

What does an elementary school library media specialist do when she/he is not teaching classes?

If you're a teacher, you already know the myriad of tasks that go into providing effective instruction for students. Library Media Specialists are teachers during much of the day, but we carry a dual responsibility to organize and administer the functions of a library media center and provide a variety of information services. Just as teaching requires training and preparation time, so does managing a library media center. This is an attempt to identify the specialized skills and tasks that need to be performed by a proficient library media specialist in order to provide an effective library media center that meets the needs of staff and students in the "Information Age."

On a regular basis, the Library Media Specialist:

1. Provides the Library Instructional Program

- Information skills instruction
- Promotion of quality literature

AND

2. Supports curriculum

- Assists classroom teachers in locating interesting materials, on the Internet, in print, multimedia or community resources to help students achieve the four basic Essential Learning Goals
- Prepares bibliographies for 6 Trait Writing, Writing Northwest, Accelerated reader, etc. and electronic pathfinders or lists of websites on specific subjects or genres
- Recommends read alouds for teachers
- Provides reading guidance for students individually as well as whole class booktalks
- Provides parents with information about children's literature
- Recommends and gathers books, etc, to use with classroom projects/themes
- Recommends Library/curriculum tie-ins
- Instructs teachers and students in use of technology, including use of the Library Browser, access to the ESD media catalog, use of ProQuest Direct online periodical index, Internet access assistance, and assistance with multimedia projects
- Provides staff development in Big6 Information Skills Approach
- Provides individual or group help for research projects

3. Collaborates, cooperates and coordinates with classroom teachers to deliver information skills in context with classroom activities.

- Current research shows that students learn more and score higher on standardized tests in schools with strong library media programs; one component of a strong program is the development of a partnership between the classroom teacher and the library media specialist to plan, design and deliver joint lesson to teach information processing skills (see attachments).
- Information skills were purposely integrated throughout subject areas in the

state EALRs; it is not intended to be a stand alone strand.

- Although the fixed schedule model used in the WSD elementary school libraries makes collaboration impossible, we still attempt to cooperate and coordinate with teachers, by delivering information and literature lessons in proximity with the classroom teacher's lessons. For example, if a classroom teacher is emphasizing the genre biography, the library media specialist can coordinate by introducing the biography section of the library, the characteristics of biographies and a variety of additional resources.

4. Selects, orders, processes, and circulates materials to support curriculum goals and students interests

- Catalogs and classifies materials using MARC (machine readable) format - see sample of typical catalog record on last page.
- Reads book reviews to select the most relevant and highest quality literature (requires a LOT of time and is an extremely important part of collection development)
- Maintains the collection of books, periodicals, documents, videos and recordings through selecting, ordering, cataloging, processing, shelving, repairing materials
- Orders supplies for processing library materials
- Provides access to the collection through the electronic card catalog
- Keeps online catalog up to date by adding and deleting records of materials purchased, lost or damaged; requires a thorough yearly inventory
- Provides daily open check-out time
- Evaluates and weeds collection to keep current information available to patrons
- Applies professional skills to select materials
- Meets with vendors who visit in person or call on phone
- Reads a ton of mail, catalogs, etc; Files useful catalogs
- Communicates with parents about overdue or damaged materials
- Notifies teachers of new materials
- Surveys staff for requests for materials or services
- Organizes or helps to organize and run a yearly book fair for staff, students, and parents

5. Maintains the Library Media Center Budget

- Works with building administrator to set funding for library
- Prepares requisitions for materials
- Follows up on orders by contacting vendors
- Keeps spreadsheet or a manual form of budget information
- Reads printouts to track expenditures and encumbrances
- Works with Title VI funds and follows guidelines for tracking materials purchases with federal funds
- Works with PTA to earn Book Fair funds to purchase materials

6. Provides for the operation and maintenance of library facility and its resources

- Provides for scheduling and care of audio-visual equipment
- Creates displays to promote reading and help patrons locate materials
- Shelves materials that have been returned by patrons or are newly acquired (hopefully with assistance of paraeducator)
- Organizes shelves in a systematic way to provide access for patrons; provides

- labels and signs
- Mends damaged materials when possible
- Maintains or requests maintenance of computer equipment for LibraryWorks management program and LibraryBrowser stations, CD-ROM and Internet
- Indexes and backs up electronic catalog on a daily basis
- Keeps facility physically attractive and easily accessible

7. Supervises Library Staff - Paraeducators and volunteers

- Supervises and evaluates paraeducators
- Trains paraeducators and volunteers to help shelve materials, check in/ out materials, locate materials
- Trains paraeducators to help with overdue notices, repair of books, processing of materials, mending damaged books, create displays, enter patron names/barcodes in circulation program

NOTE: very limited paraeducator time is available for our libraries. Therefore, many of these tasks must be performed by the librarian

8. Provides support for technology

- Participates in special training sessions with District Media and Technology Director to learn technology skills needed to keep library functioning AND to assist students and staff in using current and emerging information technologies
- Evaluates and selects web sites to support teaching and learning
- In some schools, creates and updates library webpage to support teaching and learning
- Assists students and teachers in using a variety of technology, such as laserdiscs, slide projectors, CD-ROMs
- Serves as a "back up" to the TRT or as TRT
- Promotes the use of technology

This is a condensed list of duties performed by library media specialists in our schools. Services may vary somewhat at each school. Of course, different staff members may need or request different services. Although you may not have required some of the services, you can bet that other staff members have!

Thank you for taking the time to read this list. Please feel free to ask a school district librarian for clarification of anything on the list.