

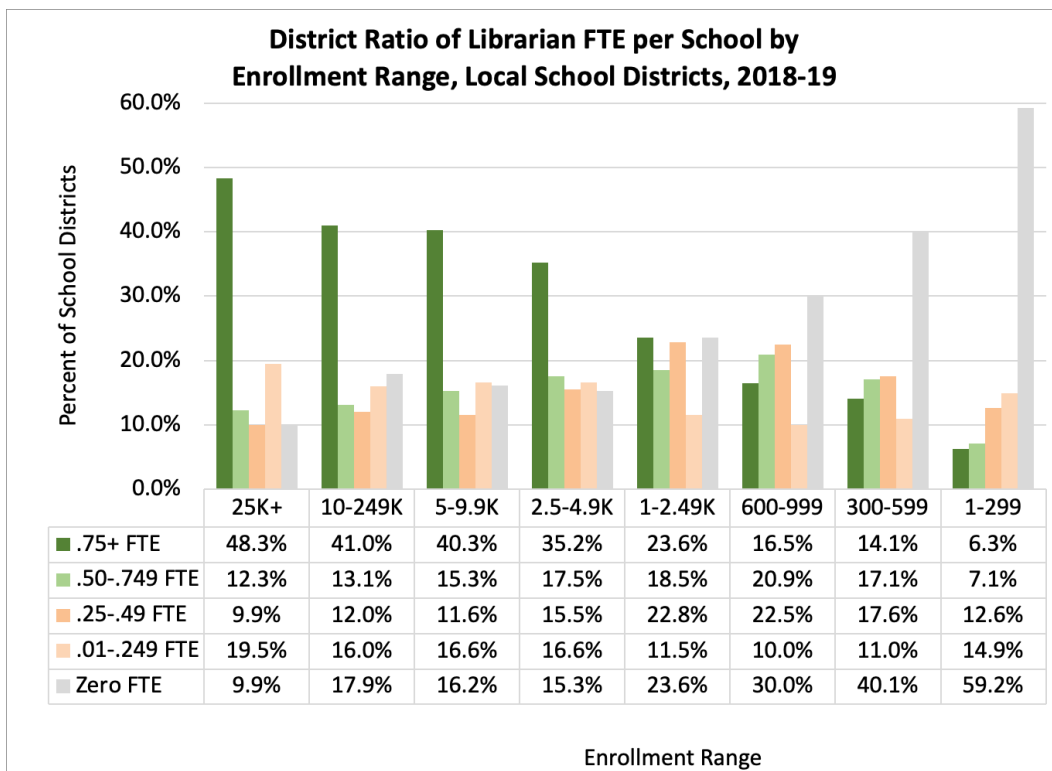
District Characteristics

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

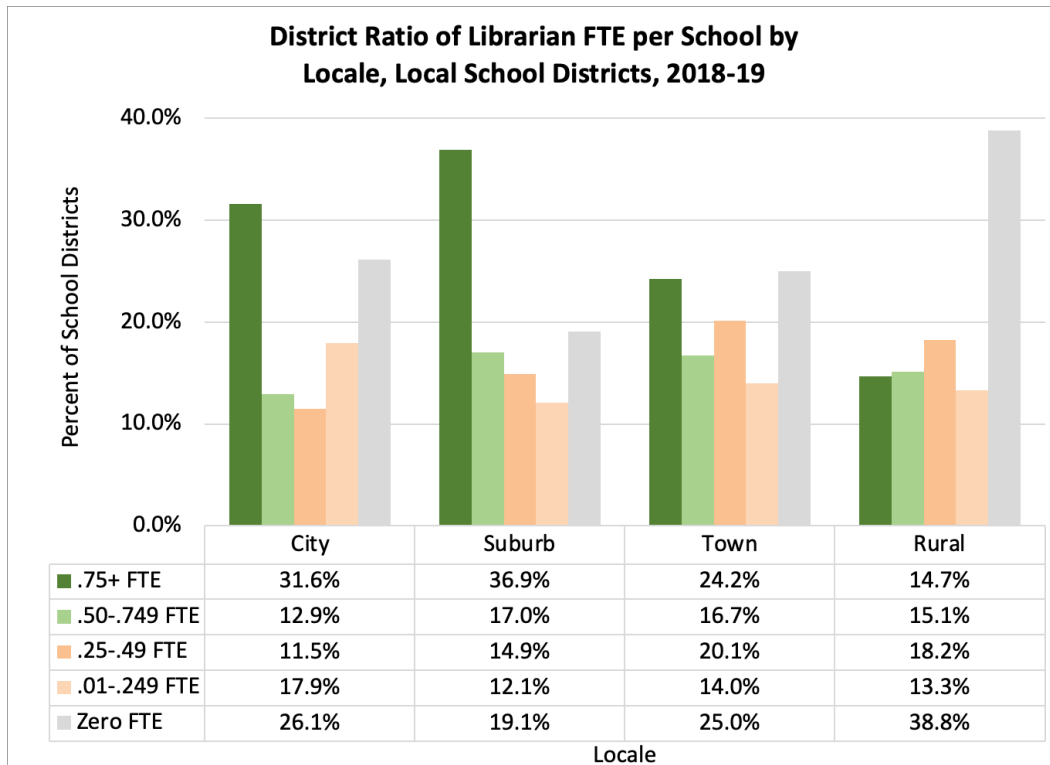


Districts with larger enrollments were more likely to report the highest level of librarian staffing and least likely to report no librarians. For districts with smaller enrollments, the opposite was true.

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.)

Chart 15



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.

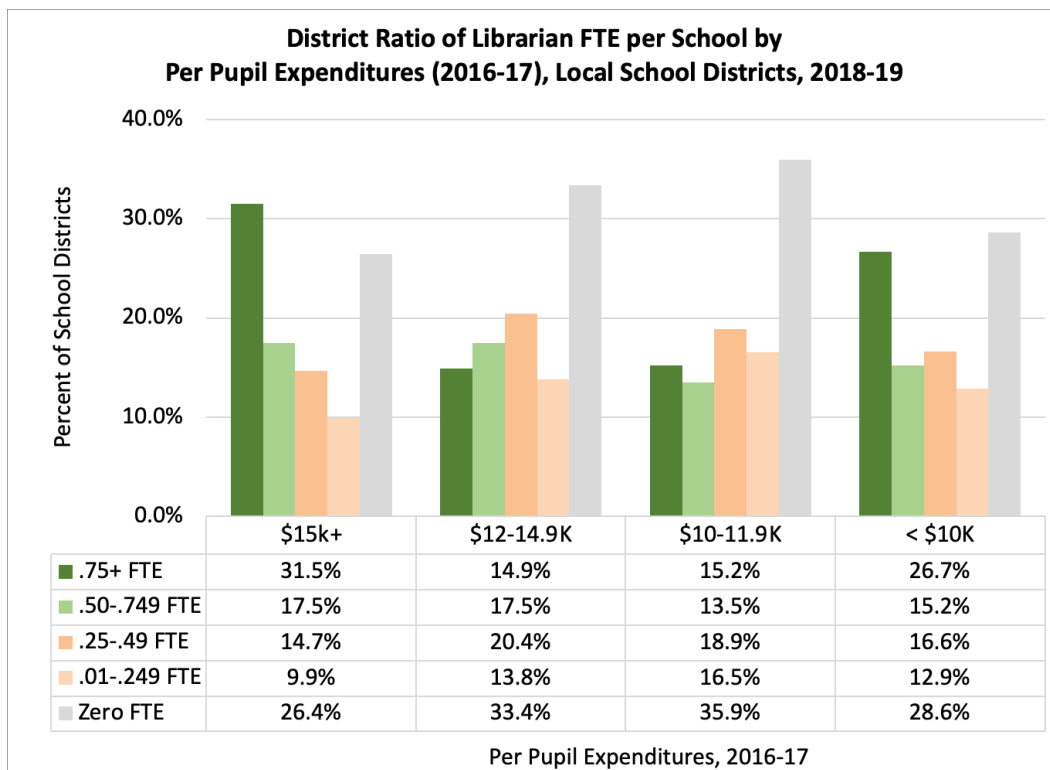
How does a district's funding relate to its level of librarian staffing?

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.