



POSITION PAPER

The Duties and Responsibilities of School Library Staff

A Position Statement from California School Library Association

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POSITION:

California School Library Association (CSLA) supports the position that an effective school library program has a credentialed teacher librarian in charge. As leaders in literacy and technology, teacher librarians are perfectly positioned to instruct every learner in a range of literacies. They are trained to provide students and teachers with a broad range of library services that paraprofessional staff cannot provide by state law.

Administrators and classroom teachers that lack credentialed librarians in school libraries should not expect nor require paraprofessionals to do the duties and responsibilities of these trained professionals.

Schools must be served by a district library supervisor at the district or county level who supports the building-level school library programs by providing resources, professional development, and leadership.

BACKGROUND:

California school districts are required to provide library services to their students and teachers. [Ed Code section 18100] Services provided by non-credentialed personnel shall not include those activities requiring possession of a valid Teacher Librarian Services Credential. [Ed Code section 44868] The Teacher Librarian Services Credential authorizes the holder to instruct pupils in the choice and use of library materials; to plan and coordinate school library programs with the instructional programs of a school district; to select materials for school and district libraries; to coordinate or supervise library programs at the school, district or county level; to plan and conduct a course of instruction for those pupils who assist in the operation of school libraries; to supervise classified personnel assigned school library duties; and to develop procedures for and management of the school and district libraries.

The California Model School Library Standards, adopted by the state board of education in 2010, include the following: "The school library is staffed by a team consisting of a credentialed teacher librarian and paraprofessional staff". A credentialed teacher librarian is essential to an effective school library program, yet only nine percent of school libraries in California are staffed with teacher librarians.

DEFINITIONS:

Teacher librarians - Library staff holding a valid teaching credential as well as a teacher librarian credential issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The teacher librarian has five different roles within the school: a leader, instructional partner, information specialist, teacher, and program administrator– and is a key member of the educational staff.

Library paraprofessionals - A person responsible for the technical services of a school library. In some schools the paraprofessional is in charge of overseeing operations, while in others, he or she provides clerical/technical support to the professional teacher librarian. Titles of classified positions are determined at the district level (e.g., library technician, library assistant, library aide). There is no state education standard for school library paraprofessionals, and most positions do not require previous library training or experience.

District library supervisor - A member of the administrative team who helps determine the criteria and policies for the district's school library programs. The responsibilities of a supervisor encompass many areas but can be classified as those of leader, administrator, communicator, and teacher.

TEACHER LIBRARIAN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leader:

- Builds relationships with organizations and stakeholders to develop an effective school library program.
- Advocates for student learning.
- Networks with other professionals through participation in local, state, and national organizations.

Instructional Partner:

- Collaborates with classroom teachers in designing, implementing, and evaluating instruction.
- Collaborates with instructional staff in preparing and delivering lessons that make effective use of information resources and incorporate the use of information literacy skills.

Information Specialist:

- Functions as the information leader within the school.
- Provides staff development opportunities in the use of information resources in a variety of formats and integration of information literacy skills throughout the curriculum.
- Gathers and disseminates professional development materials, especially those most closely aligned with building-level and district-wide goals.
- Serves as the staff resource on issues such as copyright and intellectual freedom.

Teacher:

- Helps students develop attitudes, habits, and skills that will enable them to become lifelong readers and learners.
- Teaches/models current, innovative methodology and incorporates the California School Library Model Standards in delivering instruction.
- Provides group and individual instruction in information literacy skills, including digital and media literacy, research strategies, and use of resources.
- Actively promotes reading and library use through such activities as storytelling, booktalks, displays, publications, reading programs, and special events.
- Updates instructional and library-related professional skills through attending conferences and participating in continuing education opportunities.

Program Administrator:

- Establishes yearly and long-term goals for the library media program aligned with the district's mission, goals and objectives.
- Administers the library program, developing policies and procedures to assure efficient operation and services.
- Selects, purchases and processes new materials to assure a current and balanced collection representing diverse points of view in accordance with the district materials selection policy.

- Conducts an annual survey as a means of evaluating the library program and its services and to provide a forum for faculty and student input and suggestions.
- Prepares and administers the library budget.
- Participates in curriculum development on building and district levels.

LIBRARY PARAPROFESSIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assists in maintaining an organized and up-to-date catalog and circulation system.
- Processes new materials, making them ready for checkout.
- Helps students and faculty locate materials.
- Prepares and disseminates overdue notices.
- Collects replacement costs for lost and damaged items.
- Shelves materials and makes sure items are maintained in the correct order.
- Keeps statistical records on usage, circulation, etc.
- Notifies students when reserved books are available.
- Supervises and executes automated inventory.
- Monitors students while using the library.
- Helps to maintain a friendly and helpful atmosphere for students and faculty.
- Keeps the library organized, clean, neat, and welcoming to visitors.
- Prepares bulletin boards and displays on a regular basis.
- Assists with special projects and programs.

DISTRICT LIBRARY SUPERVISOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leader

- Keeps abreast of innovative teaching methods and new instructional technologies.
- Applies data-driven research for the development of short and long term plans to advocate for effective school library programs.
- Assesses student and program needs by reviewing data, such as student assessment and program evaluation.
- Develops short and long-range plans for the district and building level school library programs in collaboration with other district leadership.
- Provides the framework for using state and national organization guidelines in implementing the objectives of a visionary school library program for the district.

Administrator

- Formulates, oversees and administers a progressive school library program based on a collaboratively developed action plan directed by the district's mission statement, goals, and objectives.
- Evaluates the school library program and makes recommendations based on current educational research and professional best practices.
- Is responsible in the areas of budget administration, district school library policies and procedures, print and digital collection development, resource challenges, copyright and ethical issues.
- Collaborates with principals in the selection and evaluation of building level library personnel.
- Develops job descriptions, recruits school library personnel, and provides for their professional development.
- Is actively involved in specifications for remodeling and new construction of school libraries.

Communicator

- Communicates the relevancy of the school library program as it aligns to the district's mission, goals and objectives, and administrative and educational policies.
- Conveys information by acting as a liaison to school librarians, teachers, administrators, parents and students through the development of a district library portal, print and/or digital resources, professional learning communities and social media to communicate with all stakeholders.
- Provides data pertaining to school libraries as required to district, state, or national agencies.
- Serves as an advocate for school library programs, representing the district to government, private agencies, businesses and professional organizations.
- Provides information on educational studies, research, standards, legislation, and professional development.

Teacher

- Develops, coordinates, and models best practices, and provides professional development while collaborating with district curriculum supervisors.
- Serves as a partner with the entire educational community to support student achievement goals and objectives.
- Works in tandem with key educational personnel to provide professional development that enhances teaching and learning.

Facilitator

- Coordinates and orchestrates the operation of a school library program that encompasses all aspects of instructional resources.
- Collaborates with other professionals to plan and implement the PreK-12 instructional program.
- Facilitates data review, provides input, and develops a timeline for data-driven dialogue.
- Brings together all key stakeholders to facilitate change.

REFERENCES:

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