Teacher librarians (school librarian and librarian) organize information, order print and electronic resources, create research guides and products, help people locate information sources, and teach patrons how to use computer software. Wow! A teacher librarian is a pioneer in the Wild West web era— an honor to want to be a teacher librarian in this dynamic age. Yet, school librarians seem to be vanishing from the educational frontlines into obscurity as fiscal budget excuses validate classic attitudes about the duties and responsibilities of school librarians.

_Silivanch relates "most states require teachers to pass one or more certification tests before they can get a license" (45)._ A teaching career is expensive. The BA degree (Bachelor of Arts) can cost as little as $10,000 a year for 4 years or as high as $20,000 or more a year for 4 years. Also, New York State certification tests are approximately $100 per test; teachers are required to take 2-3 tests. New York City license fees to process applications are approximately $100. And, New York State or Department of Education requires all teachers to possess an MA degree (Master of Arts) in order to retain a teaching position. Failure to do so, results in the loss of the teaching position. Teachers are generally given five years after hiring to obtain the MA degree.

_According the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “In May 2012, the median annual wages for librarians for … Elementary and secondary schools; state, local, and private was $57,310” (Bureau of Labor Statistics)._ New York State law requires a graduate student to have a master’s degree in teaching a content specialty such as English or math in order to pursue a master’s degree in library science (MLS). _As a result_, new teacher librarians possess two master degrees, which can make their salaries expensive to school budgets. New teachers (and teacher librarians) are required by New York State law to satisfy 175 hours of Professional Development within a 5-year period, averaging 35 hours a year in PD. Failure to satisfy the 175 Professional Development hours could result in the loss of the teaching position. Some Professional Development offerings are free, but private organization PD workshops can cost $100 and up.

_According to Silivanch, “In high school, students are starting to discover and develop_
their talents, and an encouraging teacher can help” (Silivanch 11). In high school, teacher librarians relate subject studies to real life importance encourage research discovery and development. For example, a librarian utilizes a career research list from a database or government website to introduce students to vocabulary for career titles and present job descriptions. Librarians instruct students to analyze job descriptions to determine advantages and disadvantages of job duties. The library career research analysis shows students the realities of job duties, which is more important than just knowing a career salary. Teacher librarians also present clear expectations for the career research project using model notes that show students effective note taking techniques, required citation formats, and the final outcome of an assignment or project to encourage academic success.

Silivanch notes that in a teaching career "... it's just a given that you're going to work outside of the school day” (27). A teacher librarian career requires lesson planning, resources, and student activity sheets. The three products require preparation time after the 2:30PM to 3:30PM school day.

To illustrate, as a librarian, career lesson plan starts with actual research. Reading print resources, typing notes and analytical responses is necessary to present model assignments that serve as clear expectations for student research projects.

Work at home can start from 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM weekdays after school and 4:00 AM to 10:00 AM on Saturday to complete the products. In fact, sometimes work can start from 4:00 AM to 6:00 AM on weekdays. The total time frame is easily 20 plus additional hours per week. And, during Spring and Winter breaks and summer vacation days, it is easy to spend a 7-hour a day week creating research lesson plans and resources for class research projects. Although it is a joy working with print and electronic resources and working with software technology, the preparation and work time can be a monster!

Performing the research and assignments allows one to see flaws in the resources and assignments. For instance, quotation analysis was changed from 50-300 words to 50-200 words, based on a personal response average. The Librarian also gets to see the limitations of the print and electronic resources recommended to students. The e-book collection allows students to type notes while reading the text and save notes to their FollettShelf account. However, the copy and paste feature from the e-book notes to Microsoft Office Word can become a headache because font and text size must be reformatted to Times New Roman 12 pt.
Library career research projects guided by teacher librarian recommendations of career print and electronic resources show students that people with professional degrees (BA, MA, PhD) will often find themselves working well beyond their workday--this is a fact that students must know as they consider pursuing a college education.

**School Librarians also “Organize library materials so they are easy to find, and maintain collections” (Bureau of Labor Statistics).** School libraries use Library software such as Destiny for automation to allow teacher and student patrons to see materials in the collection electronically. The Title Peek software allows student patrons to view book covers, which motivates students to read books—like going to the Barnes and Nobles book store. School libraries also use Springshare software to allow librarians to create research guides on specialized topics such as bullying, juvenile populations, youth obesity, career research, and more depending upon teacher collaboration with librarian.

**The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that “Some librarians have private offices, but those in smaller libraries usually share work space with others” (Bureau of Labor Statistics).** During a Long Island public school internship, it was noticed that the administrative librarian has a private office. But, the instructional librarian shares the office with support staff. In New York City public schools, some librarians may have a private office, some may have offices that contain media such as videos, but many do not have private offices. Many librarian private offices have been lost due to library reconstruction, co-location of other schools in a school building, or overcrowded schools where space is at a premium. The loss of the librarian office is the beginning of the vanishing librarian.

**It is interesting to note that “The industries that employed the most librarians in 2012 were as follows: Elementary and secondary schools; state, local, and private 38%” (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Yet, there seems to be a trend of decreasing the number of librarians in the next ten years or so although their professional skills, qualifications and talents are sorely needed to prepare students for college course work, private sector employment, and civil service employment—all of which require analytical skills, problem solving ability, and the ability to work in teams and independently. This is a tall order in which a teacher librarian plays a vital role along with the education community of teachers across the curriculum.**
Ramirez’ snapshot of the library “industry largely dominated by white women” was acutely noticeable while pursuing a Master of Science degree at CUNY Queens College. The number of minority graduates and especially male graduates were few. Many of the graduate students were predominantly English teachers and a few social studies teachers. White women, who were school librarians, recommended the librarian profession. They provided invaluable support and encouragement to become a teacher librarian. When the librarians retired, the job was to move the library forward beyond their footsteps. But, the moving forward has been a hazardous journey of diplomacy, advocacy, and patience in managing complex attitudes about the library and the librarian’s role in education across the curriculum.

Ramirez informs us through Jason Alston’s experience (an African American male doctoral candidate in library and information science at the University of South Carolina) that “Someone even teased him once, "That's no kind of profession for a man."” The idea that a “[Library] is no profession for a man” is nonsense when many of the public school populations are predominantly black and Hispanic males—who are in dire need of role models in the teaching profession. In fact, many black and Hispanic males are sorely absent on college campuses where it would be a beacon of light to see an African American male in the college library.

Ramirez also captures the perceptions of librarian’s duties and responsibilities with the inquiry “What will you be doing all day?” being posed to librarians. Many educators and students in public schools also pose similar questions, “So, what do you do, and you don’t teach anymore?” The questions strike like a bolt of lightning! There is only a moment and minute to respond. So the strategic response is that librarians teach classes when library class appointments are made for class research projects.

When some teachers see a librarian in the library, they may sometimes tease and say, “My next career is going to be a librarian.” Or, “Have you shelved any books today?” The statements are not harmful but rather wistful in remembrance of the role of a librarian and the place of a library to be associated with calm, peacefulness, and helpful assistance. However, the ever increasing demands of the federal, state, and city government for schools to increase graduation rates and to increase college readiness rates has made the school library become a more intense environment—unassociated with the calming nature of the past remembered school library environments. So, when old familiar library associations die, then the general perception
seems to be that the library profession is also dying, but this idea is a misconception. One need only be present for a library class lesson on book citation that takes 40 minutes of intensity in scrutinizing the title and copyright pages to write one MLA or APA citation! The tense look of student faces and the continuous raised hands for assistance or confirmation are clear examples of a rebirth of the new library profession that is preparing students for careers and college.

The perceptions of the library and librarians are playing a key role in undermining, belittling, and quietly erasing a profession that is extremely needful in today’s educational institutions. Race, class, and gender roles need to be re-examined to reshape ideas about the library and the roles of librarians in education.

Ramirez also informs us through Alston’s experience that ignorance about the value of librarians may “shine light on reasons [the library profession] is struggling to recruit and retain credential librarians of color.” When New York City requested a waiver to hire school librarians in 2013, it literally placed a glacier on recruitment and retention efforts to secure any librarian—let alone librarians of color. According to Fleisher, “City officials [stated that] advancements in technology, shifts in teaching practices and the addition of classroom libraries have made librarians not as necessary as they once were.” Are “librarians not as necessary as they once were” in Long Island and Westchester counties educating middle and upper class student populations? Or, are “librarians not as necessary as they once were” in New York City public schools educating poor, working class, and lower middle class student populations? The question of “necessary librarians” is looking more like an issue of race and/or class conflicts rather than advancements in technology, shifts in teaching practices, and classroom libraries. In short, if New York State law were to state that “librarians are not as necessary as they once were” and eliminated all public school librarian positions in New York State, then the decision would be a horrible but equitable tragedy. Yet, it seems that New York City officials have determined that there is a limit to providing equitable library education to poor, working class, and lower middle class student populations. According to the Associated Press, as of 2014, “New York City has been ordered to provide high schools with enough librarians to meet state regulations.” The order is like a governor giving a man a reprieve on death row, but in this case the school librarians and New York City school students were given the reprieve.
Incidentally, the *1935 Negro In Harlem Report* stated the following about P.S. 82 (built in 1889 with an addition in 1895):

“This school like other schools in the Negro area is overcrowded and therefore must run two sessions. Moreover, the school has no gymnasium or library, which is deemed necessary. While this is probably the worst school in the Negro section of Harlem, the majority of the other schools show similar characteristics in varying degrees” (*New York City* 69-70).

The *1935 Negro In Harlem Report* is classic in presenting the race, class, and gender discrimination that affects not only school libraries and librarians today, but also affects New York City public education also. **In short,** the absence of a library is the mark of poverty and discrimination. In 2014, the seventy-nine year update should be that the absence of a library *and* a certified librarian is a mark of poverty associated with persistent race and class historical discrimination.

The *1935 Negro In Harlem Report also stated* “overcrowding affects chiefly the schools in which Negro children represent the majority of the pupils shown by the figures on schools having more than one session” (*New York City* 70). The New York City response today to overcrowding has been to create smaller schools. **And,** the full-time librarian becomes a thorny issue in small schools. The New York City formula is 1 teacher librarian per 1,000 students. So, when small schools with less than 1000 students are able to achieve academic success without a school librarian, the implication seems to be that school librarians are not necessary. **In effect,** downsizing, excessing, and small schools result in the loss of not only librarians—but also librarian educators of color. New librarians (and librarians of color) are the first to be excessed because they are generally the newly hired. The loss of librarians of color is more acutely felt because there is simply not that many minorities in the library profession.

**Mark Puente, director of diversity and leadership programs at the Association of Research Libraries, stated that** “his father couldn't understand why his son wanted to spend more years in college to work putting books on shelves” (*Ramirez*). The statement is the most powerful image that seeks to belittle the librarian’s profession. **Yet,** it is through the “putting books on shelves” that a librarian is most informed about the weaknesses and strengths of the print collection. Although the Internet age has ushered in many electronic resources, many patrons still prefer the tactile, visual, and sensory experience of handling a book to read for
leisure or research. **Also,** books sometimes yield more in-depth information than database magazine and journal articles. **So,** although the book association can be belittling, books are still the patron and librarian’s best friend. Books are the foundation of the library business, in addition to electronic and media resources.

**Librarians have communicated at conferences about the fact that** “Some [school] libraries may close, reduce the size of their staff, or focus on hiring library technicians and assistants, who can fulfill some librarian duties at a lower cost” for the future (**Bureau of Labor Statistics**). The fact that librarians may become extinct like the dinosaurs is absolutely disturbing. **However,** the dinosaurs were at least fossilized, leaving a lasting memory and modern-day fascination about them long after their departure. Considering the fact that many New York City public school students rarely see a library or experience a certified librarian in their 12-year education, the school librarian profession may indeed outrank the dinosaurs as being the greatest extinction on earth—the school librarian vanishes!
Works Cited


