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Be a Learning Leader @ Your Library Learning Commons

Teacher-librarians have always been key players in schools where time, budget, staffing and vision for collaborative teaching have provided them with a critical role in supporting teaching and learning. Vast amounts of research over the years have proven that we have a positive influence on literacy and learning. Disadvantaged are those schools without excellent library programs. School boards' investments in library spaces, both physical and virtual, along with professional leadership, are vital in supporting teachers and students. Learning today calls for new environments and approaches conducive to working in our networked world where information explodes and knowledge is fluid. Classroom teachers want to help their students become wise, savvy and responsible users of information and ideas. They need your help more than ever before.

Nearly seven years ago, my colleagues and I began to champion the Learning Commons approach for school library transformation with the publication of *The New Learning Commons Where Learners Win!* Early adopters embraced the model and shared their struggles and success and we followed up with more publications, articles, webinars, boot camps and workshops to address evolving needs and the realities of shifts in learning pedagogy. Interest and implementation have now grown from individual schools to whole districts both nationally and internationally. Along the way, we have collected stories, videos, and articles as our success mounted.

Today we notice a new excitement, not just from teacher-librarians who

are enjoying successful results, but by students and teachers who begin to take ownership of library spaces and initiatives. That transfer of ownership seems to be the tipping point as opposed to just a change of physical spaces and a new name over the door. When the shift happens, teacher-librarians know they are working at the centre of teaching and learning and not just on the fringes. It takes courage to risk releasing ownership, but with that step, teacher-librarians help schools embrace the Learning Commons as a whole-school approach and cement their role as leaders of future-oriented learning.

Ontario school library professionals are well positioned to advance as learning leaders in their schools. In our document *Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of*

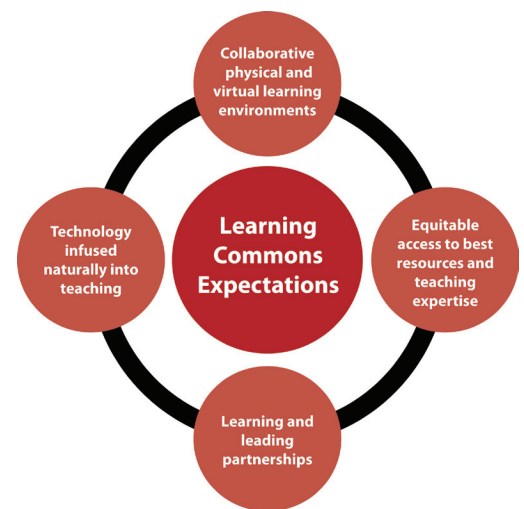


Figure 1: Learning Commons expectations.

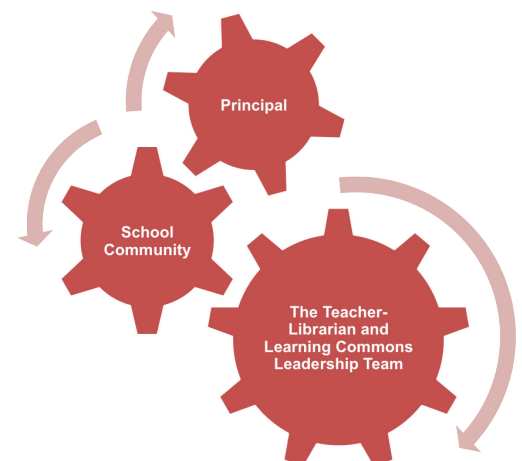


Figure 2: Collaborative leadership is key to success in a Learning Commons approach. It takes all players in a learning community working together to drive the vision set forth.