
California's Need for School Librarian Education

*Recent Trends in Issuance of
Teacher Librarian Credentials and the
SJSU iSchool's Leading Role in
Preparing School Librarians,
2018-19 to 2022-23*

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Introduction

School librarians—like classroom teachers, school and district administrators, and other educators—must be credentialed to do their jobs. On its website, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) reports its latest five years of data for California Teacher Librarian Service Credentials.

Each year, CCTC issues new credentials as well as renewals, emergency permits, and waivers. New credentials are issued based upon previous completion of a California Clear Professional Teaching Credential program and subsequent completion of a California Teacher Librarian Service Credential program. The credential is valid for five years.

School districts (not individuals) must apply annually for emergency permits and waivers; so, these alternative credentials indicate that they wish to employ teacher librarians and that they have been unable to hire fully credentialed individuals.

An emergency permit enables someone to fill a position on a short-term or provisional basis or with a limited assignment. Such permits are issued when a district is unable to recruit a fully credentialed Teacher Librarian and when an otherwise qualified individual has completed some or most of their credential requirements.

Waivers are the last resort when a district can provide necessary support to an insufficiently qualified individual. Criteria which must be met for waivers include verification that attempted recruitment efforts were unsuccessful, the applicant is the best available candidate, the person has not been misassigned, and the candidate will have ongoing support and assistance from other district staff.

This report summarizes CCTC data on issuance of Teacher Librarian credentials between 2018-19 and 2022-23. It also documents the substantial current and potential roles of the Teacher Librarian credential program of the School of Information at San Jose State University.

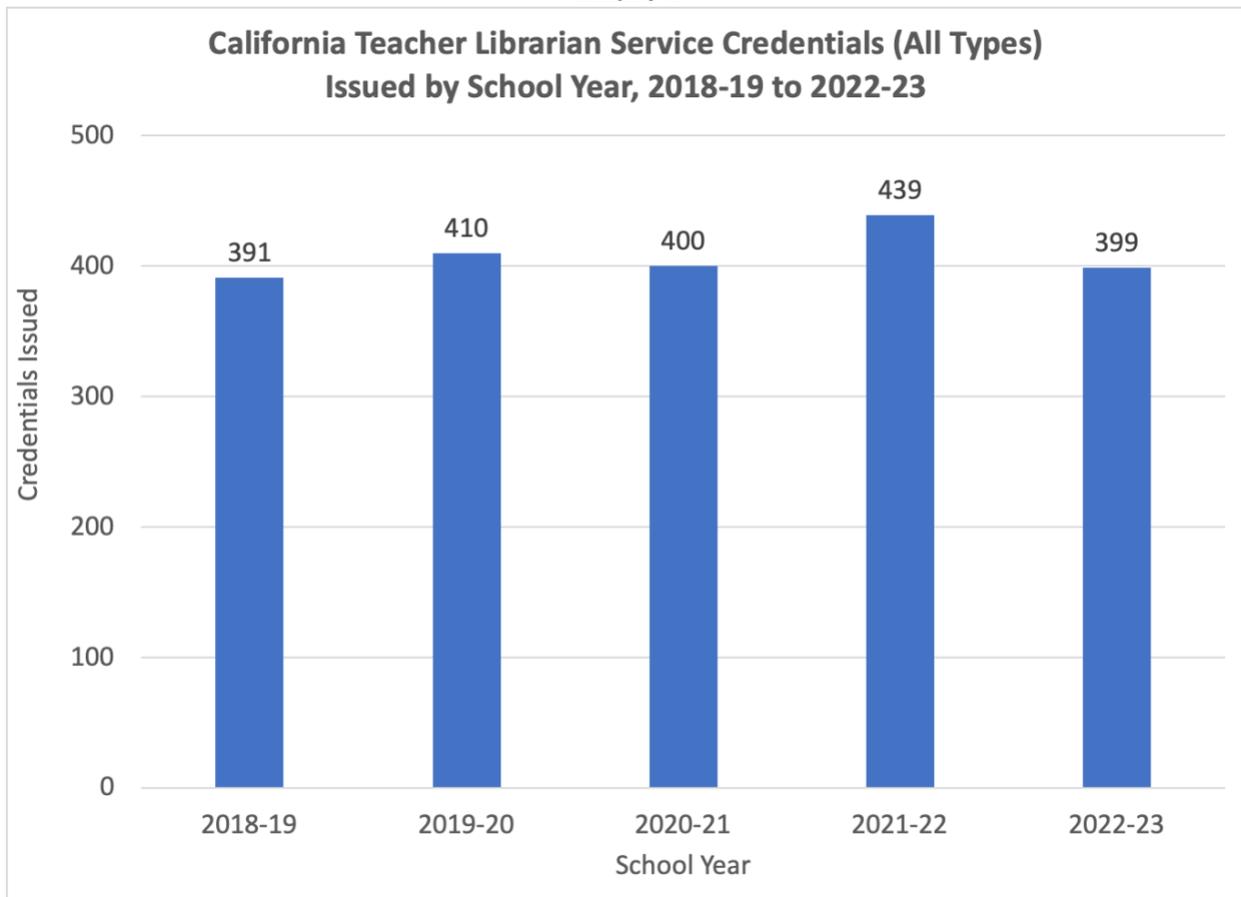
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California Teacher Librarian Credentials, 2018-19 to 2022-23

Over the latest five years of data, the number of Teacher Librarian credentials issued by CCTC has been remarkably steady, particularly considering that this period included the onset and immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each school year between 2018-19 and 2022-23, CCTC issued approximately 400 Teacher Librarian credentials (of all types) per year. These data suggest a steady demand for school librarians in California. (See Chart 1.)

Chart 1



California's Need for School Librarian Education

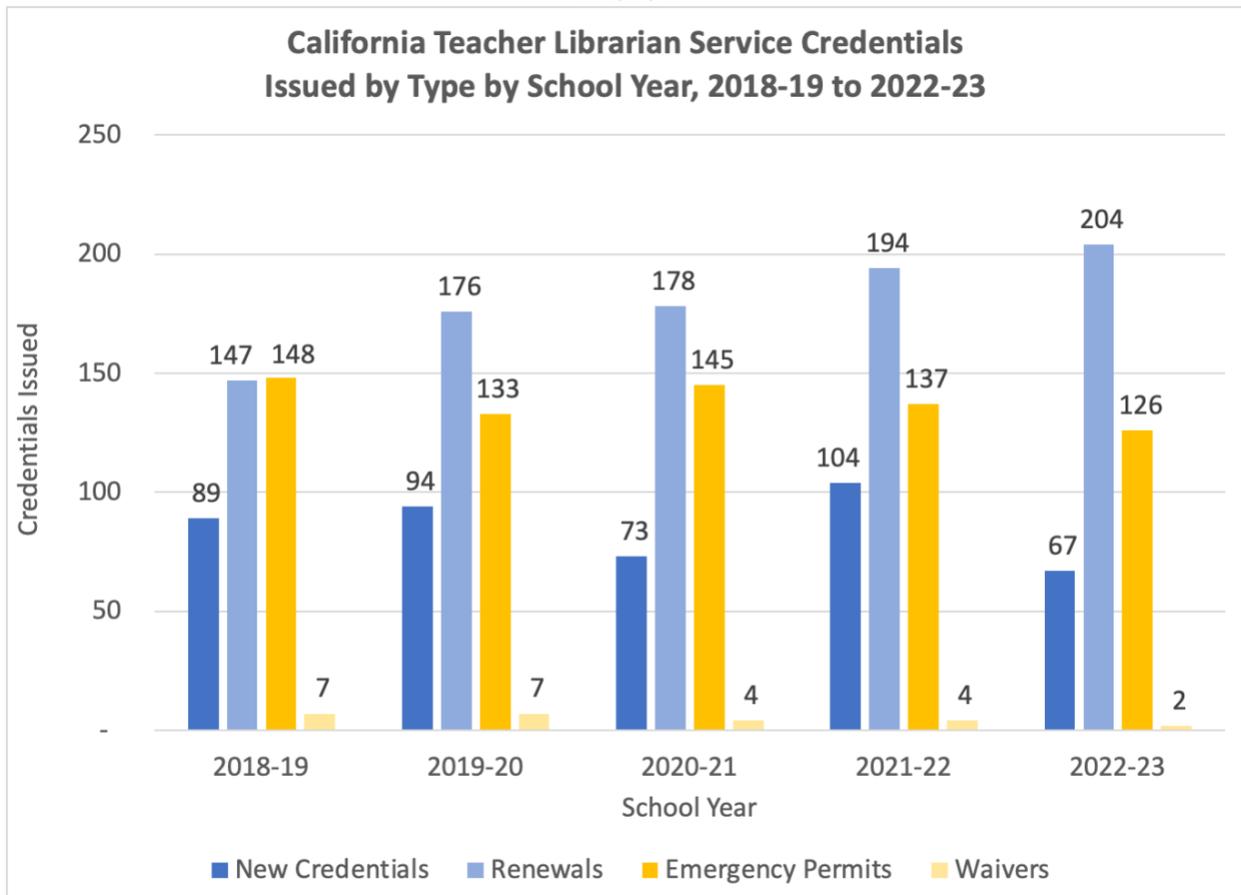
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When the Teacher Librarian credentials issued by CCTC each year are examined by type, several trends are noteworthy:

- Every year, there were substantially more new emergency waivers than new credentials, indicating that demand for school librarians consistently exceeds the supply of qualified individuals. Most notably, in 2020-21 and 2022-23, the number of new emergency permits was double the number of new credentials.
- Renewals of existing credentials increased steadily over the five years, from 147 in 2018-19 to 204 in 2022-23, a 39 percent increase.
- Waivers are very rare; but, their numbers have declined over the five-year period.

(Chart 2 includes all credential types, while Chart 3 compares new credentials with permits and waivers.)

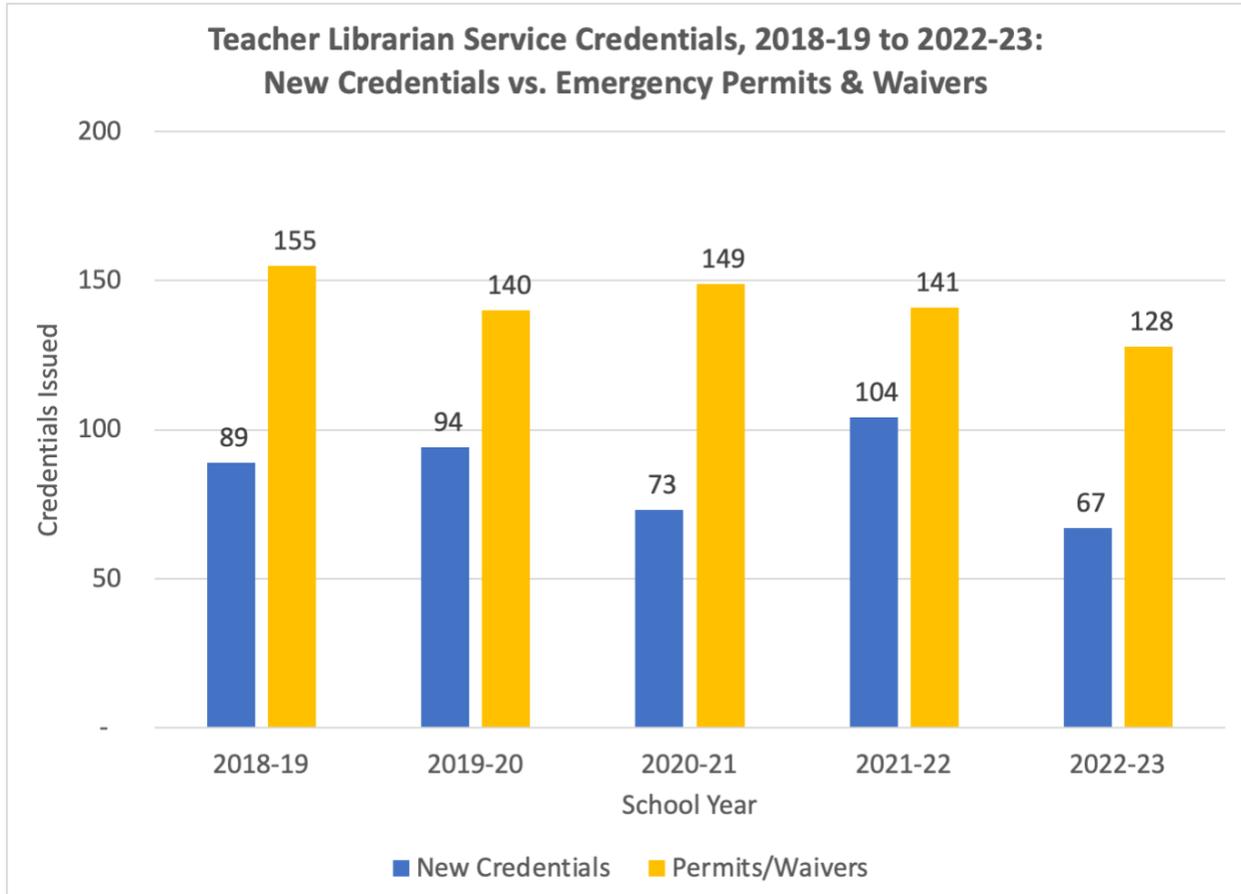
Chart 2



California's Need for School Librarian Education

Recent Trends in Issuance of Teacher Librarian Credentials and the SJSU iSchool's Leading Role in Preparing School Librarians, 2018-19 to 2022-23

Chart 3



When the five years are taken together, two additional patterns are evident (see Chart 4):

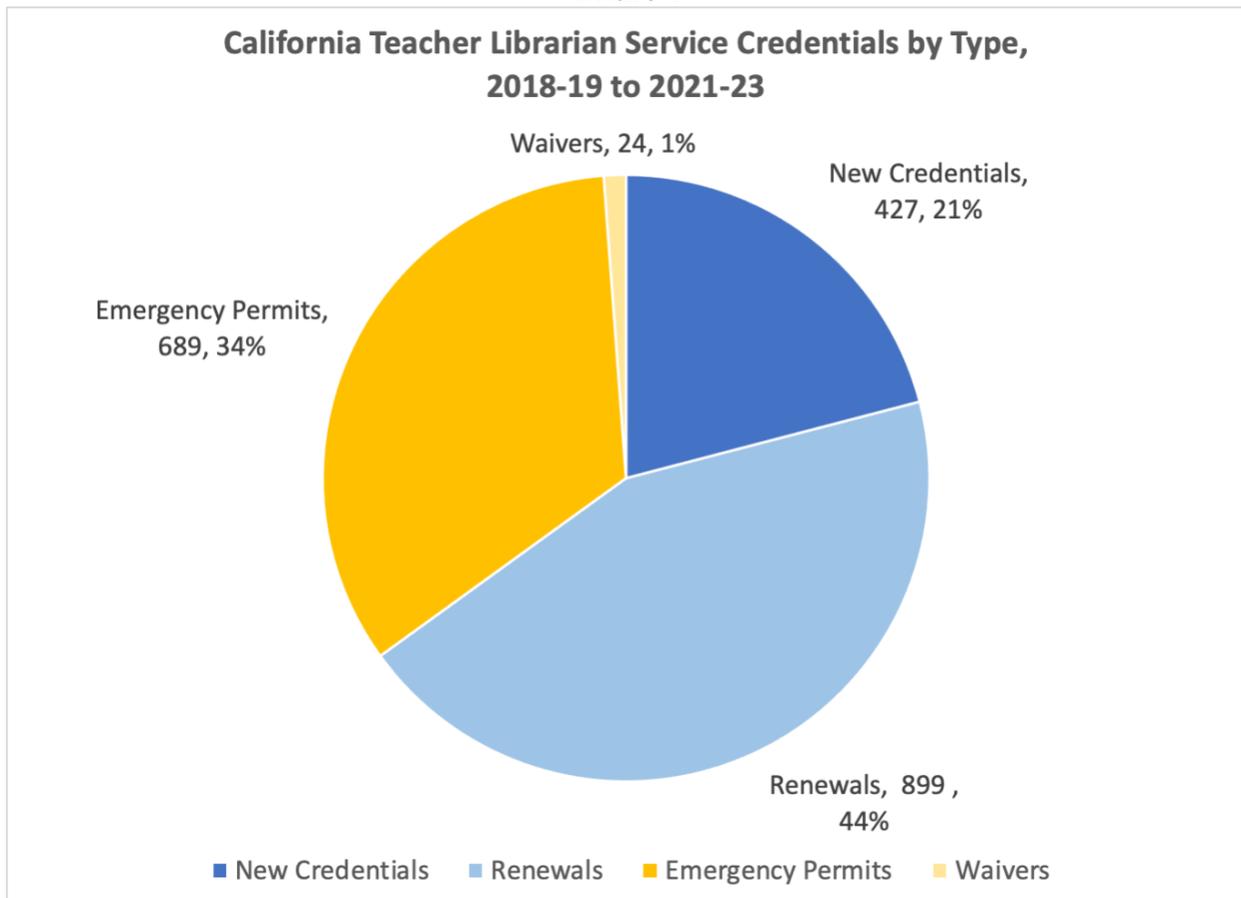
- The number of newly issued Teacher Librarian credentials is half the number of renewals.
- The number of new emergency permits exceeds the number of new credentials by 262, more than 60 percent. (This is not surprising, as Teacher Librarian credentials are valid for 5 years, while permits and waivers must be requested annually and can be renewed no more than twice.)

California’s Need for School Librarian Education

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These patterns suggest that the ranks of school librarians include a sizeable proportion who are still actively pursuing their careers, and that, despite considerable demand being filled by those with new and renewed credentials, 35 percent of credentials issued were emergency permits or waivers. Between 2018-19 and 2022-23, 132 school districts—more than one in ten—relied on permits and waivers to provide professional staff in their libraries. The 713 permits and waivers represent a sizeable ongoing market of people needing to earn those credentials from San Jose State University’s School of Information or another of California’s academic institutions providing a Teacher Librarian credential program.

Chart 4



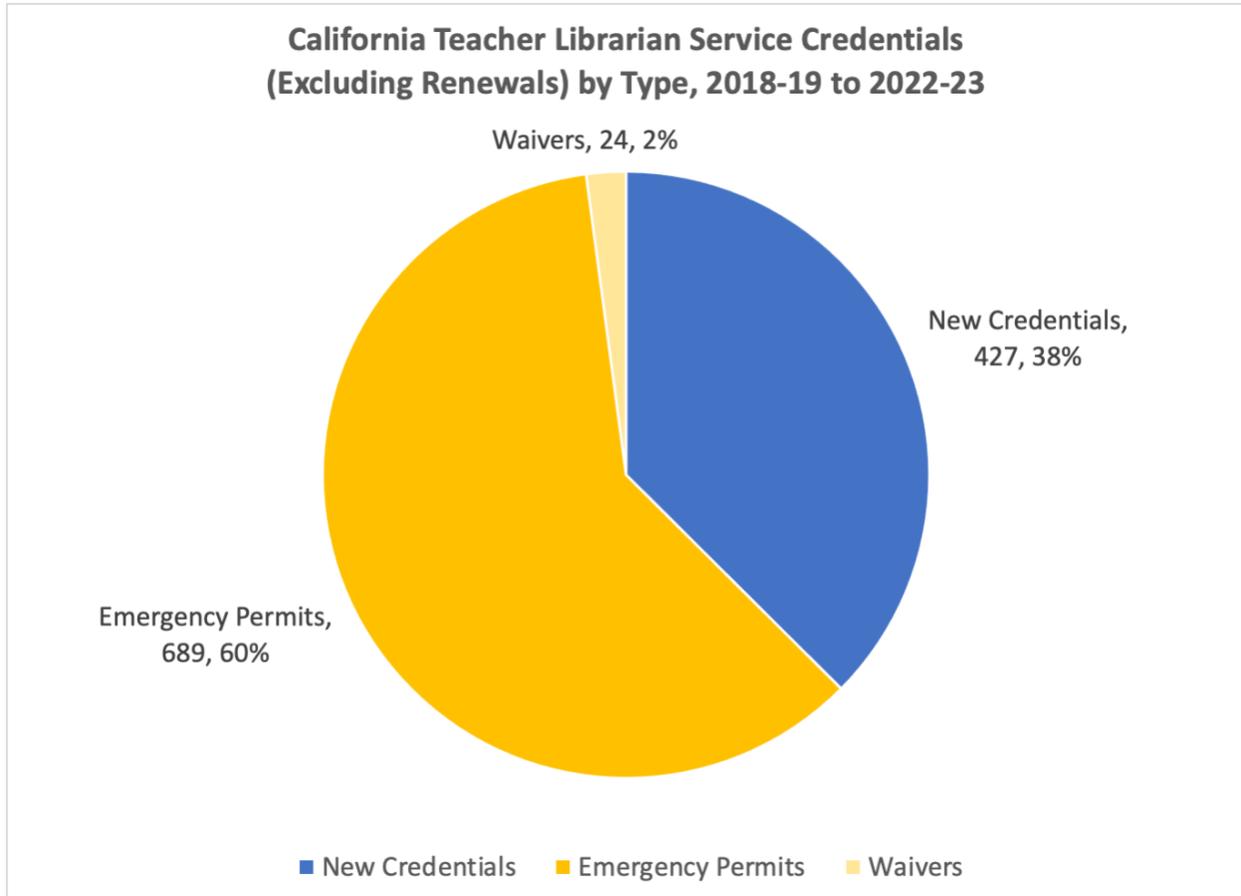
Excluding renewals and examining newly issued credentials of different types only indicates that, of that group, only 38 percent—just over a third—were new credentials, while the remaining 62 percent—almost two-thirds—were either new emergency permits or waivers. (See

California's Need for School Librarian Education

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Chart 5.) These findings reiterate the unmet demand for school librarians in California public schools. Because districts must request emergency permits and waivers, these types of credentials are indisputable evidence of unmet demand.

Chart 5



California’s Need for School Librarian Education

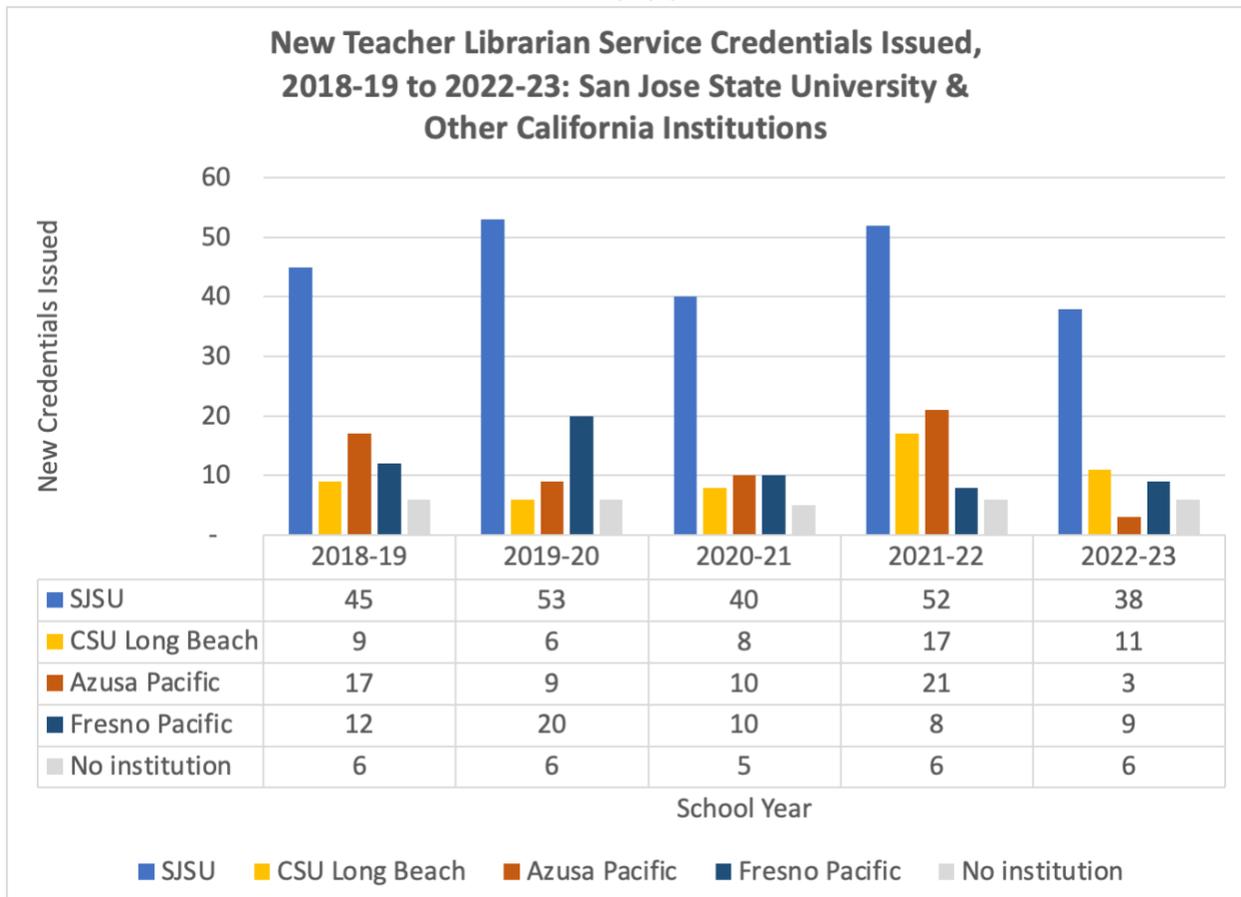
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The Role of the SJSU iSchool in Preparing California School Librarians

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing breaks down its five years of data about new Teacher Librarian credentials by the institution the recipient attended.

These detailed data indicate that, year after year, the School of Information at San Jose State University graduates, by far, the largest numbers of Teacher Librarian credential recipients. Indeed, if graduates of the state’s other three programs plus those who graduated from out-of-state programs are combined, they never exceed the number of SJSU Teacher Librarian graduates. (Azusa Pacific’s program moved to inactive status effective March 1, 2022.) Indeed, most years, SJSU graduates more Teacher Librarian credential recipients than the other programs combined. Interestingly, over this five-year period, the trend for SJSU has been for successive years to alternate between increases and decreases over the previous school year. (See Chart 6.)

Chart 6

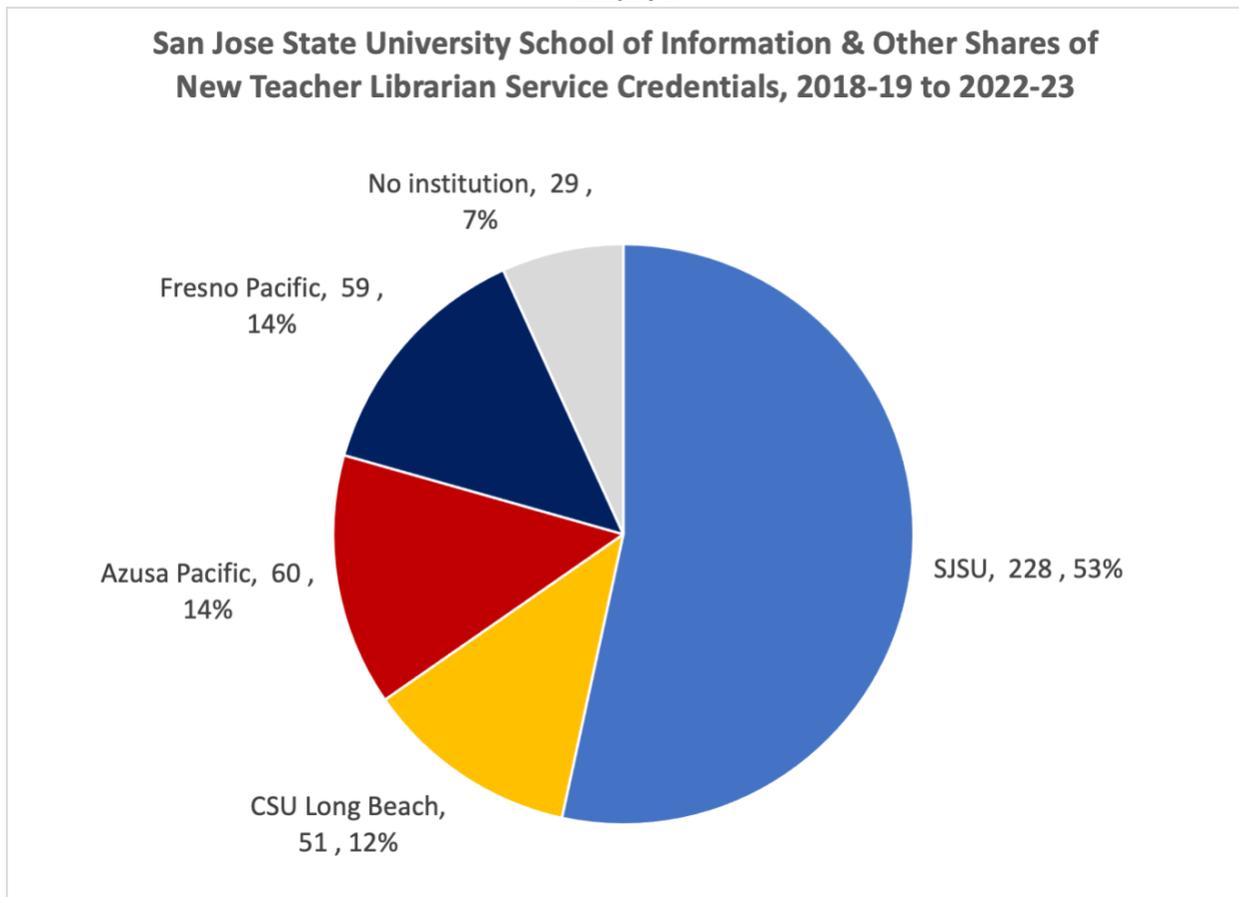


California's Need for School Librarian Education

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Over the five-year period from 2018-19 to 2022-23, the SJSU iSchool graduated 228 Teacher Librarian credential recipients—more than half of the state total. The sheer size of the SJSU credentialing program indicates what a critical role it provides in preparing the state's school librarians. Graduates of the state's other institutions and out-of-state institutions combined do not equal SJSU's total. The two next largest programs at Azusa Pacific and Fresno Pacific each graduate only slightly more than a quarter as many Teacher Librarian credential recipients as SJSU. (See Chart 7.)

Chart 7



These figures, taken together, indicate that SJSU not only already plays an undisputed leading role in preparing the state's school librarians; but, should expect to play a similar leading role in preparing even more school librarians in the future.

California's Need for School Librarian Education

Recent Trends in Issuance of Teacher Librarian Credentials and the SJSU iSchool's Leading Role in Preparing School Librarians, 2018-19 to 2022-23

Conclusion

From this analysis of Commission on Teacher Credentialing data for 2017-18 to 2022-23, four major findings are clear:

- California has a steady and sustained demand for credentialed Teacher Librarians. The latest five-year period included the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath—one of the most disruptive periods in the history of U.S. public education. The fact that demand for qualified school librarians was sustained during this extraordinary period is clear, if indirect, testimony to the value placed on them by their employers.
- Renewals of Teacher Librarian credentials by incumbent school librarians increased steadily over the five-year period. The fact that school librarians are continuing, and perhaps extending, their careers suggests a growing need for professional development courses and workshops that will enable them to stay state-of-the-art in their practice of school librarianship.
- Each year, issuance of new Teacher Librarian credentials was outnumbered considerably by issuance of new emergency permits and waivers. As both permits and waivers must be requested by districts rather than individuals, this finding indicates an ongoing shortage of fully qualified school librarians in California. Teacher Librarian credential programs at SJSU and the other universities play an essential and demonstrable role in helping to meet that demand.
- Throughout the five-year period, the SJSU School of Information's Teacher Librarian Credential program consistently graduated half or more of the state total of new Teacher Librarian credential recipients. The fact that SJSU consistently produces the majority of the state's fully credentialed school librarians further indicates that it plays a unique leadership role in enabling districts and schools seeking qualified school librarians can find them.

California's Need for School Librarian Education

Recent Trends in Issuance of Teacher Librarian Credentials and the SJSU iSchool's Leading Role in Preparing School Librarians, 2018-19 to 2022-23

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