

Cobb Library Media Education

Recommendations for Reopening
Library Learning Commons and Media Centers
2020-2021

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- The Cobb County School District Library Media Education Department believes that **library media specialists are leaders**, poised to support the instructional and technology needs of all teachers and students, as well as families, ensuring student success.
- In addition to technology support for students, teachers, and families, library media specialists **keep students reading** with engaging books that provide windows to the world and mirrors that reflect their own experience. Reading can provide **social-emotional support** and reduce anxiety during rapidly changing times.
- Library media specialists **collaborate and co-teach** with classroom teachers in all subject areas to maximize the development of digital literacy skills, including digital citizenship, master content standards, and enhance critical thinking skills.
- Library media paraprofessionals provide needed support for the library media program, managing circulation, facilitating traffic flow, and assisting teachers and students one-on-one. When library media paras manage these tasks, library media specialists can focus on **personalized reading recommendations, collaborating, and co-teaching**.



How can school library programs operate safely?



- Library media programs should follow CCSD and local school guidelines.
- The [American Association of School Libraries](#) (AASL) provides additional pandemic-related resources and information.
- Books and materials can be circulated following [American Libraries Association \(ALA\) guidelines](#), [CDC recommendations](#), and [Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 schools](#).
- [Studies show](#) that a 72-hour quarantine of books and materials is the most effective way to disinfect them.
- Access to a diverse collection of print books provides students with a welcome balance to reading on screens.
- Library media specialists can coordinate [curbside pickup and dropoff](#) of library books for digital learners.

How should library media specialists approach their role in a rapidly changing environment?



- Stay flexible, creative, and patient. Library spaces, programs, and practices may look different. Some changes may be permanent, but most changes are likely temporary.
- Attitude is contagious. Leading with positivity, confidence, and knowledge is critical for our students. Library media specialists set the tone in the digital and virtual space, one that is shared with the whole school.
- Be a safe-haven for staff and students. Everyone is returning to many unknowns. This can be an opportunity to rethink, renew, reinvent, and refresh.
- Communication is key. Ensure new expectations are verbalized often and displayed prominently.
- Be prepared for changes to the schedule, space, budget, and operating procedures. Changes may come often and swiftly. The key to success is flexibility, support, and consistent communication with all stakeholders.

How can administrators support school library programs?

- Recognize the role of the library media specialist in the school-wide instructional program and utilize their unique knowledge and strengths.
- Without volunteers to support library programs, limiting additional duties for library media staff will allow them to focus on instruction, shelving, and additional needs related to program changes.
- Support plans to provide library media services during these uncertain, changing times, as students need access to their library media specialist and high-quality, relevant materials.
- Work with your library media specialist to determine needs for safety and cleaning in the library learning commons or media center, plans for student access, and discuss the allocation of local funds to supplement district-provided resources.
- Communicate frequently regarding policy and practice changes due to updated conditions.



What are some general recommendations for healthy learning in the library learning commons?



- Evaluate the library space to determine ways to rearrange furniture to encourage social distancing when possible.
- Create and label traffic flow patterns.
- Do not allow eating or drinking. Clean surfaces several times a day.
- Avoid hands-on activities that require shared materials, such as makerspace activities.
- Develop a system to quarantine returned books and materials for 72 hours.
- Consider the following optional items:
 - [Demco Face Shields](#)
 - [Demco Floor Decals](#)
 - [Demco Health Shields](#)
 - [Demco UV Sanitizer](#)
 - [CDC handwashing posters in English and Spanish](#)

How should library media specialists get started this year?

- Rework orientation plans to include skills needed to log on to various platforms, as well as additional features that can be useful if school closes again, such as requesting books in Destiny or accessing e-books in Sora.
- Create a virtual library or digital help desk for students and staff. Update digital communications and evaluate your e-book collection.
- Update check-in and check-out procedures to align with safety guidelines.
- Create instructional videos about various tools, such as Cobb Digital Library and Destiny.
- Collaborate with administration, teachers, instructional coaches, and TTIS's to follow local safety recommendations and support the instructional needs of the students.
- Review specific information about library programming in the following slides.



What are the expectations of students visiting the library learning commons / media center?



- In the following slides, red indicates school is in session but students are not allowed to come to the library learning commons / media center.



- Yellow indicates that students can visit the library learning commons / media center in limited numbers.



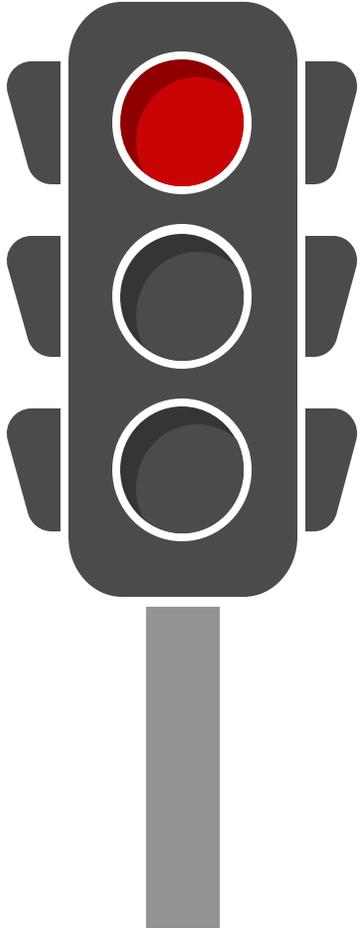
- Green indicates that students can visit the library learning commons / media center as usual. Precautions for social distancing may still be in place.

How can school libraries schedule classes on a limited basis?



- Consider the size and capacity of the space. Create a schedule that limits entry of one group at a time.
- Develop a plan for restricting numbers that takes the number of library staff members into consideration.
- Communicate new policies clearly and consistently with staff.
- Display health and safety reminders and review with students upon the arrival of each class.
- Modify the layout by spacing seating 6 feet apart when possible; turn seats to face in the same direction rather than facing each other, and/or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Half class visits - If your space does not allow for appropriate social distancing, consider scheduling instruction for half a class at a time.

How can school libraries schedule classes if the library learning commons is closed to students?



- If the library learning commons / media center is unavailable for student and class visits, the library media specialist may schedule classroom visits to provide instruction while observing physical distancing guidelines.
- Library media specialists can create instructional videos for classroom teachers to use in their instruction.
- Library media specialists can meet with classes live via CTLS / Zoom.

How can students check out print books when access to the library learning commons is limited?



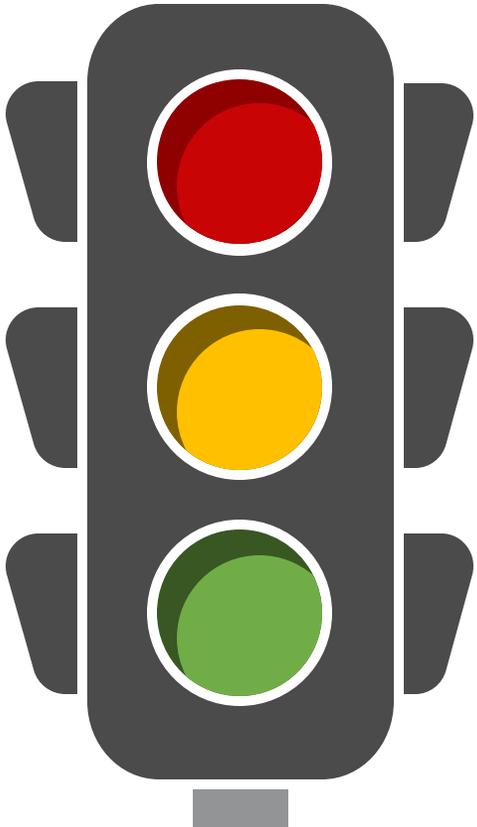
- Access to print books provides students with a welcome balance to reading on screens.
- Teach students and staff to use the hold feature in Destiny; deliver books to classrooms as needed and as staffing allows. Consider engaging ideas for getting books to kids, like this [BookHub](#) idea (like Grubhub).
- Teach students how to choose books using digital tools, such as Novelist and Destiny.
- If students are visiting in limited numbers, create systems that encourage book browsing without handling books.
- Consider creating genre quizzes or interest inventories to support personalized book recommendations and selections.

There are many forms out there, or you can create your own. Here are some options for inspiration:



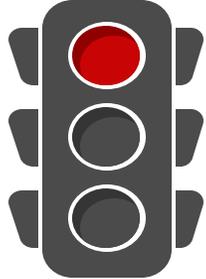
- [Scholastic](#)
 - [Smekenseducation](#)
 - [Readingapprenticeship](#)
 - [Heinemann.com](#)
 - [TeachableTeacher](#)
 - [Martha Bongiorno's Microsoft Form you can duplicate](#)
- Provide access to book request forms in both digital and paper format. Collaborate with teachers to decide what works best for their students. Present ideas and be open to suggestions.

What are ways to physically circulate print books safely?



- Consider temporarily updating checkout policies:
 - Increase the number of books students can check out at a time.
 - Restrict amount of highly circulated items per patron.
 - Extend due dates.
 - Eliminate fees and fines.
- Set up check-in station to allow for quarantining returned materials for 72 hours.
- Staff should wash hands after handling returned materials. Clean circulation desk items often.
- Adjust checkout procedures. Avoid high-touch services, such as keypads. Students can verbally state their name or student ID. Scanners can be turned so that students scan the barcode for checkout.
- Provide floor signage to indicate how to safely line up at the circulation desk.
- Consider [clear partitions](#) at the circulation desk.
- Consider ways to provide distance learning students with the ability to [pick up / return](#) requested print books. [Demco curbside pickup resources](#)

How will the library media specialist continue to support student learning through instruction?



Red guidelines:

- Prepare lessons with teachers and co-teach in their classrooms.
- Meet online in CTLS to be "present" in the classroom.
- Pre-record research lessons, book talks, and digital citizenship material for all grade levels to use.



Yellow guidelines:

- Allow for lessons in the LLC one class at a time.
- Make sure that all classes get the opportunity to have lessons, story time, and book checkout.
- Prepare engaging and relevant lessons that support classroom instruction.
- Plan for cleaning between classes.



Green guidelines:

- Re-establish the flexible schedule for your space.
- Continue to collaborate with grade level teams and individual teachers to support classroom instruction.
- Plan for cleaning between classes.
- Prepare space and train patrons on new procedures.

What are some ways to adjust the use of shared spaces and materials, such as the Makerspace, teacher workroom, or production room?



Red guidelines:

- Make clear guidelines for teacher workroom or other teacher spaces and how they can be used.
- Prepare to support teachers and limit numbers in the teacher workroom for copies, lamination, printing, and other assistance.



Yellow and Green guidelines:

- Establish and communicate clear guidelines for shared areas and how they can be used.
- Suspend or redesign the use of the Makerspace, Lego Walls, and all student-driven, high-touch items.
- To help social distancing in the library, consider using spaces for different purposes or unused spaces in [new ways](#).
- Make sure that equipment is [cleaned thoroughly](#) between uses (ie: using a camera or ipad in a production room with a green screen.) [Yale Cleaning Guidelines for Electronics during COVID-19](#)



How can we reconfigure the physical space and traffic flow?



Red guidelines

- Consider creating an interactive virtual space for students to visit, such as a Bitmoji Library or an AR classroom with Metaverse.



Yellow and green guidelines

- Assess the space and look for pinch points, tight spaces, and underutilized areas.
- Consider weeding early in the year and/or storing less-circulated items to create more floor space.
- Separate tables and furniture to create space between students.
- Remove furniture that cannot be cleaned appropriately, such as bean bag chairs or area rugs.
- Create one-way aisles where space is not large enough to maintain 6 feet of distancing; use signage and directional arrows on the floor.
- Use mobile whiteboards or other barriers to create traffic routes.
- Block off stationary equipment or furniture in order to maintain 6 feet of distancing (i.e. every other computer)



How can students safely access the library before or after school?



Yellow guidelines

- Limit access to ensure social distancing (limited passes available or student sign-up).
- Designate specific workstations and/or devices for use.
- Schedule time to clean workstations and devices after each use.



Green guidelines

- Post [signage](#) reminding students of hygiene and safety protocols.
- Provide hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes throughout space for library staff and students.
- Practice consistent cleaning and sanitizing of workstations and devices.

What are the expectations and roles of library media specialists if school buildings close?



- The evaluation instrument for library media specialists is the [School Librarian Evaluation Instrument](#) (SLEI).
- The SLEI consists of 10 standards and follows the TKES template while specifying expectations of library media specialists.
- The [SLEI Translation of Practice for Digital Learning Days](#) provides a translation of all 10 standards in terms of expectations, practices, and examples during school building closures.
- During digital learning days, library media specialists provide instructional support by continuing to meet and collaborate with teachers, curate digital resources, troubleshoot digital challenges, keep students reading, and lead professional learning.
- For more information, please review the [SLEI Translation of Practice for Digital Learning Days](#).

References and Resources

- [American Libraries Association \(ALA\) guidelines](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Schools from the American Association of Pediatrics](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance from The Library and Information Association](#)
- [Demco library supplies and resources for safe reopening](#)
- [Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 schools](#)
- [Operating Schools Dur COVID-19 from the CDC](#)
- [Pandemic Resources from American Association of School Librarians](#)
- Posters from the CDC: [letter size](#), [11X17](#), [alternate poster](#)
- [Quarantining books recommendation from The Institute of Museum and Library Services](#)
- [School Librarian Impact from American Association of School Librarians](#)
- [Strong Libraries Build Strong Students](#)
- [Why School Librarians Matter: What Years of Research Tells Us](#)

