



LLNJ Community Workshop
School Librarians
March 4, 2017

1. Context: What's happening in the world right now that is having--or will have--a big effect on libraries in New Jersey, their people and the people they serve? Consider all scales (global, national, local) and opportunities as well as challenges.

- "Agenda of Deconstruction"—how will what's going on at the national level (Devos) trickle down to us?
- Budgeting within economic constraints while looking toward the future role of the librarian.
- Pace of changing technology and maintaining current.
- Expectation of tech support and testing interference (closing space for testing).
- Quality information access along with expectation that it is used by the students.
- Staffing concerns.
- Ever-changing job description
- Fake news.
- Loss of funding
- Job confusion.
- Computers replacing people.
- Testing interference with class time.
- Not enough certified librarians.
- Job stability not a standardized test subject; we are considered a special, contracted as a teacher but labeled as support staff.
- Collaboration time is limited
- School choice
- Funding
- Lack of standards
- Technology
- We are still an island!
- No one understands our many and varied duties.
- Fake news as an impetus to understanding role school libraries play in info literature.
- Privatization and school funding.
- Anti-intellectualism.
- Tech emphasis to exclusion of learning and thinking.
- ESSA.
- Future Ready.
- Divided citizenry.
- New AASL standards.
- Need for new literacies.
- Weak information literacy skills.
- Libraries as safe places.
- Libraries as places for collaboration.
- Need for student voice and agency
- Devaluing of school libraries and school librarians.
- Inequity of resources and approach
- Lack of awareness of resources available.
- Disconnect of school librarians and classroom teachers
- Assessment culture
- Flat funding
- Closing school libraries especially in vulnerable districts
- Busy parents/guardians can't make libraries a priority

- Changes in Department of Education.
- Changes in the IMLS.
- Questions of citizenship status affecting families
- Technology access issues, confusion over roles and responsibilities involving tech and STEM
- Evolution of consumer tech
- Library time is often teacher prep time
- Librarians pulled for other responsibilities
- People don't understand what a librarian's role is
- Isolation
- The uncertainty students face because of the threat of deportation

Themes and further conversation: Budgets; assessment... standards for student learning... the time that it takes away from other things... overemphasis on testing... School libraries need to assess student literacy skills; disconnect between librarians and the classroom teachers; the way we (school librarians) are assessed... no standard for expectations within the parameters of our jobs... How do we have the help we need? At what point do you need another staff member? No guidelines for budget. Some districts budget hundreds, some thousands. The evaluation of school librarians... we're evaluated like teachers, not for librarian skills; we're given the same time as teachers plus have other duties; emphasis on technology over information literacy, books and reading; what is our role going to be in the school choice movement?

2. Envisioning our future: It's 2025 and libraries of all types are thriving hubs of their communities. Draw a picture describing what's happening. What do libraries look/feel like? Where are they? Who is in and around them? What are they doing? How are libraries connected to the rest of the community and the world? Who are our partners/collaborators? What services do they offer and for whom? What new skills do librarians have and what new roles do they take on?

[\[Link to photos on site here\]](#)

3. Strategic Analysis: Thinking about our conversation so far, what is working really well that we want to KEEP? What isn't working that we might do well to ABANDON? What might we INVENT or REINVENT that would make a big difference to our success?

KEEP

- Openness, safe space, a welcoming identity
- Collaboration with teachers
- The inclusive nature of libraries, including flexibility
- Collection Dev.
- Collaboration, teaching, print and online collection expertise, certified SL
- Curriculum
- Our values—equity, importance of information, promotion of reading and other literacies, providing space for

collaborative space but also for individual learning

- Instructional role, collaboration
- US! Books, comfort level

ABANDON

- Being evaluated as a classroom teacher or support staff instead of as a librarian
- The catchall syndrome in my school—the library is as "dumping ground"
- Walls, libraries are everywhere and all the time, just in case collections
- Libraries and librarians as expendable

- Teacher prep, library closure due to testing, meetings, etc., catch all space
- Prep coverage
- Study halls in libraries, testing in libraries
- Trends that don't fit
- Reference sections

INVENT

- Extended library hours, tech genius bar for teachers and students, flexible and larger space
- Mandatory classroom/subject teacher pre-service exposure to collaboration with librarians
- A more seamless access to electronic resources that use different platforms and authentication
- More staff
- Communicating our needs to publishers so we get materials that are useful and meaningful for our communities

REINVENT

- Collaboration opportunities and time

- Reinvent the responsiveness of policy makers to school library needs
- Relationship with technology in our schools
- Our spaces
- More resources
- Funding
- Our reputations away from “book ladies”
- Curate collection
- Professional Development, lifelong learning
- Just in time
- Integrated curriculum
- Notion of students’ products with real-world connections
- Old outdated materials
- Title and how we are perceived; are we media specialists or are we librarians?
- Advisory committee for the Library; how to stay relevant; our actual role; the teaching of inquiry; a place for individual discovery

4. Thinking about what we've learned so far, what is an action step/project/initiative that we might start today to create the desired future for LLNJ and its members and stakeholders? Include a 5-6 word catchy title and 50 word description of the project.

1. **"Pre-Service, Post-Success" (PS squared):** Integrate collaboration with school librarians into pre-service teacher, supervisor, and administrator education.
2. **Empower our Destiny!:** Establish our identity and value-start within our individual school, move onto the District level and the community. Idea... how might we flip it? Start with the community and then get into the district... pull rather than push.
3. **School Library Advocacy Group:** Students, parents, teachers, administrators, community member. Committee from the entire community on issues and trends in schools and libraries.
4. **Jersey Kids:** Access for all NJ students to free databases and the best of curated free resources and tools. Three levels of resources using a LibGuide—like platform, materials can be copied and updated to individual websites. Optimized for every device. Geolocating of free site like EBSCO. Prototype guide for each level.
5. **Powerful Promotion:** Business partnerships. Social media. Brand like a business. Present to different stakeholders. Librarians don't know how to market themselves. Every community has businesses, e.g. J&J, Comcast that could be tapped for community involvement, sponsorship.

The library world is somewhat confusing to others... different definitions of libraries in different worlds.

6. **Passion for the Library:** Goal: parents are as passionate about the library as they are about the marching band. Demonstrate the library's crucial role in student success. At Back to School night, at PTA meetings, in the Friday folders, social media, also an advocacy component. Ending in a Library Parents Group. Boosters, etc.
7. **PAC: Publishers Advisory Committee:** To work with publishers to create databases and materials we need.
8. Advisory committee for state DOE to advise them of role of school libraries.
9. Friends of the library (local level) find people to help advise us and hopefully donate money.
10. Education departments in universities to understand role of libraries in education world.