
- 80-100 students sign in to the HS Learning Commons each day, and that does not count the teachers and students who come in for a few minutes with a question.
- A book collection that strongly supports literacy and the curriculum tied to teacher requests and student needs for classwork and recreational reading (Circulation School Year 2017-2018)  
Total = 3,501 731 Students  
Note: Circulation has risen each year in the past 3 years
- Having all Technology support (inventorying, deploying, coordinating repairs, supporting, and collecting) in one place has been helpful as we support ChromeBooks, MacBook, a few desktop devices, and printers, including a 3D printer.
- Having all A/V support (inventorying, deploying, maintaining, coordinating repairs, supporting, purchasing, and storing for summer) in one place has been helpful as we support Apple TVs, projectors, document cameras, speakers, video cameras, portable DVD players, and television/DVD/VCR carts

Some **challenges** we face at the high school level:

- Having been short staffed in the ed tech position the past year has left us short of time to collaborate with teachers as much as we would like; and also short on time to plan engaging, educational programming for students and staff.
- With new standards from AASL, MASL, and ISTE, it is time to update our curriculum.
- The high school learning commons team is planning the use of the Learning Commons space in the new high school, which we will move into Fall 2020.

## Proposals

Strengthen Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish a district-level Learning Commons advisory group to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a mission statement</li> <li>○ Review and update procedures</li> <li>○ Prioritize the balance of teaching, supporting students &amp; staff, maintaining and managing Learning Commons, and technology integration</li> <li>○ Revise curriculum - update with new ISTE and School Library Standards including a learning progression for basic technology skills</li> <li>○ Revise scope and sequence of lessons at the elementary and middle school level</li> <li>○ Continue to develop use of existing and emerging technologies to support teaching and learning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Increase Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that learners and educators have access to the Learning Commons and to qualified professional staff in our elementary schools               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Investigate increasing ed-tech staffing at the elementary level</li> <li>○ Add 4.5 days for elementary Learning Commons ed-techs (This would match the Middle School and High School. With the increase of technology in our elementary schools, and the importance of having it set up properly for instruction and assessing, this request is much needed.)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2.5 days before the start of the school year to prepare laptops for students, so students and staff can begin teaching and learning as early as possible in the school year.</li> <li>■ 2 days at the end of school year for maintenance and organization of resources and equipment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Investigate increasing library media specialist staffing at the elementary level</li> </ul>

- Investigate increasing technology integrator staffing at the middle and high school levels
- Evaluate the workload of elementary ed techs
- Consider providing time for Learning Commons staff to train school staff on use of digital books, online catalog, and research databases
- Maintain a vibrant Learning Commons web presence, which provides access to a wide variety of digital resources
- Establish long-term plan for upgrading the functionality of Learning Commons spaces

### Improve Collaboration

- Explore a variety of modes of collaboration to:
  - Establish focused collaboration for units of study with elementary, middle, and high school teachers
  - Collaborate regarding research and digital citizenship skills taught in the Learning Commons so teachers can reinforce what is taught using same methods and language
  - Re-establish monthly meetings for all elementary Learning Commons staff
  - Provide mutual time for professional learning/district in-service training for all Learning Commons staff

## Program Evaluation Committee Members

Donna Brunette, Principal, Mt. Ararat High School; Jodi Crawford, Library Media Specialist, Mt. Ararat High School; Karen Silverman, Library Media Specialist, Mt. Ararat Middle School; Trish Suthers, Elementary Library Media Specialist; Kathy Stack, Learning Commons Ed Tech III; Stephanie Dustin, Learning Commons Ed Tech III; Kate Greeley, Elementary Technology Integrator; Judy Johnson, ELA Coordinator; Peg Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent

## Appendices (yellow highlighted documents are to be printed out for CIA)

- [21st Century Library Proposal 2012-2013](#)



- [Curriculum](#)
- [Learning Commons Survey 18-19 version 2.0](#)
- [Survey results](#)
- [AASL standards](#)
- [Maine Effective School Library Program Standards \(MASL\)](#)
- [ISTE standards](#)
- [Crosswalk -- Future Ready Librarians Framework and ISTE Standards for Educators](#)
- [AASL standards evaluation checklist](#)
- [Strong School Libraries Build Strong School Students](#)
- [Haves Halves Have Nots - School Libraries and Student Achievement](#)
- [The Elementary School Learning Commons: A Manual](#)
- [The Secondary School Learning Commons: A Manual](#)