

Additional comments added by Amanda Credaro 25 August 2007
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Meeting of 10 August 2007

Amanda, Margaret, Ian

Amanda Credaro, Teacher Librarian

Margaret Adebisi, A/ Manager, School Staffing Personnel Directorate

**Ian Armstrong, Manager, Human Resource Projects,
NSW DET Staffing Unit**

M: Meeting top [to?] discuss issues raised in RML in more detail.

A:

- Staffing policy
- 4 points in RML
- Principal's discretion
- Feels Staffing Agreement breached for her & other T/Ls – not unique
- Use by P's to use T/Ls to 'plug' timetable gaps (including being taken out of library)
- Role of T/L versus P's view of role of T/L
- Duties undertaken by T/Ls (pri and sec) vary across state owing to P's discretionary power
- Personnel Support – allocation of support staff to libraries varies greatly across school libraries
- Prior to intro of SA classification, a SASS position would be identified as CA (Library)
- A. concerned re accountability for P's in how discretionary power/authority is exercised in schools
- Lack of support staff allocation can lead to T/Ls undertaking SASS roles, e.g. covering books
- Looking at consistency across how school libraries are resourced and supported
- Difference in voluntary support (parents & community) between pri & sec

- School libraries shouldn't have to rely on voluntary support from community.
- Gave e.g. of a volunteer would not be asked to take on a faculty role in the absence of a teacher – but volunteers are used in libraries

Page 2 of notes from meeting (commences at 'email sent to P...')

- email from RO re Premier's Reading Challenge – email sent to P in Amanda's school. Challenge not run in Amanda's school as doesn't have time to implement on top of other roles. No additional support

The more successful any library program is (eg PRC), the greater the workload. But no additional support is ever provided to recognise this. No extra clerical support, no additional funding for additional resources needed for such programs as PRC. Given a fixed budget, in order to purchase PRC books, the school community has to sacrifice other resources to support teaching and learning.

- 40% time library – rest of time non-library duties

Concern for a TL who has been appointed by DET Staffing to a school as a full-time TL, notably in addition to the school's staffing formula.

Example: is library supervision at recess and lunchtime a professional role requiring dual qualifications? The NSW TF website provides the information that Principals can allocated classroom teachers to supervise in the library so that TLs aren't required to work beyond the DET's agreed number of hours per week. Although many Australian non-government schools actually do this, it is virtually unknown in NSW DET schools.

Similarly, allocation to sport without consultation ("All teachers are required to do sport" = A principal's statement to a TL); teaching on a subject line, etc.

Not uniform across the state; some secondary TLs have 100% of their time allocated to professional duties in the library, others have the frequently misinterpreted 20% rule applied.

- In discussion with P, P referred to DET lib document stating "min of 20%"

The July 2005 DET memo from Peter Riordon states "as a general guide, 20% of a Teacher Librarian's time is considered a reasonable allocation of administration time". [IRC 05/18; DN/05/00277]. Available Online at http://www.nswtf.org.au/TeacherLibrarians/files/tl_admin.pdf

Boston (1988?) determination stated a minimum of 20% should be allocated. There does not appear to be any formal recognition of this reduction (from “minimum” to “reasonable”), any considered rationale for the change; any investigation into the negative impact on academic achievement; only a reinterpretation based on economic considerations. Or indeed Principal’s Discretionary Powers.

Consider the implications of the application of this “20% rule” in reality; a 1.0 FTE TL in a school of 600 students with a collection of (say) 1,400 resources with a 20% allocation has the same ‘entitlement’ a 1.0 FTE TL in a school of (say) 900 students with (say) 22,000 resources would be ‘entitled’ to the same 20%?

See the Case studies available at <http://www.nswtl.net/info/casestudies/suppclass.doc> which demonstrate inequities caused through “Principal’s Discretionary Powers” in the variety of interpretations and applications of the “20% rule”.

- Amanda’s experience not unique, e.g. in primary schools, use of T/L & lib to cover RFF
- How can library collections be maximised when so much time req’d to be spent on non-library duties
- 20% rule introduced at time Ken Boston was D.G.
- referred to report on impact of school library on academic development & performance.

The Hon. John Della Bosca’s communication RML 07/1996 A51536 states: “The DET is aware of the research into teacher librarianship, collaborative approaches, information literacy... and uses this research to inform the support provided to teacher-librarians”.

The Minister then lists examples of that support; a journal containing a research column, and the provision of ‘learning workshops on the role of the teacher-librarian’’. Offered to Teacher Librarians.

Teacher Librarians already understand their role; the problem is that Principals do not. A recently offered workshop for principals on the role of the Teacher Librarian was cancelled through lack of interest.

- In terms of allocation of classes, gave eg of taking Yr 7 philosophy class in Term 2. When A. referred to being sci. teacher prior to teacher/librarian & preferred to be allocated science class, P advised ‘no – I don’t need a sci teacher’.

- Acknowledge that there are some Ps that do see value & role of the library in school, roles & purpose of teacher librarian & distribution of support staff to library.
- example of similar sized & type of schools & how discretion available to P can impact on effectiveness of T/L & lib.
- Benchmark for resourcing

The DET, along with other education authorities, recognises the need for benchmarks to assess the effectiveness of teaching programs.

Unfortunately there are no DET acknowledged benchmarks for the level of resourcing required to reach those educational outcomes. There are 'de facto' Australian National Standards for school libraries ("Learning for the Future"), which the DET does not consider when allocating resources (funding, staffing, infrastructure, etc) to school libraries.

- Allocation of Teacher/librarian entitlement to pri schools – small pri schools may only have P.T. teacher/librarian.
- Hundreds of thousands of dollars of tax payers resources & schools with P.T. tch/lib can have libraries closed during recesses and lunchtimes.

In primary schools with only a part time TL, access to the library resources cannot be delivered at "Point of Need". Programs must be tailored around availability – whilst the library sits inaccessible.

In high schools, this is a lessor problem due to the full time nature of employment of the TL. However, when school libraries are closed off to students and staff due to the holding of debates, school PR functions, executive meetings, examinations, first aid courses, etc, the situation is again appalling.

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- during absence on leave, roll call, subject & sport classes covered by casual. Library was closed for 2 weeks. Message re importance of library compared to faculty classes.
- should guidelines cover relief arrangements for library. Issue of P discretion re use of casuals.
- Premier's position re importance of libraries to schools.
- Supervisory role of teacher/librarian with support staff – Amanda has a committed & effective F.T lib asst. A. still has to do clerical duties. – **due to size of school and collection, and Principal's**

Discretion regarding the number of library assistants the library 'deserves'.

- Curric. Dir running video-conferencing to support book week. A. doesn't have time to participate without sacrificing other duties & responsibilities
- Financial Support
- believes schools should be surveyed to see how libraries are financially resourced to obtain "hard facts". Such a survey should be counter-signed by teacher-librarian. Gave personal experience of funds given to library compared to figure stated in annual report, eg carpeting in library shown as allocation to library. T/L should sign to prevent irregularities from being reported.
- use of computers in library – should be available for research at most times. Often used for computer classes which means that computers are not available for students wanting to undertake research.
- Access for students, when library 'closed' for debates, exams, executive meetings
- 2006 – 2008 School plan. – to provide Yr 10 & Yr 12 with opportunities to excel. Library could be used to assist in this plan to greater degree.

This is the known situation in one particular school. The extent of this problem is unknown, and needs to be independently assessed. The executive meet in the library during sports afternoon. The TL requested that the library be made available for non-sporting seniors; a request was also made for a 4 week trial to assess the degree of likely use (the 4 weeks were those immediately prior to the Trial HSC). The executive response included:

"The executive needed a large space for their meetings" (16 people) – it could be asked why the executive could not find an empty classroom in an empty school ...

"The executive sometimes needed the projector and screen for guest speakers" – it could be asked why one of the school's multimedia rooms couldn't be used ...

"The senior students had never used the library on sports afternoon before" – it could be pointed out that they had never been allowed to ...

"The executive needed access to a phone in case of emergencies" – it could be pointed out that the school has a mobile phone for such contingencies ...

Meeting in the library means that the executive could “supervise sport miscreants” by placing them under observation in the library’s Seminar Room - although it is noted that two students sent to the library for such supervision (on two different occasions) were sent back to sport ...

A later suggestion to the executive that they consider holding the executive meetings after school has not received any response.

- Hard data from across schools would highlight differences in how libraries are resourced. Would like to know how parents would react to figures.

There is a vast body of anecdotal evidence. However, only the DET itself has the necessary power and authority to determine the extent of these issues across ALL DET schools. Such a study was undertaken in Victoria by professional associations and various researchers – but not the Education Authority.

Unfortunately, the results of the Victorian study were not used inform any decision making.

Page 4 of notes from meeting (commences at ‘funds. When asking’)

- Before global budget, libraries rec’d tied funds. When asking why can’t we go back – advised no, we have a global budget. A. is aware that tied grants are still provided for other programs & funds so why can’t library funding be returned to a tied grant
- Role & effectiveness of finance committees in allocating budget.
- While P’s are accountable to SED & Regional director, are sed’s & rd’s interested in supporting libraries
- Revisiting prev determinations – eg 20% already discussed
- Role of 1 person as Manager for support for teacher librarians. Role also provides support for P’s seeking info/advice on libraries

Can one person based in Ryde effectively deliver the type of support that is needed (rather than mandated by policy) across a state the size of NSW, and with over 2000 schools?

The vast majority of personnel in the Library and Information Services unit are involved in the production of the DET’s journal, Scan or in providing cataloguing related services.

Are any of the other Curriculum Support units for faculty-based subjects (eg English, Maths, Science) so employed?

- Manager has advised role is to interpret policy

The Manager is also available to speak with groups of Teacher Librarians regarding the implementation of policy, disseminate information on new programs for those who wish to further increase their workload without any additional support ...

- Previously there had been 1 library consultant per district. All other faculties receive greater support beyond school level and from BoS.
- Why was Lib 'consultant' abolished?
- While re-intro of consultant would require additional funding, all other suggestions involve re-distribution of existing resources through clearer guidelines.
- Teacher/librarian required to have understanding across all learning & subject areas for prof. support for ordering purposes yet receive same salary as classroom teacher in any 1 subject area.
- Wouldn't it be more approp to be HT or equiv.
- Perception of teachers when planning with teacher/librarians – see as librarian rather than teacher (opposite of P's view of teacher/librarian)
- Outside of DET schools, role of teacher/librarian recognised through status & salary.

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- Differences between schools in how teacher/librarians are treated for attendance & participation in school exec. Meetings

In some DET schools, the TL may address the executive on a 'as and if required' basis. In other schools, the TL's policy-dictated role in providing input to all programs etc is recognised by the TLs 'membership' at executive meetings – although not on the same salary or period load as other members of the executive. In yet other DET schools, the TL is limited to accessing the executive via a Head Teacher or Executive Teacher.

- Possible if DET gave greater recognition to teacher/librarian, this could flow on to perception of teacher/librarian by P's & other teachers in schools.

- A. referred to discussion with H.T. that resulted in H.T. taking library for one lunch-time dealing with students, enquiries & issues being raised.

In this particular instance, the Head Teacher's observation was that the experience was difficult, demanding, and well beyond the expectations of a teacher on playground duty. It was also noted that 'library supervision' was a task that was best undertaken by a qualified TL.

The TL stressed to the Head Teacher that he had only completed the equivalent of 2 playground duties in time (both halves of lunch); the TL did that same duty 23 times a week ... in addition to being involved face-to-face with students on a 40/40 period allocation. Plus opening the library before school without time-in-lieu ...

- Premier recognises profession & role of teacher/librarian but will this recognition be provided through resources or financing.
- Referred to letter & request as to why teacher/librarian can't be given H.T. status.
- Dual role as teacher and librarian allows for so much different treatment depending on discretion of P & their view of the role
- Certain policies that benefit libraries are implied in current documents but not stated as a requirement
- DET has discretionary funds which could be used to provide further support to libraries. New funding not required – re-allocation of resources
- If funding provided to create HT, T&L – wasn't this what the P was already supposed to be involved in. Hasn't seen policy/role statement for HT, T&L – how can DET introduce exec position without clear statement of responsibilities.
- Referred to finances available at regional director level for support to identified subjects across district. Was support provided to libraries for Western Sydney – no.

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- Brief discussion of personal circumstances & background, including physical injury:
 - prev contact with Jan Mc & T.K.
 - work at OTEN
 - contact & dealings with Linda Watts
 - placement at Greystanes initiated through A.
 - rehab support – not satisfied with

- concerned that current treatment at G.H.S. may be related to previous contact with JM & T.K. & principals network
- had sought to have Greystanes H.S. removed from transfer list – based on experiences at school whilst there as a R.T.W.

Following lack of response to a faxed request, two personal visits were made to the Staffing Unit. The appointment to the school was a Case Managed Placement under Rehabilitation Provisions.

A letter from Linda Shearer in her capacity as (then) Manager of Staffing stated that A. would be placed at the Centre for Learning Innovation until a suitable school was identified. The current school is not “suitable” for a number of reasons, all of which have been brought to the attention of the relevant DET personnel.

The response was that GIO would not continue paying salary at CLI; communication with GIO shows that they were not paying anything.

- resolution of ‘big picture’ issues for teacher/librarians would assist in resolving local issues in school.
- RML is focussed on teacher/librarian role – not for personal benefit
- Should DET review retention/drop-out rates for teacher-librarians

At A.’s previous school appointment, she was the fifth TL in 3 years. In a profession noted for the long periods of incumbency, is this not a concern?

Why does the DET not have Exit Interviews, as does TAFE? Although the Separation Form does have provision for comment, there does not appear to be a mechanism for follow-up or the addressing of the issues raise.

Why do principals have the Discretionary Power to “tick the box” for Never to Be Employed Again? Should this not be a Staffing decision based on unsatisfactory performance or Professional Conduct concerns, rather than a conflict of personalities or perspectives of a member of teaching staff and a Principal?