

# Misperceptions of the school librarian

You'd be surprised to know the way outsiders misperceive the job of school librarians. Many people question why librarians are required to have degrees at all. But would schools really pay someone for their master's degree if it was unnecessary? What is the reality of the school librarian's job? Is it really what others perceive?

by  The Lagniappe Librarian

## What people perceive:

## The reality:

The librarian doesn't grade papers or submit grades.

The librarian assesses student needs by constantly evaluating the library collection and how it services the entire student body.

School librarians don't have to follow the same ethical code as public libraries.

School libraries best serve their patrons by following the same code of ethics as public libraries. Students need school librarians to advocate for them at school since their guardians aren't present to do so.

Both libraries and books will both be obsolete soon.

With the number of print books that are being published annually versus the number of electronic books, digital books are far from replacing print. Meanwhile, libraries are constantly evolving to be relevant and useful to patrons.

School librarians don't do anything that should require any more planning time than the classroom teacher.

In addition to all of the tasks of a classroom teacher, school librarians often create their own lessons and curriculum. They also organize, evaluate, and service the library collection and participate in research which keeps them current on materials and resources. It is also crucial that they familiarize themselves with their collection to provide effective Reader's Advisory services to students.

The school librarian's primary function in a school is to teach classes so that teachers can have planning periods.

The library exists in its own entity for its own purpose: to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. (AASL) Many libraries exist with multiple full time personnel that don't provide any direct instruction.

Librarians' duties and functions are equivalent to classroom teachers in every way- they just also check out books.

The only thing classroom teachers and librarians really have in common is that they both service students. Librarian positions require additional degrees or certification that classroom teaching positions do not. Both positions are equally necessary and effective, but different.

There is no harm in students and volunteers shelving books so that school librarians can teach more classes.

When people who do not work in the library shelve the books, it takes away the librarian's opportunity to evaluate, improve, repair, and assess the library collection which is crucial to providing an effective collection of materials to school communities.

School librarians have significantly less duties than other employees and teachers, so when a new responsibility arises it's only fair to give it to the school librarian.

School librarians have most of the same responsibilities as the classroom teacher except, typically, grading. Instead, librarians have responsibilities such as selecting, ordering, processing, and promoting books as well as reading book reviews, organizing reading programs and fundraisers, organizing the library collection, creating book lists, recommending books to students, finding resources for research, preparing data, statistics and budgets, placing orders, and providing professional development on digital resources to their peers.

There are so many books in the library, there is really no need to fund-raise for, or purchase, anymore.

Librarians struggle to find funding for the minimum number of resources that would allow them to meet the qualifications of a highly effective library program. This includes a minimum number of materials per student, minimum dollars per student for books, specific percentages of materials in each piece of the overall collection, and minimum date requirements of materials to ensure relevancy and efficacy.

A librarian's lesson should have the same qualities as a classroom teacher's lesson, and therefore can be evaluated with the same rubric.

Because instruction is not the primary function of the school librarian, it should not be the primary focus of their evaluation. Librarians best service students by providing an organized effective collection, managing library functions and procedures, planning programming, and sharing resources. If the librarian's rubric focuses on the librarian's primary function, they should absolutely have the opportunity to earn a highly effective rating.

The librarian doesn't want to monitor students' book levels because they think it's beneath them.

Leveling and restricting book choice for students is detrimental to their long-term relationships with reading and learning. School librarians are advocates for students in every manner.