

Yoshikai librarian named Oregon School Librarian of the Year

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Kirsten Truman, Yoshikai Elementary librarian, works with students Joceline Franco, from left, Cassandra Brown, and Yareni Terrones, with their reading Friday, April 22, 2011.

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Parents, teachers and staff always thought Yoshikai Elementary had the best librarian but Monday proved it.

Librarian Kirsten Truman was named Oregon School Librarian of the Year by the Oregon Association of School Librarians.

“She has done some amazing things at Yoshikai and has supported literacy like no other,” said library assistant Melinda Freshour.

Truman helped teachers build a reading program that makes sure every student finds the perfect fit between their reading level and the book they choose in the classroom and the library.

But Truman has mixed emotions about the award — she is one of many Salem-Keizer librarians who won’t have a job next year when the district eliminates all elementary and middle school librarians.

“It’s wonderful to be recognized,” she said, “but it’s bitter sweet.”

Students still think they can break open their piggy banks to keep her, Freshour said.

Truman plans to work at Yoshikai through the summer, she said, but she isn't sure what she'll do after that.

"I'm sorry for myself but I'm just so sorry for the bigger picture," she said about the cuts.

Salem-Keizer's library media program specialist Stephen Cox said the award, regardless of the timing, is well deserved.

"It's a big deal," he said, "we're excited for her."

Cox said she's one of many talented librarians the district will lose this year.

"We have some wonderful people," he said, "it's a real loss."