

## Public libraries and school media centers serve different needs

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*Library Director*

In this space, we'll try to answer some questions that you might have about the library building project. Please e-mail them to [ldf@noblenet.org](mailto:ldf@noblenet.org) or send it to 18 Summer St., Lynnfield MA 01940. We will try to answer your questions in a future column as well as on our Library Building Project web

pages. Please go to <http://www.lynnfieldlibrary.org/library-building-project> and click on "From the Desk of the Director."

One of the questions we get from our patrons is – if you are looking for more space, why not combine the Lynnfield school media centers and the public library? On the face of it, it sounds like a great idea. However, there are

some very important differences in the mission and purpose of our media center versus the public library. Our media centers purchase books and magazines that serve their students and provide curriculum for a particular age group and grade level. They collect primarily non-fiction and less fiction. More importantly, they are not equipped

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to serve any group other than pre-determined age levels. Our public library supports townspeople of all ages in meeting their personal, professional, educational and recreational needs with a wide variety of books, magazines, DVDs, music CDs and much more. Our doors are open to all.

Usually a school media center is attached to a school – either inside or part of larger campus – and may be located on the outskirts of a town or city. Security is such that school doors are locked at all times now and the schools close at the end of classes and are not open on weekends. By its very definition a school media center cannot be open to the public.

The public library is usually located – of necessity and as part of tradition – in the center of town. In some cities and towns there might be branches scattered throughout the community. Traditionally, it is open select days, evenings and weekends. The Lynnfield Public Library is open 64 hours per week.

On Thursday, March 10, the Building Committee, the Trustees, and William Rawn Associates, Architects, will hold the third and final Community Forum prior to Town Meeting on Monday, April 25. Everyone is encouraged to join us at the Huckleberry Hill School's multi-purpose room and be prepared to see preliminary designs for a new library.