

BUILDING A SCHOOL ARCHIVES: A Resource Guide

A. Purposes of a School Archives

- To be a repository for historically valuable documents, artifacts, and photographs
- To act as a resource for teaching research-related and communication skills to students
- To provide resources for celebrating a school's heritage

Distinction between a school archives and school records: school records consist of official documents that are typically private and are used for narrow legal and administrative purposes. Archival materials have a broader purpose. They provide- an historical record and are more accessible to the public.

B. Suggested actions for setting up a school archive:

1. Set up a steering committee to guide work on the archives.
2. Write out a mission statement and list of goals which show the archives fits in with the broader goals of the school.
3. Establish connections with others in the local community who work with or have access to historical documents (local archives, historical societies, former teachers and students.)
4. Decide on the duties to be performed in setting up and running the archives. Select someone to be in charge of the archives.
5. Decide on a location for the archives. Ideally, it should be-dry, cool, light-tight, and secure. A locked closet or cabinet in the library may be sufficient.

INSERT: examples from local schools

6. Estimate a budget for the archives. The budget should be sufficient to cover the cost of acid free folders or containers.
7. Identify the roles students will play in collecting, scanning, cataloguing, preserving, and displaying materials, and in conducting oral history interview and recording occasions such as school performances and sports events.

INSERT: examples from local schools

8. Make an inventory of existing archival/heritage materials in the school.

Items for consideration can be old or new. They can be collected for immediate preservation in the school archives or be put on display. The important thing is that they have real or potential archival or heritage value.

C. Items to collect:

- Artifacts such as trophies, flags, memorabilia, and vintage textbooks and other learning materials
- Photographs, videotapes featuring school life, events, and performances
- Curriculum guides, lesson plans, learning materials
- Sample documents
- Student newspapers
- Articles about the school in local newspapers
- Old report cards
- Material on special school programs
- Special awards received by the school
- Audiotaped or videotaped oral histories (& equipment to play these)
- Scrapbooks
- Staff lists
- Architectural drawings; floor plans
- Yearbooks
- Correspondence
- ???

Items on Display:

- Trophies
- Photographs
- Artwork
- ???

- D. Using the Archives to celebrate a school's heritage.**

- E. Using special anniversary events to build a school's Archives.**

- F. Protecting an Archives and preserving Heritage features during major construction/seismic upgrades and school replacement/closure.**

- G. Proposed Role of the District Heritage Website**