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AISWA LIBRARIES INC

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**COLLECTION OF RESPONSES TO
REQUEST FOR DETAILS RELATING TO FUNDING, STAFFING ISSUES
BEING EXPERIENCED BY SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
(Independent Schools and Christian School sectors)**

**PUBLIC HEARING: INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND
TEACHER LIBRARIANS IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS**

**Committee Room 2
Legislative Assembly Committees Office
Level 1/11 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH**

Tuesday, 13 July 2010

Posted on T/L listserv – Wednesday, 23 June 2010.

Good morning Watlnetters

In July, two committee members of AISWA Libraries (Inc.) will attend a meeting with representatives for the Inquiry into School Libraries.

We are seeking information from school libraries within the independent and Catholic sector and would greatly appreciate it if you would give 5 minutes of your time to email me of any concerns relating to staffing, funding or other issues. We are particularly interested in knowing whether your library is in a primary or secondary school and whether there a teacher librarian working in the library and/or teaching classes outside of the library. Names of schools will not be disclosed.

For some years there has been a decline in funding, staffing and support which is impacting on school libraries and we are anxious to assist school libraries of the future.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Penny Worthington

President

Mazenod College

AISWA Libraries (Inc.)

president@aiswalibraries.org.au

Dear Penny

Our Year 1-7 junior school split to have a 1-5 junior school and a 6-7 middle school. Because they now needed 2 principals and 2 deputies (instead of one of each), they had to find a time allowance to staff it. They took .6 away from a 1.2 teacher librarian position. The .6 teacher librarian was assigned to the junior school only. Therefore the Year 6 and 7 students did not have a literature or an inquiry programme for the whole year. The library was closed for 2 days a week. In the senior school we have seen the repercussions of this, the current Year 8's are very weak in terms of research and literacy skills. They totally lost the momentum of having an experienced, qualified teacher librarian to take them through building on the guided inquiry skills already acquired.

Hello Penny,

I am the teacher librarian at *****Currently, we consider ourselves to be severely underfunded and understaffed.

We are a K-12 school of approximately 540 students. We are currently in our 6th or 7th year of operation – I cant quite recall. We finally have a new library building being constructed and is due for completion about half way through Term 3, thanks to Federal funding. Our current library is an

unfitted science lab and does not even fit in a complete class, as it contains our library officer's desk and books, which makes instruction impossible.

I have been in charge of the library here for the past 3 years. I consider my role mainly concerned with the direction of the library and as a trouble shooter for possible conflicts, as well as being involved in library policy. Currently, for that role, I receive 2 periods a week. That is the total time given for the Teacher Librarian duties from K to 12. As you can probably gather, there has been virtually nothing achieved regarding the education of students on library matters. Currently, we have a .9 librarian who caters for the daily running of the library and purchasing of all resources, along with doing dozens of other duties. As a fluke of the timetable, I was able to teach some library based ICT knowledge to Year 7 students for a semester, for one period a week, but that has now ended.

As far as our resourcing budget goes, we have currently been cut from a \$9000 budget for books, to \$5000 for the 2010 year. As far as our running costs go, we are fixed at \$8000. The running cost budget is fine for the short term, but the book budget means we cannot effectively cater for any resourcing for Senior School, as their resourcing needs are simply too extensive at this stage. We have solely focussed on supporting the primary school in terms of resourcing our fiction section.

We have the usual promises of increased time for teacher librarians for the second semester, but the school recently announced the appointment of a finance officer instead, so any increase in time for teacher librarians has been put off until 2011. Members of the Executive are supportive verbally and recognise the need to support us more.

And by the way, I am also responsible for the running of the Secondary English department as well, and teach 4 out of a possible 5 classes of a full-time English teacher load.

I hope this gives you an accurate picture regarding how the library is supported in our private school.

Dear Penny,

I recieved a copy of your email from Gaye *****. She thought I might be interested in passing on some information to you as we have had significant changes this year.

I am currently in the library technician position at ***** Primary School, E*****.

Last year and previous years we have always had a library teacher and someone for ict.

This year we have no library teacher and nobody in ict.

Our budget has been significantly reduced in the view of not purchasing any new books this year.

Our library is slowing becoming a wasteful resource which is extremely sad to see.

Hope this is of some use to you

I am in a regional secondary Catholic high school. I was previously teaching computing and business subjects and was Head of Technology & Enterprise. I have been Head of Library for the past six years (I have a TL degree). Initially, I had a small teaching load plus my library duties with two library aides, and my role was protected by the principal of the time who ensured that the teaching load did not overtake the library load. Two and a half years ago we had a change of principal and I went from being a full-time teacher librarian to that plus full-time teacher (to 'help them out') as well as extra curricula activities such as maintaining the college website and producing (in total and single handedly) the school annual. This was to be for a year only and at the end of that year, when I said I could not continue at that pace, working the long hours (starting at school at 4.45am and finishing at 11.00pm at night with no breaks for lunch, etc - I had four upper school classes introducing New Courses of Study with their moderation and small group commitments) and trying to get over it all in the holidays (I got very sick) they assured me that it would be sorted. Another year later, heading again for breaking point, I said I would have to leave because I **really** could not continue. Finally, I was heard, the principal apologized and I was removed from all duties other than teacher librarian but not until the close of that year. Into the third year, still fighting for understanding of the complexity and fullness of TL role, the principal went on long service and the teaching workload started to increase to the point of 4 lines supervision, 2 classes, homeroom and relief classes.

My point in relaying this pathetic story is that I do not believe that the role of teacher librarian is seen as a legitimate role by some leadership personnel – they seem to think the TL is a free staff member who can take on any classes/reliefs because they are 'free' or can be told to be – that library aides can teach and assist – that, basically, the TL can take the pressure off everyone else – that 'we should go entirely digital anyway'. The library aides have no qualifications at all and there is no library technician. There seems to be little or no understanding of the various roles of library staff. In the end neither job – teaching or Library is done well as I try to juggle everything and stay physically and mentally afloat. I also co-ordinate and manage a school-wide bookhire system.

Funding is minimal and the P & F who have previously been generous have usually topped up the budget allocation. However, we have been told that we are not to apply for additional funding this year as the P & F funds are to be directed into buildings. I am barely able to buy new fiction/non fiction resources this year as the budget allocation will cover running costs only, as long as nothing breaks down and repairs have to be paid for.

The school comprises approximately 700 students and with the outside-of-library teaching load, coupled with the lack of expertise of the library aides, there is little library contact time with students. The skill base of older students is barely maintained with no lower school library programmes currently being introduced or implemented.

Despite all, I feel somewhat disloyal to the school in relating the above as I am a long standing staff member. However, I am sure you will be able to extract the pertinent points and make them more 'matter of fact' and dispassionate. If you are able to use the information, please do but, in dogged loyalty to the school, I do not wish either my school or myself to be identified.

Regards,

Hi Penny

Catholic secondary college (7-12), about 1000 students.

When I started at the end of 2007, 860 students. No TL.

Until I went on maternity leave, full-time TL with 0.2 teaching load outside the library.

This year, no TL. One part-time English teacher supporting existing two full-time Library Assistants.

We also have some extra staffing at end of year and beginning of year for our extensive bookhire scheme.

In Term 4 this year, I will be going back 0.5 (un-shared as the acting person is on leave that term) - no idea whether there will be any external teaching in this load.

In 2011, I will be 0.6 sharing with the non-qualified partner (she's lovely, luckily!) at 0.4, and I think the 0.2 external teaching load will remain, shared between us.

I think that two years ago, I could have got more TL hours, arguing the addition of the Year 7 cohort and the numbers growth, but with a massive building plan and big hits from the Global Economic Crisis and increases in teacher wages (not just spouting the party line here, I've actually seen the figures!), things are a lot tighter. I will be agitating for some more staffing time once I'm back at work (but finding the right person to do it is our biggest concern).

Hi there,

We are independent school of about 650 students K-12. Currently we have a TL who teaches in science 12 periods a week, and a library officer. Hope this helps.

Ca*****

Hello Penny,

Here are some details in point form about my situation. Please contact me if you want more information.

- Catholic primary school
- 450 students K-6
- .7 Teacher Librarian (me)
- .8 Library Technician
- I teach 'library' to p-6 currently, but next year when we have our 'Rudd' Kindy classrooms and our Kindy students will be 4 full days I will be required to teach Kindy as well to provide DOTT. I will then be back to .8 as I was before year 7 students left (or so I have been led to believe)
- I have had no library budget from my school admin for 2009 and 2010. Fortunately I have had a grant of \$4000 each year from the P&F which has allowed me to pay for library software support, subscriptions, essential stationery etc. After those expenses are met, I buy books. This situation is becoming increasingly frustrating as you can imagine. I am finding it increasingly difficult to replace worn and lost items. Buying new titles is a rare event and not taken lightly. Like several other schools ***** suffered financially when our year 7 students moved to high school. At least that's the reason I was given for 'no library money'. If I didn't love this job, the kids, my colleagues and my profession I would feel very disheartened.

Best wishes and thanks for all the work you do on our behalf.

Hi Penny

I am in a Catholic Primary school K- 6 double stream.

Funding has been severely cut both this year (and last) to the library to approx \$4000. This is to cover both capital and recurrent budgets. In some years I would expect approx 8 to \$10 000

We have a new library being constructed under the Federal Gov't funding initiative and the library has priority over other needs of the school for fit out etc early 2011. We have a very supportive P&F who assist with funds for some of these needs.

Both the Lib Tech/Assistant and myself had hours cut for this year onwards. From .8 to .7 (myself .5 and one other teacher .2 share this) and the Library assistance now .7 down from .8, due to the decision to no longer cater for Yr 7 in Catholic PS's.

We cater for PP - Yr 6 in the library with 14 classes. There are 2 Kindy groups but they have no library classes at this stage.

I would be best described as Library Resource Teacher (20 +yrs experience teaching in the library, 15 of them at my present school) with no formal library qualifications but employed by the Ed Dept in my role originally when the Library Resource Teacher course was available through the former Ed Dept in WA. I had been a primary classroom teacher prior to 1989.

The second .2 library teaching position is held by a classroom teacher who works under my guidance but does not manage the library.

I am not expected to teach other subjects and receive support to deliver a library programme providing DOTT for classroom teachers from PP - Yr 6 for 14 classes in 7.

I hope the Fed Gov't will follow the welcome funds for new buildings with funding to staff these lovely new facilities.

Kind regards

D*****

It's great that a review is taking place over this issue.

I work in a Primary School which services PP-7 classes. We have approximately 400 students. There is no dedicated T/L – I am a level 2 Library Officer who runs the Library single handed. One of our Deputy Principals conducts 'library' classes with the Year 1-3 classes, focussing on enjoyment of literature and basic library skills (F vs NF, basic Dewey etc) to the best of that person's knowledge.

I see a few issues:

- There is low priority placed on library, information and research skills using library resources
- There is no curriculum to my knowledge to guide teachers in what skills are required
- Library Officers are required to select books with virtually no guidance
- The workload of Library Officers has increased dramatically over recent years with little increase in FTE

We are receiving a new library shortly, which is very exciting. My only complaint there is we have had little or no notice of what furniture etc we will receive to allow forward planning for layout etc.

L**** Library Officer

Hi Penny

I work in a Government Independent school for special needs children. (Approx 120 as the population is constantly changing). The school caters for children from 3.5 years old to the end of the year they turn 18 years old (or PP School to year 13 of high school). I am an untrained library officer (though I do have quite a few years of library work under my belt. These are some of the duties I perform I'm not concerned about performing these duties and being under paid I'm concerned because I'm now being told my job will be gone soon!

S****

- Operating routine library procedures
- Processing orders of resources, equipment and library supplies.
- Develop and submit detailed cost centre submissions for school accounts.
- Manage the library cost centres as per budgetary allocation.
- Choose appropriate materials to add to the library collection as per the budgetary allocation.
- Sourcing material for teaching staff – Purchasing/Loans (interlibrary).
- Maintain library record system (Bookmark automated system and manual resource list).
- Maintain library shelves – re-shelving and checking stock.
- Perform daily back-ups of Bookmark automated system.
- Maintain and repair books and non-book materials.
- Support IT staff with set up of audio visual materials.
- Support school administration with stocktaking of school non-consumables/resources/assets.
- Create awareness of materials available from the library.
- Create awareness of materials available through interlibrary loans.
- Create language props to support literacy awareness sessions (education support years PP to Year 13).
- Choose appropriate material (book and non-book) to be used in book exchange and literacy awareness sessions.
- Runs literacy awareness and book exchange sessions.

- Monitors behaviour as per the school Behavioural Plan.
- Teach students how to use the automatic system.
- Teach the students to shelve returned items.
- Write comprehensive news letter articles for the school newsletter that include appropriate photos.
- Plan and running whole school open day.
- Source external performers for school open day.
- Budget for school open day as per school budgetary allocation.
- Maintenance of Copyright Compliance requirements, including provision of information to staff
- Plan, implement, monitor and report the implementation of the Aboriginal Education operational plan (including management of associated budgets).

Hi Penny

We are a Senior library at a Catholic secondary school. We do not have a teacher/librarian and the head of library (who is also head of English) also has three classes to teach. This takes up at least half her working week. We are very understaffed with only 1 library assistant and 1 library technician. We do not feel the school values us at all.

Thanks

Hi Penny

I am one of the lucky ones!! We are a P-12 library with 3 T/L's (2 full time one .8) plus me (Head of library and qualified T/L- though I don't teach!) 3 library officers (1 full time and 2 are .6), an av tech and a part time bookhire person! One of the T/L's takes one period of English per week.

So I am probably not much help!

Hi Penny,

I am from ***** Senior High School, am qualified teacher librarian, work full time and do not work outside the library. We have not significantly changed our student numbers over the last 5 years ~ 1000 - 1100 depending on the year, but he have lost a whole FTE. This means we have gone from 2FTE to 1. We have also lost Library Officer Time from 1.9 to 1.7 and if we were to loose one of our library officers, we would drop again to 1.5 when they reappointed a replacement.

The other concern is my budget has halved over that time, (\$10,000 for '10) primarily due to lack of school fees being paid, and the loss of the government \$200 payment to families of high school students, half of which came directly to the school. The non compulsory nature of school fees is significant in the collection of school funds, and the state government needs to address this.

Hi Penny,

I don't know if this will help, I am a trained Teacher Librarian who is working as a Literacy Specialist and English Teacher. I worked for 22 years in a district high school where I was TL 0.6 plus 0.4 other class duties (for 5 years when TL's were provided outside of the staffing formula), then that declined and there was no TL for years and I taught what ever the school had on offer. Then the school decided literacy was a priority so I went back to the library 0.6 for 4 years and now currently it doesn't fit into the formula so there isn't a TL in that library now. Instead the Literacy Specialist teachers are being used in the classrooms or supporting teacher's planning.

I have been in the city for 18 months and am lucky to still be working with the library staff and TL plus the Literacy Team through the literacy program.

At ***** School we have a 0.6 TL who is straight library. To enable the library to be open on the days that she is not here I have volunteered to take on a TL role as it is important to have the library open as a central place for students to use. Once the doors shut on a few days then the students are never aware of when it is open and then they stop utilising the facility.

Funding is a concern and with the declining students over the next few years because Yr 7's are leaving the public sector many school libraries may begin to lose their staffing proforma.

Hope this helps.

Kind regards,

Sh****

Dear Penny, We are a secondary school catholic library with a student population of over 1000 students.

We have myself, a teacher librarian as HOD, I teach 3 x 55 min periods per week outside the library (RE). My hours are 7.45am to 3.30pm Monday -Friday.

From the beginning of this year after another TL left we employed a Librarian for 42 weeks a year. She is paid as a public servant but employed under CEO conditions. Her hours are from 10.00am - 6.00pm Monday-Thursday, Friday 10.00am - 4.00pm. Her hours also include opening the library during Term 3 holidays for Year 12 study prior to their mock exams. In discussions with the union and the Principal it was clear that a TL cannot be asked to work beyond the hours of a teacher as they belong to the same award as teachers.

We have the library open every recess and lunch time as well.

Both the TL and librarian teach library skills to Years 7 and 8 as well as mark in-text and reference list for upper school classes or other classes if requested.

We have a full time Library Tech position (shared between 2 people, this is very handy when LSL is taken, people sick etc, it allows some flexibility for replacement with staff who do not require training).

We also have 2 library officers, one five days a week the other 3 days a week.

We have a budget of \$48,000, this is only for books, dvd's, elibrary, periodical, Foxtell, SCIS, supplies etc. Capital expenditures do not come from our budget.

We have 4 separate areas that can be booked in the library at any one time.

We have 46 computers located throughout the for areas, one laptop trolley of 20 (first in best dressed and hired out and returned via students pin), we also have another laptop trolley on its way.

What we have noticed this year is the affect of having Year 7's in our school for the first time. Not so much of an impact on teaching staff they still have the same teaching requirements, but for us in the library there is virtually not sown time. Almost all four areas of the library are continually booked throughout the day which means heaps more shelving, support for students, staff and increased borrowing etc.

We average 140-170 students each morning before school starts at 8.40 am and average around 20-40 students after school, few stay till 6.00pm. Most would leave between 4.30-5.30pm. we keep daily stats for before, recess, lunch and after school.

If you need other information would be happy to provide.

Thanks S**

Hi Penny,

I work at a Private secondary girls school and am a qualified TL employed to run the library from 4.30 - 8.30pm four afternoons a week.

During the day there is:

1 x full time library officer

1 x part-time 0.4 library officer

1 x 0.8 TL

1 x 0.7 TL

and me 1 x 0.5 TL (Evenings)

I hope this helps.

best regards,

L*****

Are there any Destiny library system librarians who can explain to me how the Subject heading page works? I want to add subjects from the index of non-fiction books and am confused by the "topical heading" and "general headings". I can add a heading using "Find headings" and "authority headings" which I have downloaded but am not sure of the correct use for Destiny. This is our first year on Destiny, we used to have Alice.

We don't have a teacher librarian in our library. We have two library officers (notice how I avoided saying "just" two LOs!) and a parade of other teachers for "duty of care".

Many thanks in advance.

J*****

Hi Penny

This would have to be a classic case of what should not be happening in a school library. A Library Officer taking classes!!! I feel mean when Library Officers put these emails out but I don't reply as it not their role. Is the school at fault or sometimes do LO's take on this thinking they are helping. Gets me hot under the collar.

Bye

A*****

RESPONSES RECEIVED BY MARY HOOKEY ON BEHALF OF WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.

We are a Catholic primary school with 190 students -kk to yr 6.
I am the Library officer and I have 9 hours a week and a teacher (not a library trained teacher) takes the library class and I do all the library returns and library duties.

Chris ****

Hello again Mary

Because I am pulling the pin on working in school libraries I can be brave in saying it as I see it!

My duties include: original cataloguing, SCIS downloads, administration of library budget, selection and processing of all library resources, teaching of library skills including use of OPAC, supervision of internet research, operation of issues desk, maintaining collection including weeding, maintaining teacher resource room, contributing to weekly newsletter, fundraising through book fare, displays including Bookweek, bulk loans, run reports, recommend websites to parents and staff, supervise students during library times and at lunch-time and general day to day running of school library.

It is a small single stream school, less than 250 students but the work-load increases weekly. Two years ago, there was a .4 teacher librarian and a .4 library officer. Now there is just me. I was offered .6 for the first year of running the library but at the end of last year I was told my hours were cut back to .5

[Catholic primary] School lost Year Sevens in 2008. It was not a full complement of students because many had left at the end of year six. The school numbers are increasing because three year olds are about to be catered for. There was no reason to cut the budget in 2009, a full year after the Year Sevens had left.

On return to school at the beginning of this year I was informed I also had to design, upload and maintain the library web page for the school. Plus produce a procedure manual.

All students borrow on one day - a Wednesday - and I seldom have a tea break and have not had a lunch break on borrowing day in the three years I have been at Holy Spirit School. There is not enough time because the last class leaves at 12:50 and then I have to do lunch time duty at 1:00. I do lunch duty every day. I arrive at 8:30am and never leave before 3:30pm.

I am told to attend PD days even although they are usually on my days off and have never been paid for attending. Last year I was told I had to attend the parade for Book-week and also take one of the classes to Cambridge Library to 'Meet the Author', both on my days off and of course not paid for. I have never taken time off in lieu.

I sometimes buy stock from Borders which involves using my car, paying for parking/petrol and going on my days off. I do this because they often have books no one else has in stock.

Usually a student request or replacing missing item.

Most computer research for stock et cetera is done at home because the school has filters on the internet and it is impossible to find 'quiet' time anyway.

I also buy books on the internet if they are cheaper and use my credit card to be reimbursed by the school later.

The library does not have a phone so my mobile is used for all library communication including IT problems and dealing with book sellers.

I take the library lesson, 30+ students. A teacher's assistant can come with the class although usually a teacher accompanies them but they often disappear. Sometimes for the whole lesson.

Last year, I spend most of one whole day supervising groups of students doing research on the internet.

The Book Fair is a big money earner for the school but all normal library duties are expected to be carried out so yet again, more out of hour work to cater for it.

And this year, a new library is being built although the current one was only finished in 2005, so I am expected to pack-up the Library and Resource Room which is also my responsibility.

The library software – Athena – is now obsolete and sourcing and implementing a new system is also on my duty statement.

In my submission to the government inquiry I mentioned that due to the poor pay of library officers, school administration saw the financial benefit of using them to run libraries as opposed to teacher librarians. And I have said this in my submission, that had teacher librarians been more vocal in getting better pay for library officers the difference in salary would not have been so apparent. In catholic education, library officers are stood down 8 weeks a year without pay and the salary is based on a 7 ½ hour day not 6 ½ so when I was working 2 days a week I earned around \$10,000 per annum!! I am now paid as a teacher's assistant because I originally had to have the TA's certificate for the job. Not that I was paid that for the first 18 months I was there. And the money is still pathetic anyway.

Mary, I am sorry to have to add the above but I believe it is a significant part of the problem in funding of government/catholic school libraries. I also believe that headmasters are of the misguided opinion that books are dead. And as you and I know, they are so wrong.

I do all of the above. I can read to the class and have them mesmerized but I can't do what a teacher librarian does. I can't discuss whether the book is well written. I can't do the endless list of 'educational' aspects of books. Not my job and frankly I am fed up trying to do all of the above which is why I have quit.

People will always read words on paper – think the Dead Sea Scrolls – 2,000 years old! But try telling that to the powers that be. I just hope you can!

Best of luck Mary.

And please use anything I have said if it helps. Use my name...like I said, 'I can be brave.' I certainly know I am an idiot. So I can be a brave idiot.

Kindest regards

D*****

Hi Mary

Just a note to let you know of two situations that I have been involved with:

1. [Major PSA boys' school] does not have a qualified Teacher Librarian. When the last one left, the school advertised the position, but did not find a suitable one, so have employed a Library Technician to fulfil this role. She is doing a great job, but has commented that we do need a qualified Teacher Librarian. The School benefits by having to pay less money for this position.
2. When I left [country]Primary School in 1999 as the Teacher Librarian to take my Long Service Leave, I was told by the Principal that there would no longer be a position there for me as Technology was taking over and he would be employing a Computing teacher. A parent was left to run the library and still is as far as I know.

Good luck with your submission. Regards Glenda