

## Ministry of Education School Staffing Review

Graeme Marshall  
Staffing Review Committee  
Ministry of Education  
P.O. Box 1666  
Thorndon  
Wellington  
[resourcing@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:resourcing@minedu.govt.nz)

Jill Stotter  
Chairperson  
SLANZA  
Rosehill College  
5 Edinburgh Avenue  
Pakuranga  
Auckland  
[jill.s@clear.net.nz](mailto:jill.s@clear.net.nz)

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Dear Graeme Marshall,

Please find enclosed the submission from the Executive Committee of the School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (SLANZA) Te Puna Whare Matauranga a Kura.

**Name of Organisation:** School Library Association of New Zealand, (SLANZA) Te Puna Whare Matauranga a Kura

**Type of Organisation:** Professional Association for any person interested in school library matters

**Vision:** SLANZA will strengthen and promote the role of school libraries to enable all school communities to become information literate

**Purpose of Organisation:**

- To provide a national voice for the school library community;
- To advocate the critical role of school libraries in teaching and learning;
- To represent all school library staff: Teacher Librarians, Teachers with Library Responsibility; School Librarians, and support staff;
- To lobby for improved funding to provide better library facilities and services,
- To create opportunities to recognise excellence within the school library field;
- To improve the professional standing, working conditions and qualifications for all staff involved with school libraries;
- To support professional development through biennial conferences, regular newsletters and a Web site;

- To develop links with associated national and international professional organisations.

Yours faithfully

Jill Stotter

Chairperson

SLANZA

School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa,

Te Puna Whare Matauranga a Kura

## **Submission to the Ministry of Education on their School Staffing Review**

SLANZA wishes to provide the Ministry of Education with information about staffing needs for the school library in light of the imminent major School Staffing Review.

### **Background**

- A professionally organised and managed school library supports the school's staff to deliver effective and quality teaching programmes. It will also play a leading role in helping both staff and students develop information literacy skills which are essential for life-long learning.
- The effective school library provides access to information in both print and electronic format.
- School libraries are currently staffed by a variety of people with many levels of professional training and expertise. Staff range from those who are Trained Teacher Librarians, to staff called Librarians who might have a degree and postgraduate Library qualification, to Librarians without any professional training/ancillary staff. There may be Teachers with Library Responsibility or Trained Teacher Librarians. This haphazard method of staffing will continue until the Ministry of Education Guidelines for School Libraries are completed later this year.

### **Job Definitions**

#### **The Trained Teacher Librarian (TTL)**

The TTL is a teacher who has completed the postgraduate Diploma of Teacher Librarianship. There are a number of such positions in schools around New Zealand. The TTL usually teaches 2 or 3 classes, manages the school library and is responsible for the integration of the Essential Skills across the curriculum and often for the integration of ICT into the curriculum. Such a position is seen as a senior post and carries 2 or 3 MU. This is a leadership position within a school and TTL training is ideal for such a position.

#### **Teacher with Library Responsibility (TLR)**

The TLR may have not formal library training but has a time allowance usually of 4 to 5 hours per week in which to manage the library. However, as it is vital that there are effective links between the teaching staff and the information hub of the school, TLRs need to have sufficient time allocated as well as Management Unit recognition to allow them to co-ordinate the management of the library and to communicate and organise Info Literacy development with teaching staff

### **The Professional Librarian. (L)**

A number of school libraries are currently managed by trained Librarians who are responsible for the day to day running of the library. These staff members have often had wide experience working in a number of types of libraries and their contribution to the successful school library is essential. Their training though, rarely includes development of information literacy skills across the curriculum.

### **Library Assistants (LA)**

There are many library assistants employed in school libraries. Las do not have any formal library training but have learned on the job and play a crucial role in the operations of the school library.

### **Ancillary Staff. (AS)**

Most primary schools employ AS who help in the tuck shop, the office and in the school library for a few hours every week.

### **School Library Staffing**

There are several models for school library staffing at present in New Zealand school libraries but the model put forward in this submission represents the **best possible practice**

This model advocates staffing of the School Library by a professional library team, particularly in secondary schools. The Library Team should consist of:

- A trained Teacher Librarian (TTL) or a trained Teacher with Library Responsibility (TLR) with time and M.U.
- A trained School Librarian (L)
- Library Assistants (LA) and/or
- Trained teacher aides (ancillary staff)

We will refer to this whole group as the **Professional Library Team**

### **The Professional Library Team (particularly in secondary schools)**

A professional Library Team, particularly in secondary schools, makes a huge difference to the successful operation of a school library. The difference that a properly recognised professional Library Team can make is underscored in

the newly released report ***How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards: the Second Colorado Study***. This study has revealed that student scores on standardised tests are 10% to 18% higher at schools with outstanding library media programmes and staff. Reading scores are higher in schools whose library media programmes are better staffed, better stocked and better funded. Scores are also high where library media specialists (Teacher Librarians) play a leadership role in their schools, collaborate with classroom teachers in the design and delivery of instruction, and utilise computer networks to extend the reach of the library media centre. Similar studies for Alaska and Pennsylvania also supported these findings. (Library Research Service, Colorado State Library, Colorado Department of Education. Also for a variety of related documents visit <http://www.lrs.org>)

It is important that the Ministry of Education recognises the importance of specialist staffing in our school libraries and makes suitable provision in its planning for the future.

### **Advantages of using this model of the professional library team**

- The School Library is an expensive resource and professional staffing is required to ensure we make the best use of this resource. After all we do not employ untrained teachers in our schools so for the same reason we should not leave our library staff untrained.
- New Zealand schools have seen significant shifts in learning styles, which in turn has meant that library staff have had to ensure their service remains relevant and supportive in the changing environment. This change has been most successful in schools where the library has employed professional staff.
- These significant changes to the school curriculum have made the school library a key player in supporting the development of information literacy and information skills in the school. Assessment 2002 has a strong emphasis on student centred learning, e.g. All Level one English classes have to complete a Research unit - many schools currently sitting School Certificate have little knowledge or understanding of the information literacy process. Level 2 students in 2003 also have a compulsory research unit to complete.
- For successful implementation of these initiatives school libraries need to be staffed by professionally trained staff who can actively lead and support teachers in the delivery of their learning programmes, support the learning of students and facilitate the implementation of Essential Skills across the curriculum. The TTL /TLR and L together can make this difference.
- Staffing of school libraries should be mandatory, not optional; and funding for this part of the school business should be ring fenced. At the moment many students and teachers are being short-changed through not having a level of support which provides effective access to

the materials held in their libraries, and guidance on how to use them. Students will not achieve the level of academic competence of which they are capable if they are not information literate.

- All schools have to ensure that all students develop the Essential Skills. The TTL is trained to facilitate this process as when for example they work collaboratively with teachers to support resource based learning methods.
- ICT is an integral part of Information Literacy. The development of ICT skills needs to be done within a learning context, as ICT skills have no end in themselves. Recent research by Ross Todd et al (SCAN JULY 2000) tells us that the successful integration of ICT into teaching and learning programmes requires significant changes to the way teachers teach and student learn. Therefore if teachers and students are to be learning and using the technologies effectively to enhance their teaching and learning, both groups will require professional development and skilled support and guidance. The professional Library Team is the ideal group to provide in-service professional development. They have both the pedagogical and ICT skills to successfully integrate ICT into teaching and learning programmes across all areas of the curriculum.
- *This responsibility is only just being recognised by schools, yet is a role that is increasingly being undertaken by the professional Library Team because ICT is found in nearly every school library in New Zealand. This situation must be recognised and acknowledged by the School Staffing Review and provision made both in hours the library remains open with library staff available, and in training provided where required.*

## **What SLANZA would like to have addressed**

### **1. Specialist Staffing**

- A professional Library Team (as defined above) should be put in place in schools (particularly in secondary schools) to manage and direct the school library if maximum benefit is to be gained from that school's investment in the school library. This is especially so because a professional Library Team is able to provide leadership and support for both the development of information literacy and the integration of ICT across the curriculum.

### **2. Professional development**

- Staff training and allocation of appropriate staffing hours for the library should be included in the School Staffing Review to ensure this.

### **Note:**

- a recent request on the schoollib listserv for information about hours and conditions of secondary school library staff has shown that many library staff are under great stress from increasing work load, low pay and little recognition of the key role they play, or could play in the teaching and learning outcomes for their schools.
- recent mail on this listserv has also highlighted strong feelings of 'us' and 'them' between librarians managing secondary school libraries who are usually paid at low rates, and Teacher Librarians who are paid at teacher rates plus M.U.s. (see encl.) This situation has arisen because our government has never produced any staffing standards or guidelines for New Zealand school libraries as has been done for Australian and American school libraries. SLANZA believes these staffing issues need to be resolved urgently for all the above reasons.

This submission is put forward by the Executive members of SLANZA