

"But what happens when this invention [the book] sits unused behind locked doors, or remains elusive because library shelves are empty?

What happens when a book sits idle, unread? What happens when we fail to read? Well, we know the answer: the mind remains enslaved to ignorance. The great thoughts of the past are undiscovered. Our horizons remain fixed, limited, surrounded by unknown territory. Our imagination is unengaged. Life itself remains narrow and possibilities remain diminished. And we don't have as much fun, because reading is so pleasurable."

Secretary Rod Paige, U.S. Department of Education
"Kids Read: Kids Succeed" Grant Award, August 11, 2004



1619 Dayton Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651.646.0475
www.metronet.lib.mn.us

This METRONET project was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), administered as a grant by the state library agency, State Library Services and School Technology, Minnesota Department of Education

Available in PDF at
<http://metronet.lib.mn.us/survey/survey2004/report.cfm>

Check It Out!

The Results of the 2004 School Library Media Program Census



2004
Final
Report

October 2004

Minnesota School Library Media Programs

METRONET • 1619 Dayton Ave. • St. Paul MN 55104 • 651-646-0475

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Susan J. Baxter
Ann Walker Smalley

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Metronet Governing Board

Citizen Representatives

Christine Anning
John Bergstrand
Lois Fiskness
Peter Pearson
Lars Steltzner

Library Representatives

Judy Bull - School
Tim Johnson - Academic
Brigid Shields - Special
Lynn Wyman – Public

Design

Eye2Eye Design Group
507-663-1020
Mary F. Nelson
Sherry Wendelin

Photography

Harry Cutting Photography

This document is available from METRONET
<http://metronet.lib.mn.us/survey/survey2004/report.cfm>

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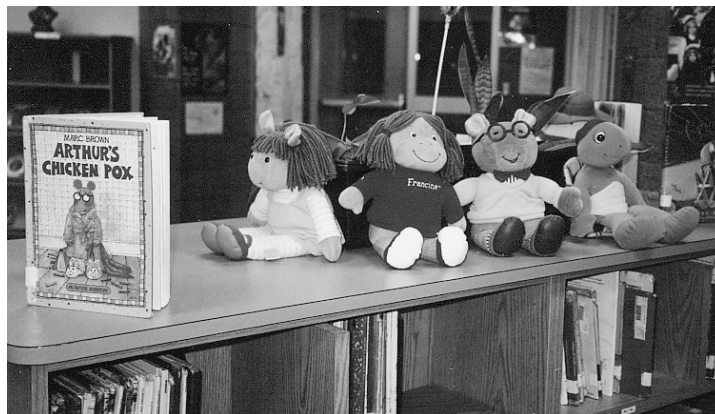
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Preface

This project is a follow-up to a two-year project conducted by METRONET that was designed to assess the condition of Minnesota's school library media programs against the *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*¹ created by the Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO), the professional organization for school library media specialists and staff. That project, funded by two Library Services and Technology Act² grants to METRONET in 2001 and 2002, collected data on 1,172 school library media programs. METRONET used this baseline data to determine the condition of school library media programs statewide and to assess the impact of school library media programs on student achievement. The project report *Check It Out! The Results of the School Library Media Program Census* is a comprehensive look at how well Minnesota school library media programs were doing in school year 2001-2002 and the important roles media programs play in student achievement.



In spring 2003, METRONET distributed both the *Check It Out! Final Report* and the 12-page Executive Summary to all media specialists and school superintendents. The Executive Summary was sent to public school principals. Both documents from the 2002 Census are available in PDF. A limited number of print copies remain for use with school boards and community presentations. All the background information on the Census is contained in these two documents. In addition, the data from the 2001-2002 Census is available in several formats on the METRONET Web site <http://www.METRONET.lib.mn.us/survey/index.cfm>. The 2001-2002 raw data is available by school and district.

Media specialists and others can use the two sets of Census results:

- to assess where their school's school library media programs stand in relation to the Standards.
- to help explain how the roles media specialists play and the services they provide impact student success.
- to assist school districts and individual school library media programs to develop plans to improve their programs reflecting best practices.

At the time that report was written, there was much speculation about the future of school library media programs in some Minnesota school districts. State level budget reductions for education support led many to predict that school library media programs would suffer. At that time, several districts had severely reduced staff and resources in their media programs. Others were eliminating the programs completely. School library media specialists, the multicounty multitype library systems, and others felt that a second Census would help determine how school library media programs have fared since the 2001-2002 school year.

The first Census report recommended that the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning (now the Minnesota Department of Education) take over conducting the data collection as part of the statistics it collects from schools now. Several factors prevented this from happening. Layoffs of library services staff at the Department of Children, Families & Learning (CFL), absence of a state librarian to champion this at CFL, state budget cuts in all areas of the Department, and other circumstances made METRONET the logical choice to conduct the second Census.

Planning for the second Census began in October 2003. The original Advisory Committee was recalled and additional persons invited to participate in the planning process.³ The Advisory Committee made several recommendations for improving the second Census:

- Reduce the total number of questions
- Eliminate the questions that resulted in few or no answers
- Identify the key questions
- Offer ranges for question answers rather than rely on open-ended questions

While everyone agreed that the site visits conducted as part of the first Census were vital to providing context and understanding of Minnesota school library media programs, the shorter timeline for the second Census coupled with the complicated logistics and expense of the site visits made it impractical to include site visits in this project.

This project received help and support from many people. The METRONET Governing Board was supportive of the project. Eric Hinsdale and Dawn Brintnell conducted some of the data analysis using the 2004 Census data. Dana Noonan, METRONET's Webmaster, designed the online 2004 Census form and database. She also conducted data analysis of the Census results. Deanna Sylte, METRONET Administrative Assistant, helped the project progress smoothly. Ann Walker Smalley returned to write the final report and the executive summary. Mary Nelson and Sherry Wendelin of Eye2Eye Design did the design and layout. Susan Baxter, METRONET Executive Director, supervised the project. Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) has been very supportive of both Census projects, announcing the Census on its email lists and in newsletters, as well as publicizing the results of both the 2002 and 2004 Census projects.

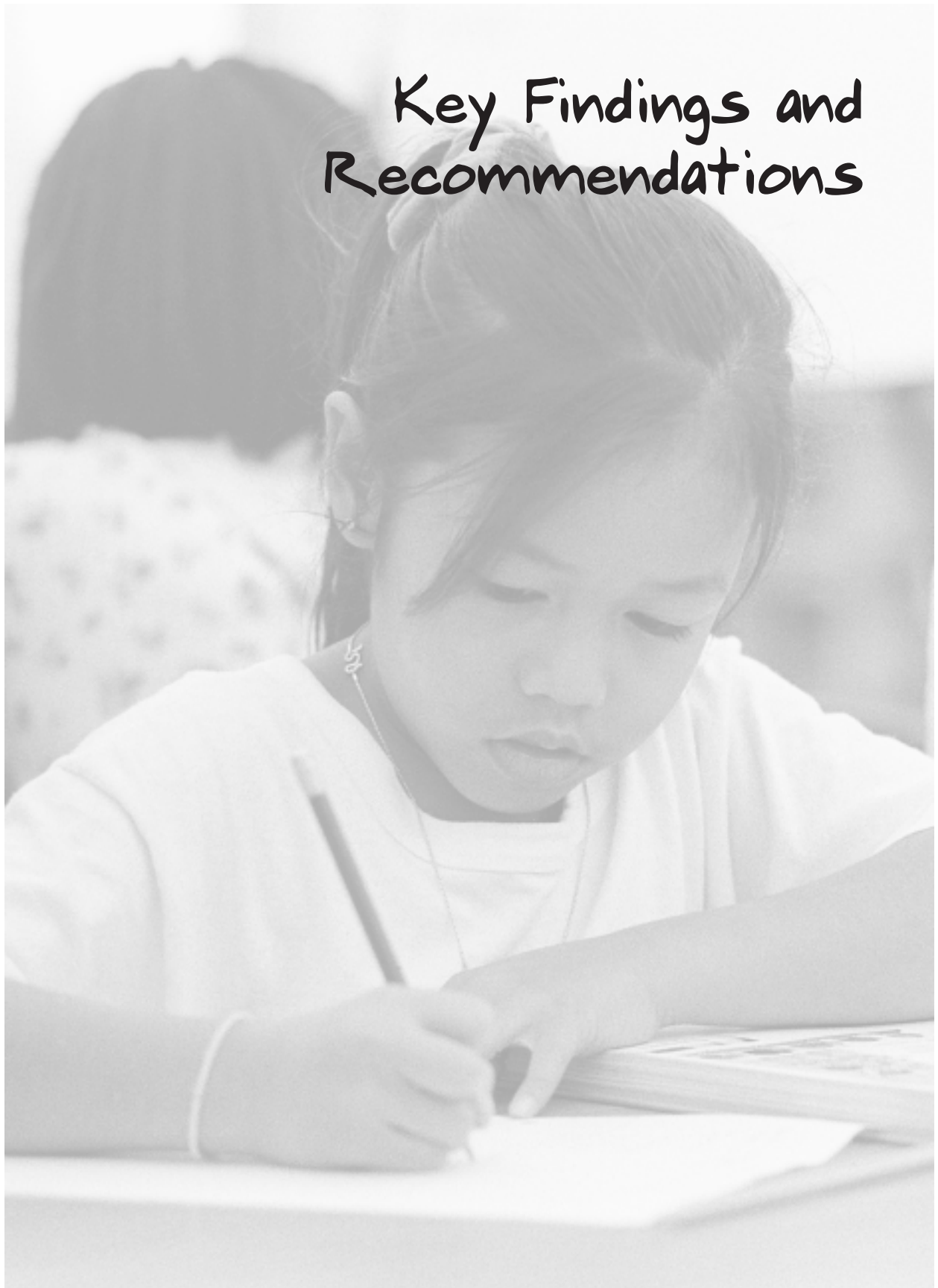
Thanks, too, to the more than 850 media specialists who took the time to respond to the 2004 Census (sometimes more than once, when data was lost). Their on-going interest in and support of both Census projects made these results possible. We know how busy media specialists are. We appreciate all they do for Minnesota's students.

1. *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*. Minnesota Educational Media Organization in cooperation with Library Development and Services, Department of Children Families & Learning. Available at <http://www.memoweb.org/htmlfiles/links.html#standards>

2. The Federal Institute of Library and Museum Services and State Library Services and School Technology, the Minnesota State Library Agency, support this METRONET project with funding under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

3. A list of Advisory Committee members is in the Appendix.

Key Findings and Recommendations



Key Findings

1. Staffing and spending in school library media centers make a difference in student reading scores.

- Student reading achievement in elementary and secondary schools is related to the number of hours media specialists work and to school media center spending. This finding is based on an analysis of the Minnesota School Library 2004 Census and results from the Minnesota statewide reading assessments in Grades 3, 5, 7, and 8.¹
- Schools with above average student reading scores have library media specialists (LMS) who work more hours.

2. 93% of Minnesota Five Star Schools in Reading and Math have a media specialist at least some hours per week.

- 70% have fulltime media specialists; 15% have at least a .5 FTE media specialist
- Only four of the Five Star schools have no recorded hours for a licensed media specialist

3. Budgets for books in Minnesota school library media program have decreased significantly.

- School library media centers lost an average 29% of the per pupil amount spent on books since the 2002 Census.
- High schools lost 37%, dropping from an average of \$11.29 to an average of \$7.12.
- In all school library media programs that reported budget figures, per pupil spending is much less than the cost of one book. Responses show that money available for book purchases continues to decrease.

4. Minnesota School Library Media Programs have collections that are not current and are seriously out-of-date in several subject areas.

- Average copyright date for science books is 1989.
- Average copyright date for geography books is 1989.
- The range of average copyright dates for geography books in elementary schools is 42 years: the oldest is 1960; the newest is 2002.

5. Both professional and support staffing levels are lower in schools where 50% or more students receive free or reduced-price lunch than in schools where 15% or less of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch.

- In schools with a 50% or greater level of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch, 16% had no licensed media specialist; 56% had 1 FTE licensed media specialist. 30% of these schools had at least 1 FTE support staff person.
- In schools with 15% or less students receiving free or reduced price lunch, 79% have at least 1 FTE licensed media specialist and 54% have at least one FTE support staff.

Recommendations

1. Increase spending from state and local sources to update all school library media center collections to the standard of current, which in the *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000* is defined as a collection with an average copyright of 10 years old or newer.

- Minnesota schools must be able to purchase new materials to support curriculum and standards changes as well as to buy materials that are age appropriate and appealing to students.

2. All Minnesota schools must provide a high quality, professionally-staffed library media program with up-to-date materials, access to the Internet and other electronic resources, and funding to maintain the program so all Minnesota students have access to the information they need and the training to use it.

- The Minnesota Department of Education must address equity issues in access to and quality of school library media programs so that no matter where a student goes to school, he or she has a good quality media program.
- Every Minnesota school should have a certified media specialist and adequate support staff to provide instruction in library use to students, to collaborate with teachers, and to leverage the investments already made in library resources and technology by integrating technology into the curriculum.
- Develop plans to ensure all students have access to up-to-date technology in media programs and classrooms so that 100% of Minnesota's K12 students can use ELM and other electronic resources. A permanent solution to funding telecommunications costs in schools is vital to maintaining and expanding access to technology statewide.

3. The Minnesota Department of Education must demonstrate its commitment to school library programs and recognize their impact on student literacy and achievement. MDE can demonstrate this support by:

- Hiring school library media program specialists at MDE State Library Services and School Technology to lead the improvements in media programs and to provide technical assistance and support to media specialists and administrators as they develop effective library media programs.

4. The State of Minnesota should adopt quantitative and qualitative standards for school library media programs to insure that all students have high quality school library media programs.

- Adopt *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000* and *Standards for Information and Technology Literacy* and other benchmarks based on research findings, *Information Power*, and other resources. This will insure that all school library media programs across the state provide equitable access to information, formal teaching of information and technology literacy skills. This will help Minnesota students build the foundation of reading and literacy to become knowledgeable users of information.

5. The Minnesota State Legislature and the Minnesota Department of Education must continue to fund the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM).

- The State Legislature and the Minnesota Department of Education must increase the state's financial commitment to ELM so all Minnesotans have access to thorough, accurate information for their academic, business, and personal use. Minnesota cannot use Federal LSTA funding for this statewide resource indefinitely.

6. Library media specialists and their supporters must develop education programs for various audiences to help increase their understanding of what media programs do, what the research says, and what districts and schools need to improve their own programs.

- Media specialists need advocacy training in order to become more comfortable and articulate in this role.
- Develop a coordinated, statewide effort to provide evidence to school administrators, parents, and others on importance of school library media programs and their impact on student achievement. A statewide initiative would benefit all school library media programs.
- Disseminate the results of the Minnesota School Library Media Program Census projects to all groups to provide information for measurement and comparison of school library media programs.
- Take information about the impact of school library media programs on student achievement to school boards, the public, and the State Legislature. Relate that information with the condition of Minnesota's school library media programs and the need for on-going investment in these vital programs.

7. The Minnesota Department of Education should continue data collection and analysis on school library media programs to provide measurement of program development.

- Develop a procedure at MDE for regularly-scheduled data collection and analysis on school library media programs.
- The collection of the data must go beyond the basic statistics on budgets, staffing, collections, and activities as the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) does. Appropriate data must be collected and put into context for users to determine how well school library media programs are performing and their impact on outcomes for students.
- Perform additional analysis using the Census data collected in 2002 and 2004.

1. The MCA is a high standard test; a school with a score of 1545.2 or more means students scoring average or above are above the "grade level" based on the state definition. The MCA scale scores range from 200 to 3000 for individuals. For schools, the maximum possible average would be 1800.

A grayscale photograph of two young Black students sitting at a desk in a library or classroom. The student on the left is looking at a computer monitor, while the student on the right is pointing at the screen. A keyboard and mouse are on the desk. The background shows bookshelves.

Chapter One

What Does the Research Say About School Library Media Programs and Student Achievement?

Chapter 1

What Does the Research Say About School Library Media Programs and Student Achievement?

In 2002, Minnesota completed its first-ever Census of school library media programs. Significant findings in the Minnesota study include:

- Schools with above average reading scores have school library media specialists (LMS) that work more hours. In the 633 Minnesota schools with above average reading scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment and Basic Standards Test, 423 (66.8%) had a media specialist who worked 36 hours a week or more.
- The larger the budget for books and electronic resources of a Minnesota elementary school media center, the higher a student's reading achievement. There is a statistically significant relationship between higher reading scores and larger school media center budgets at the elementary level.

Complete results of the 2002 Census are in *Check It Out! Final Report* (http://www.METRONET.lib.mn.us/survey/final_report.pdf).

The Minnesota school library media program Census was prompted by the substantial amount of research that has been conducted on the impact of school library media programs on student achievement. Colorado's Library Research Service led the way with a pioneering study that clearly showed a correlation between funding, staffing, and availability of print and non-print resources and student achievement. Since 1990, 13 states have conducted studies that demonstrate that a well-stocked media center that is staffed by a licensed media specialist has a positive measurable impact on student test scores.

Findings from Research in Other States

"Read To Succeed" is no mere slogan. Convincing evidence that school library media programs that have professional, certified media specialists and support staff, enough books and other resources to meet the needs of the student population, access to the Internet and electronic resources, and are adequately funded to maintain staffing and collection levels have a significant impact on student achievement as measured by reading assessments and other standardized tests.

1993

Colorado

Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement (1993 Colorado study) by Keith Curry Lance, Lynda Welborn, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. <http://www.lrs.org/impact.asp#colo> (statistics and information on ordering report)

How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards: The Second Colorado Study (2000 Colorado study) by Keith Curry Lance, Christine Hamilton-Pennell, and Marcia J. Rodney <http://www.lrs.org/documents/lmcstudies/CO/execsumm.pdf>

- The size of the school library staff and collection explained a 21% variation in 7th grade Iowa Tests of Basic Skills reading scores. Study controlled for other socio-economic factors.
- In elementary schools that had the most collaborative relationships between teachers and librarians, students scored 21% higher on the Colorado Student Assessment Program reading than did students in schools with the least collaborative teachers and librarians.

1999

Alaska

Information Empowered: The School Librarian as an Agent of Academic Achievement in Alaska Schools
<http://www.library.state.ak.us/dev/infoemxs.pdf>

- Test scores tend to be higher where there is:
 - a librarian
 - a full time librarian rather than a part-time one
 - a part-time librarian rather than no librarian at all
 - higher levels of librarian staffing lead to more media center hours open which leads to higher student usage and consequently higher test scores
- The higher the levels of librarian staffing, the greater percentage of library media staff devoted to delivering library/information literacy to students and planning instructional units cooperatively with teachers.
- The more often students receive library/information literacy instruction in which library media staff are involved, the higher the test scores.
- Regardless of levels of staffing, the more library media staff time devoted to teaching and planning, the higher the student test scores.

2000

Pennsylvania

Measuring Up to Standards: The Impact of School Library Programs & Information Literacy in Pennsylvania Schools

<http://www.statelibrary.state.pa.us/libraries/lib/libraries/measuringup.pdf>

- For all three grades tested, the relationship between schools with a fulltime media specialist with at least one fulltime aide or support staff member and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) reading scores is both positive and statistically significant.
- In 1998-99, three out of five Pennsylvania elementary schools with adequate school library staffing reported average or above average reading scores. The same proportion of elementary schools with inadequate library staffing reported below average scores.
- Pennsylvania middle schools with the best PSSA reading scores spend twice as much on their school libraries as the lowest scoring schools.

2001

Oregon

Good Schools Have Good Libraries

http://www.oema.net/Oregon_Study/OR_Study.htm

Oregon reading test scores rise with increases in:

- total staff hours per 100 students (including both professional and support staff),
- print volumes per student,
- periodical subscriptions per 100 students, and
- library media expenditures per student.

Whatever the current level of development of a school's library media (LM) program, these findings indicate that incremental improvements in its staffing, collections, and budget will yield incremental increases in reading scores.

2001

Texas

Texas School Libraries: Standards, Resources, Services, and Students' Performance

<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/schlibsurvey/index.html>

- At all grade levels, library staffing levels, collection sizes, librarian interaction with students and teachers, and library

technology levels have a positive association with performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) expectations in reading.

- In schools with librarians, 10% more students met minimum expectations in reading on the TAAS than in schools without a librarian.

2002

Florida

Making the Grade: The Florida School Library Media Study

<http://www.sunlink.ucf.edu/makingthegrade>

- Schools at all levels that have a certified library media specialist and better support staffing (more than 60 hours per week) have higher scores on the Florida assessment tests.
- Test scores were higher in schools with more books, periodicals and newspapers, Internet connections, and other resources and adequate funding to build and maintain collections.
- In schools where media resources are valued and used, academic achievement increases.

2002

Iowa

Make the Connection: Quality School Library Programs Impact Student Achievement in Iowa

<http://www.aea9.k12.ia.us/04/statewidelibrarystudy.php>

- In Iowa elementary schools with the highest Iowa Tests of Basic Skills reading scores, students use more than two times as many books and other materials during library visits than those students in the schools with the lowest test scores.
- Iowa reading test scores rise with the development of school library media programs.

2002

Massachusetts

School Libraries and MCAS Test Scores

<http://web.simmons.edu/~baughman/mcas-school-libraries/Baughman%20Paper.pdf>

- At every grade level, students have higher scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests if their schools have library programs.

2002

New Mexico

How School Libraries Improve Outcomes for Children: The New Mexico Study

<http://www.stlib.state.nm.us/files/NMStudyforDistribution.pdf>

New Mexico achievement test scores tend to rise with increases in:

- school librarian and total library staff hours per 100 students
- print volumes per student
- periodical subscriptions, video materials, and other resources per 100 students
- school library expenditures per student

New Mexico middle schools with the highest language arts scores on the New Mexico Achievement Assessment program are twice as likely as the lowest scoring schools to provide access to licensed databases through a school library network.

2003

Michigan

The Impact of Michigan School Libraries on Academic Achievement: Kids Who Have Libraries Succeed

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/shal_lm_schllibstudy03_76626_7.pdf

- Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) reading test scores rise with the extent to which the state's school library programs are headed by qualified school librarians.
- In elementary schools, reading test scores are likely to rise as students spend more time in the library and library staff spend more time teaching students, working with teachers, and developing collections.
- In middle schools, reading test scores are likely to rise as more computers throughout the entire school are networked to library resources, including Michigan's statewide network of electronic resources.
- In high schools, reading test scores are likely to rise as the library is open more hours, with more professional staffing, more books, and more students visiting the library on their own.

2003

Missouri

Show Me Connection: How School Library Media Center Services Impact Student Achievement 2002-2003.

<http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/curriculum/librarystudy/libraryresearch.pdf>

- The Weighted Average of the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) index scores rose with the availability of school library media center services. The relationship between the school library media center services and student achievement was not negated by other school or community demographics.
- When other conditions were taken into account, the development of school library media center services accounted for up to 11% of the variation in the MAP index.

2003

North Carolina

An Essential Connection: How Quality School Library Media Programs Improve Student Achievement in North Carolina

<http://www.rburgin.com/NCschools2003/NCSchoolStudy.pdf>

School library programs at all levels in North Carolina have a significant impact on student achievement as measured by scores on standardized reading and English tests.

Scores on standardized reading and English tests in the schools included in this study tended to increase when libraries in these schools:

- Were staffed more hours during the school week
- Were open more hours during the school week
- Had newer books
- Spent more money per 100 students on books and other print materials like magazines and newspapers
- Spent more money per 100 students on electronic resources
- Were more likely to subscribe to online periodical services
- Were more likely to subscribe to CD ROM services

2004

Ohio

Student Learning Through Ohio School Libraries

<http://www.oelma.org/studentlearning/default.asp>

Researchers surveyed Ohio students to determine how students benefit from school libraries. Findings and conclusions were based on a quantitative data set of 13,123 responses, and 10,315 qualitative responses from these students. Grades 9, 11, and 12 produced the greatest number of responses; grades 3, 4, and 5 produced the lowest number. Most respondents were between 12 and 18. 51% of the respondents were girls; 48% were boys, with the remainder not specifying gender. Students were asked to assess how helpful the school library is to them in various information, research, and school work areas.

Key findings from the study include:

- Statistically, 99.4% of the sample indicated that the school library and its services, including the school librarian, have helped them in some with their learning.
- An effective school library, led by a credentialed school librarian who has a clearly defined role in information-centered instruction, plays a critical role in facilitating student learning for building knowledge.

The results convey the notion of an effective school library as not just a storehouse of information, but also as a dynamic place where students develop the information literacy skills they need to define information needs, find resources, analyze resources, and produce results.

It Takes More Than Books

There is an emphasis on books and reading in the studies of media centers and in all studies of how to improve student achievement in reading. It certainly makes sense that to improve their reading, students must practice their reading and need books and periodicals to do so. However, just a collection of books, no matter how varied or large, will not improve reading achievement. Media centers need to be led by a trained certified media specialist who understands information management and how to teach information literacy and library research skills to students.

A certified media specialist has a teaching license and additional training in teaching reading, selection of literature for children and young adults, information literacy curriculum development, media production, organization of knowledge, integrating technology into the curriculum, collaboration in designing units of study with teachers, and in management of a collection of materials that are appropriate and support a school's learning objectives.

A certified media specialist who is enthusiastic about reading, research, and literacy is a key element in every successful media program. However, a media specialist cannot create an effective program on his own. Other key members of the "media team" are:

- **Support staff** are vital because their work, which is focused on processing, shelving, and circulation of materials, frees the media specialist to devote the majority of her time to those activities that impact student achievement—teaching, reference and research, collaboration with teachers, and program management.
- **Teachers who understand the value to their students of collaborating with the media specialist** to integrate resources—

print, electronic, or others—into the curriculum in a meaningful, productive way. Media specialists are experts on finding the material that supports a curriculum area and can do it more quickly and more in-depth. Collaborative relationships in which teachers and media specialists work together to find appropriate up-to-date materials in any format make the best use of teachers' and media specialists' time and ensures that the wide range of resources in the media center are used to the fullest to impact student learning objectives. In Minnesota, for example, all K12 schools can have access to the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM), a collection of online databases with access to more than 10,000 periodicals and newspapers, many full text, and hundreds of thousands of primary source documents, photographs, maps, and more. ELM also offers access to more than 13,000 ebooks. Media specialists help students and teachers find their way through this wealth of information quickly and efficiently because of their media training and specialized training offered through MINITEX.

- **A supportive and knowledgeable principal** with a commitment to literacy is vital to a successful library media program. In many districts, principals determine how building resources are spent, control staff development, influence scheduling, and are a key influence on the attitude of teachers and staff towards the MC. It is rarely possible to have an effective program if the principal does not understand how the media program improves all student learning. The research evidence is clear that teachers collaborate more with other teachers and with the LMS when the principal actively encourages it and makes sure that schedules are in place to facilitate collaboration. The site visits in the first Minnesota Census project confirmed the effect a supportive principal can have on the media program.¹
- **District level leadership for media programs** provides advocacy at the district level with administrators, school boards, and principals for media programs and adequate budgets. Coordinators can improve media programs through technical support and consultation with media specialists; staff development specific to media specialists and teachers; and dissemination of up-to-date information to support media program development. Especially in large districts, the presence of a media coordinator helps ensure equitable access to media programs for all students. Minnesota school districts with a media coordinator tend to have more cohesive and comprehensive programs of media instruction than those that do not. The Minnesota site visits showed that those schools in a district with a media coordinator were rated more positively than schools without a coordinator.²

- **Leadership at the state level** such as at the Department of Education that provides guidelines or standards for minimum levels of school library media programs makes a difference in how programs are regarded statewide. Including the presence of a media specialist on a School Report Card, as was done by a previous Commissioner of Education, is a step toward raising awareness of SLMPs, but more needs to be done. Cooperation among various professional organizations such as MEMO and the Minnesota Library Association and the Department of Education and the state library agency helps foster literacy programs and acceptance of standards. MEMO has shown leadership in the development and promotion of standards for school library media programs and information and technology literacy.

What Library Media Programs Do

Good school library media centers provide students with the tools they need to navigate in an information-rich world. From the earliest grades through college and beyond, students face mountains of printed material they must be able to read and understand. Even on the Internet, one must be able to read and comprehend the information and be able to evaluate that information. By high school, students are expected to access and organize information, make judgments on the value of the information and its veracity, and make decisions based on the information. High-level reading and critical thinking skills are essential if students are to become masters of information and literate discerning citizens.

Being “information literate” is learning not only how to read well, but also how to use information for everyday decision-making. Essentially, information literacy is learning how to learn. In the information economy of the 21st century, those who have information, know where to find what they need, how to evaluate information for accuracy and authenticity, and then use it will be leaders. It benefits everyone if today’s students are equipped for this leadership role.

Effective media centers can no longer be thought of only as places where information is stored for students and teachers. Media programs are an entry to the vast world of information. It takes training to sift through such quantities of information. Most people benefit from someone to help manage such quantities of information—a guide. In schools, the guide to all this information is the media specialist.

Information literacy is the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, and effectively use the information for the issue or problem at hand.³

Library media specialists and up-to-date media centers are vital if students are to achieve the skills they need. Media specialists can facilitate student learning and teacher preparation because media specialists are:

- Teachers and practitioners of information literacy.
- Trained to find and select materials that support school curricula and projects.
- Skilled at assisting students and teachers in finding and using appropriate resources both inside and outside the media center.
- Expert users of on-line databases and Internet resources.
- Teachers and models for the ethical use of information.

Research done on the ability of high school students entering colleges and universities to access and evaluate the information resources they need for their coursework shows the need for teaching information literacy skill before students reach higher education. In one recent study⁴, college faculty listed competencies expected of first year students. These include, among others:

- adequate access and experience with computer technology
- information-finding and basic Internet research skills
- sophisticated reading skills that include criticism, analysis, and follow-up inquiry
- evaluation skills, including the will and ability to evaluate resources for "clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance..."
- judgment skills, including the ability to gather evidence in support of judgment
- synthesis skills, including the ability to relate prior knowledge to new information... make connections... synthesize information in discussion and written assignments.

A second study outlines additional ideas on students' success at university.⁵ Students are expected to:

- Be able to research across disciplines
- Use personal experience and knowledge of other topics to connect ideas across content areas and think beyond the information in lectures and texts and move through levels of generality and context
- Be information literate, that is, have the ability to find, evaluate, synthesize, and use information from a variety of sources

Taken together, this list of competencies expresses high expectations for a first year college student of 18 or 19 years old. The burden on the student to acquire these competencies is even greater if a student has no media center staffed with a professional librarian who can teach the research and information skills, appropriate and effective use of the Internet, how to choose and evaluate information sources, and other areas of the competencies.

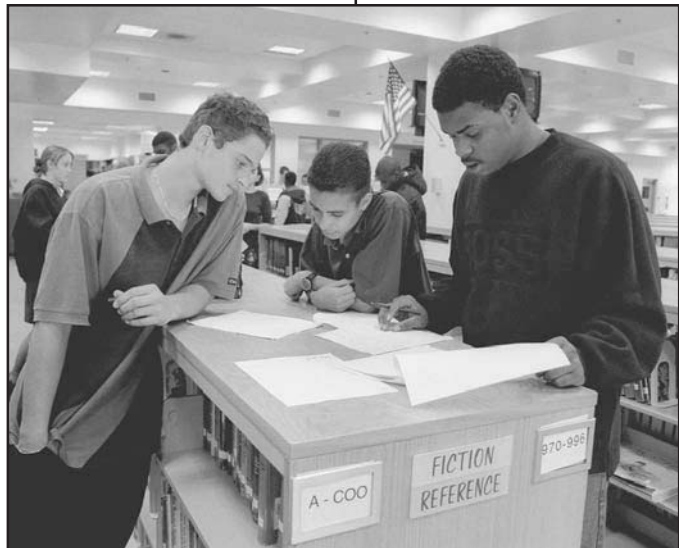
Media specialists help students acquire skills necessary for academic success in college. Media specialists start in the elementary grades by exposing students to a wide variety of literature and introduce basic research skills—how to use the card catalog and age appropriate databases, how to organize information, and then produce a product based on the information. They continue to build on these skills through the grades with more complicated learning activities and research projects with more in-depth information products. Teaching these skills in collaboration with grade level or subject specialist teachers helps students gain the vital skills they need. Without this experience, they may lag behind other students who have the benefit of good school library media programs.

According to research findings, those students who regularly use the library in the course of their college education are the ones who make the best grades and succeed in higher education. Preparing students to use their college libraries is one role of the school library media specialist.

Acquiring these skills is more difficult once a student enters higher education; many professors expect students to come prepared to learn. There is no class time to teach these skills. Instead of having built the skills through a scope and sequence of research and literacy training developed through the K12 years, university students often get a quick library tour and a promise of help from the professional librarians in their college library. Libraries can be daunting for the inexperienced student and many stumble through their academic lives relying on the Internet for quick answers to simple questions.

Media specialists guide students and teachers to the resources they need for student success. Media centers should be the first stop for Minnesota students as they begin their progress towards mastering these life-long skills.

Minnesota school library media specialists have taken a proactive approach to ensuring that all Minnesota students are equipped to handle the challenges of the information society. In 2000, the



According to research findings, those students who regularly use the library in the course of their college education are the ones who make the best grades and succeed in higher education. Preparing students to use their college libraries is one role of the school library media specialist.

"...too large a proportion of our limited educational resources are spent preparing students for college in such content areas as calculus and literature. ...We should be building basic literacy, habits of mind, information literacy, higher-order thinking skills, ... in all of our students. These skills benefit everyone and every future."

Mary Ann Fitzgerald "Making the Leap from High School to College", *Knowledge Quest* 32:4, March / April 2004, pages 19-24.

Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) developed *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*.⁶ These standards identify minimum, standard, and exemplary levels of program elements for school library media programs in all areas including staffing, collections, budget, and program management. These standards were the basis for the first Minnesota Census project. To complement these standards and help ensure that Minnesota students are information literate, MEMO is developing *Standards for Information and Technology Literacy*.⁷

The *Standards for Information and Technology Literacy* describe the processes and skills a learner must understand and practice in order to meet a minimum level of information literacy. There are four general areas:

- Research Process—formulating questions and using a systematic research process that includes a broad understanding of information resources and specific skills.
- Technology Use—understanding the basics of hardware, software, and connectivity. Understanding of basics of file management and network function. Ability to choose right tool (software) for the job at hand.
- Reading and media literacy—Ability to extract information from text (reading comprehension). Evaluate material for bias and credibility.
- Responsible use of technology and information—Learn the laws and practices that protect intellectual property. Use resources wisely and know how to operate safely and ethically in networked environments.

These Standards state that information literacy is most effectively learned by completing relevant assignments and projects throughout the school curriculum, i.e., "real world" activities that integrate the skills and processes in subjects the student is learning. The committee creating the Information Literacy Standards gave careful attention to the Minnesota Content Standards in all subject areas. A few of the skills are shared with language arts and social studies, but most complement or further define processes mentioned in content standards. Most skills described are unique to these standards.

According to the second Census of Minnesota school library media programs, 70% of schools that reported have an information literacy curriculum in place. That means that many other students do not have systematic instruction in the four areas of information and technology literacy.

Several Minnesota school districts have used the new Standards for

Information and Technology Literacy as the basis for information literacy curricula. These students will have a jump start on further education because they will have learned the literacy and technology skills they need to succeed.

MEMO hopes that these Information and Technology Literacy Standards will be adopted by all Minnesota school districts as a basis for district curriculum on information literacy. It would benefit all Minnesota students and those of us who are depending on them to keep Minnesota's future bright and growing if the Minnesota Department of Education would endorse these standards as part of the overall Content Standards for Minnesota schools.

Everyone involved in education—teachers, principals, parents, school boards, and the general public along with governors and legislators—needs to abandon the idea that media centers and libraries are just warehouses of books. In the 21st century, media centers and libraries are dynamic collections of print, non-print, and electronic resources that are guided by professional librarians and media specialists who can take the mystery out of information, the Internet, or reading for all library users. It is in libraries that students learn the information literacy skills that will stay with them throughout their lifetime, enabling them to find the information they need for all parts of their lives from buying a car to electing a president.

School library media programs provide equity of access to information for all with Internet connections, collections of books, newspapers, periodicals, and more. This access through their school library media centers is vital for students who may not have books at home, a public library nearby, or a way to get to a public library.

Considering the emphasis on reading and literacy, the disconnect between school libraries, their collections of books for all reading levels, and improved reading scores is puzzling. Organizations from Target stores to Six Flags amusement parks recognize that kids need books to read in order to improve their reading, but media specialists and media program budgets are being cut in many school districts.

School library funding nationally is dropping; in Minnesota it appears to be plummeting. In 2004, spending on books in Minnesota



"Children who have access to books are more likely to read for enjoyment and information. Children who read for enjoyment increase their reading skills and their desire to read to learn."

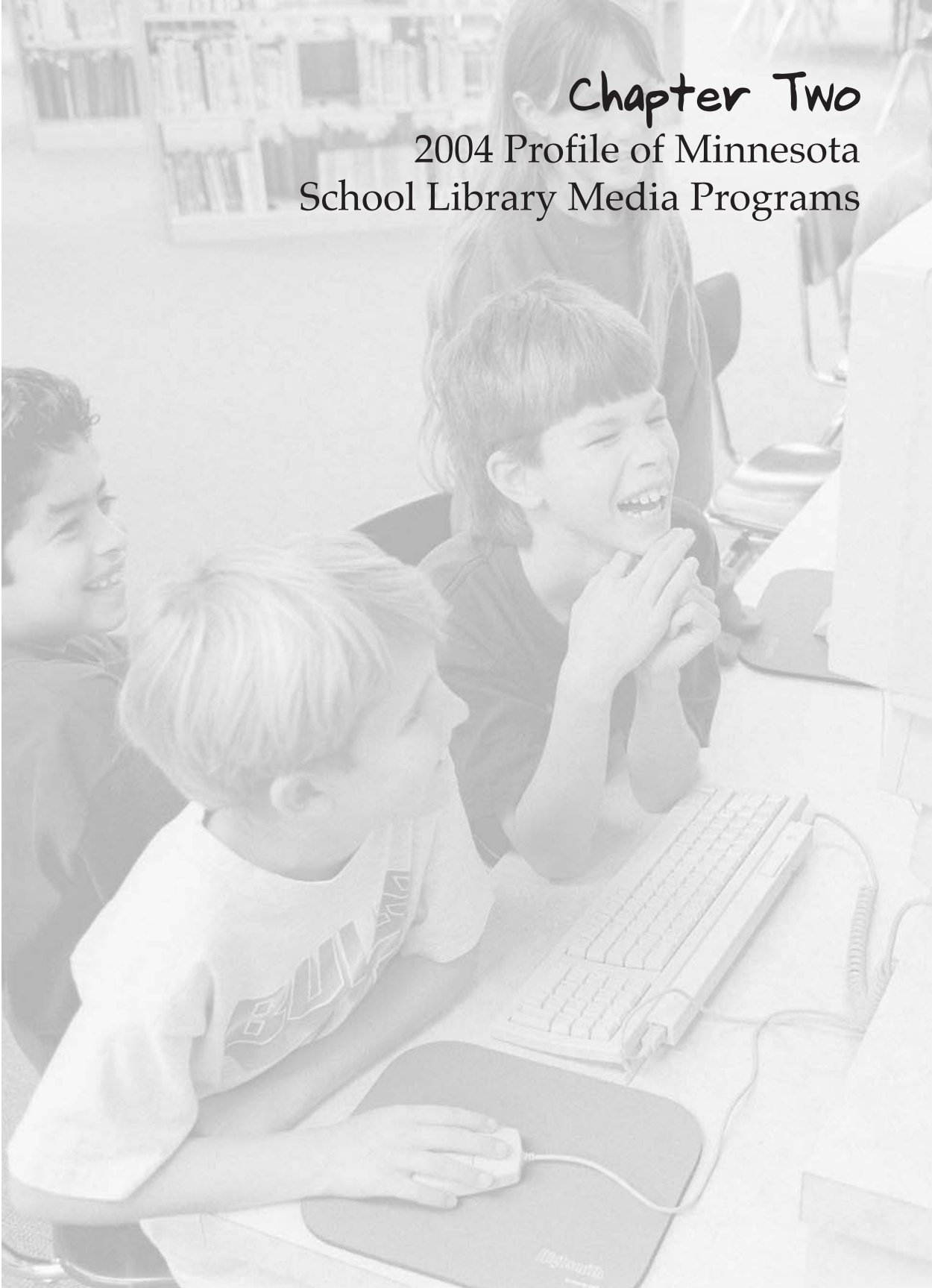
International Reading Association Position Statement, "Providing Books and Other Print Materials for Classroom and School Libraries," 2000.

high schools dropped 37%, from \$11.29 per pupil to \$ 7.12 per pupil. Elementary and middle schools reported significant reductions in spending, too.⁸

Strong school library media programs are essential to create a fair balance between children who have access to books outside of school and those who do not. Not all children have easy access to a public library or can afford to visit bookstores for their reading needs. Even for students near public libraries, access to resources has been reduced. Cuts in Minnesota public library funding have meant libraries are open fewer hours, have fewer staff to help library users, and have reduced ability to purchase books.

With the emphasis on reading in the No Child Left Behind legislation and Governor Pawlenty's commitment that all children should read by the end of Grade 1⁹, Minnesota must do a better job of investing in school library media programs so that students at all grade levels have access to the wide range of materials that are necessary to meet their learning needs.

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1. *Check It Out! The Results of the School Library Media Program Census*. St. Paul: METRONET. January 2003. page 73.
 2. Ibid., page 81.
 3. The National Forum on Information Literacy <http://www.infolit.org/>
 4. *Academic Literacy: A Statement of Competencies Expected of Students Entering California's Public Colleges and Universities*, 2002, www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/reports/acadlit.pdf (Accessed September 7, 2003)
 5. *Understanding University Success: A Report from Standards for Success: A project of the Association of American Universities and The Pew Charitable Trusts*, 2003. www.s4s.org/understanding.php (Accessed September 7, 2003)
 6. *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*. St. Paul: Minnesota Educational Media Organization in cooperation with Library Development and Services, Department of Children Families & Learning. October 2000. <http://www.memoweb.org/htmlfiles/links.html#standards>
 7. *Recommended Standards for Information and Technology Literacy*, Minnesota Educational Media Organization, Standards Committee, draft July 23, 2004. <http://www.memoweb.org/htmlfiles/links.html#literacy>
 8. Detailed budget information is in Chapter 2.
 9. Governor Pawlenty Unveils "Read To Achieve" Initiative -- September 22, 2003 http://www.governor.state.mn.us/Tpaw_View_Article.asp?artid=57 (Accessed September 7, 2004)



Chapter Two

2004 Profile of Minnesota School Library Media Programs

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2004 Profile of Minnesota School Library Media Programs

A Word About Process

The first School Library Media Center Program Census was conceived by Library Development and Services (LDS)¹ in May 2001 and then developed by METRONET and the other multitype organizations as a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)² grant proposal. The first project began with an analysis of the best-known surveys—those developed by the Colorado Library Research Service (<http://www.lrs.org>) headed by Keith Curry Lance. The surveys of school libraries in many other states done by the Library Research Service provided a starting point and some structure for the first Census. Chapter 1 summarizes these studies' findings.

The Advisory Committee for the first Census included school library media specialists and supervisors from all over the state, Library and Development Services (LDS) staff, and the multitype directors. The Advisory Committee for the first Census planned for 100% participation, with participation being defined as answering one question. Using the Colorado surveys and the Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Center Programs 2000 as starting points, the Committee determined the questions that would provide the best information. The group also determined the wording of the questions.

The first school media Census had responses from 1,172 schools or 82% of all regular public elementary and secondary schools. **217 school districts had 100% response; every school in the district responded.** The first project also included 131 site visits, including interviews with principals and media specialists, in randomly selected schools around the state.

As the report of the first Census was being written, printed and distributed, the Minnesota State Legislature was coping with a massive deficit. Part of their response was to reduce school funding for the upcoming biennium. School district budgets were trimmed beginning in the fall of 2003.

The authors of Check It Out! The Results of the School Library Media Center Program Census heard stories about the cuts that were going to be made in media centers around the state. Clearly, the first Census provided a baseline, but the baseline might be eroding fast.

METRONET applied for a grant to conduct a second Census with LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) funds to discover whether a

new baseline was needed. The grant was awarded in October 2003. This LSTA grant did not include site visits for two reasons: first, the visits were just completed two years before, and second, site visits are very expensive to manage and do.

METRONET staff convened an Advisory Committee for the second Census. Many of the first Census Advisory Committee members along with some additional people gathered in St. Cloud in November 2003 to design the second Census. The Committee agreed unanimously that the second Census should be much shorter. From 170 items, the questions were pared down to 62. The Advisory Committee also reviewed questions from Colorado, Ohio, and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). After considerable discussion, some questions were reworded, such as the question about media center budgets. School media specialists told Committee members that they rarely had a budget; instead they requested particular purchases of books and other materials.

The Committee determined that seven questions would be critical. Those questions, which included number of staff, coverage of multiple media centers by one licensed person, media center budget, collection size, and average book copyright dates, would determine whether the Census was “done” by a school. If all schools in a district answered all seven questions, the district would be counted as 100%.

METRONET hosted the online Census on its server this time, which provided more latitude for design. Dana Noonan, METRONET’s Webmaster, oversaw the online Census and provided many different ways to view the Census results for METRONET staff. For example, the answers to the seven critical questions could be viewed as soon as they were completed. METRONET staff could then call the school media specialist about a specific question.

The second change for 2004 was that more questions had ranges of answers rather than being open ended. This helped to decrease the number of data entry errors, but these answers are impossible to average. So “average” numbers were not available for some questions. We used frequency of ranges as a substitute.

As with the first Census, the comments section was one of the most interesting parts of the Census. Media specialists were invited to offer insight and opinion on their media programs. These comments are not on the METRONET Web site to maintain confidentiality. Representative comments selected from the 59 pages of comments received appear in the report.

After extensive testing, the 2004 Census opened on February 19, 2004. METRONET sent letters to superintendents, principals, and media

specialists in late January explaining the Census. Schools knew far more about the Census the second time around and that increased the level of responses. Media specialists answered more questions than the first time around. On a few occasions METRONET's server received more queries than it could handle. Some Census answers were lost; it is difficult to estimate how many.

The Census closed on May 28, 2004. 974 school media centers responded to the Census. Of those, 861 answered the Census completely; 113 had provided partial answers. 390 schools did not respond. **127 school districts had a 100% response rate—meaning that every school had answered all seven of the critical questions.** Some of the largest school districts in the state had 100% responses. Minneapolis and St. Paul each had about 75% response rates. St. Cloud, Duluth, and Rochester had very high completion rates too. 41 mostly small school districts had no respondents; the largest non-respondent district was a suburban district that has five schools. We did not attempt to get responses from alternative learning centers or charter schools. Our goal was to encourage the highest response from “regular” public schools.

In the 2004 Census, the response rate was 71%, lower than in 2002. Several things account for the decrease. Some schools no longer have media specialists; some media specialists have no assistance in the media center; some media specialists work very few hours in the media center (but many hours in the classroom).

After the Census closed, we needed to clean the data so it could be analyzed. Eric Hinsdale, Dawn Brintnell and Dana Noonan all provided numerous tables and supported information on parts of the Census database. Ann Walker Smalley was the principal writer of this second Census report.

METRONET presented a short version of the Census at the Minnesota State Fair.³ Interested students, parents, grandparents, media specialists, and citizens could view every responding school's most meaningful Census data. Fairgoers were very interested. After the data was analyzed and the report writing was well underway, METRONET staff distilled the Census information into a Power Point presentation for the MEMO conference held in the fall of 2004.

Census Results

This section describes the results of the data analysis from the 2004 school library media program Census and, wherever appropriate, provides comparisons with the findings from the 2002 Census. Not all data collected is comparable. The 2004 Census asked fewer questions than in 2002 to reduce completion time for library media specialists. In some cases, the way the question was asked in the two

Comments are taken from the 2004 Census. Schools are identified by multitype region and school type.

Multitype Region Headquarters

- Southwest Area Multicounty Multitype Interlibrary Exchange (SAMMIE)—Marshall
- Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN)—Detroit Lakes
- North Country Library Cooperative (NCLC)—Mountain Iron
- Central Minnesota Libraries Exchange (CMLE)—St. Cloud
- METRONET—St. Paul
- Southeast Library System—(SELS)—Rochester
- Southcentral Minnesota Library Exchange—(SMILE)—Mankato

years was different. In most areas, the findings in 2004 are consistent with those in 2002, with few dramatic changes. The biggest difference between the two years was in the number of responses. The data from the second Census is from the 2003-2004 school year. There are additional tables with more detail in the Appendix.

Wherever possible the analysis is compared to the appropriate minimum, standard and exemplary standards described in the *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000*.⁴ The Standards list 26 elements of a library program with minimum, standard, and exemplary levels to each element.

Principal Findings

Staffing and spending in school library media centers make a difference in student reading scores.

Student reading achievement in elementary and secondary schools is related to the number of hours media specialists work and to school media center spending. This finding is based on an analysis of the Minnesota School Library 2004 Census and results from the Minnesota statewide reading assessments in Grades 3, 5, 7, and 8.⁵

Schools with above average student reading scores have library media specialists (LMS) who work more hours.

Table 1. Minnesota Schools with Above Average Reading Scores Compared to Library Media Specialist Work Hours - 2004

Library Media Specialist (LMS) Work Hours Per Week	Number of MN schools with above average student scores on MCA and Basic Skills state reading tests 2004				Total Schools Responding	%
	Grade 3 Schools	Grade 5 Schools	Grade 7 Schools	Grade 8 Schools		
LMS working fewer than 36 hours	115	101	50	53	319	37%
LMS working 36 hours or more	163	156	114	114	547	63%
Total Schools with above average student scores	278	257	164	167	866	

Of the 866 Minnesota schools with above average student scores on the Grade 3, 5, 7, and 8 reading tests, 547 (63%) are schools where the library media specialist worked full time.

Data collected by the Minnesota Department of Education to determine Minnesota's Five Star Schools in Reading and Math supports the Census finding that schools with LMS have higher scores on state-wide reading tests. There are 70 schools on the Five Star list. Census or other data on school library media program staffing is available on 60 schools.⁶ Of these 60 schools:

- **3% of Minnesota Five Star Schools in Reading and Math have a media specialist at least some hours per week**
- 70% have fulltime media specialists; 15% have at least .5 FTE media specialist
- Only four of the Five Star schools have no media specialist hours.
- Only 2 media programs do not have support staff to free the LMS to work with students and teachers.

There is a statistically significant relationship between higher reading scores and larger school media center budgets. Students taking the reading tests in grades 5, 7, 8, and 10 scored between 3 and 6 points higher on those tests in schools with higher media center expenditures.

Minnesota School Library Media Program budgets for books have decreased significantly.

- School library media centers lost an average 29% of the per pupil amount spent on books since the 2002 Census.
- High schools spending on books dropped 37%, from an average of \$11.29 to an average of \$7.12.
- In all school library media programs that reported budget figures, per pupil spending is much less than the cost of one book. Responses show that money available for book purchases continues to decrease.

Table 2. Per Pupil Spending on Books in Minnesota School Library Media Programs 2002 and 2004

	Book Budget Per Pupil 2002	Book Budget Per Pupil 2004	% Change 2002 to 2004
Elementary	\$9.35	\$7.48	-20%
Middle	\$10.44	\$7.40	-29%
High	\$11.29	\$7.12	-37%
K12	N/A	\$7.92	N/A

Nationally, the 2001-2002 average per pupil expenditure on books was \$11.17 in elementary schools. Middle schools spent \$11.11 while high schools averaged \$15.44 per pupil. Minnesota's average per pupil expenditures in 2001-2002 were well below the national averages for that year and were even lower in the 2003-2004 school year.⁷ Book prices in most categories continue to increase, especially in the

children's market. With budgets that are flat or decreasing, keeping up with current materials is a challenge.

Table 3. Book Prices (Children, Young Adult, and Adult Titles) 2002-2004⁸

Hardcover	2002	2003	2004	% Change 2002-2004
Average Price (all children/YA titles)	\$18.78	\$19.18	\$19.31	+3%
Preschool to Grade 4	\$16.04	\$17.45	\$17.51	+9.2%
Grade 5 and up—Fiction	\$16.83	\$16.77	\$16.84	N/A
Grade 5 and up—Non-Fiction	\$21.49	\$22.99	\$23.25	+7.2%
Adult Fiction	\$26.86	\$26.02*	\$24.81*	-7.6%
Adult Non-Fiction	\$41.01	\$40.64*	\$41.07*	N/A
Adult Non-Fiction, including single volume reference titles	\$74.35	\$74.48*	\$73.64*	-1%
* Preliminary Prices				

Many LMS commented on the impact that cuts in education funding at the state level have had on media programs. With some school districts facing millions of dollars in cuts, it is not surprising that media programs have lost funding, along with other school programs. According to the comments in the Census, very few school library media programs escaped reductions in some area of their budget, staff, or programming.

..district has not had money for new books in at least 10 years. I have a book budget of . . . \$500 this year.

METRONET Suburban Elementary School

With such an erosion of purchasing power, and the years of little investment in school library media program book collections, it is not surprising that:

Minnesota School Library Media Programs have collections that are not current and are seriously out-of-date in several subject areas.

The Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs defines a current collection as having an average age of not greater than 10 years. For a media program to meet that minimum standard today, the average copyright date would be 1994. The most startling data from the 2002 Census was the 1985 average copyright date for all books in media center collections; books in high school media centers had a 1983 average copyright date. There has not been much change since 2002. The average copyright date for books in elementary school media centers is 1988; the average in K12 schools is 1987.

Other data for elementary schools indicate aging collections:

- Average copyright date for science books is 1989.
- Average copyright date for geography books is 1989.
- The range of average copyright dates for geography books in

elementary schools is 42 years: the oldest is 1960; the newest is 2002.

In 2004, 96 Minnesota school media centers have book collections with an average copyright date of 1979 or older; an average copyright date of 1979 means that the average book is 25 years old. 266 have average copyright dates of 1980-1985. It is not surprising that there has been little change since 2002. Upgrading a collection requires weeding of old, out-of-date books and replacing them with newer materials. A substantial financial investment is necessary to increase average copyright of a collection by 10 or more years.

The average copyright of geography books in Minnesota media centers averages 1987, two years newer than in 2004. In the 2002 Census, site visitors noted that many elementary schools were updating their collections of "country books." Geography collections are still old; even after adding new books, the copyright remains an average of 1987. 123 Minnesota school media centers have geography books with average copyright dates between 1960 and 1979.

Geography is the study of societies, the earth's features, and environments. Names and boundaries of countries change, wars are declared, famines occur, governments evolve, and other world changes mean geography books must be updated regularly to reflect the political and cultural changes. Students looking for Zimbabwe on a map in a 1980 geography book would find Rhodesia. War in South-east Asia, China's cultural revolution, the Six Day War, various invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq, and other Middle Eastern happenings, and the independence of East Timor are not reflected in books with an average copyright of 1987. Just the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s would require books and maps to be updated significantly.

Another result of having old books is that the collections lack diversity. The thousands of new Minnesota children who have immigrated here will not find themselves—or their former countries—accurately reflected in books in their school media centers. Nor will other students be able to learn about their new classmates' cultures, countries, and customs. Knowledge of the social and political upheavals that have resulted in the waves of immigration from African countries and elsewhere is vital if today's students are to accept and support each other. If Minnesota students are to be citizens of the world, they need access to materials that reflect the political and geographic realities of the 21st century.

No books have been purchased using the media center budget for two years ... I need the media budget to support the media center, not the entire building's maintenance needs. As it stands, collection development is limited to ... what book fairs can offer in 10% free books.

METRONET Suburban
Elementary School

Science books aren't much newer than the geography books. 93 Minnesota schools reported average copyright dates ranging from 1959 to 1979. From new information about dinosaurs to mouse genome projects, science has marched on since 1959. Just since 1989, the average copyright date for science books in elementary schools, dozens of major breakthroughs and discoveries have occurred from cloning to Mars landings to robotic surgery. Elementary students seeking to do reports on a current science topic would have to seek sources outside their media centers.

In spite of weeding and ordering new books during the last two years, the average age of the collection hasn't improved. Everything became two years older.

SMILE Jr/Sr High School

Secondary school media centers still have the same old books; their average copyright date remained at 1983. Some large suburban high schools have average copyright dates in the 1970s. Science books have average copyright dates of 1984.

New data in the 2004 Census is the copyright date on biography books in school library media center collections. There is no good news in this area. The average copyright date for biography is 1985. The range of average copyright dates is 1951 to 2002. If a school has an average of 1951 for biography the oldest book is dated much, much earlier.

Elementary school media centers have an average copyright for biography of 1988; half the book collections are an average of 16 years old. A common elementary school assignment is to prepare a report or presentation on a famous person. Kids in Minnesota schools who relied on their media center for a "current" famous person biography would have trouble finding one they would recognize. Children in elementary school today were born in the mid-to-late 1990s, Sammy Sosa had just started in the majors, Will Smith made his TV debut, there was one Jurassic Park movie, and the first George Bush was elected president.

In secondary schools the average copyright for biography is 1980; half the book collections are an average of 24 years old. Students must look elsewhere for information on almost every modern politician, artist, scientist, and public figure including Desmond Tutu, Rita Dove, Sammy Sosa, Coretta Scott King, and every U.S. President since Jimmy Carter.

Table 4. Average Copyright Dates for Books in Minnesota School Media Centers 2004

	Overall 2004	Overall 2002
Books (all types)	1986	1985
Geography	1987	1985
Science	1987	1985
Biography	1985	N/A

There are some pockets of hope. Farmington School District media specialists spent over a year providing information to the school board on how their media programs impact student achievement, presented collection analyses on the age of media center collections in all their buildings, and reported state, local, and national statistics on spending and collections. The result of their effort was some \$650,000 to invest in updating collections in every building.⁹

In other districts, grants from various federal, state, and local sources have helped upgrade collections. Overall, however, many of the books Minnesota students are relying on are more than 16 years old, and in high schools the books are an average of 21 years old.

Data Summary

This section describes the results from the major areas of the Census: All of the data is from the 2003-2004 school year. Where possible, comparisons with the 2002 Census are provided.

Staffing and Hours

Standard 18. There is a minimum of one licensed full-time media professional in each school.

Standard 19. The building has sufficient clerical and technical staff to allow the professional media staff to work with teachers and students.

The majority of schools (82%) reporting had library media programs staffed by a licensed media specialist at least part-time. Of those schools with media specialists, most had one licensed person. Only 4% have two licensed persons in the media center. These are typically suburban schools with large enrollments.

K12 schools most often reported non-licensed personnel in the media program. **22% of the 67 K12 schools reported that there was not a licensed person in the media program, compared to 11% of all media programs where there was no licensed person in the media program.** 10% of K12 media programs are supervised by a person with a teaching license. K12

schools tend to be in small and/or rural communities that may not have easy access to other information resources through a public or academic library, bookstore, or other resource. Students in these schools would benefit greatly from a licensed media specialist who can help them find resources from outside the school through multitype systems' interlibrary loan and other services, using ELM

...library is closed a good portion of the day because we share one person with two buildings. We used to have two fulltime media people and two clerical. We are not even maintaining service.

NLLN Elementary School

databases, or guide their Internet searching to valid sites. Without a licensed media specialist, students do not have easy access or training in using information resources.

Table 5. License of Person Supervising the Media Center by School Types Minnesota 2004

Type of License	All Schools	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	K12
No License	11%	13%	6%	8%	22%
School Library Media Specialist	40%	39%	47%	44%	27%
Media Generalist	34%	33%	40%	37%	25%
Librarian	8%	8%	5%	7%	15%
Teacher	5%	7%	1%	3%	10%
Other teaching license	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%
Total Schools	963	526	106	264	67

As noted earlier, hours worked by a media specialist in the media center makes a difference in reading test scores. Only 61% of the media specialists reporting are fulltime equivalent. 27% worked .5FTE, a more common occurrence in elementary than in secondary schools.

Table 6. Buildings per Library Media Specialist in Minnesota 2004

	All Schools	Number of Responses	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	K12
1 building	73%	636	318	72	186	60
2 buildings	20%	175	115	16	41	3
3 buildings	5%	46	25	5	15	1
4 buildings	1%	12	10	0	2	0
5 buildings	0%	0	0	0	0	0
More Than 5	1%	7	7	0	0	0
Total Schools		876	475	93	244	64

We were told that if the levy passed, media specialists would go back to one building now most have two. The levy passed, but it looks like staffing will not change for next year. We will still have two schools.

CMLE Elementary School

Standard 18 notes one media specialist per building as the benchmark. In 73% of the cases, the media specialist is responsible for one school media center. In 20% of the cases, the media specialist had two media centers. 65 media specialists (7%) were responsible for 3 or more buildings, while 7 of those media specialists had 5 or more buildings. It is more typical in elementary schools for buildings to share media specialists. Only 58 (23%) of secondary school media specialists had more than one building.

The comments in the second Census from media specialists noted that while a media specialist may be responsible for the media center in only one building, this does not mean that she is fulltime in the media center. Many are teaching other subjects one or more periods a day or have duties in the computer lab that take them from media center tasks. Many commented that it is very difficult to maintain the media center or work with students and teachers when they are available only part of the day.

**Table 7. All School Library Media Program Staff
by Grade Level in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2004**

Number of Staff (FTE)	Elementary Schools	Secondary Schools	K12 Schools
1	2	4	3
2	142	44	28
3	372	107	24
4	101	43	11
5	19	15	0
6+	4	10	0
Total	640	224	66

Having other staff in the media center makes a difference in the level of service a media specialist can offer to students and teachers. A substantial number of schools (920) have more than one staff person in the school media center. 87% of the schools reported some clerical assistance in the media center.

638 elementary schools have more than one person working in the media center, but the number of hours worked looks much different. Only 11% of elementary schools have more than 2 full time staff. 25% of those same 638 schools have less than 1 fulltime person. Without a fulltime media specialist, students may not receive the help they need and there is less time for the media specialist to collaborate with teachers. At a minimum, schools need a fulltime media specialist to perform all the professional functions of administering and maintaining a school library media program (book selection, cataloging, reference service for students and staff, and other tasks) and perform the teaching and collaboration duties required to produce information literate students.

[our] curriculum advisory committee recommended the number of professional media people be increased...shortage of dollars and administrator priorities mean there will be no change next year and the year after, para[professional] staff will be cut. I am too tired and stressed managing 3 buildings, 2,000 students and 300 staff. I am retiring.

CMLE Middle School

Table 8. Hours Worked (FTE) by Grade Level in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2004

FTE	Elementary Schools	Secondary Schools	K12 Schools
.25 - .1.0	160	48	35
1.25 - 2.0	406	123	27
2.25 - 3.0	67	39	3
3.25 - 4.0	2	15	0
Total	635	225	65

In secondary schools, which generally have higher enrollments, a higher percentage of media centers have more than one full time staff person. 78% of all secondary schools have between 1.25 and 4.0 full time equivalent persons working in the media center. 24% have more than two full time staff positions. For all school types 126 schools (13%) have more than two full time staff positions.

Table 9. Personnel Trends in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2002 and 2004

Staffing	Frequency	Percentage
Increased	53	6%
Stayed the Same	496	55%
Decreased	346	39%

Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. For the period July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$23,920 for a family of four; 185 percent is \$34,040.¹⁰

Media program personnel stayed the same in 55% of the media programs between 2002 and 2004: personnel decreased in 39% of the programs reporting. Only 6% of the media specialists reported that number of staff increased in the past two years.

One notable point is that both professional and support staffing levels are lower in schools where 50% or more of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch than in schools where 15% or less of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch.

There were 233 responses to the Census from schools where 15% or less students receive free or reduced price lunch. Of those, 79% have at least 1 FTE licensed media specialist and 54% have at least one FTE support staff.

In schools with a 50% or greater level of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch, 16% had no licensed media specialist; 56% had 1 FTE licensed media specialist. 30% of these schools had at least 1 FTE support staff person.

As enrollment increases, media center staffing remains the same.

CMLE Middle School

Media Center hours depend on the availability of staff. In many schools, the media center is closed all or part of some days because the media specialist is teaching a class or is at another school building. Most Minnesota students

in schools with media centers have access to them at least 21 hours per week.

- Of 935 schools responding, 41% are open more than 35 hours per week during class hours. 39% are open between 21 and 30 hours a week.
- 7% of the school library media centers are open fewer than 20 hours per week

Table 10. Total Hours Open During Class Hours Per Week in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2004

	All	Number of Schools	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	K12
1-5	0%	3	1	0	2	0
6-10	5%	48	26	6	14	2
11-15	1%	9	8	0	1	0
16-20	1%	11	9	0	0	2
21-25	3%	31	27	1	3	0
26-30	9%	84	73	4	4	3
31-35	39%	364	197	48	102	17
Over 35	41%	385	164	45	134	42
Total		935	505	104	260	66

Schools vary in the availability of before or after school hours for student access to the media center. Only 36% are open more than 5 hours a week, or one hour per day, before or after school. 50% are open between 1 and 5 hours per day. 14% have no hours in media center beyond the school day. Extended hours require staffing, which many media programs do not have.

Between 2002 and 2004, budget and staffing remained the same in 26% of the school library media programs.

Table 11. Total Hours Open Before and After School Per Week by School Type in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2004

Hours Open	All	Number of Schools	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	K12
0	14%	129	107	8	8	6
1	10%	94	60	6	23	5
2	13%	119	66	11	34	8
3	7%	61	35	6	17	3
4	4%	37	23	1	10	3
5	16%	150	79	22	40	9
More than 5	36%	325	141	48	127	9
Total		915	511	102	259	43

Budget

Library media program budgets continue to suffer.¹¹ Since 2001-2002:

- 45% of the school library media programs reported that their budgets had decreased

- 37% of the school library media programs reported they stay the same—a net decrease due to reduced buying power as book and other prices continue to increase

Table 12. Annual Minnesota School Library Media Center Materials Budget from School Building Funding 2003-2004

	All	Elementary	Middle	High	K12
2003-2004 Annual Budget	\$6,423	\$4,653	\$7,475	\$9,713	\$4,630
Books & other print materials	\$4,723	\$3,681	\$5,719	\$6,730	\$3,275
Materials in electronic format	\$811	\$284	\$556	\$1,876	\$704
Non-print materials	\$869	\$688	\$1,200	\$1,107	\$651

For the past five years, we have seen a 10% decrease annually in library budgets and we expect at least a 10% decrease next year and significant cuts for 2005-06.

METRONET Suburban HS

In 2003-2004, spending levels in Minnesota schools dropped below the national average spending levels for 2001-2002. The national average spending on books at the elementary level was \$5,751 in 2001-2002.¹² In that same school year, middle schools nationally spent an average of \$8,569 and high schools spent an average of \$15,130 annually on books. K12 and other schools spent an average of \$7,490 a year on books.

Comparison with budget figures collected in the previous Census shows that overall budgets have dropped significantly, particularly in elementary schools.

- The budgets for books/print, electronic resources, and non-print materials dropped 34% in elementary schools.¹³
- There was a drop of 23% in high school book/print, electronic resources, and non-print materials budgets.
- Middle schools fared slightly better with only a 14% drop in those categories.

Table 13. Percent Change in Budgets in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2001-02 and 2003-04

	All	Elementary	Middle	High	K12
Change in Annual Budget 2001-02 to 2003-04	-22%	-34%	-14%	-23%	N/A
Books & other print materials	-8%	-11%	-1%	+1%	N/A
Materials in electronic format	-40%	-57%	-65%	-74%	N/A
Non-print materials	+2%	+4%	+20%	-8%	N/A

Non-print materials showed a slight increase overall, but a 20% increase in middle schools. High school book budgets increased a slight 1%.

The biggest change in all budgets occurred in the area of electronic format resources, i.e., online databases. All budgets dropped, with high schools reporting a 74% decrease in the amount spent on electronic resources.

This would be very alarming if Minnesota did not have the benefit of the Electronic Library for Minnesota. ELM provides on-site and remote access to Web-based information resources for users of school, public, academic, and state government libraries. The Minnesota State Legislature and the Minnesota Department of Education fund ELM for all K12 and college students and the general public. This is a cost-efficient and cost-saving investment in information access and equality. Statewide licensing of these resources costs much less per student than if schools or districts had to individually license these resources. In addition, ELM allows local buildings and districts to spend on resources tailored for their curriculum and students.

There are a few bright spots. 8% of the media specialists responding reported an increase in their budget. In the comments section of the Census, several media specialists noted that their principals had allocated carry-over money to the media center. Still others noted significant budget increases because the school became a magnet school or received grants for materials.

More and more “creative financing” is occurring in media centers. As district and building funds allocated for media programs are reduced, media specialists are relying on parent groups, book fairs, corporate programs like Box Tops for Education, and other sources to purchase books for the media center. In some cases, nearly half of the average budget is from outside fundraising.

They [school] have given the media budget another \$4,000, a great increase. I plan to put it toward print material.

CMLE Elementary School

I get my budget from box tops, soup labels, book fairs, grants, and milk caps.

METRONET Urban Elementary School

Table 14. Comparison of School Funding and Outside Fundraising for Books by School Type in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2004

	Average School Funding for Books	Average Outside Fundraising for Books
Elementary	\$3,681	\$3,521
Middle	\$5,719	\$2,241
Secondary	\$6,730	\$1,368
K12	\$3,275	\$2,408
All Schools	\$4,723	\$2,861

Our book fairs have not made as much money as usual either as parents are feeling the budget crunch at home.

METRONET Suburban
Elementary School

While library media specialists should be applauded for their resourcefulness in seeking outside funding, the reality is that grant-seeking, juggling milk caps, and bundling box tops takes a lot of time. This time must come from somewhere and it may come from LMS contact with students and teachers and media center activities, or the LMS donates her own time for these labor-intensive activities. Bigger districts with grantwriting staff, schools with well-organized parent organizations, and schools with more affluent parents

who can afford to buy brand name cereal and books at the book fairs have a fundraising advantage.

Budget and staffing may be connected. In 63% of the media programs that lost staff in 2004, the budget decreased. Staffing stayed the same in 33% of the media centers where the budget decreased.

Media Center Resources

Standard 14 states there should be 15-20 current items per student. Minnesota media collections average between 15 and 29 volumes per student. Size of media center collections varies widely. 49 schools have fewer than 5,000 books in their collections. 372 schools have more than 20,000 books.

Table 15. Profile of Minnesota School Media Center Book Collections 2004 By School Level

	Average Number of Volumes	Books per student	Average Copyright of Book Collection	Average Copyright of Science Books	Average Copyright of Geography Books	Average Copyright of Biography Books
Elementary	14,429	29	1988	1989	1989	1987
Middle	15,287	20	1988	1988	1989	1980
Secondary	14,113	15	1984	1984	1984	1980
K12	14,192	21	1986	1987	1987	1981

Minnesota media center collections tend to be larger than the national average. Size does not equate with quality, however. In many cases the collections are large because little or no weeding has been done over the years, as evidenced by the copyright dates.

... I estimate that 75% of the 500s [natural science & math] and 66% of the 900s [geography & history] are more than 20 years old.

NCLC Jr/Sr HS

Minnesota media centers book collections have remained stable. The average number of books in school media centers in 2004 is 13,376; in 2002 the average was 13,943. Perhaps the oldest books have been weeded; perhaps some new books have been added, but many old books are still in school media center collections.

There is some anecdotal evidence that weeding of collections took place after the 2002 Census revealed the age of many collections.

Table 16. Collection Sizes of Minnesota Media Centers Compared to National Averages ¹⁴

School Level	Minnesota Average Number of Volumes	National Average
Elementary	14,129	11,000
Middle	15,287	11,100
High	14,113	13,552
K12	14,192	11,000

Library media specialists commented that after “doing their copy-right numbers,” weeding became a higher priority because they had seen how many old books were in their collections. There is still concern about extensive weeding of collections, however, as this quote from A SAMMIE Elementary School demonstrates: ‘The library is in need of some heavy weeding, but to do that would mean that most of the books would be weeded and there would not be enough money for replacing the books.’”

One factor that may affect the age of the school library media center collection is whether or not a media center has been remodeled. There is a statistically-significant relationship between remodeling date and average copy-right date of the book collection. It appears that when a media center is remodeled, the collection is also updated. However, the investment appears to be a one-time event, since overall, the average copyright date of collections remains older than 10 years.

Media specialists often hear from school boards and others that students can just use their public libraries if they do not have an up-to-date collection in their school. While it is true that public libraries offer supplemental materials for student research and recreational reading, public library collections are designed to support a much broader customer base from birth to old age. Their book and other collections range broadly across the subject areas and may not have the depth of material at appropriate age levels to support students with many levels of different curricula. In addition, public libraries across the state have had to reduce hours, lay off staff, and cut budgets for books and electronic resources due to reductions in local government aid. This means public libraries must focus on their broad mission to serve all.

Another panacea offered for old book collections is the Internet. Many persist in believing that “everything is on the Internet” and so up-to-date print material is not necessary. In response to these claims, school boards and administrators regularly ask media specialists to justify the need for the book collections, and for their own work.

Students who try to do research feel very frustrated; they can't find the materials. Teachers also feel the frustration. I think we have lost teachers and students because they don't feel we have what they need.

CMLE High School

Our public libraries have suffered severe budget cuts and neighborhood libraries are open only 24 hours a week over three days, which also hinders students in completing their research and studies.

METRONET Urban HS

Google results on
October 13, 2004 for:

- George Bush
7.1 million
- George W. Bush
6.3 million
- Presidential
Debates
3.1 million
- War in Iraq
7.7 million

*My guess is (it will be) about
300 years until computers are
as good as, say, your local
reference library in search.*

Craig Silverstein,
Director of Technology,
Google.com

After all, if anyone can “Google” for the answers and information, why do we need librarians and media specialists?

There are many responses to this, but briefly:

- The Internet does not have free, in-depth full text material available on all subjects covered by K12 curricula.
- The Internet is not organized, selected to support a curriculum, or easy to use to find reliable, validated information.
- Nor, as the push for filtering in libraries indicates, is everything on the Internet appropriate for K12 students.

When used by an experienced searcher, someone who understands how information is created and organized and can evaluate its usefulness and accuracy—e.g., a media specialist or librarian—the Internet is a wonderful and useful tool for research. Most students are not experienced researchers and tend to put in the broadest search terms with results that are overwhelming and that few students can reliably evaluate. Allowing our students to rely solely on the Internet as their main or only source of information leaves them open to misinformation, inaccurate information, and worse. As is pointed out in arguments for filtering in libraries, anyone with a computer, a little technical knowledge, and a topic can put up a convincing-looking Web site. It takes experience and knowledge to sort the good from the bad from the indifferent. It is that knowledge and experience that school library media specialists bring to students—and which they develop in students through information literacy and research skills curricula.

Professional staffing is what makes school library media centers more than shelves of books. The professional expertise of a licensed media specialist that goes into selecting and organizing the library materials is as valuable as the teaching and guidance media specialists give students in using all resources. All schools need access to high-speed Internet, but they also need school library media staff to teach efficient and appropriate use of this resource.

Not all the Internet resources that are valid and useful are free, another widely held misconception. Full text articles from major newspapers such as the New York Times are free to readers for seven days after publication. After that, users must purchase articles from either the New York Times (recent articles) or from a commercial vendor (historic articles).¹⁵ Similar fees or subscriptions are required for other information sources. In Minnesota, thanks to advocacy by librarians from all types of libraries and library systems and the support of the State Legislature and Department of Education, residents have access to the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM), a collection of online databases with access to more than 10,000 periodicals and newspapers, many full text, and hundreds of thousands of primary

source documents, photographs, maps, and more.

These subscription-based electronic resources have become a mainstay of Minnesota school media centers. As noted earlier, the biggest change in budgets at all school levels occurred in the area of electronic format resources, i.e., online databases. All budgets dropped. High schools reported a huge 74% decrease in the amount spent on electronic resources. One reason for this is the availability of ELM. Many school districts rely on the ELM subscription databases funded by the Minnesota State Legislature and Minnesota Department of Education for all K12 and college students and the general public. The databases include many appropriate for elementary, middle, and high school students, including:

- Discovering Collection which focuses on articles and references in five core curricular areas
- InfoTrac editions for MS and HS students that search newspapers, magazines, and reference books
- Kids InfoBits aimed at grades K5 with selected articles from magazines and newspapers
- ProQuest Newsstand Complete with more than 350 newspapers, 250 full text, including Star Tribune

Cuts in the MINITEX¹⁶ budget, the state level entity that manages ELM, and the resulting realignment of priorities has meant that Minnesotans have lost access to some databases. As many media specialists noted, it is important that the State Legislature, through appropriations to the Department of Education and MINITEX, maintain access to and expand these important statewide resources.

Not all students have equal access to these resources because of lack of staff or connections in their schools. 71% of 889 respondents state that students can access the databases from all classrooms in the school. 16% do not have the databases available in all classrooms in the school and half of those (8%) have no classrooms with the databases. How well students can access ELM and other electronic resources in these schools will depend on the hours the media center is open before and after school and how the school day is scheduled in the media center. Flexibly scheduled school library media centers are more open to individual student use than those that are used for prep time or for scheduled classes.

In 64% of the schools, students are able to access the school's electronic resources from home, usually via the school library's home page. 36% of the schools report that the databases are not available outside the school.

The best resource we have is the regional library system which allows sharing of books and materials. Also, [ELM] is a wonderful resource for rural districts. I don't see us being able to offer access to the databases if the state does not continue to fund these.

SELS Jr/Sr High School

I am a half-time media specialist without any [support] help in a K-12 school. I teach a 100-minute block of social studies, supervise an hour of study hall, and teach an hour of kindergarten prep daily. I spend a good portion of my half-day in the media center on prep for my social studies class.

NLLN School

All students deserve easy access to electronic resources. In schools or districts where access is limited by staff time or lack of appropriate hardware or connections, steps need to be taken to ensure that all students can use ELM and other resources to help them in their studies.

Media Specialist Activities

As in the 2002 Census, the most frequent activity of school library media specialists is “other library activities.” This catchall phrase includes checking books in and out, shelving, processing, and other tasks that keep the library running. Most fall into the “support” category. Library media specialists’ time is better spent on activities that impact student achievement: teaching library / literacy skills, collaborating with teachers, instructional planning, and other professional activities.

Table 17. Most Frequent Staff Activities per Typical Month in Minnesota School Library Media Centers Often and Very Often in 2004

Activity	2004
All other library activities	66%
Managing or operating the library automation system and troubleshooting computer and technical problems	64%
Collection development	63%
Teaching students information skills	47%
Teaching students cooperatively with teachers	31%
Advocacy / public relations for the media center	26%
Instructional planning with teachers	25%
Number of Schools	931

Only in elementary schools is a professional teacher-librarian task—teaching students information skills-- the most frequent activity. 49% of the elementary school media specialists listed this as their most frequent activity. Collection development, an important professional task, tended to be the fourth most frequent activity

Table 18. Top 5 Activities Marked as Very Often By School Level in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2004

Activity	Elementary	MS	HS	K12
All other library activities	48%	44%	35%	43%
Teaching students information skills	49%			21%
Managing or operating the library automation system and troubleshooting computer and technical problems	37%	37%	36%	35%
Collection development	33%	3%	29%	42%
Meeting with school library staff in building or district	13%	13%		
Teaching students cooperatively with teachers & providing information skills instruction		23%	19%	
Instructional planning with teachers BEFORE students begin projects			11%	
Number of schools	472	115	132	67

There is no question that library media specialists are busy juggling many duties related both to the library media program and, according to the comments received on the Census, many other teaching duties from social studies to kindergarten. This Census did not ask about other teaching duties of library media specialists; future data collection may wish to include this question since non-media program duties impact the effectiveness of the library media program.

It is also interesting to look at what media specialists are not doing or rarely doing.

- 8% never or rarely meet with their principal
- 6% meet with principal or other administrators sometimes or occasional

Table 19. Staff Activities per Typical Month: Rarely or Never in 2004

Activity	Rarely	Never	Total
Teaching students information skills	14%	12%	27%
Teaching students cooperatively with teachers	18%	14%	32%
Meetings with school library staff at building, district, etc.	29%	9%	37%
Meetings with academic standards, teaching staff, curriculum committees, etc.	27%	7%	34%
Meetings with principal or other administrators	32%	6%	38%
Advocacy/public relations for media center	18 %	3%	21%
Number of Schools	931		

Meeting regularly with the principal is one of the best ways to keep the administration informed of media program activities and to be

sure the principal knows the impact the program is having on student achievement. Gary Hartzell, a noted columnist for School Library Journal and speaker at MEMO workshops, advocates weekly meetings with principals.

Participating in building and district committees is another way to increase library media program visibility and provide proof to others that library media programs are valuable to students, staff, and administration. However, many media specialists do not meet with other media specialists in their district or participate on committees on school issues.

- In 37% of the cases, meetings with other media specialists in the district rarely or never occur.
- 34% of the media specialists who responded do not meet with committees or teams on curriculum, standards, or other issues.

Advocacy and public relations for the media program is more and more important as budgets are reduced and administrators and school boards question the need for school library media programs. Only 26% of the media specialists indicated that they do advocacy frequently or often. However, many media specialists report that they do advocacy or public relations rarely or never:

- 21% of the respondents say they never or rarely advocate for their programs
- 54% do advocacy sometimes or occasionally

Given the time spent on the many other tasks of a media specialist, it is clear that meetings are a lower priority. However, media specialists should consider the value to their programs' continued well-being that regular meetings with their principals, on-going advocacy, and participation on building or district committees can have.

... library media specialists are used for four 50-minute prep periods a day. ... we have twice monthly student check out times, in a school where students are supposed to read 25 books a year.

METRONET Urban
Elementary School

Prep Period Coverage

Standard 13: The media program is flexibly scheduled so the professional services of the media specialist are available when needed by students and staff.

Media specialists continue to discuss how media center use and media specialists' time should be structured—prep time vs. flexible scheduling. With a prep time schedule, media specialists provide coverage for classroom teachers "prep time," the time teachers have during the school day to work on their lesson plans or do other planning for their classes.

With flexible scheduling the media specialist and the media center are open for use by all students and classes. LMS plan with teachers how students will use resources, classes of students use the library with their teacher, and individual students can use the library

throughout the day. Students are encouraged to regard the media center as a place to go whenever they need information, recreational reading, or just need a quiet spot, not a place they visit only on a schedule. With prep scheduling, students not in the prep class may not have access to the media center and in most cases, due to limited staffing, will not have access to the LMS for help.

Some media specialists are able to structure prep coverage to teach information research skills, but in many schools, prep scheduling may not include any “prep time” for the media specialist to prepare his lessons. Prep coverage then becomes no more than book check-out time. A full load of prep coverage also reduces the time available for the many other information management and administrative tasks in a media program.

In the most recent Census, elementary school media specialists reported that they provide a lot of prep coverage for teachers;

- 49% of all media specialists provide some prep coverage for other teachers
- 45% of elementary school library media specialists had more than 60 prep periods per month or at least 15 per week
- 19% of the elementary LMS had more than 100 prep periods per month or 25 per week

The majority of middle school (83%) and high school (92%) media specialists do not provide prep coverage.

All elementary media specialists were eliminated. One remains to supervise and train ten paraprofessionals that will staff the media centers. The media specialist will select the books for the ten schools. Students will have had very little training in using media resources when they get to junior high.

METRONET Suburban
Elementary School

Computers, Technical Support, and Equipment

Nearly all Minnesota schools offer networked computers with Internet access to their students and teachers. This allows access to ELM and other online resources.

Table 20. Networked Computers in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2004

Number of computers	Number of Media Centers	Percent of Total Schools
Under 10	305	34%
11 to 20	199	22%
21 to 40	223	25%
41 to 60	87	10%
61 to 80	42	5%
81 to 100	11	1%
Over 100	26	3%
Total	893	100%

Many school media specialists have a substantial number of computers in the media center. In smaller schools the number of computers available for student use is more limited. In some schools the media center has only one or two computers used for the catalog; there are no workstations for students to use for Internet access or other work.

Of the 893 responses received on numbers of networked computers in the media center, 81% stated that they had 40 or fewer computers. With 40 computers one class may work effectively in the media center and each student will have access to a computer.

34% of the media centers report that they have 10 or fewer networked computers. This greatly restricts the kinds of research that students can undertake in the media center and restricts the assignments that teachers can give to students.

In some schools, the media specialist is responsible for the computer lab. She may maintain the computers and may teach computer skills in the lab.

Table 21. Student Computers in Minnesota School Library Media Centers 2004

Number of Computers	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Under 10	379	31.0
11 to 20	195	21.1
21 to 40	237	25.6
41 to 60	61	6.6
61 to 80	29	3.1
81 to 100	13	1.4
Over 100	11	1.2
Total	925	100

Media specialists in Minnesota are often responsible for most of the computers in the school building. In schools with many computers, that time commitment is substantial. As noted in an earlier section, 64% of the respondents indicated "troubleshooting" computer problems as their most frequent activity. Often there is only one person who is responsible for keeping all the computers in working order and up-to-date with the latest software the school can afford. In other schools the library media specialist is responsible for the computers in the media center and the adjacent computer lab. In some schools, a tech director or tech assistant is responsible for all the electronic equipment. 63% of the LMS reported that they were responsible for the media center computers.

In one METRONET suburban middle school, as an example, the media

specialist is responsible for all the nearly 300 computers in the school and all the electronic equipment in the media center, including a TV studio, TV's, DVD's, digital cameras and camcorders, etc. In a METRONET urban district, in contrast, media specialists are responsible for very few of the school's computers.

The median number of computers that the Census respondents were responsible for in 2004 was 15, meaning that at least half of the library media specialists were responsible for a small number of computers. The average was 52, a number that includes those bigger schools with many computers.

Most Minnesota school media centers have an automated or computerized catalog of the collection. Students can access the catalog only in the school media center in 29% of the 879 schools that responded. This means research into media center holdings can take place only when students can get into the school library media center to use the online catalog. Depending on class schedules, whether or not a school has flexible scheduling, hours the media center is open before and after school, and other factors, students may have a very limited opportunity to find materials they need in the school library media center. The recommended approach is to have the online catalog available on all networked computers in the school (classrooms, computer lab, etc.) and from home via the school library media program's Web page.

In those schools with an automated catalog, 24% have the computerized catalog available throughout the school; 22% of schools have even wider access; students can access the catalog in the school and online from home as well. Access to the catalog and databases is improving. In 2004 64% of students had access to electronic databases in school and from home or outside school; in 2002 46% of students had that access.

Slightly more students in Minnesota school media centers had access to an automated catalog in 2004 (72%) than did in 2002 (65%). In more than half (55%) of elementary school media centers, students do not have access to an automated catalog. In comparison, in 68% of high school media centers, students do have access to an automated catalog.

Information and Media Literacy Curriculum

Information literacy is an all-important skill in today's information flooded world. Students must be able to identify a need for informa-

District technology committee is discussing moving 12-14 computers from the library to classrooms. If that happens, I will no longer be able to teach full classes in the media center.

NLLN Middle School

tion, determine what types of information are needed, find that information using a variety of sources including print, online, non-print, access the value and veracity of the information for the purpose, synthesize what information is found, put the information to use, and display a final product. The information literate learner integrates technology skills, reading and media literacy skills and demonstrates an understanding of ethical issues such as copyright, plagiarism, and intellectual freedom.¹⁷ Not to mention the time and success pressures today's students are under. These are high expectations for anyone, but important because the information literate student of today is the informed and knowledgeable adult of tomorrow.

Minnesota's school library media specialists, through the professional association Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO), have been proactive in developing a set of Information and Technology Literacy Standards that describe the processes and specific skills a learner must understand and practice to meet a minimum level of information literacy. The Standards are divided into four areas: research process, technology use, reading and media literacy, and responsible use of technology and information. The hope is that these Standards will be adopted statewide as the basis for information and technology literacy curriculum.

...wonderful to be able to work collaboratively with teachers, work with students individually...and tailor the media center to the school population and curriculum fully. These duties were extremely difficult when the LMS was only [there] two days a week.

METRONET Suburban
Elementary School

Minnesota school library media programs are implementing information/media literacy curriculum. 69% of school media centers reported that they had an information/media literacy curriculum in 2004. Some Minnesota school media centers have very active information literacy programs. 80 schools (9%) of 887 reported that over 2000 students receive information skills instruction in an average month. 166 schools (19%) report that from 801 to 2000 students receive information skills training. Of those schools with an information literacy curriculum, 71% report that ethical and legal behaviors including copyright are taught.

Many media specialists commented that in their schools it is "assumed that information literacy is taught by classroom teachers or [in high schools] by subject specialists." However, with no curriculum it is not possible to know how students are being taught information literacy skills or to measure any results from the information literacy teaching. It is important that all students learn these skills with a consistent measurable curriculum so they are able to learn and produce in higher education settings and are functioning as information literate adults in the future.

Multitype Regional Comparisons

Minnesota's multitype library regions provide a basis for regional comparisons of the data in both the 2002 and 2004 Census.¹⁸ There are some significant differences across the regions in school library media centers. These differences are notable in media program budgets and collections. Data is affected by the number of schools that responded to the Census in each region, as well as by the size of the schools and the districts.

Table 22. Number of Schools Responding to 2004 Census by Minnesota Multitype Regions

Multitype	Schools	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	K-12
CMLE	124	61	16	41	6
Metronet	410	267	54	86	3
NCLC	65	32	5	19	9
NLLN	125	49	8	38	30
SAMMIE	83	32	10	33	8
SELS	103	59	9	29	6
SMILE	58	28	4	20	6
Total	968	528	106	266	68

One notable difference among the regions is the number of K12 schools. Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) by far the greatest number of K12 schools reporting. NLLN is also the largest geographic region of the seven multitypes. It encompasses 23 counties in northwestern Minnesota. In the METRONET region, which is the seven counties around the Twin Cities, only three of the more than 400 schools reporting are K12 schools. How programs are administered, as well as staffing and budget, is impacted by the type of school and its enrollment and district resources devoted to school library media programs.

Budget

Budgets differ significantly across regions.

Table 23. Average Book Budget from School Funding By Minnesota Multitype

Multitype	Number of Schools	Book Budget Per Student
CMLE	124	\$8.00
Metronet	410	\$6.09
NCLC	65	\$6.69
NLLN	125	\$9.87
SAMMIE	83	\$8.07
SELS	103	\$9.07
SMILE	58	\$11.16
Total	968	\$7.34

Book budgets vary by school level within the multitype regions. In all regions, high school media programs have higher budgets. For example, high school media program book budgets are 46% higher than elementary school budgets in the METRONET region.

**Table 24. 2004 Average Book Budgets by School Type
By Minnesota Multitype Region**

Multitype	Elementary	Middle	High	K12
CMLE	\$4,309	\$6,329	\$6,669	\$3,433
METRONET	\$3,389	\$5,999	\$9,247	\$2,633
NCLC	\$1,776	\$3,046	\$5,050	\$3,632
NLLN	\$4,579	\$7,514	\$5,122	\$4,093
SAMMIE	\$2,850	\$3,707	\$4,289	\$2,014
SELS	\$4,457	\$5,986	\$5,957	\$2,367
SMILE	\$4,910	\$4,183	\$6,138	\$1,375

The statewide average book budget for all schools is \$4,743. School library media programs in five of the multitype regions have average book budgets that exceed this state average. NCLC budgets are 35% below the state average; in SAMMIE, media programs are funded at 27% less than the state average.

Changes in state curriculum standards require support [from] the media center, but no corresponding increase in the materials budget.

METRONET Early Childhood Center

In 2003-2004, none of the spending levels in multitype regions reached the national average spending levels for 2001-2002.¹⁹ The national average spending on books at the elementary level was \$5,751 in 2001-2002. In that same school year,

middle schools nationally spent an average of \$8,569 and high schools spent an average of \$15,130 annually on books. K12 and other schools spent an average of \$7,490 a year on books.

**Table 25. 2004 Outside Fundraising for Books
by Minnesota Multitype Region and School Level**

Multitype	Average	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	K12
CMLE	\$1,644	\$2,164	\$1,717	\$186	\$1,767
Metronet	\$4,457	\$5,186	\$3,176	\$2,261	\$1,100
NCLC	\$954	\$1,040	\$313	\$811	\$1,254
NLLN	\$2,015	\$2,021	\$871	\$992	\$4,028
SAMMIE	\$1,097	\$1,439	\$824	\$836	\$250
SELS	\$1,648	\$1,566	\$1,634	\$1,930	\$1,300
SMILE	\$1,536	\$1,888	\$1,367	\$1,036	NA

METRONET school library media programs lead other regions in outside funding for school library media programs. Of the 30 top fundraising school media centers, 18 were in Anoka-Hennepin School district; 4 were in Minneapolis. The top 30 fundraisers raised between

\$13,000 to \$60,000. The top 100 fundraisers ranged from \$5,000 to \$60,000. Nearly all the schools were in the METRONET region. North Country Library Cooperative (NCLC) media programs raised the least money on average. However, K12 media centers in NCLC raised a respectable \$1,254 for books. The least amount of outside fundraising was in secondary schools in CMLE.

Fundraising appears more successful in elementary school media centers than other schools, regardless of region.

Media Center Resources

There is a marked difference in the size of book collections among the multitype regions. METRONET school library collections had the largest average at 16,432 volumes. The smallest average sized collections were in SMILE in south central Minnesota and SAMMIE in southwestern Minnesota. In all regions, books-per-pupil exceeds the minimum number recommended in the Standards.

Table 26. 2004 School Library Media Centers Average Book Collections and Books per Pupil by Minnesota Multitype Regions

Multitype	Number of Schools	Average Book Collections	Books per Student
CMLE	118	14,164	21
Metronet	398	16,432	21
NCLC	63	12,021	27
NLLN	108	12,338	25
SAMMIE	73	11,233	26
SELS	96	14,335	28
SMILE	49	11,431	27
Total	905	14,428	23

Average copyright for all regions is between 1984 and 1988, close to the statewide average. No one region seems to have invested more in their book collections than any other, making the need for substantial investment in updating these collections a statewide need.

Table 27. Profile of School Library Media Program Collections by Minnesota Multitype Region

Multitype	Number of Schools	Average Number of Volumes	Average Copyright of All Books in Collection	Average Copyright of Geography Books
CMLE	124	14,164	1986	1987
Metronet	410	16,432	1988	1989
NCLC	65	12,021	1985	1984
NLLN	125	12,338	1985	1985
SAMMIE	83	11,233	1985	1985
SELS	103	14,335	1984	1985
SMILE	58	11,431	1986	1987
Total	968	14,428	1986	1987

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1. Library Development and Services (LDS) was the name of the state library agency in the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning (CFL). In early 2004, CFL was reorganized into the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Since then LDS has changed its name twice. It is now called State Library Services and School Technology. It is in the MDE and is the Minnesota state library agency. For the purposes of clarity in the two Census reports, we have retained the LDS name when referring to the agency.
 2. The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is administered by the federal Institute of Library and Museum Services through Minnesota's state library agency the State Library Services and School Technology division (formerly LDS) of the Minnesota Department of Education.
 3. A handout with statewide averages for certain questions was distributed at the State Fair. A copy is in the Appendix.
 4. *The Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000* was developed by a committee of the Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) in cooperation with The Minnesota State Library Agency, Library Development and Services, Department of Children, Families & Learning. It contains 26 standards at three levels: minimum, standard, and exemplary. A summary of the Standards is in the Appendix.
 5. The MCA is a high standard test; a school with a score of 1545.2 or more means students scoring average or above are above the "grade level" based on the state definition. The MCA scale scores range from 200 to 3000 for individuals. For schools, the maximum possible average would be 1800.
 6. Schools with fewer than 100 students and charter schools were not included in the Census, since in most cases such schools cannot support a media center or media specialist. See Appendix for a detailed table with additional information.
 7. Miller, Marilyn L. and Marilyn L. Shontz, "The SLJ Spending Survey," *School Library Journal* 49, no. 10 (2003):52-59.
 8. St. Lifer, Evan. "Stop the Insanity: Some Nonfiction Series Publishers Need To Know When to Say When," *School Library Journal* 50, no. 3 (2004):11.
 9. Farmington School District media specialists have described their timeline and content of their presentations at <http://www.farmington.k12.mn.us/fmse/media/mediapresentation.htm>. (Accessed October 12, 2004)
 10. The National School Lunch Program. "Program Act Sheet." <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/AboutLunch/NSLPFactSheet.htm> (Accessed October 13, 2004)
 11. Additional budget tables appear in the Appendix.
 12. Ibid.

13. 2001-2002 budget table is in the Appendix.
14. Miller, Marilyn L. and Marilyn L. Shontz, "The SLJ Spending Survey," *School Library Journal* 49, no. 10 (2003):52-59.
15. The New York Times Article Archive 1851-Present. <http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html> (Accessed October 13, 2004)
16. The MINITEX Library Information Network (MINITEX) is a publicly supported network of academic, public, state government, and special libraries working cooperatively to improve library service for their users. The MINITEX program is funded by the Minnesota Legislature through the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (MHESO).
17. *Recommended Standards for Information and Technology Literacy*, Minnesota Educational Media Organization Standards Committee, July 23, 2004. <http://www.memoweb.org/htmlfiles/links.html#literacy>
18. These seven multitype library systems were established by the Minnesota State Legislature in 1978. Each regional system in the statewide network serves public libraries, school library media centers, college and university libraries, law, medical, government, museum and other special libraries and information centers. See Appendix for a map showing the multitype regions.
19. Miller, Marilyn L. and Marilyn L. Shontz, "The SLJ Spending Survey," *School Library Journal* 49, no. 10 (2003):52-59.

Chapter Three

Recommendations



Chapter 3

Recommendations

The more you read, the better you read. Minnesota students deserve up-to-date books and research materials in their school library media centers. They need and want materials that interest and inform them. These materials are vital if our students are to become literate, competent users of information now and in the future.

The 2004 Census confirmed the finding from the 2002 Census that Minnesota students are using books that are old and out-of-date. Book collections with average copyright dates in the 1980s and earlier show a lack of investment in quality materials over the years. Lack of fulltime media staff, loss of professional staff, programs operated by non-licensed staff, and low budgets are more evidence that this important education resource has been neglected. Media specialists and their supporters need to address these issues with a comprehensive advocacy program aimed at all stakeholders. The program must clearly explain the impact that well-funded, up-to-date, and professionally-staffed school library media programs have on student achievement.

While some districts or principals are committed to developing and maintaining quality school library media programs, others have not made media programs a priority. This leads to inequity for students across the state. Some students have great media centers with up-to-date resources, high-speed Internet access, licensed professional media specialists to teach information literacy and research skills, and more. Other students are muddling along with books from the 1970s or earlier, little access to computers, and even schools with no media center or no media specialist licensed staff. Which group of students is more likely to be able to use information as productive adults of the future?

Minnesota, unlike many other states, has no requirements or guidelines for minimum acceptable levels of school library media programs in K12 schools. This contributes to the inequity of access for students. With no guidelines set by MDE, school library media programs are at the mercy of local school boards and building principals. Site-based management, local and state budget cuts, unfunded mandates from the federal government, and other factors leave local boards and administrators looking for places to reduce spending. Often it is the “non-mandated” programs, including media programs, that are targeted first.

The Minnesota Department of Education has a vital role to play in strengthening our school library media programs. It needs to make

Local districts set spending priorities. One large METRONET suburban district has an annual athletic budget of more than \$1million. The budget for media center books is just over \$35,000 for the district. Other money for books comes from school building fundraising.¹

Minnesota lags behind in spending on school library media programs. The national average for books from local funds is \$8,068. The Minnesota average is \$6,423.

A large metro suburban high school has 25 football coaches for a program of approximately 300 players. That same school has one media specialist and one FTE support staff person to work with its 2,400 students.³

support of school library media programs a priority in its budget and staffing, making it clear to local districts that school library media programs play a key role in student achievement.

Quality library media programs with resources, technology, and informed, committed library media specialists are not developed easily or without cost. For Minnesota's media programs to advance to their full capacity to impact student achievement, all stakeholders need to look upon the development of media programs as an investment in our future. The media program is the one program that can reach all students every year of their education from preschool through high school—and make them competent learners in university settings. The investment pays off in student academic success now and better jobs in the future. We must make the investment in media programs to ensure that all Minnesota students will have the skills they need.

These recommendations are the first steps to creating school library media programs that give all Minnesota students access to information and resources and the training they need to use them. School library media specialists, Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO), the Minnesota Department of Education, public librarians, teachers, parents, and all stakeholders in Minnesota's future need to band together to push for improved school library media programs. To help improve student achievement and create information literate Minnesotans, these investments and changes need to be made:

1. **Increase spending from state and local sources to update all school library media center collections to the standard of current**, which in the *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000* is defined as a collection with an average copyright of 10 years old or newer.
 - Minnesota schools must be able to purchase new materials to support curriculum and standards changes as well as to buy materials that are age appropriate and appealing to students.
2. **All Minnesota schools must provide a high quality, professionally-staffed library media program with up-to-date materials, access to the Internet and other electronic resources, and funding to maintain the program so all Minnesota students have access to the information they need and the training to use it.**
 - The Minnesota Department of Education must address equity issues in access to and quality of school library media programs so that no matter where a student goes to school, he or she has a good quality media program.
 - Every Minnesota school should have a certified media specialist and adequate support staff to provide instruction in

library use to students, to collaborate with teachers, and to leverage the investments already made in library resources and technology by integrating technology into the curriculum.

- Develop plans to ensure all students have access to up-to-date technology in media programs and classrooms so that 100% of Minnesota's K12 students can use ELM and other electronic resources. A permanent solution to funding telecommunications costs in schools is vital to maintaining and expanding access to technology statewide.
3. **The Minnesota Department of Education must demonstrate its commitment to school library programs and recognize their impact on student literacy and achievement. MDE can demonstrate this support by:**
 - Hiring school library development specialists at MDE State Library Services and School Technology to lead the improvements in media programs and to provide technical assistance and support to media specialists and administrators as they develop effective library media programs.
 4. **The State of Minnesota should adopt quantitative and qualitative standards for school library media programs to insure that all students have high quality school library media programs.**
 - Adopt *Minnesota Standards for Effective School Library Media Programs 2000* and *Standards for Information and Technology Literacy* and other benchmarks based on research findings, Information Power, and other resources.
 - Insure that all school library media programs across the state provide equitable access to information and formal teaching of information and technology literacy skills. This will help Minnesota students build the foundation of reading and literacy to become knowledgeable users of information.
 5. **The Minnesota State Legislature and the Minnesota Department of Education must continue to fund the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM).**
 - The State Legislature and the Minnesota Department of Education must increase the state's financial commitment to ELM so all Minnesotans have access to thorough, accurate information for their academic, business, and personal use. Minnesota cannot use Federal LSTA funding for this statewide resource indefinitely.
 6. **Library media specialists and their supporters must develop education programs for various audiences to help increase their understanding of what library media programs do, what the research says, and what districts and schools need to improve their own programs.**

Minnesota's state library agency reported 3 FTE staff dedicated to library development, fewer than any other state except North Dakota. Delaware reported 7.5 library development staff members.²

Students in schools with a high percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunch are less likely to have access to a media specialist than students in schools with a smaller percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunch.

In FY03, MINITEX reported that library users initiated more than 2.2 million sessions on the Gale databases in ELM. The sessions resulted in 6.8 million searches. More than 5 million documents were retrieved.⁴

21% of Minnesota school library media specialists rarely or never do advocacy or public relations for their programs.

Book budgets differ significantly across regions. Average book budget vary from \$6.09 in the metro area to \$11.16 in the south central region.

- Media specialists need advocacy training in order to become more comfortable and articulate in this role.
 - Develop a coordinated, statewide effort to provide evidence to school administrators, parents, and others on importance of school library media programs and their impact on student achievement. A statewide initiative would benefit all school library media programs.
 - Disseminate the results of the Minnesota School Library Media Program Census projects to all groups to provide information for measurement and comparison of school library media programs.
 - Take information about the impact of school library media programs on student achievement to school boards, the public, and the State Legislature. Relate that information to the condition of Minnesota's school library media programs and the need for substantial investment in these vital programs.
- 7. The Minnesota Department of Education should continue data collection and analysis on school library media programs to provide measurement of program development.**
- Develop a procedure at MDE for regularly-scheduled data collection and analysis on school library media programs.
 - The collection of the data must go beyond the basic statistics on budgets, staffing, collections, and activities as the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) does. Appropriate data must be collected and put into context for users to determine how well school library media programs are performing and their impact on outcomes for students.
 - Perform additional analysis using the Census data collected in 2002 and 2004.

1. Brackin, Dennis and Michael Rand. "Beyond the Games, Part 1: Prep Sports Success Has a Price." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, November 23, 2003 (online update December 2, 2003). (Accessed October 12, 2004).

2. Holton, B., Kroe, E., O'Shea, P., Sheckells, C., Dorinski, S., and Freeman, M. (2004). *State Library Agencies: Fiscal Year 2002* (NCES 2004-304). U.S. Department of Education, NCES. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

3. Brackin.

4. <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/gen-info/about/facts/survey.asp>