

On April 9, 2014, the Colorado Board of Education and Commissioner Hammond will recognize 22 schools for their highly effective school library programs. Libraries from past decades were associated with keeping quiet, reading, and maintaining order. However, today's school libraries are the interactive hub of the school. They are places where collaboration, active learning and inquiry are encouraged and practiced. They make a positive impact on the lives of their staffs, communities, and most importantly, their students. Those are hallmarks of the 22 Highly Effective School Library honorees announced today by the Colorado Department of Education.

"Twenty-first century skills are an essential component in education today, and effective school libraries and librarians are critical links for attaining these skills," said Eugene Hainer, assistant commissioner and state librarian at CDE. "Students can benefit from the district's support of these highly effective programs and the staff in the honored libraries."

Prior to applying, each teacher-librarian, along with their respective principal, assessed their library program using the "Highly Effective School Library Program Evaluation Rubric." This assessment tool outlines what a quality school library program should look like in areas such as student and teacher collaboration, differentiated instruction, curriculum development and leadership both within and outside the school community. In this competitive process, the applicants must provide concrete evidence that they not only meet or exceed the criteria for being considered, but also show how they are instructional leaders who help improve student learning.

State and national studies conducted over the past two decades show that students in schools with endorsed librarians score better on standardized achievement tests in reading, compared with students in schools without endorsed librarians. The presence of school librarians positively impacted students' standardized reading scores even when controlling for student poverty (free and reduced-cost meals). Even if schools had overall staff declines between 2004 and 2008, students' standardized reading scores were better in schools that maintained or gained a licensed librarian. Go to www.lrs.org/documents/school/school_library_impact.jpg to view a complete list of the study and its findings.

Commissioner of Education Robert Hammond will recognize the 21 librarians and principals at the April State Board of Education meeting. In addition, each school will receive a banner indicating their school library is highly effective.

Please visit the following link for a listing of these schools and school librarians:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/HESL2014Handout.pdf>