



Arlington
Public
Schools

Library Services

BRIEFING REPORT

February 2017





LIBRARY SERVICES

Library Services provides print and non-print resources for both classroom learning and choice reading. Students are taught 21st Century Skills so that they may become high-end users of information and lifelong learners. Library programs are designed to grow literacy for both students and their families while instilling a passion for reading.

MAJOR SERVICES

- Librarians are active collaborators in supporting a wide range of curriculum, and are leaders in providing Digital Citizenship instruction.
- Librarians are invested in programming, offering more than 60 author visits per year, book clubs, and a significant number of Family Literacy Nights in addition to special events, such as "Battle of the Books" and "March Book Madness."
- APS Libraries have almost 700,000 print titles for students to use, and more than 7,000 eBooks/eAudiobooks in a growing digital library.
- Library Services works with 14 vendors to provide high quality, authoritative resource databases for students to use on or off campus in their classwork and research.
- APS Librarians provide a bridge to Arlington Public Library resources, working to ensure each student has a public library card and an understanding of the offerings and services of the public library.
- Library Services maintains and updates the patron catalog and circulation system in several ways, including adding tens of thousands of new records to our catalog each year.

Bright Spots

Highlights of the past year's author visits include disabled rights activist Emmanuel Yeboah visiting a number of our library programs during his latest U.S. tour, and award-winning authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely discussing their timely book about black/white relations with high school students. As part of our focus on diversity, local civil rights icon Joan Mulholland spoke at Barcroft and Kenmore, while author Hena Khan spoke to Randolph students about her life as a Muslim woman.

Arlington's close working relationship with the Public Library continues to pay dividends. A higher-than-average number of students registered for Public Library cards as part of the Elementary Library Drive last spring, as well as a record number of APS students who participated in the Summer Reading initiative. Attendance at the 2016 NoVA Teen Book Festival was well over 500 last year, a three-fold increase since the program began in 2013.

We also collaborate with content areas across the system. In conjunction with the focus on writing units of study, Elementary librarians have been attending workshops this year to build practices that can enhance and complement the work going on in the classrooms.

APS Librarians aren't just professionals; they are leaders in our community. Two were chosen as Teachers of the Year at their schools this year: Nicole Gustafson at Nottingham Elementary School and Holly Ousley at Kenmore Middle School. APS Librarians continue to present at conferences and win awards. Karen Bentall, at Oakridge Elementary School, was selected as one of 300 educators selected to participate in the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Summer



Teacher Institute, while Deah Hester, from the Arlington Community High School, won a James Patterson Grant which will benefit both her school and Langston. Amy Blaine, of Jamestown Elementary School, and Meghan Fatouros, from Abingdon Elementary School, presented a session called "Windows and Mirrors" to the Greater Washington Reading Council last fall, while Luly Maceo and Ivette Roman, of Claremont Elementary School, attended the International Book Fair in Guadalajara, Mexico, expressly to purchase "authentic" Spanish Language materials. Lastly, librarians across the county were active participants in this year's "Hour of Code" – often acting as primary instructors for this annual event.

Of great note is the McKinley library. Huge thanks for both the funding and for the Facilities Office for the redesign. The space has been transformed, and is now bright, open and welcoming.

Finally, our Social Media presence is high, with the #APSLibrariansConnect hashtag campaign as one way of highlighting our broad impact on the community as a whole, particularly in literacy and with our curriculum connections.



Data which Provides Insight

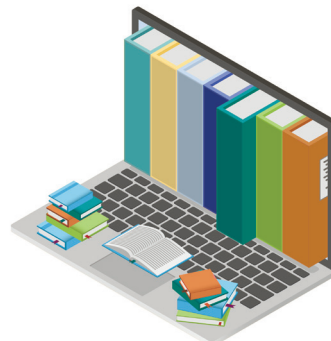
- 1,071 students registered for Arlington Public Library cards in the Spring drive of 2016.
- 257 APS high school students attended the APL Study Night at Central Library last May, funded in part by the Friends of the Library.
- More than 300 students attended the All-TAB event with author Jason Reynolds last year.
- 6200 students registered for the public library summer reading program and read a total of 64,462 books. Car magnets, paid for in part by APS, were also a huge hit and can still be seen around Arlington.
- Over the past two years, exit interviews were held with 350 students in 5th, 8th and 12th grade. 94% of students have positive opinions on their school libraries.
- Central Office Library Services staff added 163,185 records for new materials last year, including more than 5,000 for eContent.
- ¼ of the library staff presented at conferences in 2015-2016, including at VAASL, Festival of the Minds, and in Costa Rica.
- Competitive grants were won by several librarians, which allowed them to travel to Chicago, NYC, and to study topics like primary resources and digital literacy.

2015-2016 CIRCULATION



◀ 1,039,366 physical items

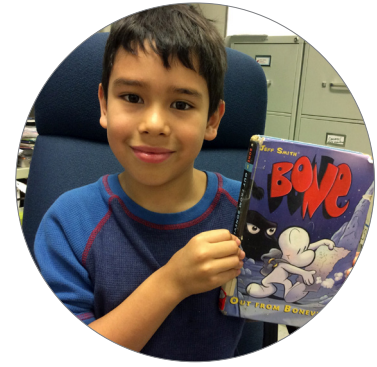
52,392 eBooks & eAudio items ▶
(a significant increase over 2014-2015)



◀ 353,833 database access sessions



FOCUS ON STUDENTS



Omar, third grader at Oakridge. "I like books because they can teach you stuff like how things work. I like that there are so many funny books in libraries, because I am a funny person. When I read books I ask questions and then sometimes I put myself into the story. I like that the library has computers and people who can help you and lots of books."

What We Learned

By and large, eContent does not replace print, it adds to our existing holdings, which is a cost challenge.

eContent does not sell itself. The message must be repeated and "marketed" repeatedly both with students and staff.

"Rock Star" librarians are not happenstance. Recruitment must be very proactive and year-round. Support, once they arrive, must be multi-pronged and ongoing.

Construction has become a major focus, with newly renovated libraries, such as McKinley, and newly built libraries, such as Ashlawn and Discovery. With Abingdon, the Stratford Middle School, the new Elementary School at Jefferson and the Wilson School project moving forward, a considerable amount of time has been given to library designs and operations by this office and by Facilities, with a focus on "mobile, mobile, mobile". With Discovery, we learned that libraries are somewhat unique, and the shelving and furniture design must often be provided by library vendors, rather than classroom vendors.

Moving Forward

For the first time in our history, we are seeing library vacancies which cannot be filled. This is a concern, and one the Library Supervisor has been actively working towards addressing, by being more proactive in reaching out to the wider library community, and by trying to make stronger connections with area library schools.

We would like to review the 2004 Ed Spec being used by architecture firms to design the new APS libraries. We continue to find challenges with it, as the libraries designed using those parameters are far smaller than those currently in existence in APS, and, in the case of Discovery, much work had to be done on the back-end to provide for the needs of the library program.

In addition to all that is being done with libraries now by hard-working library staff, we would like to build a "full" digital library. Because of the cost of eContent, this is taking time, but we believe we are about 35% there. Digital libraries have the advantage of equalizing the playing field between small and large programs, are adjustable for the needs of diverse students, and can be accessed anywhere there is internet and a device. We believe that such an initiative fits in well with the goals of APS in terms of the whole child and providing optimal learning environments.

Last and Not Least

Librarians and their programs contribute to literacy, often in ways which are very clear but not easily quantifiable. For a good example of this, check out an episode of the popular Vimeo video series produced at Gunston for the library program:

<https://vimeo.com/201673897>



Jamila, third grader at Randolph. "Libraries are important to me because this is where you can find many adventures, this is where you can read silently in your head, you find so many things, you can find things that are real. Books are fun to read, and if you enjoy them, you going to read the whole thing. You have to find books you enjoy, because you are yourself and that's who you are."



Heskeal, first grader at Randolph. "I like the library because I get to check out books every time and the books at my house I don't read a lot because some of them I have already read. When I read new books, I'm kind of curious and stuff like that. I like it because you don't have to pay to get the book. If there were no libraries, I would have to read the same books all the time and I don't have that much to read, so I wouldn't learn a lot."