Position Statement on the
Evaluation of School Library Media Specialists

A thorough and accurate evaluation of the school library media specialist as the leader of the school library program is essential to ensure that the program effectively contributes to student achievement. While instruction is the primary role of a school librarian, there are significant differences between instruction in the classroom and instruction in the school library. Furthermore, using an evaluation tool designed for a classroom teacher does not appropriately reflect all of the additional important roles of a school library media specialist.

Examples of significant instructional differences between classroom teacher and school librarian:
- Classroom teachers have a fixed number of students; school librarians teach every student in the school.
- School librarians do not see each of their students every day, which does not allow the same opportunity for the development of rapport and establishment of routines as in a classroom.
- Every level of the library program is unique (i.e. elementary libraries often have a fixed schedule where the librarian sees individual classes once a week; upper levels may have flexible schedules with whole class instruction scheduled as needed along with study hall students, and other drop-ins at the same time).

These differences have an impact on the preparation for and delivery of instruction, and should be considered when evaluating the librarian as teacher.
A school library media specialist also administers non-instructional aspects of a library program, and provides services to the school community that are not reflected in evaluation tools for classroom teachers.

Examples of non-instructional roles of school librarians:
- Collection development connected to the curriculum for all subject areas as well as materials to encourage independent reading, and resources to support staff professional growth and development.
- Creation of budget rationales and spending priorities based on school community needs.
- Promotion of reading through a variety of motivational activities.
- Maintenance of a large and welcoming physical facility to house resources and support a variety of activities.
- Provision of flexible and equitable access to organized collections of physical and digital resources that support diverse learning needs (print & ebooks, websites, wikis, online catalog, databases, etc.)

These are just a few examples of things that should be considered when evaluating a school library media specialist. More comprehensive information for evaluating school librarians can be found in A 21st-Century Approach to School Librarian Evaluation, published by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL).

For more detailed information about the roles of the school library media specialist refer to Empowering Learners: Guideline for School Library Programs, AASL and the "Performance Evaluation of School Librarians." AASL Essential Links:

http://aasl.ala.org/essentiallinks/index.php?title=Performance_Evaluation_of_School_Librarians

About NJASL

The New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) is the professional organization for school librarians in the state of New Jersey. NJASL advocates high standards for librarianship and library media programs in the public, private, and parochial schools in New Jersey to ensure that students and staff become effective users of information. Learn more about NJASL by visiting www.njasl.org, For more information, email president@njasl.org.