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**SLM 502**

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**DESIGN THE LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER FACILITY**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**AASL 1.4:** Stimulating Learning Environment – Candidates demonstrate ways to establish and maintain a positive educational climate in the media center. Candidates plan and organize library media centers according to their use by the learning community.

**Our Mission**

The mission of our school library is to provide a diverse collection of timely, exceptional resources to promote an enduring school community of critical thinkers and ardent readers.

**Our Vision**

The library is truly the hub of the school, and the center of its focus is the student. The library is a structured but comfortable and nurturing environment where the student's rights as a reader are protected and the student may feel safe to ask questions. The school library staff works tirelessly to serve the student, both directly by addressing his/her specific academic needs and personal interests and also indirectly by providing current and dynamic supplemental materials for use in the teachers' classrooms.

I designed my mock school library with a middle school of approximately 1,500 students in mind. When I created the above mission and vision statements for a middle school library as part of my SLM 501 coursework, I already had AASL Standard 1.4 in mind. I truly believe that the library should be the heart of the school – a place where both students and teachers want to be. As designed, this library could comfortably accommodate three classes with an additional class in the adjacent computer lab and still have space for small groups and students engaging in independent work.

I wanted to provide the students with as much opportunity for computer access as possible. With that in mind, I incorporated a class set of desktop computers into the main media center in addition to the desktop computers in the attached computer lab. I included four portable laptop carts for use by classes in other areas of the library and/or in the classroom. Four additional computers are located within the school library specifically for access to the computers.

I am particularly passionate about reading promotion at the middle school level because I think it is so important to instill good reading habits prior to the students entering high school. I dedicated two computer stations specifically to eBook downloading so that the students can utilize technologies such as the nook and Kindle within the school library. I not only wanted to provide quiet, comfortable locations for the students to read for pleasure, I wanted to be able to accommodate an active book club for meetings, which is why I created a reading area with elongated custom couches. I also devoted a computer module and counter space for reading promotion materials. I would use the computer to continuously flash brief book summaries of outstanding young adult book selections to assist in book selection even during times when I might be busy.

Serving and collaborating with the teachers in the building is an essential part of the school librarian’s role in providing the best educational experience possible for the students in the building. Via a spacious well-equipped teacher preparatory /work room and additional area on the library floor for collaborative planning, I have made building relationships with the teachers a priority.

**REFLECTION:**

It was quite an experience as I completed this project to envision myself creating a school library space from the ground up. I loved having the chance to do this because I don’t think that my school’s library is orchestrated in the best possible way to facilitate effective learning and collaboration. I went through draft after draft as I planned because there was so much that I wanted to include, and yet, I was very concerned with maintaining appropriate distances between objects.

I had never really stopped to think about how important my sight-lines would be in helping me effectively manage the library. It is for this reason that I chose to keep the shelving located on the library floor no higher than forty-eight inches in height. Shelves against the walls on the other hand are seventy-two inches in height to maximize space without the need for stepstools. I thought this was a good compromise. I really found this particular issue to be an area of struggle for me.

It is clear to me after spending hours and hours, working out a plan for a mock library, that if I were really faced with this type of project (even if the sky was the limit in terms of budget), I would want to spend months working independently and then with a sounding board of teachers, students, and other stake holders to make sure that the library was as perfect as possible to meet the needs of the school.

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