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Reflection 4.4

**4.4 Advocacy**

Candidates identify stakeholders within and outside the school community who impact the school library program. Candidates develop a plan to advocate for school library and information programs, resources, and services.

**Artifacts**

1. [ISTC 789 Journal 3R](../ISTC789/ISTC%20_Journal_3R.docx)

2. [ISTC 789 Reading Promotion Program](../Internships/Glenwood%20Middle/Proposal%20for%20Radical%20Readers.docx)

3. [ISTC 601 Action Plan](../../Assignment6_ActionPlan_McHugh_Richardson_Richter.docx)

**Relevance**

Advocating for the school library is a critical component for a school library media specialists’ career. Many schools across America have eradicated library media specialists from their school, which in my opinion, is a huge mistake. We are leaders in the school, in so many different areas, and we need to advocate for the services and resources that we can provide to the school community, so that everyone can see the how we can help our school achieve success, and keep our careers intact.

In my internships, we reflected on our practices and wrote journal responses about various topics. My artifact is a journal response focusing on how we would advocate for our school library. First, it is important to identify the stakeholders in the school community who could greatly impact the library. Ranging from the PTA, to our administrators, many people can influence the school library and help advocate for our services, however we have to advocate ourselves to them first, so that they can see how much we are needed in the school. Therefore, I plan on attending any meeting that I possibly can, to not only be seen as an involved member of the community, but to promote how I can support the needs of the school and help implement solutions to help the school improve. Some meetings that I think would be critical to attend are PTA meetings, team level meetings, school improvement meetings, and more. I also noted the importance of staying connected to the school community by giving them updates about the events that are occurring in the library and what the students are learning about, to continuously show them how the school library is an essential part of the students’ positive growth. I would accomplish this by sending out newsletters and updating the school’s website, as well as getting them involved in the library by asking for feedback or suggestions about what they hope to see, or continue to see, happening in the library. These are all important steps that I plan on taking in my future library, to advocate for my role as a media specialist.

My second artifact is a reading promotion program that I created during my middle school placement. This program not only promoted reading for enjoyment, but it also promoted the services and resources of the school library. After getting the principal on-board with this program, he was able to get the PTA to purchase prizes for the students as an incentive for reading. I also went around to every English classroom and introduced the program to students and teachers to get them excited about participating and to promote coming down to the library to check-out books to read. Pretty soon, I heard students talking about the program in the hallways, and teachers were excited to give me updates about their students’ reading progress. After this, English classes started to come in regularly to have their students check-out books to read, and the students were more excited to come to the library. Creating a school-wide program, and getting stakeholders (e.g. the PTA, the principal, the teachers) involved, was a great way to advocate for the library and all we have to offer them. In my future school, I will get the community involved in the events that are happening in the library, in order to demonstrate why a media specialist is needed in schools, and how we can greatly assist students with their continued success.

It is so important to create a plan of action on how you will continuously advocate for your profession. In my ISTC 601 course, we created an action plan on how a media specialist could support the Common Core State Standards. Although this plan focused on Common Core, it still demonstrates multiple ways of how a school library media specialist can advocate for themselves and their role in the school. For example, having regular meetings with the principal to keep them informed about the progress of the media center and its critical role in students’ academic achievement and collaborating with teachers and informing them about the resources and databases that they can use with their instruction, are just some of the ways you can advocate for the library. Anytime when you can assist others, become active members in teams and meetings, or promoting how the services and resources that are available through the library can improve students’ academic achievement, you are advocating for your role as a media specialist. I will make sure that I not only *say* that I am going to do these things, but I am going to make sure that I *do* them. This action plan is a great place for me to start and to use as a guide, especially in my first year, to take a look at what I want to accomplish and how I can better advocate for myself as a media specialist in my future school.