

Top 10 Survival Tips:



1. **Assemble “lifeboat” resources.** What things need to travel with you wherever you go? What are the “bare essentials” that help you survive?
2. **Create a detailed instructional/sub notebook.** Write out instructions for basic library tasks including circulation (include screen shots), shelving, etc. Include instructions for “always” jobs like cleaning books, straightening shelves, etc. Always have tasks ready for volunteers and helpers.
3. **Delegate.** Save tasks for volunteers, aides, subs, and students. It’s OK if it’s not done perfectly or exactly the way you’d do it. Save your energy for the most important things. (It’s hard for perfectionists to do this -- I would

usually prefer to do it myself so it’s done my way, but I’m improving in this area and it helps a LOT.)

4. **Network.** My #1 network is my KASL colleagues. I regularly use their collective wisdom by asking questions and participating in discussions on the KASL email list. I also have personal contact with librarians I know and respect, so I know who to go to for help and advice.
5. **Plan ahead & communicate.** I spend lots of time figuring out my monthly schedule, planning lessons and trying to avoid calendar conflicts (field trips, etc.). I communicate these schedules to staff through monthly and weekly calendars.
6. **Celebrate successes & accomplishments.** Send emails and photos to administrators and board members of programs / activities / successes / accomplishments. Always include something about the library in the district/school newsletter. Let people see what you’re doing and why the library is vital in your school. It’s worth the time.
7. **Set boundaries.** Learn to say no. That’s hard when you’re a people pleaser, but you can’t do everything for everybody. Guard your personal time so you don’t get overwhelmed and burned out. Here are my boundaries: After 4 years of trying to keep my nose above water, I demanded a protected plan time, and it made a HUGE difference. I don’t skip lunch. I don’t spend out-of-school time doing basic library tasks: cataloging, shelving. I decide if I want to put in extra time for special displays, new lessons, and promotions. It’s my choice.
8. **Give yourself credit and learn to let it go.** Instead of focusing on what you **don’t** have time to do, focus on what you can do and let go of the rest. Don’t feel guilty. You can’t do everything, and that’s OK!
9. **Do something fun.** I can remember feeling so overwhelmed with basic tasks that I didn’t have time to do anything creative or fun. I made it my goal to do at least one creative/fun project per semester. I figured out a way to make time for something fun and was glad I did! It was energizing to my students, my staff, and to me! Steal/borrow ideas from others. Some things can be really simple and really don’t take much time.
10. **Remember: you have the best job ever!** You make a difference in your school and in the lives of your students. At my desk, I posted a note I got from a parent. Feel free to insert your name: “Thanks for all the creative ways you encourage reading, _____. Your work is so important.”