



Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on school libraries. My perspective is from the role of teacher/librarian in a small primary school in western Sydney. I would like to comment on the terms of reference.

1. The impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities;

Recent funding has allowed an expansion of our existing library that will provide space for computer hubs. This will mean that the library can now function more like a 21st century library with a variety of resources, including access to digital information.

The teachers' resources/reference room was also expanded which has allowed for a reorganisation and therefore better access for staff.

2. The future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy;

For school libraries and librarians to fulfil their future potential it is essential that clear parameters be agreed for the role of libraries and librarians. A specific curriculum including the teaching of how information/knowledge is discovered/learned, organised, stored, retrieved and conveyed should be part of this.

In order for students to make the most effective use of all the resources in the library it is important for them to understand the role and history of libraries as repositories of human knowledge whether it be in the form of books or digital images. School librarians' role should be seen as a facilitator in accessing and using this knowledge.

Equitable division of time between teaching and resource management is essential.

For a school library to be seen as part of the community, access for parents should be available. This could range from the library being open before and after school, to, access to digital resources through the school intranet. Providing parents/carers with training in accessing the available resources would have to be investigated.

3. The factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians;

Teacher training and experience, especially in the primary school must be considered a priority. Information technology skills as well as librarianship training must be provided if librarians are to provide the services that the students, staff and community require.

Resource management skills, within the whole school context, should be demonstrated and be part of professional development.

Provision of career path opportunities must be a priority to attract well qualified personnel.

4. The role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians;

Links with high school libraries, local libraries, university libraries and state libraries would be desirable but time to establish and maintain these is problematic.

5. The impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians.

Digital technologies allow for the delivery of information in a format that is engaging and impressive, especially to the minds of primary age students. It is of the utmost importance that future librarians are able to harness up-to-date technologies for the benefit of the school as a whole. As the rate of introduction of new technologies increases, time and resources to learn new skills must be provided.

Thanking you for your time,

Robyn King
Villawood North Public School