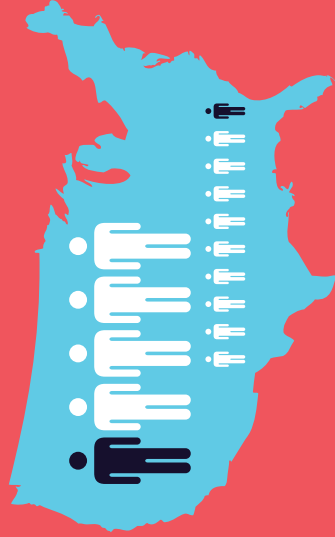


# Data Speaks

PRELIMINARY DATA ON THE STATUS OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS IN THE U.S.



In 2018-19, at least **1/5 of U.S. school districts** had no librarians, impacting at least 7 million K-12 students. **Only 1/10 of charter schools** reported employing librarians.

Districts losing school librarians tend to share characteristics that raise profound concerns about equity of access to librarians and all that they provide to their students and teachers:



Almost 3/5 of the smallest districts have no librarians, while more than 9/10 of the largest districts (25k+ students) have librarians—almost 1/2 full-time in most schools.



More than 1/3 of rural districts and 1/4 of urban districts lack librarians. However, 1/3 of suburban districts and 1/4 of districts in towns outside metro areas have full-time librarians in most schools.



Districts with the most students in poverty are almost twice as likely to lack librarians as districts with the fewest students in poverty.



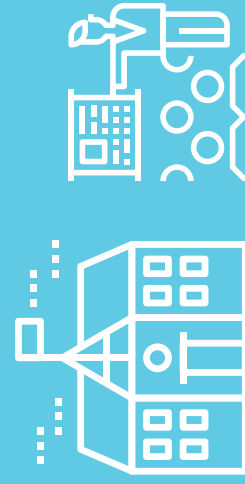
Majority Hispanic districts are twice as likely to lack librarians as Majority Non-Hispanic districts.



Districts with the most English Language Learners & English as a Second Language students (top quartile) are more than twice as likely to lack librarians as districts with the fewest such students (bottom quartile).



School funding alone is not sufficient to explain the presence or absence of librarians in a district. Surprisingly, districts spending the most and least per pupil are more likely to have librarians than districts in-between.

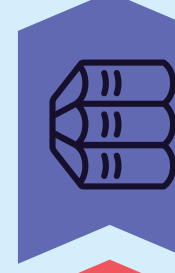


As of 2020-21, the 50 states and D.C. vary dramatically in the extent of their support for the presence of school librarians in public schools.

**2/3+ of states** have adopted standards, guidelines, or both for school library program; 1/3 of states have neither.

**1/4+ of states** have a state government employee whose full-time job is working with school libraries. Only 2/5 of states employ such a person part time. And 1/3 of states have no such position.

**3/4 of states** provide schools free access to databases and other e-content. The other 1/4 is equally divided between those offering discounted pricing and those providing no such access.



**Only 10 states and D.C.** mandate and enforce the employment of school librarians in public schools.

- o 16 additional states have requirements for school librarians but do NOT enforce them.
- o 24 states (nearly half) have NO requirements for school librarians

**50 states plus D.C.** have requirements for school librarians to be certified or endorsed where they are employed.

**Only 15 states** (30%) provide direct funding to school libraries.

**6 states** have 5 or more higher education programs to prepare school librarians.

Twenty-five states have 2-4 institutions, while 15 states have only 1. Five states—Alaska, Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, and Wyoming— have no such programs.

The School Librarian Investigation—Decline or Evolution? is a three-year, exploratory project submitted by Antioch University Seattle and funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The research will determine patterns in the national decline in school librarian positions and how school districts decide to staff library, learning resources, and instructional technologies programs for K-12 students.

Kachei, D.E., and Lance, K.C. (2021, February 1). *Contexts of school librarian employment*. <https://libslide.org/publications/>

Lance, K.C., and Kachei, D.E. (2021, January 26). *Perspectives on employment of school librarians in the U.S.* [Manuscript in preparation]. <https://libslide.org/publications>

teacher | librarian