Contexts of
School Librarian Employment

January 26, 2021
Debra E. Kachel & Keith Curry Lance

A survey of all 50 states and District of Columbia was conducted in Fall 2020 to gain background information to inform an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant project called SLIDE: The School Librarian Investigation--Decline or Evolution? As part of the grant, a school library leader, some in a state government/agency position or in a state school library association, agreed to participate in the grant as a "State Intermediary" to help share project findings and assist with providing state-level information. The responses, collected via Survey Monkey, were gathered to provide context to the findings of the SLIDE study's analysis of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) library staffing data and to inform planned interviews of school district leaders who make staffing decisions. The project is directed by Debra E. Kachel with principal investigator Keith Curry Lance, administered through Antioch University Seattle. More information about the SLIDE project can be found at https://libslide.org.

NOTE: The responses have been provided by a leader in a state government/agency position or in a state school library association. Most of these responses were not further vetted by the SLIDE researchers.

Responses to the following items are summarized in this report.
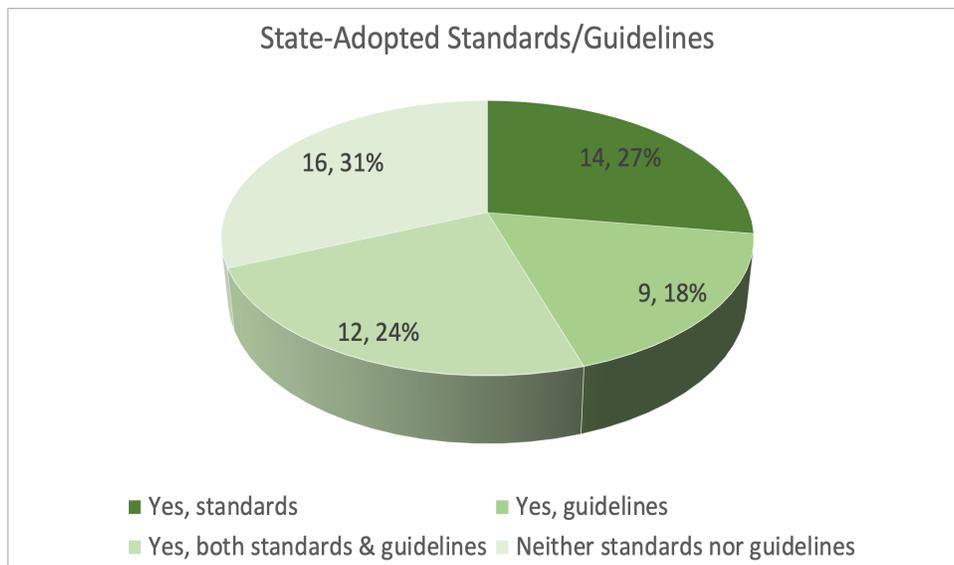
- Has your state adopted standards or guidelines for school library programs?
- Does your state have certification requirements for school librarians?
- Does your state have any legal requirements for school librarian staffing?
- Does your state have a state government employee assigned specifically to work with school libraries?
- Does any state agency or organization regularly collect school and/or district-level data about school librarian employment?
- Does your state provide direct funding to school libraries for any purpose? (Example: New York provides $6.25 per student directly to each school library.)
- Does your state government provide access to licensed databases or other subscription-based e-resources, including e-books, to all schools in your state?
- List the institutions of higher education in your state that prepare school librarians or provide a link to such a list. Do not list completely online institutions that have no physical campus in your state.

State-Adopted Standards / Guidelines for School Library Programs

Question: Has your state adopted standards or guidelines for school library programs?

School library program standards and guidelines usually address librarian job responsibilities, staffing, collections, technology, instruction, and program administration including budgets. Generally, standards are more enforceable than guidelines, or at least standards are perceived as being stronger than guidelines. Frequently, state-developed standards and guidelines indicate recommended staffing levels for school libraries. Whether states have these resources also indicates a certain level of state support for school libraries. Some states report that guidelines or standards have been drafted by their state school library association but have not been officially adopted by their state's department of education. Other states added that they refer to AASL's *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians and School Libraries* (2018).

Refer to pages 12-13 for the Table of Survey Responses to view a summary of each state's response to this question. To read all questions, responses, and comments by state, go to the *Appendix to the Contexts of School Librarian Employment* located at https://libslide.org/pubs/contextsappendix.pdf.

State-Adopted Standards/Guidelines

- 14, 27%
- 9, 18%
- 12, 24%
- 16, 31%

■ Yes, standards   ■ Yes, guidelines
■ Yes, both standards & guidelines   ■ Neither standards nor guidelines

State Certification Requirements for School Librarians

Question: Does your state have certification requirements for school librarians?
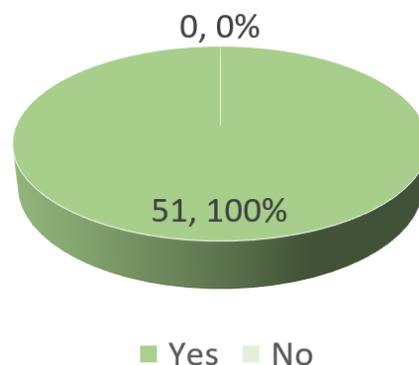
Each state has authority to certify K-12 public school educators, including school librarians. However, certification requirements and enforcement of them vary greatly. In some cases, certification requirements are treated as guidelines. Some states will grant waivers, whether temporary or permanent, to exempt certification requirements.

In most states, the path to school librarian certification is to first earn a teaching degree, then earn a Master's degree in library science with a specialization in school libraries or add a state school library endorsement certificate to a teaching certificate. Some states require a teaching certificate plus completion of a certain number of library science courses from an institution of higher education and passage of the state's required tests for public school librarians. In other states, teachers may be certified as school librarians by testing alone with no additional coursework required. Some states have their own school library certification tests; others defer to national tests, such as the PRAXIS Library Media Specialist (https://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5311). In some states, only a teaching certificate is needed.

NOTE: Although 5 states initially reported that there are no certification requirements in their states, their states do have certification or endorsement requirements.

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State Certification Requirements for School Librarians

0, 0%

51, 100%

■ Yes ■ No

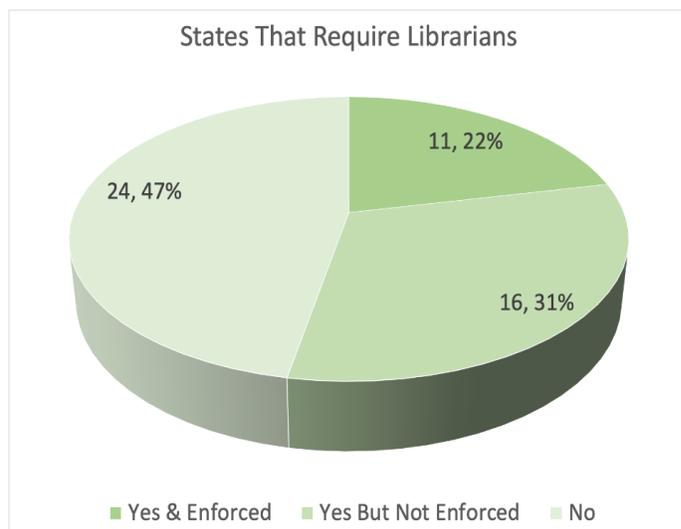**State Legal Requirements for School Librarians**

Question: Does your state have any legal requirements for school librarian staffing?

Comments to this question varied greatly. In some states, there are legal requirements that are enforced; in others, they are not enforced. However, almost half of the states do not require public schools to employ librarians. The 10 states plus DC that require librarians, 6 further quantify staffing based on the number of students (DC, MS, MT, NE, OK, and SC). Of the 14 states that have some quantitative requirements (not all enforced), typical ranges for staffing are: a part-time school librarian for schools with under 300 students; a full-time librarian, between 300 and 500; more than 1 full-time librarian, over 500. MT, NE, TN, and VA have the most articulated and quantitative staffing levels. NY is the only state to require librarians at only one level-secondary, although they are trying to legislatively include elementary.

In the second phase of the SLIDE project, interviews will be conducted with school district leaders who make decisions on school librarian staffing. Interviewees will be asked if staffing requirements or recommendations impact their hiring decisions. AASL (2019, June 22) recommends one full-time certified librarian per school (*Appropriate staffing for school libraries*.
http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/advocacy/statements/docs/AASL_Appropriate_Staffing.pdf).

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States That Require Librarians

- 11, 22%
- 24, 47%
- 16, 31%

■ Yes & Enforced ■ Yes But Not Enforced ■ No

STATE RESPONSES

YES, AND ENFORCED - 10 states plus DC (18%) have legal, enforced requirements for school librarians in their public schools. – AL, AR, KY, MS, MT, NE, ND, OK, SC, WI, and District of Columbia

YES, BUT NOT ENFORCED -16 states (35%) have legal requirements, but they are not enforced. – CA, GA, IN, IA, LA, ME, MD, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OR, TN, VT, VA, WA

NO - 24 states have no legal requirements. – AK, AZ, CO, CT, DE, FL, HI, ID, IL, KS, MA, MI, MN, MO, NV, NC, OH, PA, RI, SD, TX, UT, WV, WY

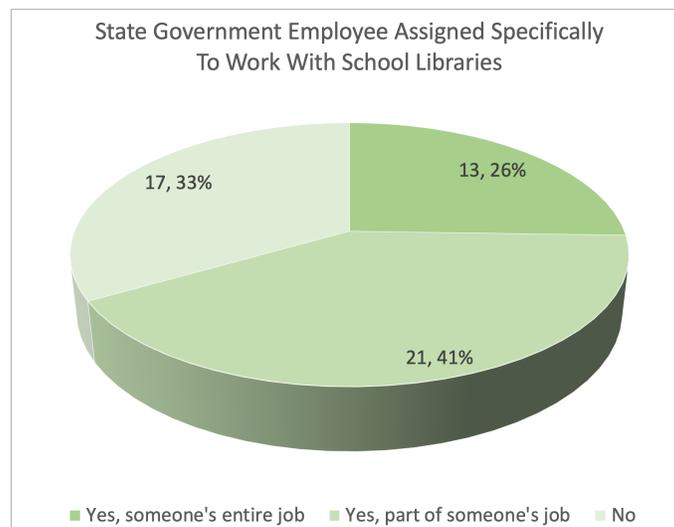**State Government Employee Assigned to School Libraries**

Question: Does your state have a state government employee assigned specifically to work with school libraries?

State government oversight of school library programs also indicates a certain level of recognition and support. In some states, this position is under the direction of the state's department of education; in others, the state library. Several states responded that such a position has been phased out over the years or is currently only part-time. One-third of states lack this position in their state government. Of those with such a position, respondents offered differing job titles, including Digital Teaching and Learning Consultant, Digital Learning Director, and Education Technology Coordinator.

According to a 2007-2008 AASL task force, "While the research consistently indicates a serious need for full-time state department school library consultants/coordinators, the research also consistently shows funding for these positions has been decreased or eliminated" (*Impact of the Loss of a State Library Consultant/Coordinator.*
http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/advocacy/Loss_of_a_State_Library_Consultant.pdf)

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STATE RESPONSES
13 states with full-time state government officials assigned with school library oversight –
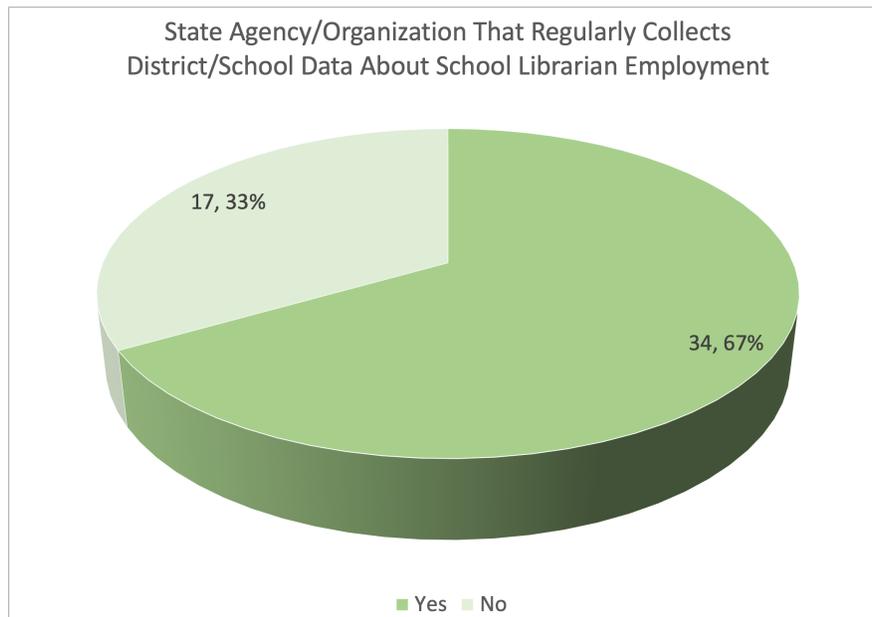AL, AK, CO, HI, ID, MD, MS, NV, NY, SD, TX, WI, AND WY

State Agency or Organization Collecting School/District Data on School Librarian Employment

Question: Does any state agency or organization regularly collect school and/or district-level data about school librarian employment?

No data collection system is 100 percent accurate or complete. NCES Common Core of Data also has anomalies and missing data for school librarian staffing which is reported in full-time equivalents (FTEs) per district, not per building. As for all positions for which NCES collects FTEs, the school librarian count ignores state certification.

While two-thirds of the states collect some data about school library staffing, there appears to be no consistent standard of reporting based on the links provided from respondents in the survey. In some cases, the data collected is only what NCES requires and the state agency is a "pass-through" to that federal agency.

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State Agency/Organization That Regularly Collects District/School Data About School Librarian Employment

17, 33%

34, 67%

■ Yes ■ No

Direct Funding to School Libraries

Question: Does your state provide direct funding to school libraries for any purpose? (Example: New York provides $6.25 per student directly to each school library.)

Direct state funding allocated specifically to school library programs occurs in only a few states but addresses the importance of equitably (although not necessarily adequately) funding information resources for K-12 students. Wisconsin appears to have the most stable and consistent funding dating back to 1848 when land was sold to establish the Common School Fund Distribution know as Library Aid (https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/categorical/common-school-fund) which amounted to $36.99 per student in 2020. Alabama allocates $96.14 "per unit" but the meaning of "unit" is unclear. Although most funds are based on a per pupil amount, Colorado distributes a lump sum amount of either $3,500 or $4,000 per district.

In some districts, administrators choose how to allocate the funds among the schools and, thus, funds are not always used for school library resources. Recently, in Washington state, legislation awarded school libraries $20.00 per student. However, due to a loophole in the language, some districts are spending those funds otherwise (RCW 28A.150.260 https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.260). Illinois provides "up to" $.75 per student in its School District Per Capita Grant program to "qualifying schools" (https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/schoolpercapgrant.html).

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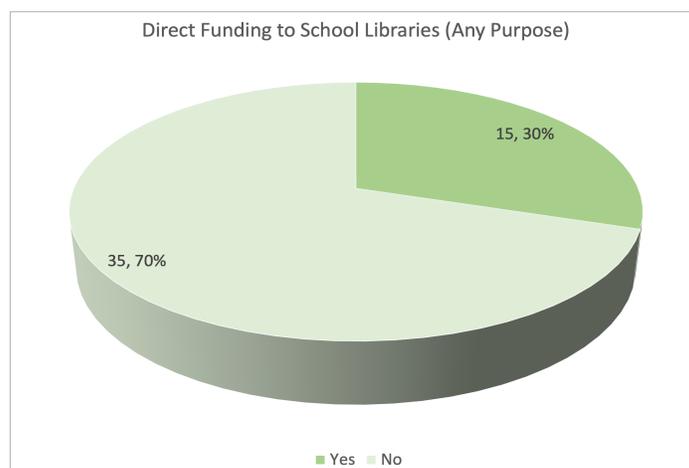

Direct Funding to School Libraries (Any Purpose)
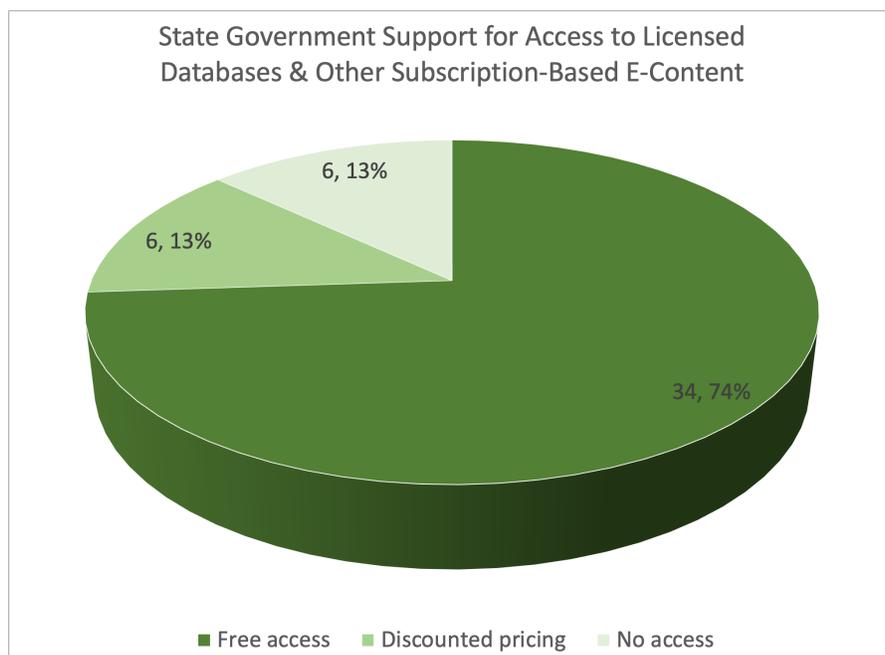
15, 30%

35, 70%

■ Yes ■ No

STATE RESPONSES

The following states indicate that there is some direct funding for school libraries. Competitive LSTA grants were excluded. - AL, AR, CO, DC, FL, IL, NE, NM, NY, OK, TN, WA, UT, WV, and WI

State Access to Licensed Databases/Other Subscription-Based E-Resources

Question: Does your state government provide access to licensed databases or other subscription-based e-resources, including e-books, to all schools in your state?

Almost 75 percent of states subscribe to and provide some electronic resources to schools and libraries which indicates a strategy to equitably provide educational resources to K-12 students. During the planned interviews in years 2 and 3 of the SLIDE project, it will be interesting to learn if those making decisions about school library staffing know whether their schools are utilizing these free resources (where available).

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State Government Support for Access to Licensed Databases & Other Subscription-Based E-Content

6, 13%

6, 13%

34, 74%

■ Free access ■ Discounted pricing ■ No access

Institutions of Higher Education Preparing School Librarians

Question: List the institutions of higher education in your state that prepare school librarians or provide a link to such a list. Do not list completely online institutions that have no physical campus in your state.

The pool of certified librarians seeking employment in public schools varies across the nation. Often school administrators are unable to find certified candidates for jobs in their schools. A state's number of programs preparing school librarians likely has a powerful impact on the pipeline of available candidates.

Number of Institutions Per State

Number of Institutions	Number of States	States
8	1	TX
6	3	AL NY TN
5	2	IL NC
4	7	CA GA KY LA MD OK WA
3	8	AR KS MA MN MO NJ VA WI
2	10	CO CT FL ID IA MT NE ND PA SD
1	15	DC DE HI IN ME MI MS NV NH OH RI SC UT VT WV
0	5	AK AZ NM OR WY
	51	

Institutions of Higher Education Preparing School Librarians by State

State	Institutions
AL	1) University of South Alabama 2) University of West Alabama 3) University of Alabama 4) Alabama State University 5) Jacksonville State University 6) Auburn University
AR	1) University of Central AR 2) AR Tech University 3) Southern AR University
CA	1) Azusa Pacific University 2) Cal State, Long Beach 3) Fresno Pacific University 4) San Jose State University
CO	1) University of CO Denver 2) Denver University
CT	1) Southern CT State University 2) Fairfield University
DC	1) Catholic University
DE	1) University of Delaware
FL	1) University of South Florida 2) Florida State University
GA	1) University of West Georgia 2) Valdosta State University 3) Georgia Southern University 4) Georgia College & State University
HI	1) University of Hawaii at Manoa
IA	1) University of Iowa 2) University of Northern Iowa
ID	1) University of Idaho 2) College of Southern Idaho
IN	1) Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis

IL	1) University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2) Dominican University 3) Chicago State University 4) Illinois State University 5) Northern Illinois University
KS	1) Emporia State University 2) Pittsburg State University 3) Ft. Hays State University
KY	1) University of Kentucky 2) Western Kentucky University 3) Murray State University 4) Eastern Kentucky University
LA	1) Louisiana State University 2) Northwestern State University 3) McNeese State University 4) University of Louisiana at Lafayette
MA	1) Simmons University 2) Salem State University 3) Cambridge College
MD	1) McDaniel College 2) College of Notre Dame Maryland 3) Towson University 4) University of Maryland, College Park
ME	1) University of Maine
MI	1) Wayne State University
MN	1) Minnesota State University Mankato 2) University of St. Catherine 3) St. Cloud State University
MO	1) Lindenwood University 2) University of Central Missouri 3) University of Missouri-Columbia
MS	1) University of Southern Mississippi
MT	1) University of MT-Western 2) Montana State University
NC	1) North Carolina Central University 2) UNC Chapel Hill 3) UNC Greensboro 4) East Carolina University 5) Appalachian State University
ND	1) Valley City State University 2) Mayville State University
NE	1) University of Nebraska – Omaha 2) University of Nebraska -- Kearney
NH	1) Plymouth State University
NJ	1) Rutgers University 2) William Paterson University 3) New Jersey City University
NV	1) University of Nevada
NY	1) Syracuse University 2) State University at Albany 3) State University at Buffalo 4) Long Island University 5) Queens College 6) St. John Fisher College
OH	1) Kent State University
OK	1) University of Oklahoma 2) University of Central Oklahoma 3) East Central University 4) Northeastern State University
PA	1) Kutztown University 2) University of Pittsburgh
RI	1) University of RI
SC	1) University of South Carolina – Columbia
SD	1) Black Hills State University 2) Emporia University (satellite campus)
TN	1) University of Tennessee, Knoxville 2) East Tennessee State University 3) Middle Tennessee State University 4) University of Memphis 5) Trevecca Nazarene University 6) Tennessee Technological University
TX	1) Our Lady of the Lake University 2) Prairie View A&M University 3) Sam Houston State University 4) Texas A&M University 5) Texas Woman's University 6) University of Houston-Clear Lake 7) University of North Texas 8) University of Texas - Austin
UT	1) Southern Utah University
VA	1) Longwood University 2) Old Dominion University 3) UVA/Wise
VT	1) University of Vermont
WA	1) Antioch University Seattle 2) University of Washington 3) Central Washington University 4) Seattle Pacific University
WI	1) UW Milwaukee 2) UW Madison 3) UW Whitewater
WV	1) Marshall University

Conclusion

The State Intermediary Survey conducted in the Fall 2020, is one component of *The School Librarian Investigation: Decline or Evolution?* (SLIDE) project. The survey responses summarized here add context to the status of school librarian employment in the United States. The NCES Common Core of Data provides statistics such as the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) librarians by state and school district as well as characteristics of the students (race and ethnicity, poverty, and special needs) and schools (enrollment, setting, geography) where librarians are employed. To learn more about why and how school librarians are employed in public schools requires a deeper analysis. To that end, understanding the level of recognition and support that school library programs are afforded in each state impacts district staffing decisions. The researchers of the SLIDE project are using these factors to help determine state support:

- State adoption of school library program standards or guidelines
- School librarian certification requirements
- Provision of a state government employee with oversight of school library programs
- State-collected data about school library programs
- Direct state funding to school libraries
- Provision of state-funded licensed databases or e-resources
- Availability of higher education institutions that prepare school librarians

In years two and three of the SLIDE project, school leaders who decide how to staff library, learning resources, and technology services will be interviewed. The survey information will provide state-specific context where interviews occur. The interviews-- conducted where librarian FTEs relative to schools have increased or decreased most dramatically--will add another layer of understanding to staffing patterns. SLIDE researchers hope to learn if and how school librarian roles and titles are changing and what internal school factors and external community factors influence school leaders as they make staffing decisions. Innovative staffing models and new positions with blended responsibilities for the delivery of library, information, and instructional technology resources may be revealed.

Findings from this IMLS-funded investigation may inform the way school librarians are prepared to meet the challenges of our ever-changing educational landscape. Perhaps new skill sets are needed to meet the needs and priorities of public schools as determined by those who decide how to staff schools. With access to customized data via the SLIDE website, school administrators and library leaders may become more informed about inequities of access to school library services and learn about new staffing models to meet their students' educational needs.

TABLE OF SURVEY RESPONSES

State	School Library Standards	School Library Guide-lines	School Librarian Certifi-cation	State Staffing Mandate	School Library Govern-ment Official	State Collected Staffing Data	Direct State Funding *	State Funded E-Resources	Number of Institutions Preparing School Librarians
AL	Y	Y	Y	Y	FT	Y	Y	Y	6
AK	N	N	Y	N	FT	Y	N	Y	0
AZ	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	0
AR	Y	N	Y	Y	PT	Y	YN	Y	3
CA	Y	N	Y	YNE	PT	Y	N	Y	4
CO	Y	Y	N	N	FT	Y	Y	N	2
CT	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	2
DE	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	1
DC	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	1
FL	N	N	Y	N	PT	Y	Y	N	2
GA	N	N	Y	YNE	PT	N	N	Y	4
HI	Y	N	Y	N	FT	Y	N	Y	1
ID	N	N	N	N	FT	Y	N	Y	2
IL	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	5
IN	Y	N	Y	YNE	N	N	N	Y	1
IA	Y	Y	Y	YNE	N	Y	N	Y	2
KS	Y	Y	Y	YNE	PT	Y	N	Y	3
KY	Y	Y	Y	Y	PT	Y	N	N	4
LA	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	4
ME	N	N	Y	YNE	PT	N	N	Y	1
MD	Y	N	Y	YNE	FT	Y	N	Y	4
MA	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	3
MI	N	N	Y	N	PT	Y	N	Y	1
MN	Y	N	Y	N	PT	Y	N	Y	3
MS	Y	N	Y	Y	FT	Y	N	N	1
MO	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	3
MT	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	2
NE	Y	Y	Y	Y	PT	Y	N	Y	2
NV	Y	Y	Y	N	FT	N	N	Y	1
NH	N	N	Y	YNE	PT	N	N	N	1
NJ	N	N	Y	YNE	PT	Y	N	N	3
NM	N	Y	Y	YNE	N	N	Y	Y	0
NY	N	Y	Y	YNE	FT	Y	Y	Y	6
NC	Y	y	Y	N	PT	Y	N	Y	5
ND	Y	N	Y	Y	PT	Y	N	N	2
OH	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	1
OK	Y	N	Y	Y	PT	Y	Y	Y	4
OR	N	Y	Y	YNE	PT	Y	N	Y	0
PA	Y	Y	Y	N	PT	Y	N	Y	2
RI	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	1
SC	Y	Y	Y	Y	PT	Y	N	Y	1
SD	Y	Y	Y	N	FT	Y	N	Y	2
TN	N	N	Y	YNE	N	N	Y	Y	6
TX	Y	N	Y	N	FT	N	N	N	8

State	School Library Standards	School Library Guide-lines	School Librarian Certifi-cation	State Staffing Mandate	School Library Govern-ment Official	State Collected Staffing Data	Direct State Funding *	State Funded E-Resources	Number of Institutions Preparing School Librarians
UT	Y	N	Y	N	PT	N	Y	Y	1
VT	N	N	Y	YNE	N	Y	N	Y	1
VA	N	Y	Y	YNE	N	N	N	Y	3
WA	Y	Y	Y	YNE	PT	Y	Y	Y	4
WV	Y	N	Y	N	PT	N	Y	Y	1
WI	N	Y	Y	Y	FT	Y	Y	Y	3
WY	N	N	Y	N	FT	Y	N	Y	0

CODES: YNE = Yes, but not enforced   PT/FT = Part-time/Full-time   DK = Don't know
NOTES: * = Competitive funding from LSTA grants excluded

Citation: Kachel, D. E., & Lance, K. C. (2021, January 26). *State contexts for school librarian employment.* https://libslide.org/pubs/contexts.pdf.