The Status of School Librarians: IMLS Grant Findings
Texas Association of School Library Administrators
2022 Conference

Debra E. Kachel, Project Director
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SLIDE - The School Librarian Investigation
Decline or Evolution?

• Sept 2020 through August 2023, funded by IMLS
• Submitted by Antioch University Seattle
• PURPOSE: “what’s behind the slide?”
  • NCES staffing data inaccurately reported?
  • Confusion over job definitions?
  • Jobs morphing with other positions?
  • How staffing choices are made and why?

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SLIDE - The School Librarian Investigation
Decline or Evolution?

Phase 1 examined:
• NCES data from 2009-10 to 2018-19
• Almost 13,000 school districts
• NO school data, only district
• Used a “District Ratio of Librarian FTE per School”

Phase 2 conducting:
• Interviews of school decision makers
• To learn priorities, factors, and experiences considered when choosing how to staff information & technology services for staff & students

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First Year  Sept 2020 – Aug 2021

• *Perspectives on School Librarian Employment in the United States*

  Assess patterns in librarian employment (geography, district size & setting, race/ethnicity, poverty & per pupil $$) from 2009-10 – 2018-19

• *Contexts of School Librarian Employment*

  Requirements for School Librarian Employment: A State-by-State Survey

• [Libslide.org](http://Libslide.org) website and share findings

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Years 2 & 3  Sept 2021 – Aug 2023

- Recruit and conduct interviews among school decision makers
- Create data tutorials and refine web tools
- Attend and present at conferences
- Communicate results in articles, videos, and infographics
Districts likeliest to have full-time librarians in most schools tend to be in the South and Northeast.

NOTE: Created and assessed by a “District Ratio of Librarian FTE per School” Based on 2018-19 NCES data
States with Least Full-Time Librarians

Districts in Western states are most likely to have no librarians.
Factors Associated with Regional Staffing

Better staffing in Southeastern states and east versus west associated with:

• Staffing mandates, whether enforced or not

• Number of higher education institutions preparing school librarians
YES, AND ENFORCED - 10 states plus DC (22%) 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 (31%) have legal requirements, but not enforced – CA, GA, IN, IA, LA, ME, MD, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OR, TN, VT, VA, WA

NO REQUIREMENT- 24 states (47%) 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

Source: Contexts of School Librarian Employment
State Staffing Mandates

States with enforced mandates averaged .61 FTE per school versus .38 in states with no mandates.

Mandated in 10 out of 16 Southern states; 6 out of 10 actively enforced.
# Institutions of Higher Education Preparing School Librarians

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<thead>
<tr>
<th># Institutions</th>
<th># States</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>TX</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>DC DE HI IN ME MI MS NV NH OH RI SC UT VT WV</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>AK AZ NM OR WY</td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
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</table>

Source: [Contexts of School Librarian Employment](http://example.com)
States with more higher education institutions preparing school librarians had more FTE per school.

Source: *Contexts of School Librarian Employment*, p. 9-10
Equity Issues – Who is Impacted?

1. Ethnicity (Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic)
2. Race (non-white vs. white)
3. Poverty (Free & Reduced-cost Meals Eligibility)
4. English Language Learners
5. Enrollment size
6. Locale

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SLIDE Equity Findings

• Almost 60% of majority Hispanic school districts had NO librarians between 2015-16 and 2018-19.

• In 2018-19:
  • 4.8M students in majority non-white districts had NO librarians (p.86).
  • 41% of districts with 75%+ students eligible for free/reduced-cost meals had NO librarians (p.47).
  • 43% of districts with more than 7.5% English Language Learners had NO librarians (p.49).

Source: Perspectives on School Librarian Employment in the United States, 2009-10 to 2018-19
33.6 million students are in districts where all or some schools have librarians...

82%

18%

These students live in majority white & low-poverty districts

...but another 7.5 million are in districts where no schools have librarians

https://libslide.org/infographics
Of those 7.5 million students:

- 64.0% have been without a librarian since 2015-16,
- 64.0% are in majority non-white districts,
- 58.7% are in high-poverty districts,
- and 41.3% are in majority Hispanic districts.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics/state data for 2018-19

https://libslide.org/infographics
Intriguing Finding:  
It’s Not Solely about School Finances

Evidence

1. Employment patterns of other school staff
2. Per pupil expenditures

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While the best-funded districts are most likely to have full-time librarians in most schools, districts spending the least per student have better staffing than districts spending less than $15,000 and more than $10,000 per student. Funding alone is insufficient to explain staffing levels for other districts.
School librarian losses mirrored instructional coordinator gains. Who are instructional coordinators?
Custom Search

Select and examine—by district or state-specific NCES data concerning employment of school librarians and others as well as district characteristics and student demographics.

NOTE: The data for 2015-16 to 2018-19 were collected where possible for completeness and accuracy, relying chiefly on state data sources. (See Appendix A: Data Quality for details.) The 2019-20 data has not been subjected to this review and revision. If your state’s data appears less than complete and accurate, please refer to your state department of education’s data office that submits data to NCES’s Common Core of Data (CCD) project. Ultimately, state departments of education and school districts are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of their data. States with known major data issues include California, Illinois, and New York.

District Comparison

Compare library staffing data for a selected district compared with peer districts.

State Profile

Examine library staffing data for a single state over time and compare those trends to those for other educator positions.

State Survey

View data collected during a Fall 2020 survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The survey gathered state-specific information to provide context to the findings of the SLIDE study’s other analyses.

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Making NCES data more searchable and usable at national, state and district levels.

https://libslide.org/data-tools/
Texas State Profile Data from SLIDE Data Tools

Librarian FTE per School

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Librarian FTE per School</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.50</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TENAS is ranked 19 of 51 states (and D.C.) for the most current year.

https://libslide.org/data-tools/state-profile/
Texas State Profile Data from SLIDE Data Tools

Students per Librarian FTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students per Librarian FTE</td>
<td>1,158</td>
<td>1,164</td>
<td>1,168</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>1,204</td>
<td>1,198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEXAS is ranked 29 of 51 states (and D.C.) for the most current year.

https://libslide.org/data-tools/state-profile/
# Texas School Librarian Ratios

2020-21 data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FTE Librarian to:</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average FTE per School Building</td>
<td>0.4 average 0.5 median</td>
<td>0.5 (ranks 19/51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students per 1 FTE Librarian</td>
<td>934 average 1,388 median</td>
<td>1,123 (ranks 28/51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Teachers per 1 FTE Librarian</td>
<td>67 average 89 median</td>
<td>78 (ranks 27/51)</td>
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### FTE School Librarian Losses

(Based on 50 states plus D.C.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Span</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Losses between 2009-10 and 2018-19</td>
<td>Average – 22.7%</td>
<td>-14.0% (ranks 19/51 for most losses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median -19.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losses between 2015-16 and 2018-19</td>
<td>Average – 3.7%</td>
<td>-1.1% (ranks 19/51 for most losses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median -3.4%</td>
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</table>

Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the U.S. lost 10,266 school librarian positions; all states lost school librarian positions except New Hampshire.
Next Phase: Recruiting for Interviews

• Purpose: to learn staffing priorities and choices in information and technology positions
• 100 interviews of school/district administrators who make staffing decisions
• In 3 sets of districts
  1. GAINED librarians
  2. LOST SOME librarians
  3. LOST ALL librarians
• Where changes occurred since 2015-16
• Individual and confidential
• One-hour Zooms

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Interviews of Decision Makers

- Recruited with help from 51 State Intermediaries
- Must be an administrator with decision-making authority over which positions are staffed
- 45 completed/scheduled to date from 26 states (3 From TX)
- Questions designed to go beyond finances, seeking staffing priorities
- Ongoing through October 2022
- Email dkachel@antioch.edu with potential interviewees
For More Information

- [https://www.libSLIDE.org](https://www.libSLIDE.org)
  - Publications: major reports, articles, infographics
  - Presentations & infographics:
  - Interactive Data Tools (get tables, charts & maps of data you select)

- Contact project leaders
  - Project director: Debra E. Kachel, Affiliate Faculty, Antioch U Seattle, dkachel@antioch.edu
  - Principal investigator: Keith Curry Lance, RSL Research Group, keithlance@comcast.net

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