

Madeira High School Library Study

Prepared by Marcia Deddens, Susan Fraley, John Kirby, Diane Shulthies

A quick look at the Madeira High School Library makes it easy to conclude that a large amount of centrally located space is being underutilized. Thus, the questions of how to use the existing facilities, how to conceptualize a vibrant library, how to staff this resource and what activities take place therein, are a logical and necessary assignment for study. We began our study by asking some basic questions, the first and foremost being “Do we need a high school library?”

Our answer is simple and direct: Only if that which we now call a library is necessary for the education of our students and their preparation to continue as young adults in careers, military service, family roles and higher education. Our answer has a yes and no response. **NO** if all a high school library provides is replication of services readily available from our local public library and **YES** if what is now a traditional library space becomes a hub of learning that prepares our students to

- (1) use and communicate through technology
- (2) retrieve and use information in a literate manner
- (3) create new content useful to themselves and other students
- (4) work collegially in peer groups with the assistance of teachers who mentor
- (5) engage in productive and self-directed learning

We have engaged in a series of activities to validate our answers

How do our students use the current high school library and how would they like to see that facility and its services change?

An online survey of students was conducted with over thirty responses. It covered frequency of use, characteristics of current use, resources that would be desirable to add and changes needed for improved service. Students recognize that the current space is underutilized and report that a majority of the current use is for study hall and testing. They mentioned that the books are rarely used because there is not a convenient tool for searching for materials and the books do not seem to be directly associated with the classes the students take. It was even mentioned that class textbooks should be available in the library.

More importantly, students mentioned the lack of necessary technology equipment and software, space for group projects, an inviting atmosphere, and time within the school day to make use of the library. They also mentioned a need for staff support within the library. Students would like to have electrical outlets and network capacity to make use of their own personal devices

How does our faculty use the school library currently and what facilities and services would they like to see in the future?

We assessed the administration and faculty's perspective of the media center by interviewing Tom Olson and asking for feedback from the department chairs. The following is information based upon feedback from Mr. Olson, MHS principal, Jennifer Jordan MHS Business Department, Abby Seelmeyer, MHS English Department Chair, Cindy Cadet, MHS Foreign Language Chair, and Christy Barton, Science Department Chair.

Current Use of Media Center by faculty & students:

- Research for English and Social Studies classes
- Storage of AV equipment, media
- Large group meeting space for speakers and presentations
- Group meetings during common time
- Testing space (AP, ASVAB, OGT)
- Study halls
- Use of computer lab for Science simulations (connectivity is much more reliable on desktop computers), occasionally for a physics or physical science lab that requires extra space

Stumbling blocks that prevent more frequent usage:

- Physical set up
- Lack of resources
- Functionality outdated
- Study halls meeting there; teachers noted that there is concern as to where SH would meet and the need to assure that students have greater access to computers during SH, whether it's in the MC or a classroom
- Frequency the MC is used for testing

Teachers'/Administration Vision for MC:

- Space to meet 21st century needs
- Flexible to meet teachers' and students' changing needs
 - More modern, functional furniture, flooring, lighting
- Space for small groups to meet as well as a class of about 20-25 students
- More access to technology; less emphasis on print material
 - More power sources to charge I pads and other devices
 - More computers in general
- If literacy was a focus—reading spaces, resources/books indexed in an online catalog, coffee shop or at least a “coffee shop” atmosphere
- Flexibility by students to come and go/use the MC independently
- Use of MC for a blended learning class; class would meet a few times a week but groups could use MC to meet, work or collaborate the other days of the week
- Open, interactive learning commons used to prepare our students for the college environment

What have other schools done to develop school library services and facilities, particularly Cincinnati peer high schools?

In order to answer this question we examined several award winning school library programs but quickly found an excellent example just east of Madeira in the Mariemont Schools. We also contacted a local architect to find illustrations of recent area projects. All facilities share some common characteristics

- Multiple uses of space – individual, small group, presentation, lounges conducive to conversations
- Comfortable furnishings
- Multiple technologies including software and devices not practical for individual classrooms
- Integration of technology and space for small groups with emphasis on communication
- Multimedia presentation space – large digital projection, touch screens, sound systems including earphone delivery
- Extensive network connections and electrical outlets for students to use their own devices

What do higher education and employers expect as technology, information literacy, and multimedia presentation skills for beginning undergraduates?

Both those reviewing college applications and those placing college graduates in entry level positions at the University of Cincinnati stressed that colleges and employers look for students who show academic excellence, especially as seen in their ability to communicate in writing and in person. That said, they also stress that students are now expected to have a personal portfolio that has been created using multimedia technology. The portfolio that shines includes mastery of technology in a purposeful manner. Creativity, logic, reasoning, purpose, intellectual development over time, ability to learn, and self analysis were all mentioned. Additionally, both mentioned the ability to find and make use of valid content found through Web resources and content that shows a presentation developed with a collegial group process. And last, they mentioned the presentation of personal interests that grows in depth as the individual matures.

Higher education and job training increasingly involves distance learning and online tutorials. Students are expected to enter college with computer skills that center on the use of software used to communicate in writing, with video and in person over distance. The Faculty does not expect to need to show students how to use basic software. If the student is not prepared, he will be directed to a self-paced tutorial. Students who have used communications and presentation creation software in K-12 will be far ahead of those who have not.

The UC placement officers mentioned that while employers expect content knowledge in new graduates, their most important needs are for applicants who can communicate, work in groups and absorb further training quickly and thoroughly.

Our Recommendations

Given the research and surveys conducted, we recommend that Madeira High School closely examine the Learning Commons model created by Mariemont Schools and redesign the existing Madeira High School Library to provide –

An inventory of existing equipment and software that can be made available to faculty, students, and potentially community groups

A plan to re-design the existing space to accommodate this equipment and software, and to augment the inventory regularly with up-to-date hardware and software and new services

Access to technology for individuals and small groups that facilitates information retrieval and research, creation of individual learning portfolios and multimedia presentations, and small group interactive space

Extensive network capacity and electrical outlet access for students to use devices they own

A plan to integrate the services of the Learning Commons into the curriculum of Madeira High School programs

Training for Madeira faculty in the use of technology and the Learning Commons features such that the faculty may act as mentors for the students who will regularly use that Commons.

Dedicated and knowledgeable staff for the Commons and seek Madeira Public Library assistance whenever possible.

A plan to make use of student technology expertise such that it is readily available to students and faculty

Learning Commons facilities and services available to individuals and groups as a source of revenue for further developing the commons

Key to this development will be a further examination of the partnership between classroom learning and that which takes place within the Commons. Current jargon often quips that teaching is moving from a “sage on the stage” to a “guide on the side.” Content that has been delivered as lecture in a classroom can now reach students via technology, thus providing the time and opportunity for the teacher to mentor students both within the classroom and the Learning Commons. This learning approach will encourage critical thinking and discovery learning as prominently included in the new Ohio Common Core. Students will be guided through a discovery process to discern fact from fiction, valid information from myth and purposeful misrepresentation, and will discover within themselves the power to determine their own learning and create their own intellectual property. The Learning Commons will be designed to support this learning approach and provide facilities that cannot be

duplicated within each individual classroom. Also key to this development will be time provided for faculty to participate in Learning Commons activities, time that may now be almost totally dedicated to the classroom.

We do not suggest that this transformation will be easy or quick. We trust, however, that this transformation will change the current bland and underutilized library space into a hub of learning activity that students and teachers alike seek and enjoy. We also trust that it will help to prepare Madeira graduates for the challenges of higher education and career development, both of which will require the self-motivated lifelong learning we all seek to enrich our lives.

Appendix 1 – Student Responses

How often do you currently use the Media Center/ Library?	What do you use the center/ library for during the school day?	What resources would you like to have available in the media center?	What changes would you like to see made to the library to better serve your needs at the high school?	If you could reconfigure the current Media Center/ Library to include more technology and group lessons, what would you include?
Daily	Study Hall	textbooks from classes, space large enough areas to work with others, teachers who are on their free period to ask questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be allowed to use the group rooms for collaboration - take out the bookcases in some areas to provide more space, they hardly get used and never will be used most likely - a better system of checking yourself out of study hall to do something 	- take out unneeded bookcases and shelves and replace with areas for collaboration and space for more iMacs, (really stressing the collaboration thing... we should be able to work in groups of 2 or 3 together on homework or projects during study hall)
once a week	Use of reference materials	it would be nice if you could print from your own laptop.	I see any changes because I have my own laptop.	smart board
1-3 times a month	Group meeting	None that aren't already there	it already has/does everything I need/want it to	I wouldn't because it already has what it needs, and not many people make use of those resources

Daily	Study Hall, Group meeting, Writing papers, working on projects, homework	Computer	Better printers Faster web connections (if possible) Up dated books Books we have to read for English classes	New computers Up graded computer programs Up graded books/informational books
Daily	Study Hall, Group meeting	Current national and/or international newspapers	A student-accessible library catalog could prove very useful.	More easily accessible power outlets could prove useful, as many students are now making use of their own technology in school.
Never	To get a laptop.	More computers.	I think it should be kind of like a meeting room so that students can work together on projects and study together.	I think there should be more small rooms so that small groups of students can go in there to work on projects. I also think there should be more computers because people are always in need of computers.
Daily	Study Hall, Group meeting			
once a week	Study Hall, computers	books we read in class.	More computers, less printer problems.	Nothing much , but I would make it so every subject taught at the school had several copies of their textbooks within the library for study hall.
Never	Study Hall, Group meeting		Having more of the textbooks meaning more than one of each book	A white board not just in the rooms and markers, more couches or better chairs
Daily	Group meeting, To get a laptop or talk to the lovely Ms. Ford!	Nothing I think it's good!	I'd like to see borrowing books from our library become a less-taboo activity. We have a lot of really quality books lying around, but I get the impression no one touches them. There seems to be an unspoken rule that no one takes books out of the library EVER. It'd be cool if we could fix that. Please and thank you!	Probably not, since I'm not very tech-savvy, but I'm sure some people (who are cooler than me) would love it!
Daily	Use of reference materials		more laptops!	
Daily	Study Hall	laptops	Less desktop computers and more laptops available	Update the computers/laptops Make the server faster and more efficient

Daily	Study Hall	computers and books		
Daily	Computers / laptop checkout	More comfortable locations	A more comfortable setting that is focused around lounge furniture rather than tables and chairs. Places that are comfortable to work but also tables for people who like them	More computers, in a lounge like area. We need to feel comfortable in school. Thanks!
Never	Study Hall	More books	A larger collection of novels	
Daily	Study Hall			
Daily	Study Hall	computers, textbooks, and calculators	Have textbooks from all classes in the media center	A space ship
once a week	Group meeting, printer			more current books, all the classes textbooks
1-3 times a week	Group meeting			
Daily	Study Hall			
NEVER	Study Hall	All the textbooks		Open up the space more. Take out all the empty bookshelves or fill them. If you took out the bookshelves not being used, you could include more computers.
Once a week	Group meeting			
1-3 times a month	Club meetings			
Daily	Study Hall, Group meeting	Nothing; Everything I need is already available.		I would include a document camera so that a group of people can view a piece of paper, a diagram, or a live question-solving session.
Daily	Study Hall		faster computers more couches to spread out less books because no one uses them	
Daily	Study Hall			
Daily	Study Hall			
Never	Study Hall, Group meeting	books in foreign languages	more computers and technology in general books in foreign languages(esp. Spanish) for students to better their skills, literacy and translating with.	more computers

1-3 times a month	Priny		Not freezing cold	
Never	Computers	Computers/laptops	more laptops available in media center	More individual side rooms and more computers.
Daily	Study Hall, Group meeting			
Daily	Study Hall, Use of reference materials	more text books	comfy chairs	
Daily	Study Hall			
Daily	Study Hall, Group meeting	computers		
Daily	Study Hall, Group meeting, computers	more books that are just for reading that I can check out instead of having to buy them	I think the library should be the next remodeling project. Remodeling will bring more students to use it more often.	Updated computers and laptops maybe a technology class?