Collection Improvement Plan

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Introduction to the Library

Cedar Lane Library is a small school library located in Vienna, Virginia. The Town of Vienna is located in Fairfax County in Northern Virginia, 15 miles outside of Washington, D.C. (Town of Vienna, 2021a). Vienna's total area is 4.4 square miles and has a population of 16,544 people (Town of Vienna, 2021b). Cedar Lane School is a special education center that serves grades 9 - 12 for students with Individualized Education Plan (IEP), specifically students with emotional or behavioral disability, and students on the autism spectrum. As of the end of the 2020-2021 school year, Cedar Lane School had 72 students enrolled (FCPS, 2021).

Cedar Lane School currently doesn't have a librarian, so the staff have been giving access to the students when possible. Cedar Lane Library's website states that there are over 6,500 books available to the community and that there are 6 desktop computers available for student use (Cedar Lane School, 2021). Even though Cedar Lane Library provides access to a robust collection of databases and other digital resources, most of the staff and students are not aware of how to access or effectively utilize these extensive online resources. Random sampling uncovered the lack of diversity throughout Cedar Lane Library's fiction section. Despite high levels of diversity among the student population, only 32% of the fiction books featured characters that identified as something other than White, able-bodied, and/or cis-gendered. There are many different aspects of Cedar Lane Library that can be improved to better support the community of Cedar Lane School.

Areas of Need

Cedar Lane School can improve its collection by targeting the following areas: employ a full-time librarian, develop a method to ease user access to digital resources, such as eBooks and databases, and purchase more physical books that feature characters that identify as someone other than white, cis-gendered, or able-bodied. Cedar Lane School's student population is quite unique compared to other local high schools because 50% of its population identifies with a race other than White and 100% of the students attending have Individualized Education Programs (IEP). At least 32% of the student population are enrolled in a reading support class. Cedar Lane School community would greatly benefit from having a full time librarian that can work with teachers and students to create a place that supports all of their literacy needs.

Full-Time Librarian

There are countless reasons why having a full time librarian is needed to support Cedar Lane's community reach its academic and literacy goals. One important reason for employing a full time librarian is it would allow for collaboration between the librarian and teachers. Research has consistently demonstrated the fact that "the presence of full-time, qualified school librarians exerts a positive influence on 'scores on standards-based language arts, reading, and writing tests, regardless of student demographics and school characteristics" (Merga, 2019, p. 65, section Background Information). With the support of the administration and an outgoing librarian, librarians can help support teachers in the classroom and library by creating engaging lessons and helping to access valuable instructional materials that can increase student participation and learning.

Another reason for employing a full time librarian is because a librarian is the one professional within a school qualified to select appropriate materials needed to create a well-developed collection that is as unique as the community it was created for. Johnson states that when assessing the value of a material, "one considers the item in relation to user needs, the existing collection, the mission of the library, and consortial obligations" (2018, chap 4, sect Assessment). While other members in Cedar Lane's community can make recommendations, only a librarian is able to select the best materials.

Last of all, librarians can help teachers and students better utilize the extensive list of databases and other online resources available. The digital resources include over fifteen databases that offer students the opportunity to access information in a variety of formats, including visual and audio options. This is very beneficial for the students at Cedar Lane, many of whom struggle with reading comprehension when limited to reading traditional print resources for research. However, teachers don't have the time needed to truly explore all that these databases have to offer.

Utilizing Databases for Student Use

"Databases provide learners with a one-stop shop for cross-curricular, up-to-date, vetted information in a structured and easy-to-manipulate format for class projects" (Ivory & Viens, 2019, p. 18). With the increasing push to incorporate more project-based learning opportunities inside classrooms, students have more opportunities to take ownership of their learning. However, in order for students to be successful when researching and learning about a new topic, they need to "know how to use a database to find the information they need" (Ivory & Viens, 2019, p. 18). Library Information Services within FCPS centrally purchased over 20 different databases and online

resources in order to facilitate student learning. However, the sheer number of resources are overwhelming to staff, let alone students who have a history of struggling with reading and being successful in school. Teachers have enough responsibilities without adding learning how to navigate the online databases and resources that can be used to teach their students the necessary skills to research. It is true that databases can provide a more manageable amount of resources (when compared to a search engine); provide abstracts and summaries; leveled reading texts and translations for students who are learning English; and provide citations for students so they can cite their information easily. But a librarian is the best individual to teach students how to maneuver a database so they can learn the trial and error part of research without too much frustration, as well as finding information presented in the most accessible way.

Diverse Representation

At a school where only half of the student population identify as White and 100% have IEPs, there needs to be a more diverse representation featured in the fiction books. Many of the students who attend Cedar Lane School have faced some level of "otherness" or not belonging for most of their academic career. They should not have to feel the same way when they read a book they have selected from their school library. As Sims Bishop pointed out, "when children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are part" (1990, para 4). Even though those words were written over 30 years ago, the same issue of lack of diversity is still a problem. To make the situation even more complicated, whoever is tasked with selecting materials to improve the representation of

diversity also needs to be aware of the appropriateness of the reading level and emotional level. Many of the students at Cedar Lane struggle with reading, so if they see a 400 page book with a picture of a Black girl on it, they will skip right over it, regardless of how many booklists that title appears on. There is also a high number of students who have experienced trauma in their lives, which needs to be kept in mind when selecting books that feature characters who identify with something other than White, able-bodied, and/or cis-gendered.

Materials to Select for Cedar Lane Library

Full-Time Librarian

Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me by Mariko Tamaki; illustrated by Rosemary Valero-O'Connell

This graphic novel follows Freddy's journey to get out of a toxic relationship with her girlfriend. This book is published by MacMillan and was one of Forbes Best Graphic Novels and NPR's Best Books for 2019. Students who enjoy reading graphic novels will enjoy Laura Dean Keeps Breaking up with Me with it's easy to follow and fast paced story line allowing them to get tangled up with Freddy's relationships. The content of this book is appropriate for high school students without being too mature and its reading level is very accessible with the sparing use of text, so that students will be able to finish this story quickly. This graphic novel will be of value to a high school community that enjoys reading graphic novels that feature a very diverse cast of characters.

Fire 7 Tablet manufactured by Amazon

The Fire 7 is an affordable tablet students can use to access digital content from a variety of places in a variety of places. The Fire 7 tablet is yet another reliable product

created by Amazon that supports apps like MackinVIA and Kindle. Using the Fire 7 will allow students to access ebooks and audiobooks with greater ease compared to using laptops because tablets are easier to hold and allow for easier reading of text. The Fire 7 is appropriate for high school students to use because they have become increasingly more adept at using electronics to access instructional materials in school. The Fire 7 will add value to Cedar Lane School's library because it offers students access to all their digital reading and listening content in one, portable place.

Utilizing Databases for Student Use

ABC-CLIO Social Studies Database

ABC-CLIO Social Studies offers databases in a variety of areas of studies, like American History and Government, World Geography, and World History for the Modern, Medieval, and Ancient eras. ABC-CLIO has been a credible source for schools and libraries for 65 years. ABC-CLIO Social Studies Database is appropriate for the diverse learning needs of Cedar Lane's community because by offering features such as built-in read aloud, video, images, audio clips, and translation which will support students that struggle with reading traditional print based texts. ABC-CLIO can assist students in independently conducting research in secondary school courses that focus on World and American history, Government, and English Language Arts. This database is valuable to any secondary school library because as schools introduce more project based learning opportunities, ABC-CLIO provides trusted resources where students can confidently access factual information that is provided in a variety of multimedia to support student learning, regardless of how they receive and understand information.

Comics Plus created by LibraryPass

Comics Plus offers school communities unlimited and simultaneous access to thousands of digital comics, graphic novels, and manga. This database is curated by LibraryPass, which selects interesting and engaging digital content for K-12, public and academic libraries to offer to their communities. Comics Plus is relevant to high school curriculums because it offers an easy to access platform for students to find books to read during independent reading opportunities, both in and out of school. Comics Plus utilizes the ALA Library Bill of Rights to inform their collection development plan and their age-appropriate guidelines. In a high school community with a growing appreciation for comics, graphic novels, and manga, Comics Plus will be both valuable and used by students and staff.

Diverse Representation

***Dreamland Burning* by Jennifer Latham**

This young adult murder mystery takes place both during present day and during the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Author Jennifer Latham, a resident of Tulsa, Oklahoma, spent four years researching before writing a book based on the stories of the unheard victims. *Dreamland Burning* is relevant to the US History and African American History curriculums because it explores a vital event that is not often discussed in most high school US history classrooms. This book will be of interest to a diverse high school community because it acts as a window into a fascinating period of US history, while also featuring characters who are racial diverse with non-conforming sexual identities. *Dreamland Burning* is appropriate for a high school library because it makes a very important topic accessible, engaging, and modern. This book will add value to Cedar

Lane Library's fiction collection because it can act as a mirror, window, or sliding glass door for any reader.

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi; narrated by Jason Reynolds

This young adult nonfiction audiobook is a remix of Ibram Kendi's *Stamped From the Beginning* and explores how U.S.'s ideas about race and Black people have evolved throughout this country's history. This book explores the famous historical figures who have impacted the lives of Black people in America. Ibram Kendi is an American Historian and writer who currently heads Boston University's Center for Antiracist Research and Jason Reynolds is an award winning young adult author who knows how to connect and engage youth, regardless of their skin color. Reynolds's engaging narration allows students 12 years and older to be introduced to a perspective that is different from what is presented in their US History textbooks. Reynolds offers listeners a new way to view history in an easily digestible manner by using language that is informal, accessible, and conversational, without overwhelming listeners with unnecessary details. This book will add value to a high school library's nonfiction collection because it opens the door to examining the history of the US in a new lens that will pave the way for much needed conversations about race in this country.

3 Year Collection Plan

	Employ Full-Time Librarian	**Utilize Databases**	**Diversify Collection**
Description	Provide research-based evidence to support the value of a full-time	Provide research-based evidence to support the value of	Increase the amount of fiction books that feature characters that identify as

	librarian.	databases for student learning.	something other than White, able-bodied, and/or cis-gendered up to 50% of the collection.
Year 1	Create a survey for staff to take so they could share how a librarian could support them in the classroom. Push into ELA classroom to offer programs like First Chapter Fridays, book talks, and presentation on citation.	Study and research Standards for English 9 - 12 to become familiar with standards of learning Work with the ELA teachers to identify units that the librarian can offer support in using the databases. .	Over a 3 year period, increase the percentage of fiction books that feature diverse characters by 6% a year. The starting point was 32% and the end point will be 50%
Year 2	Survey teachers again for feedback about how pushing into the classroom contributed. Create a survey for students to share books and other resources they are interested in using at the library.	Study and research the curriculums for World History I, World History II, US/VA History, US Government, and African American History to become familiar with standards of learning. Work with history teachers to identify units that the librarian can offer support in using the databases.	
Year 3	Survey teachers again for feedback about how the librarian supported the classroom in the past and how the librarians	Study and research the curriculums for Active Physics, Biology I, and Geosystems to become familiar with	

	can continue to offer support.	standards of learning. Work with science teachers to identify units that the librarian can offer support in using the databases.	
Formative Assessment	Create a survey at the beginning of the year to understand how the librarian and library can support the staff.	Create a survey for staff and students to get information about the level of comfort and proficiency at using the database for research.	Compare the monthly checkout rates with corresponding months from the three previous years to look for an increase in circulation.
Summative Assessment	Create a survey where staff and students can share their thoughts, strengths, and suggestions of the library and the librarian.	Compare the number of teachers, classes, and curriculums the librarian collaborated with and supported from the first year of the plan to the third year of the plan. Administer the same formative survey to see how the levels of comfort and proficiency have changed.	Compare the number of fiction books that feature diverse characters checked out from the first year to the third year. Complete another random sample to determine the percentage of books featuring diverse characters.
Marketing Plan	In the beginning of the school year, the librarian will ask to join ELA classes to introduce themselves, explain what the library has to offer, and explain suggestion box/google form.	At the beginning of the school year, during grade level team meetings, and on professional development day provide training for staff about how to navigate and use the databases.	Prominently feature books with diverse characters. Push into ELA classes and do First Chapter Fridays and Book Talks that include books with diverse characters.

	Throughout the school year, the librarian will try to visit each ELA class at least once a month for an opportunity to connect with students.		Invite authors with diverse backgrounds to meet with staff and students.

Summary

Cedar Lane School is a unique high school community that needs a strong and collaborative librarian who can support the staff and students in meeting their research and literacy goals. It will take time and effort to make the library and the librarian an integral part of the Cedar Lane community. But with that effort and the right librarian, Cedar Lane can become a more supportive and engaging community that pushes its students to learn the research and literacy skills needed in order to be successful members of their communities outside of the classroom.

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