

Reopening School Libraries Safely

The academic success of students corresponds with access to an effective school library program, led by a certified librarian. Schools can safely manage school libraries and school library materials circulation during the pandemic. Indiana Library Federation recognizes that library space, staffing capacity, and local situations may vary.



Based on the CDC and library best practices, K-12 schools should continue to circulate books throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

Safe Materials Handling

According to the CDC research, the virus does not live on paper beyond 24 hours. Books with plastic coverings may be disinfected with time and/or cleaning supplies. During this pandemic, libraries around the world have developed safe collection handling practices for various circulating library materials. *Based on the CDC and library best practices, K-12 schools should continue to circulate books throughout the 2020-2021 school year.*

Children NEED Access to Books

Research agrees to the importance of reading and literacy. While online reading has increased, research shows that physical books are still preferred over electronic reading. Many students have no access to books, internet, or technology at home. Students physically require non-screen time and memory functions better from physical print. K-12 school libraries maintain 15,000 books in the library collection, while districts average about 58,000 books. *K-12 schools should prioritize continued purchase and circulation of physical books.*

Students NEED Library Time

Whether your school offers a “Library Special” or “Flexible Library Visits” throughout the day, students benefit from the ability to browse, explore, and the freedom and privacy to choose books of interest to them. Stories provide mirrors to see themselves and windows and doors into the world and other people’s lives. Access to diverse narratives builds empathy, social, and emotional skills. The school librarian helps grow students’ minds, provides additional personal connection, and often provides a support for at-risk, high-ability, English-language learners, and students who have not yet found their niche in school. As schools plan for extended period in the same classroom, children need the movement of walking to the library. *K-12 should schools prioritize library time for each student during each week.*

Safe Library Practice Recommendations

- Signage about masks, hygiene, distance
- Floor markings for foot traffic and safe check out
- “Clean in” and “Clean out” process to wash/sanitize hands upon entry and exit
- When returned, quarantine books overnight and/or clean to disinfect
- Laser pointer and remote help in lieu of over-the-shoulder computer help
- Distanced seating
- Reduce “Study Lounge”
- Increase short library visits in individual flexible library time, which also reduces hallway crowding
- Explore options for physical barrier, remote book hold, and contactless interaction at check out

Schools NEED qualified school librarians AND paraprofessional staff assistants

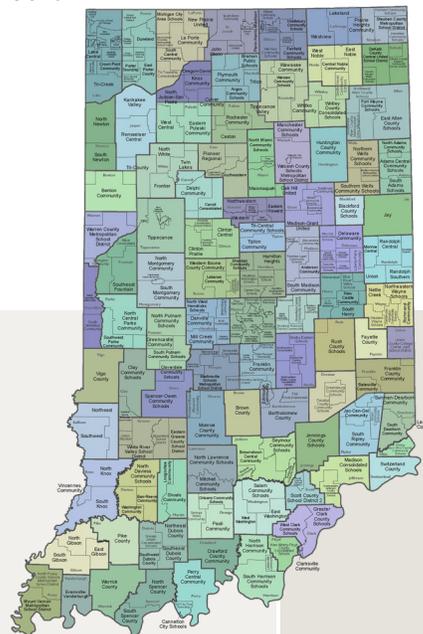
The eLearning experience from March to June illustrated how teachers, students, and their caregivers all rely on the school librarian to curate digital resources, to assist faculty with online instruction modules, to promote and select reading, and to help students with their courses and technology. Library paraprofessional assistants are needed to help ensure safe collection handling, to staff library specials, and to provide additional tech support across faculty, students, and parents.

We recommend schools prioritize qualified school librarians and paraprofessional staff, as they are required to support the school’s literacy, wellness, digital, and outreach goals.

How School Libraries served during stay-at-home order

School librarians statewide met weekly to share best practices to serve students and faculty during the school closures. Librarians:

- * Led professional development with fellow faculty, creating tutorials and supporting transition to virtual instruction.
- * Supported students and teachers with online instruction, learning, technology support, and reader’s advisory.
- * Assisted in providing technology to students without technology or internet at home.
- * Created tutorials on using technology and digital resources.
- * Assisted students and faculty with transition to remote learning.
- * Collaborated with public, academic, and special libraries.
- * Hosted virtual author visits, maker labs, and programs.
- * Checked in with students on academic, technology, social, and emotional needs.
- * Curated online apps and vetted offers of “free software”
- * Convened book clubs, open office hours.



Libraries Transform® Indiana

Indiana Library Federation believes that libraries, with all of their modern amenities and innovations, are a smart investment, with the potential to transform communities and create a passion for lifelong learning.

Indiana’s K-12 schools by the numbers*

1,135,194 students enrolled in 2019-2020

Income eligibility: **40%** free lunch **7%** reduced-price

Ethnicity: **67%** White **13%** Hispanic **12%** Black **5%** Multi-racial **3%** Asian

1:1 device adoption: **83%** districts



Sources for Reopening School Library Safely

Sources on Safe Library Materials Handling

The CDC and Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) trained libraries. See *Mitigating COVID-19 When Managing Paper-based, Circulating, and Other Types of Collections*, available at <https://www.imls.gov/webinars/mitigating-covid-19-when-managing-paper-based-circulating-and-other-types-collections>.

A collaborative project between IMLS, OCLC and Battelle is researching virus interaction with various types of materials that circulate in libraries. Review the recently completed literature review and updates from the REopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums (REALM) Project at <https://www.oclc.org/research/news/2020/project-realm-updates.html>.

The [Back On Track Indiana](#) plan [Stage 2](#), and [Executive Order 20-26](#), gave Indiana's public libraries the ability to phase in services according to local needs, staff capacity, and the community's situation. ILF has been tracking how public libraries phase in curbside, limited access appointments, and reopening plans in this map at www.ilfonline.org/page/reopen.

Sources on Needing Physical Books

Anderson, Richard C., Paul T. Wilson, and Linda G. Fielding. 1988. "Growth in Reading and How Children Spend their Time Outside of School." *Reading Research Quarterly* 23: 285-303.

Kaufman, Geoff and Mary Flanagan, "High-Low Split: Divergent Cognitive Construal Levels Triggered by Digital and Non-Digital Platforms, a paper presented at the Computer-Human Interaction conference, 2016, accessed at <https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/2858036.2858550>.

Krashen, Stephen D., Sy-Ying Lee, and Christy Lao. *Comprehensive and Compelling: The Causes and Effects of Free Voluntary Reading*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2018.

Ross, McKechnie, Lynne (E.F.) McKechnie, and Paulette M. Rothbauer. *Reading Still Matters: What Research Reveals About Reading, Libraries, and Community*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2018.

Singer, Lauren and Patricia A. Alexander, "Reading on Paper and Digitally: What the Past Decades of Empirical Research Review," accessed at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0034654317722961>.

School Library Survey by Indiana Library Federation, June 2020, which showed school library collections ranged from 6,800 to 23,000 books and district-wide collections ranged from 15,000 to 478,535 books. Many schools offer curbside library book lending through spring and summer.

Sources on Library Time - either fixed schedule or flexible

"A Novel Therapy." *Prevention*. September 2011, at <http://prevention.coverleaf.com/prevention/201109?pg=55#pg55>.

Jurkowski, Odin L. "The Library as a Support System for Students." *Intervention in School and Clinic*, vol. 42, no. 2, 01 Nov. 2006, pp. 78-83.

Preddy, Leslie. *SSR with Intervention: A School Library Action Research Project*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007.

Shaper, Sue and David Streatfield. "Invisible Care? The Role of Librarians in Caring for the "Whole Pupil" in Secondary Schools." *Pastoral Care in Education*, vol. 30, no. 1, 01 Jan. 2012, pp. 65-75.

Sources on School Librarians and Paraprofessionals

2018 Status Report on Indiana School Libraries, published by Indiana Library Federation, accessed at https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ilfonline.org/resource/resmgr/school_library_census/ilf-school-libraryreport_only.pdf.

Lance, Keith Curry, et al. "School Librarian, Where Art Thou?" *School Library Journal*, 20 Mar. 2018, www.slj.com/2018/03/industry-news/school-librarian-art-thou/.