

News Release
Association for Indiana Media Educators
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Four Indiana School Library Media Programs Honored as Exemplary

Four school library media programs were honored as exemplary in support of teaching and learning at the Annual State Conference of the Association for Indiana Media Educators (AIME), November 7 and 8 in Indianapolis. Two programs are located in Noblesville, one in Pike Township of Indianapolis, and the other from the South Central Community Schools of Union Mills. Each program is managed by a full-time, certified professional teacher of school library media. Each school has a consistent record of ISTEP language arts scores above the State average over the past five years.

This is the first year for what will be the annual “Blue Ribbon” awards for exemplary school media programs in Indiana. School library media specialists, with support from their administration, submitted extensive portfolios to be considered. Each program was judged against a rubric of 25 performance criteria established nationally by the American Association for School Librarians (AASL).

Minimum standards that must be met to be considered include an annual financial investment of at least \$12.00 per student for print library

materials, a full-time school library media staff including professional librarians certified in Indiana as a teacher of library media as well as technical support staff. Teaching and learning criteria include evidence of the school library staff and services enhancing a school-wide program for promotion of reading achievement, effective application of technology to curriculum and information services, and providing leadership in the State for adoption of information literacy standards.

Carl A. Harvey II, library media specialist at North Elementary School of Noblesville and Rebecca Gould Downen, library media specialist at Noblesville Middle School, provided evidence of advancing student achievement through their district-wide practice of collaborative teaching. Their programs enhance the curriculum across all subject areas including social studies, science and language arts.

Kym Kramer, former school media specialist at Fishback Creek Public Academy in Indianapolis, documented an extensive program in multimedia production that involves students and teachers. Her work in development of inquiry projects that take students into selection and use of quality print and electronic materials is also tied to the school's exemplary curriculum. Kramer is now a doctoral student in education at Indiana University.

Nancy McGriff, school library media specialist at South Central Community Schools, Union Mills for the past eleven years, documented team teaching activities in both elementary and secondary settings to support greater student achievement in reading. McGriff, as well as Harvey, have extensive service records in promotion of school libraries nationally.

McGriff and Harvey hold certification degrees from Ball State University. Downen and Kramer are graduates of Indiana University. Each also holds a master's degree in education or library science.

Studies conducted through Indiana University have demonstrated that the AASL evaluation rubric is a strong predictor of exemplary school media programs related to high student performance on language arts ISTEP exams. In addition, studies in the state have shown that a school is more likely to provide extensive use of modern electronic technologies for teaching and information access when a full-time school media specialist is employed for service to one specific building.

Other recent studies have indicated that funding for print library materials in Indiana has declined in recent years, and many Indiana schools are now below the national average. Special state legislative funding to help increase investment in quality school library materials was eliminated two years ago.

Nearly 500 educators attended the Blue Ribbon Awards at Indianapolis, including several of the principals from the honored schools. AIME is also the sponsor of several other reading and media activities. The Young Hoosier Book Award and the Eliot Rosewater Indiana Book Award engages over 50,000 students annually in evaluation of new books for children and young adults. The AIME Media Fair competition provides students the opportunity to present multimedia programs designed individually or in student teams that illustrate use of modern computer technologies to instruct and entertain. Several Indiana student-produced video projects have gone on to win national awards over the past five years.

2005 is the first year for the Blue Ribbon School Media Awards, but Robyn Young, Chair of the Committee for the award, states that she anticipates a larger number of entries next year, especially as some schools seek to increase investment in school library collections, technology, staff and services.

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