

Responding to a March 15th Notice.
Steps to take when you've been notified that your teacher librarian
position may be reduced

First take a deep breath. Then take action. Remember that districts are obligated to notify certificated staff by March 15th if there is any possibility that positions will be eliminated next school year. It is not a done deal.

1. Define the issues.

- Schools with a teacher librarian in the library perform better on standardized tests. As a teaching partner in the classroom, you provide instruction that is not replicated anywhere else in the curriculum and is necessary to meet CA Standards.
- The value of your library collection is estimated conservatively at \$_____. The teacher librarian is the link between the collection and the classroom. If you're not there, what is the plan for getting the school/district money out of the collection?
- Are you the "librarian of record" for more than your school? For example, do you assist with elementary feeder school libraries in any way? If you were not there, is there a person at the district level? If not, would this mean your district must contract for library services with the county office of education.
- Coin a slogan to defend the library positions and use it on printed documents, buttons, even t-shirts.(link to quotes)

2. Gather your people resources.

- Talk to the parents. Ask them to also *write* letters of support...and to appear at the same Board meeting as the classroom teachers. The current campaign in Washington State was initiated by three concerned parents!
- Talk to your classroom teaching colleagues- ask them to *write* a letter on your behalf. Better yet is to have them write it and bring it with them to the next school Board meeting and hand it to the school Board members themselves.
- Ask the local newspapers television news to come to the Board meetings, and to interview you at school.
- If there are several Teacher Librarian positions being considered for cutbacks, work together to create the handout packets.
- There will probably be several Board meetings about this – attend them all.

3. Gather your handouts. [link to must-have documents]

- Handouts that go to Board members should be delivered to the District Office so that they can read them in advance of the meeting. Include a cover letter that lists the highlights of the packet. Be sure to thank them for their time.
- •Make copies for all district administrators - including the Principals of all the district schools. If they have Principal meetings with the Superintendent, deliver them before that meeting.

4. Talk to your colleagues.

- Join CSLA if you are not already a member.
- Join in the discussion on Calib--there are great ideas in our collective advocacy.

- Gather with other Teacher Librarians in your district and region and work together to inform administrators about the role of Teacher Librarians and achievement.

Must-have Documents

1. School Libraries Work! This most important publication is produced by Scholastic and is offered free. Contact your local Scholastic Rep to have some mailed to you. If you do not know who your Rep is: call Scholastic at 1-800-SCHOLASTIC (1-800-724-6527), prompt #1. You can also download it in a pinch at: <http://www.scholastic.com/librarians/> but the copy from Scholastic is more professional looking.
2. Your school library plan for student achievement. Make copies for every Board member and district Principal.
3. Include any of the information from the CSLA 'toolkit for administrators'. Download them from <http://www.csla.net>
4. Highlight pages from *Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries* that pertain to staffing, instruction or other relevant information. Do not hand them the entire document at this point. Chapter 3 is an excellent resource for information on staffing.
5. Don't forget to include any in-house documents you have that show the instruction you do at your school. These could include a lesson, a collaboration worksheet or student work, circulation statistics
6. Why Care About School Libraries? Two-page summary by the U.S. National Commission on Library and Information Science that connects recent research to five basic premises about school libraries.
7. What's It Take? from the White House conference. This is an older document, but it is filled with connections to administrators. <http://www.laurabushfoundation.org/Hartzell.pdf>
8. Syracuse Researchers link Higher Test Scores with Certified Librarians in Schools. A Report of the New York Library Association.
<http://ischool.syr.edu/about/news.aspx?recid=506>

If you are reinstated:

1. See this as an opportunity to begin advocating for yourself and your library position all year.
2. Join CSLA if you are not already a member and participate in Legi-day, region workshops, conference and on a committee.
3. Join site and district committees – start now by sitting in on them [e.g. Site Council]. Participate in Staff Development, Curriculum Committee, Technology Committee or any other district committee where you can be there to problem-solve and brainstorm ways to improve instruction.