

]For Immediate Release
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National School Library Media Program of the Year Award recipients named

The Indian Prairie School District 204 in Naperville, Ill., and the Blue Valley Unified School District 229 in Overland Park, Kan., are the 1993 recipients of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) National School Library Media Program of the Year Awards.

The awards, \$3,000 each and a plaque donated by Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation, are given to school districts for excellence and innovation in outstanding library media programs.

The Indian Prairie School District won the small school district category (enrollment less than 9,999) and the Blue Valley Unified School District in the large school district category (enrollment greater than 10,000).

"In Indian Prairie, the committee members were especially impressed with the commitment and professionalism of school library media specialists throughout the entire school district," said Diane D. Myers, chair of the AASL National School Library Media Program of the Year Award Committee. "The collegiality of the media specialists is outstanding -- their leadership roles are truly serving as catalysts for the integration of information literacy into the curriculum.

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"The close professional relationship and the mutual respect between the media specialists and the school administration at all levels serve as a model of partnerships in establishing truly outstanding school library media programs."

There are 13 schools in the district with 9,487 students served by 16 full-time professional school library media specialists. Nancy Young, library media center coordinator at Gordon Gregory Middle School, coordinated the application process for the district.

"An effective school has an empowered professional at the helm of the library to coordinate people and resources," said Superintendent Thomas G. Scullen. "The librarian is the instructional partner who helps drive out competitive and adversarial relationships among teachers to foster an environment that develops a team approach.

"The time has never been better for the school library to assume the lead in making libraries the pulse of the school. Therefore, the library must receive first priority in determining what is essential in a quality program."

The once rural community has grown in 20 years from four schools in 1972 to 13 schools adding an average of 750 new students annually over the past 10 years. Two new buildings will open in September 1993. Each school has a centralized library media center. Budgets in the district have been standardized to allow each library to develop a collection regardless of enrollment. Expenditures for library materials per pupil were \$19.49 for 1992-93.

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"The long-range commitment that Blue Valley Unified School District has made to providing exemplary school library media programs in all their schools was outstanding," said Myers. "The mutual respect and close working relationship that all the school library media specialists receive from top administrators is fundamental to the partnerships school librarians need to create in performing their jobs.

"Planning occurs between media specialists and classroom teachers to assure the integration of information literacy into the curriculum -- it's a school district where the media specialists provide truly exemplary instructional leadership throughout."

A total of 21 full-time professional school library media specialists work in 19 schools with a total enrollment of 11,126 students. Ruth Bell is the director of library media services.

"In Blue Valley, we believe that an integrated approach to the library media program is a key reason for the very high academic achievement of our students," said James C. Thompson, former Superintendent of Schools. "This approach is a critical element of the school reform and improvement efforts so needed in education today. We believe that the school library media center is the place where learning for the 21st Century will occur."

Gary Gordon and Steve McIlvain are currently serving as interim superintendents.

Blue Valley is in northeast Johnson County in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The district encompasses 87 square miles and has changed from a rural to an urban/rural community. It was unified in 1965 and has

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since grown 5 to 20 percent each year. A new high school and a new elementary school will open this fall. Nine of the schools in the district received the U.S. Department of Education award for outstanding educational programs.

Indian Prairie and Blue Valley were judged on how their programs met the challenge of "Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs," by providing school library media programs that ensure that students and staff are effective users of information. (American Library Association and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1988).

Members of the AASL National School Library Media Program of the Year Award Committee were: Myers, chair, Atlanta, Ga.; Suzanne W. Hawley, Naples, Fla.; Barbara Jeffus, Fresno, Calif.; Paula Kay Montgomery, Baltimore, Md., and Bernice (Bunny) Yesner, Woodbridge, Conn.

The awards will be presented on Monday, June 28, at the AASL Awards Luncheon, featuring author Bruce Brooks as featured speaker, during the ALA American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in New Orleans.

For more information, contact Marie-Louise Settem at 800-545-2433, ext. 4381.

AASL is a division of the American Library Association.