



Tips for Library-School Partnerships

A new year brings new opportunities to be seen as an indispensable part of the instructional team on your campus, one who is a champion for 21st Century Skills, Literacy, and who has a powerful impact on student achievement.

Below are some ideas to implement this year, compliments of your TASL Advocacy/Legislative Committee.

- 1. Texas Library Study** - This data just went out to every principal and superintendent in the state. Texas voters were asked and heartily responded that school libraries are important, even at the expense of raising taxes! It's a great opportunity to begin a conversation with your principal about ideas for your program. Check this link for more information from Gloria Meraz on the TLA website:
<http://www.txla.org/html/pr/survey.html>
- 2. Back to School Teacher Survival Kit** - Create a set of reminders about how to get materials needed to start the school year for your staff, including a book mark with the database passwords, how to check out professional materials, AV equipment, etc. Also, include a way for teachers to suggest materials that they'd like you to purchase. Adding a little something chocolate is always a good idea, too!
- 3. New Teacher Orientation** - This is similar in concept to the Back to School Teacher Survival Kit, but step it up and offer muffins or bagels in the morning or cookies in the afternoon. Keep it short, but get those new staff members in your library and lay the groundwork for future collaboration. Don't forget to check in on them throughout the year! Remember that first grading period as a teacher?? THAT's stress!
- 4. TAKS data** - How we love to hate TAKS! Unfortunately, it's inescapable in Texas public schools, so try a "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em" take on our state accountability test. If you don't already do this, examine your school's data and develop a written TAKS Plan. Locate one or two of the objectives that were difficult for your campus, and develop a plan for how you can help your students improve their performance. Write up your plan and present it to your principal and the appropriate grade level or department chairs. Everything from collection development to collaborative lessons around that skill will show your staff just how in tune you are with the instructional needs of your campus!
- 5. Database Bookmarks** Customize your own bookmarks for Meet the Teacher or Open House night. This is a great conversation starter and gives you something to do besides standing near the door greeting parents. Promoting the K-12 databases and others your school may purchase is important for keeping the funding going. Plus, it's comforting for parents to hear, "File this away for that night when your child comes home and says he has a project due tomorrow with no time to run to the public library."
<http://web.esc20.net/k12databases/training.html>
- 6. Volunteer Tea** - If you're lucky enough to have a good supply of volunteers, invite them in for tea or coffee and explain how they can help free you up to do the important instructional duties that you were hired to do. No volunteers? Try using student helpers (even second graders can help with simple tasks in the library) - some will even give up their recess time, lunch periods, or come early or stay after school to help.
- 7. Get on a Parent Night Program** - Ask to speak at PTA meetings, college nights, literacy events, etc. If you're not comfortable speaking in front of a large group, use ESC Region 20 video clips to help you promote the K-12 databases. Keep it short, but be visible at these events! If necessary, join the PTA board and offer to help them get going. A strong PTA can pay huge dividends to library programs. Libraries serve every student and staff member in the school, and PTA's love to support this academic endeavor.
- 8. Book2Movie!** - Plan some fun book/movie tie in events - *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, and of course *New Moon*. Here's a fabulous idea stolen straight from the AASL Leadership workshop in Dallas on Monday--have a blood drive at a *New Moon* party! (Thanks, ladies, for sharing!)

9. **Library Events** - Make a list of important library events that need to be included on the master calendar for your school. Include School Library Week and School Librarian's Day! It doesn't look as self-serving if you do it way in advance among a group of other promotional events like bookfairs, Children's Book Week, Teen Read Week, etc. If the school doesn't celebrate you, be sure to celebrate the library anyway!

10. **New Books** - Once that first big shipment of books arrives, be sure to invite the staff in to see what you ordered! "Books and Brownies," or some sort event is a great way to give them a minute to peek, be the first to check the materials out, and for you to say, "Oh, Mrs. Jones--here's that book on X that you asked me to order!"

11. **English Language Arts TEKS** - Don't forget the most important thing that a librarian brings to the table is his/her ability to combine knowledge of instruction and curriculum with information and literacy skills. Be sure to meet with your ELA teachers about the new TEKS that include library skills and research and be ready with ideas of how you'd like to collaborate with them on teaching these new standards.

12. **Bake for your Principal** - At the AASL Leadership workshop in Dallas on Monday, former school librarian and current superintendent Steven Baule reminded us how incredibly stressful the opening of school is for your principal. They usually hear all kinds of complaints from teachers about their schedules, how their rooms were left untidy or not rearranged properly, how they don't like their class rosters, etc. As easy as it is to fall into that complaining mode along with those types of teachers, be a bright spot in his/her day instead! If not baked goods, a six pack of their favorite soda, or something easy and inexpensive will work just as well (remember, they rarely even get to eat a lunch on the first day or two)! It's the thought that counts (and that you weren't in line with your complaints like so many others!).

13. **Student Teachers** - If your school takes in student teachers, invite them once a semester to the library for donuts (yes, food again! It's a huge draw!) and a five minute chat on how important a good relationship is with their future librarian. In schools of education, they might learn the informal rules of teacher success such as making friends with the custodian and the school secretary, but explain how a teacher-librarian collegial relationship can be even more important. Until schools of education do a better job of this, we can take up the task by working with Pre-Service teachers as they come to us.

14. **Web 2.0** - We can't all be experts on everything, but pick at least one of the great free Web 2.0 tools out there and give it a try. Make it a goal to use it with students and to promote library events, so that others see you helping students with technology. Fun things to try--Animoto, VoiceThread, Xtranormal, Wix flash web page maker. These are all super easy, even for non-techies. Get online and play for a few minutes, and you'll see how deceptively simple it is to make something impressive!

These are just a few ideas. We hope some of them might be useful for you, or might bring to mind an idea that you have used in the past (or thought about using in the future). Please send additional ideas and tips directly to Jennifer LaBoon at jennifer.laboon@fwisd.org She will collect them all and send another set of ideas mid-month.