Volunteers

Appendix G

Volunteers

Volunteers are asked to assist in the library program in many school districts. Care must be taken to make sure that the use of volunteers does not violate the teachers’ contract and that the school administration is aware that volunteers are being recruited. A district-wide policy about the use of volunteers in schools may exist. If the district provides orientation and coordination, the school librarian can be relieved of responsibility for this part of the process.

If no district-wide program is in place, the librarian must do the following:

1. Inform the principal and other appropriate administrators of the scope of the volunteer program and the person or persons designated to take responsibility for it.

2. Develop job descriptions of the tasks expected of volunteers so interested people may anticipate their activities once they volunteer. These job descriptions will help the librarian plan the training for volunteers.

3. Recruit volunteers through the parent-teacher organization in the school, notes sent home with students, pleas to service organizations in the area, and any other means available.

4. Recruit a manager of volunteers. That is, enlist another person to assume responsibility for the attendance of volunteers. The volunteer coordinator frees the librarian from such time-consuming tasks as volunteer scheduling and rescheduling, accepting telephone calls for volunteers who cannot appear on their scheduled day, and so on. Otherwise, the volunteer program could take more time, consequently becoming more trouble than it is worth.

5. Ask volunteers to complete an information form (sample follows).

6. During orientation, explain your expectations to volunteers. If there is no district orientation, volunteers must be informed of their expected behavior toward students and
information they may learn about students. All information about the school, teachers, or the program must remain confidential and should remain at school. Volunteers must not discuss the activities in the library with their friends and neighbors, because this may be a violation of students’ rights. Any volunteer who is unable to come at the designated time should call the volunteer coordinator well in advance to allow opportunity to call a substitute. Volunteers should also recognize that they will serve as “librarians” while in the library and should dress and behave appropriately.

7. Accurate records should be kept of volunteers’ attendance, activities, and comments concerning possible revisions and volunteer program improvement. Careful evaluation can help reinforce good work by volunteers, encourage better performance, and help remove those who are not adding value to the program.

8. Plan a reward system for volunteers. Parties to honor them or other acknowledgements of their efforts will be appreciated and will encourage them to continue. The true test of volunteer devotion is continuing after their children leave the school.

9. Remember at all times that volunteers are directly linked to the school and to those people who can support the library program. Volunteers can be enthusiastic advocates of library activities.

Parent Volunteer Form

Please complete this form and return it to the librarian.

Name _____________________________________________________

Address ___________________________________________________

Telephone Number __________________________________________

Cell Phone _________________________________________________

Days you are available to volunteer: _____________________________
(Please indicate 1, 2, 3 for your preference)

Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday

Times you are available to come to the library:

__________________________________________________________

   a.m. only   p.m. only   a.m. and p.m.

Grades you prefer to work with:

   Primary      Elementary      Middle School      High School

I would like to (check as many as apply):

___ read stories to children       ___ prepare orders and book lists
___ prepare a bulletin board       ___ assist with computers
___ duplicate learning materials   ___ help circulate materials
___ other, please specify