



The Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

11 April 2010

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for inviting submissions into School libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools.

I wish to draw your attention to an example of a successful school library that is incorporating innovative approaches in the provision of information services.

I write as the Head of Library and Curriculum Services at John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School in Perth, Western Australia, a private, co-educational school with over 1900 students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Spread over two campuses there are two libraries. At the Beechboro campus the library caters for primary students from K-6, whilst at the Mirrabooka campus the library caters for students from K-12.

In 2008, in response to the continued growth of the school, a new state of the art library building was completed and opened at the Mirrabooka campus. This provided an opportunity to expand and enhance the provision of information services, facilitate learning and improve educational outcomes across the school for all students.

Recognising that the role of libraries continues to evolve, a substantial investment in ICT was undertaken principally through the purchase and installation of computers and digital signage. The new library now has a designated area for internet research, which currently can accommodate over forty students. This facility has proved extremely popular among the student body and teaching staff. In addition, the library has expanded the collection of fiction and non-fiction books and continues to encourage reading both for pleasure and information through whole school competitions and school newsletters. However, the future expansion of services offered by the library is predicated on increased levels of funding, particularly as the cost of books and provision of ICT continues to rise substantially.

The School sees the library as the hub of John Septimus Roe, driven by the curriculum and playing a central role in continuing to improve the educational outcomes of students, particularly in regard to literacy. As such, the School's policy is to appoint a classroom teacher (rather than a librarian) as Head of Library and Curriculum Services. This policy ensures that the Head of Library is actively involved in the delivery of curriculum in the classroom and is able to steer library policies and procedures that are both relevant and responsive to the educational needs of the students.

The library currently hosts two Book Clubs (one for staff and one for students), a chess club, a philosophy club and several after-school tuition classes. The library is also an important meeting point for students before and after school. Senior school students are regularly involved in the acquisition of new fiction – through surveys and viewing booksellers’ catalogues and discussing popular texts. This has resulted in higher interest and engagement in the collection.

In partnership with the English Department, the School has reintroduced whole-class reading periods for students in Years 7-9. The purpose is to encourage students to read a variety of genres in a pleasant, relaxed environment and foster a love of reading. These sessions have proved to be extremely popular with both students and staff.

The School also provides opportunities for students to study after school by remaining open until 7 pm Monday to Thursday. Later this year we intend to extend our opening hours to include the school holidays and Sunday afternoons. We believe that this has the potential to improve educational outcomes by providing an environment for homework, study and research, particularly for students who may find working at home difficult.

The role of library officers and technicians employed at John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School continues to develop. All library staff members are required to be computer literate, be flexible in regard to working hours and, more importantly, be aware and responsive to the role of school libraries in improving the educational outcomes for students, including establishing curriculum resources and creating curriculum focused displays in the library.

Going forward, the School aims to expand both the range and scope of services to respond to the needs of the local community. A major initiative currently being developed is the plan to open the library to parents and the wider community. This will be achieved by providing borrowing rights for parents and family members and, should this prove to be successful, members of the local community. Plans are also underway to provide a coffee and book shop on the premises within the library building.

In summary, the School will build the library’s capacity to reflect a Public Library model by further extending hours, increasing the provision and range of information services and expanding our users beyond the student body.

Yours sincerely

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