

“Charting the Landscape/Mapping New Paths”: Project Descriptions

- 1. Project Name: Traveling Exhibits To School Libraries
(i.e. *The Bill of Rights*)**
- 2. Goal: To provide K-12 school libraries a traveling exhibit for teachers and librarians to share with their students.**
- 3. Participating institutions/agencies: The Austin Independent School District (AISD), Social Studies Unit & School Libraries, and The Texas Council for the Humanities.**
- 4. Your role/expertise in this type project: As director of ACCESS (Austin Collaborative of Cultural and Educational Sites and Schools) I helped to initiate the exhibits to school libraries program, requested funding (\$200.) from the social studies unit to rent the exhibit, and requested assistance from the district physical plant which transferred the exhibits from school to school. Our ACCESS steering committee co chairs for Outreach and Programs provided the various exhibit options to be selected, solicited schools, and arranged the schedule for the exhibits to be displayed and transferred.**
- 5. Outcomes / successes to-date: *The Bill of Rights* traveled to 8 AISD schools in spring 2004. Total attendance for the 8 schools was 3,375. Related books and materials were displayed at 3 of the 8 libraries. One school developed handouts specifically outlining each amendment in both English and Spanish. At all locations, a copy of the curriculum guides for the exhibit was provided for classroom discussion and follow-up. Most schools reported that teachers used the materials and exhibit to varying degrees, and although the exhibit was available to all library visitors, it was primarily used as part of direct instruction.**
- 6. Lessons learned: Work with the school district to match the district curriculum area with the exhibit. (In Texas, *The Bill of Rights* is studied in fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades, as part of United States History.) Collaborate with district school teachers, librarians, and the physical plant, to request their permission to provide this educational resource at school libraries.**
- 7. If we began anew we would ask these questions at the beginning: What curriculum areas in the school district would benefit from having an exhibit at their campus library? Who will research exhibits to compliment the curriculum? Who will decide which exhibit and which curriculum area**

to address? Who will contact the teachers and librarians to discuss traveling exhibits in their school library? Who will work with the district physical plant to receive their support in moving the exhibits from school to school?

8. **Critical success factors:** A poster was designed and printed for each school. Information about the exhibit was printed in the ACCESS winter newsletter, which was sent out to all current members in both the school and museum communities. At each school, notification was done through announcements in team and faculty meetings and through school-wide weekly newsletters. At one school, the exhibit coincided with RIF (Reading Is Fundamental) Week, so both adult and student traffic through the library was especially high. Hours spent at the schools in set-up, supervising and publicity ranged from 1 to 6 hours, with 2 hours being the usual. The exhibit was "school-sized," and people who had hosted last year's exhibit commented on how easy this one was to put up and take down.
9. **Our next steps will be:** To evaluate the success of the traveling exhibits. For example: Did the exhibit enhance learning? Were more library books provided in the library in conjunction with the exhibit? Did students check the books out? Did students look at the exhibit while on their own in the library? Did the teacher and/or librarian receive additional questions prompted by the exhibit?
10. **What else?**

Since it is increasingly more difficult to receive funding for study trips to museums and educational sites for K-12 students, bringing the exhibits to the school library is an opportunity to bring the museum/educational site resources to the schools. Also, the exhibit can be shared with the entire campus (not with just a few whose classes may have been able to receive bus funding to visit a museum/site exhibition). Last, the exhibit in a school library offers a limited focus, which may allow for more specific learning in a content area.

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