

PRESS RELEASE

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Celebrating the Educators Who Open Doors to the World *National School Librarian Day is Tuesday, April 4*

Kansas City, April 3, 2017: Kansas City Public Schools isn't going to whisper as it celebrates the talented professionals who run school libraries.

National School Librarian Day is Tuesday, April 4, and April is School Library Month. KCPS is taking the opportunity to showcase the enormous contributions made by its 28 librarians in schools across the community.

School librarians have a unique position because they help connect students and other staff to the ocean of learning that's available outside classrooms, according to KCPS Textbook Coordinator Thomas Sullivan. He helps coordinate library services for the school system.

"School librarians open kids up to the world," Mr. Sullivan said. "They teach students and teachers how to access all of the information they can find around the world."

School librarians are educators first, Sullivan explained. Every librarian has to be a certified teacher and have some classroom experience. Only then can they add a certification as a school librarian and pursue a library position.

Elementary school librarians teach five classes on most days, helping orient students to the basics of using the library and finding the right materials. At the secondary school level, librarians serve more of a complementary role for classrooms, guiding students and teachers deeper into the available print and digital resources.

"In many cases, our high school librarians are teaching the teachers about how to amplify and support the work they're doing with students," Sullivan said. "There's a lot of collaboration with teachers, which is one of the reasons why the librarians have to be constantly updating themselves on the latest resources."



Library management remains one of the top priorities for school librarians. That means managing a budget, updating technology, making sure their facilities are in great condition, planning events and curating a collection of books and other materials that will best serve their students and teachers.

"I really can't emphasize enough how big this job is," Sullivan said. "Our librarians do an amazing job of maximizing their resources."

Border Star Montessori School Librarian Rebecca Parker is a good example of the top-flight library staff found across KCPS. On a recent Thursday, she coached students as they helped sort books that had been donated to the school, teaching them how to differentiate the material by subject matter and to think about how knowledge itself is classified.

Being a school librarian is a dream job, Ms. Parker said.

"I love being able to help students in so many different ways," Ms. Parker said. "I get to help them see that there is a much bigger world out there than they might have imagined. That's very powerful."

Parker has been with KCPS for 19 years and is a leader in her profession. She was elected board treasurer of the Missouri Association of School Librarians this year, and recently lead a presentation about how to advocate for the needs of school libraries at the association's spring conference in St. Louis.

"This profession has given me so much and I want to give back," she said. "I want to share what I've learned. That really gets to the heart of what we do as librarians."