Working with Your Administration in the Local School
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Four key resources are provided here to begin your consideration of this topic: How should teacher-librarians work with their school administration, in particular with the school principal or headmaster?

1. An overview article on the concept of "principal support," written for teacher-librarians, with some practical suggestions for gaining respect and support.

Oberg, D. (2006). Developing the respect and support of school administrators. *Teacher Librarian, 33*(3), 13-19.
Gaining the respect and support of school administrators is the number one challenge facing school library professionals in the 21st century. Research in the school library field has shown that although teacher-librarians generally view principal support as being critical to the success of the library program, they often have low expectations of principal support and rarely engage in the kind of activities that would increase their principals' understanding and support. Here, Oberg explores the role of principals in supporting school library programs, in terms of three questions: How does the principal support the school library? What do principals believe about the teacher-librarian and the school library program? How can teacher-librarians develop principal respect and support?

2. A professional report on an international study of the relationships between principals and school librarians in seven countries, written for researchers as well as for teacher-librarians and principals.

Henri, J., Hay, L., & Oberg, D. (2002). *The school library-principal relationship: Guidelines for research and practice* (IFLA Professional Report, No. 78). The Hague: IFLA.
This professional report provides a comprehensive description of an international study of the principal's role in developing and supporting school library programs conducted in Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Japan, Scotland, and South Korea. The study was funded as a large project from Division 3 of IFLA and from the International Association of School Librarianship. The purpose of the study was to provide information for principals and teacher-librarians in countries throughout the world that might inform their efforts to develop information literate school communities. Such school communities place a high priority on the mastery of information-use processes by both teachers and students; that emphasis on information literacy is reflected in policy, benchmarking, funding, and evaluation. Cross-country comparisons as well as the findings from individual countries are provided. One of the unique features of this international study was the use of online data collection and analysis techniques. In this report, the researchers describe the design and administration of the study and explore the methodological issues involved. See the abstract of authors' article in *School Libraries Worldwide (* An International Study on Principal Influence and Information Services in Schools: Synergy in Themes and Methods) for a summary of findings from the study.

3. A theme section of *School Libraries Worldwide*, presenting four perspectives on the multidimensional concept of principal involvement in school library programs.

Hartzell, Gary. (2002). The Multiple Dimensions of Principal Involvement [Theme Section]. *Libraries Worldwide*, 8(1), 43-110.
An introduction to the theme and four public access articles available on the IASL website at http://www.iasl-online.org/pubs/slw/slwjan02.html

The Multiple Dimensions of Principal Involvement (pp. 43-48). Theme Editor: *Gary Hartzell*, University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA
Years of research show that the principal plays a key role in the development and maintenance of quality school library media programs. That role is multidimensional; the concept of principal support is a complex concept. The relationship of principal and librarian is equally important. Librarian and principal are bound in a relationship that lasts as long as the two of them hold their positions. The work of each is firmly anchored in the context of this relationship and their behavior is interlocking. The nature of these interlocked behaviors is of paramount importance, because the various ways the principal and librarian individually and collectively interpret their meaning define the level of trust they share. The resulting level of trust, in turn, influences how effectively and efficiently each is able to work and the levels of their individual satisfaction. In the long run, the only real measure of principal involvement is his or her behavior. The antecedents of the behavior are rooted in the perceptions the principal develops in advance of being asked for support, because they predispose his or her willingness to become involved. Involvement is not a single behavior, but a complex set of behaviors that are at once sequential and simultaneous.

An International Study on Principal Influence and Information Services in Schools: Synergy in Themes and Methods (pp. 49-70). *James Henri*, Hong Kong University, Hong Kong; *Lyn Hay*, Charles Sturt University, Australia; *Dianne Oberg*, University of Alberta, Canada
An international study of the principal's role in developing and supporting school library programs was conducted in Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Japan, Scotland, and South Korea. The purpose of the study was to provide information that might inform the efforts of principals and teacher-librarians to develop information literate school communities. Principals and teacher-librarians completed three survey instruments: (1) participant demographics; (2) the participants' perceptions and beliefs about the principals' current and future roles; and (3) the participants' views on such concerns as the strengths and challenges of the school library, the contributions of teacher-librarians to teaching and learning, the nature of information literacy, and barriers to integration of information skills. The overall findings of the research project included the following: (1) principals and teacher-librarians differed in age and gender; (2) beliefs of principals and teacher-librarians about the role of the principal were well-aligned except where librarians were not also qualified teachers; (3) principals and teacher-librarians differed most on their current and future perceptions of the role of the principal in advocating and facilitating the development of an information literate school community; and (4) principals and teacher-librarians agreed that principals should spend more time informing new teaching staff about the importance of collaboration with the teacher-librarian.

Flexible Scheduling: How Does a Principal Facilitate Implementation? (pp. 71-84). *Joy H. McGregor*, Texas Woman's University, USA

This study investigated flexible scheduling in U.S. elementary libraries that had received no funding to implement the change. The larger study examined many elements of the implementation, but this article looks specifically at the role of the principal in the implementation of flexible scheduling in the six schools involved. The principals' beliefs and behaviors were described by principals, librarians, and teachers in regard to their role in implementation. Principals supported flexible scheduling because they believed it would have a positive impact on student learning. They were willing to take risks because they trusted their librarians to be leaders in the implementation process. Librarians depended on their principals to be strong advocates for the change to flexible scheduling and found that the change was facilitated by the principal's support.

[The Role of the Principal in the Evaluation of the School's Library Media Specialist](#)
(pp. 85-91) *Miles Bryant*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA
As many library media specialists in the USA know, the manner in which administrators evaluate their work seldom covers the many facets of work in today's school media center. Many factors combine to compromise the utility of the evaluation of library media specialists by the school administrator. Paramount among these factors are: 1) increased demands on the school principal as the instrument of accountability; 2) the tendency to use an evaluation model designed for teachers, not library media specialists; and 3) the dramatic changes that have occurred in the work of the library media specialist. This author analyzes briefly each of these influences and makes recommendations relative to how the evaluation of the school's library media specialist should be altered to provide a more effective means of helping achieve "information literacy", one of the 21st century's goals in the education of American children.

[The Principal's Perceptions of School Libraries and Teacher-Librarians](#) (pp. 92-110).
Gary Hartzell, University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA
Principal support is vital to the establishment and maintenance of a quality library media program. The problem is that support flows from trust, and trust flows from understanding. Many principals do not understand what teacher-librarians really do nor do they appreciate the potential the library media program has for contributing to student and faculty achievement. This article explores why this is so. Principals' perceptions of school libraries and teacher-librarians have been shaped by four interactive forces. The first is their own experiences in school libraries as children, in which they perceived the library as peripheral to the classroom. The second is the effect of their professional training, in which the library's role in curriculum and instruction was conspicuously absent. The third is the nature of the teacher-librarian's work, which is to enable and empower others. The fourth is the low profile teacher-librarians and school libraries have in the professional literature read by teachers and administrators, which prevents them from updating their sense of what the library really is and can do. The cumulative result is that administrators have only a limited and inaccurate understanding of libraries and teacher-librarians. The only way to change principal perceptions is to assault them directly, repeatedly, and from a multiplicity of directions. Reshaping perceptions takes time and effort and commitment. In the meantime, these erroneous perceptions will continue to guide most principals' relationships with school library media specialists.

4. A practical book, based on research, focusing on how the school library media specialist and the principal collaborate to develop an exemplary school library media program.

Wilson, Patricia Potter, & Lyders, Josette Anne. (2001). *Leadership for today's school library: A handbook for the library media specialist and the school principal.* Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

School library media specialists know that a close collaboration between the school principal and themselves is critical in the development of an exemplary school library media program, but they are often unsure of how to establish and build on that collaboration. The authors present a vision for a student-centered library program, showing methods librarians can use to learn to work together with their principals and teachers to build curriculum, incorporate state and national standards and guidelines, and implement technology. Beginning with a discussion of the principal's training and experience with the school library, the authors describe what goals he or she has in common with the school library media specialist, and how the two can develop a rapport to reach these shared goals. Wilson and Lyders explain how the media specialist can work with the school principal in curriculum planning and evaluation, in assessing and evaluating the school library, on library public relations and outreach to the school community, on Internet and technology and on such issues as intellectual freedom and copyright. Interviews and vignettes from practicing school library media specialists and school principals highlight examples of key points.

Related articles:

Abilock, D., Harada, V. H., & Fontichiaro, K. (2013). Growing schools effective professional development. *Teacher Librarian, 41*(1), 8-13.

Church, Audrey. (2008). The instructional role of the library media specialist as perceived by elementary school principals. *School Library Research,* Vol. 11 [American Library Association]. <http://www.ala.org/aasl/slmr/volume11/church>

Church, Audrey P. (2010). Secondary school principals' perceptions of the school librarian's instructional role. *School Library Research*, Vol. 13 [American Library Association]. <www.ala.org/aasl/slr/volume13/church>.

Everhart, N. (2006). Principals' evaluation of school librarians: A study of strategic and nonstrategic evidence-based approaches. *School Libraries Worldwide, 12*(2), 38-51.

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Hartzell, G. (2002). What's it take? *Teacher Librarian, 30*(1), 81-86.

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Hartzell, G. (2003). Why should principals support school libraries? *Teacher Librarian, 31*(2), 21-23.

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Morris, B. J., & Packard, A. (2007). The principal's support of classroom teacher-media specialist collaboration. *School Libraries Worldwide, 13*(1), 36-55.

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Oberg, D., Hay, L., & Henri, J. (2000). The role of the principal in an information literate school community: Cross-country comparisons from an international research project. *School Library Research,* Vol. 3*.* Available online at: http://www.ala.org/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume32000/principal2

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Oberg, D. (1997). The principal's role in empowering collaboration between teacher-librarians and teachers: Research findings. *Scan*, 16(3), 6-8.

Shannon, D. M. (2009). Principals' perspectives of school librarians. *School Libraries Worldwide, 15*(2), 1-22.

Wejrowski, K., & McRae, M. (2013). Developing a culture of readers through effective library planning. *Knowledge Quest, 42*(1), 38-43.

Wilson, P. J., Blake, M., & Lyders, J. A. (1993). Principals and teacher-librarians: A study and a plan for partnership. *Emergency Librarian*, 27(1), 18-24.