

Advocacy Plan

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Gary Hartzell (1997), author of *The invisible school librarian: Why other educators are blind to your value*, stated “People regard as expendable those things about which they are indifferent.” It is important to make the library present to all within the school. Teachers, administrators, and even parents need to be shown the significance of the school library. One of the best ways to do this is through an advocacy plan. Advocacy plans also help provide excellent communication with stakeholders, ensuring their concerns are being heard and their needs are being met.

Executive Summary

Welcome to the Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary School library! This school library is located inside Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary School (Vaughan), home of the Wildcats, in Woodbridge, VA. Vaughan Elementary School serves 577 students in grades Prekindergarten-5 (School Quality Profile, 2024). According to the Public School Review website (2024), the minority enrollment at Vaughan is 95% of the student body (majority Hispanic), which is higher than the Virginia state average of 54% (majority Black and Hispanic). The School Quality Profile (2024) indicates that 57.9% of the student population at Vaughan Elementary are English learners. While 62.7% of the students at Vaughan Elementary are considered economically disadvantaged (School Quality Profile, 2024).

School and Library Mission Statement

The Mission of the Vaughan Elementary library is the same for all school libraries within the Prince William County (PWC) Public School system, regardless of their level (elementary, middle, or high school). The PWC School Library Program’s (2023) mission is as follows:

Mission: In Prince William County, school libraries support the educational goals of our school system and serve all students, teachers, and members of the school community. In mission,

structure, and practice, they serve as the center of the school's instructional process. The school library provides opportunities for the use of "real-world" information and technology through access to resources and individual service. Library instruction that is meaningful, relevant, and integrated contributes to student proficiency in basic skills and problem-solving. Students using a variety of library resources broaden their understanding and respect for the diversity of individuals and cultures. Because the school library is a shared resource owned and used by every member of the school community, it provides a learning environment that fosters good citizens who function effectively as members of a group and society.

The mission does not simply focus on the students, but it also mentions teachers and members of the school community as well. This mission gives hope for a better future because it shows that the library would like for all patrons to have access to a variety of resources in both print and nonprint formats, and to also be able to use those resources proficiently. This in turn propels the library into an ideal for the community, especially for a community that has a high disadvantaged population that typically lacks access to those resources.

Stakeholder Analysis and Advocacy Plan

Stakeholders: Parents of Vaughan Elementary Students

Concern: "My children need to easily access resources and information needed to succeed in school and in life." Other parents agreed with this statement during a monthly PTA meeting. Parents also expressed this sentiment during a Title I event held for parents with students in a tutoring program for PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening), which is grades K-3.

Goal: The librarian will provide curriculum related resources, make resources more easily available, and give opportunities to students and parents to allow them to work towards becoming proficient users of print and nonprint resources.

Strategy 1: The librarian will make connections with the curriculum and learning through collaboration with teachers. The librarian will work closely with the teachers to learn which standards are the most challenging. The librarian will ensure students can easily access resources on those standards to help students better succeed in school. To encourage students to utilize those resources, the librarian will create grade level displays that showcase the library resources. There will be a contest between the classes in each grade level to see which class is utilizing the resources the most. The librarian will focus on one-two grade level(s) each month, beginning with kindergarten.

Assessment: The librarian will analyze book checkout history for the grade level of focus for the month to see how many students checked out books pertaining to the challenging standards that are being showcased. The librarian will track the data on a grade level bar graph, which will be displayed in the library. Students will complete a brief survey sharing how they felt about the book they checked out (i.e. Did you like this book? Circle the face that matches your feeling. Did you learn more about a topic from this book? Circle the face that matches your feeling. Write any thoughts you had about your book.). Each library class, the librarian will take a picture of the students holding up their curriculum related books. The librarian will highlight that specific grade level in the library newsletter by sharing the pictures of each class with a few quotes from student surveys included about the curriculum related books. In the library newsletter, the winning class of the contest will be at the top. A small blurb about the contest will be sent

to classroom teachers to include in class newsletters. The librarian will also post the contest progress on the library website for parents to view. As previously stated, there are monthly PTA meetings and the librarian will take 10 minutes at each meeting to share the highlights of what that grade level learned and how it is helping them to succeed more in school.

Strategy 2: The librarian will collaborate with the PWC public library to provide assistance on resource availability to students and their families by hosting a ‘Get a Library Card’ event. This event will allow students and their families to get a library card for the PWC public library, which will make available many more resources than the Vaughan Elementary school library can offer and the resources range from young child to adults, which provides resources for the entire family, not just elementary age students. If families are unable to attend the event or do not feel comfortable bringing a proof of address to get a library card, there will be library card forms available in the library for students to take home to fill out with their parent, then bring back for the librarian to take to a PWC public library. A teacher or librarian taking the forms to the public library is proof enough that the student lives in PWC and can therefore get a PWC public library card. The librarian would even pick up the cards to deliver to the students after the two-week processing time. The PWC public library card allows patrons to check out print and digital resources making it easier for students and families to access resources. The PWC public library does not have late fees on resources and if a digital resource is checked out, it will automatically be returned after a certain number of days. Resources can also be renewed digitally making it easier to continue using the resources if necessary.

Assessment: The librarian would record how many people signed up for a library card at the 'Get a Library Card' event. The librarian would follow up the event by sharing its successes (i.e. what was done at the event and what aspects can still be taken advantage of even if they could not attend) through newsletters, through the library webpage, and at PTA meetings. The librarian will also create posters, to be placed around the school, stating that it is not too late to get a public library card. Students will be encouraged to stop by the library for their chance to get one (they will be given a form to fill out with a parent to get a public library card and bring it back for the librarian to take care of the rest). The librarian will also keep track of the number of students who bring back completed forms, which can be added to those that were completed at the 'Get a Library Card' event. This will help show the success of the public library card campaign.

Strategy 3: The librarian will host information literacy sessions where parents can receive lessons that provide strategies for effectively and ethically locating, evaluating, using, and even creating information sources. These will be similar lessons offered to the students during library class. This will enable parents to become a partner with the library and school to help their child more easily access resources and information.

Assessment: The librarian will advertise the information literacy sessions by sending out flyers. The librarian will also send out paper and virtual invitations to each session with a RSVP attached that will need to be submitted, so the librarian will have adequate space and materials for the parents joining. At the end of each session, parents will be asked to complete a brief reflection about the session (i.e. What did they like? What could be changed to make it better for the next session?) on a Microsoft Form, this will also serve as a sign in. The reflection data will help the librarian see what was helpful and what

could be changed for the next session. Each session, parents will leave with a better understanding of information literacy and a list of helpful resources they can use with their child at home.

Providing the Vaughan Elementary community with curriculum related resources, making resources more easily available with a public library card, and giving opportunities, like information literacy sessions, to students and parents will allow them to work towards becoming proficient users of print and nonprint resources. The strategies laid out in this advocacy plan will help equip parents with what is necessary to help their children when it comes to accessing resources and information. In turn, students will be ready with the knowledge and know how to succeed in school and in life.

References

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