



Open Letter to Principals of School Librarians

As president of the Mississippi Library Association and with the endorsement of the Mississippi Department of Education school library program office, I would like to solicit your support and encouragement of the school librarian who serves the students and faculty of your school. School librarians share in the teaching mission of educators by developing and nurturing learners' reading and research skills. We know from numerous studies how these foundations directly serve students' learning as they grow into responsible and well-informed citizens.

There are few opportunities for continuing education for school librarians outside of the workshops, programs, and conferences that librarians themselves plan, organize, and deliver to serve the needs of all librarians in Mississippi. Our unique role as information mediators bolsters student success in the research and study process, and these skills are crucial to the classroom experience. Remaining current in best practices in librarianship, as well as being fully engaged professionally, can best be achieved by attending professional venues that serve this specific purpose. The kinds of programming that librarians need include learning the best way to select new library materials that support the school curriculum, incorporating new technologies that best serve both the teaching faculty as well as their students, and sharing creative ideas that excite students to read with understanding as well as pleasure, just to name a few.

Every school librarian, through attendance at conferences or workshops, will be able to incorporate the ideas they acquire there in your school library. You should see a direct correlation between the investment of time and resources in this professional development and successes in your school library. As a professional organization in librarianship, it is our goal to make that possible for school librarians throughout the state.

The upcoming conference is October 22-25, 2019, at the Westin in downtown Jackson. The theme is "Mississippi Libraries: Educating, Cultivating, Inspiring" encapsulates the very essence of what school librarians do on a day-to-day basis. According to the Mississippi Department of Education's educator licensure guidelines, Continuing Education Units (CEU's) must be in content or job/skill related areas. School librarians can receive on average 4 to 5 CEUs if the librarian attends the annual conference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Crisler-Ruskey", written over a white background.

Sarah Crisler-Ruskey, President, MLA