

Districts Reporting Any Librarians & No Librarians, 2015-16 through 2018-19

This section examines school librarian employment to determine trends over time from 2015-16 to 2018-19. Districts that maintained some level of school librarian FTEs shared certain district characteristics and student demographics. Districts that eliminated librarian positions by the middle of the last decade—and had not restored them by 2018-19—fit a very different profile.

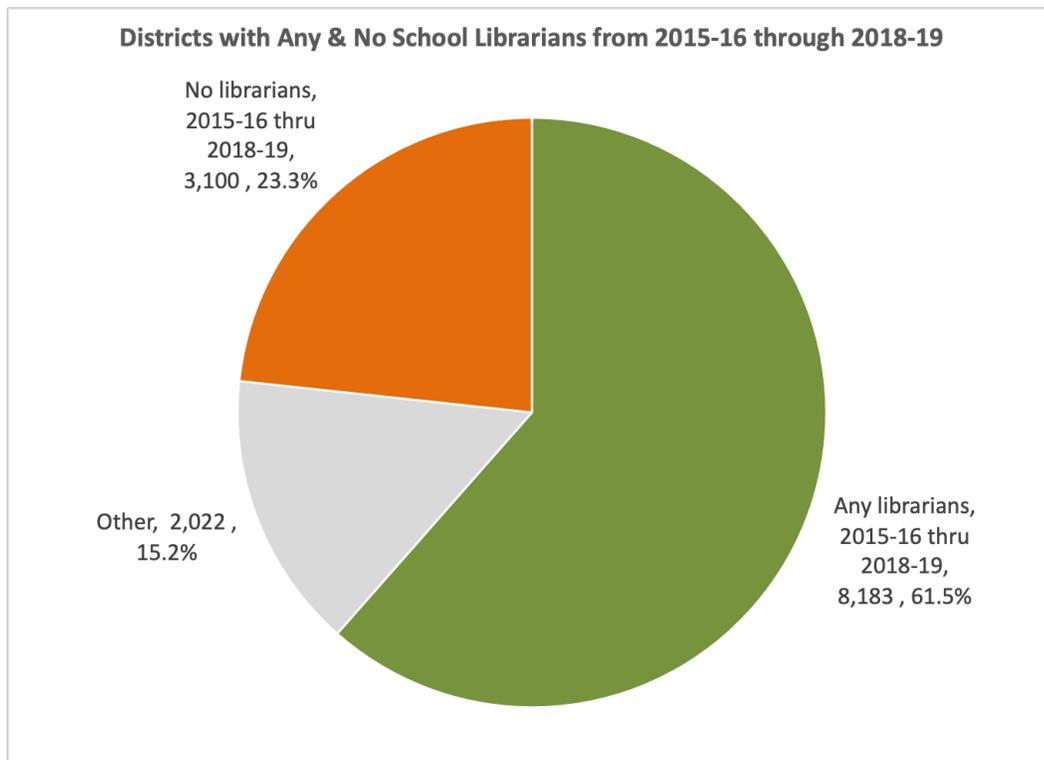
How many districts maintained any level of school librarian staffing—however variable it may have been—between 2015-16 and 2018-19? And conversely, how many districts have reported no librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19?

Three out of 5 districts (61.5%) reported some full-time equivalent (FTE) of school librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19. Almost a quarter of districts (23.3%) have reported no school librarians since at least 2015-16. Remaining districts (15.2%) are those that had librarians some years, and not others. (See Chart 20.)

61.5% of local school districts have employed school librarians consistently between 2015-16 and 2018-19. Almost a quarter have reported no librarians since at least 2015-16.

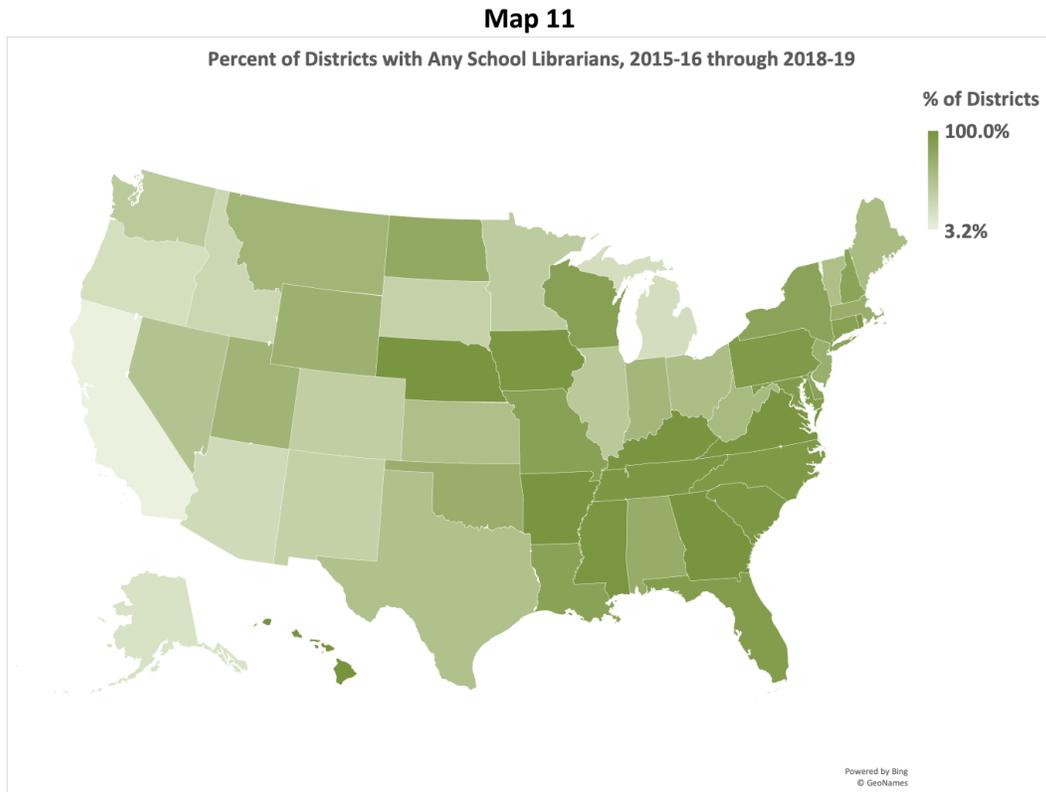
Districts that maintained school librarians share certain geography, district characteristics, and student demographics. Districts that gave up their last librarians by the middle of the last decade—and have not reported restoring them—fit a very different profile.

Chart 20



Which states had the largest percentage of districts that continuously employed school librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19?

Applying the comparison ratios—librarian FTE per school, students per librarian FTE, and teachers per librarian FTE—districts that sustained some level of librarian staffing were concentrated in the eastern half of the nation, particularly the South. (See Map 11.)



Jurisdictions with the largest percentages of districts that employed school librarians continuously between 2015-16 and 2018-19 included D.C. and Hawaii (100.0% as each is a single district) as well as seven Southern states—Georgia (98.9%), Arkansas (98.3%), Virginia, Kentucky (both 97.7%), Mississippi (97.2%), Tennessee (95.9%), and South Carolina (95.2%). Other similarly staffed Midwestern states include Nebraska (98.4%) and Iowa (96.4%). (See Chart 21.)

Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, districts in the South and Northeast were more likely to have continuously employed school librarians than those in the West.

Which states had the smallest percentages of districts that continuously employed school librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19?

Twelve states reported fewer than half of their districts as continuous employers of school librarians. Those states include 8 Western states: Washington (43.8%), Colorado (39.3%), New Mexico (36.0%), Idaho (29.6%), Arizona (26.2%), Oregon (22.2%), Alaska (18.9%), and California (3.2%). The remaining 4 states with low percentages of districts employing librarians continuously are in the Midwest: Illinois (44.7%)⁹, Minnesota (41.6%), South Dakota (34.9%), and Michigan (22.3%). (See Chart 22.) Percentages of districts reporting any librarians consistently from 2015-16 to 2018-19 are reported by state in Tables 14a and 14b.

⁹ As almost half of Illinois districts did not report librarian staffing, this percentage is incomplete.

Chart 21

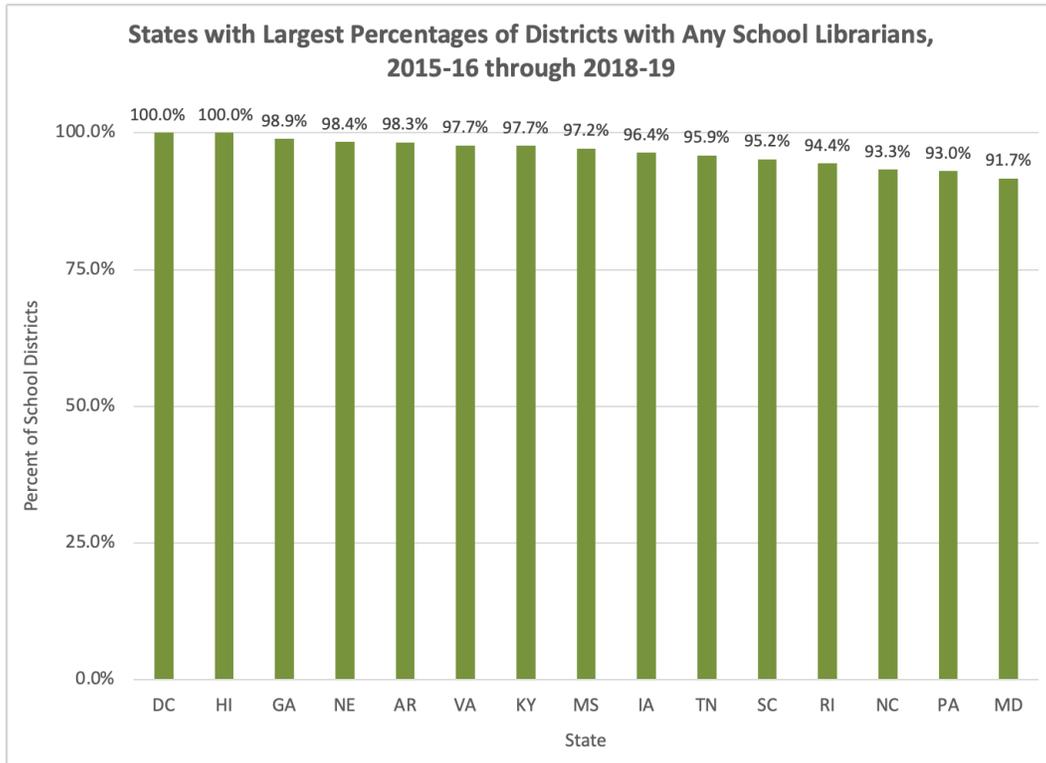
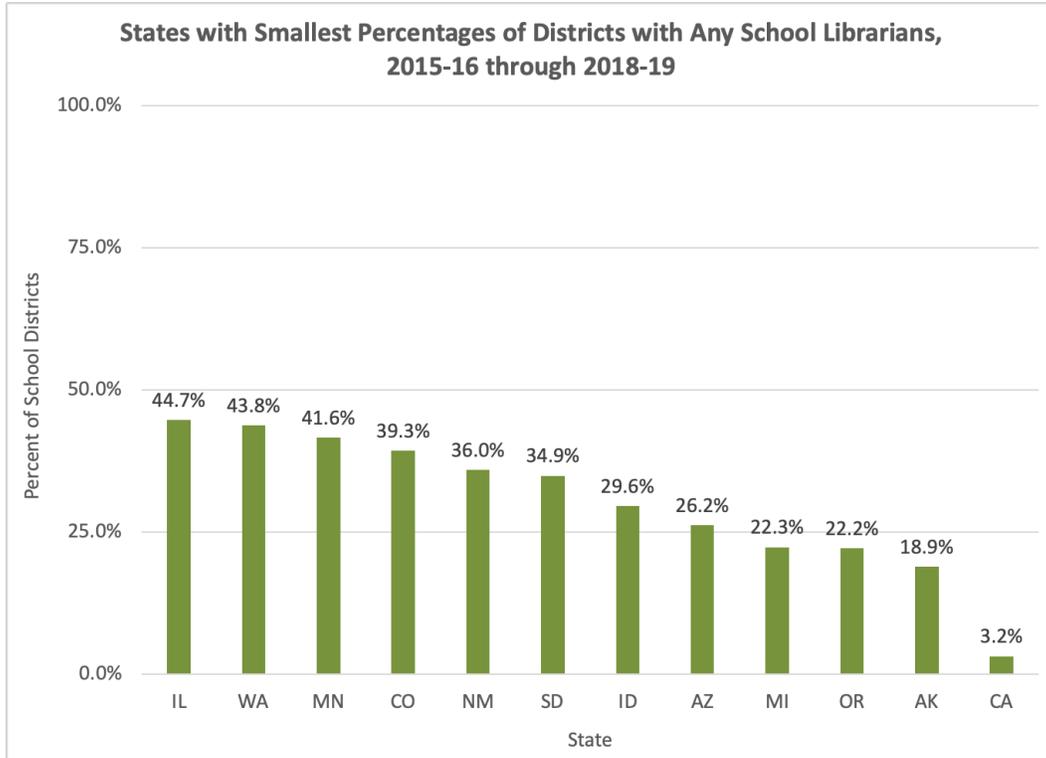


Chart 22¹⁰



¹⁰ Almost half of Illinois districts did not report school librarian staffing during this four-year period, so this data is incomplete.

Table 14. Percent of Districts with Any School Librarians by State, 2015-16 through 2018-19

a. In alphabetical order by state

State	Any librarians 2015-16 through 2018-19
AK	18.9%
AL	74.5%
AR	98.3%
AZ	26.2%
CA	3.2%
CO	39.3%
CT	87.0%
DC	100.0%
DE	84.2%
FL	89.6%
GA	98.9%
HI	100.0%
IA	96.4%
ID	29.6%
IL	44.7%
IN	63.1%
KS	54.2%
KY	97.7%
LA	84.5%
MA	71.9%
MD	91.7%
ME	58.1%
MI	22.3%
MN	41.6%
MO	85.7%
MS	97.2%
MT	64.8%
NC	93.3%
ND	77.1%
NE	98.4%
NH	82.4%
NJ	71.6%
NM	36.0%
NV	50.0%
NY	83.5%
OH	55.8%
OK	72.7%
OR	22.2%
PA	93.0%
RI	94.4%
SC	95.2%
SD	34.9%
TN	95.9%
TX	52.3%
UT	65.9%
VA	97.7%
VT	54.4%
WA	43.8%
WI	86.1%
WV	60.0%
WY	68.8%
State Average	68.8%
State Median	72.7%

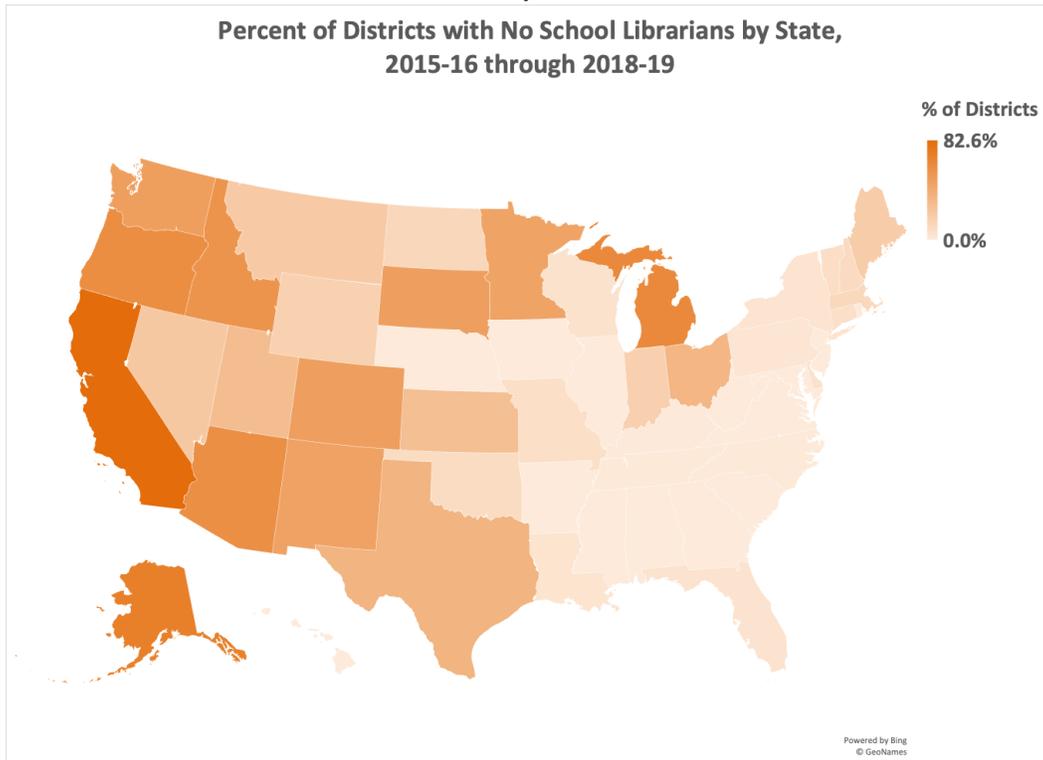
b. In descending order by percent of districts

Rank	State	Any librarians 2015-16 through 2018-19
1	DC	100.0%
1	HI	100.0%
3	GA	98.9%
4	NE	98.4%
5	AR	98.3%
6	VA	97.7%
6	KY	97.7%
8	MS	97.2%
9	IA	96.4%
10	TN	95.9%
11	SC	95.2%
12	RI	94.4%
13	NC	93.3%
14	PA	93.0%
15	MD	91.7%
16	FL	89.6%
17	CT	87.0%
18	WI	86.1%
19	MO	85.7%
20	LA	84.5%
21	DE	84.2%
22	NY	83.5%
23	NH	82.4%
24	ND	77.1%
25	AL	74.5%
26	OK	72.7%
27	MA	71.9%
28	NJ	71.6%
29	WY	68.8%
30	UT	65.9%
31	MT	64.8%
32	IN	63.1%
33	WV	60.0%
34	ME	58.1%
35	OH	55.8%
36	VT	54.4%
37	KS	54.2%
38	TX	52.3%
39	NV	50.0%
40	IL	44.7%
41	WA	43.8%
42	MN	41.6%
43	CO	39.3%
44	NM	36.0%
45	SD	34.9%
46	ID	29.6%
47	AZ	26.2%
48	MI	22.3%
49	OR	22.2%
50	AK	18.9%
51	CA	3.2%
	State Average	68.8%
	State Median	72.7%

Which states had the largest percentages of districts reporting no school librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19?

During the 4 years under study, states with more districts without librarians long-term were concentrated in the West and the northern tier of the Midwest. States with some consistent level of librarian staffing were concentrated in the South along with some states in the Midwest. (See Map 12.)

Map 12



Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, states that continuously had no librarians were concentrated in the West and the northern tier of the Midwest.

During this time period, regional patterns emerged among states with the most long-term no-librarian districts. Of the 11 states reporting more than 45% of their districts without librarians for the 4 years of study, 8 were in the West: California (82.6%), Alaska (69.8%), Oregon (60.2%), Arizona (59.3%), Idaho (56.5%), Washington (49.5%), Colorado (48.9%), and New Mexico (47.2%). The 3 remaining states with large percentages of long-term no-librarian districts were in the Midwest: Michigan (63.3%), South Dakota (49.0%), and Minnesota (45.9%). (See Chart 23.) Percentages of districts in each state consistently without school librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19 are reported in Tables 15a and 15b.

Chart 23

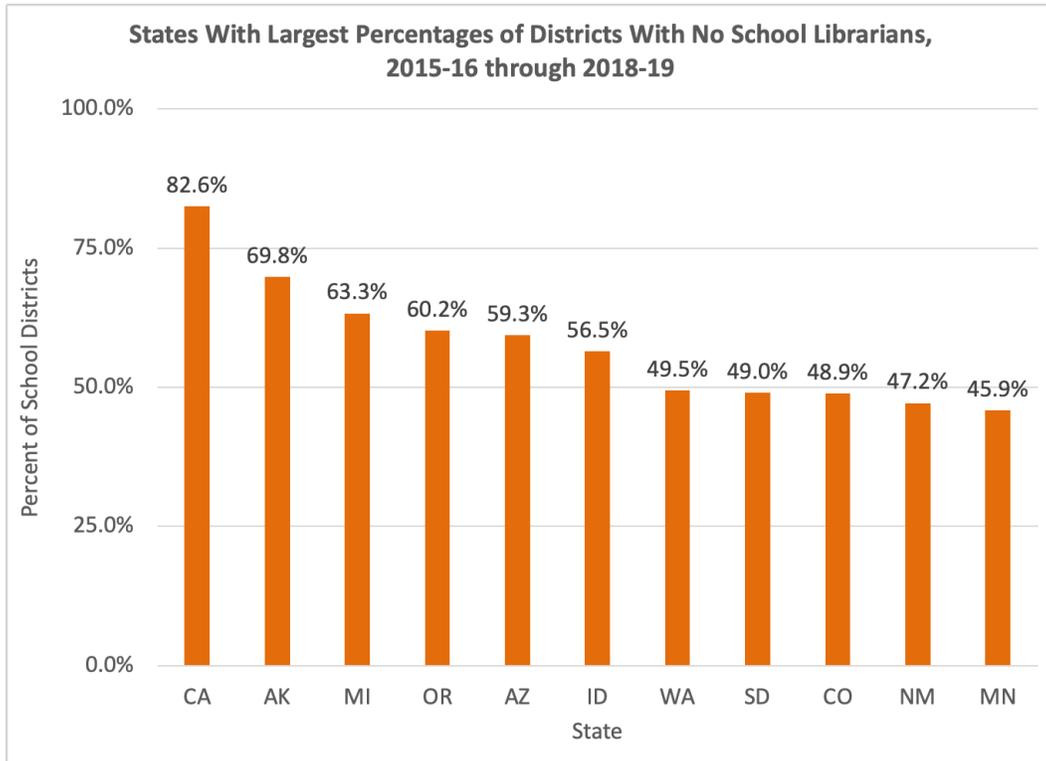


Table 15. Percent of Districts with No School Librarians by State, 2015-16 through 2018-19

a. In alphabetical order by state		b. In descending order by percent of districts		
State	No librarians 2015-16 through 2018-19	Rank	State	No librarians 2015-16 through 2018-19
AK	69.8%	1	CA	82.6%
AL	0.0%	2	AK	69.8%
AR	0.0%	3	MI	63.3%
AZ	59.3%	4	OR	60.2%
CA	82.6%	5	AZ	59.3%
CO	48.9%	6	ID	56.5%
CT	7.1%	7	WA	49.5%
DC	0.0%	8	SD	49.0%
DE	5.3%	9	CO	48.9%
FL	4.5%	10	NM	47.2%
GA	0.0%	11	MN	45.9%
HI	0.0%	12	TX	35.7%
IA	0.0%	13	OH	34.2%
ID	56.5%	14	UT	29.3%
IL	0.0%	15	KS	28.3%
IN	17.1%	16	NV	22.2%
KS	28.3%	17	MT	21.2%
KY	.6%	18	ME	19.4%
LA	4.2%	19	IN	17.1%
MA	12.0%	20	WY	16.7%
MD	0.0%	21	ND	12.4%
ME	19.4%	22	MA	12.0%
MI	63.3%	23	NH	9.7%
MN	45.9%	24	OK	9.0%
MO	7.4%	25	VT	8.2%
MS	0.0%	26	MO	7.4%
MT	21.2%	27	CT	7.1%
NC	.8%	28	WI	5.5%
ND	12.4%	29	DE	5.3%
NE	0.0%	30	FL	4.5%
NH	9.7%	31	LA	4.2%
NJ	0.0%	31	NY	4.2%
NM	47.2%	33	PA	2.6%
NV	22.2%	34	NC	.8%
NY	4.2%	35	TN	.7%
OH	34.2%	36	KY	.6%
OK	9.0%	37	AL	0.0%
OR	60.2%	37	AR	0.0%
PA	2.6%	37	DC	0.0%
RI	0.0%	37	GA	0.0%
SC	0.0%	37	HI	0.0%
SD	49.0%	37	IA	0.0%
TN	.7%	37	IL	0.0%
TX	35.7%	37	MD	0.0%
UT	29.3%	37	MS	0.0%
VA	0.0%	37	NE	0.0%
VT	8.2%	37	NJ	0.0%
WA	49.5%	37	RI	0.0%
WI	5.5%	37	SC	0.0%
WV	0.0%	37	VA	0.0%
WY	16.7%	37	WV	0.0%
State Average	18.6%		State Average	18.6%
State Median	7.4%		State Median	7.4%

District Characteristics

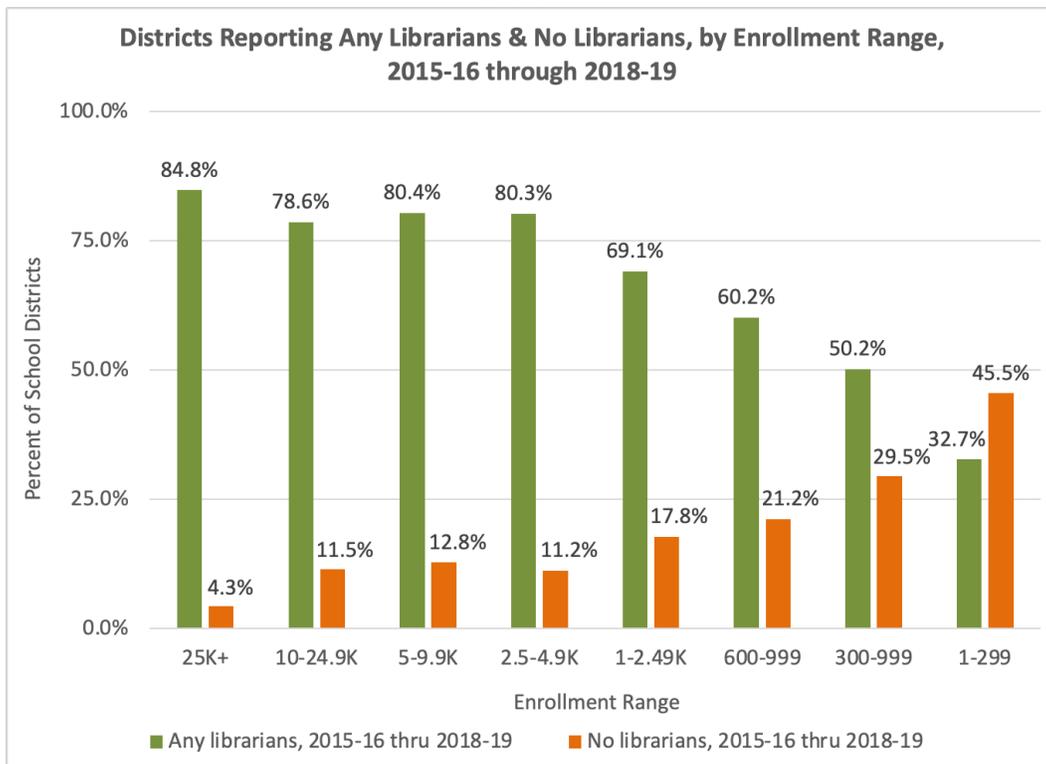
The long-term presence or absence of a school librarian, as reported by districts, is strongly related to three district characteristics: enrollment, locale, and per-pupil expenditures.

How does a district's enrollment relate to the long-term presence or absence of librarians?

Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, 4 out of 5 districts (more than 80%) with enrollments of 2,500 or more reported consistently having librarians. However, the proportion of districts with stable librarian staffing dropped off sharply for smaller enrollments, ranging from 7 out of 10 (69.1%) for enrollments between 1,000 and 2,499 to fewer than a third (32.7%) for those with fewer than 300 students. Conversely, only 1 out of 23 of the largest districts—those with 25, 000 or more students—(4.3%) were without librarians during this four-year period, compared with almost half (45.5%) of districts with fewer than 300 students. (See Chart 24.)

From 2015-16 through 2018-19, districts serving larger enrollments were more likely to employ librarians consistently, while districts serving smaller enrollments were more likely to have had no librarians.

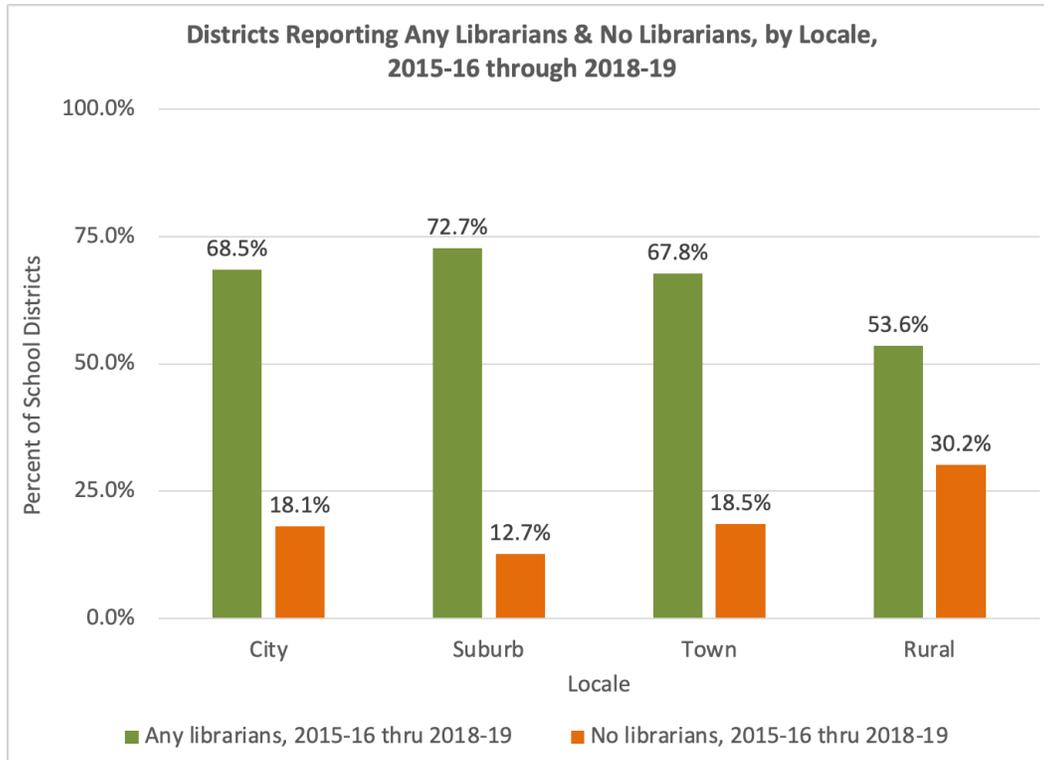
Chart 24



How does a district's locale relate to the long-term presence or absence of librarians?

Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, suburban districts were most consistent in employing school librarians, while rural districts were most consistently without them. Librarians were employed, at some level, consistently between these years by more than 7 out of 10 suburban districts (72.7%), more than two-thirds of districts in central cities (68.5%) and outlying towns (67.8%), and just over half of districts in rural areas (53.6%). Conversely, 3 out of 10 rural districts (30.2%) have been without librarians, compared with about 1 out of 6 districts in central cities (18.1%) and outlying towns (18.5%) and fewer than 1 out of 8 suburban districts (12.7%). (See Chart 25. See Locale in Appendix B for definitions of city, suburb, town, and rural areas.)

Chart 25

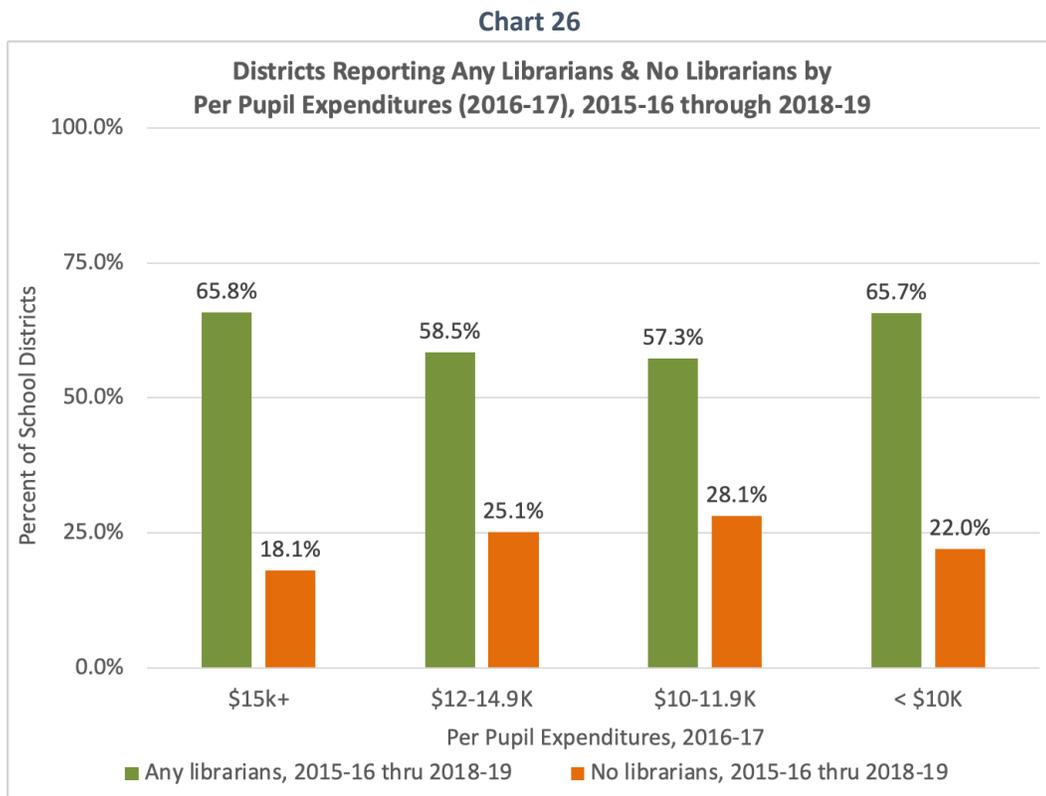


Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, more suburban districts consistently employed school librarians, and more rural districts were consistently without librarians.

How does a district's funding relate to the long-term presence or absence of school librarians?

Data about the consistency with which districts do or do not employ school librarians and its relationship to per-pupil spending challenge the often-heard claim that school librarians were cut because of insufficient funding. The districts most likely to have had librarians consistently between 2015-16 and 2018-19 were the wealthiest and the poorest ones (65.8% of districts spending \$15,000 or more per pupil and 65.7% of those spending less than \$10,000 per pupil in 2016-17). Fewer than 3 out of 5 districts spending between \$10,000 and \$14,999 per pupil employed librarians consistently. Conversely, a quarter or more of districts with middling funding (25.1% to 28.1%) were the ones most likely to be without librarians over this time period. (See Chart 26.)

School funding alone cannot explain librarian staffing decisions. Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, districts most likely to have employed librarians consistently were those spending the most—and the least—per pupil.



Student Demographics

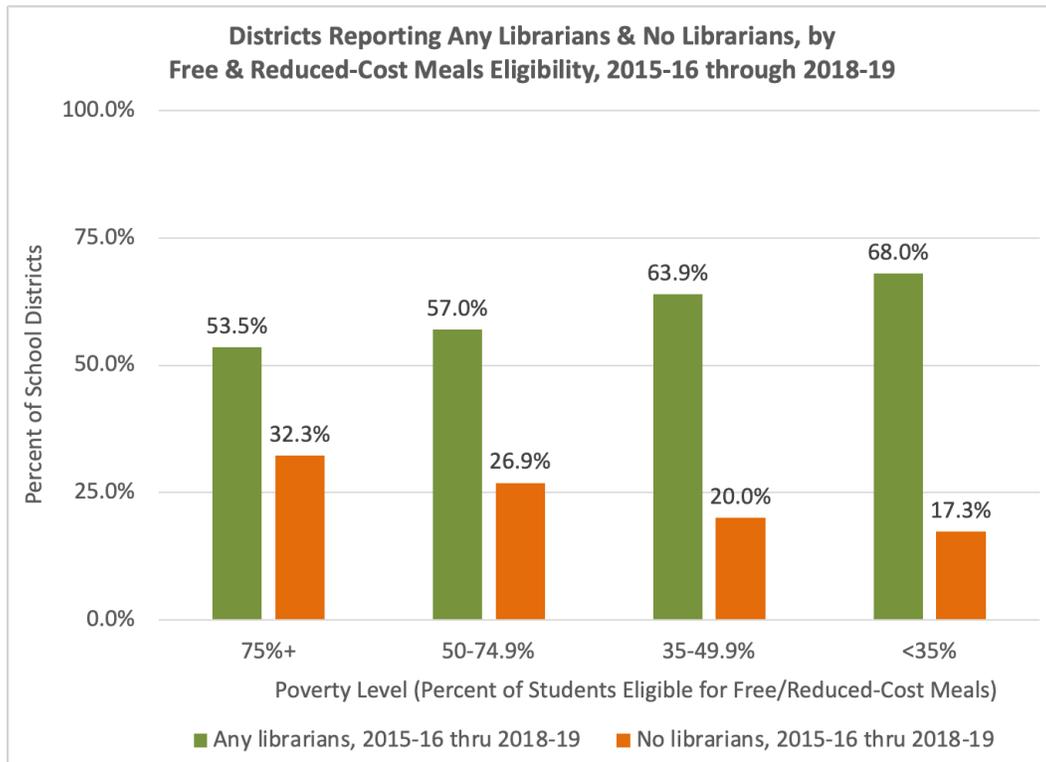
Socio-economic differences between districts are also powerful drivers of long-term inequality of access to school librarians. The Common Core of Data (CCD) provides data on three student demographics that demonstrated strong, significant relationships to the presence and absence of librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19: Free and Reduced-cost Meals eligibility (a poverty indicator), race/ethnicity, and language status.

How does poverty relate to the long-term presence or absence of school librarians?

Over the 4-year time period studied, just over half of the districts with the highest poverty levels (53.5%) reported having librarians consistently since 2015-16 compared to more than two-thirds of the districts with the lowest poverty levels (68.0%). (See Chart 27.) The indicator of poverty is the percentage of a district’s students who are eligible for the federal Free and Reduced-cost Meals program. (See Appendix B.) Conversely, almost a third of districts with the highest poverty levels (32.3%) did not have librarians throughout the 4 years, while only fewer than 1 in 6 of districts with the lowest poverty levels (17.3%) had no librarians for multiple years. Notably, a student in one of the poorest districts was almost twice as likely to have had little or no exposure to a librarian as their counterpart in one of the least poor districts.

Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, districts with the most students in poverty were the most likely to have been without school librarians consistently. Districts with the fewest students in poverty were the most likely to have had librarians all 4 years.

Chart 27



How do race and ethnicity relate to the long-term presence or absence of school librarians?

Differences in long-term employment of librarians are related strongly to the racial makeup of a district's student body. More than 3 out of 5 majority white districts (63.3%) have had librarians consistently between 2015-16 and 2018-19, while just over half (55.5%) of majority non-white districts have experienced the same. Conversely, almost 3 out of 10 majority non-white districts (29.0%) have been without librarians since 2015-15 compared with only about 1 out of 5 majority white districts (21.6%). (See Chart 28.)

Majority non-white districts were less likely to have had librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19. Over the same period, more than twice as many majority Hispanic districts as majority non-Hispanic districts were consistently without librarians.

The differences in long-term school librarian employment were more extreme for majority Hispanic versus majority non-Hispanic districts. More than 3 out of 5 majority non-Hispanic districts (64.1%) had librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19, compared with fewer than 2 out of 5 majority Hispanic districts (38.4%).

The most egregious inequity based on ethnicity, however, concerns districts that were without librarians for at least 4 years. Almost half of majority Hispanic districts (46.7%) were without librarians compared with only 1 out of 5 majority non-Hispanic districts (21.0%). Notably, a student in a majority Hispanic district was more than twice as likely to have had little or no experience of a school librarian as their counterpart in a majority non-Hispanic district.

How does the presence of English Language Learners relate to the long-term presence or absence of school librarians?

Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, as a district's percentage of students who were English Language Learners grew, the odds of it having had librarians since 2015-16 declined, while the odds of it having had no librarians increased. Of districts with the most English Language Learners (top quartile), only about half (51.9%) had librarians all 4 years, while more than a third (34.4%) had no librarians during the same period. Of districts with the fewest ELL students (bottom quartile), more than 7 out of 10 (72.7%) had librarians all 4 years, and only about 1 out of 7 (13.5%) had been without librarians. (See Chart 29.)

Districts with the most English Language Learners were least likely to have had librarians consistently between 2015-16 and 2018-19, and more than twice as likely as districts with the fewest ELL students to have had no librarians throughout the same period.

Chart 28

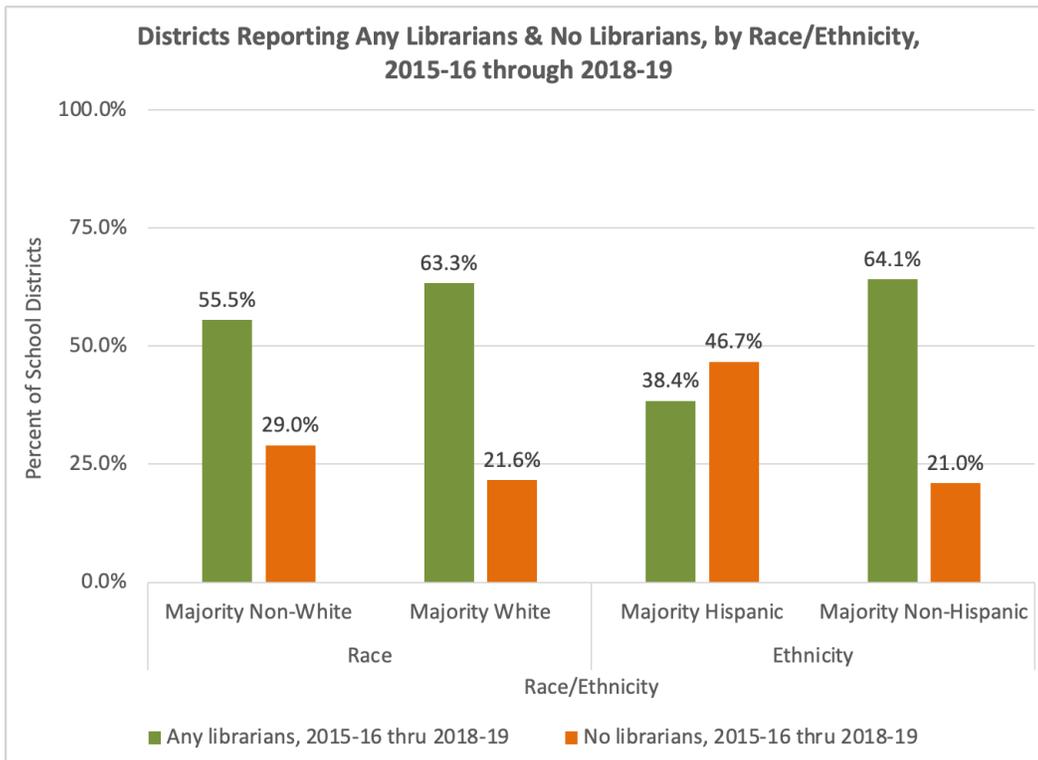


Chart 29

