

**PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

# **Pennsylvania School Library Study**

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**Findings and Recommendations**

**Conducted Pursuant to House Resolution 987 of 2010**

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# **State Board of Education Ad Hoc Committee on School Libraries**

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# **Pennsylvania School Library Study: Findings and Recommendations**

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# **Pennsylvania School Library Study: Executive Summary**

## **House Resolution 987 of 2010**

On October 5, 2010, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives unanimously adopted House Resolution 987, which encouraged the State Board of Education to undertake a quantitative study of the state of school libraries in Pennsylvania. The resolution charged the State Board to conduct a study of school library resources and services for students in kindergarten through grade 12, measuring and comparing funding, facilities, access to print and electronic resources, professional support and instruction in the use of information and research among the Commonwealth's public school districts and evaluating how funding and resources are allocated for school library services in relation to student and community circumstances.

House Resolution 987 also urged the State Board to conduct at least three public roundtables to receive input on a draft of the study and its recommendations. To solicit comments about the draft study, the State Board of Education's Ad Hoc Committee on School Libraries conducted three roundtable meetings that were open to the public: September 13 at Parkland High School in Allentown, September 15 at Susquehanna Township High School in Harrisburg, and September 20 at Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy in Erie. A copy of the draft report and feedback from the three public roundtable meetings also was presented to the full State Board at its meeting on September 21.

## **School Library Survey**

In order to conduct the analysis requested by House Resolution 987, the State Board needed to gather data on the status of school library programs and resources across the Commonwealth since such data was not currently available. To collect the necessary data, the Board developed a survey instrument in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association. All school districts, charter schools and career and technical centers were asked to complete the survey electronically via SurveyMonkey in order to help inform the results of this study.

## **Tabulating Survey Responses**

In July 2011, the State Board of Education contracted with the University of Pittsburgh to compile and analyze results of the survey and to draft potential recommendations based on that analysis for consideration by the Board and for discussion at public roundtables held across the Commonwealth.

Before survey responses could be tabulated and analyzed, the basic demographic data for each school and each school district that participated in the survey needed to be verified and, in some instances, corrected using data provided by PDE's Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

## **Summary of Survey Results**

The survey instrument contained 49 questions that were organized into 10 sections: Centralized School Library Collection; Certification of Professional Staffing; Support Staffing; Library Access; Print and Electronic Resources; Age and Condition of Collection; Funding; Age of Technological Equipment; Library Services and Programs; and Additional Aspects.

In addition to the 10 sections of the survey that were developed to respond to information requested by House Resolution 987, the survey also included an introductory question that requested a profile of the school building for which the data was submitted.

It should be noted that this analysis is based entirely on the responses made to the survey instrument by respondents from 2,204 schools (73% of schools in traditional public school districts, 16% of charter schools, and 14% of the comprehensive career and technical centers). Assumptions cannot be made about the 921 schools that did not participate in the study.

This study provides a benchmark for school library programs in publicly-funded schools in Pennsylvania in the 2010-2011 school year. Because such a comprehensive study of Pennsylvania school libraries had not been conducted in the past, this study provides a baseline of data and establishes a benchmark for assessment of school library programs in future school years. It is important to note that these results provide a snapshot of the 2010-2011 school year only, and changes to school library programs that have occurred in the 2011-2012 school year are not represented in this analysis.

### **Representation of Schools and School Districts in the School Library Survey**

Of the 500 Pennsylvania school districts, 389 districts (78%) participated in the survey, and of the 2,970 schools in those districts, 2,180 schools (73%) participated. Of the 141 charter schools in Pennsylvania, 22 schools (16%), including one cyber charter school, participated. Of the state's 14 Comprehensive Career and Technical Centers (CTCs), two CTCs (14%) participated.

### **Representation of Schools Participating in the Survey by Grade Levels (Question 1b)**

Nearly two-thirds of the schools responding can be described as elementary schools, which represent proportionally the larger number of elementary schools within a school district as compared with the smaller number of secondary schools. More than 15% of the schools represent middle-school grades and 16% of the schools represent high schools.

### **Section One Centralized School Library Collection**

Of the 2,196 schools participating in the survey, 2,068 schools (94%) have a library with print and other resources for students and staff to borrow and use. Only 128 schools (6%) do not have a school library. Of the 128 schools with no library, 103 of these schools are in one district—the School District of Philadelphia. The majority of the 128 schools with no library within the school closed their libraries three to five or more years ago, citing as reasons the need for the library space to be used for other purposes and staffing and budget cuts.

### **Section Two: Certification of Professional Staffing & Section Nine: Library Services and Programs**

#### **Number of Library Science K-12 Certified Librarians (Questions 5 & 8)**

Section Two of the survey focused on the staffing of the school library in the 2010-2011 school year. Almost every school with a library in this survey (95%) has the services of a Library Science K-12 certified school librarian. Of the 2,068 schools with libraries in the survey, 89% of the libraries are staffed by one Library Science K-12 certified librarian; 6% are staffed by two Library Science K-12 certified librarians, and only nine are staffed by three Library Science K-12 certified librarians, who are, with one exception, not all full-time. In 88% of libraries, professional staffing has remained constant over the past three years; only 9% indicated a decrease in staffing over the past three years.

Of the 2,068 schools, 5% do not have a Library Science K-12 certified librarian staffing the library; eight of these schools are charter schools, one of which has no library. Three of the schools are middle schools, one with no library. Of the remaining schools, 21 are in the School District of Philadelphia, and 11 are in the School District of Erie. The majority of schools with no Library Science K-12 certified librarian serving as the school librarian are elementary schools.

### **Hours Per Week Library Science K-12 Certified Librarians Work (Question 6)**

At least 44% of the Library Science K-12 certified librarians can be considered full-time because they work 36+ hours per week. An additional 23% of librarians work between 30-35 hours per week or nearly full-time or full-time depending upon the number of hours defined as full-time by the school district contract. In 23% of libraries, the librarian works 10 to 19 hours per week. It is possible that these librarians serve more than one school or have other responsibilities in the school.

### **Collaboration & Hours of Instructional Planning with Colleagues (Questions 45 & 46)**

Nearly two-thirds of librarians with Library Science K-12 certification do not have a designated time within their schedules allocated by the principal or by the district contract to plan with classroom teachers on student-focused instructional units. A majority of librarians (61%) spend less than one hour per week meeting with teachers to plan instruction, and an additional 28% spend 1 to 2 hours in such planning. Only 3% of librarians—almost all in middle and high schools—spend more than 3.25 hours per week planning with teachers. Libraries at these levels make a much greater use of flexible scheduling.

### **Librarian Instruction, Schedule Type & Group Visits (Questions 39, 40 & 42)**

The school librarian is a certified teacher of information literacy and an instructional partner with other teachers. More than half of the librarians (58%) spend between 6-21 hours per week delivering instruction to students. Of these librarians, 55% work with classes on a fixed schedule; the great majority of libraries with fixed schedules are in elementary schools. Only 28% of libraries use flexible scheduling, in which teachers and librarians work together to schedule classes when it is most appropriate for the class to learn in the library. In two-thirds of the libraries, between 11 and 30 classes and small groups visit the library during a typical week.

### **Librarian Engagement in Student Reading Activities**

Another critical responsibility of librarians is motivating students to read; the majority of librarians (59%) spend 1-10 hours per week engaging students in reading motivation, and approximately one-quarter of librarians spend between 11-20 hours per week motivating students to read through reading-related activities.

### **Librarian Committee Service & Non-Library Related Duties (Questions 41 & 47)**

Almost every librarian serves on school committees, and many serve on multiple committees. School librarians serve most often on grade-level and departmental committees, with 40% of librarians serving on these committees in their buildings.

### **Information Literacy Curriculum (Question 44)**

Information literacy competencies are most effectively taught by librarians to students when embedded in content-area, standards-based units of study through teacher-librarian collaboration. More than half of the librarians use a written, local-board-approved, sequenced K-12 information literacy curriculum that has been written or revised since 2005-2006. An

almost equal number of librarians do not use a written or a sequenced curriculum for grades K-12 or use an information literacy curriculum that is more than five years old.

### **Professional Development Opportunities (Question 48)**

More than three-fourths of librarians are given annual opportunities to participate in professional development outside the district.

### **Section Three: Support Staffing (Questions 11-14)**

The presence of support staff in a school library allows the school librarian to focus on the critical responsibilities of collaborating with teachers and motivating students to read. Library aides carry out the many routine, daily tasks in a busy school library: circulation, attendance, processing resources, and record keeping. More than 60% of school libraries employ one support staff member working under the direction of the Library Science certified school librarian, and an additional 9% (in high schools) employ between 2 and 5+ support staff. Nearly one-third of the libraries have no library support staff. The overwhelming majority of schools (74%) use no volunteers to help in the library. Of the libraries that use volunteers (24%), most are elementary school libraries that use between 1 and 10 volunteers per week.

### **Section Four: Library Access (Questions 15-17)**

Student and teacher access to the school library and the services of a school librarian throughout the school day are basic to an effective school library program. In slightly more than half the schools, students and teachers have access to a library staffed by a Library Science K-12 certified school librarian full-time during the hours of the student school day. In about 10% of the schools, students and teachers have such access to a librarian only 1-2 hours per day. Half of all libraries (1,023) are not open to students beyond the student school day.

### **Section Five: Print & Electronic Resources (Questions 18-26)**

### **Section Six: Age & Condition of Collection (Questions 27-32)**

The number of items in a collection is important in determining if there are sufficient resources for students; the types of resources included in the collection are important for representation of different kinds of information as well as appeal to different types of students and the currency of the resources is important in determining their usefulness.

Overall, the majority of print book collections range in size between 5,000 and 15,000 volumes. More than half of the library collections provide between 16 and 30 books per student. *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* state that elementary school library collections should have 20 volumes per student as a minimum, 25 volumes as a standard and 30 as exemplary. Middle schools and high schools should have 15 volumes as a minimum, 20 volumes as a standard and 25 volumes as exemplary.

According to *Guidelines*, titles should be “useful,” meaning current, accurate and meeting student needs. The *Guidelines* recommend that the average age of the book collection not exceed 10 years. More than three-fourths of libraries report total book collections with an average copyright age within the past twenty-five years.

### **Magazines and Newspapers (Question 20)**

Almost three-fourths of libraries subscribe to 20 or fewer magazines and newspapers, and 14% of the libraries have no magazine or newspaper subscriptions. The *Guidelines* establish a minimum number of subscriptions for elementary libraries at between 16 and 21, for middle

schools at between 47 and 57 subscriptions, and for high schools at between 58 and 73 subscriptions.

### **Electronic Resources: Licensed Databases (Questions 21 and 22)**

Almost half of school libraries have five or fewer databases accessible for students and teachers beyond what is now offered through the reduced POWER Library. More than 25% have no additional licensed web-based information databases. High school libraries report the largest number of additional databases.

### **Electronic Resources: eBooks (Question 22)**

eBooks, a relatively new type of resource, are growing in popularity, and more and more titles are now available in this electronic format. More than three-fourths of school libraries do not provide access to eBooks, and the few that provide access are in high schools.

### **Video & Audio Resources Available; Average Age of Video & Audio Resources (Questions 29 & 30)**

More than three-fourths of libraries have some video resources, with an average age of fifteen years or less. Fewer than 20% of libraries have no video resources. One-third of libraries have no audio resources, and these are all in elementary schools. Audio collections tend to be newer with an average age of ten years.

### **Automated/Online Catalog Accessed Within and Outside Building (Questions 25 & 26)**

More than 90% of libraries have an automated catalog accessible within the school building. Of these libraries, about 70% allow students, teachers and parents to access the catalog remotely.

### **Student Access to District-Funded Productivity Tools (Question 31)**

More than three-fourths of libraries provide students and teachers access to four or more productivity tools such as Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Suite products and Inspiration and Kidspiration.

### **Student Ability to Access & Use Web-Based Collaboration Tools Based on Filtering Software (Question 32)**

The vast majority of libraries (80%) provide students with limited access to collaboration tools such as wikis, blogs, Google Docs and Audacity because of their filtering software, and 11% of libraries provide no access to these tools to their students.

## **Section Seven: Funding (Questions 33-34)**

### **Per-Student Expenditures by the District for Library Resources (Question 33)**

Respondents were asked to report per pupil funding for library resources provided by their district over the ten-year period from the 2000-2001 school year through the 2010-2011 school year. For this ten-year period, the largest percentage of libraries by far (39%) received per pupil funding for library resources from the district of between \$1 and \$10 per student, and an additional 21% of libraries received district funding of between \$11 and \$15 per student. In 2010-2011, 3% of libraries received no district funding for library resources. In regard to outside funding, 29% of the libraries received no outside funding, whether from outside grants or from fundraising within the school; 20% were able to increase outside funding, while 13% reported a decrease in outside funding. There was no change in outside funding in 39% of the libraries.

**Section Eight: Age of Technological Equipment (Questions 35-37)  
Number of Computers Housed in Library Purchased/Leased since 2005-2006 &  
Purchased/Leased before 2004-2005**

Nearly three-quarters of the libraries have purchased or leased computers in the past five years; only 14% of libraries did not purchase or lease any computers in the past five years. About 44% of the libraries have no computers more than five years old. An additional 30% have only 1-9 older computers in the school library. Almost 95% of students have access to computers networked to library resources throughout the school building. Respondents were asked if the school had a one-to-one laptop program. One-student/one-laptop programs are not yet widespread. Only 65 schools (3%) have a one-to-one laptop program in which each student in the school is provided with a laptop computer.

A summary of the responses to **Section Nine: Library Services and Programs** is included with Section Two.

**Section Ten: Additional Aspects (Question 49)**

Respondents were requested to assess the adequacy of the library's collection of resources in meeting the needs of specific student populations: English Language Learners, students with visual or physical disabilities, and students who read below grade level. Multicultural resources were deemed adequate in the vast majority of libraries as was access to the facility by students with physical disabilities. Nearly 65% of library collections were not considered adequate for English Language Learners. A large majority of libraries (nearly 70%) do not have adequate assistive technology for students with visual disabilities.

## Introduction

The mission of the school library program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The school librarian empowers students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers and ethical users of information. (*Empowering Learners*, 2009, p. 8)

### **The Status of School Libraries in Pennsylvania**

In 1999, the Office of Commonwealth Libraries of the Pennsylvania Department of Education in partnership with the Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries received a grant through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funded by the U.S. Department of Education for a study of the impact of school library programs and information literacy in Pennsylvania schools. This study of 435 Pennsylvania school libraries was conducted by Dr. Keith Curry Lance, Director of the RSL Research Group of the Colorado State Library and the University of Denver, who has completed similar studies in 21 other states across the country since 1993.

As a result of his study of Pennsylvania libraries, Lance concluded:

Pennsylvania school library programs can make a difference supporting the efforts of schools to measure up to standards. Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) reading scores increase with increases in the following characteristics of school library programs: staffing, information technology and integration of information literacy into the curriculum. In addition, as library staffing, information resources and information technology rise, so too does the involvement of school librarians in teaching students and teachers how to find and assess information. The relationship between staffing and test scores is not explained by other school or community conditions. (PA Lance Study, 2000, pp. 6 and 9)

A school's PSSA Reading test scores tended to improve by 10 to 15 points higher based on all maximized library predictors (e.g., staffing, library expenditures, information resources and technology and information literacy activities of library staff). (PA Lance Study, 2000, p. 8)

The studies conducted in 22 states by Lance and others provide the clearest evidence based on empirical research that an effective library program staffed by a professional school librarian with paraprofessional support allowing the librarian to collaborate with teachers to help students learn results in higher scores on standardized reading tests.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, Pennsylvania achieved a national reputation for its school library programs based on the innovative and effective leadership provided by the Division of School Library Media Services of the Office of Commonwealth Libraries in the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Access PA and POWER Library (Pennsylvania Online World of Electronic Resources) are widely admired models for other states to emulate. Access PA, which began in 1985, is a union catalog of 22+ million resources in school, public, academic and special libraries across the state and is the mechanism by which these resources can be shared among the 2,991 member libraries. Today each of the 500 Pennsylvania school districts and 2,193 schools in these districts participate in Access PA along with 785 public, special and academic libraries. The POWER Library provides access to databases that provide thousands of full-text periodical articles, newspapers, and eBooks, in addition to access to photographs, pictures, maps and reference materials.

The Division of School Library Media Services of the Office of Commonwealth Libraries provided school librarians with continuous professional development through its helpful publications and extensive workshop offerings and regular Access PA meetings held in all areas of the state. These workshops and publications helped school librarians develop an information literacy curriculum for their own school districts and powerful library collections to support students in achieving academic standards. Building on the findings of the 2000 Pennsylvania Lance Study of Pennsylvania school libraries, in 2005 the Division published *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* to help school librarians and decision makers in school districts understand what resources and services are necessary to provide a quality school library program in each school so that students can achieve academic success. To accommodate the rapid advances in educational technology and electronic resources, the *Guidelines* were revised in 2011.

All students and teachers in school districts across Pennsylvania benefited from these efforts to equalize the resources all school districts could offer their students and teachers. Access PA and POWER Library provided access to resources—both print and electronic—beyond what any one district could provide to its students. In January 2010, the budget for Access PA and POWER Library was reduced from \$7.9 million to \$3 million, and the number of electronic databases had to be reduced accordingly. The Division of School Library Media Services estimated that each district would have to allocate at least \$35,000 a year to achieve the same level of access to electronic resources that POWER Library provided before the 2010 budget reduction.

### **House Resolution 987 of 2010**

On October 5, 2010, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives unanimously adopted House Resolution 987, which encouraged the State Board of Education to undertake a quantitative study of the state of school libraries in Pennsylvania. (*See Appendix A for the full text of the Resolution.*) The Resolution charged the State Board to conduct a study of the school library resources and services for students in kindergarten through grade 12, measuring and comparing funding, facilities, access to print and electronic resources, professional support and instruction in the use of information and research among the Commonwealth's public school districts and evaluating how funding and resources are allocated for school library services in relation to student and community circumstances.

The Resolution urged the State Board to include an analysis of the following elements, measured and quantified, where possible, by student, school district and statewide:

1. The number of public schools without a centralized school library collection in the building under the administration of a certified school librarian assigned full-time to that building;
2. The ratio of certified librarians to students;
3. The assignment of other support staffs to work in school libraries, the number of such other staffs and their qualifications;
4. The number of hours that students have access to the school library in their building per day;
5. The amount of up-to-date and useful print and electronic resources to which students and teachers have access through school library services;

6. The average age and condition of books and technology in school libraries;
7. The amount of funding from all sources being spent annually over the past ten years for school library resources and services;
8. The availability of up-to-date, functional, Internet-connected computers for student use in school libraries'
9. The kinds of other library services and programs provided by school libraries to support students and teachers;
10. Additional aspects of school libraries related to the overall purpose of this study.

House Resolution 987 also charged the State Board to make recommendations necessary or desirable to:

1. Improve and update public school library resources, services and facilities for all students in this Commonwealth, including recommendations for appropriate levels of resources, staffing and hours of access;
2. Provide all students with the school library resources, facilities, program and instruction to enable them to become successful readers, learners, researchers and consumers and producers of information; and
3. Address school library inequities or insufficiencies affecting disadvantaged students and communities.

House Resolution 987 also urged the State Board to conduct at least three public roundtables to receive input on a draft of the study and its recommendations. To solicit public comments about the draft study, the State Board of Education's Ad Hoc Committee on School Libraries conducted three roundtable meetings around the state for public comment and discussion: September 13, 2011, at Parkland High School in Allentown; September 15, 2011 at Susquehanna Township High School in Harrisburg; and September 20, 2011, at Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy in Erie. Each meeting was well-attended and those attending commented informally and participated in extensive discussion. Participants expressed strong support for school libraries and, in general, supported the findings and the draft recommendations of this study. A copy of the draft report and feedback from the three public roundtable meetings also was presented to the full State Board at its meeting on September 21 in Erie.

## **School Library Survey**

### **Types of Publicly Funded Schools Studied**

To comply with the resolution, three types of publicly funded schools were included in the study:

1. **School Districts**

There are 500 public school districts in Pennsylvania, and 2,970 schools in these 500 districts. Of the 500 school districts, 389 districts (78%) participated in the survey. Of the 2,970 schools in the 500 districts, 2,180 (73%) participated in the survey.

## **2. Charter Schools**

Pennsylvania has 141 charter schools or 4.5% of the total number of publicly funded schools. Of these 141 charter schools, 22 charter schools, including one cyber charter school, are represented in this study, representing 15.6% of Pennsylvania charter schools.

## **3. Comprehensive Career and Technical Centers (CTCs)**

There are 14 Comprehensive Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) in Pennsylvania. These schools include both core subjects as well as specialized career and technical subjects and students take all courses at the CTC. Only 2 of these 14 CTCs are represented in this survey.

The 64 Occupational Career and Technical Centers are not included in this study because their students take general core subjects at their home schools nor are the 8 State Juvenile Correction Institutions (SJs), and 29 Intermediate Units (IU) included in the study.

### **Development of School Library Survey**

In order to conduct the analysis requested by House Resolution 987, the State Board needed to gather data on the status of school library programs and resources across the Commonwealth since such data was not currently available. To collect the necessary data, the Board developed a survey instrument in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (*See Appendix B for a copy of the survey instrument.*) The survey instrument was mounted electronically using SurveyMonkey, a commercial survey vendor, through PDE's subscription with the vendor. A hard copy of the survey instrument was also mounted on the State Board's web site. The survey instrument was not pre-tested before it was made available to respondents.

### **Distribution of the Survey Instrument**

Respondents were invited to complete the electronic survey by linking to the SurveyMonkey Website (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6F7FLCL>; site no longer active). On March 29, 2011, the link to the survey was sent to chief school administrators in the 500 school districts, the 141 charter schools and the 14 Career and Technical Centers via a message on PENN\*LINK, the official PDE electronic mail service established in 1986 for communication among PDE, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), school districts, charter schools, career and technical centers and Intermediate Units (IUs). Each chief administrator determined who would collect the requested information and who would complete the survey. In the PENN\*LINK message sent with the survey link, the State Board and PDE requested that each chief administrator review the final survey responses to verify correctness before submission. School librarians completed 90% of the responses submitted; principals, central administrators and building and central staff completed the remaining surveys.

### **Accuracy of Survey Responses**

During the period the survey was available for completion, some respondents requested clarification from PDE and the State Board about the meanings of some questions. Several respondents encountered problems with the SurveyMonkey technology in attempting to complete the survey online. Respondents were not permitted to save data and return to it before submitting their final responses. In addition, respondents could be “timed out” of their session and have to begin the survey again. As a result, of the 2,703 responses submitted, 484 responses were duplicate responses; some schools submitted as many as 6 responses. Each duplicate response had to be examined to determine which response was the most complete; the remaining duplicate responses were not considered in the analysis. An additional 15 responses were considered “false start” entries and also could not be considered. After this review process, 2,204 responses were used in compiling the survey results.

### **Tabulating Survey Responses**

On July 13, 2011, the State Board of Education contracted with the University of Pittsburgh to compile and analyze results of the survey and to draft potential recommendations based on that analysis for consideration by the Board and for discussion at public roundtables held across the Commonwealth. Dr. Mary K. Biagini, Associate Professor and Chair of the Library and Information Science Program, and three adjunct faculty members in the School of Information Sciences (Patrick Hickey, Sally Myers and D’nis Lynch) at the University of Pittsburgh compiled and analyzed the survey responses.

Before survey responses could be tabulated and analyzed, the basic demographic data for each school and each school district that participated in the survey needed to be verified and, in some instances, corrected using data provided by PDE’s Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS). The unique nine-digit Administrative Unit Number (AUN) number for each school district and for each charter school as well as the unique four-digit school code for each school had to be verified; almost 1,000 code numbers had to be corrected.

The names of individual schools also had to be verified and matched to the PIMS data. Because many schools are named for a person, respondents often did not provide the complete name of the school. In the PIMS data, some school names are alphabetized by first name of the person for whom the school is named and some by last name. Hundreds of school names had to be corrected within the SurveyMonkey data so that the names conformed to the way they are presented in PIMS. This step was necessary to locate each school’s correct code in the PIMS data.

### **Survey Respondents (Question 1c)**

Nearly 90% of the surveys were completed by the building school librarian or by a single librarian or library supervisor for the schools of the district. The remaining 10% of the surveys were completed by building principals and assistant principals, by central administrators (ranging from directors of curriculum and instruction to compliance officers and technology coordinators), by central staff such as assistants to superintendents, or by paraprofessionals in the building. Several were completed by the librarian and the principal together. A very few were completed by volunteers. Because this range of respondents may not have had access to the same information or interpreted each

question in the same way, responses across a district were sometimes conflicting or contradictory.

### **Representation of School Districts Participating in the Survey (Question 1a)**

Of the 500 school districts in Pennsylvania, 389 districts (78%) participated in the survey, which is a very high response rate for a survey. To determine the geographic distribution of respondents, AUN numbers were verified for each district participating, and the maps prepared by PDE of each of the state's 29 Intermediate Units identifying the school districts within each IU were checked to determine which of the 500 school districts participated in the survey. Districts in all 29 IUs participated across the state. Every district in Carbon-Lehigh IU 21 and Colonial IU 20 participated. Districts participating in the survey represent all geographic areas of the state as well as urban, suburban and rural areas. Such widespread geographic representation means that all types of communities are represented in the survey results.

### **Representation of Schools Participating in the Survey (Question 1a)**

Within the 500 school districts there are 2,970 schools. Of these schools, nearly three-fourths of the schools (2,180 or 74%) are represented in the survey. This represents a very high response rate. The 2,180 schools are located in all geographic areas of the state and represent diverse urban, suburban and rural communities.

Responses from the 141 charter schools were very low; only 22 (16%) of the 141 charter schools are represented in the survey. There are only 14 Comprehensive Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) in Pennsylvania; and, of these, only 2 CTCs are represented in the survey. Given the very low response rates for charter schools and CTCs, it is fair to describe these survey results as representing only traditional public school districts.

### **Representation of Schools Participating in the Survey by Grade Levels (Question 1b)**

Of the 2,180 public schools represented in the survey, nearly two-thirds (1,336) can be described as elementary schools, which represent proportionally the larger number of elementary schools within a school district as compared with the smaller number of secondary schools. These 1,336 elementary schools include a wide range of grade levels among schools categorized in this survey as elementary schools. Some schools begin with pre-kindergarten and some with kindergarten. Some schools are primary schools, ranging through grade two or grade three. A few elementary schools have only one grade in a building, for example, only the third grade. In some elementary schools, grade five is the highest grade, and in some grade six is the highest. More than 100 schools encompass grades K-8, including grades usually identified as middle-school grades. There are 19 schools that include pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, and these are in districts with very low enrollments and in charter schools.

More than 320 schools (15%) represent middle-school grades, ranging from grade five to grade nine. A few schools represent one grade only. Grades six to eight represent the most common middle-school pattern of grades; 187 schools (57%) include these grades. Of the 330 high schools (16%), a few include grades eight through twelve; the majority (298 or 94%), however, include grades nine through twelve.

The numbers of schools at both the elementary and secondary levels that participated in this survey very adequately represent the numbers of schools proportionally at these two levels in school districts in Pennsylvania.

## **Analysis of Survey Responses**

This section of the report summarizes and analyzes the responses to the School Library Survey. The survey instrument contained 49 questions that were organized into 10 sections: Centralized School Library Collection; Certification of Professional Staffing; Support Staffing; Library Access; Print and Electronic Resources; Age and Condition of Collection; Funding; Age of Technological Equipment; Library Services and Programs; and, Additional Aspects.

In addition to the 10 sections of the survey which were developed to respond to information requested by House Resolution 987, the survey also included an introductory question that requested a Building Profile, including the school's name, AUN and building numbers, grade levels served, and contact information for the individual completing the survey. A discussion of the results received from the Building Profile data is addressed in the Introduction above. *(See Appendix B for the survey instrument and Appendix C for statistics on the number of responses to each survey question and the responses in rank order.)*

It should be noted that this analysis is based entirely on the responses made to the survey instrument by respondents from 2,204 schools (73% of schools in traditional public school districts, 16% of charter schools and 14% of the comprehensive career and technical centers). Assumptions cannot be made about the 921 schools that did not participate in the study.

This study provides a benchmark for school library programs in publicly-funded schools in Pennsylvania for the 2010-2011 school year. Because such a comprehensive study of Pennsylvania school libraries had not been conducted in the past, this study provides a baseline of data and establishes a benchmark for assessing school library programs in future school years. It is important to note that these results provide a snapshot of the 2010-2011 school year only, and changes to school library programs that have occurred in the 2011-2012 school year are not represented in this analysis.

### **Section One: Centralized School Library Collection (Questions 2-4)**

#### **Schools with and without Libraries (Question 2)**

Question 2 asked "Does your school have a school library facility with print and other resources for students and staff to borrow and use?" Of the 2,196 respondents, 2,068 schools (94%) have a library with print and other resources for students and staff to borrow and use. Overwhelmingly, public schools in Pennsylvania have a library for their students and teachers. Only 128 of the schools that responded to the survey do not have a school

library. Of the 128 schools with no library, 103 of these schools are in one district—the School District of Philadelphia.

The School District of Philadelphia, with a total of 254 schools, is represented in this survey by 185 schools or 73% of its total schools. Of these 185 schools, 103 do not have libraries, well more than half of the Philadelphia schools represented in the survey. These 103 Philadelphia elementary, middle and high schools with no library represent almost 5% of the 2,196 schools in the survey. The 185 Philadelphia schools participating represent 8% of the 2,196 schools in the survey.

There is not a state-wide pattern of schools without a library, but rather a single school district with a large number of schools without a library. The other 25 schools without a library represent 6 school districts and 5 charter schools, with the Pittsburgh Public Schools reporting 10 elementary schools with no library.

#### **Time Frame of Library Closings & Reasons Given for Closings (Question 3 & 4)**

The majority of the 128 schools with no library within the school closed their libraries three to five or more years ago. A very few respondents (all from charter schools) indicated that the school never had a library or that the school did not yet have a library. There is no evidence from the responses that library closings increased in the 2009-2010 school year; however, these data represent only a snapshot in time, and this figure may well change given the economic pressures facing schools in the 2011-2012 school year.

The survey also asked respondents to state the reason(s) for closure of the school library. The most cited reasons given for library closings are the need for library space to be used for other purposes and staffing and budget cuts. Respondents with closed libraries indicated multiple reasons, often a combination of staffing cuts because of budget reductions. Only one respondent indicated a library closed because of lack of use.

## **Section Two: Certification of Professional Staffing (Questions 5-10)**

### **Section Nine: Library Services and Programs (Questions 39-48)**

Questions in Section Two focus on professional staffing of the school library and questions in Section Nine focus on how a librarian structures the library program to help teachers teach and students learn. It is helpful to examine these two sections together to develop a picture of the adequacy of school library programs in meeting teacher and student educational needs.

The 2000 Lance study of PA school libraries, based on the 1998-1999 school year, found that

. . . the success of any school library information program in promoting high academic achievement depends fundamentally on the presence of adequate staffing—specifically each library should have at least one, full-time school librarian with at least one full-time aide or support staff member. For grades five, eight and eleven, the relationship between such staffing and such reading scores was positive and statistically significant. (PA Lance Study, 2000, p. 35)

### **Number of Library Science K-12 Certified Librarians (Questions 5 & 8)**

Section Two focuses on the staffing of the school library in the 2010-2011 school year. Of the 2,068 schools with libraries in the survey, 1,847 libraries (89%) are staffed by one Library Science K-12 certified librarian; 116 libraries (6%) are staffed by two Library Science K-12 certified librarians, and 9 libraries (less than 1%) are staffed by three Library Science K-12 certified librarians.

Of the 2,068 schools, 96 (5%) do not have a Library Science K-12 certified librarian staffing the library. Eight of these schools with no Library Science K-12 certified librarian are charter schools, one of which has no library. Three of the schools are middle schools, one with no library. Of the remaining schools, 21 are in the School District of Philadelphia, and 11 are in the School District of Erie. The majority of schools with no Library Science K-12 certified librarian serving as the school librarian are elementary schools.

Almost every school with a library in this survey (1,972 or 95%) has the services of a Library Science K-12 certified school librarian. For 2010-2011, 1,694 (88%) responded that professional staffing has remained constant over the past three years; only 9% indicated a decrease in staffing over the past three years.

It should be noted that Question 5 about the certification of the school librarian was open to interpretation as evidenced by the contradictory and conflicting answers of the respondents. Of the sixteen possible choices of responses to Question 5, many respondents provided multiple and contradictory answers about the school librarian's certification area (Library Science, K-12 and/or another content area) or the lack of teacher certification (neither in Library Science K-12 nor in another content area).

These contradictory responses rendered responses difficult to interpret. After many attempts to aggregate and interpret the responses, the decision was made to use only the responses to the first part of Question 5: whether the library employs a librarian certified in Library Science K-12. Based on the multiple responses to the second, third and fourth parts of Question 5, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether schools have staff members certified in disciplines other than Library Science K-12 acting as the school librarian.

Based on the multiple conflicting responses, it was also impossible to determine with certainty whether the school librarian holds certification in another subject in addition to certification in Library Science K-12. The responses seem to indicate that librarians were unable to interpret whether they should have responded again if they held additional certifications beyond Library Science K-12. Thus, some respondents indicated both that they have multiple librarians with different areas of certifications as well as no librarians in those categories.

### **Hours Per Week Library Science K-12 Certified Librarians Work (Question 6)**

It is more difficult to determine with certainty how many of the 1,972 reported Library Science K-12 certified librarians work full-time in the library because more than 17% of respondents did not report the number of hours the librarian worked. At least 711 librarians (44%) can be considered full-time because they work 36+ hours per week. An additional 372 librarians (23%) work between 30-35 hours per week, which can be

considered nearly full-time or full-time depending upon the number of hours defined as full-time by the school district contract. These librarians may be among the 165 librarians who work 5+ hours per week on other duties. (*See responses to Question 41 below*). In the remaining libraries, 368 librarians (23%) work 10 to 19 hours per week. It is possible that these librarians serve more than one school or have other responsibilities in the school.

In only 32 (28%) of the 116 libraries that have two librarians is that second librarian full-time (36+ hours per week). The remaining schools have one librarian and a portion of time of a second librarian who serves other buildings or who has other responsibilities in the building. Of the nine schools reporting three librarians, only one school (a large, suburban high school) has three librarians each of whom works 37.5 hrs. per week. Two schools have two full-time librarians and a part-time third librarian. The remaining six libraries each have only one full-time librarian and two additional librarians each of whom works half-time or less in that school's library. Two of these librarians work only 1.5 to 2 hours per week in that library.

### **Librarian/Student Ratio (Question 7)**

The responses to the question requesting the ratio of certified librarian to students in the school were unusable. Almost no respondents reported a ratio even though the instructions provided an example of how to report a response. Given the number of schools that have only one librarian, that librarian must serve all students in that school, regardless of enrollment. Part-time librarians who serve more than one building serve a larger number of students a shorter period of time over the course of a week or cycle.

### **Collaboration & Hours of Instructional Planning with Colleagues (Questions 45 & 46)**

At all three school levels, school library staffing also demonstrated a consistently positive and statistically significant relationship to a combination of library staff activities related to integrating information literacy into the schools approach to standards and curricula. (PA Lance Study, 2000, p. 42)

Librarian collaboration with teachers to help students learn is ranked as the most important responsibility in every research study on the value of a school library program. Collaboration between the librarian and teacher(s) involves three sequential components: planning together on student learning outcomes in advance of the unit, sharing instructional responsibilities and sharing assessment of student learning. The 2000 Lance Study of Pennsylvania School Libraries reports that PSSA reading test scores increased with increases in school librarian staff hours, and the link between collaboration and increased test scores is the key finding of the Lance Study.

In the 2011 Pennsylvania School Library Survey conducted to inform this study, librarians were asked to report on how they allocated their time across key activities. Nearly two-thirds of librarians with Library Science K-12 certification (1,226) do not have a designated time within their schedules allocated by the principal or by the district contract to plan with classroom teachers on student-focused instructional units. A majority of librarians (1,194 or 61%) spend less than one hour per week meeting with teachers to plan instruction. An additional 559 librarians (28%) spend 1 to 2 hours in such planning. A lack of allocated time for teacher-librarian planning in elementary schools may be explained by the large

number of elementary libraries that use a fixed schedule for the librarian, in which the librarian teaches information literacy classes during fixed or set periods each week or cycle and is therefore not available to plan with teachers.

Only 69 librarians (3%) spend more than 3.25 hours per week planning with teachers. Of these 69 school librarians, just 17 spend more than 5 hours per week planning with teachers, and all but one of these is a librarian in a high school. Of these 69 librarians, 22 librarians plan with teachers between 4.25 and 5 hours, and the majority of these librarians are in middle schools. These responses may reflect a much greater use of flexible scheduling at the secondary level.

### **Librarian Instruction, Schedule Type & Group Visits (Questions 39, 40 & 42)**

The more often students receive information literacy instruction from librarians, the higher the test scores. (Alaska Lance Study, 2000, *School Libraries Work!*, 2008, p. 10)

A key finding of the 22 Lance studies and other research conducted in Ohio and Indiana is that school libraries should be scheduled as flexibly as possible to help achieve student learning. (Illinois Lance Study, 2005, *School Libraries Work!*, p. 11)

Principals associated flexible scheduling with meaningful access when needed, curriculum integration, . . . students having more opportunities, being more excited about the rich experiences in the library and becoming more independent. They described their libraries as a 'hub of learning' and a place that is learner centered. (McGregor, 2006, accessed 09/05/11)  
([http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume09/mcgregor\\_flexiblescheduling.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume09/mcgregor_flexiblescheduling.cfm) 09/03/11)

The school librarian is a certified teacher of information literacy and an instructional partner with other teachers. More than half of the librarians (1,106 or 58%) spend between 6-21 hours per week delivering instruction to students. Of these librarians, 55% work with classes on a fixed schedule; the great majority of libraries with fixed schedules are in elementary schools. In schools using a fixed library schedule, the librarian's schedule is established for the school year by the principal so that each grade-level class visits the library for one or more fixed periods each week or cycle. During these periods, the librarian teaches a lesson in information literacy, reads a story, or helps students select books and often carries out all three activities in a single period.

Some school districts use fixed scheduling as part of the contract to provide classroom teachers with a planning period; in these districts, the teacher neither accompanies the class to the library nor stays with the class during the learning activity. In these cases, a fixed schedule results in the librarian's information literacy instruction not being correlated in any way with what students are learning in the classroom.

Because many elementary library facilities are not large enough to seat more than one class at a time, only the scheduled teacher's class may be able to use the library in a given period. As a result, it is not possible for a teacher to schedule instructional time with the librarian in the library when it is needed most to integrate with what the students are learning. Only 548 libraries (28%) use flexible scheduling, in which teachers and librarians work together to schedule classes when it is most appropriate for the class to learn in the library. Even fewer libraries (356 or 18%) used a combination of the fixed and flexible

types of schedule. Research conducted in elementary schools since the 1990s demonstrates that librarians who use flexible rather than fixed scheduling are able to collaborate longer and more successfully with teachers in planning instructional units.

Elementary school students with the most collaborative teacher-librarians scored 21% higher on Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) reading scores than students with the least collaborative teacher librarians. (Colorado Lance Study, 2000, *School Libraries Work!*, 2008, p. 10.)

In two-thirds of the libraries, between 11 and 30 groups visit the library during a typical week. This number includes both classes and small groups of students. Of the 52 libraries that report more than 51 group visits per week, almost all are in high schools, indicating that large numbers of small groups of students rather than entire classes are using the library. Because of the way the survey question was phrased, it is not possible to determine if these small groups and classes are receiving instruction from the school librarian or are working independently or with a teacher.

### **Librarian Engagement in Student Reading Activities (Question 43)**

Credentialed school librarians promote, inspire and guide students toward a love of reading, a quest for knowledge and a thirst for lifelong learning. (Board Resolution of the International Reading Association, 2000, *School Libraries Work!*, 2008, p. 16)

Reading is a foundational skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment. The degree to which students can read and understand text in all formats (e.g., picture, video, print) and all contexts is a key indicator of success in school and in life. (*Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learner*, p. 2)

Another critical responsibility of librarians is motivating students to read; the majority of librarians (59%) spend 1-10 hours per week engaging students in reading motivation, and approximately a quarter of librarians spend between 11-20 hours per week motivating students to read through reading-related activities. Students build their reading skills through independent reading, and reading skills improve through the practice of reading. Librarians play an important role in encouraging students to read independently through such activities as giving book talks, sponsoring book clubs and providing collections of current books and magazines on topics of interest to students.

### **Librarian Committee Service & Non-Library Related Duties (Questions 41 & 47)**

Across grade levels, better-performing schools tended to be those whose principals placed a higher value on having their school librarian serve on key school committees. (Indiana Lance Study, 2006, *School Libraries Work!*, 2008, p. 17)

Almost every librarian serves on school committees, and many serve on multiple committees. School librarians serve most often on grade-level and departmental committees, with 787 librarians (40%) serving on these committees in their buildings. One-fourth of librarians serve on technology committees and one-fourth serve on curriculum committees. Librarians frequently serve on anti-bullying, Accelerated Reading, book clubs, principal advisory, and discipline committees. Some librarians serve as their building representative to the local professional teachers association. Service on all types of committees integrates librarians into the life of the school, and allows librarians to work

with many teachers and administrators in settings other than the library. Such contact increases the possibility of collaboration on student learning.

Almost three-quarters of the librarians (1,435 or 73%) have no non-library related duties or only up to 1.75 hours of outside duties per week. This scheduling makes it possible for the librarian to provide continuous library service throughout the school day and makes service before and after the student school day possible.

### **Information Literacy Curriculum (Question 44)**

The 'keystone' finding is the importance of an integrated approach to information literacy teaching. For school library programs to be successful agents of academic achievement, information literacy must be an integral part of the schools' approach to both standards and curriculum. (PA Lance Study, 2000, p. 6)

Librarians are teachers of information literacy. Information literacy competencies are most effectively taught to students when embedded in content-area, standards-based units of study through teacher-librarian collaboration (California School Library Association, 2011). More than half of the librarians (1,020) use a written, sequenced K-12 information literacy curriculum, approved by the local school board, that has been written or revised since 2005-2006. An almost equal number of librarians (956 or 48%) do not use a written or a sequenced curriculum for grades K-12 or use an information literacy curriculum that is more than five years old.

### **Professional Development Opportunities (Question 48)**

More than three-fourths of librarians are given annual opportunities to participate in professional development outside the district. Librarians may take advantage of free or low-cost professional development offered locally through Intermediate Units or online through WebJunction Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association and the American Association of School Librarians offer conferences each year. The American Association of School Librarians also offers regular webinars. The two-year moratorium on compliance with Act 48 professional development requirements enacted by Act 24 of 2011 may have an effect on the professional development opportunities for librarians over the next two years.

## **Section Three: Support Staffing (Question 11-14)**

Having certified school librarians and aides emerged as the most critical component of the library program at all school levels. Well-staffed programs, especially those with full-time professional and support staff, exerted a greater impact on student academic performance. (Smith, Wisconsin Study, 2006, *School Libraries Work!*, 2008, p. 15)

The presence of support staff in a school library allows the school librarian to focus on the critical responsibilities of collaborating with teachers and motivating students to read. Library aides carry out the many routine, daily tasks in a busy school library: circulation, attendance, processing resources, and record keeping. More than 1,238 libraries (60%) employ one support staff member working under the direction of the Library Science K-12 certified school librarian, and an additional 178 libraries (9%) employ between 2 and 5+

support staff. These libraries with multiple staff members are almost all in high schools except for one in an elementary school. Nearly one-third of the libraries (642) have no library support staff. Librarians in these schools have less time to collaborate with teachers on student learning and motivate students to read because they must also carry out routine management tasks each day.

The more than two-thirds of the libraries that have support staff meet the minimum recommended levels of staff assignments established in *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* (2011, p. 29). Only the schools with no support staff do not meet this requirement. In almost 80% of the schools with paid support staff, the combined staff hours worked per week range between 10 and 39 hours, meaning that a percentage of these staff members are not full-time.

The overwhelming majority of schools (1,508 or 74%) use no volunteers to help in the library. Of the libraries that use volunteers (494 or 24%), most are elementary school libraries that use between 1 and 10 volunteers per week. Approximately 72 middle schools and 51 high schools use volunteers. Of the volunteers helping, nearly three-fourths (468 or 72%) work between 1 and 9 hours per week, with some libraries using more than one volunteer working per week.

District policies on the use of volunteers vary. In some districts, no volunteers are used because of contractual agreements; for example, a volunteer cannot perform the task of a contract employee. More parents and guardians are working, sometimes in multiple jobs, and have no time to volunteer. Traditionally more women have served as library volunteers, and the percentage of women in the work force has increased. Additionally, because volunteers are required to have criminal and child abuse clearances, some potential volunteers are inhibited by the cost of obtaining these clearances.

#### **Section Four: Library Access (Questions 15-17)**

Student and teacher access to the school library and the services of a school librarian throughout the school day are basic to an effective school library program. In slightly more than half the schools (1,039 or 55%), students and teachers have access to a library staffed by a Library Science K-12 certified school librarian full-time during the hours of the student school day. In about 10% of the schools, students and teachers have such access to a librarian only 1-2 hours per day. There is a discrepancy between the reported hours of access to a library staffed by a librarian and the reported number of hours the Library Science K-12 certified librarian works because of the differing number of responses and the contradictory responses to Question 15 about access to the library and Question 6 about the average hours worked per week by the librarian.

In about a quarter of the libraries (377), the library is staffed by someone other than the librarian between 1 and 9 hours per week; this may be coverage provided for the librarian's lunch and planning period. In half the libraries (893 or 55%), however, the library is never staffed by someone who is not a Library Science K-12 certified librarian.

Half of all libraries (1,023) are not open to students beyond the student school day. In these schools, if a student's schedule had no available time during the school day or if the library is not open due to a fixed schedule of classes in the library, that student would not be able to use the library on that day. This lack of access beyond the student school day may be due to busing schedules, contract issues, or available librarian or support staffing. In 728 schools (35%), the school library is open between 1 and 4 hours per week beyond the student school day, and an additional 15% of the libraries (303) are open between 5 and 15 hours beyond the school day each week.

### **Section Five: Print & Electronic Resources (Questions 18-26)**

### **Section Six: Age & Condition of Collection (Questions 27-32)**

The extent to which books are borrowed from school libraries shows a strong relationship with reading achievement. (School Libraries Work!, 2008, p. 12)

Sections Five concerning the collection of resources and Section Six concerning the age and condition of the collection are considered as an entity because the responses to the questions in these two sections present the clearest picture of the usefulness of the resources in the library collection. The number of items in a collection is important in determining if there are sufficient resources for students; the types of resources included in the collection are important for representation of different kinds of information as well as appeal to different types of students and the currency of the resources is important in determining their usefulness.

#### **Book Collection (Questions 18, 19, 27 & 28)**

Overall, the majority of print book collections range in size between 5,000 and 15,000 volumes. More than half of the library collections provide between 16 and 30 books per student. *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* (2011, p. 32) state that elementary school library collections should have 20 volumes per student as a minimum, 25 volumes as a standard and 30 as exemplary. Middle schools and high schools should have 15 volumes as a minimum, 20 volumes as a standard and 25 volumes as exemplary. Two-thirds of the schools represented in the survey are elementary schools, which generally have lower student enrollments than secondary schools. Elementary school libraries may have fewer total volumes than high school libraries but the collections are adequate for the number of students in the school.

According to the *Guidelines* (2011, p. 32), titles should be "useful," meaning current, accurate and meeting student needs. The *Guidelines* recommend that the average age of the book collection not exceed 10 years (2011, p.5). More than three-fourths of libraries report total book collections with an average copyright age within the past twenty-five years. Unless a library has a very new collection of recently published books, this range of average ages is predictable. Collections that have been in existence for more years and have not been re-evaluated regularly will tend to have older average copyright dates.

In determining the average age of books in the Dewey Decimal Classification 600s, which includes subjects such as technology, medicine and health that benefit most from currency, more than half of the libraries reported an average copyright age for these books

as between 1990-1999, and more than 10% reported an average age of ten years or less. The *Guidelines* recommend that titles classified in the Dewey 600s have an average age not to exceed 5 years (2011, p. 5).

When the first wave of high school libraries joined Access PA in 1985, school librarians were urged to re-evaluate (“weed”) their collections and remove older, outdated books and other resources. When middle and elementary schools joined Access PA in following years, their librarians were urged to “weed” their collections as well so that the Access PA database of collections would be useful. Librarians were also urged to re-evaluate their collections again when automated catalogs and circulation systems were purchased. Librarians who applied for federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants for collection development knew that their proposals would receive higher rankings if their collections were more current, another incentive to “weed” collections.

The technology in automated circulation systems makes it possible for a librarian to calculate the average age or copyright date of an item in the collection. About 20% of respondents were unable to determine the average age of their collections because their library does not have an automated circulation system.

#### **Magazines and Newspapers (Question 20)**

Almost three-fourths of libraries subscribe to 20 or fewer magazines and newspapers, and 14% of the libraries (267) have no magazine or newspaper subscriptions. *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* (2011, p. 32) establishes a minimum number of subscriptions for elementary libraries at between 16 and 21, for middle schools at between 47 and 57 subscriptions, and for high schools at between 58 and 73 subscriptions.

This very low number of subscriptions reported across libraries at all levels may be the result of having access to full-text periodicals through the electronic databases of POWER Library and other licensed databases prior to 2010 when the number of databases was reduced. In some libraries, the physical space used to store back issues of magazines became adapted for other uses such as housing network infrastructure. The cost of library subscriptions is one reason libraries do not subscribe to more magazines because subscription rates for schools are much higher than those for personal subscriptions. The ephemeral nature of print magazines and newspapers and high theft and vandalism rates can also be reasons. Librarians are now considering e-Subscriptions for personal computing devices like iPads. Current issues of magazines and periodicals, however, are the popular print formats for young people and provide current and regular new information for all students, especially those who are not proficient readers and who need every opportunity to practice their reading skills.

#### **Electronic Resources: Licensed Databases (Questions 21 and 22)**

Almost half of school libraries have five or fewer databases accessible for students and teachers beyond what is now offered through the reduced POWER Library. More than 25% have no licensed web-based information databases in addition to POWER Library. High school libraries report the largest number of additional databases; only 39 libraries (2%), however, have more than 31 databases that are accessible to teachers and students.

The mid-year reduction in early 2010 of the Access PA and POWER Library budget from \$7.29 million to \$2.97 million has resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of databases available to students and teachers in school libraries, especially in elementary schools. The Office of Commonwealth Libraries had negotiated much-lower pricing for database licensing based on volume; a single school district must pay a much higher individual rate. When the budget was reduced and the number of licensed subscriptions had to be reduced accordingly, few school districts could afford to pay these much higher fees for individual licenses to databases. POWER Library—the great equalizer across school districts—has been diminished for all students.

**Electronic Resources: eBooks (Question 22)**

eBooks, a relatively new type of resource, are growing in popularity, and more and more titles are now available in this electronic format. More than three-fourths of school libraries do not provide access to eBooks, and the few that provide access are in high schools. A few school districts are able to circulate eBooks through their Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), and a few other libraries have access through their licensed databases.

**Video & Audio Resources Available; Average Age of Video & Audio Resources (Questions 29 & 30)**

More than three-fourths of libraries have some video resources, and the average age of almost all of these video collections is 1995 or newer. Fewer than 20% of libraries (338) have no video resources. One-third of libraries (665) have no audio resources, and these are all in elementary schools. Audio collections tend to be newer with an average age of ten years.

**Automated/Online Catalog Accessed within and outside Building (Questions 25 & 26)**

More than 90% of the libraries have an automated catalog accessible within the school building. Of those schools, about 70% allow students, teachers and parents to access that catalog remotely, which makes it possible to expand access to the library collection at all times from locations within the school building and from the home.

**Student Access to District-Funded Productivity Tools (Question 31)**

More than three-fourths of libraries provide students and teachers access to four or more productivity tools such as Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Suite products and Inspiration and Kidspiration.

**Student Ability to Access & Use Web-Based Collaboration Tools Based on Filtering Software (Question 32)**

The vast majority of libraries (80%) provide students with limited access to collaboration tools such as wikis, blogs, Google Docs and Audacity because of their filtering software, and 11% of libraries provide no access to these tools to their students. It is possible that access is limited because of the way filtering protocols have been set up in the district; for example, teachers may have access to collaboration tools but students may not have access. Sometimes licensing agreements limit access; licensing at a higher cost provides greater access. School policies and limited infrastructure may also affect this access as can possible bandwidth concerns.

## Section Seven: Funding (Questions 33-34)

Resolved, that the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), respectfully advises Congress that: Schools be provided with adequate resources to provide up-to-date print and non-print materials in all school libraries. (NCLIS, 2007, *School Libraries Work!*, 2008, p. 3)

### **Per-Student Expenditures by the District for Library Resources (Question 33)**

Budgets for library resources are often established by school districts on a per pupil basis. Salaries for certified librarians and support staff are not included in this budget, but rather in the personnel budget. Respondents were asked to report per pupil funding for library resources provided by their district over the ten year period from the 2000-2001 school year through the 2010-2011 school year. For this ten-year period, the largest number of libraries by far (774 or 39%) received per pupil funding for library resources from the district of between \$1 and \$10 per student, and an additional 426 libraries (21%) received district funding of between \$11 and \$15 per student.

In the 2011 *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* (p. 30) a quantitative benchmark for funding is established that represents a dollar amount per pupil rather than a fixed dollar amount:

- \$41 per pupil for elementary schools
- \$45 per pupil for middle schools
- \$50 per pupil for high schools

Across the state, 65 schools (3%) reported district funding of \$41+ per student, meeting this “standard” guideline for district per pupil funding for library resources. The schools indicating \$41 of funding per student were overwhelmingly elementary schools. Some libraries in the \$41 to \$51+ per pupil expenditure category may have received federal grant funds for collection development and for technology that flowed through the district but were not district funds. Some schools might have counted funding for classroom collections of single titles purchased with Title I funds.

Many respondents were not able to report district funding for the earlier years of the ten-year period. The pattern of responses in the dollar-amount categories remains consistent over the ten years, however. In every school year between 2000-2001 and 2010-2011, the largest number (774) and percent (39%) of districts provided between \$1 and \$10 per pupil for library resources. In 2010-2011, 49 districts (3%) provided no funding for library resources.

### **Change in Outside Funding (Question 34)**

Respondents were asked if outside funding (i.e., funding not provided by the school district) had changed over the past two school years of 2010-2011 and 2009-2010. Of the schools in the survey, 586 libraries (29%) received no outside funding, whether from outside grants or from fundraising within the school. Of the remaining libraries, 394 (20%) were able to increase outside funding, while 253 libraries (13%) reported a decrease in outside funding. There was no change in outside funding in 39% of the libraries

## **Section Eight: Age of Technological Equipment (Questions 35-37)**

Where networked computers link school libraries with classrooms, labs and other instructional sites, students earn higher PSSA reading test scores. (PA Lance Study, 2000, p. 6)

### **Number of Computers Housed in Library Purchased/Leased since 2005-2006 & Purchased/Leased before 2004-2005**

Respondents were asked to report on the availability of up-to-date, functional, Internet-connected computers for student use in the school library. Nearly three-quarters of the libraries have purchased or leased computers in the past five years; only 296 libraries (14%) did not purchase or lease any computers in the past five years. About 44% of the libraries (877) have no computers more than five years old. An additional 30% have only 1-9 older computers in the school library.

Only 6% of students (111) do not have access to computers networked to library resources throughout the school building. Almost all students have such access, and the number of computers available throughout the school ranges between 1 computer and 300 computers, with students in more than half of the schools having access to more than 100 networked computers throughout the school building.

### **One-to-One Laptop Program (Question 38)**

In a one-to-one laptop program, each student in the school is provided with a laptop computer for academic work that can be used at school and at home. The laptop computer is the responsibility of the student and the student's parent or guardian for the school year. These computers are usually leased because models are so frequently upgraded and wear-and-tear on the laptop is constant.

Respondents were asked if the school had a one-to-one laptop program. One-student/one-laptop programs are not yet widespread. Only 65 schools (3%) have a one-to-one laptop program in which each student in the school is provided with a laptop computer. An examination of school websites could not verify that these schools have a one-to-one laptop program for each student in the school. Some respondents may have interpreted a one-to-one laptop program as a traveling cart with enough laptop computers for each student in a class.

**(Analysis of responses to Section Nine of the survey—Library Services and Programs—is combined with the analysis of Section Two of the survey beginning on page 14.)**

## **Section Ten: Additional Aspects (Question 49)**

Respondents were requested to assess the adequacy of the library's collection of resources in meeting the needs of specific student populations: English Language Learners (those students whose first language is not English), students with visual or physical disabilities, and students who read below grade level.

### **Resource Needs of English Language Learners (ELL):**

There are increasing numbers of students whose first language is not English in more areas of Pennsylvania. Only 722 respondents (39%) believe their school library has adequate library resources to address the special language needs of English language learners and contains some resources written in the languages of the school's ELL students. More than 60% of respondents believe their libraries do not have adequate resources to support this student population.

### **Adaptive Technology Needs of Students with Visual Disabilities:**

Only 565 respondents (27%) believe their libraries have adequate assistive technology for students with visual disabilities to search the collection catalog, to read or listen to books or other written materials and to perform research on a computer with an Internet connection. This is the lowest percentage of adequacy of the four identified areas perhaps because the technology requirements for helping students with visual disabilities are very specific and have real costs.

### **Resource Needs of Students Reading Below Grade Level:**

Respondents for 1,601 libraries (77%) believe that their library provides adequate resources for students who need high-interest, low-reading-level materials. In the past few years, publishers have focused on offering these types of resources and such resources are now widely available. Few of the libraries in this survey reported more than 10 periodical subscriptions, even though magazines represent the most popular print format with young people.

### **Collection Access for Students with Physical Disabilities:**

Respondents in 1,664 libraries (81%) indicate that their facility allows students with physical disabilities to have access to the collection. This statement does not address the adequacy of the resources themselves for these students.

### **Collection of Multi-cultural Resources:**

The vast majority of respondents (80%) believe that their collection includes adequate resources that are multi-cultural or reflective of different cultural backgrounds.

## Benchmarking Documents

American Association of School Librarians. ***Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs.*** Chicago: American Library Association, 2009.

American Association of School Librarians. ***Standards for the 21-st Century Learner.*** Chicago: American Library Association, 2007.  
URL: <http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards>

American Association of School Librarians. ***Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learner in Action.*** Chicago: American Library Association, 2009.

American Association of School Librarians. ***Libraries Count! National Longitudinal Survey of School Library Programs.*** Chicago: American Association of School Librarians, 2007-2010.  
URL: <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/researchandstatistics/slcsurvey/slcsurvey.cfm>

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the national association of more than 9,000 professional school librarians, sponsors Libraries Count!, an annual longitudinal survey open to all school libraries that provides data on the health of U.S. school library programs. The first survey was conducted in 2007, and annual results are posted each year on the AASL website. Most of the questions are tracking questions, though each year the survey includes a short series of topical questions. AASL has invited participation by state to gain greater participation. Two states—Kentucky and Georgia--now participate.

***Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs.*** Harrisburg: Office of Commonwealth Libraries, 2011.  
URL: <http://pa.webjunction.org/pa-schoolguidelines/-/articles/content/116271282>

Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. ***Measuring Up to Standards: The Impact of School Library Programs and Information Literacy in Pennsylvania Schools.*** Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2000.

URL: <http://www.lrs.org/documents/lmcstudies/PA/pabrochure.pdf>

The Lance Study was conducted in 435 PA schools representing grade 5, grade 8 or grade 11 in the 1998-99 school year.

***School Libraries Work!*** 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, updated 2008. New York: Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008.  
URL: <http://listbuilder.scholastic.com/content/stores/LibraryStore/pages/images/SLW3.pdf>

## Recommendations

House Resolution 987 of 2010 requests that the State Board of Education with the Department of Education make recommendations necessary or desirable to:

1. Improve and update public school library resources, services and facilities for all students in this Commonwealth, including recommendations for appropriate levels of resources, staffing and hours of access;
2. Provide all students with the school library resources, facilities, program and instruction to enable them to become successful readers, learners, researchers and consumers and producers of information;
3. Address school library inequities or insufficiencies affecting disadvantaged students and communities.

### **Context of Recommendations Based on National Attention to School Libraries**

Pennsylvania is not alone in assessing the role school library programs play in student achievement. Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, decision makers across the nation have supported the role of effective school library programs in student learning and academic achievement. In 2002, then First Lady Laura Bush hosted a White House Conference on School Libraries. She concluded the conference by stating that

“An investment in libraries is an investment in our children’s future.”  
([http://www.laurabushfoundation.org/Close\\_Remarks.html](http://www.laurabushfoundation.org/Close_Remarks.html), accessed 09/05/11)

In 2007, the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) attested to Congress the need for school libraries and school librarians for all children based upon the research evidence between strong school library programs and student achievement. (*School Libraries Work!*, 2008, p. 3)

### **Context of Recommendations Based on Survey Results**

The results of this survey of Pennsylvania school libraries in the 2010-2011 school year show that not every student in a publicly funded school has access to a quality library program in their school that is:

- Staffed by both a full-time certified school librarian to collaborate with teachers and an aide;
- Open throughout the school day;
- Supported by an adequate collection of current and useful print and electronic resources; and
- Provisioned with needed technology networking infrastructure, current computing equipment and software to access information electronically.

## **Recommendations for the Pennsylvania Department of Education and School Entities**

What can Pennsylvanians do to assure that public school students have access to effective library programs that will help them achieve academic success?

Given this national attention to the role of school libraries in student learning and the intense debate over student achievement at all levels from the local to the national, one potential solution that stakeholders at all levels can consider is to draw upon research that demonstrates that an effective school library program helps students achieve academic success and strengthen all components of school library programs across the state.

At the state level, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, the State Board of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) can shape policy. At the local level, school directors and district administrators as well as principals, teachers and librarians in schools and students, parents and community leaders can assess the effectiveness of their school library programs.

Every decision maker and stakeholder can build on the empirical evidence amassed in research studies conducted since 1992 in Pennsylvania and in 21 other states across the country (Alaska, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin) concluding that

. . . students in schools with good school libraries learn more, get better grades, and score higher on standardized test scores than their peers in schools in schools without libraries. (*School Libraries Work!*, 2008, p. 4)

### **Recommendations for the Pennsylvania Department of Education**

Consider the academic benefits that would accrue to all students and teachers by:

- Restoring the Division of School Library Media Services in the Office of Commonwealth Libraries and appointing a director with appropriate education and library credentials to provide leadership and professional development for school librarians through publications and workshops for professional development and to provide guidance to school districts and to librarians attempting to assess the effectiveness of their school library programs.
- Spearheading a working committee of PDE staff, school librarians, and officers of state professional associations to develop a model information literacy curriculum for school library programs to help align the 2007 *Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learner* of the American Association of School Librarians with the 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts* and any additional standards that Pennsylvania may add to the *Common Core*. (The former Division of School Library Media Services played a leadership role in the early 2000s in helping librarians develop a model information literacy curriculum for their school districts. Now that new academic

standards are being implemented and new information literacy standards are in place the need for an updated model information literacy curriculum is a high priority.)

- Encouraging district and school participation in the assessment of school library programs on an annual basis. This can be accomplished most easily by becoming an official state partner in *School Libraries Count!*, the longitudinal survey of the status of school libraries sponsored annually by the American Association of School Librarians.
- Distributing to chief school administrators through Penn\*Link and posting as a resource on the Department's Standards Aligned System web site (SAS portal) the 2011 *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* published by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries. The *Guidelines* provide each administrator benchmarks to use as guidance in assessing the effectiveness of the district's K-12 library program.
- Providing specialized guidance and assistance to school districts in identifying, evaluating and using adaptive technologies needed for students with visual disabilities to access library resources.
- Providing specialized guidance and assistance in identifying and evaluating resources in languages other than English for English Language Learner students.

### **Recommendations for School Entities**

Consider the academic benefits that would accrue to all students and teachers by:

- Assessing the adequacy of support provided to district and school library programs for professional and support staffing, collections of resources, and technology infrastructure and computing equipment. Over a ten-year period, library budgets have decreased in purchasing power because of the increased cost of resources and licensing during this period.
- Developing and implementing in all schools a written, K-12 sequenced information literacy curriculum that is aligned with K-12 subject area curricula and with the state's academic standards and that is approved by the school's local governing board. Just as each subject area has a sequential, vertical curriculum for grades K-12, so should the library program have such an information literacy curriculum that correlates with subject area curricula and academic standards and is integrated into subject learning activities.
- Considering a move to a flexible schedule for libraries in elementary schools to allow for the all-important time needed for teachers and school librarians to plan together and to teach and assess student learning collaboratively.
- Assessing the currency, usefulness and scope of the total collection of resources, including current magazines and newspapers, available to students, especially those who are English Language Learners.

- Making open-source eBooks available to students through open-source access tools such as the International Children’s Digital Library.
- Investigating sources of grant funding from community groups and from outside agencies and working with librarians to apply for applicable grants.
- Planning fund-raising activities within the schools and with school and community groups. For example, the number of school libraries sponsoring book fairs is rising. Students benefit from having more books to read, and the library earns funding that can be used to purchase new resources.
- Planning school-wide activities that relate to reading motivation throughout the school year to encourage students to have reading success and enjoyment. Reading competitions among grades, book clubs, author visits, book fairs and “drop everything and read” campaigns are examples of such activities.
- Considering the use of volunteers in the library to assist the librarian by completing routine tasks and encouraging community members to volunteer.

All stakeholders have a responsibility to work together to provide effective school library programs for every student in every publicly-funded school in Pennsylvania so that all students can meet academic standards and succeed.