

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARIES

by

Carole Goldstein

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by

Carole Goldstein

has been approved

August 1999

APPROVED:

John G. Mansour

Karlene H. Edwards

ACCEPTED:

Frederick Ramey

Dean

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to develop a design for flexible scheduling for the elementary school library that would function within the parameters most acceptable and suitable to administrators and teachers, while also providing time for ample and meaningful instruction in library skills for its students. Research showed that to ensure the most effective use of its facilities and to make the learning of library skills most meaningful, these skills would be best taught in conjunction with the needs of the students and the classroom curriculum. To accomplish this, the library and its resources must be available to students and staff when it is needed.

Two methods of scheduling classes in many school libraries that have shown success are flexible scheduling and flexible access. Administrators and teachers need to be educated and convinced that the best use of the library and its resources would be to enrich and supplement learning that was taking place in the classroom. It became apparent during the study that the school library in question would still need to provide prep time for its teachers. A totally flexible schedule would not be considered at this time. Compromises would need to be made. Six teachers and their students were to be assigned to the new magnet school because of overcrowding. It was

decided by the principal, librarian and the site team that the time slots vacated by these teachers would not be filled so that some flexible use of the library could be pursued. Also, a librarian aide was hired to help the librarian with the process of introducing a new scheduling technique to the school. An alternative model to the fixed schedule being used would need to be designed. This model would have to enable teachers to have their prep periods and also allow time in the library for research, study and the exchanging of books. An innovative schedule has been designed to introduce the concept of flexible scheduling to administrators, staff and students. It is modeled after a program used by one of the schools in the study. Grades one and two will be paired for storytime, but each class will have its own time for book exchange. In this schedule, one class will come fifteen minutes before storytime and checkout books. Then after the two classes have listened to the story, the class that has already checked out books will leave and the other class will stay and checkout books. This will be a savings of fifteen minutes for each two classes that are seen. This extra time will be used for the implementation of flexible scheduling of the library by grades four and five for the use of its resources and the learning of library skills.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The school library has the potential for being a major resource and learning center for students and staff and can be an exciting place for learning new ideas and technologies. Information Power (American Library Association 1988) discusses guidelines for school library media programs. The school librarian's role may be viewed as that of an information specialist whose ultimate goal may be to encourage and teach students and staff members to become confident and avid users of the library. The library may be envisioned as an extension of the classroom with the teacher and the Library Media Specialist (LMS) planning cooperatively to provide learning strategies for students. The library may need to be readily available for research, study and for the exchange of books and other materials to function in this capacity as the information center of the school (AASL, 1988).

Flexible scheduling may be used to help students and staff maximize

their use of the school library and its many different forms of ideas, information and materials.

Development of the Problem

Problems may arise when the library time is used to fulfill the preparation periods mandated as part of a teacher's contract. The use of the library by students may be on a fixed schedule to accommodate teacher preparation periods. With fixed scheduling, each class might have access to the library for only thirty minutes once every five or six school days. The thirty minute allotment may be used by students to exchange their library books, leaving little or no time for the in-depth learning of library skills. Impromptu use of the library for research, study, or instruction by other than these scheduled classes might become unfeasible. The library may always be filled with classes coming on a set schedule to exchange their books. The library may be unavailable as a full functioning library to the rest of the school. Students and staff may be denied access to the library when they need it the most, and when they may be prepared to get the most benefit out of it. Instead, it may be used as just another room to store books while the teacher takes a break.

An opportunity for meaningful integration of the library's resources with student needs may not occur. Time, resources and talent may be

wasted. Even the best equipped libraries may lose their value if people are unable to access them. Students who are at risk of failing may be denied the tools of knowledge and information retrieving skills that may help them reach their full potential and carry them on to the pursuit of higher education. The impact on society when students fail may have an effect on all of us throughout their lifetime.

By acknowledging and studying the problems and benefits associated with different types of scheduling in the library, solutions and compromises may be reached. Administrators and teachers may become interested in flexible access and scheduling if its use could be supported and shown to be advantageous to their students without causing too much disruption for themselves and their schools. The goal is to devise a program that has merit and is viable to administrators, teachers, and students.

Need for the Study

The library in the urban school district being studied has been used extensively as a drop off place for students while teachers utilize the time for their prep periods. The amount of time available to instruct children allows for minimal presentation of library skills. A study of the benefits and feasibility of flexible scheduling within schools may help inform administrators and educators of library scheduling issues.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to design flexible scheduling for the library to accommodate administrators and teachers, while providing time for instruction in library skills to students.

Research Question

Can a model be developed establishing a flexible schedule in the school library that will provide optimal benefits to administrators, teachers and students?

Definition of Terms

AASL: American Association of School Librarians. It is a subgroup of the ALA.

ALA: American Library Association.

AZLA: Arizona Library Association.

Cooperative Program Planning: A strategy for developing and implementing instruction in the library resource center. The classroom teacher and the library media specialist work together to plan an instructional program that coincides with and complements the needs of the classroom curriculum (Mills, 1991).

Fixed Scheduling: A method for scheduling classes into the library based on a master schedule that provides teachers with planning time on a regular specified basis. The library and the librarian are only available to the one class assigned during this time (AASL, 1988).

Flexible Access: Refers to students and staff having the opportunity to use the library when they have a need (AASL, 1988).

Flexible Scheduling: A method for scheduling classes based on instructional or informational needs. Students may come individually, in small groups or as a class. The classroom teacher and the library media specialist usually collaborate on what lesson or activity will take place (AASL, 1988).

Library Media Specialist (LMS): A certified, professional librarian.

LM_NET: A computer network on the world wide web that is used by school library media professionals for communication, exchanging of ideas, and the sharing and discussion of library media concerns.

School Library: Also known as the School Library Resource Center (resource center) or, School Library Media Center (media center).

SLMD: School Library Media Division. A subgroup of AZLA.

Teacher Preparation Time: Also known as prep time. It is a legal part of the teacher's contract that gives teachers specific amounts of time for planning and preparation of class curriculum without any students or duties.

Summary

To ensure the most effective use of its facilities and to make the learning of library skills more meaningful, it is suggested that library skills be taught in conjunction with the needs of the students and the classroom curriculum. The library and its resources must be available to students and staff when it is needed to enrich and supplement learning that is taking place in the classroom. Flexible scheduling and flexible access are two methods that have shown success in many school library media programs. Some benefits can be shown from the use of flexible scheduling to develop a useable and acceptable model which will work within the parameters and guidelines set by school programs besieged by the need to provide prep time for their teachers.

services that can be offered in the media center. The librarian needs to be well read in the literature pertaining to flexible scheduling and be able to communicate the benefits it can have to administrators. Fixed schedules will probably continue as long as administrators see the library in the same way as they see music, art, and P. E. (Toor, 1987; Kroeker, 1989).

In a survey on official schedules of schools in West Texas, it was found that only the time that the librarian spent with actual classes was given recognition and perceived of as important. No value was recorded on the evaluations for the many other duties and responsibilities of the librarian. Collection development, collaboration with teachers, open library for staff and students to exchange books, ordering, processing, and repairing of materials were often unrecognized (Kroeker, 1989; Browne, 1989; van Deusen, 1995).

Thirty-seven principals in the Halifax District in Nova Scotia were approached with a request for a brief interview to obtain personal and professional opinions regarding scheduling of classes in the school library. The concept of cooperative program planning, adjustment to flexible scheduling and its inherent difficulties, and the type of staff that would best respond to these changes were discussed. It became clear from these interviews, that implementation of flexible scheduling in the library would be difficult and that the principals would require a greater level of understanding

(Mills, 1991). When the principal has little knowledge of the educational foundation of the library as a resource center, the library may continue to be utilized inefficiently. The teacher/librarian may not be available to become actively involved in program development and curriculum implementation (Haycock, 1981).

The principal has the greatest potential for communicating expectations to all members of the staff and establishing a climate for cooperation in making changes in the school. To facilitate full integration of the school library resource center program into the curriculum, principals and other administrators need to have an inservice on the role of the library media center. After the inservice activities have taken place, the principal should be the initiator of change in library scheduling and program planning. This would involve the development and/or revision of library policies and guidelines with library and teaching staff working out possible solutions under the principal's direction (Mills, 1991; Kroeker, 1989).

Integration of Library Resources with Classroom Instruction

A timeline for learning information skills should be mapped out for the year for each grade level. This will give the teachers, administrators and the librarian a clear idea of what needs to be taught and how to plan together to accomplish this. It is possible that a class will come to the library everyday

for five days in a row to work on an assignment or a project. It might even be necessary for a class to come everyday for two weeks and then not come again for instruction for three weeks or more until an activity in class calls for it again (van Deusen, 1995).

The students are more apt to retain and apply library skills because the skills are taught when it makes sense to teach them. The students need to see this relevance, too. Media skills and classroom instruction can best be enhanced and retained when they are used together. It is hoped that these experiences will help the students become lifelong learners (Browne, 1989).

Implementation of Flexible Scheduling and Flexible Access

Communication is essential to help foster and maintain a positive attitude among everyone who is involved with the implementation of the new program. Objectives and structure of the program needs to be understood by administrators, staff, students and parents. Continuous evaluations and assessments are necessary to see how the new schedule affects the current school program (Browne, 1989).

Teachers need to understand which library skills are being taught and how these skills coincide with the subjects they are teaching in the classroom. This will help them accept change more readily. One of the most difficult adjustments the staff will face is the lack of structure. It

would be beneficial to keep a schedule book to help with this because the schedules will be changing constantly (Browne, 1989).

Some teachers may not schedule their classes to come to the library. If that happens, then the librarian should go to them with a list of ideas and suggestions for lessons in various subject areas over a period of weeks. There needs to be support staff in the library so that the library media specialist's time is spent teaching (AASL, 1988).

Recommendations made by the Halifax School Board were to have an inservice to explain to all the staff, including the library staff, the best possible use of the school library resource center and to provide examples, suggestions, and alternatives. Everyone would be encouraged to share and talk about this including any experiences or knowledge they might have (Mills, 1991).

At Whiskey Bottom Elementary School in Texas, the principal and vice principal worked with the library media specialist to implement a schedule change in the library. The vice principal and the librarian visited a school where flexible scheduling was already in place. Many of the suggestions that were made by that librarian were utilized (Browne, 1989).

The library staff must have a clear understanding of the curriculum, the teacher's role in the library, educational changes, and must know what is expected of them when the students enter the library. There needs to be

continuous evaluation and feedback and the program must be constantly assessed, modified and, if necessary, rejected (Mills, 1991).

Evaluations of the new design can occur through observation and discussions of activities in the classroom as well as in the library. Some factors to be considered beforehand are: teacher's prep time; school enrollment, number of classes; the size of the media center how the school is organized; and if the library curriculum is currently integrated into the total school curriculum (Browne, 1989).

Public relations is important because flexible scheduling requires teachers to revise their plans and change their routines and this can be traumatic for everyone. Strong administrative and staff support and planning is essential. Schedules must be kept straight. The first year is the most difficult. Support staff is needed to cover routine jobs and checkouts while the librarian is teaching students or working with teachers (Browne, 1989).

The Roosevelt School District in Phoenix, Arizona, supports and encourages the concept of flexible scheduling in its school libraries. As of the fall of 1999 there will be twenty schools in the district. Susan Garvin had been a media specialist in the district for over eighteen years. For the last three years she has been a Collaborative Peer Teacher (CPT) within the district, but she will go back to being a media specialist in the fall of 1999 in one of the two new schools that is scheduled to be opened. She is an

advocate for flexible scheduling and is well versed on the subject of school libraries. She received her MLS from ASU in 1988, was a winner of the Progressive School Library Media award in 1994, and president of the School Library Media Division of the ALA in 1996/1997. She states that the district has always had a very progressive approach to their school libraries. Since 1912, the district has only used certified, well-trained and qualified library media specialists in their school libraries. The decision to implement flexible scheduling may vary from school to school within the district. It may be dependent on whether the librarian is needed as part of the loop of specialists who provide a preparation period for its teachers. If so, the use of flexible scheduling is much more difficult to accomplish. These are site-based decisions. Currently, two schools in the district use a totally flexible schedule, while two others use a combination of fixed/flex scheduling. In the fixed/flex schedule, the lower grades are usually seen on a fixed schedule, while the upper grades utilize a flexible schedule.

School A is in the Roosevelt District. In addition to being a traditional K-8 school, it also houses a preschool with a headstart program. The librarian has trained student helpers to assist her in the library for one hour per day. She would like to have additional help in the library to make the library more accessible to students and staff when it is being utilized for other purposes. This would allow for the more productive use of the library

while not hindering the exchanging of books. It would also provide the librarian with more time to confer with teachers and work with individual students, groups or classes.

The scheduling of classes in this library is totally flexible and accomplished by the use of a weekly sign-up sheet that is divided up into half-hour time slots. The only prescheduled time is the one hour for the librarian's lunch and preparation time, but even this is flexible and can be changed. The teacher and librarian decide on the length and duration of time needed for instruction and research on their current project or lesson.

A flexible schedule allows for modification of this time depending upon the need of the students. The librarian meets with the teachers in advance of their scheduled library time, to plan and discuss the skills, objectives and/or subject matter they want their students to be taught. This helps ensure that the materials needed are accessible and that time is not wasted in meeting the students' and teacher's goals. The librarian said that teachers in the lower grades usually sign up for a half-hour time slot, while grades 4-8 often require two half-hour time slots that are back to back. Teachers are required to stay and assist the librarian with their class, as this is not their preparation time. She is continuously updating and developing literary programs, lessons, and units of study that cover a wide range of subjects and library skills based on curriculum needs and teacher input. She keeps a

record of how often teachers schedule their classes to come to the library. She contacts teachers that have not brought their classes for a month or more. She brings them sample lessons and skills that the library can offer their students. She said that if the teachers have doubts about the value of the library for their students before they come, these doubts are usually alleviated when they see how intertwined the library experience is with their classroom curriculum.

The Alhambra School District in Phoenix, Arizona, supports a curriculum-oriented approach in its libraries. The district policy for the libraries states that the librarians must work cooperatively with all classroom teachers in planning, correlating, and developing the best use of school library facilities and materials. During orientation classes in library skills and classes for the introduction of new materials, the librarian shall assume sole responsibility for the class being instructed. All other classes should be under a system of open scheduling, to be preplanned by the classroom teacher and librarian to meet the individual needs and educational objectives of pupils in the total instructional program (Alhambra School District, 1998-1999).

The mission policy for the school libraries in the Roosevelt and the Alhambra districts are exactly the same. This is because Annie Weisman was the librarian at V. H. Lassen School in the Roosevelt District until

August, 1988. She is now the librarian at Sevilla School in the Alhambra District.

Mission:

The mission of the library media program is to ensure that the students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. A school library media program that is fully integrated into the school's curriculum is central to the learning process. (Teacher handbooks – Alhambra and Roosevelt Districts, 1998-1999)

There are eleven school libraries and librarians in the Alhambra District.

None of the libraries are used as a preparation period for its teachers.

Teachers must accompany their classes to the library and assist where needed. The decision on scheduling is site-based. One school is on a fully flexible schedule. Two schools use a combination fixed/flexible schedule. Currently, the other schools are on fixed schedules.

The librarian at School B is able to keep the library opened all day for book checkout with the help of an aide who assists her for 29½ hours per week. The library has been on a combination of fixed/flexible scheduling for two years. In order to keep the weekly schedule from looking less confusing, the librarian puts the names of the teachers that are on fixed schedule in capital letters and the names of the teachers using the library on a flexible schedule in lower case letters. Grades K-2 are on a fixed schedule. These classes come two at a time for a story. The first class arrives fifteen

minutes before the story to checkout books. The other class stays fifteen minutes after the story to checkout books. This allows for two classes to come to the library in a forty-five minute period. This frees up more time for grades 3-6, which are on a flexible schedule, to use the library for lessons and research. Teachers in grades 3-6 schedule their classes to come to the library according to their class needs and assignments. The teacher and librarian collaborate on the lesson to be taught beforehand.

School C is a K-8 school. The librarian has an aide for 29½ hours per week. Her library is on a combination fixed/flexible schedule. She uses the library schedule from School B as a model for her own library.

School D is a grade 4-8 middle school. The school library has been on a totally flexible schedule for 4½ years. There is no need for a combination schedule because there are no primary grades. The library schedule is put out three weeks in advance. The teachers can confer with the librarian by telephone or by e-mail from their classrooms to discuss the topic they want their class to be working on. The teachers may sign their classes up for as little as fifteen minutes to as much as two hours in the library. Students can also come to the library individually or in a small group with a pass from their teacher. Most of the time this does not need to be scheduled, as the library is well staffed. The librarian has an aide for 29½ hours. She also receives assistance from students who come every day for a library class that she

teaches. The class is comprised of eighth grade students who have been carefully selected in the beginning of the school year from recommendations by their previous year's teachers. Each of these students is assigned and trained in specific library tasks on a rotating basis which enables them to become proficient and confident in the many different aspects of running an efficient and organized library. They help and interact with students who might need to checkout a book or find material for a project they are working on. They earn credit and get a grade for this class. The service they provide is very valuable to the library and the school.

School E is in the Washington School District in Phoenix, Arizona. The librarian began her career with the Saudi Arabian International Schools after graduating from Arizona State University. The school library in Saudi Arabia was on a flexible schedule. She worked there for five years and gained much insight and expertise as to the advantages and feasibility of flexible scheduling. She has been President of the School Library Media Division of the ALA. She has served on a national committee for flexible scheduling through AASL. She has written articles on flexible scheduling in school libraries for the School Library Journal as well as many other educational journals. She has been a librarian in the Washington School District for nineteen years and has always used flexible scheduling there. At the beginning of each school year, every teacher in the school must schedule

their class for a thirty minute library orientation before regular library use may begin. The librarian attends grade level meetings so she can help with planning and instruction and encourage teachers to use the library resources for their curriculum. The library sign-up sheet is kept in the teacher's workroom. There are also forms kept with it for the teacher to request specific books, books on specific subjects, or alternative dates for class research. The librarian checks it each morning. If the teacher needs to request the library for immediate use after the school day has begun, she calls the librarian directly.

School F is in the Washington School District in Phoenix, Arizona. The school is on a six-day schedule. There are twenty-six classrooms from K-6. These classes are scheduled to come to the library in the mornings on a fixed schedule. This leaves the library available after lunch for students to come with a library pass for the exchange of books or to do research.

School G is in the Deer Valley Unified School District in Glendale, Arizona. The district is supportive of flexible scheduling in its school libraries, but it is a site-based decision. The library is on a flexible schedule. Teachers sign up for their classes to come to the library on an as-needed basis. The weekly sign-up schedule for the library is from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It is closed from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. The schedule is

divided into half-hour time blocks. Teachers sign up for the amount of time they need and they must stay with their class to assist the librarian.

Summary

The information from this chapter supports the importance of having a flexible schedule program in the library media center setting that will assist teachers and students in the most effective use of the library. Further research demonstrates the need for administrative support in the implementation of the flexible schedule program. It is important that the flexible schedule developed for the school integrates with the curriculum and correlates with the mission statement of the school.

CHAPTER 2

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter discusses innovative school library media programs needed as models to demonstrate effective learning and use of the library. The advantages of flexible scheduling over fixed scheduling will be addressed.

Fixed Scheduling in the Library

School libraries can be more for students than just a depository filled with books. This is a terrible waste of the library's potential for curriculum enrichment for its users. Libraries have much more to offer now than they did a generation ago. The traditional role of the school library was to have classes come on a fixed schedule based on a master plan to check books in and out. The typical school library has expanded its services to become a resource and media center. Today, the school librarian often has a teaching background as well as being trained as a library media specialist with technological skills. In today's highly competitive technological world,

information retrieval skills are critical. A rigid schedule restricts the use of the librarian and the library, leaving little or no time for spontaneous research or other classroom needs for teachers and students (Kroeker, 1989; Buchanan, 1991).

Flexible Scheduling and Flexible Access in the Library

Information Power recommends that class visits to the library media center be scheduled to facilitate use at point of need (ALA, 1988). The AASL Position Statement on Flexible Scheduling is located in Appendix A. Flexible scheduling allows time for library skills to be taught in conjunction with the curriculum needs of the student. Planning time, the length of the lesson, and group size may vary. The librarian needs to have a good working knowledge of the curriculum. It is important that the teacher and the librarian have time to collaborate about the skills and subject matter that will be taught in the library as it pertains to the classroom curriculum. These skills can then be integrated into the lessons based on instructional needs derived from an assignment or project in the classroom (van Deusen, 1995).

Library skills which are learned, when they are relevant and coincide with students searching for an answer to a problem, will be retained longer because they are more meaningful to the student (American Library Association, 1988). There have been many studies conducted on the

advantages of having the school library available for research and study.

One such study was conducted by the Halifax School Board in Nova Scotia in 1989. It resulted in recommendations that their school libraries should not have regularly scheduled classes during the day. Instead, the libraries were to be used as a part of the instructional program as agreed upon by teachers and library personnel (Mills, 1991).

Flexible scheduling puts more demands on the librarian in the first few years of its implementation due to the increase in planning time, teaching time, curriculum development and expanded use of the library (Browne, 1989). Even though timing is flexible, the librarian must be very systematic in making sure that all teachers utilize the library with their students. Students must also have access to the library to browse and select materials for their personal use (van Deusen, 1995).

Administrative Support

Any major changes in the school library program may be determined by administrators who may or may not have any idea of what an ideal media center should be (Mills, 1991; Kroeker, 1989). In order to initiate changes, the issue of educating administrators in the most effective use of the library media center needs to be addressed. Education may clarify perceptions of the skills that the school librarian is expected to have and of the types of

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Project Purpose

The purpose of the study was to design flexible scheduling for the library to accommodate administrators and teachers, while providing time for instruction in library skills to students.

The goal of this project was to educate administrators to the benefits of using the classroom and the school library resource center as partners in resource based learning. A model for flexible scheduling in the library resource center will be developed.

Project Design

The final project will be to design and implement flexible scheduling and flexible access of the library using models within the school schedule. Librarians in the Isaac School District who are all currently on fixed scheduling and librarians in other school districts that are using flexible scheduling, were asked for their input and ideas for developing a flexible schedule for the school library that would have the support of the principal

and teachers. Librarians were asked for their flexible scheduling models, advantages of the flexible schedule, how the flexible schedule was introduced to the staff, and how it was implemented. It was determined that a study on flexible scheduling would need to be done. This study would be shared first with the principal and later, with his approval and assistance, be presented to the teachers. The study would need to address the teachers' concerns on how it would affect them as well as what benefits the scheduling would have for the students and themselves. Administrative advice was solicited on the feasibility of adapting a flexible schedule in the school library with the intent to initiate a fixed/flexible schedule on a limited and modified basis, if the schedule could still provide prep time for the teachers. The project examined literature and research studies on the benefits of having flexible scheduling in the school library media center. Through research and collaboration, a model for a semi-flexible schedule was formulated, refined and ready to be utilized.

Grades one and two will be paired for storytime, but each class will have its own time for book exchange. In this schedule, one class will come fifteen minutes before storytime and checkout books. Then after the two classes have listened to the story, the class that has already checked out books will leave and the other class will stay and checkout books. This will be a savings of fifteen minutes for each two classes that are seen. This

extra time will be used for the implementation of flexible scheduling of the library by grades four and five for the use of its resources and the learning of library skills.

Appropriateness of Project Design

Research indicates that administrators should be persuaded to study the issue of flexible scheduling and the feasibility of implementing it into their school schedules. This is essential because any major changes in the school library program must have administrative support if it is to succeed. Mills (1991), indicates that the principal has the greatest potential for communicating expectations to all members of the staff and establishing a climate for cooperation in making changes in the school.

The approach to finding a project design was to locate and study materials found in journals, periodicals, books, personal interviews, and the LM_NET on the subject of flexible scheduling. Flexible as well as fixed/flexible schedules were examined to see the feasibility of incorporating them into a viable model for the Isaac School District. Examples of these models are in the appendix. The model that was finally designed from these examples was adapted to cover a fixed schedule, which at this time must still be met, while incorporating innovative ideas from other models that free up time and allow for some flexibility.

Target Population and Project User

The target users of the new flexible schedule are the administrators, teachers and students of the Isaac School District in Phoenix, Arizona. The initial model for flexible scheduling in the school library was formulated and developed at Alta E. Butler Elementary School. It is hoped that this schedule will be utilized as a working model for the other school libraries in the district.

Major Objectives of the User

The major objective of the study is to have administrators consider flexible scheduling as it applies to libraries in the Isaac School District, especially as it might benefit teachers and students. It is hoped that this project will encourage discussion and action towards the eventual adoption of flexible scheduling in all the school libraries in the district. A model schedule was developed. Strategies for implementation will include open communication and public relations with administrators and staff, research to back up the concept of flexible scheduling, and a workable model ready to be studied and employed.

This project on flexible scheduling in the school library was initiated because of the many positive accolades from school librarians on the

LM_NET and was reinforced through discussions with other librarians and teachers that are using flexible scheduling or have learned about it.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

Introduction and General Description of the District

The Isaac School District was founded in 1879 and was in its 36th year of existence when Arizona became a state on February 14, 1912. The district is located in Phoenix, Arizona and is one of thirteen elementary school districts which feed into the Phoenix Union High School system.

In 1995, the Isaac District's previous northern boundary of Thomas Road was extended to Indian School Road with the addition of a new middle school. Its other boundaries are Van Buren Street to the south, 27th Avenue to the east, and 51st Avenue to the west. It encompasses 6.12 square miles. There are currently ten schools within the district. An eleventh school is scheduled to open on April 19, 1999.

District Mission Statement:

The staff of the Isaac School District, in partnership with students, families, community members and businesses, are providing a safe, supportive and positive learning environment in which members of the community reach their highest potential as lifelong learners in a diverse and technological society.

Goal:

Isaac School District students will leave grades three and eight having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, Mathematics, science, history and geography, and every school in the district will ensure that all students learn to use their minds so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

(Isaac Elementary School District #5 Policy Book 1998-99)

Students in the Isaac School District are considered high risk. While competency in English, Math, science and technology is the major focus of the schools, it is realized that the whole child must be considered and nurtured if the child is to achieve scholastically. All students are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch as part of the Federal Food Program.

The implications of the district's mission/goals on family, community, and schools have shown some successes in the areas of school environment and discipline. These successes, however, have not yet been translated into scholastic achievements. This is evidenced by the poor test results on both the Iowa and Essential Skills tests on the Arizona Report Card. With the accountability issues and information standards we are facing these days, it is very important to provide a comprehensive learning program for our students.

Media literacy is an important prerequisite to a student's educational success. Our society has entered the information age where the knowledge

and ability to access information is vital. The success of the school library media center is dependent on the quality of the education being offered in its school. The value that is put in its programs and resources is evidenced by the materials and the attitudes of those that come within its walls. The main emphasis of school library programs must change from an area in the school to house a collection of books, to a more visible role which focuses on reading for pleasure, research, media literacy, learning, and the interchanging and expanding of ideas and knowledge. School librarians and media centers can have a very positive impact on the lives of their students. The library media center needs to be available for use when it is needed. That is when the most meaningful learning will take place. Students do not learn in a vacuum. Relevance is important in learning anything, including library skills. Skills taught at the point of instructional need rather than in isolation, are more apt to be remembered. The excitement and confidence that comes with discovering and putting together so much information can help foster a lifelong desire to learn. Teachers and librarians must work together to restructure and integrate their curriculums so that their students will have a wide range of choices and learning opportunities from which to work from.

Alta E. Butler School Mission Statement:

The mission of our school is to provide a sound and safe educational environment that integrates traditional and progressive means in teaching our students. We will emphasize the strengths that our diverse and bilingual population inculcate here at our school site. Our objective is to provide an enriched academic atmosphere for teachers, students and community.

School Statistics

1. Promotion rate: 98.15%
 2. Attendance rate: 94.70%
 3. Number of school days: 175
 4. Mobility rate: 17.5%
 5. Hours of instruction: 6 hours and 30 minutes
 6. Number of incidents requiring law enforcement intervention: 1
- (Arizona School Report Card, 1997-1998)

Student Demographics – Alta E. Butler Elementary School

Ethnic Distribution by Grade and Sex as of April 6, 1999

DE	LEVEL	SEX	CODE:	?	B	H	I	With	ALL
Grade	00	GIRLS		0	3	106	2	2	113
		BOYS		0	4	98	3	8	113
		TOTAL		0	7	204	5	10	226
Grade	01	GIRLS		0	3	102	0	11	116
		BOYS		0	4	98	2	8	112
		TOTAL		0	7	200	2	19	228
Grade	02	GIRLS		0	1	72	0	9	82
		BOYS		0	0	84	2	4	90
		TOTAL		0	1	156	2	13	172
Grade	03	GIRLS		0	3	82	2	12	99
		BOYS		0	0	79	1	6	86
		TOTAL		0	3	161	3	18	185
Grade	04	GIRLS		0	2	77	3	2	84
		BOYS		0	1	76	1	7	85
		TOTAL		0	3	153	4	9	169
Grade	05	GIRLS		0	1	79	1	5	86
		BOYS		0	2	88	1	5	96
		TOTAL		0	3	167	2	10	182
TOTAL		GIRLS		0	13	521	8	41	583
		BOYS		0	11	529	10	38	588
		TOTAL		0	24	1050	18	79	1171

(Butler Elementary School office records)

Staffing

Administrators: 2

Teachers: 47

Teacher Aides: 18

Emergency certificates: 3

Provisional certificates: 5

Nurse: 1

Counselors: 1 full time and 1 part time

Iowa Test Scores for Fourth Grade

	1993	1994	1995	1995	
	<u>Butler</u>	<u>Butler</u>	<u>Butler</u>	<u>Arizona</u>	<u>National</u>
Reading	27	20	19	47	48
Language	25	29	22	48	49
Math	28	29	23	49	46

Essential Skills for 3rd Grade 1995-1996

	<u>District Standard</u>	<u>Butler</u>
READING		
Personal Experience Narrative	75%	59%
Story	75%	72%
Informative Report	75%	50%
WRITING		
Personal Experience Narrative	75%	34%
Imaginative Story	75%	33%
Communication	75%	37%
Report	75%	22%
Poem	75%	59%

(Arizona School Report Card, 1996-97)

Since 1997, students in grades 3 through 12 were tested in reading, language and mathematics using the standardized, nationally norm-referenced *Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition* (Stanford 9). The percentage of eligible students tested (5) and the school's percentile rank score are presented below. State percentile rank scores (AZ) are provided for comparison. Also, note the percentile rank scores for the nation are 50 for all subjects in all grades.

**Stanford 9 Percentile Rank Scores
Alta E. Butler School**

Grade	Content Area	1996-97			1997-98		
		%	Score	AZ	%	Score	AZ
03	Reading	95	13	44	53	13	47
	Language	96	21	45	54	21	49
	Mathematics	97	14	41	55	15	46
04	Reading	100	18	52	70	27	53
	Language	100	19	45	73	30	47
	Mathematics	100	19	48	75	31	51
05	Reading	97	23	50	76	18	51
	Language	100	21	40	76	17	42
	Mathematics	100	20	47	78	22	51

(Arizona School Report Card, 1998-99)

Based on research from Chapter 2 and the demographics, mission statement, and test scores in Chapter 4, the following two models have been formulated for study and review for the 1999-2000 school year.

Model I

Fixed Schedule for K-3 and Flexible for Grades 4-5 1999 – 2000 School Year

	Day I	Day II	Day III	Day IV	Day V	Day VI
7:30 – 7:55	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
8:15 – 8:45	K-A	K-B	K-D	K-E	K-G	K-H
8:50 – 4:20	1-B Books	K-C	I-D Books	2-C Books	I-F Books	2-F Books
	Story		Story	Story	Story	Story
9:25 – 9:55	I-C Books	2-A Books	I-E Books	2-D Books	I-G Books	2-G Books
		Story			I-H Books	
10:00 – 10:30	3-B	2-B Books	3-C	3-D		3-F
10:35 – 11:05						
11:10 – 11:40						
11:40 – 12:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:35 – 12:55						
1:00 – 1:30						
1:35 – 2:05						
2:10 – 2:40	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep

Model II

Fixed Schedule for All Grades and Flexible for 4-5 1999 – 2000 School Year

	Day I	Day II	Day III	Day IV	Day V	Day VI
7:30 – 7:55	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
8:15 – 8:45	K-A	K-B	K-D	K-E	K-G	K-H
8:50 – 4:20	1-B Books	K-C	I-D Books	2-C Books	I-F Books	2-F Books
	Story		Story	Story	Story	Story
9:25 – 9:55	I-C Books	2-A Books	I-E Books	2-D Books	I-G Books	2-G Books
		Story			I-H Books	
10:00 – 10:30		2-B Books	3-C	3-D		3-F
10:35 – 11:05	4-A	3-B	4-C	4-D	3-E	4-F
11:10 – 11:40	5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D	4-E	5-F
11:40 – 12:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:35 – 12:55						
1:00 – 1:30						
1:35 – 2:05						
2:10 – 2:40	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep

These models should create the following benefits for the school:

1. The students will benefit by having access to materials and resources in the library when needed. They will learn relevant information skills in conjunction with their classroom curriculum. There is more opportunity for individualized instruction.
2. The teachers will benefit by having a trained resource specialist working as a partner with them in developing their students' skills for accessing information and fostering a love of reading and learning.
3. The principal will benefit by having a library media center that will further the school's goals and encourage professional cooperation.
4. The librarian will benefit by having the opportunity to teach relevant integrated instruction of information skills by collaboratively planning with the classroom teachers (Dade County Public Schools Library Media Services, 1988).

There were eleven librarians and seven schools involved in the study which led to the development of these models. The two models shown are the same except for the scheduling of classes in the fourth and fifth grades. Other examples of different types of scheduling models are in the appendix. At this time the library must still be utilized as a preparation period for the teachers, but a half-time librarian aide will be hired for the school year in order to facilitate the introduction of flexible scheduling in the school. A schedule for students in grades 1-5 to exchange their books each day will be developed.

The teachers in grades four and five will meet and confer with the administration and the librarian at the end of the school year to discuss the

pros and cons of these two models as they pertain to their classes based on the literature provided to them. They will have the opportunity to express their opinions and vote by grade level as to which model they would prefer to adopt for the scheduling of their classes. It is expected that these models may be interchanged and adjusted during the school year as needed. The initial few years of flexible scheduling requires a lot of hard work and education. The librarian must be prepared and knowledgeable as to grade level needs to build up the momentum for an eventual changeover to a true flexible schedule for all grades. It is up to the librarian to keep the lines of communication open with administrators and teachers and to develop an exciting resource-based instructional program that coincides with the interest and grade level curriculum of the students. For now, only classes in grades four and five will be able to sign up for the flexible use of the library either as a class with their teachers or in small individual groups for research and study.

Grades K-3 will still be seen at a fixed time in the six-day school schedule. On April 19, 1999, one teacher from each grade level left the school with their classes to go to the new school next door. Their library times will not be filled. Kindergarten library time will be left in place as it is. This age group would be too difficult to combine for storytime. A system is

already in place for the Kindergarten teachers to check books out to their students in the classroom.

First and second grades will come two classes at a time for a fifteen minute storytime. Library skills as they pertain to the checking out of books will also be taught to the group as a whole and/or individually to each class when needed. Books will be checked out before and after the story as suggested in Chapter 2. One class will come fifteen minutes before the story to check out books, and the other class will stay for fifteen minutes after the story for the same purpose.

For now, third grade will be seen in its regular time slot and will not be able to sign up for additional time. During this trial phase, only teachers in grades four and five will be able to sign up for extra time for their classes to do research. This may expand in the future if a more flexible schedule is decided on for the school. The teachers must stay and assist the librarian with the class at this time as this is not a preparation period. Library skills will be taught as they apply to the research or use of the library.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to design flexible scheduling for the library to accommodate administrators and teachers, while providing time for instruction in library skills to students.

Research showed that to ensure the most effective use of its facilities and to make the learning of library skills most meaningful, these skills would be best taught in conjunction with the needs of the students and the classroom curriculum. To accomplish this, the library and its resources must be available to students and staff when it is needed. Two methods of scheduling classes in many school libraries that have shown success are flexible scheduling and flexible access.

Variations in responsibilities and focuses of school library media specialists has caused large differences in school library programs. Sometimes, within the same school district, there can be discrepancies as to the use of the library. Site-based management often determines if the schools will be using libraries as a prep period for teachers or flexible time for

instruction of a school, while another may be tightly scheduled with classes that serve as teacher-planning time. In these schools, library skills may be taught in isolation. It may result in chaos, with our children as the losers. School librarians and up-to-date media centers can have a very positive impact on the lives of our young people. The excitement and confidence that comes with discovering and putting together so much information can help foster a lifelong desire to learn. It is for this reason that this project was undertaken.

Conclusions

An innovative schedule has been designed to introduce the concept of flexible scheduling to administrators, staff and students. It is modeled after a program used by one of the schools in this study.

It is helpful for administrators and teachers to be educated and convinced that the best use of the library and its resources would be to enrich and supplement learning that was taking place in the classroom. It became apparent during the study that the school library would still need to be used to enrich student learning while providing prep time for its teachers. A totally flexible schedule would not be considered at this time.

Conclusions and results on the success of the new program may not be known for a few years. The new schedule will be introduced at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year.

Recommendations

An alternative model to the fixed schedule being used would need to be designed. This model would have to enable teachers to have their prep periods and also allow time in the library for research, study and the exchanging of books.

It is recommended that there be orientation classes for the staff, as well as the students, to explain the objectives and structure of the program before it is implemented. The program and its strengths as well as weakness will need to be continuously monitored by the principal, librarian and teachers to help make the library an indispensable part of the educational foundation of the school. The librarian needs to encourage the involvement of all teachers and to develop positive working relationships with the staff that fosters open communication and cooperative planning. The librarian also needs to be flexible and willing to change what doesn't work. Recommendations for modifications and changes must all be seriously evaluated and explored in order to foster a buy-in of the scheduling by the teachers and a continuous refinement of the program and skills for the

students. It is hoped that everyone involved will grow and learn from their collective experiences with flexible scheduling.

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APPENDIX A

AASL POSITION STATEMENT ON FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

AASL
POSITION STATEMENT
ON
FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

Schools must adopt the educational philosophy that the library media program is full integrated into the educational program. This integration strengthens the teaching/learning process so that students can develop the vital skills necessary to locate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information and ideas. When the library media program is fully integrated into the instructional program of the school, students, teachers, and library media specialists become partners in learning. The library program is an extension of the classroom. Information skills are taught and learned within the context of the classroom curriculum. The wide range of resources, technologies, and services needed to meet students learning and information needs are readily available in a cost-effective manner.

The integrated library media program philosophy requires that an open schedule must be maintained. Classes cannot be scheduled in the library media center to provide teacher release or preparation time. Students and teachers must be able to come to the center throughout the day to use information sources, to read for pleasure, and to meet and work with other students and teachers.

Planning between the library media specialist and the classroom teacher, which encourages both scheduled and informal visits, is the catalyst that makes this integrated library program work. The teacher brings to the planning process a knowledge of subject content and student needs. The library media specialist contributes a broad knowledge of resources and technology, an understanding of teaching methods, and a wide range of strategies that may be employed to help students learn information skills. Cooperative planning by the teacher and library media specialist integrates information skills and materials into the classroom curriculum and results in the development of assignments that encourage open inquiry.

The responsibility for flexibly scheduled library media programs must be shared by the entire school community.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION endorses the philosophy that the library program is an integral part of the district's educational program and ensures that flexible scheduling for library media centers is maintained in all buildings and at all levels.

THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION supports this philosophy and monitors staff assignments to ensure appropriate staffing levels so that all teachers, including the library media specialists, can fulfill their professional responsibilities.

THE PRINCIPAL creates the appropriate climate within the school by advocating the benefits of flexible scheduling to the faculty, by monitoring scheduling, by ensuring appropriate staffing levels, and by providing joint planning time for classroom teachers and library media specialists.

THE TEACHER uses resource-based instruction and views the library media program as an integral part of that instruction.

THE LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST is knowledgeable about curriculum and classroom activities, and works cooperatively with the classroom teacher to integrate information skills into the curriculum.

06/91

American Association of School Librarians
American Library Association
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
1-800-545-2433, Ext. 4386

APPENDIX B

MODEL III: FIXED SCHEDULE: CLASSES REMOVED THAT WENT TO NEW SCHOOL

Model III

Fixed Schedule: Classes Removed That Went to New School Removed: K-F; 1-A; 2-E; 3-A; 4-B; 5-E

	Day I	Day II	Day III	Day IV	Day V	Day VI
7:30 – 7:55	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
8:15 – 8:45	5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D		5-F
8:50 – 4:20	4-A		4-C	4-D	4-E	4-F
9:25 – 9:55	1-B 2-A	3-B	3-C	3-D		3-F
10:00 – 10:30		1-C	1-E	1-G	1-H	1-F
10:35 – 11:05		2-C		2-D	2-B	2-F
11:10 – 11:40		2-D	2-F	2-A	3-E	2-G
11:40 – 12:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:35 – 12:55	K-A	K-B	K-D	K-E	K-G	K-H
1:00 – 1:30	2-B	K-C	1-F	1-H	1-D	1-E
1:35 – 2:05	1-C	1-D	1-G	2-G		1-B
2:10 – 2:40	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep

APPENDIX C

**MODEL IV: THIS YEAR (APRIL/MAY) FIXED WITH COMBINATION
IN GRADES 1 AND 2**

Model IV

This Year (April/May) Fixed with Combinations in Grades 1 and 2

	Day I OPEN	Day II OPEN	Day III OPEN	Day IV OPEN	Day V OPEN	Day VI OPEN
7:30 – 7:55	K-A	K-B	K-D	K-E	K-G	K-H
8:15 – 8:45	1-B Books	1-E Story	1-E Books	1-G Story	1-H Books	1-E Story
8:50 – 4:20	Story	1-D Story	Story	1-H Story	Story	1-F Story
9:25 – 9:55	1-C Books	2-C Books	1-F Books	2-A Story	1-D Books	1-B Story
		2-G Story		2-D Story	2-G Books	2-F Story
10:00 – 10:30	3-B	2-D Books	3-C	3-D	2-G/2-B Story	3-F
10:35 – 11:05	4-A	3-B	4-C	4-D	2-E	4-F
11:10 – 11:40	5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D	3-E	5-F
11:40 – 12:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:35 – 12:55	2-A Books	K-C	1-G Books			
	Story		Story			
1:00 – 1:30	2-B Books		2-F Books			
1:35 – 2:05						
2:10 – 2:40	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep

APPENDIX D

MODEL V: ORIGINAL FIXED SCHEDULE

Model V

Original Fixed Schedule

	Day I	Day II	Day III	Day IV	Day V	Day VI
7:30 – 7:55	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
8:15 – 8:45	5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D	5-E	5-F
8:50 – 4:20	4-A	4-B	4-C	4-D	4-E	4-F
9:25 – 9:55	1-A	3-B	3-C	3-D	K-F	3-F
10:00 – 10:30	1-B	1-C	1-E	1-G	1-H	1-F
10:35 – 11:05	2-A	2-C	2-E	2-D	2-B	2-F
11:10 – 11:40	3-A	2-d	2-F	2-A	3-E	2-G
11:40 – 12:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:35 – 12:55	K-A	K-B	K-B	K-E	K-G	K-H
1:00 – 1:30	2-B	K-C	1-F	1-H	1-D	1-E
1:35 – 2:05	1-C	1-D	1-G	2-G	1-A	1-B
2:10 – 2:40	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep

APPENDIX E

MODEL VI: TOTALLY FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE

Model VI

Totally Flexible Schedule

	Day I	Day II	Day III	Day IV	Day V	Day VI
7:30 – 7:55	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
8:15 – 8:45						
8:50 – 4:20						
9:25 – 9:55						
10:00 – 10:30						
10:35 – 11:05						
11:10 – 11:40						
11:40 – 12:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:35 – 12:55						
1:00 – 1:30						
1:35 – 2:05						
2:10 – 2:40	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep