

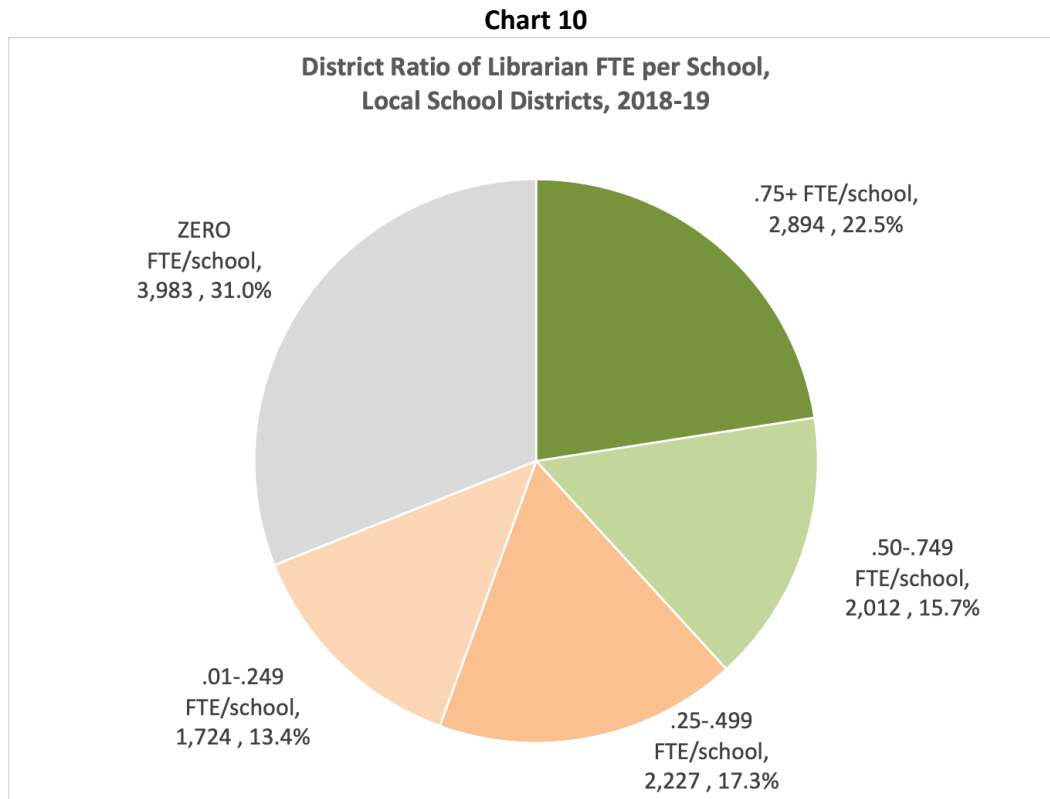
District Perspective

State and national figures belie enormous discrepancies in school librarian employment at the local district level. Access to a school librarian is impacted strongly by several district characteristics—enrollment, locale, and per pupil spending—and student demographics—poverty, race/ethnicity, and language status. This is evident when one examines variations in district figures for three ratios: librarian full-time equivalent (FTE) per school, students per librarian FTE, and teacher FTE per librarian FTE.⁶ In addition to zeroing in on how much these figures can vary from district to district, this perspective also profiles districts that have been most stable over time (either having or not having librarians from 2015-16 through 2018-19). It also examines how school librarian employment patterns and trends differ between districts that had signed the Future Ready Schools pledge and those that had not. Finally, this perspective describes what is happening in two circumstances where school librarians are absent: where school librarians have been replaced by library support staff and where school librarians have been present, and absent, for four or more years.

District Ratio of Librarian FTE per School

In 2018-19, how many districts had school librarians and, if they did, at what FTE levels per school?

In the absence of school data on librarian employment, the best way to address this issue is by reporting the district ratio of librarian FTE per school. (See Chart 10.) Five levels of librarian FTE per school were created for this analysis: .75 or more FTE per school (i.e., almost a full-time librarian in every school or a full-time librarian in most schools), .50 to .749 FTE (at least half-time, but less than three-quarter time), .25 to .499 FTE (at least



⁶ The district ratio of librarian FTE per school is a district’s total number of librarian FTEs divided by the district’s total number of schools minus its number of charter schools. (Because 9 out of 10 charter schools do not have librarians, a separate analysis of them appears later in this report.) The district ratio of students per librarian FTE is a district’s total number of students divided by the district’s total number of librarian FTEs. The district ratio of teacher FTEs per librarian FTE is a district’s total number of teacher FTEs divided by the district’s total number of librarian FTEs.

one-quarter time, but less than half-time), .01 to .249 FTE (less than one-quarter time, but greater than zero), and zero FTE per school.

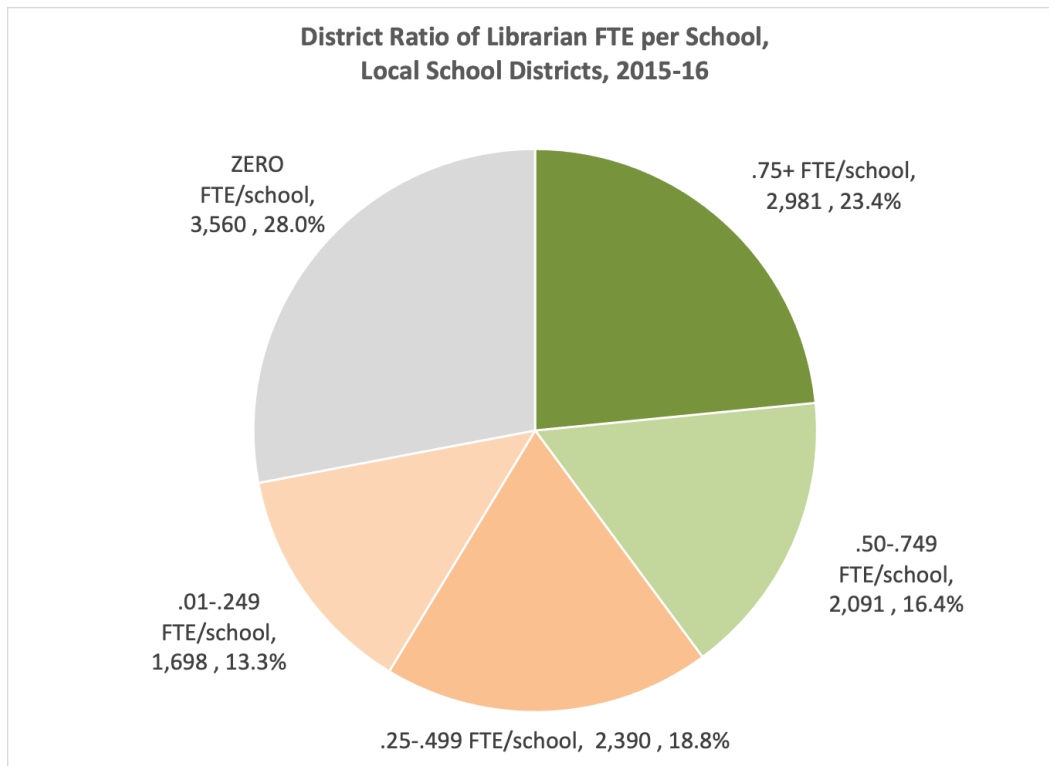
In 2018-19, school librarians were present at some level in 8,857 districts (69.0%). Another 3,983 (31.0%) reported having no librarians. (Notably, this excludes the small number of districts which did not report about librarian FTE at all.) More than 1 out of 5 (22.5%) had enough librarians to have .75 FTE or higher in every school. More than 1 out of 6 (15.7%) had enough librarians to have .50 to .749 FTE in every school. Almost 1 out of 6 (17.3%) had enough librarians to have .25 to .499 FTE in every school. More than 1 out of 7 had enough librarians to have .01 to .249 librarians in every school. Three out of 10 districts reported no librarians. These figures illustrate the extent of inequality of access to librarians among districts when compared to the national ratio of .43 FTE per school.

In 2018-19, 31% of districts had no librarians, and only 23% reported enough for full-time librarians in most schools. Since 2015-16, numbers and percentages of districts with no librarians have increased.

At the district level, how have school librarian employment patterns and trends changed over time?

The best baseline for district comparisons over time is 2015-16, the year for which the most complete data were available prior to 2018-19. (See Chart 11.) As at state and national levels, from a district perspective, school librarian employment was stronger in 2015-16. More districts reported employing school librarians at the 3 highest FTE levels, and fewer districts reported having no school librarians.

Chart 11



How did these district patterns vary from state to state?

Table 11 reports librarian FTE per school levels by district for each state and D.C. As a cursory scanning of this table makes evident, FTE per school levels—including districts with no school librarians—varied wildly among the states.

Table 11. District Ratio of Librarian FTE per School by FTE Level and State, 2018-19

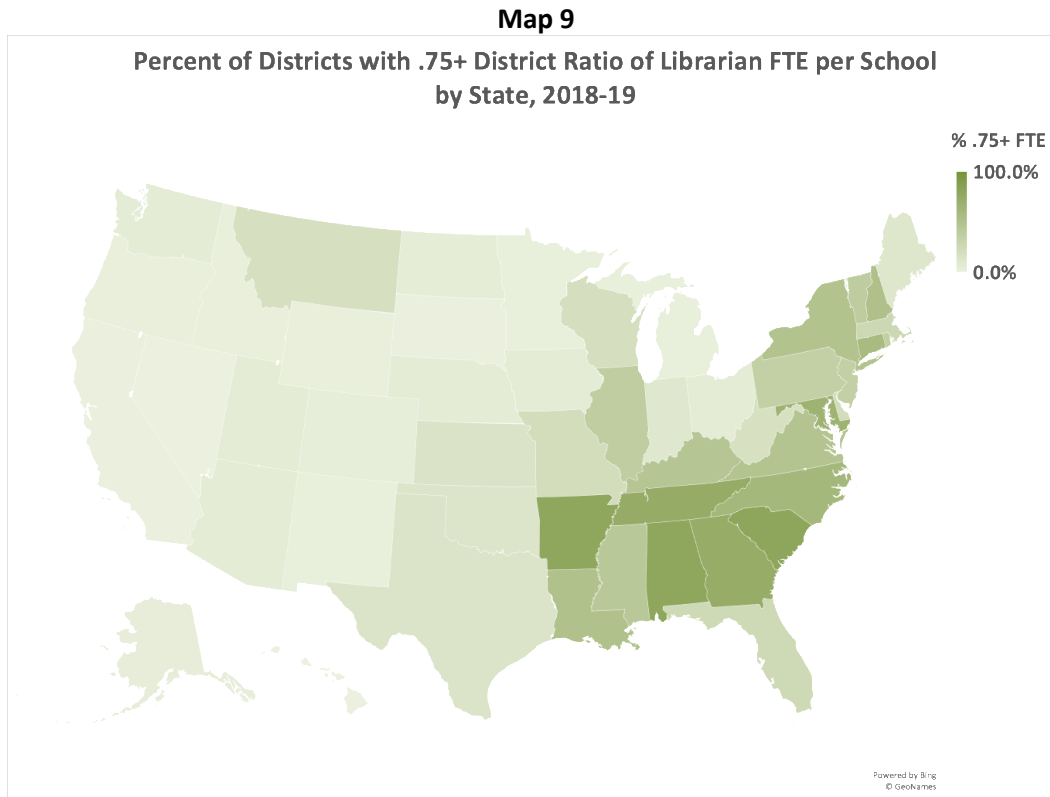
State	.75 FTE/school	.50-.749 FTE/school	.25-.499 FTE/school	.01-.249 FTE/school	ZERO FTE/school	Total
AK	3.8%	3.8%	7.7%	7.7%	76.9%	100.0%
AL	79.6%	20.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
AR	79.4%	20.2%	0.0%	0.0%	.4%	100.0%
AZ	5.6%	4.2%	9.3%	12.1%	68.7%	100.0%
CA	0.6%	0.6%	1.2%	4.0%	93.6%	100.0%
CO	3.9%	8.4%	17.4%	14.6%	55.6%	100.0%
CT	58.0%	13.0%	14.8%	3.0%	11.2%	100.0%
DC	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
DE	21.1%	26.3%	15.8%	21.1%	15.8%	100.0%
FL	25.4%	25.4%	29.9%	10.4%	9.0%	100.0%
GA	73.3%	15.6%	10.6%	0.0%	.6%	100.0%
HI	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
IA	5.5%	7.3%	33.3%	51.5%	2.4%	100.0%
ID	1.7%	1.7%	5.2%	24.3%	67.0%	100.0%
IL	38.3%	19.9%	24.7%	16.2%	.9%	100.0%
IN	9.9%	12.6%	26.6%	22.5%	28.3%	100.0%
KS	14.3%	21.0%	18.5%	7.7%	38.5%	100.0%
KY	46.2%	31.2%	16.8%	4.0%	1.7%	100.0%
LA	50.7%	12.7%	8.5%	12.7%	15.5%	100.0%
MA	26.9%	12.3%	17.3%	23.8%	19.8%	100.0%
MD	66.7%	16.7%	8.3%	4.2%	4.2%	100.0%
ME	11.0%	15.7%	18.8%	24.1%	30.4%	100.0%
MI	2.2%	3.5%	8.2%	17.7%	68.3%	100.0%
MN	2.4%	10.6%	18.2%	12.8%	55.9%	100.0%
MO	21.1%	25.7%	26.9%	15.1%	11.2%	100.0%
MS	43.3%	33.3%	21.3%	1.4%	0.7%	100.0%
MT	18.5%	11.3%	17.5%	23.0%	29.8%	100.0%
NC	60.8%	20.8%	10.0%	4.2%	4.2%	100.0%
ND	4.7%	22.4%	31.2%	22.9%	18.8%	100.0%
NE	4.9%	32.8%	48.0%	13.9%	0.4%	100.0%
NH	52.1%	23.0%	8.5%	4.8%	11.5%	100.0%
NJ	34.7%	24.1%	12.4%	8.0%	20.8%	100.0%
NM	2.3%	5.7%	8.0%	23.9%	60.2%	100.0%
NV	0.0%	11.8%	11.8%	47.1%	29.4%	100.0%
NY	49.3%	23.8%	13.8%	5.4%	7.7%	100.0%
OH	5.5%	11.0%	24.5%	17.5%	41.5%	100.0%
OK	13.1%	19.7%	25.6%	17.8%	23.8%	100.0%

Table 11. District Ratio of Librarian FTE per School by FTE Level and State, 2018-19—continued

State	.75 FTE/school	.50-.749 FTE/school	.25-.499 FTE/school	.01-.249 FTE/school	ZERO FTE/school	Total
OR	1.7%	2.8%	8.0%	17.6%	69.9%	100.0%
PA	34.9%	31.9%	21.8%	6.2%	5.2%	100.0%
RI	36.1%	47.2%	13.9%	0.0%	2.8%	100.0%
SC	80.2%	16.0%	2.5%	0.0%	1.2%	100.0%
SD	0.7%	2.0%	20.1%	17.4%	59.7%	100.0%
TN	74.3%	16.0%	5.6%	2.1%	2.1%	100.0%
TX	13.4%	11.3%	18.1%	14.4%	42.9%	100.0%
UT	4.9%	2.4%	19.5%	39.0%	34.1%	100.0%
VA	48.1%	32.1%	13.7%	6.1%	0.0%	100.0%
VT	38.8%	23.1%	11.6%	6.1%	20.4%	100.0%
WA	5.7%	11.8%	15.2%	12.8%	54.5%	100.0%
WI	19.4%	20.3%	34.7%	16.5%	9.1%	100.0%
WV	17.6%	14.7%	29.4%	38.2%	0.0%	100.0%
WY	2.1%	12.5%	22.9%	33.3%	29.2%	100.0%
U.S.	22.5%	15.7%	17.3%	13.4%	31.0%	100.0%

In which states did more districts provide the highest level of librarian FTE per school in 2018-19?

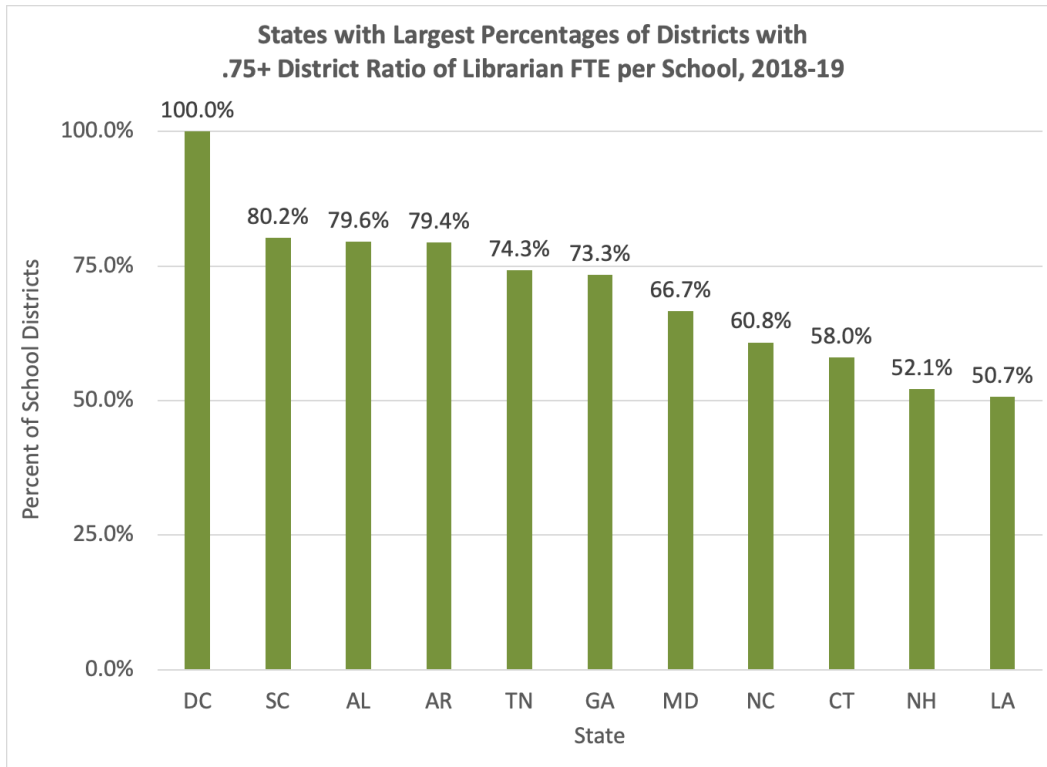
Districts with a librarian FTE per school of .75 or more were far more likely to be in the “deep” South, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Northeast. Such districts were far less likely to be in the plains of the Midwest and the Mountain and Pacific West. (See Map 9.) Notably, because this is an FTE ratio to schools, that pattern is not merely a reflection of population concentration in the former regions. State factors identified earlier as predictors of school librarian employment—state mandates and numbers of higher education institutions preparing school librarians—help to explain why districts in certain states in particular regions were more likely to have a substantial librarian FTE in most schools.



Districts that come closest to having full-time librarians in their schools were more prevalent in the South and the Northeast than in the Midwest and the West.

Besides Washington, DC (a single school district), a majority of districts in 10 states had this highest level of librarian FTE per school. About four out of five districts have such librarian staffing in South Carolina (80.2%), Alabama (79.6%), and Arkansas (79.4%). About three out of four districts had this level of librarian staffing per school in Tennessee (74.3%) and Georgia (73.3%). Two-thirds (66.7%) of Maryland districts have such staffing. About three out of five districts had .75+ librarian FTE per school in North Carolina (60.8%) and Connecticut (58.0%). And just over half of districts had this highest staffing level in New Hampshire (52.1%) and Louisiana (50.7%). It is no coincidence that eight of these 10 states are in the South, where states are more likely to mandate having librarians in schools and to provide more institutions where aspiring school librarians can attend graduate programs. (See Chart 12.)

Chart 12



In which states were there the most districts reporting no school librarians in 2018-19?

States with the most districts reporting no school librarians tend to be concentrated in the West and the Great Lakes region. (See Map 10.) As reported earlier, states in these regions were least likely to provide structural supports for the profession—such as a state mandate for the position and numerous (or indeed any) institutions offering school librarian preparation programs.

By far, the hotspot for no-librarian districts is California, where more than 9 out of 10 districts (93.6%) lack school librarians. (See Chart 13.)⁷ Over 3 out of 4 Alaska districts (76.9%) were in a similar position. Two-thirds or more of districts lacked librarians in Oregon (69.9%), Arizona (68.7%), Michigan (68.3%), and Idaho (67.0%). Three out of 5 districts were librarian-less in New Mexico (60.2%) and South Dakota (59.7%). And more than half of districts had no school librarians in Minnesota (55.9%), Colorado (55.6%), and Washington (54.5%).⁸

Tables 12 and 13 provide state rankings for districts at both library staffing extremes—those with .75+ librarian FTE per school and those with zero librarian FTE per school, respectively. The range of percentages in each table indicates the extremity of the extent to which local districts vary in librarian staffing by state. To find these staffing levels reported by state in alphabetical order, return to Table 11.

⁷ Notably, reporting of school librarian FTEs in California has been problematic in recent years, due to a shift toward reporting “teacher librarians” as teachers rather than librarians. Fortunately, state data made it possible to revise NCES’s district data to reclaim those FTEs. Efforts are underway to improve the accuracy of district reports to NCES on school librarian FTEs.

⁸ Most likely, Illinois does not appear in Chart 13 only because more than 48% of its districts did not report school librarian staffing for 2018-19. Illinois accounts for 429 of the nation’s 465 non-reporting districts for that year; but, only 4 of its districts reported no librarians. This suggests that many, if not most, of the missing-data districts should have reported zero.

Map 10

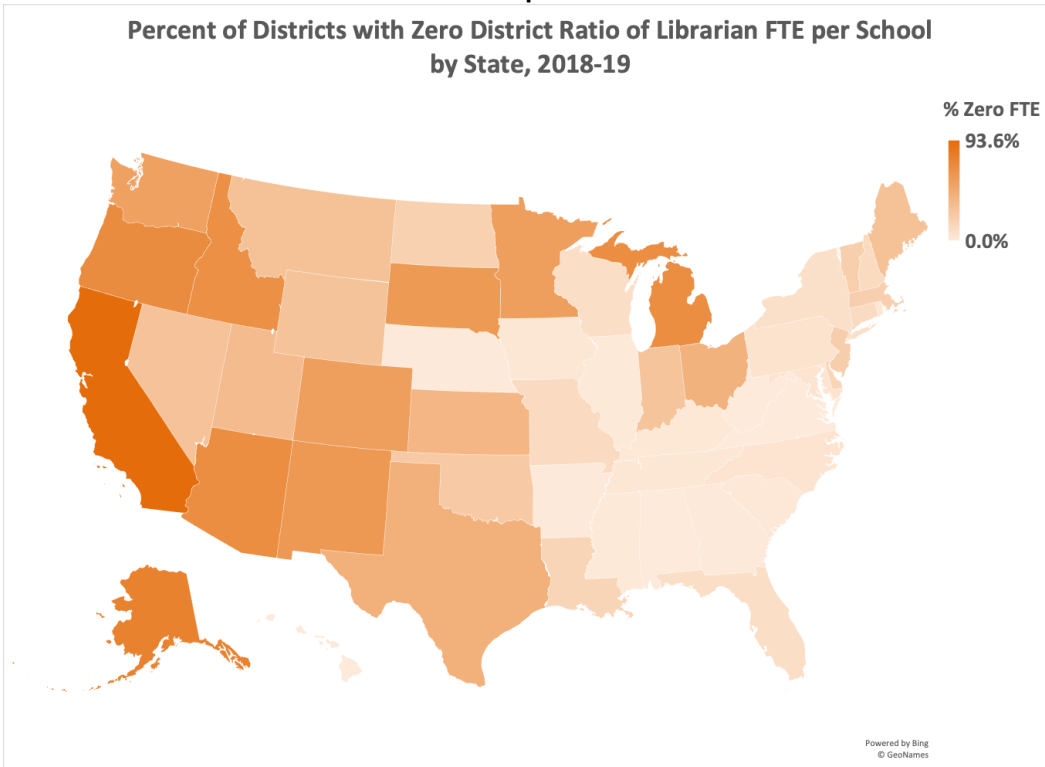
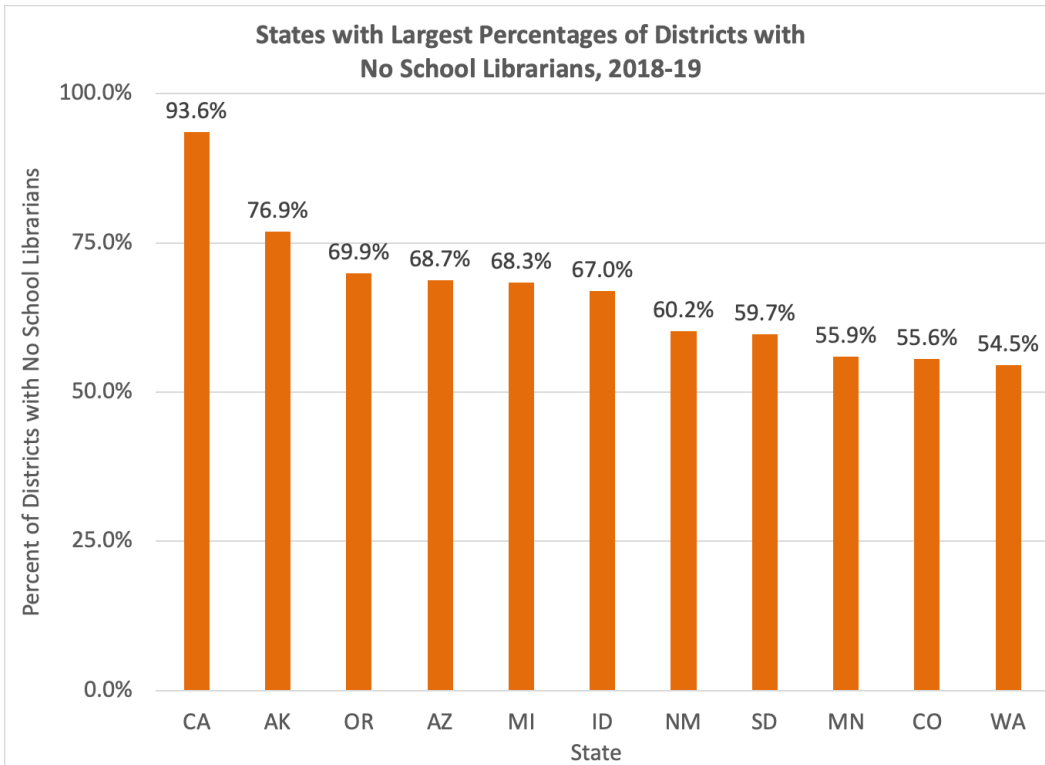


Chart 13



Perspectives on School Librarian Employment in the United States, 2009-10 to 2018-19

Table 12. States Ranked by Percent of Districts with .75+ School Librarian FTE per School, 2018-19

Rank	State	Percent of districts with DRLS .75+ FTE/school
1	DC	100.0%
2	SC	80.2%
3	AL	79.6%
4	AR	79.4%
5	TN	74.3%
6	GA	73.3%
7	MD	66.7%
8	NC	60.8%
9	CT	58.0%
10	NH	52.1%
11	LA	50.7%
12	NY	49.3%
13	VA	48.1%
14	KY	46.2%
15	MS	43.3%
16	VT	38.8%
17	IL	38.3%
18	RI	36.1%
19	PA	34.9%
20	NJ	34.7%
21	MA	26.9%
22	FL	25.4%
23	MO	21.1%
23	DE	21.1%
25	WI	19.4%
26	MT	18.5%
27	WV	17.6%
28	KS	14.3%
29	TX	13.4%
30	OK	13.1%
31	ME	11.0%
32	IN	9.9%
33	WA	5.7%
34	AZ	5.6%
35	OH	5.5%
35	IA	5.5%
37	NE	4.9%
37	UT	4.9%
39	ND	4.7%
40	CO	3.9%
41	AK	3.8%
42	MN	2.4%
43	NM	2.3%
44	MI	2.2%
45	WY	2.1%
46	ID	1.7%
46	OR	1.7%
48	SD	.7%
49	CA	.6%
50	HI	0.0%
50	NV	0.0%
	State Average	27.7%
	State Median	18.5%

Table 13. States Ranked by Percent of Districts with Zero School Librarian FTE per School, 2018-19

Rank	State	Percent of districts with zero FTE/school
1	CA	93.6%
2	AK	76.9%
3	OR	69.9%
4	AZ	68.7%
5	MI	68.3%
6	ID	67.0%
7	NM	60.2%
8	SD	59.7%
9	MN	55.9%
10	CO	55.6%
11	WA	54.5%
12	TX	42.9%
13	OH	41.5%
14	KS	38.5%
15	UT	34.1%
16	ME	30.4%
17	MT	29.8%
18	NV	29.4%
19	WY	29.2%
20	IN	28.3%
21	OK	23.8%
22	NJ	20.8%
23	VT	20.4%
24	MA	19.8%
25	ND	18.8%
26	DE	15.8%
27	LA	15.5%
28	NH	11.5%
29	CT	11.2%
29	MO	11.2%
31	WI	9.1%
32	FL	9.0%
33	NY	7.7%
34	PA	5.2%
35	MD	4.2%
35	NC	4.2%
37	RI	2.8%
38	IA	2.4%
39	TN	2.1%
40	KY	1.7%
41	SC	1.2%
42	IL	.9%
43	MS	.7%
44	GA	.6%
45	AR	.4%
45	NE	.4%
47	AL	0.0%
47	DC	0.0%
47	HI	0.0%
47	VA	0.0%
47	WV	0.0%
	State Average	24.6%
	State Median	15.8%

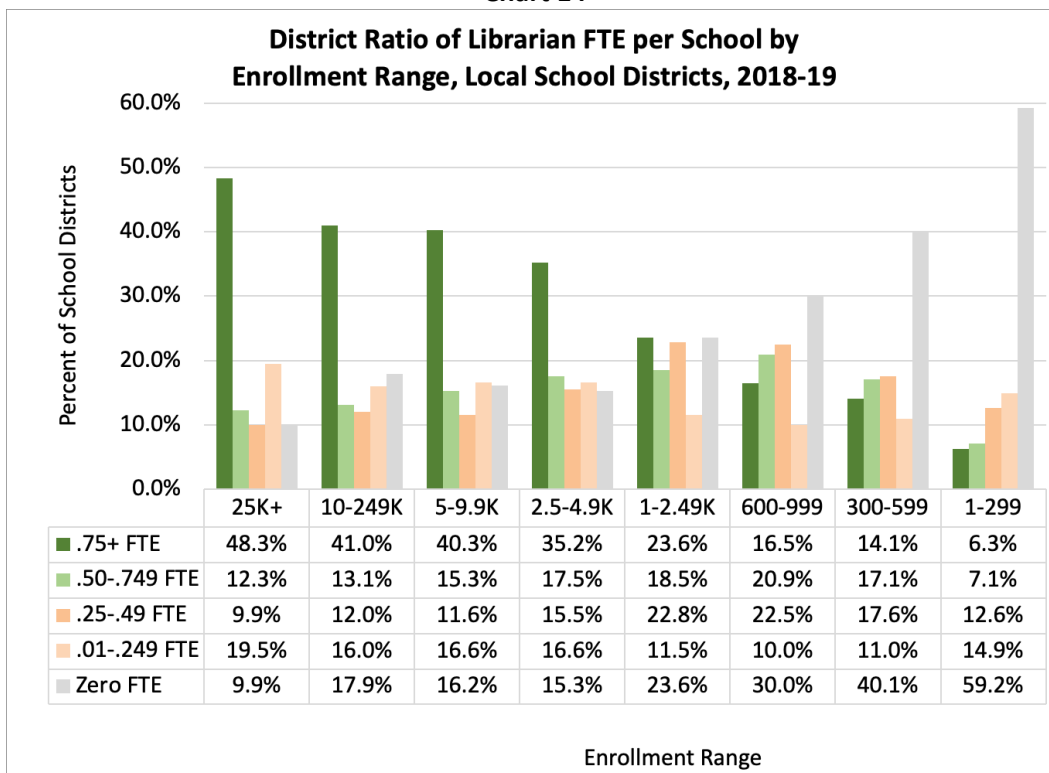
District Characteristics

Enrollment range, locale type, and per pupil expenditures are district characteristics associated significantly with inequality of access to school librarians. Data on these characteristics were strongly related to the District Ratio of Librarian FTE per School.

How does a district’s enrollment relate to its level of librarian staffing?

Unsurprisingly, local districts serving larger enrollments were more likely to have a substantial librarian presence in most schools (.75+ FTE), while those serving smaller enrollments are more likely not to have librarians at all. (See Chart 14.) In 2018-19, 48.3% of districts with enrollments of 25,000 and over had .75+ librarian FTE per school. The same year, 59.2% of districts with enrollments under 300 reported zero librarians.

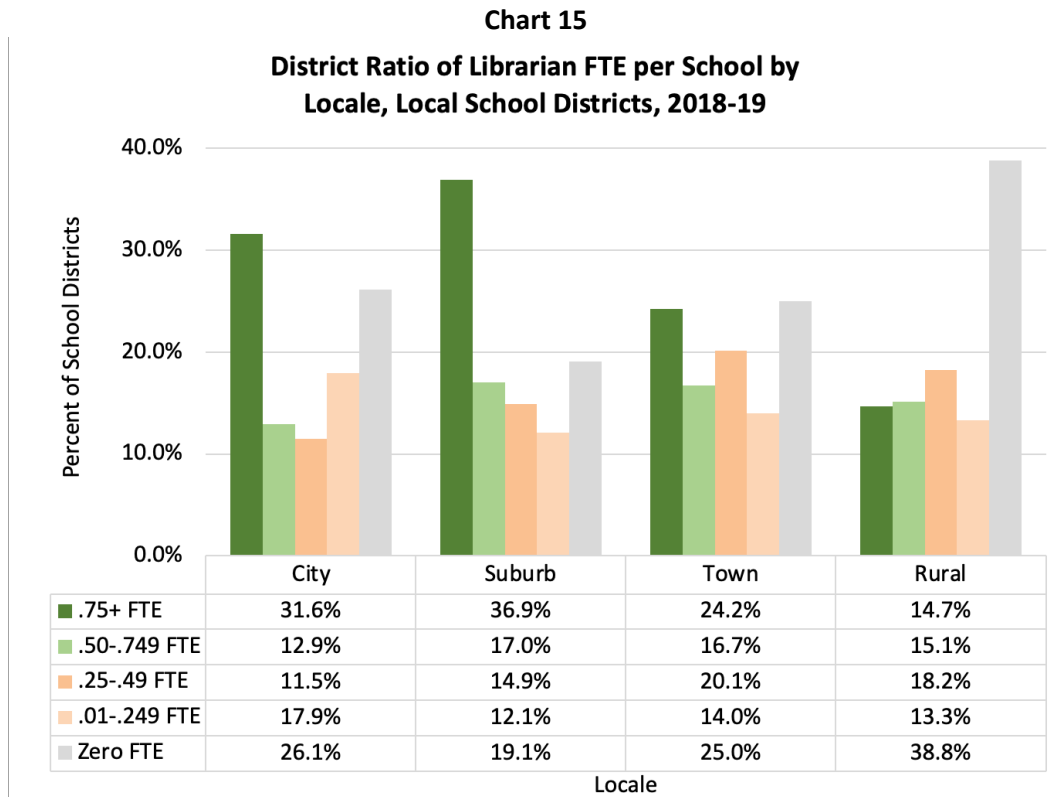
Chart 14



Districts with larger enrollments were more likely to report the highest level of librarian staffing and least likely to report no librarians. For districts with smaller enrollments, the opposite was true.

How does a district's locale relate to its level of librarian staffing?

The location of a district can affect all of the other equity factors that influence access to school librarians: enrollment size, per-pupil spending, poverty level, race/ethnicity, and language status. Districts located in suburbs were most likely to have .75+ librarian FTE per school, while those located in rural areas were most likely to report no librarians. In 2018-19, 36.9% of suburban districts had the highest librarian FTE levels per school, followed by city districts at 31.6%. The same year, 38.8% of rural districts reported no librarians. (See Chart 15. See Locale in Appendix B for locale type definitions.)



Suburban districts were most likely to report higher levels of librarian staffing and least likely to report no librarians. The opposite was true for rural districts.

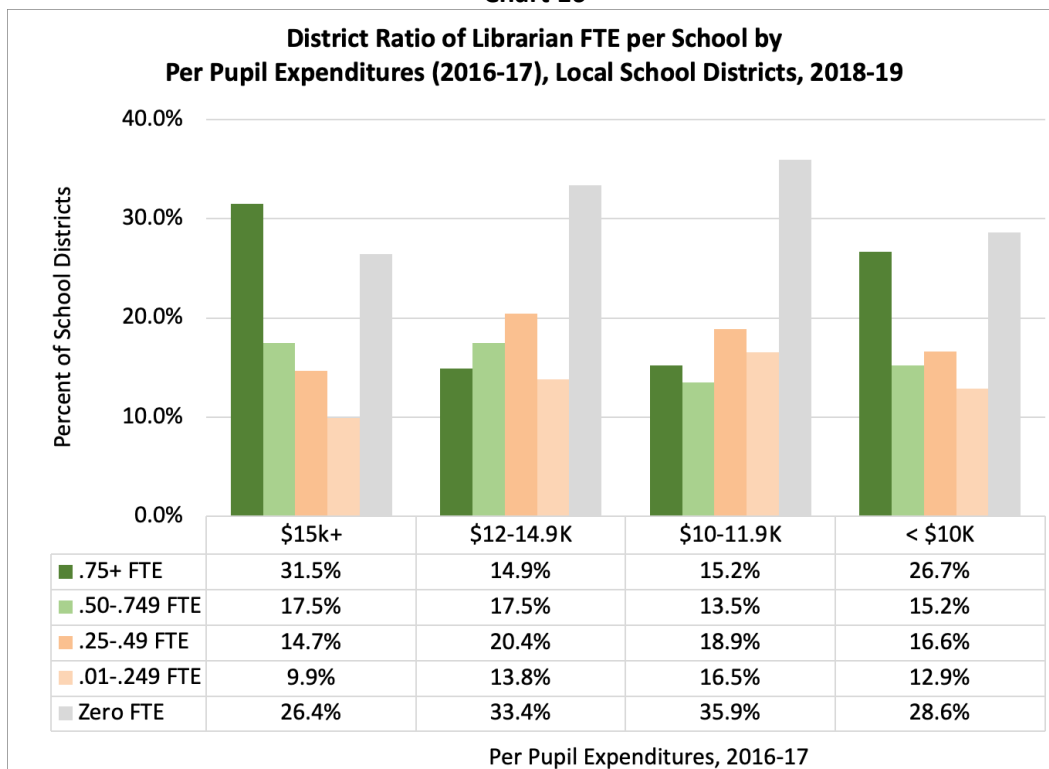
How does a district’s funding relate to its level of librarian staffing?

Local districts that spent the most per pupil (in 2016-17, the latest available data) were most likely to report the highest level of librarian staffing in 2018-19. Surprisingly, however, there was not a linear relationship between K-12 spending and librarian FTE per school. (See Chart 16.) Almost a third (31.5%) of districts spending \$15,000 or more per pupil had .75+ librarian FTE per school. More than a quarter (26.7%) of the poorest districts—those spending less than \$10,000 per pupil—had similar staffing levels. Districts with more middling per-pupil spending (\$10,000 to \$14,999 per pupil) were the least likely—at about 15%—to have similarly high levels of librarian staffing.

Conversely, districts that spent the most per pupil (\$15,000 or more) and the least (less than \$10,000) were almost equally less likely to report not having librarians—just over a quarter for each group (26.4% and 28.6%, respectively). Districts with more middling spending (\$10,000 to \$11,999 and \$12,000 to \$14,999 per pupil) were almost equally more likely to report no librarians—just over a third for each group (33.4% and 35.9%, respectively).

These findings challenge the notion that employment of school librarians is mostly a matter of funding. This implies that other factors besides financial pressures drive decisions about whether or not to employ librarians. The SLIDE interviews of school decision-makers will attempt to elicit some of those factors as well as the thinking involved in assessing the tradeoffs between financial and other factors when making staffing decisions.

Chart 16



Based on the non-linear relationship between per pupil spending and librarian staffing, funding cannot be the only factor determining whether or not a district has school librarians.

Student Demographics

Socio-economic differences between districts were also powerful drivers of 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 District Ratio of Librarian FTE per School: Free and Reduced-cost Meals Eligibility (a poverty indicator), race/ethnicity, and language status.

How does poverty relate to a district's level of librarian staffing?

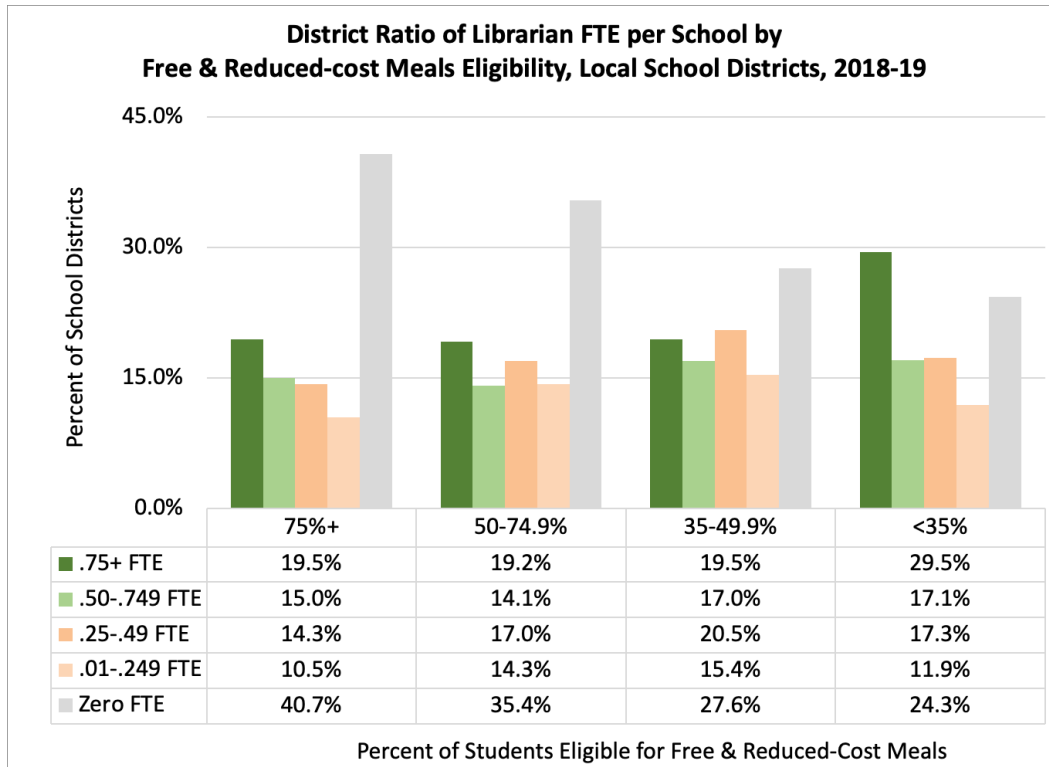
A common measure of poverty in education research is the percentage of a district's students who are eligible for the federal Free and Reduced-cost Meals program. Notably, unlike school spending, this financial variable was more predictably related to librarian staffing levels. (See Chart 17.) In 2018-19, almost 3 out of 10 districts with the fewest students eligible for the federal meals program (29.5%) had .75+ librarian FTE per school. Of other districts, only 1 out of 5 (19.2% to 19.5%) had that highest staffing level.

The relationship between poverty and having no librarians was more linear. Two out of 5 (40.7%) districts with 75% or more of their students in poverty reported no librarians, while fewer than a quarter (24.3%) of districts with fewer than 35% of their students in poverty reported no librarians.

Districts with the most students in poverty were most likely to have no librarians. Districts with the fewest students in poverty were most likely to have librarians in all or most schools.

These findings are concerning, as they indicate that schools in poorer communities were less likely than schools in wealthier communities to enjoy the benefits of the services librarians have to offer to students and their teachers. Despite decades of federal and state education programs intended to reduce such inequities, they continue. Ironically, students in schools experiencing such inequities need the services of librarians even more than their counterparts in more prosperous schools.

Chart 17



How does the racial and ethnic composition of a district’s student body relate to its level of librarian staffing?

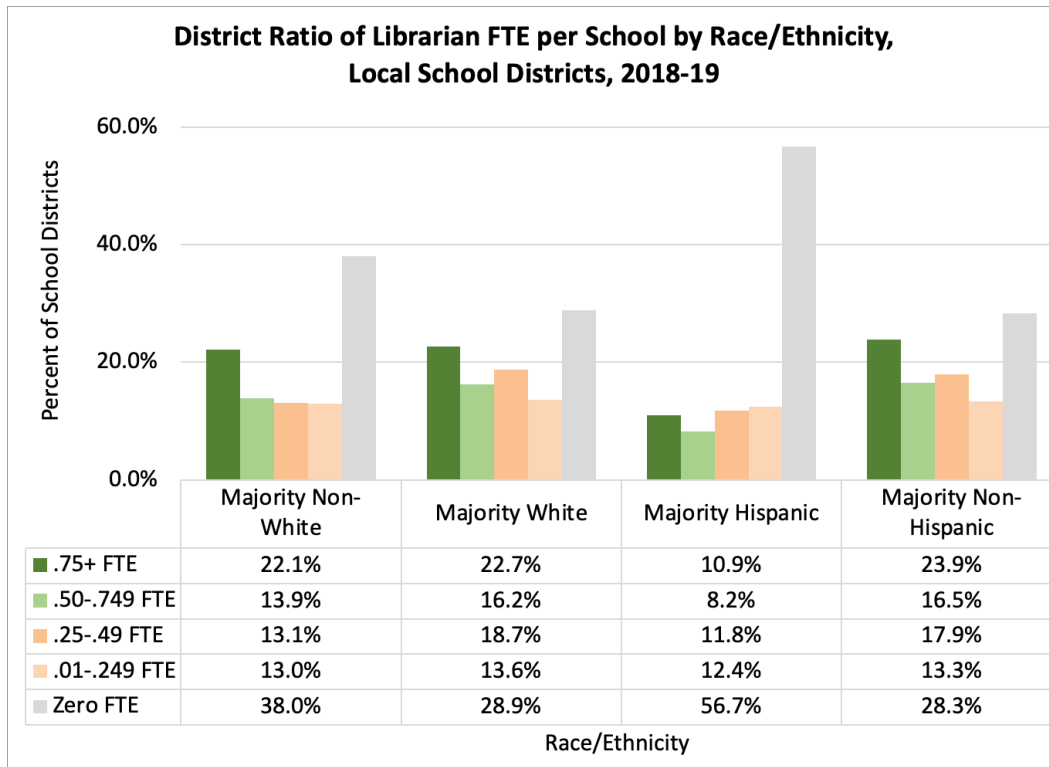
There were predictable differences in librarian staffing associated with majority non-white versus majority white districts as well as majority Hispanic versus majority non-Hispanic ones. The extremity of the two sets of differences is somewhat surprising. (See Appendix B for explanations of “race” and “ethnicity.”)

Majority white and majority non-Hispanic districts were more likely than others to have higher levels of librarian staffing. Majority Hispanic districts were twice as likely not to have librarians as majority non-Hispanic districts.

In 2018-19, the percentages of majority non-white and majority white districts with .75+ librarian FTE per school were almost equal at 22.1% and 22.7%, respectively. The same year, however, 38.0% of majority non-white districts reported no librarians compared with 28.9% of majority white districts. (See Chart 18.)

Differences associated with ethnicity were much more extreme than those associated with race. Also, in 2018-19, fewer than half as many majority Hispanic districts (only 10.9%) reported .75+ librarian FTE per school compared to majority non-Hispanic districts (23.9%). Conversely, twice as many majority Hispanic districts (56.7%) reported no librarians compared to majority non-Hispanic districts (28.3%).

Chart 18

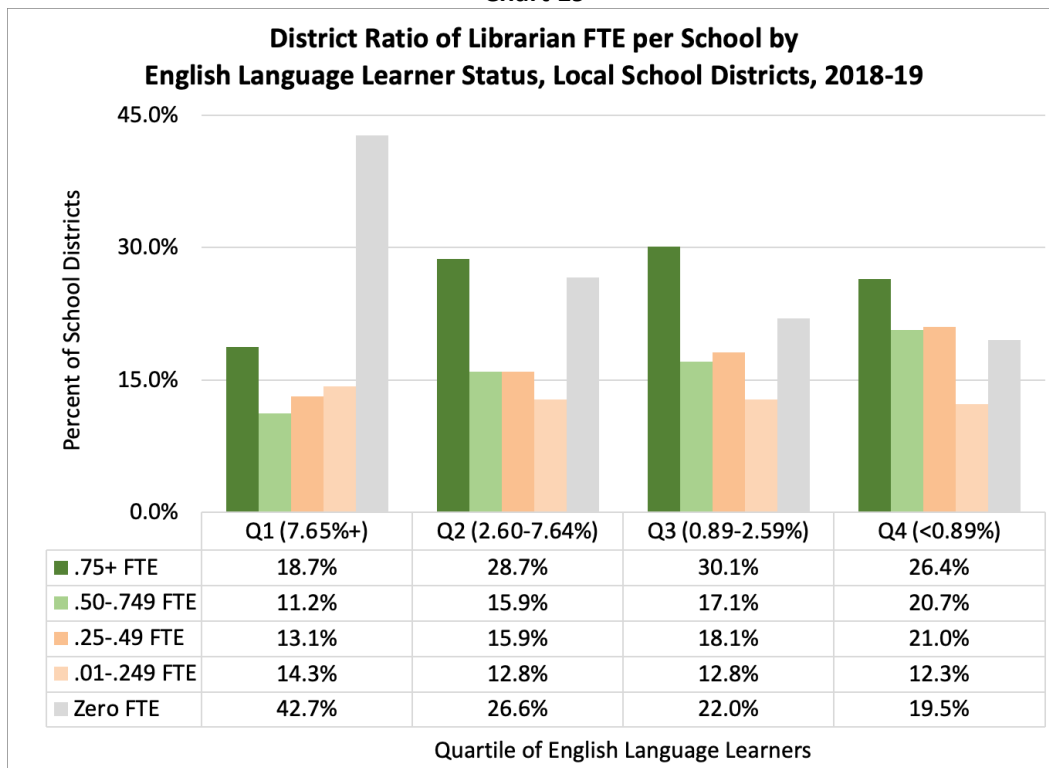


How does the presence of English Language Learners relate to a district's level of librarian staffing?

Districts with the most English Language Learners (ELL) were least likely to have .75+ librarian FTE per school and most likely, by far, to have no librarians. In 2018-19, the highest level of librarian staffing (.75+ FTE per school) was found in fewer than 1 in 5 districts (18.7%) with the most ELL students compared to more than a quarter of districts (26.4%) with the fewest ELL students. The same year, more than 2 out of 5 districts (42.7%) with the most ELL students had no librarians compared with 1 out of 5 districts (19.5%) with the fewest ELL students. (See Chart 19.)

Districts with the most English Language Learners were least likely to have the highest level of librarian staffing and most likely, by far, to have no librarians.

Chart 19



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.

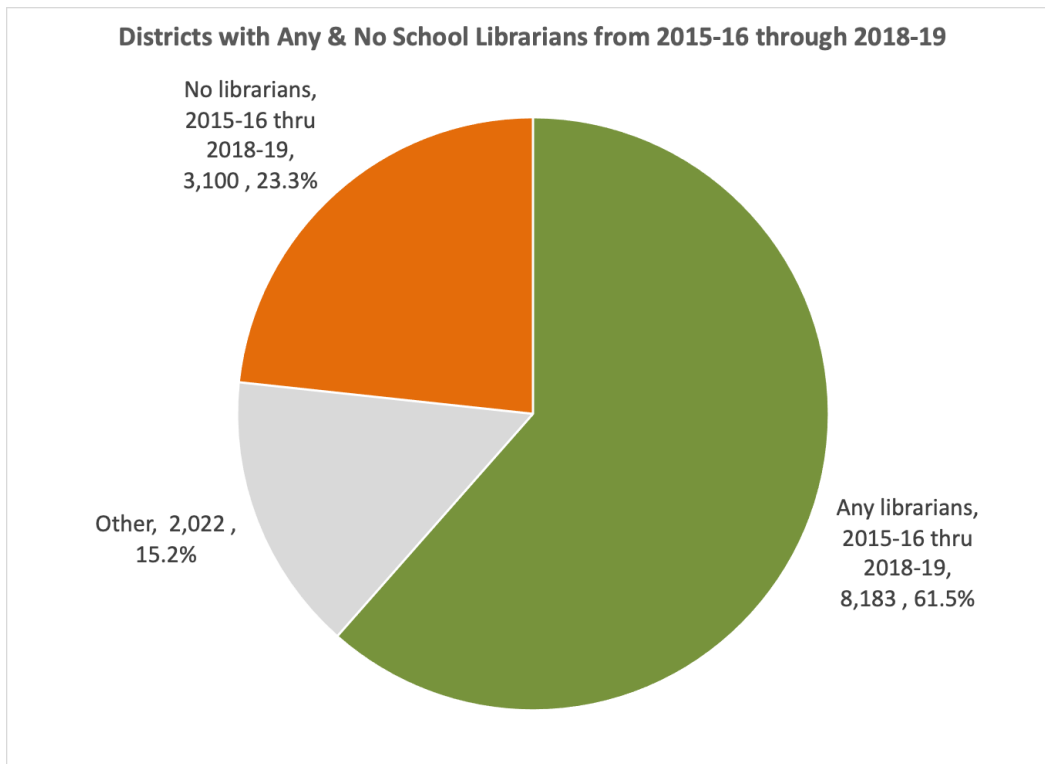
How many districts maintained any level of school librarian staffing—however variable it may have been—between 2015-16 and 2018-19? And conversely, how many districts have reported no librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19?

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.

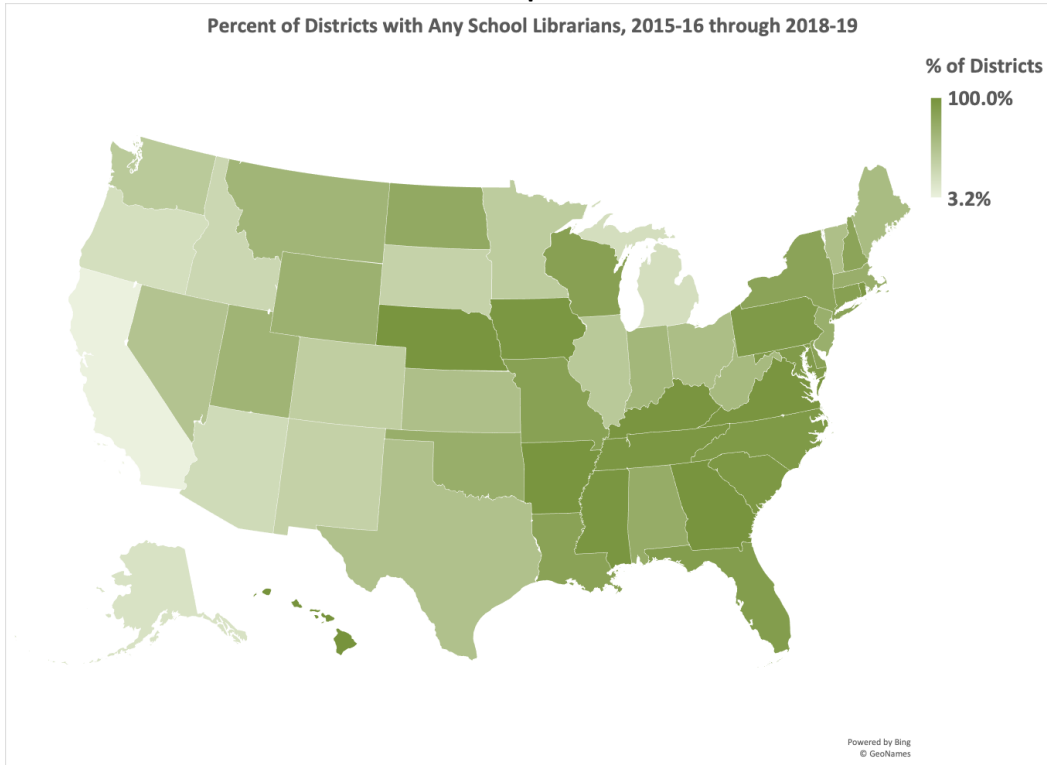
Chart 20



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.)

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

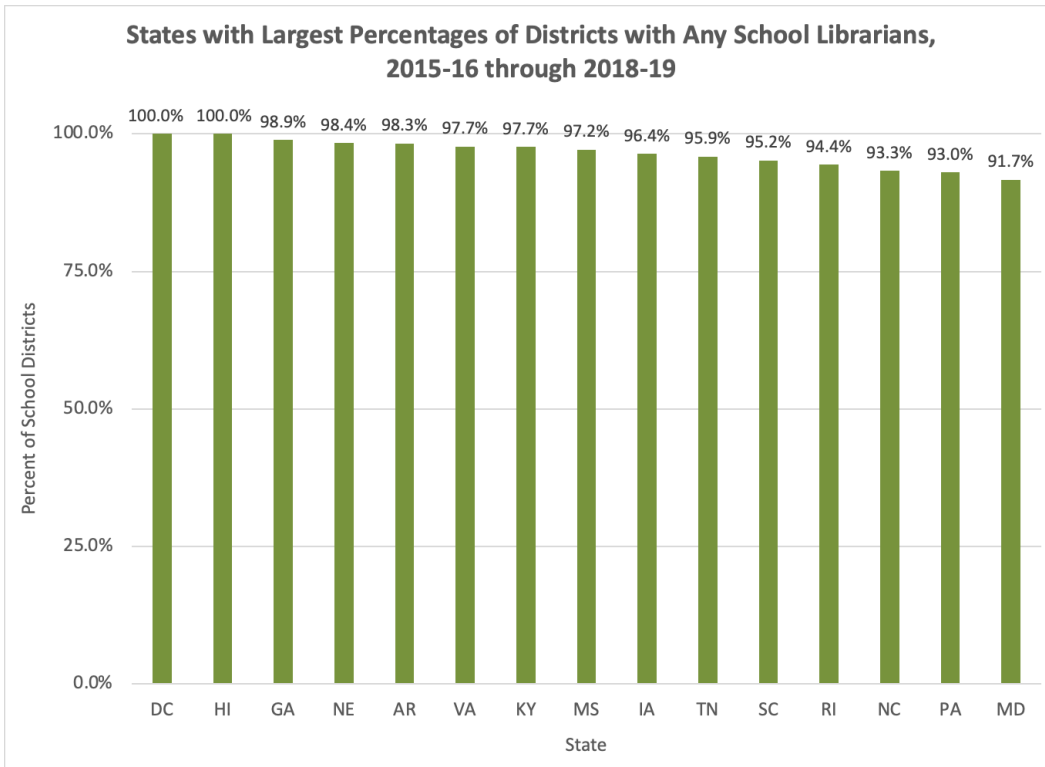
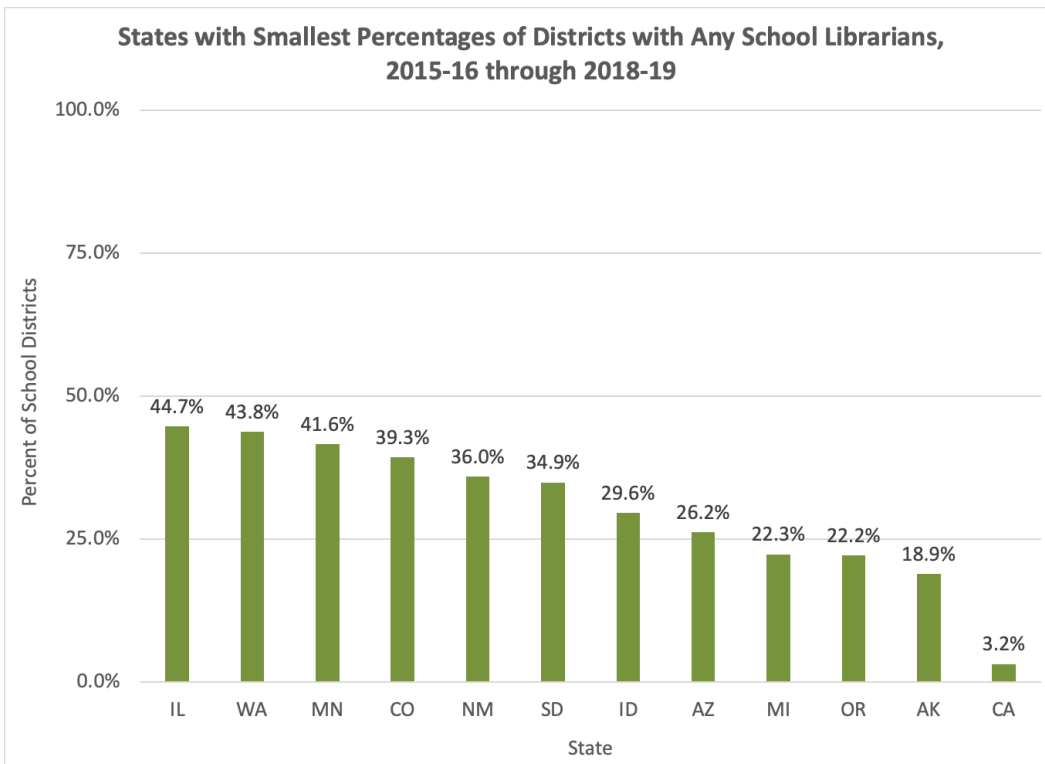


Chart 22¹⁰



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

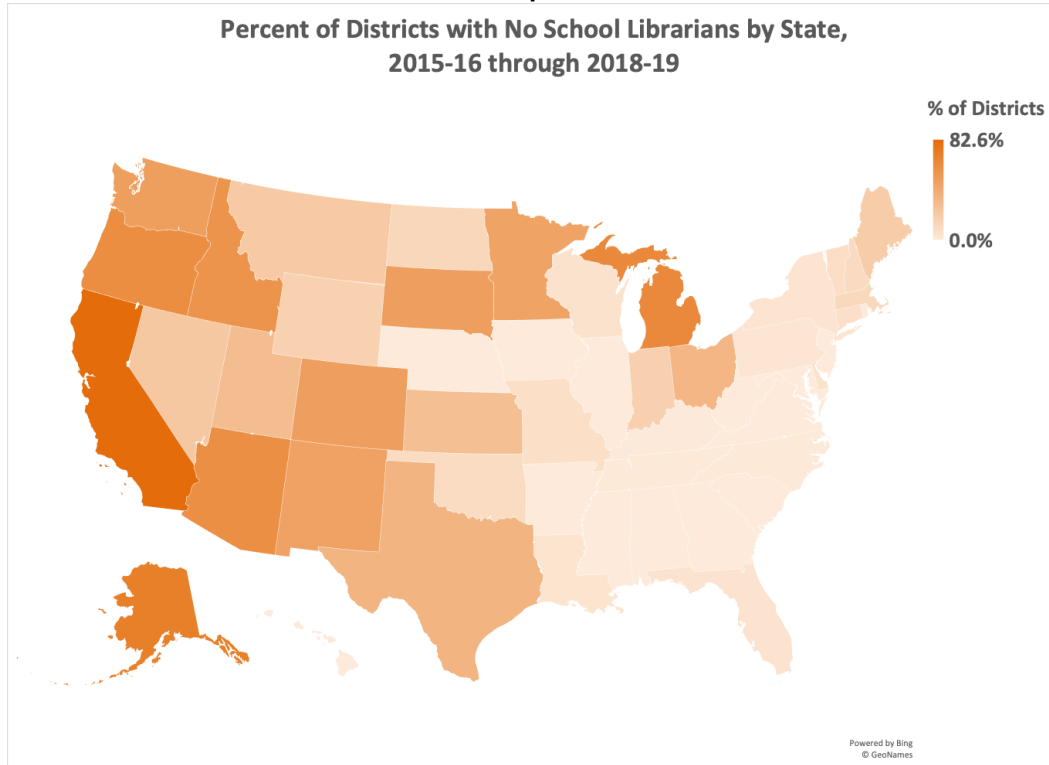
Table 14. Percent of Districts with Any School Librarians by State, 2015-16 through 2018-19

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

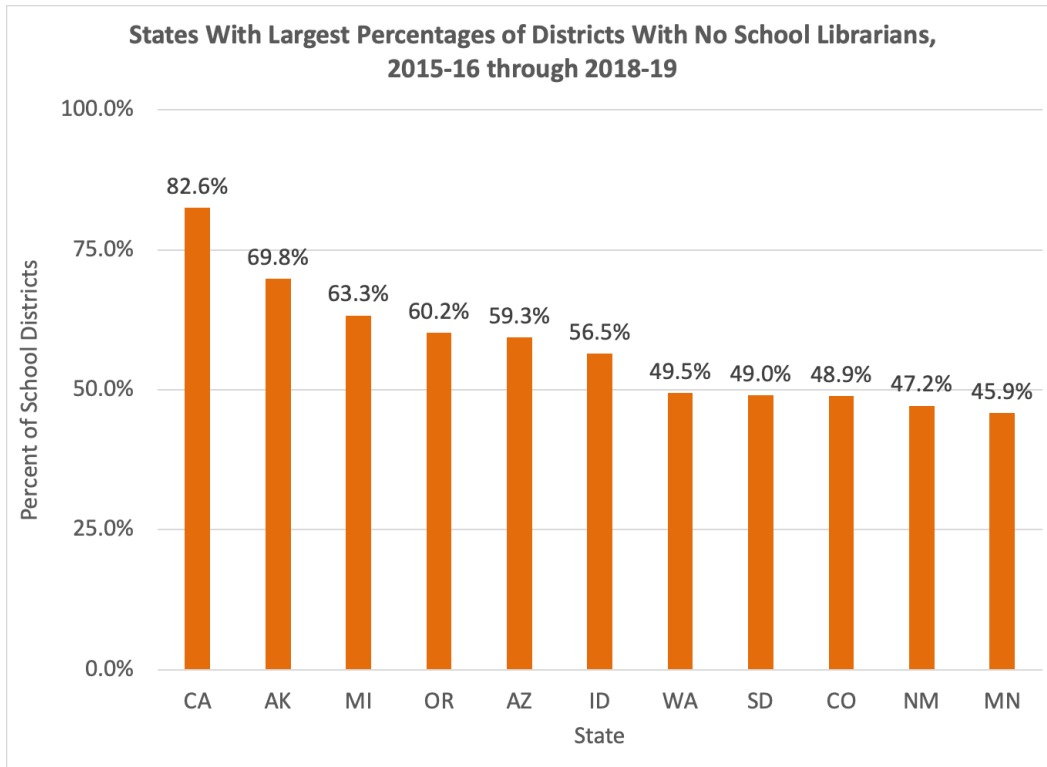


Table 15. Percent of Districts with No School Librarians by State, 2015-16 through 2018-19

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

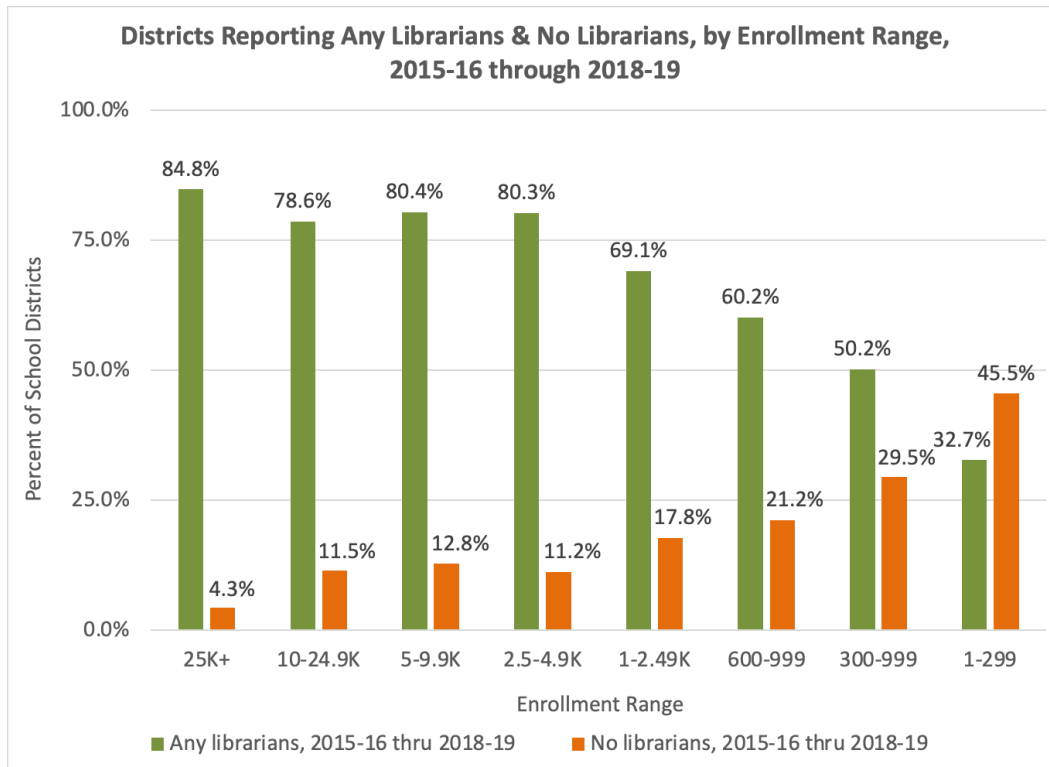
The long-term presence or absence of a school librarian, as reported by districts, is strongly related to three district characteristics: enrollment, locale, and per-pupil expenditures.

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.

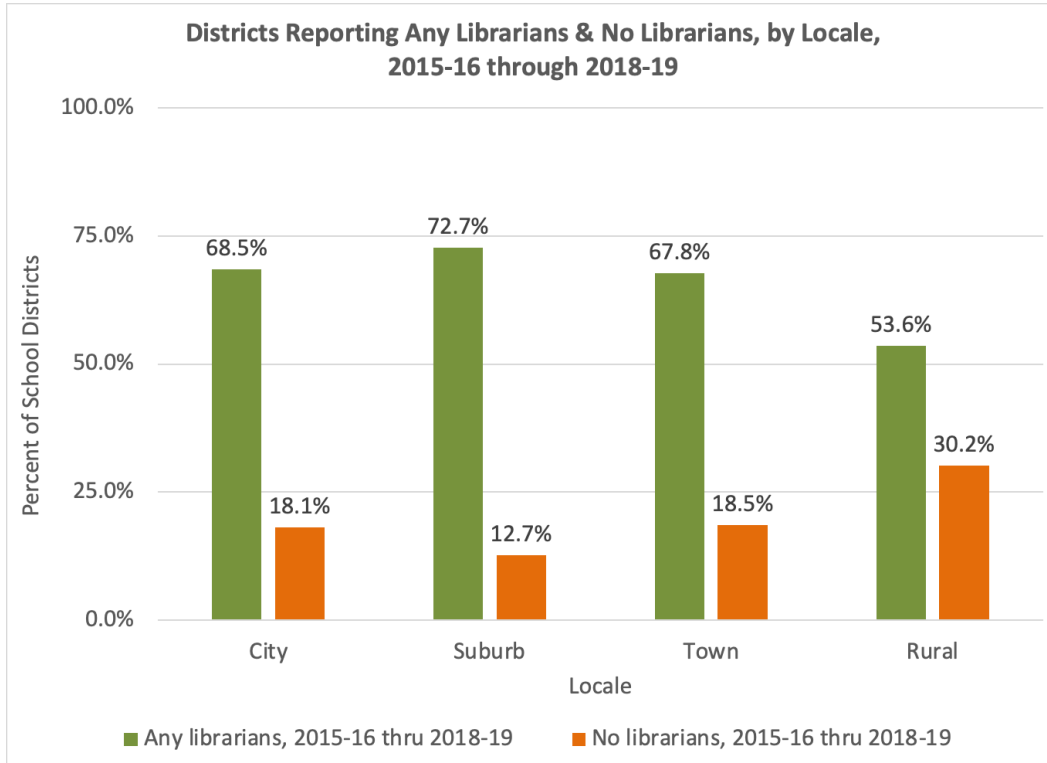
Chart 24



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

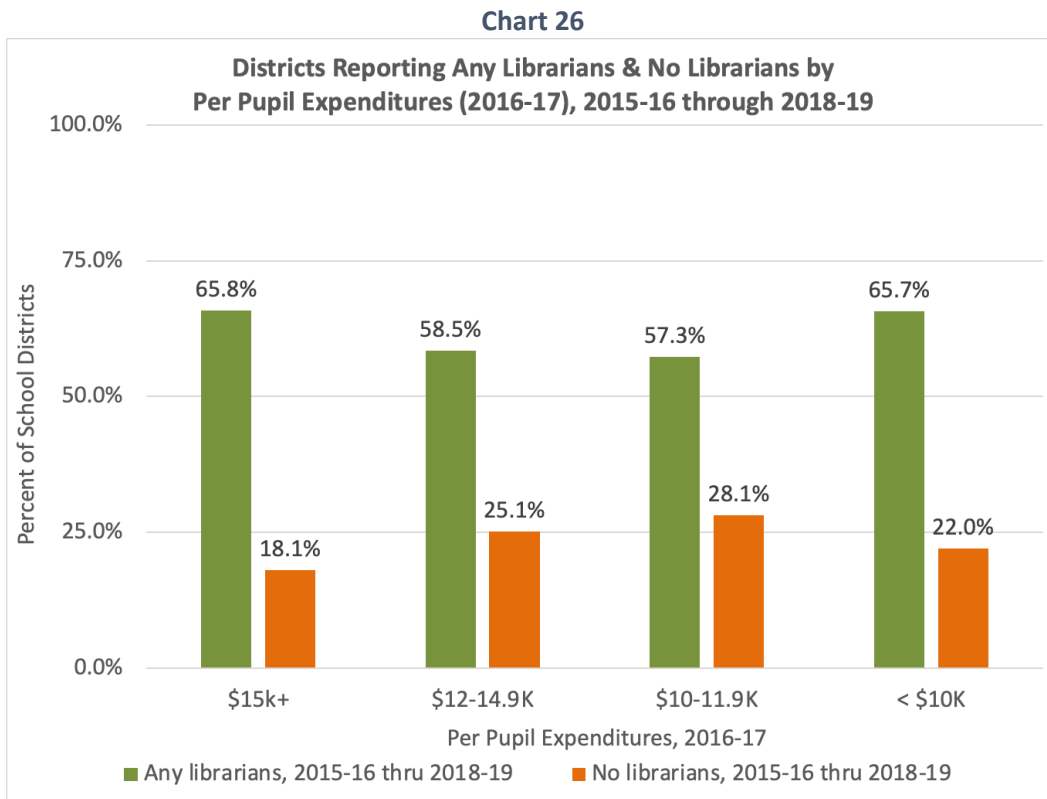


Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, more suburban districts consistently employed school librarians, and more rural districts were consistently without librarians.

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

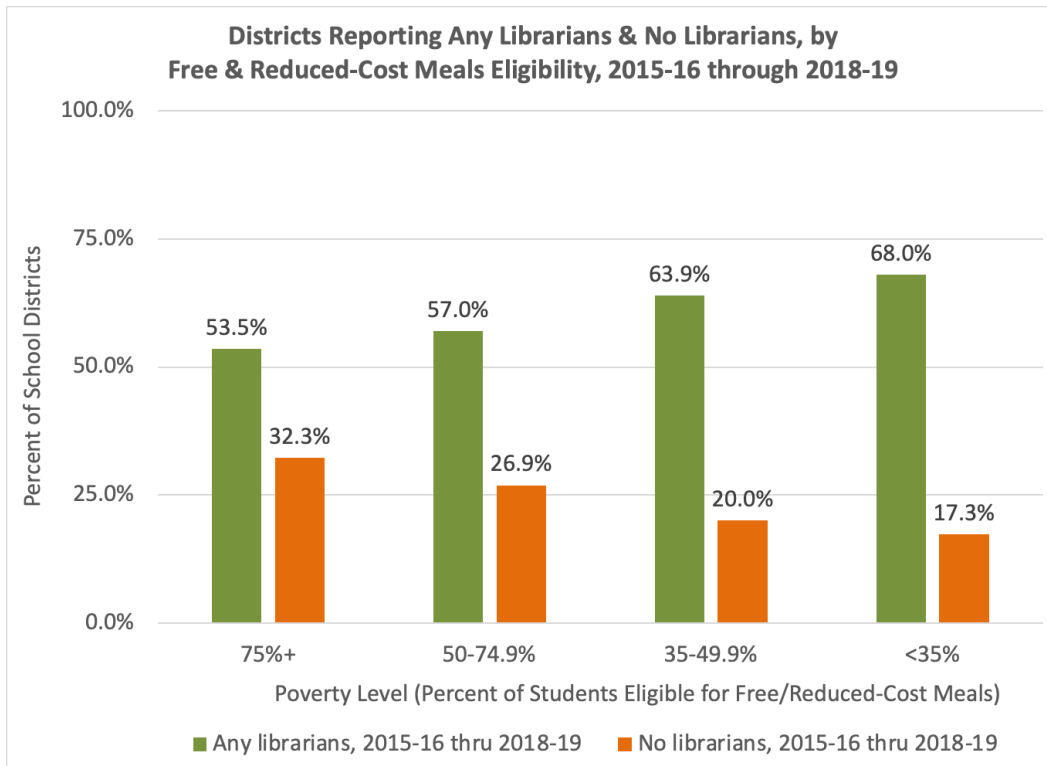
Socio-economic differences between districts are also powerful drivers of long-term inequality of access to school librarians. The Common Core of Data (CCD) provides data on three student demographics that demonstrated strong, significant relationships to the presence and absence of librarians between 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

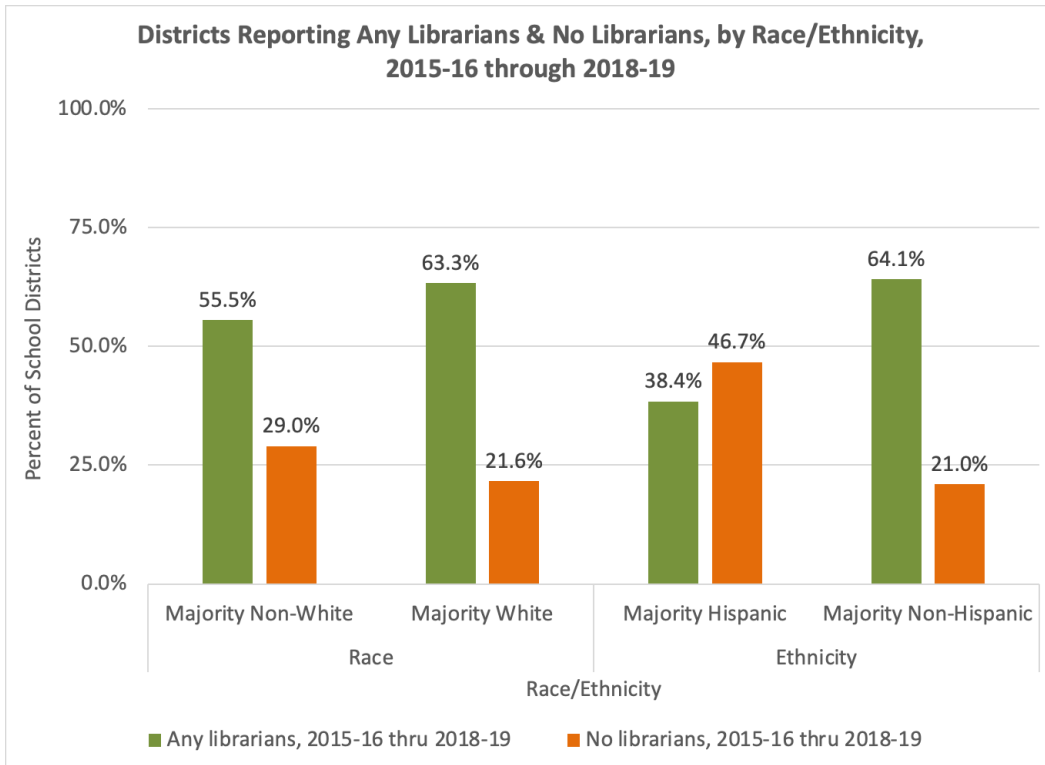
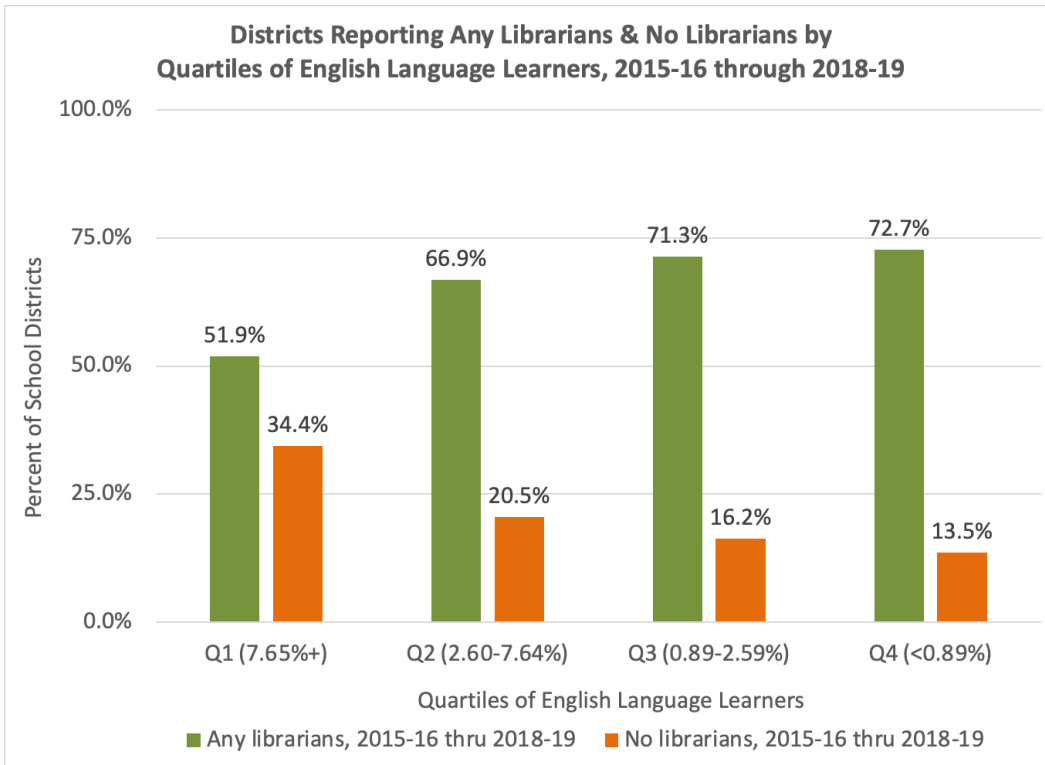


Chart 29

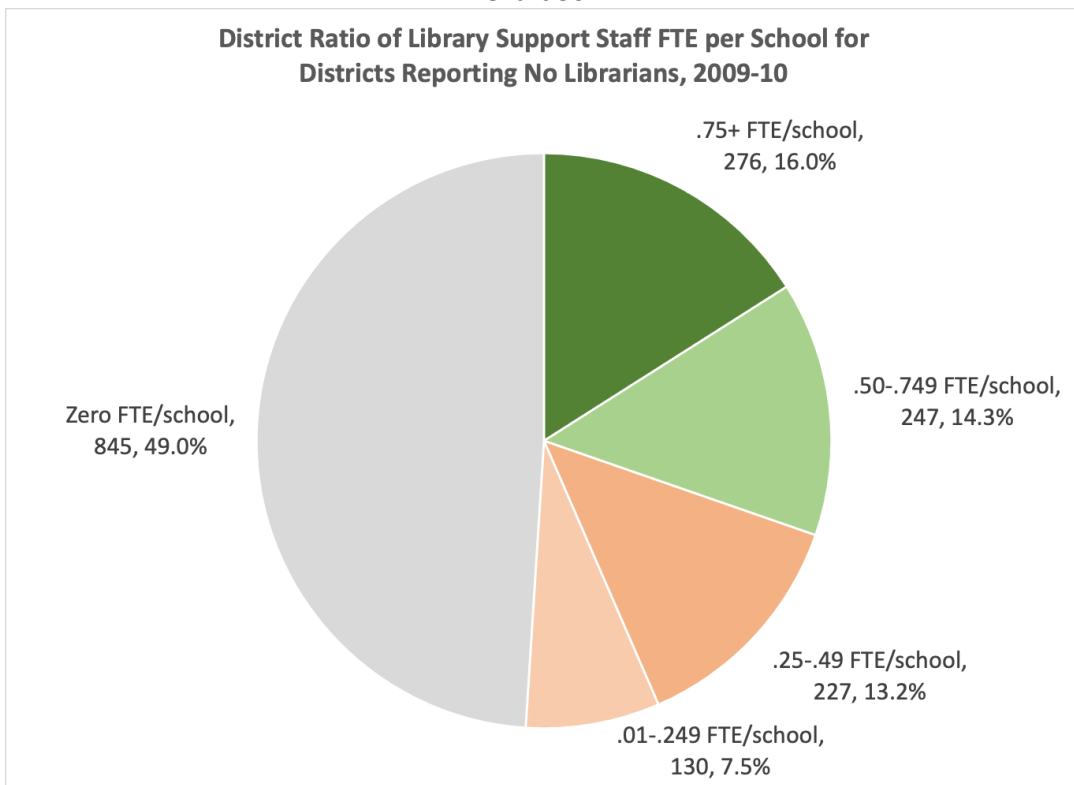


Replacement of School Librarians with Library Support Staff

To what extent have local school districts been replacing school librarians with library support staff?

To determine if librarians were being replaced by library support staff, we analyzed NCES’s library staffing data from 2009-10 to 2018-19. In 2009-10, there were 12,145 districts that reported some level of school librarian staffing (including none). Of those, 2,159 districts—17.8% of that year’s 12,145 local districts—had no librarians. Of those 2,159 districts 1,725 also reported some level of library support staff. Almost half of those 1,725 districts (49%) reported no library support staff as well as no librarians. Of the remaining districts—those relying on library support staff without any librarians—about 1 in 6 (16.0%) reported near-full-time library support staffing (.75+ FTE) per school, about 1 in 7 (14.3%) reported half- to three-quarter time library support staffing per school, and about 1 in 5 (20.7%) reported less than half-time library support staffing per school. (See Chart 30.)

Chart 30¹¹



¹¹ Notably, this analysis does not report library support staff levels for individual schools without librarians, if there were any librarians elsewhere in the district.

In 2018-19, there were 12,840 districts that reported to NCES some level of school librarian staffing (including none). Of those, 3,983 districts—31% of the 12,840 districts—had no librarians. Of these 3,983 “no librarians” districts, 1,323 or almost half (47.1%) reported some level of library support staff. The remainder—1,488 or more than half (52.9%)—reported no library support staff as well as no librarians.

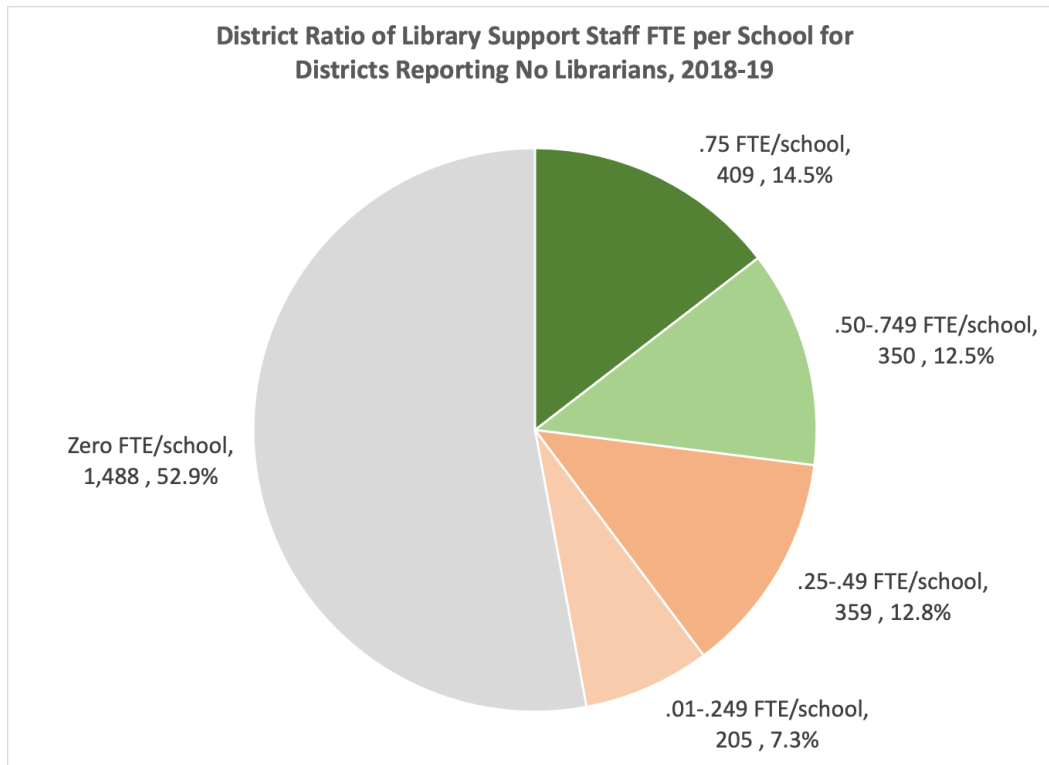
In 2018-19, almost half of districts with no librarians reported some level of library support staff—library aides working without the supervision or guidance of on-site librarians.

Of the districts relying on library support staff without any librarians, about 1 in 7 (14.5%) reported near-full-time library support staff per school, about 1 in 8 (12.5%) reported half- to three-quarter time library support staff per school, and about 1 in 5 (20.1%) reported less than half-time library support staff per school. (See Chart 31.)

These circumstances—analogueous to having instructional aides replacing teachers—raise concerning questions:

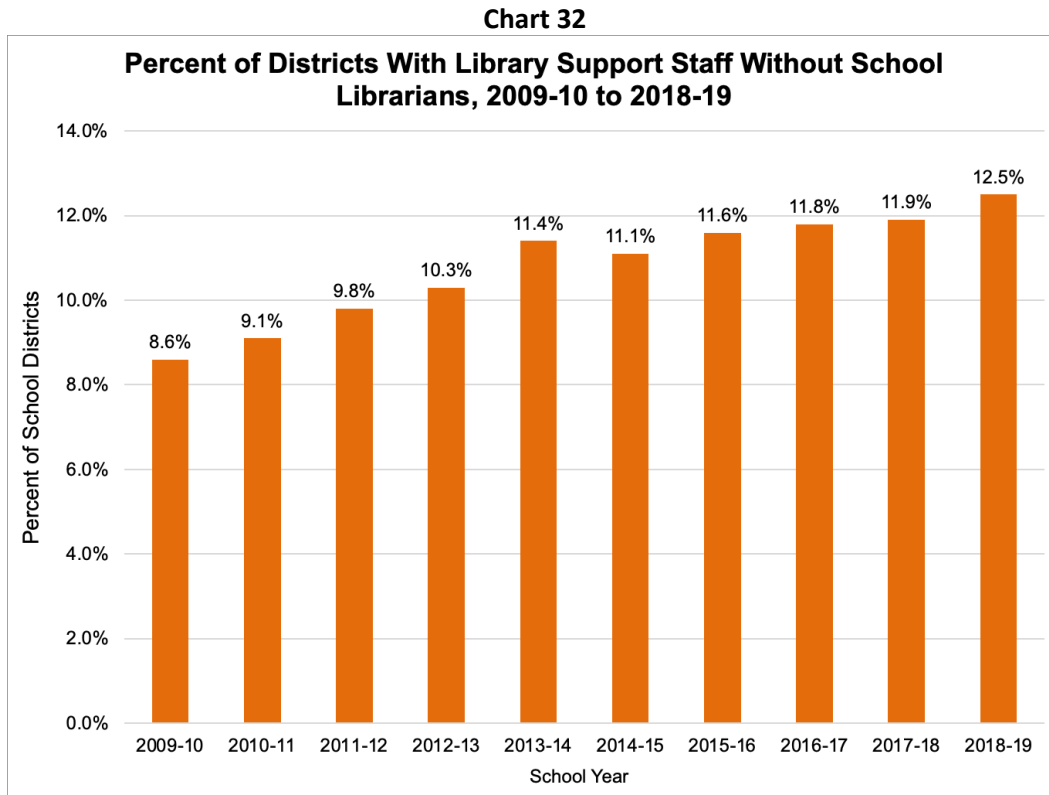
- Who, if anyone, provided these paraprofessionals with daily supervision?
- To what extent are they—though classified and reported as library support staff—expected to deliver all or part of the services usually associated with a certified, professional librarian?
- If they are being expected to work beyond the paraprofessional level, what services are they attempting to provide, how well are they doing that, and what is falling by the wayside?
- Or, is the employment of library support staff instead of librarians simply a reflection of a staffing decision-maker’s determination that having someone to monitor the library space and the use of its resources (e.g., computers, makerspace equipment, books and other physical materials) is “good enough?”

Chart 31



The replacement of school librarians with library support staff is a growing trend. In 2009-10, only about 1 in 12 districts (8.6%) employed library support staff, but no librarians. By 2018-19, 1 out of 8 districts (12.5%) were employing library support staff, but no librarians. (See Chart 32.) Notably, these figures include only whole districts without librarians. In addition to these cases, there were also an unknown number of schools with library support staff in place of librarians, due to the presence of librarians elsewhere in the district.

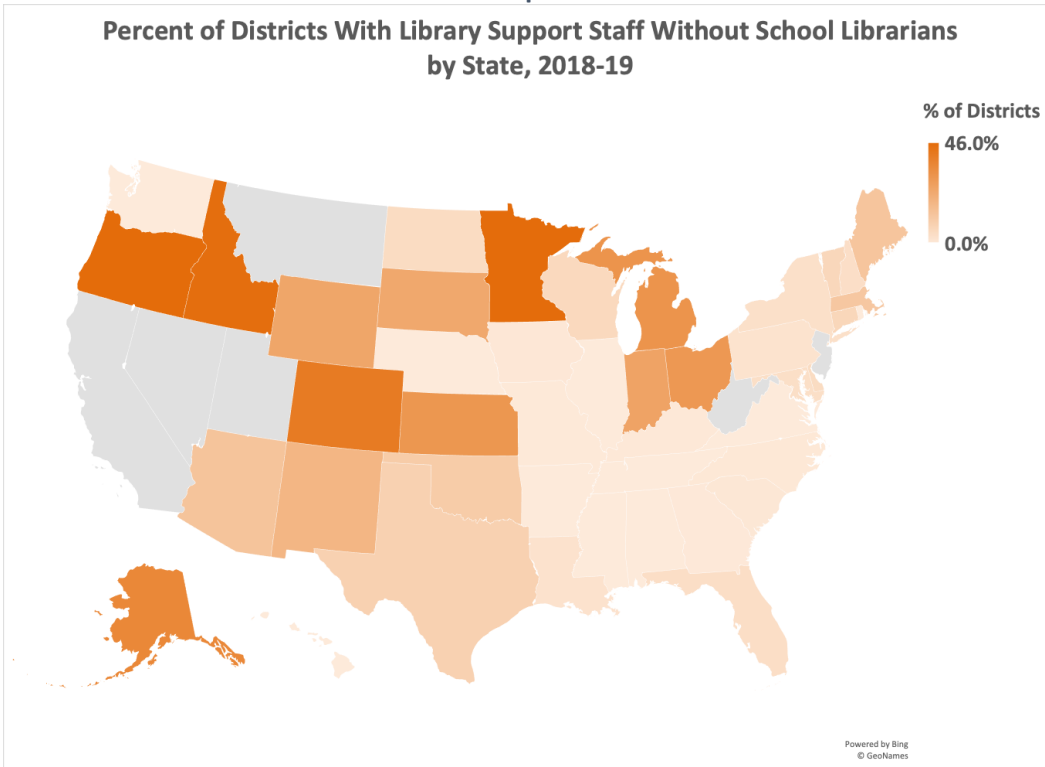
Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the percentage of districts relying on library support staff working without librarians increased by almost half from 8.6% to 12.5%.



While these year-to-year increases in districts replacing librarians with library support staff are concerning, they are being driven largely by a few states in the West and the Great Lakes region. (See Map 13.) By 2018-19, between 2 out of 5 and almost half of districts employed library support staff without librarians in 4 states: Oregon (46.0%), Minnesota (45.9%), Idaho (45.2%), and Colorado (40.4%). Between a quarter and more than a third of districts relied on library support staff in place of librarians in 6 states: Alaska (35.8%), Michigan (31.5%), Kansas (30.4%), Ohio (29.8%), Indiana (25.9%), and Wyoming (25.0%). (See Chart 33 and Tables 16 and 17.)

Over the past decade, more and more districts have been employing library support staff in place of librarians. By 2018-19, this trend was most pronounced in 4 states—Oregon, Minnesota, Idaho, and Colorado.

Map 13



States for which data not available: CA, MT, NJ, NV, UT, and WV.

Chart 33

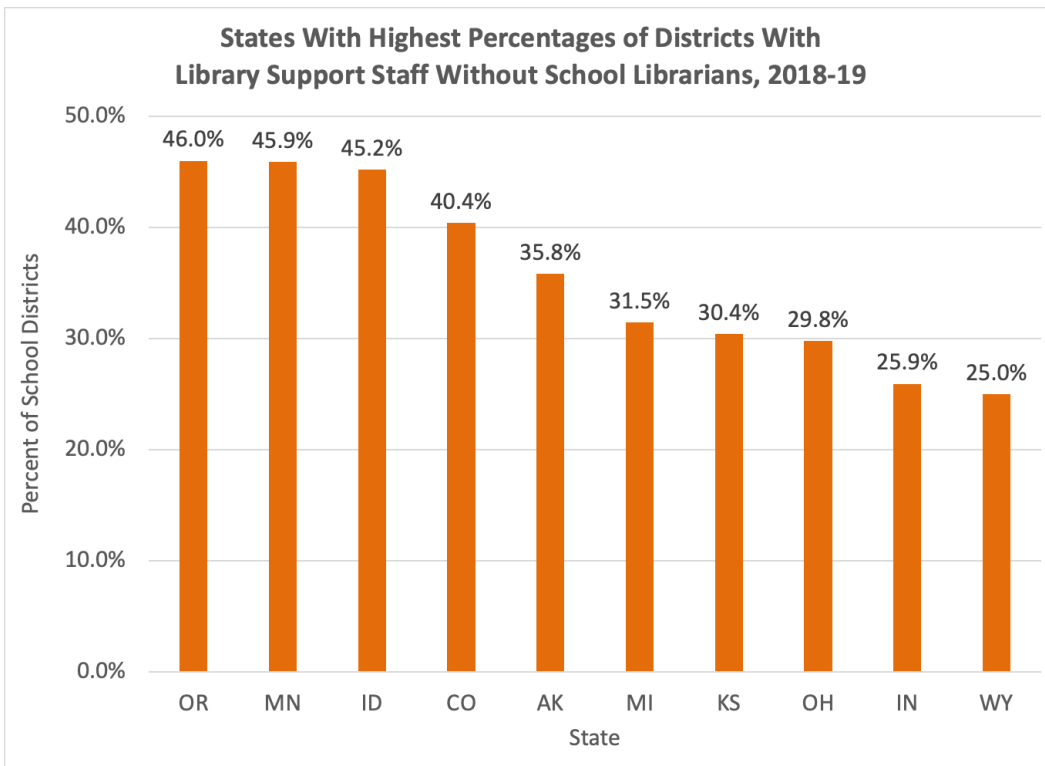


Table 16. Districts With Library Support Staff Without School Librarians by State, 2018-19

State	Local School Districts, 2018-19		
	Total number of districts	Number of districts with library support staff without school librarians	Percent of districts with library support staff without school librarians
AK	53	19	35.8%
AL	137	0	0.0%
AR	234	0	0.0%
AZ	214	30	14.0%
CO	178	72	40.4%
CT	169	12	7.1%
DC	1	0	0.0%
DE	19	1	5.3%
FL	67	3	4.5%
GA	180	1	0.6%
HI	1	0	0.0%
IA	330	3	0.9%
ID	115	52	45.2%
IL	891	0	0.0%
IN	293	76	25.9%
KS	286	87	30.4%
KY	173	1	0.6%
LA	71	2	2.8%
MA	324	41	12.7%
MD	24	1	4.2%
ME	191	26	13.6%
MI	537	169	31.5%
MN	329	151	45.9%
MO	517	2	0.4%
MS	141	0	0.0%
NC	120	1	0.8%
ND	170	9	5.3%
NE	244	0	0.0%
NH	165	7	4.2%
NM	89	17	19.1%
NY	720	27	3.8%
OH	617	184	29.8%
OK	512	57	11.1%
OR	176	81	46.0%
PA	499	13	2.6%
RI	36	0	0.0%
SC	83	1	1.2%
SD	149	36	24.2%
TN	146	0	0.0%
TX	1,022	93	9.1%
VA	132	0	0.0%
VT	147	10	6.8%
WA	297	0	0.0%
WI	418	26	6.2%
WY	48	12	25.0%
State Average	250	29	11.5%
State Median	173	9	4.5%

States for which data not available: CA, MT, NJ, NV, UT, and WV.

Table 17. States Ranked by Percent of Districts With Library Support Staff Without School Librarians, 2018-19

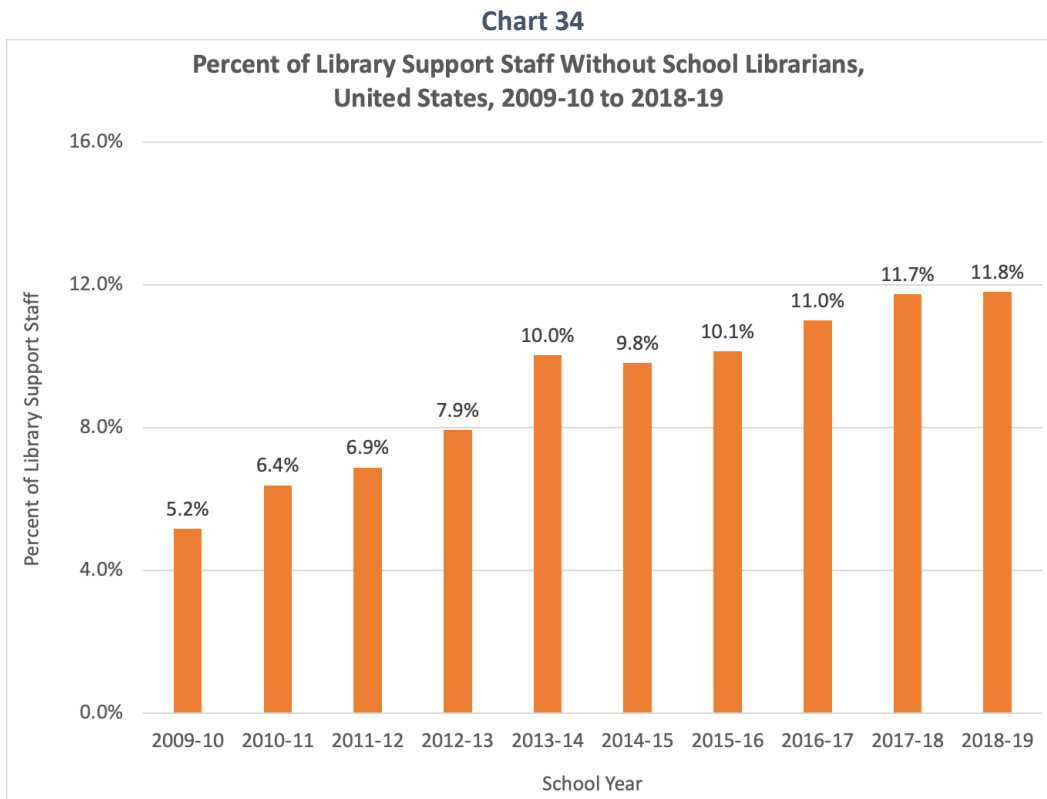
Rank	State	Percent of districts with library support staff without school librarians, 2018-19
1	OR	46.0%
2	MN	45.9%
3	ID	45.2%
4	CO	40.4%
5	AK	35.8%
6	MI	31.5%
7	KS	30.4%
8	OH	29.8%
9	IN	25.9%
10	WY	25.0%
11	SD	24.2%
12	NM	19.1%
13	AZ	14.0%
14	ME	13.6%
15	MA	12.7%
16	OK	11.1%
17	TX	9.1%
18	CT	7.1%
19	VT	6.8%
20	WI	6.2%
21	ND	5.3%
21	DE	5.3%
23	FL	4.5%
24	NH	4.2%
24	MD	4.2%
26	NY	3.8%
27	LA	2.8%
28	PA	2.6%
29	SC	1.2%
30	IA	0.9%
31	NC	0.8%
32	KY	0.6%
32	GA	0.6%
34	MO	0.4%
35	AL	0.0%
35	AR	0.0%
35	DC	0.0%
35	HI	0.0%
35	IL	0.0%
35	MS	0.0%
35	NE	0.0%
35	RI	0.0%
35	TN	0.0%
35	VA	0.0%
35	WA	0.0%
	State Average	11.5%
	State Median	4.5%

States for which data not available: CA, MT, NJ, NV, UT, and WV.

To what extent have library support staff been working without school librarians?

The growing trend of librarians being replaced by library support staff is even clearer if, instead of examining the trend at the district level, one considers the percentage of library support staff FTEs employed in districts with no school librarians. In 2009-10, only about 1 in 20 (5.2%) library support staff FTEs worked in districts without librarians. By 2015-16, that proportion had increased to 1 out of 10 (10.1%), and, by 2018-19, almost 1 out of 8 (11.8%). (See Chart 34.) Notably, these figures include only library support staff working without librarians in whole districts without librarians. Unknowable, due to the lack of school level data, is the percentage of library support staff working without librarians in districts where some schools have, and some do not have, librarians.

Over the past decade, the percentage of library support staff working without school librarians has more than doubled from 5.2% to 11.8%.



Over the past decade, more and more library support staff have been employed in place of librarians. By 2018-19, this trend was most pronounced in three states--Arizona, Michigan, and South Dakota.

While these year-to-year increases in library support staff replacing librarians are concerning, they are being driven largely by a few states in the West and northern Midwest. (See Map 14.) By 2018-19, in 7 out of 10 library support staff in Arizona (71.2%) were working without the supervision of a librarian. In South Dakota and Michigan, more than half of library support staff (57.8% and 55.9%, respectively) worked without librarians. In Alaska, over 40% of library support staff worked without librarians and about a third of library support staff in four other states in the West and northern Midwest lacked librarian supervision: Idaho (35.5%), Oregon (35.1%), Minnesota (34.5%), and Ohio (31.6%). Notably, Delaware (33.3%) was the only state on the eastern seaboard where a similar pattern prevailed. (See Chart 35 and Tables 18 and 19.)

Map 14

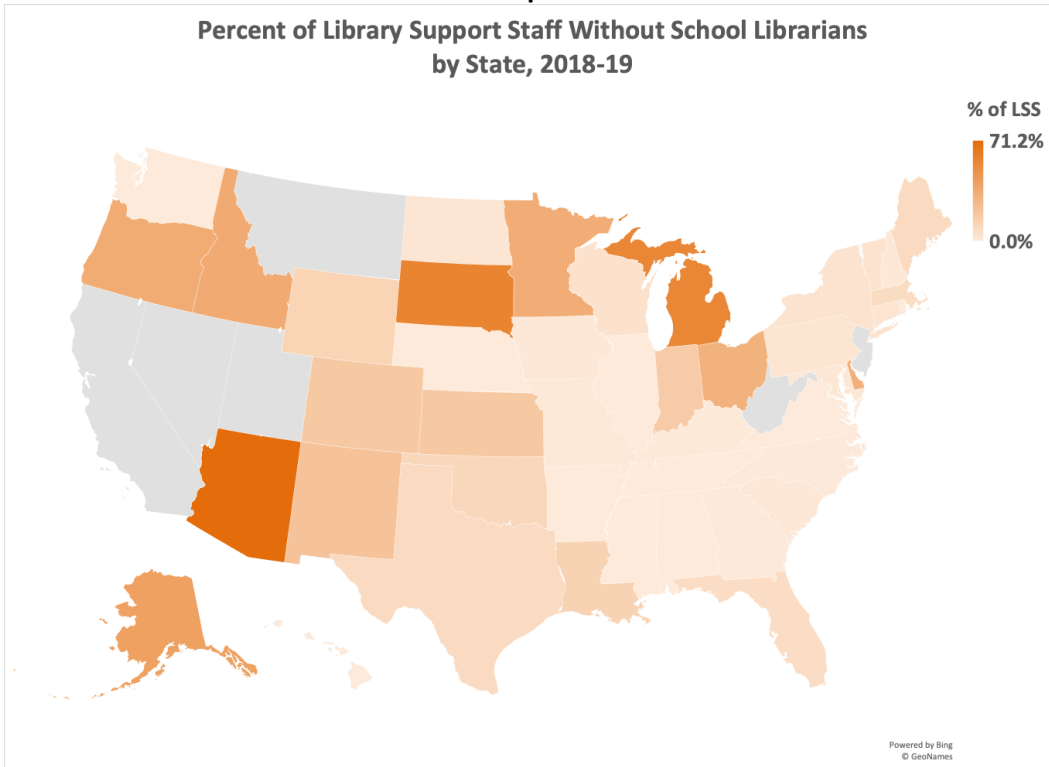


Chart 35

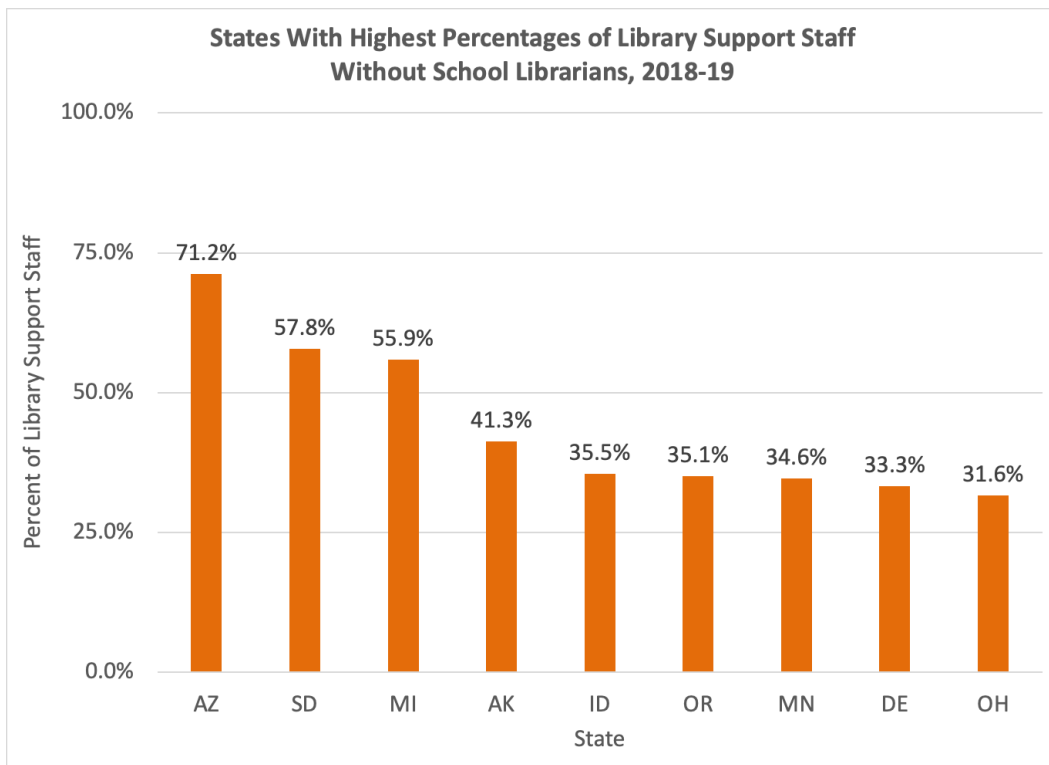


Table 18. Library Support Staff Without School Librarians by State, 2018-19

State	Library Support Staff, 2018-19		
	Total Library Support Staff (FTE)	Library Support Staff Without School Librarians (FTE)	Percent of Library Support Staff Without School Librarians
AK	77.16	31.89	41.3%
AL	188.94	0.00	0.0%
AR	173.31	0.00	0.0%
AZ	69.70	49.61	71.2%
CO	703.01	131.93	18.8%
CT	448.28	14.10	3.1%
DC	3.00	0.00	0.0%
DE	3.00	1.00	33.3%
FL	803.26	57.00	7.1%
GA	1,181.00	4.00	0.3%
HI	53.20	0.00	0.0%
IA	408.33	4.00	1.0%
ID	268.80	95.48	35.5%
IL	955.26	0.00	0.0%
IN	1,122.76	197.70	17.6%
KS	626.40	117.90	18.8%
KY	186.96	1.00	0.5%
LA	158.22	21.00	13.3%
MA	1,332.68	102.46	7.7%
MD	274.09	5.20	1.9%
ME	302.60	26.10	8.6%
MI	742.25	414.65	55.9%
MN	680.86	235.69	34.6%
MO	72.10	0.44	0.6%
MS	81.74	0.00	0.0%
NC	214.24	1.00	0.5%
ND	186.51	5.28	2.8%
NE	382.22	0.00	0.0%
NH	224.20	2.70	1.2%
NM	124.94	27.86	22.3%
NY	1,070.30	39.70	3.7%
OH	1,559.53	493.21	31.6%
OK	682.50	73.30	10.7%
OR	686.51	241.13	35.1%
PA	1,282.00	38.00	3.0%
RI	14.10	0.00	0.0%
SC	497.50	6.00	1.2%
SD	62.95	36.39	57.8%
TN	454.40	0.00	0.0%
TX	1,646.37	141.99	8.6%
VA	1,702.73	0.00	0.0%
VT	113.00	4.19	3.7%
WA	0.00	0.00	0.0%
WI	685.64	29.85	4.4%
WY	351.57	44.57	12.7%
State Average	507.96	59.92	12.0%
State Median	351.57	14.10	3.4%

States for which data not available: CA, MT, NJ, NV, UT, and WV.

Table 19. States Ranked by Percent of Library Support Staff Without School Librarians, 2018-19

Rank	State	Percent of Library Support Staff Without School Librarians, 2018-19
1	AZ	71.2%
2	SD	57.8%
3	MI	55.9%
4	AK	41.3%
5	ID	35.5%
6	OR	35.1%
7	MN	34.6%
8	DE	33.3%
9	OH	31.6%
10	NM	22.3%
11	KS	18.8%
11	CO	18.8%
13	IN	17.6%
14	LA	13.3%
15	WY	12.7%
16	OK	10.7%
17	ME	8.6%
18	TX	8.6%
19	MA	7.7%
20	FL	7.1%
21	WI	4.4%
22	NY	3.7%
23	VT	3.7%
24	CT	3.1%
25	PA	3.0%
26	ND	2.8%
27	MD	1.9%
28	SC	1.2%
29	NH	1.2%
30	IA	1.0%
31	MO	0.6%
32	KY	0.5%
32	NC	0.5%
34	GA	0.3%
35	AL	0.0%
35	AR	0.0%
35	DC	0.0%
35	HI	0.0%
35	IL	0.0%
35	MS	0.0%
35	NE	0.0%
35	RI	0.0%
35	TN	0.0%
35	VA	0.0%
35	WA	0.0%
	State Average	12.7%
	State Median	3.7%

States for which data not available: CA, MT, NJ, NV, UT, and WV.

Probability of Reinstating School Librarians Once Eliminated

What happened over time in districts that eliminated school librarians? How often have lost librarian FTEs been restored?

To examine whether districts reinstated librarian positions once eliminated, we tracked, from 2015-16 through 2018-19, districts that reported no librarians in 2015-16.

In 2015-16, 3,560 districts nationwide reported no school librarians. (That may have been the district's first year of no librarians, or it may have eliminated its last librarian sometime earlier.)

In 2016-17, of those no-librarian districts, 210 (5.9%) reported something greater than zero for librarians. It may have been one librarian for the entire district, a full-time librarian in every school, or anything in-between.

In 2017-18, of those no-librarian districts, 275 (7.7%) reported something greater than zero for librarians.

In 2018-19, of those no-librarian districts, 336 (9.4%) reported something greater than zero for librarians.

Although this group of "no librarians" districts tracked from 2015-16 through to 2018-19, showed some minimal additions of school librarians over time, the probability of librarian positions being restored was not high. In 2016-17, 94 out of every 100 districts that reported no librarians the year before had none. Even three years later, in 2018-19, 91 out of every 100 districts that reported no librarians in 2015-16 still had none.

Nine out of 10 districts that had eliminated school librarians by 2015-16 had not reinstated them by 2018-19. This indicates that, once lost, a school librarian position was highly unlikely to be restored.

These data suggest that decision-makers for the vast majority of districts that eliminated school librarians did not see a need to reinstate them—at least, within the three subsequent years for which data were examined. These findings raise important questions that SLIDE interviewers will seek to explore with decision-makers from such districts.

- If school librarian cuts are not reversed within three years, what, if any, consequences for their students and teachers do decision-makers believe resulted from those cuts? What, if any, steps were taken to ameliorate those consequences? What, if any, protests were heard from students, their parents, teachers, the community, or local media?
- If, as NCES data indicate, school librarians were cut, who, if anyone, replaced them? Were any of their responsibilities shifted to other particular staff (e.g., reading teachers, educational technology staff) or added to the workloads of all teachers? Or are those responsibilities no longer fulfilled by anyone?
- If school librarians were cut in order to make room for a new staffing model involving a different position or positions, what does that model look like? How were alternative positions staffed and by whom?

The SLIDE interviews will be the first time there has been a large-scale effort to understand the thinking of school leaders regarding such decisions and their consequences. An improved understanding of their thinking would better inform the school library community to identify more promising strategic directions for the profession's future, possibly including new alliances with other types of educators (perhaps newer types) who share wider concerns for what are now perceived as library, learning resources, and teaching-with-technology functions.

District Ratios of Students & Teachers to School Librarian FTEs

Two additional measures of school librarian employment at the district level are the number of students per librarian full-time equivalent (FTE) and the number of teachers per librarian FTE. As noted earlier, the 2018 National Standards of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) perpetuate the long-held ideals that school librarians should teach information literacy and related skills to students and collaborate on instructional design and delivery with teachers. At the district level—as at national and state levels—the numbers of students and teachers per librarian FTE make fulfilling those charges extraordinarily challenging for most districts and schools.

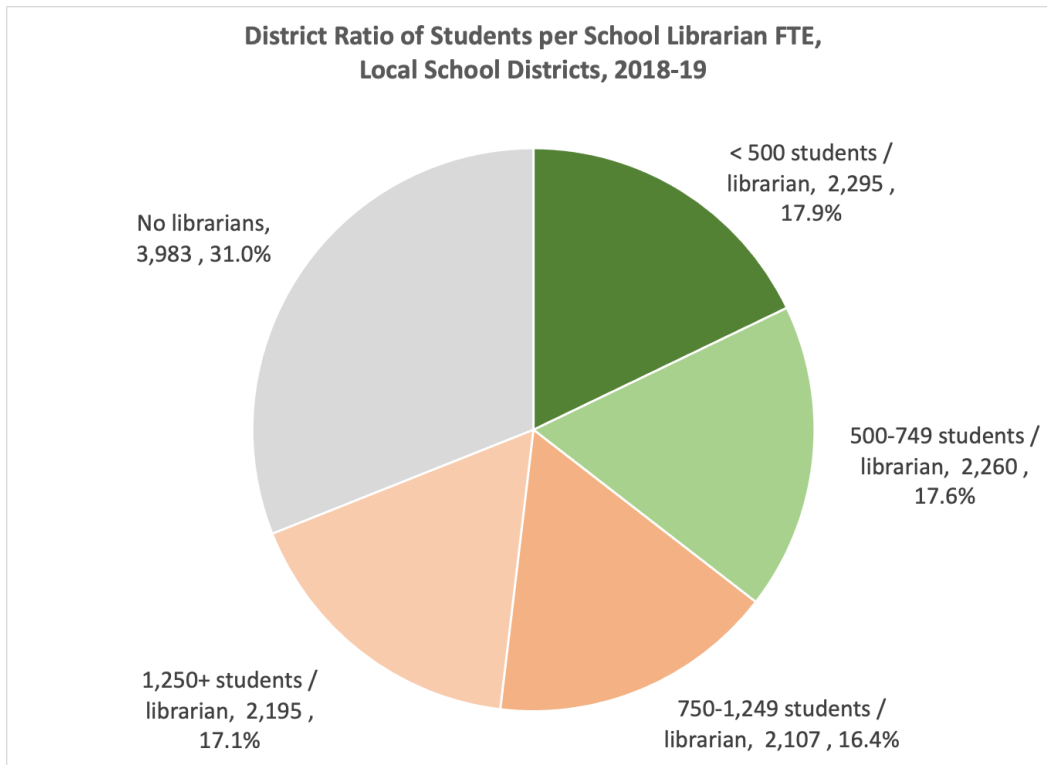
The wide range of these ratios can be attributed very largely to the fact that few schools are staffed with librarians on the basis of how many students or teachers they serve. Generally, individual schools have one full-time librarian, a part-time librarian (ranging from a few hours a week to something approaching full-time), or no librarian. Generally, only the very largest schools have more than one librarian FTE. Consequently, due to the range of building-level enrollments, the ratios of students and teachers per librarian FTE run the gamut.

District Ratio of Students per Librarian FTE

How did the ratio of students per librarian full-time equivalent (FTE) vary among local school districts in 2018-19?

Fewer than 1 out of 5 districts (17.9%) had fewer than 500 students per librarian FTE. Similar proportions of districts had 500 to 749 students per librarian FTE, 750 to 1,249 students per librarian FTE, and 1,250 or more students per librarian FTE. The remaining 3 out of 10 districts (31.0%) had no librarians at all. (See Chart 36.)

Chart 36



In 2018-19, in 1 out of 6 districts, there were 1,250 or more students for every librarian. There were fewer than 500 students per librarian in about the same proportion of districts.

As extreme as this national pattern was, however, the distribution of districts among these students per librarian FTE categories at the state level made for extraordinarily unequal access to school librarians for students. In 2018-19, districts with fewer than 500 students per librarian FTE were in the majority in only five states: Arkansas (70.8%), Vermont (61.2%), Montana (60.5%), New Hampshire (56.4%), and Nebraska (51.6%). At the other extreme, in D.C. and three states—Delaware, Florida, and Utah—there were no districts with fewer than 500 students per librarian FTE. (See Table 20.)

Conversely, in addition to Hawaii's single statewide school district, there were 1,250 or more students per librarian FTE in a majority of districts in 2 states: Utah (58.5%) and Iowa (52.4%). In D.C. and only three states—Arkansas, South Carolina, and Vermont—were there no districts (of those with librarians) that had 1,250 or more students per librarian FTE.

Plainly, the numbers of students per librarian FTE were so low in districts in some states and so high in others that student access to a librarian was highly inequitable. Further evidence of inequity of student access to a librarian was the percentage of districts in each state with no librarians at all. (Also, see Table 20.)

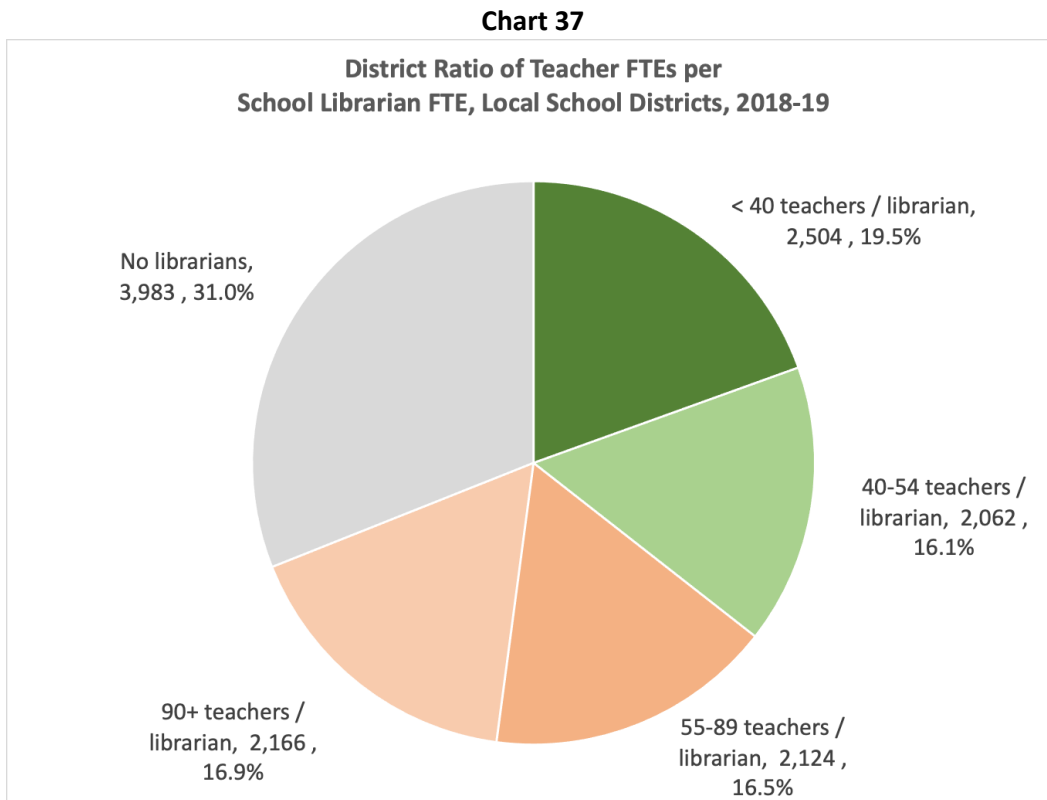
Table 20. District Ratio of Students per School Librarian FTE by State, 2018-19

State	Students per school librarian FTE				No librarians	Total
	< 500	500-749	750-1,249	1,250+		
AK	3.8%	7.7%	3.8%	7.7%	76.9%	100.0%
AL	43.8%	46.7%	8.8%	.7%	0.0%	100.0%
AR	70.8%	25.8%	3.0%	0.0%	.4%	100.0%
AZ	2.3%	3.3%	4.2%	21.5%	68.7%	100.0%
CA	.3%	.2%	.5%	5.4%	93.6%	100.0%
CO	10.1%	6.2%	7.3%	20.8%	55.6%	100.0%
CT	36.7%	27.8%	13.6%	10.7%	11.2%	100.0%
DC	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
DE	0.0%	21.1%	15.8%	47.4%	15.8%	100.0%
FL	0.0%	11.9%	56.7%	22.4%	9.0%	100.0%
GA	6.7%	46.7%	40.6%	5.6%	.6%	100.0%
HI	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
IA	7.6%	11.2%	26.4%	52.4%	2.4%	100.0%
ID	1.7%	1.7%	4.3%	25.2%	67.0%	100.0%
IL	23.2%	21.4%	23.2%	31.4%	.9%	100.0%
IN	3.1%	7.8%	17.4%	43.3%	28.3%	100.0%
KS	22.0%	16.8%	14.0%	8.7%	38.5%	100.0%
KY	24.9%	48.0%	19.7%	5.8%	1.7%	100.0%
LA	19.7%	38.0%	14.1%	12.7%	15.5%	100.0%
MA	10.8%	15.7%	14.2%	39.5%	19.8%	100.0%
MD	4.2%	62.5%	16.7%	12.5%	4.2%	100.0%
ME	17.3%	15.7%	17.8%	18.8%	30.4%	100.0%
MI	.7%	1.9%	8.0%	21.0%	68.3%	100.0%
MN	1.5%	5.2%	17.9%	19.5%	55.9%	100.0%
MO	42.0%	28.2%	13.5%	5.0%	11.2%	100.0%
MS	24.1%	51.8%	22.0%	1.4%	.7%	100.0%
MT	60.5%	6.3%	2.0%	1.5%	29.8%	100.0%
NC	16.7%	55.0%	18.3%	5.8%	4.2%	100.0%
ND	47.1%	21.8%	7.1%	5.3%	18.8%	100.0%
NE	51.6%	30.7%	15.2%	2.0%	.4%	100.0%
NH	56.4%	23.0%	7.3%	1.8%	11.5%	100.0%
NJ	13.7%	23.6%	23.9%	18.0%	20.8%	100.0%
NM	3.4%	4.5%	4.5%	27.3%	60.2%	100.0%
NV	5.9%	5.9%	17.6%	41.2%	29.4%	100.0%
NY	28.7%	29.8%	21.7%	12.1%	7.7%	100.0%
OH	3.6%	6.2%	15.7%	33.1%	41.5%	100.0%
OK	27.1%	22.7%	18.9%	7.4%	23.8%	100.0%
OR	.6%	1.1%	6.3%	22.2%	69.9%	100.0%
PA	7.6%	26.3%	42.3%	18.6%	5.2%	100.0%
RI	22.2%	50.0%	19.4%	5.6%	2.8%	100.0%
SC	22.2%	56.8%	19.8%	0.0%	1.2%	100.0%
SD	13.4%	6.7%	7.4%	12.8%	59.7%	100.0%
TN	30.6%	49.3%	14.6%	3.5%	2.1%	100.0%
TX	3.6%	7.9%	22.5%	23.1%	42.9%	100.0%
UT	0.0%	2.4%	4.9%	58.5%	34.1%	100.0%
VA	19.1%	45.0%	20.6%	15.3%	0.0%	100.0%
VT	61.2%	12.9%	5.4%	0.0%	20.4%	100.0%
WA	.7%	8.4%	17.5%	18.9%	54.5%	100.0%
WI	18.2%	21.5%	27.0%	24.2%	9.1%	100.0%
WV	8.8%	20.6%	23.5%	47.1%	0.0%	100.0%
WY	16.7%	12.5%	14.6%	27.1%	29.2%	100.0%
U.S.	17.9%	17.6%	16.4%	17.1%	31.0%	100.0%

District Ratio of Teacher FTEs per Librarian FTE

How did the ratio of teachers per librarian full-time equivalent (FTE) vary among local school districts in 2018-19?

Teacher access to school librarians—and librarian access to teachers—varied across the almost 13,000 local districts for which data were available. Only 1 out of 5 districts (19.5%) had fewer than 40 teachers per librarian. About 1 out of 6 districts (16.1% to 16.9%) had, for each librarian, 40 to 54 teachers, 55 to 89 teachers, or 90 or more teachers. (See Chart 37.)



As for the students per librarian ratio, the district ratio of teachers per librarian FTE ran the gamut among the states. In the best scenario, there were fewer than 40 teachers per librarian FTE in a majority of districts in 7 states—Alabama (89.1% of districts), Arkansas (62.2%), Vermont (58.5%), Kentucky (58.4%), Montana (58.0%), Tennessee (56.9%), and Louisiana (53.5%). D.C. and Delaware were the only jurisdictions reporting no districts with this most desirable ratio. Conversely, states with the most districts with the least desirable ratio—90 or more teachers per librarian FTE—included Hawaii (100.0%), Iowa (54.2%), Utah (46.3%), Massachusetts (42.9%), and West Virginia (41.2%). Alabama, Arkansas, D.C., and South Carolina reported no districts in which the teachers per librarian ratio was this least desirable one. (See Table 21.)

In 2018-19, school librarians in 1 out of 6 districts worked with 90 or more teachers. Librarians in 1 out of 5 districts worked with 40 or fewer teachers.

Clearly, some school librarians face far greater numerical challenges than others when they seek to collaborate with teachers on instructional design and delivery. Some librarians—those serving fewer than 40 teachers—may find it realistic to collaborate with teachers individually. Other librarians—those who have 90 or more teachers to serve—must be far more strategic and efficient for their collaboration with teachers to have

Perspectives on School Librarian Employment in the United States, 2009-10 to 2018-19

schoolwide impact. This suggests that working with their teacher colleagues in groups by grade level, subject area, or special project may be more effective.

Table 21. District Ratio of Teacher FTEs per Librarian FTE by State, 2018-19

State	Teacher FTEs per school librarian FTE				No school librarians	Total
	< 40	40-54	55-89	90+		
AK	7.7%	7.7%	1.9%	5.8%	76.9%	100.0%
AL	89.1%	8.8%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
AR	62.2%	31.8%	5.6%	0.0%	.4%	100.0%
AZ	5.1%	2.3%	7.5%	16.4%	68.7%	100.0%
CA	.5%	.3%	.6%	5.0%	93.6%	100.0%
CO	10.7%	5.6%	9.6%	18.5%	55.6%	100.0%
CT	29.6%	31.4%	15.4%	12.4%	11.2%	100.0%
DC	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
DE	0.0%	21.1%	26.3%	36.8%	15.8%	100.0%
FL	7.5%	32.8%	35.8%	14.9%	9.0%	100.0%
GA	17.2%	47.8%	29.4%	5.0%	.6%	100.0%
HI	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
IA	8.5%	10.6%	24.2%	54.2%	2.4%	100.0%
ID	3.5%	1.7%	4.3%	23.5%	67.0%	100.0%
IL	24.9%	20.3%	25.8%	28.1%	.9%	100.0%
IN	5.8%	10.6%	16.4%	38.9%	28.3%	100.0%
KS	22.4%	15.7%	14.0%	9.4%	38.5%	100.0%
KY	58.4%	25.4%	9.2%	5.2%	1.7%	100.0%
LA	53.5%	12.7%	7.0%	11.3%	15.5%	100.0%
MA	10.2%	9.6%	17.6%	42.9%	19.8%	100.0%
MD	8.3%	58.3%	20.8%	8.3%	4.2%	100.0%
ME	11.5%	16.8%	17.3%	24.1%	30.4%	100.0%
MI	1.1%	5.6%	5.8%	19.2%	68.3%	100.0%
MN	2.1%	7.3%	17.9%	16.7%	55.9%	100.0%
MO	38.5%	24.6%	19.3%	6.4%	11.2%	100.0%
MS	42.6%	40.4%	14.9%	1.4%	.7%	100.0%
MT	58.0%	4.8%	3.3%	4.3%	29.8%	100.0%
NC	42.5%	35.8%	10.8%	6.7%	4.2%	100.0%
ND	39.4%	18.2%	14.1%	9.4%	18.8%	100.0%
NE	38.5%	37.3%	19.3%	4.5%	.4%	100.0%
NH	49.1%	24.2%	10.9%	4.2%	11.5%	100.0%
NJ	9.1%	16.9%	29.3%	23.9%	20.8%	100.0%
NM	3.4%	5.7%	3.4%	27.3%	60.2%	100.0%
NV	5.9%	5.9%	23.5%	35.3%	29.4%	100.0%
NY	19.4%	26.2%	30.4%	16.4%	7.7%	100.0%
OH	7.0%	7.6%	17.3%	26.6%	41.5%	100.0%
OK	36.1%	19.5%	13.7%	6.8%	23.8%	100.0%
OR	2.3%	4.5%	4.0%	19.3%	69.9%	100.0%
PA	9.6%	29.3%	38.5%	17.4%	5.2%	100.0%
RI	25.0%	30.6%	33.3%	8.3%	2.8%	100.0%
SC	45.7%	39.5%	13.6%	0.0%	1.2%	100.0%
SD	12.1%	5.4%	10.7%	12.1%	59.7%	100.0%
TN	56.9%	31.3%	6.9%	2.8%	2.1%	100.0%
TX	2.9%	10.1%	21.1%	23.0%	42.9%	100.0%
UT	2.4%	4.9%	12.2%	46.3%	34.1%	100.0%
VA	29.0%	42.0%	14.5%	14.5%	0.0%	100.0%
VT	58.5%	10.9%	7.5%	2.7%	20.4%	100.0%
WA	7.7%	11.1%	13.1%	13.5%	54.5%	100.0%
WI	19.9%	21.5%	25.8%	23.7%	9.1%	100.0%
WV	14.7%	14.7%	29.4%	41.2%	0.0%	100.0%
WY	16.7%	6.3%	20.8%	27.1%	29.2%	100.0%
U.S.	19.5%	16.1%	16.5%	16.9%	31.0%	100.0%

Future Ready Schools Districts

One of the SLIDE project's national partners is Future Ready Schools (FRS), a network of districts nationwide that encourages innovation in education by providing district and school leaders with tools and resources they need to create better learning environments by adopting evidence-based practices. Due to the success of Future Ready Schools and its allied program, Future Ready Librarians, we wondered if there was any relationship between a district signing the FRS Pledge and the district ratio of librarian FTE per school as well as the probability that FRS districts have been more likely to sustain librarian staffing over time.

The Future Ready Schools Pledge

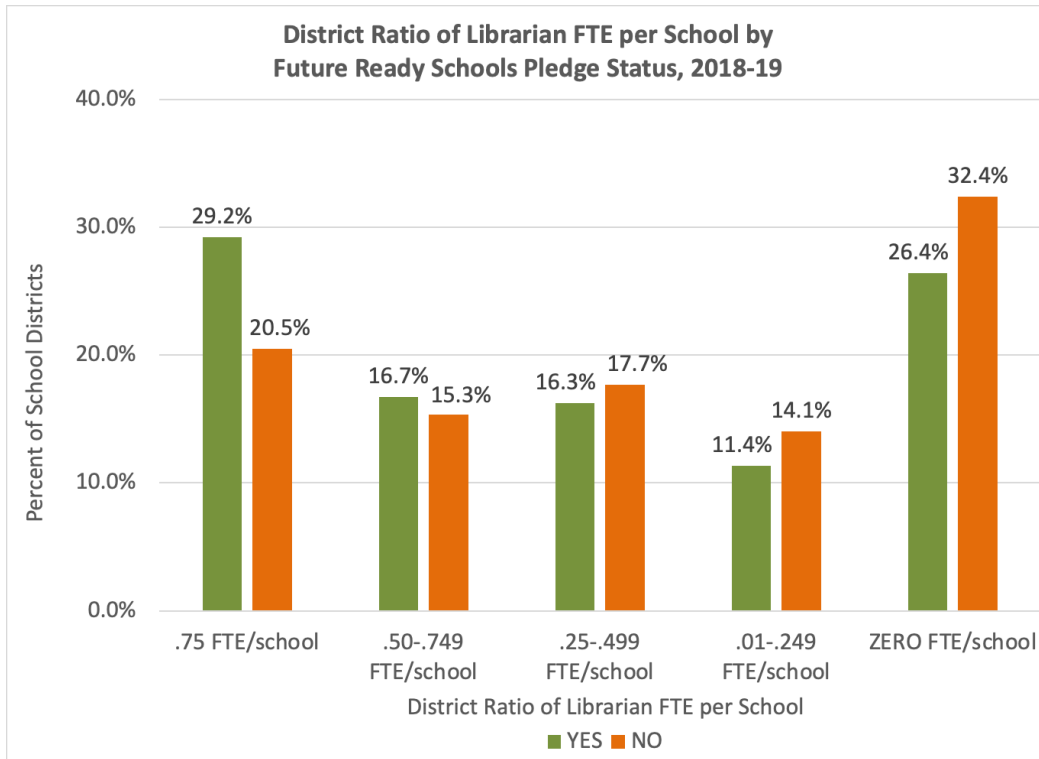
1. **Foster a culture of collaborative leadership.** FRS district leadership teams are composed of leaders at all levels who work collaboratively to transform teaching and learning to a more learner-centered approach.
2. **Provide rigorous academic content for all students to build life skills.** In an FRS district, curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned tightly with and designed to engage students in personalized, technology-empowered, and deeper learning experiences that build life-long learning skills.
3. **Empower personalized professional learning opportunities.** FRS districts strive to provide all educators with access to professional learning experiences that are personal and authentic.
4. **Help schools and families transition to anytime, anywhere learning.** High-quality, high-speed technology and infrastructure within an FRS school district are essential to advancing authentic, learner-centric experiences.
5. **Rethink the use of space and time.** Learner-centric experiences in an FRS district require changes in the way instructional time is allotted and how the learning space is designed.
6. **Focus on long-term sustainability.** In FRS districts, the transition to learner-centered, technology-empowered experiences requires strategic short- and long-term budgeting as well as creative leveraging of resources.
7. **Share and mentor for continuous improvement.** FRS districts understand that transformation is a process, not an event. Regardless of where FRS districts fall on the implementation continuum, they work diligently toward a system of continuous improvement districtwide, with emphasis on its lowest-performing schools and student subgroups (Future Ready Schools, n.d.).

Is a district participating in Future Ready Schools associated with its level of librarian staffing?

There was a significant, positive relationship between a district being a FRS Pledge signatory and its level of librarian FTE per school. Three out of 10 districts (29.2%) that had signed the FRS Pledge by 2018-19 had .75 or more librarian FTE per school that year. Only 1 out of 5 non-FRS districts (20.5%) had that highest level of librarian staffing. Conversely, almost a third of non-FRS districts (32.4%) reported no librarians for 2018-19, while only a quarter of FRS districts (26.4%) reported an absence of librarians. (See Chart 38 in which yes indicates that a district had signed the FRS Pledge by the 2018-19 school year and no indicates that it had not.)

In 2018-19, districts that had signed the Future Ready Schools (FRS) Pledge were more likely to provide the highest level of librarian staffing (.75 FTE or more per school) and less likely to have no librarians. Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, FRS districts were more likely to have kept librarians and less likely to have been without them.

Chart 38

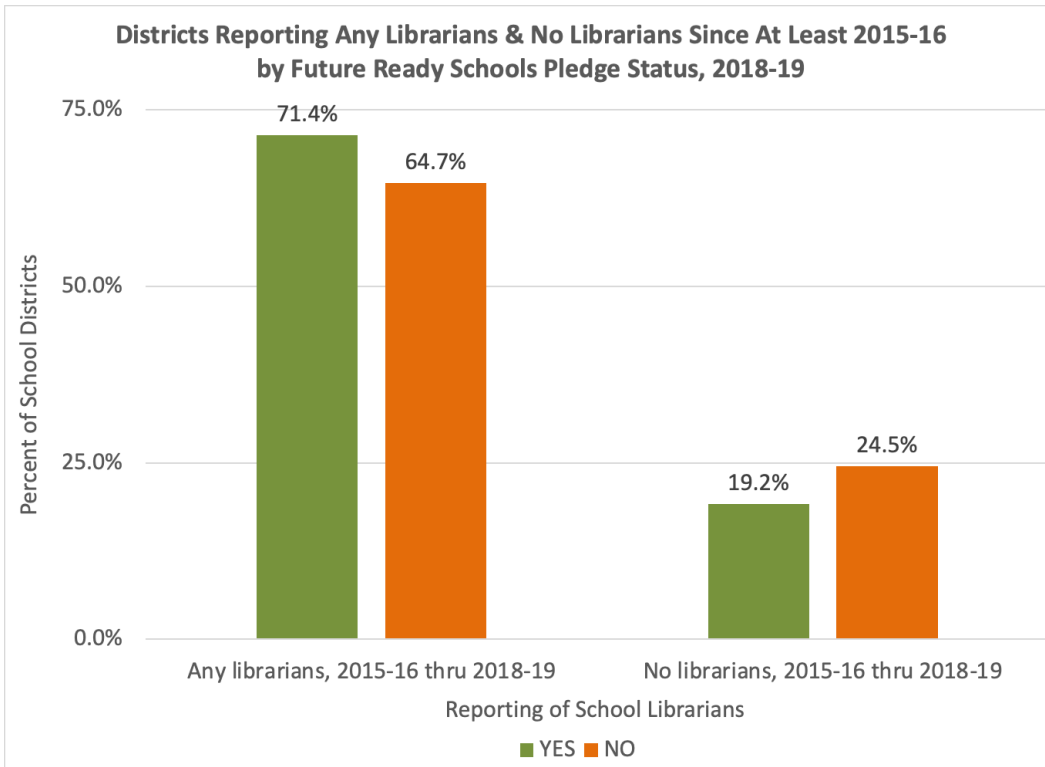


Is a district’s FRS status a predictor of whether or not it has sustained librarian staffing over time?

Similarly, Future Ready Schools status was somewhat related to whether or not districts retained librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19. More than 7 out of 10 FRS districts (71.4%) had librarians consistently during this period, while fewer than two-thirds of non-FRS districts (64.7%) did so. Conversely, fewer than 1 out of 5 FRS districts (19.2%) were without librarians all 4 years, while a quarter of non-FRS districts (24.5%) had no librarians during that time. (See Chart 39.)

These findings should encourage other researchers to investigate in more detail the relationship between Future Ready Schools (FRS) status and not only librarian staffing, but librarian success at teaching students and collaborating with teachers. This data point is a snapshot in time. A district may have been involved in FRS for several years or signed the pledge only recently. If merely being an FRS Pledge signatory—perhaps even a very new one—is related to librarian staffing levels, there must be more to learn about the role of FRS and Future Ready Librarians in activating the potential of librarians to foster school and student success.

Chart 39



Charter Districts

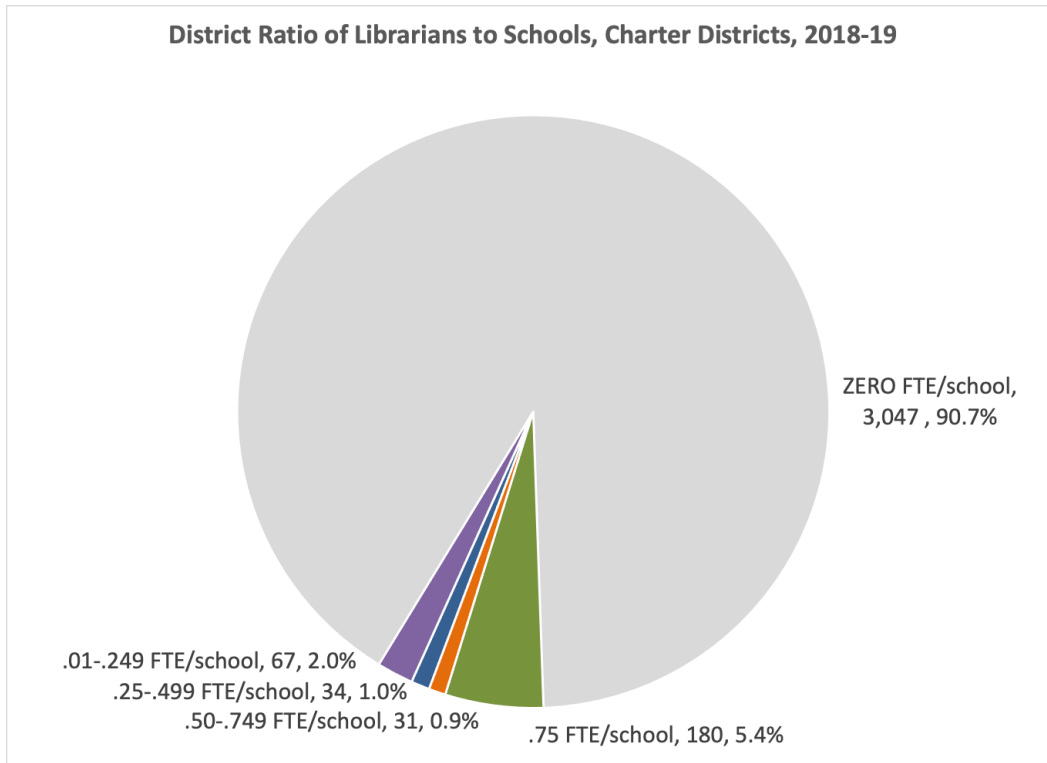
How prevalent were school librarians among U.S. charter schools in 2018-19?

Thirty-four (34) states and D.C. reported having all-charter districts in 2018-19.¹² Nationwide, in 2018-19, there were 4,000 all-charter school districts operating 5,203 charter schools. The total number of school librarians employed in those schools was 321.19 full-time equivalents (FTEs). That amounts to 6 librarian FTEs for every 100 charter schools. In 2018-19, 90.1% of charter districts reported no school librarians. (See Chart 40.)

In 2018-19, 90% of charter districts (excluding charter schools that are part of local school districts) had no school librarians.

The SLIDE project is focusing on regular public schools in local districts. The charter school sector, where school librarians are so rare, should be the focus of a similar study. Because many charter schools pride themselves on innovative organizational structures and staffing models, school library leaders and educators need to gain a better understanding of why most charter school decision-makers eschew having libraries or librarians. What are most of them doing instead? And why don't they seem to miss school libraries and librarians?

Chart 40



¹² The 15 states with no charter districts include: Alaska, Florida, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Any charter schools in these states are part of local districts. Due to the lack of school level data about school librarians, this section addresses only independent charter districts, though notably the vast majority of them are, in fact, single independent charter schools.