

THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN INTERVIEW GUIDE

Questions & Resources from the SD State Library



The South Dakota State Library, a division of the SD Department of Education, supports local librarians and libraries by encouraging excellence in services, providing collections to expand local reach, serving special populations, and offering quality research and interlibrary loan services to libraries and state agencies. This guide is intended to be a helpful resource as school districts hire quality library staff - a vital component of any strong school library program. In addition to containing useful information and resources, this document contains a variety of questions and scenarios that may be helpful during the interview process.

GENERAL

- Describe an ideal day in the school library.
- What is it about you that makes you stand out? What will we remember about you?
- What experiences qualify you for the school librarian position?
- What strategies do you use to organize the multi-faceted role of teacher-librarian?
- What is your favorite genre? Favorite author? Favorite book?

THE PROGRAM: Learning & Teaching

Achievement

- Explain how the school library can have a positive impact on student achievement.
- What resources do you recommend to support libraries and student achievement?

General

- What might we see in the library program should you get this position?
- Scenario: It's almost School Library Month. What would you do to promote this celebration?
- Scenario: It's almost the end of the school year. What would you do to promote summer reading and prevent "the summer slide"?

Makerspaces

- Makerspaces are popular right. Some see Makerspaces as a natural fit for school libraries while others see them as a threat to the school library program. What is your opinion?
- We have a Makerspace currently, how would you go about continuing it and balancing it with other aspects of the library?

Reading

- How would you promote recreational reading?
- How would you promote inclusivity through reading?
- What are your thoughts on systematic reading programs such as Accelerated Reader?

Collection Development

- How will you determine and support the collection needs of students and staff?
- What are your thoughts on print vs. digital books?
- What types of resources might you focus on to support special populations or subgroups?
- Scenario: The library collection is outdated and does not adequately support its patrons. Outline your strategy to begin the process of weeding (deselection of current collection).

THE PLACE: Learning Environment

Physical Library Spaces

- What changes might we see in the library space should this position be yours?
- Describe a day in the school library for students. What does it look like, feel like, sound like?
- What are your ideas to support inclusive practices in the library?

Digital Library Spaces

- Describe your technology skills as they relate to digital content management.
- Explain your experience using technology to support a 24/7 library environment.
- How can you extend the physical library space into a digital space?

THE PROFESSIONAL: Leadership for Learning

Communication

- How do you create and maintain parental involvement in the library?
- What are some ways you can communicate with students, students, and parents/guardians?
- How would you handle a resource challenge (a request to remove an item from the library)?

Leadership

- Discuss the roles of the librarian (as Librarian, Information Specialist, Teacher, Instructional Coach, Technology Coach) that are integral to the vision of a modern library program.
- What standards and guidelines inform your practice for your role as a school librarian?
- How do you envision being a leader in this school and district?
- Describe a typical day in the library for you as the librarian.
- Scenario: The library has been closed for a few years and patrons are not familiar with using the library. Outline your strategy for reintroducing the library to both students and staff.

Management

- Explain your student/behavior management style.
- Scenario: The library is open during lunch periods and a table full of students in the library is being disruptive. Detail the steps you would take in dealing with this situation.

Teaching and Learning

- Describe the role of the librarian in teaching digital citizenship.
- How will you make an impact on teaching and learning in our school?
- Who is responsible for learning? Why?
- Co-teaching is essential for this position. What ways do you envision collaborating with staff?
- Explain a time a lesson didn't go well. What did you learn?
- How do you stay current with best practices in pedagogy?
- Research skills are important, how do you create a strong research program?

Technology

- Describe your technology skills as they relate to teaching and programming.
- How do you stay current with new educational technologies?
- Describe how you have used technology to tap into outside expertise.

RECOMMENDED READINGS & RESOURCES

- [SDSL School Libraries page \(library.sd.gov\)](https://library.sd.gov)
- [SD School Library Standards \(library.sd.gov\)](https://library.sd.gov)
- [South Dakota School Library Guidelines \(library.sd.gov\)](https://library.sd.gov)
- [SD 21st Century School Library Self-Assessment \(library.sd.gov\)](https://library.sd.gov)
- [South Dakota's Future Ready School Libraries \(library.sd.gov\)](https://library.sd.gov)
- [AASL Position Statement - Role of the School Library Program \(ala.org/aasl\)](https://ala.org/aasl)
- [AASL Standards - Guide for Administrators \(standards.aasl.org\)](https://standards.aasl.org)
- [AASL Standards Framework for Learners \(standards.aasl.org\)](https://standards.aasl.org)
- [AASL School Librarians as Learning Leaders \(ala.org/aasl\)](https://ala.org/aasl)
- [Future Ready Librarians \(futureready.org\)](https://futureready.org)
- [ISTE document about librarians and educational technologies \(iste.org\)](https://iste.org)

JOB TITLE

- The term **librarian** is applied to all types of librarians (public, school, academic, research, cataloging, etc.) who hold a degree in the library field.
- The term **teacher-librarian** is applied to a certified educator who is also endorsed in library media. Other terms might include **library media specialist** and **school librarian**.
- Para-professionals who work in a library and do not hold a degree or certification in the library field are referred to as **library aides, library clerks, library associates, or library technicians**. Often, the term *librarian* is mistakenly applied to anyone who works in a library; instead, the term should be applied to those with applicable education.

ENDORSEMENT

South Dakota does not have a requirement for staffing school librarians. Consequently, there is quite a bit of staffing diversity in school libraries across the state. Mid to large districts routinely staff their libraries with teacher-librarians or teachers who are seeking library media endorsement. Depending on a variety of factors, smaller districts staff with part-time teacher-librarians, classroom teachers who also work part-time in the library, or full- or part-time para-professionals.

In South Dakota, there are two options for gaining school library endorsement:

1. Via [Praxis test \(doe.sd.gov\)](https://doe.sd.gov) with a passing score of 152
2. Via accredited library media coursework:
 - [Black Hills State University \(bhsu.edu\)](https://bhsu.edu): fully online; minor/endorsement
 - [Emporia State University \(emporia.edu\)](https://emporia.edu): online and in-person; Masters or endorsement-only

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The SD State Library offers a variety of professional development opportunities for librarians. [School Library Boot Camp \(library.sd.gov\)](https://library.sd.gov) is an annual event in which participants earn two credits towards the library media endorsement from Black Hills State University. Instructional content changes yearly and is geared for all types of educational staff. The State Library offers full-tuition scholarships, while travel costs are the responsibility of the participant. Boot Camp is an excellent opportunity to connect with others, learn more about topics in school library and education, and work towards endorsement.

South Dakota
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