

For Immediate Release
May 4, 2022

Paula Michalak, District Librarian at Silver Creek Central School District is Certified Sustainable

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative has recognized Paula Michalak as a leader in sustainability.

New York State – May 4, 2022 – Paula Michalak, District Librarian at the Silver Creek Central School District in Silver Creek, NY has been certified through the award-winning Sustainable Library Certification Program. Paula is the second school librarian to be certified through this program, the first of its kind in the world, through the [Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#).



Paula Michalak, District Librarian at Silver Creek Central School District with her Sustainable Library Certification Program Certificate.

Paula’s mentor for the Sustainable Library Certification Program, Dr. Jen Cannell has offered guidance throughout the school year to assist Paula as she completed the benchmarks that make up this substantive and reflective program. Regarding Paula’s certification, she stated:

“It is clear that Paula has been systemically working to integrate the ideals of the SLCP into her program, even before she began working on the benchmarks. It is wonderful to read about all she is doing to truly integrate the principles of sustainability into all areas of the curriculum. She is developing strong relationships and advocating for student needs in order to ensure that transformative learning takes place. It is especially impressive that she has worked to connect people, ideas and resources.”

The comprehensive Sustainable Libraries Certification Program for School Librarians requires each member to work through Action Items in five categories covering the three pillars of environmental, social, and economic sustainability included in the Triple Bottom Line definition used by the Sustainable Libraries Initiative. Focusing on Community Involvement, Leading Beyond the Library, Social Equity and Resiliency, Standards and Curriculum, and Collections, all program participants choose from the suggested actions to identify those that are most beneficial to their libraries. Working through these actions, reflecting on their impact, and sharing these resources as they move through the program, they are creating a community of practice that is moving their schools and communities towards a more sustainable future.

Pursuing this certification has helped Paula focus her efforts for the benefit of her students, school, and community. As she worked through the Action Items, she was able to reflect and demonstrate to her administration and community that the school librarian plays a vital role in students' learning and community engagement. Her efforts have helped to elevate her role and have gained her much deserved recognition. She reflects:

“I believe a school librarian has a unique responsibility to always be current in teaching trends, collection development needs, technology, advocacy for literary needs, while also keeping a birds eye view of the curricular needs throughout the grade levels. School librarians can speak to vertical and horizontal alignment in a way many people cannot, and have a unique ability to see trends within student learning to help students achieve... the school library is a great place to develop connections with students and families through programs created and run by the school libraries, like the High School Internship Program or MS Minecraft Club or Elementary Lego Robotics or Newspaper Club... The SLCP helped me clearly articulate the many aspects of being a school librarian and the clear benefit of a school librarian in any school.”

For the 2021-2022 school year, there is a cohort of 12 School Librarians in New York State enrolled with the goal of becoming certified in June 2022. These participants have individual guidance from a mentor and regularly scheduled online group meetups and work sessions. Working together, sharing resources, and being able to network with other school librarians who are advancing the principals of sustainability in their buildings keeps these participants engaged and motivated to take action.

The Sustainable Library Certification Program is now enrolling School Librarians throughout New York State, Public Libraries nationwide, and will launch an Academic Library Certification Program in the fall.

For more information:
Annemarie Gordon, Sustainability Coordinator
[Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#)
sliadmin@suffolknet.org