8

ADVOCACY AND YOU

Several years ago, advocacy moved from the concept of promoting an issue—such as "advocating for school reform"—to being an initiative many organizations have embraced. A number of people regarded it as just another buzzword for doing the same old thing, but those who were open to learning more soon realized it was quite different and very powerful. In today's world where jobs are based on increased accountability, knowing how to incorporate advocacy into what you do has become necessary to your survival.

What Advocacy Is

Before you can use it, you need to understand what advocacy is and is not. There is a tendency to confuse it with public relations and marketing. In practice, those two activities join advocacy to form a tripod on which to showcase your program.

Becoming clear about the differences and functions of these three practices is important since you will be using each of them. In general, think of public relations as short-term, marketing as a fixed-period campaign, and advocacy as an ongoing way of being. Sometimes you will have all three going at once. But no matter what else you are or are not doing, you will always be advocating at some level.

Public Relations

This can be the easiest of the three activities to use. Simply put, public relations tells people what you are doing well. You let them know of your existence and show that you provide an important service.

Some examples of good public relations are to invite people to an event you are holding in the library, or announce a new database that you will demonstrate. It can even be as simple as making sure the hours the library is open are posted in a visible location as well as on your website. If you are so inclined (and can manage to fit it into your very crowded schedule), try to do something every month to keep people aware of the school library program.

Once you understand what public relations is, you realize how much of it you already do. You distribute bookmarks or create a brochure about the library. Perhaps you hand out pencils with the library's name on them. Now that you are conscious of it, keep track of all these mini-campaigns and inform your principal about them.

If you would like to get some possible ideas for a public relations program, check out the winners of the John Cotton Dana Award. Sponsored by the H. W. Wilson Company, the award honors an outstanding library public relations program. While public libraries are the most frequent recipients of the award, find-

ing out what they did may suggest possibilities for something you might want to try in the future. You can see what campaigns won by going to www.ebscohost.com/academic/john-cotton-dana since the award is now managed through EBSCO.

Marketing

Marketing is about selling your program and is an area that the ALA is stressing for all types of libraries. As with public relations, your campaign can be small or large—and for your first attempt you want to take a baby step. Once you get positive results, you will be eager to try another. Just remember, do not offer more than you can deliver.

To have a successful marketing campaign, you need to determine just what you want to sell and what message to use. Decide whether you want to use one slogan throughout your campaign (as in "Got Milk?") or vary them to keep up interest. Think of your slogans as highlighting a four-step process. Initially you want to raise *awareness*. What is happening in the library that key stakeholders should know about? (A bit of public relations is important here.)

Next you want your target audience to develop *interest*. Tease them into taking a closer look. Once they are hooked, raise their *desire* for the service. Show why it is something they cannot live without. Finally, present them with an opportunity to take *action*. In the business world, this is where you make the sale. What do you want them to do?

While selling your program is essential, don't think you must create a grand campaign. Principals and teachers have to be aware of what you do and why it is important to them. On the other hand, developing a marketing campaign requires time to think through the steps and develop all the parts and a time line to execute it.

Eventually you may want to work with the other SLs in your district on a campaign. Your state affiliate may put on training sessions using ALA materials to teach you how to construct a detailed campaign. Until then, just let everyone know that "Every Student Succeeds @ your library."

Advocacy

As noted earlier, advocacy is a continuing process. Look for partners and recognize that aspects of your success are intertwined with theirs. If you are in an elementary school with a fixed schedule, you have something in common with the art, music, and physical education teachers. They would also like to connect to the curriculum.

Instead of each of you working in your separate areas, find ways to work together for a greater impact. For your initial effort, tie your collaboration to the school calendar. You might prepare a schoolwide Thanksgiving celebration.

Students can learn art forms as they decorate the building depicting the theme, study songs related to the holiday, and play old-fashioned games in gym. For *your* contribution, help students research the history of the feast and find and make colonial recipes. Read stories to them about the day and about gratitude. A showcase from all four subject areas just before vacation will do much to focus attention on the contribution you all make to increase student learning.

The AASL provides numerous resources for you at its website. Go to www.ala.org/aasl/, click on "Advocacy." Review the definitions for *public relations*, *marketing*, and *advocacy*. Scroll down to "Tools" for Brochures, an Infographic with supporting information, and several very helpful toolkits including the "@ your library toolkit for School Library Programs" with additional Tools and Resources.

You need not spend time each day or even once a week on advocacy. What you must do is make it part of your way of doing business. While it is important to let others know what you do that is unique, keep promoting *their* work *which you support through the SLP*. As they come to rely on your assistance, they have a stake in your survival. And you must have a stake in theirs. That is advocacy.

PROMOTING YOUR PROGRAM

What small public relations idea can bring your program to teachers' attention?

What part of your program do you want to sell? Who is the prime audience?

How can you connect with the school nurse? The computer teacher?

What other partnerships can you create in your building?

Why You Need It

Teaching students and managing the administrative aspects of the library are a huge job. Added to that is your responsibility for developing collaborative relationships with teachers and making your principal aware of the scope of what

you do. With all that on your plate, when are you going to find time for public relations, marketing, and advocacy? Is it really that important?

Yes, it is that important, but as was stated earlier, you are already doing a lot of it. In encouraging collaboration with teachers, you are constantly engaged in marketing. As noted in chapter 6, they feel they are very successful without the library program. You are the one who shows them how their students can learn more when you work together. You offer them support at whatever level they will accept, hoping they will come to realize how much they need you. That is marketing—it is targeted and specific.

Your reports to your principal, whether required or not, are public relations. You are letting her know what is happening in the library. Posters announcing special services or new databases are also public relations.

What you are probably not doing much of is advocacy. In your first months on the job, you have a great deal to assimilate and little time to focus on creating partnerships. But on your calendar or wherever you will notice it, make a note that somewhere in the third marking period you should begin to think about advocacy.

We live in a world of tight budgets and accountability. No matter what the economy does, this will not change. Every department in the district is fighting for money and staff. To maintain and build a strong program, you need a lot of support. If your focus is on *defending* your needs, you will find each year the administration chips a little bit away. It is a losing battle.

Stop worrying about guarding your territory, put your energy into creating alliances, and your program will thrive. In his bestseller, *The World Is Flat,* Thomas L. Friedman discusses a fundamental change in how economies work. Although he is describing the business world, the message applies equally well in the education setting. He observes that we are moving from a vertical, command and control model to a horizontal, connect and collaborate model.[1] Connecting and collaborating are the hallmarks of advocacy.

Focus on your goals and outcomes. Who else shares them? What can you do together that would be more successful than if you worked separately? It is natural for an SLS to think, "How can I help you?" Use this mind-set when speaking with everyone in the educational community. The more people who know who you are and what the library program can do for them, the more likely you are to find supporters when you need them.

By continually reaching out to others, you also get a reputation for being a team player. As noted earlier, the term is overused, but it is not bad when the administration perceives you that way. Give a lot before asking for support in return, but be prepared to ask for help when you need it. When you do, make your request specific and key it to your common goals.

CREATING AN ADVOCACY PROGRAM

What public relations are you already doing?

_____

What marketing are you doing?

_____

List your goals and outcomes. Who shares them in whole or in part?

_____

Avoiding Pitfalls

While advocacy and its "handmaidens"—public relations and marketing—are important to keep in mind, we cannot state too often that you should move slowly when in a new job situation. Cliques, rivalries, and friendships are already in place, and you will have little knowledge for some time about where these lines are drawn. If you are fortunate enough to have a clerk or active volunteers, they may start filling you in as you build a relationship with them. Until then, steer clear of major projects in this area.

One of the most common missteps is to speak at a faculty meeting about a problem you are experiencing or an action step you want to take. It seems like such a logical idea. Everyone is together; you can prepare your thoughts. What could be simpler?

Before you open your mouth, reflect on what is happening at this time. It is after school. People are tired. Some are griping about the length of the agenda. Others use this as an opportunity to make negative comments about the administration to a friend sitting next to them. Then you step up with your great plan. What reception are you going to get?

Although a few might ask questions, most teachers do not want to drag this out. The sooner you are finished, the earlier the meeting will end. What is worse, the naysayers are dissecting your idea, pointing out what is wrong with it (or you for suggesting it) to those alongside them. *And you will not hear any of this.* All you will discover is that you have a low level of cooperation, and you will start getting frustrated.

Instead of launching your campaign at a faculty meeting, test it out with those teachers you trust. Listen to what they have to say. Tinker with it. Try it with a few others. If you must present it to the whole group, have your support already built up. Let everyone know that you have spoken with a number of people and you want to thank them for their input. Do not mention names, since that can cause another set of problems.

If any of your projects involve money, be sure you know if and where it is available. Do not assume that having money in your budget means you can spend it on what you like. Accounts are reserved for special purposes (see chapter 9), and not all expenditures are permitted.

Speak with your principal to ensure you proceed according to district policies. Focus on what you hope to achieve, why it is important, and how you plan to accomplish it. Discuss your anticipated budget and have a smaller, cheaper version to fall back on if your first suggestion is not accepted. By demonstrating that you plan for contingencies, you are more likely to get approval.

Usually, you also need permission for fund-raising activities. Find out who oversees this area and learn what steps are required. Because you are accustomed to working alone, making choices about book orders and other aspects of managing the library, you can easily act as though you are an independent operator. However, projects that occur frequently during the year under the auspices of teachers (or parents), such as bake sales, are normally more closely regulated. Always check to be sure you are not violating school or district procedures.

TREADING WITH CAUTION

What patterns and behaviors have you observed during faculty meetings?

Which teachers would you speak to before addressing the faculty?

How would you request a meeting with your principal to discuss an advocacy, public relations, or marketing project?

Social Media—the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Your students spend a great deal of time on social media and you are probably doing so as well. It has become integral to our lives. Although districts are increasingly allowing some access to it in the schools, they are moving cautiously because of the risks involved. Know and observe your district's policy.

Even with restrictions, there are permitted social media channels available in schools and you should make good use of them. Create a Twitter account for your library. This will separate it from a personal account you might have. Use it for professional development by following librarians with great ideas and asking for advice and help. Check out the Twitter Chats, such as #edchat and particularly #tlchat which is specifically for school librarians.

Join Pinterest and search on school libraries or other related topics to see how the resource is being used to connect with students and generate interest in books and what libraries have to offer. Create one based on your interests to get a feel for how to do it. Once you are comfortable with making a board, start one for your students. You can do one for new books or alternate search engines. Ask students for suggestions and give them what they want.

Use safe social media such as Edmodo when working with students. It is a good place for them to learn online safety. Become familiar with the AASL Best Websites for Teaching and Learning (www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines/best-websites) and the AAASL Best Apps for Teaching and Learning (www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines/best-apps). New ones are added each year.

The "Bad" concerns your own social media presence. You are well aware of the lack of online privacy and how difficult it is to clean up a digital footprint. When you work in a school, you will be under observation. Make sure you are not tagged in photographs showing you with alcohol. It can cause problems. Do not "friend" any of your students. That sort of social interaction is frowned upon. It might be prudent to avoid taking bold political stances online. While you have the right to your opinion, some will believe you will use it to sway students and take you to task for it.

For the most part, the "Ugly" refers to cyberbullying. Despite efforts by school personnel, it continues to flourish, springing up in new forms all the time. Most students have left Facebook for Instagram, Vine, and Snapchat. Others will be in existence when you read this. A recent app fills a wall with negative messages about someone and others join in adding to the vitriol. One school responded by overwhelming the app with positive messages. As a school librarian you are in a position to be one of the first to hear about these sites and apps. Let the administration know and watch for students who may be targeted and in need of help from the guidance staff.

SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

How active are you on Twitter and other social media?

What changes do you need to make concerning your online presence?

What would you do if you became aware of cyberbullying?

Talking with Parents and School Board Members

One of the best and worst aspects of your job is that—within the limits of school security—there is open access to you and the library. Although you customarily think of open access in terms of students and teachers being able to come to the library as needed, the phrase frequently embraces other members of the educational community. Chapter 7 discussed how to manage when the principal (or even the superintendent of schools) drops by unannounced, but you should also anticipate school board members and parents (sometimes wearing both hats) visiting your facility.

Volunteers

If you are at the elementary school level, volunteers may be your only support staff. You will need to recruit, train, and hold on to them. Most often these are parents of your students, although senior citizens and grandparents may be among your helpers.

Since they are not being paid, volunteers need other motivators to bring them in and keep them coming back. On the most positive side, their motive is to help make their children's school a better place. A degree of curiosity is normally present as well. In some cases, there is a desire to ensure that their child is getting the best teachers, preferential treatment, and that educational practices conform to their viewpoint. Managing all these can be a challenge but is well worth your time and effort.

Whether the volunteers sought you out, worked in the library previously, or responded to an invitation from you to come to a tea in the library, once you

have them you need to get the most from them. You do this by making them feel valued. Greet them when they arrive and thank them when they leave. Give your regulars ongoing jobs for which they can be solely responsible. These can be as simple as weeding and shelf reading a section that connects to their special area of knowledge, or more specialized tasks such as entering students into the database, doing simple cataloging, and so on.

While you do want volunteers to handle clerical and even paraprofessional tasks, you should not have them take on professional ones unless you are fortunate enough to have someone with a library background. For example, one new SL allowed parents to do story time with classes while she checked in books. The balance of responsibilities was completely skewed, and it resulted in a major mess. The librarian divided her time between buildings. One day when she was at another school, her volunteers—who felt they could handle anything—decided to reclassify books. They put a significant number of beginning readers in with the picture books. As they only changed spine labels, locating the titles was a time-consuming task. In addition, she had to ease hurt feelings, while establishing procedures to rein in overly exuberant helpers.

You need to have ground rules for acceptable practices. Go over them during the tea and on their first visit when you are training new volunteers. As much as possible, do not change what was previously allowed. Is it acceptable for young children to come with their mothers? (If you do not permit this, you may lose many potential helpers.) Are there a minimum number of hours per week required? Can they schedule themselves to be there when their child has library? (This is a big draw.)

How much authority are you going to give volunteers to discipline students? If you are not in the school full-time, you will need to give them some responsibility in this area. Speak about your philosophy and offer some scenarios as to how you would want them handled. Listen to the volunteers' opinions and work with them.

Volunteers tend to chatter among themselves. If they get too loud—and they sometimes do—have a discussion that alerts them to what is happening without making them feel "wrong." Let them know that teachers sometimes do this as well. When people get to talking, it is easy to forget voice levels.

Since some of your helpers are there for the social aspects, you want to be sure you are still getting work from them. Make a list of tasks that you want done for the day and have them initial what they accomplished. If you compliment the hard workers publicly, the others will get the idea.

In addition to being extra pairs of hands, your volunteers are your eyes, ears—and mouths—in the community. If you do not live locally, they are the ones who will keep you posted on what is happening and give you some inside informa-

tion. They can also be your best supporters as they report to friends and neighbors about the learning that occurs in the library. Be sure to take time to explain to them about information literacy, current research on the connection between an active school library program and student achievement, and the varied roles you play.

At the same time, be cautious when speaking with your volunteers. Never criticize the administration or any teachers. Your comments will be repeated and will come back to haunt you. Whenever possible, put a positive spin on any negatives they observe. In one elementary school, a volunteer observed how often the students in one class needed to be reminded to behave. She commented, "Mrs. Z. is not a very good teacher." The librarian, who was familiar with the situation, responded, "Mrs. Z. is really an excellent teacher with a number of challenging special needs students in her class."

If you find yourself in a difficult situation, such as a budget cut, there is a temptation to marshal your volunteers to wield their influence. Even if you are apparently successful, your reputation with the administration will be harmed. You can let your supporters know what is happening, but do not suggest a course of action to them. Anything they choose to do must be their own decision. You may have to curtail some of their more extreme plans, but make sure that you cannot be seen as encouraging them. (For more information about working with volunteers and planning for their successful participation, see chapter 9.)

Parents

Even if they are not volunteers, parents will occasionally come to the library. Sometimes they want to complain about how you treated their child or discuss a problem with a lost or overdue book. They may want suggestions for reading material, or occasionally they wish to register a complaint about a book. You will want to handle each of these situations with care.

Two guidelines should help you get through the first examples. First, listen actively to what is being said. Do not interrupt or work on what your response will be while the parent is talking. Restate what you believe you heard to be sure that you both agree with what the situation is. Second, do not be defensive. State your policy and practices as objectively as possible, observing that these are uniformly enforced. Ask what the parents' expectations are. Explain what you plan to do (or not do), including informing the principal who can either overrule or uphold your decision.

If parents wish to have a book removed from the shelves, keep calm as recommended in chapter 4. Compliment them on being caring and conscientious. Although you should have a selection policy in place and be prepared to give

them the form you use for challenged material, see if you can keep things from escalating to that point. With today's automated circulation systems, you can usually put a comment in a child's record indicating that he is not permitted certain books. Offer that option, pointing out that parents have full authority to control what their child has access to, but restricting other children is a different matter.

Whatever the situation, how you handle it will be a learning experience for the parents. They will find out more about the library program, its place in the school, and what it means for students and teachers. Rather than feeling attacked, focus on any of these occurrences as an opportunity to promote your program.

Board Members

While some districts do not permit school board members free access to the schools, you may find it is acceptable or even encouraged where you are. In some cases, the board members may be your volunteer parents. It is usually a good idea to learn board members' names and know if they have children in your school. Not that you will give them preferential treatment, but you should be aware of who they are in case a circumstance arises that might get reported home.

Treat visiting board members the same way you handle an appearance by your principal. If you are involved with a class or working with a student, do not stop. However, if you are not engaged in teaching, interrupt what you are doing, and welcome them. Ask what you can do to help and respond to their questions.

When you become more familiar with some of them, you can speak of accomplishments and plans, focusing on the successes of students and teachers. By now you should know that you do not use their visit to complain. Even if they should bring up an issue, be careful how you respond. For example, in one school a number of computers had "out of order" signs on them. The board had met in the library, and this particular member saw the notices and wanted to know what was happening. The answer was, "We are waiting for them to be repaired. The principal is aware of the situation and is dealing with it."

Whether or not the board member focused on a problem area or was just looking around, be sure to notify your administrator of the visit. You cannot predict how this encounter will be relayed, and you want to make sure that your principal is not caught by surprise.

EXTENDING ADVOCACY

What does this section have to do with advocacy?

What guidelines will you have for volunteers?

What do you want your volunteers to know about the library program? How will they learn it?

What is the first thing you will say to a parent who brings a complaint to you?

What are the names of your school board members?

Speaking Outside the School

On occasion, you may speak with those not directly connected to the school. You might visit other local libraries or an organization that works with a segment of your student body. Perhaps you are asked to address a parent-teacher group or the business community. In each case, you need to think about the focus of your message and how to use the meeting to strengthen support for your program.

Other Libraries

Get to know the staff of the local public library. Know the names of the librarians and the rest of the people who work there. Some may have children in your school. Your message, voiced or not, is "We are partners." Exchange e-mail addresses so you can quickly alert them to projects occurring in your school, and they can contact you if they need to know what a particular teacher wants her students to discover. Invite the children's librarian (or the young adult or reference librarian if you are in a middle or high school) to visit you.

Find out what databases you have in common and which are unique. If an interlibrary loan system is not in place, you may be able to set up a personal one, requesting materials for teachers and students—and allowing the public library to borrow books from your collection not connected to a current assignment. By drawing on each other's strengths you will do a better job, and you can show the community that you are making maximum use of its tax dollars.

Secondary SLs should also make the acquaintance of any academic librarians in their area. The push is to look at information literacy at levels K–20, so it helps if you can open a dialogue with them about what abilities their

professors find lacking in entering freshmen. You can then design lessons to build those missing skills. Your teachers will be more apt to collaborate with you if they learn that you have opened this channel and are working to ensure their students' college success.

Community Organizations

Whether it is a YMCA or a place where poverty-level children spend a great deal of time, try to learn more about the community resources your students use. With all you have to do, you may not have an opportunity to meet with these organizations until spring or later, but be mindful of their existence and try to schedule a meeting before school resumes the following year.

As with other libraries, invite key people to visit your facility, but in this case expect the cooperation to be mostly one-sided. You want to develop a sense of the places where a number of your students may be after school. If these places have computers available, check with your database providers and see if your license allows them to have the passwords to access these resources off-site. Let the vendors know that this may be the only way some students can use the databases because home connections are not available.

Parent Groups

Whether you are trying to increase the number of regular volunteers, get help for a special event such as a book fair, or just want to show parents what they need to know about Internet use, speak to the parent organization in your school. Be warmly professional in your demeanor and open to requests and inquiries no matter what the purpose of your talk.

Always have a handout to distribute. Cull your latest statistics to illustrate the vitality of the library program; include "fast facts" about libraries that you can get from the various toolkits available at the AASL website; list recommended alternate search engines; and inform parents of the electronic databases that they can also access. Use your best design skills in preparing the handout, and list your e-mail and phone number so that you can be reached with questions afterward.

Everyone loves freebies, so in addition to the handout you might consider distributing one of your public relations items. Pencils are great, but if your budget does not stretch that far, offer informative bookmarks that you either purchased or made. Although preparing these items as well as your talk will add to your already overburdened schedule, you will not be doing it that often, and you need to make the most of your opportunity. The handout can become a boilerplate for others that you make, so the investment will pay off over time.

Business Organizations

In addition to the parent groups, there are times when you want to approach local businesses. You might be asking them to give you computers when they upgrade their equipment or to volunteer for a read-in. You will most likely be speaking at a Kiwanis or Rotary meeting. Although you would have discussed the project far in advance with your principal and gotten permission for your plans, you will also need to get release time, since these meetings are invariably held at midday and their lunches last much longer than the ones that schools schedule.

Again, you want to have a handout to give them. In addition to the items suggested for parents, you will want to stress that information literacy skills prepare students to think through problems and be ready to learn new things. The business world is not looking for graduates who can do the current job but ones who are able to quickly adjust to a fast-changing environment. You want to show them—succinctly—that the library program provides this "value-added" commodity in the educational setting.

Even if you are not asking them to come to the school for a specific event, extend an invitation to them to visit the library. A few might take you up on your offer, and you can show them how much today's library differs from the school libraries they knew when they were young. Always remember that they are taxpayers who, in many states, vote on the school budget.

REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

What colleges are in your area?

_____

What organizations serve the disenfranchised in the community?

_____

What are some possible topics for a talk you might give to the parent association?

_____

What would you like from local businesses? What can you offer them in return?

_____

Managing the Media

SLs look for opportunities to get local newspapers or television outlets to cover a library event, but most of the time they are unsuccessful. Here as in other areas, you need to build a relationship in order to get results. Find out which person is in charge of education news at the local paper or television station. Send e-mails to these people commenting on columns or programs that you admired.

Well before you ask reporters to come to the library to cover a story, find out how far in advance you need to inform the newspaper or station about the event. (You can make reminder calls as necessary.) Also, discuss what types of situations will bring them to the school. Invariably, journalists want to have pictures of students (and you will need to know what release forms are required). With contacts already in place, when you do invite them to attend some library happening, you will be able to present it in a way that is most likely to get you the desired coverage.

The flip side of successfully bringing the media into the library is that you will be interviewed. Although you will be asked many questions, only a small part of your answers will be used, and you want to be sure that you cannot be quoted as saying anything negative that reflects on the school or the staff. You can promote the goals of the library program, but show how these are achieved as a result of administrative support and teacher collaboration. Highlight student successes. In other words, have only positive things to say.

MEDIA MANNERS

What are the local newspapers and who has the education beat on them?

How often do school events make news? Do you see any patterns?

What local television stations cover schools? Is there one person who does most of the reporting?

Vendor Relations

It may seem odd to discuss vendors in a chapter on advocacy, but they can be an overlooked source of support. You deal with two types, and they can each benefit you in different ways. The ones that visit on-site know what is happening in your area and can provide news as well as alert you to new resources. Large companies from whom you purchase supplies and services often have free materials that can improve the look of your facility or help you advertise the latest acquisitions.

Periodically, a sales representative may call on you. (In some districts this is prohibited, but see what can be done because they provide a valuable service.) Rigidly scheduled SLs have to meet with them at the end of the school day, but those of you who have the flexibility can see them whenever you are not teaching a class.

Some SLs refuse to speak with vendors, claiming they only want to sell their products. Of course they do! And you want to buy them—not everything, but the ones that meet the needs of your students and teachers. When they show up, they bring you copies of books to look over. This is a better way of making a purchasing decision than reading reviews by other people. In addition, you can show the titles to any teachers who are present and get their opinion—and engage their interest.

Good sales representatives come to know your collection and your curriculum and focus on titles they think will work for you. They need to do this if they are going to make a sale, but at the same time it helps you. Most keep track of your past purchases to prevent you from duplicate ordering. However, you will need to be careful not to buy books from your jobber (see chapter 9) that you have already ordered from the representative. Since sales representatives limit themselves to particular publishers, when reading reviews mark the ones you will want to purchase from your rep.

As you examine the items, you can chat about what is going on in the region. You might hear that someone is changing their library automation system or that a nearby SL is leaving at the end of the year. (You may or may not be interested in possible job openings elsewhere.) Once you have completed your selection, many sales representatives will prepare the order list for you so that you need only attach it to your purchase order. You can delete any items that on reconsideration you decide not to buy.

Large companies, particularly database vendors, often have posters and other items that promote their products and will send you these to alert students

and teachers to what is available. Some have teacher and student guides which include lesson plans that can be used directly or be adapted.

Their websites also have numerous free resources. Since these frequently change, check in whenever you have a few spare moments. You can often get good ideas or ask for a demo of a product that you think will fill a need. Speak with someone in their sales and marketing departments and find out if they will send a representative to do an in-person demonstration. They will often provide a trainer for a staff development day at no charge.

IN FAVOR OF VENDORS

Does your library's past purchase orders indicate any acquisitions from publisher representatives?

_____

What resources, if any, are available on the websites of your database vendors?

_____

Which databases would you like to have demonstrated?

_____

KEY IDEAS

- Public relations is putting a spotlight on what you do.
- Marketing is creating a need for your program.
- Advocacy is a continuous process of giving and getting support from a broad range of people.
- Be conscious of your public relations and marketing strategies.
- Look for partners.
- Do not address the faculty unless you have done the groundwork first.
- Verify that you can use money in your budget for advocacy projects.
- Learn the procedures for fund-raising activities.
- Know your district's social media policy.
- Clean your digital footprint and keep it that way.
- Become aware of social media sites and apps your students use.

- Volunteers are your connection to the community.
- Respond positively when challenged by parents.
- Treat school board members the same way you treat your principal.
- Identify various groups outside the school with whom you can make connections.
- With administrative approval, create an open door policy and invite members of these groups to visit the library.
- Always have a handout to distribute when speaking to community groups.
- Become acquainted with newspaper and television reporters who cover local school events.
- Be careful what you say to reporters.

Note

1. Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 201.