Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats:

A SWOT Analysis of the

Andrew Jackson Elementary School Library

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Abstract

The following is a SWOT analysis of the Andrew Jackson Elementary School (Jackson) Library. The S.W.O.T. analysis examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the school library. The Jackson Library provides materials to support the classroom curriculum for Kindergarten through fifth grades. Materials are provided for students in support of Scholastic Reading Counts, recreational reading, and research for reports and projects. Data has been gathered through email and informal interviews with library users. Results will be used to guide future planning, collection development and to ensure the Jackson library supports the mission of the school.
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An analysis of the Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T) provides an overview of any library. For a school library it is an excellent planning tool for the upcoming school year. Results can be used to establish goals for growth and improvement of the library. Data gathered can ensure the library is continually working to serve the needs of its users and support the school curriculum.

**Strengths**

The staff of the Jackson library consists of one full-time certified librarian and one full-time library assistant. Participants in the S.W.O.T. analysis listed the library staff as knowledgeable, helpful and welcoming to students and adults. The library collection is good in many areas including the fiction and easy book collection. The library website is helpful to teachers and students. It provides information about the library and links to online databases and research tools. Jackson’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is supportive of the library, providing volunteers and monetary donations from time to time.

**Weaknesses**

Changes in the school curriculum require students not only read from many genres, but that they experience literature through various media. One area of weakness noted was the need for more books with CDs and audio books in the collection. The physical library at Jackson school is inadequate for the population it serves. The library furniture and shelves are worn and need to be replaced. Increased wiring for computers, printers, scanners and other electronic devices needs to be added. Lack of space prohibits the audiovisual collection from being stored in the library.
with the print collection. The library is fully scheduled with six classes each school day. There is no flexible time during the day for students or teachers to use the library at the point of need. Some type of marketing plan is needed to alert library users of new materials and upcoming events.

**Opportunities**

The nine student computer workstations in the library are in need of upgrade. With the upcoming school year approaching, there is an opportunity to seek funding to purchase new computers and equipment to be used in the library. There is a large population of students who remain after school in the YMCA after school care program. A partnership between the library and the YMCA that would allow students to use the library after school for reading, research and to take Scholastic Reading Counts quizzes could greatly benefit the school. The Jackson library currently has one book fair each school year in the fall. A second book fair could be added during the spring. For the upcoming school year, eBooks will be purchased and added to the library collection. This is one way to improve areas of the collection that are lacking. Many teachers think they do not have time to search for materials in the library. This is an area of opportunity for the library staff to reach out and develop a collaborative partnership with the classroom teachers.

**Threats**

The Kingsport City School (KCS) system has always funded its school libraries above the state minimum. With increasing demands on the overall school system budget, decreased funding for the KCS libraries is a threat. Students are responsible for all materials checked out from the library. Each year there are more students who check materials out and lose them, do not return them, or return them in damaged condition. The cost to replace these materials is often never
Many students and teachers today turn to the Internet for all their information needs. Students and teachers need to be taught to seek quality sources of information and that the library can play an important role in this.