



School Library Media Specialists: Preparing for your Initial Planning Meeting and Observations

You and other certified school library media specialists, along with those serving as school librarians, perform an array of educational and administrative tasks. You may teach students how to improve reading and research skills using a variety of pedagogical strategies such as group lessons, individualized coaching, hands-on activities and interactive instruction. You may also spend time organizing and managing print, media, and electronic resources while providing access to computers, databases, e-books and other technology. You also collaborate with content and grade level teachers in these activities while ensuring the school library is a safe place where all students can explore, create and acquire knowledge. It's a lot of work!

By using the following guide you can have a proactive, productive and meaningful conversation with your administration throughout the evaluation cycle. This is also an opportunity to put forth proposals for how you would like to make the school library an integral part of the school's educational program.

- Here is some information you may want to have available:
 - Schedules of open access and teaching periods;
 - Student registers;
 - Evidence of co-planning activities;
 - Agendas of any professional learning opportunities you have attended or offered;
 - Order forms and other budgetary information;
 - Previous evaluations and observation reports

- One of your primary roles is to make the library a space for learning and intellectual growth.
 - Discuss how you use the library as a resource to support teaching and learning. Share efforts you've made to make staff and students aware of the various services you can offer, such as flyers, promotional materials and presentations to staff.

 - Have you had opportunities to meet with subject and grade level teachers so you can collaboratively use library resources to support what is happening in classrooms? How can your administrative facilitate this?

- Discuss how you include members of the school community other than teachers, such as paraprofessionals, school related personnel and parents, in the school library program or what supports you would like so you can expand these efforts.
- Are there topics you would like to see included in the school's professional learning opportunities? This is an opportunity to discuss any professional learning opportunities, in collaboration with the school professional learning team, you would like to provide and what supports, in terms of time and, if appropriate, compensation, you can expect from the administration.
- One of the responsibilities of a school librarian is collection and resource development.
 - You should discuss what already exists, and, based on your professional knowledge and expertise, the appropriateness of materials.
 - Describe how you assess the school's current print and electronic resources to ensure they are reflective of the standards, the curricula and the needs and interests of the school's student population.
 - You should share any ideas for additional and alternate materials and resources you need to help students and colleagues.
 - How do you collaborate (or how would you like to collaborate) with colleagues in resource selection and the replacement of outdated or inappropriate materials?
 - Familiarize the principal with the ordering process and the special budgeting skills your role requires. You may want to provide examples that illustrate this process.
- School librarians work with students in a variety of ways. There are many student specific skills you can discuss.
 - How do you work to improve students' access to texts based on need, interests and ability levels?
 - What are research and library skills you provide? Sample units and lesson plans may be helpful to illustrate this, especially those developed in collaboration with colleagues.
 - You can discuss strategies you use when dealing with special student populations such as gifted and talented, students with disabilities and multi-lingual learners. This is an opportunity to identify the materials and resources you have developed or modified to meet the needs of special student populations or to describe resources you feel you need.
 - Discuss the one-on-one and group assistance you provide to students, both as part of regular teaching periods or during open access periods.

- How do you help students to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning?
 - Discuss the ongoing, informal assessments you use in order to plan instruction, gauge student understanding and assist in curating library materials and resources that will support teaching and learning?
- Just like other educators, the work of a school librarian is never done. You can share with your administration the roles and responsibilities you have taken on outside of the regular school day.
 - Discuss outreach with which you are involved, such as with local branch libraries, elected officials, or parent and community groups.
 - Have you held any special events to highlight the services the school library provides, such as inviting parents, elected officials or department of education leadership to visit your library and discuss the work you do? What support from the administration would you like so you can schedule or expand these events?
 - Are there special programs, such as *MyLibraryNYC*, that you brought into the school or would like to include in the school's instructional program. Are there exhibits or library materials you would like to create, or have created, to highlight or accompany the school's instructional program, shed light on current events or reinforce special themes or calendar events?
 - Discuss the professional organizations to which you belong and how your participation in these organizations enhances your professional skills and knowledge. Discuss connections you would like to make between these organizations and your school and how the administration can support you in these efforts.

Remember: Making others aware of the work you do is one of the best ways to advocate for yourself and school librarians everywhere.

(January 31, 2020)