

# FAST FACTS

Recent Statistics from The Library Research Service

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## State and National Data Link Circulation of Children's Materials from Public Libraries & Reading Test Scores

Relationships between public libraries and school library media centers (LMCs) are somewhat difficult to observe and assess. Consequently, distinguishing between the effects of public libraries and school LMCs on children's performance in school is problematic. Several recent issues of **FAST FACTS** have presented evidence of the contributions of LMCs alone and their collaboration with public libraries.

The latest data available for both Colorado (1997) and the United States (1994) indicates that public libraries themselves contribute to academic achievement.

### Highlights

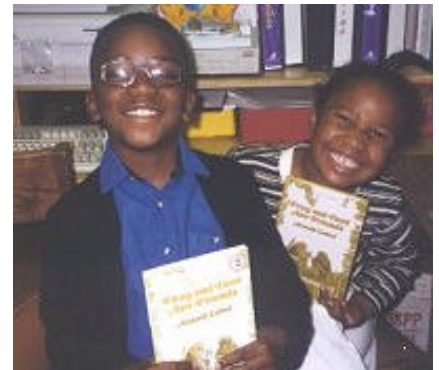
- In Colorado school districts scoring in the highest third on the 1997 CSAP reading test, circulation of children's materials per capita by public libraries was 50 percent higher than in school districts scoring in the lowest third.
- Similarly, in states scoring in the highest third on the 1994 NAEP reading test, circulation of children's materials per capita by public libraries was more than a third higher than in states scoring in the lowest third.

**Table 1 ■ Average Circulation of Children's Materials Per Capita for Public Libraries in High, Middle, and Low Scoring School Districts on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) Reading Test, 1997**

| School Districts Ranked on CSAP Reading Test Scores | Circulation of Children's Materials Per Capita* for Public Libraries, 1997 |           |         |
|---|--|-----------|---------|
|   | Print  | Non-print | Total** |
| Highest Third                                       | 2.8  | .51       | 3.2     |
| Middle Third  | 2.3  | .19       | 2.7     |
| Lowest Third  | 2.0  | .18       | 2.3     |

Sources: Colorado Department of Education, LRS.

\* While circulation of children's materials per child would be a preferable ratio, numbers of children residing in public library jurisdictions are not readily available. Because the circulation count is of children's materials rather than transactions by children, using legal service area population is deemed an acceptable substitute.



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**Colorado**

When aggregated by school district, the state’s public library statistics for 1997 indicate that circulation of children’s materials—both print and non-print formats—is associated with higher performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) reading test. (See Table 1.)



indicate that circulation of children’s materials (including print and non-print formats, but not distinguishing between them) is associated with higher performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test. (Note: The latest year for which NAEP reading test scores are available is 1994.)

**Table 2 ■ Average Circulation of Children’s Materials Per Capita for Public Libraries in High, Middle, and Low Scoring States on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Test, 1994**

| <b>States Ranked on NAEP Reading Test Scores</b> | <b>Circulation of Children’s Materials Per Capita for Public Libraries</b> |
|--|--|
| Highest Third                                    | 2.5  |
| Middle Third                                     | 2.0  |
| Lowest Third                                     | 1.8  |

Sources: Library Statistics Program and National Assessment of Educational Progress, both National Center for Education Statistics

**United States**

Likewise, when aggregated by state, the nation’s public library statistics for 1994

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**Further Reading**

Other recent issues of **FAST FACTS** on the role of school library media centers and/or public libraries in K-12 academic achievement include:

- No. 141; Aug 15, 1998: *Library Media Specialists & Technology Linked to Higher CSAP Test Scores*
- No. 149; Oct. 6, 1998: *Student Use of Library Media Programs, Key to NAEP Success*
- No. 150; Oct. 7, 1998: *Well-Managed Library Media Programs That Cooperate With Local Public Libraries Linked to Higher CSAP Test Scores*

For copies of these issues of **FAST FACTS** and documents concerning **The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement** (1992, 1993) and the study in progress, **How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards**, visit [www.lrs.org](http://www.lrs.org).

For more information about the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), visit [nces.ed.gov/NAEP](http://nces.ed.gov/NAEP). Regularly updated links to this and related sites also appear on the LRS site.