

FAST FACTS

Recent Statistics from the
Library Research Service

Library Media Center Collections Suffer as Print Spending Drops

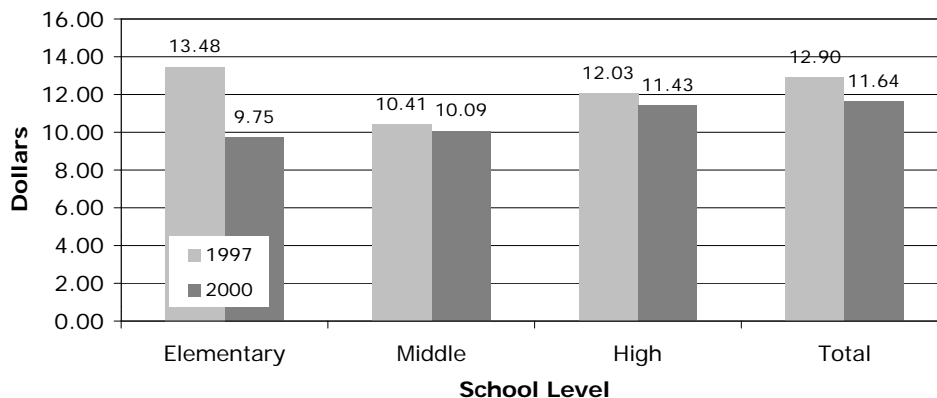
Print Expenditures

Over the past three years, school library media center spending on print materials (defined as all types of books) per student dropped 10 percent from an average of \$12.90 in 1997 to \$11.64 in 2000. Elementary schools experienced the biggest cut in expenditures with a 28 percent drop – taking their spending from the most per student to the least per student based on school level.

- **High schools:** 5 percent drop from \$12.03 to \$11.43
- **Middle schools:** 3 percent drop from \$10.41 to \$10.09
- **Elementary schools:** 28 percent drop from \$13.48 to \$9.75

Compounding the problem of a decrease in print spending is the continued increase in print costs. According to *School Library Journal* the average price for all print titles combined has increased 12 percent since 1997*. The combined impact of decreased spending and increased costs does not bode well for the future of library media centers' print collections. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1
Library Media Center Print Expenditures Per Student
for Colorado Public Schools by School Level, 1997 & 2000



For more information on book prices see *Fast Facts* no. 172, "Future Trends in Pricing for Library Materials" at <http://www.lrs.org/>

*Source: *School Library Journal* available online at <http://schoollibraryjournal.com/index.asp>

Highlights

- From 1997 to 2000, library media center spending on print materials per student decreased by 10 percent, while book costs during the same period increased by 12 percent.
- Extrapolating from the findings of the study, *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards*, a decrease in spending on print collections can adversely impact students' academic achievement and as a result lower test scores.
- For all school levels combined, the ratio of print volumes per student increased 14 percent from 1997 to 2000.
- Middle schools had the greatest increase in the ratio of volumes per student with a rise of 18 percent from 17 volumes per student to 20.

Print Volumes Per Student

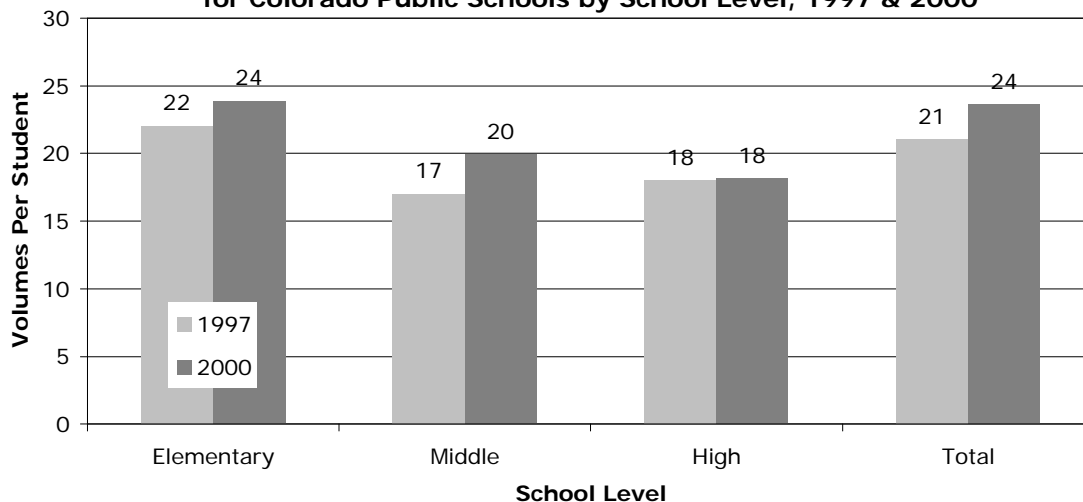
Also impacting library media centers' print collections is the continued growth in enrollment in Colorado public schools. Since 1997 enrollment has increased over 5.4 percent, with average annual growth statewide of approximately 2 percent.

Year	Enrollment
1997	687,167
1998	699,135
1999	708,109
2000	724,508

Fortunately, the ratio of print volumes per student has kept pace with the increased enrollment. In fact, the overall volumes per student ratio has increased 14 percent in the last three years, from 21 volumes per student in 1997 to 24 in 2000. Middle schools benefited from the biggest change with an increase of 18 percent since 1997. (See Figure 2.)

- **High schools:** held steady at 18 volumes per student
- **Middle schools:** increased 18 percent from 17 volumes per student to 20
- **Elementary schools:** increased 9 percent from 22 volumes per student to 24

Figure 2
Library Media Center Print Volumes Per Student
for Colorado Public Schools by School Level, 1997 & 2000



Cause for Concern

In the study, *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards*, school library media center development, including collection size and expenditures, was demonstrated to be an important factor affecting student academic achievement and test scores. Although the volumes per student ratio is strong, the drop in print expenditures has the potential to degrade library media center's print collections and in turn adversely impact student academic achievement and test scores.

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