

## No Increase in Number of School Librarians in Colorado

Despite Their Pursuit of Activities Related to Achievement



Results from the 2002 Colorado School Library Survey show no increase in the number of endorsed school librarians serving Colorado children. This is disappointing in light of the study ***How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards*** (Colorado, 2000) which found that strong school libraries staffed by endorsed and licensed school librarians contribute to measurable improvement in student achievement.

The 2002 survey did have good news about how school library staff is spending time. An important finding from the above-mentioned study was that test scores rise when school librarians and teachers work together. This year's survey shows that school library staff are working collaboratively with classroom teachers and administrators at all grade levels.

One question on the annual survey asks the responding school libraries about how many of their staff hold the School Library Media Endorsement. To be endorsed in school library media, a person must hold a teaching license and have completed an approved upper division or graduate program in school library media. Table 1 shows the figures from the 2000 and 2002 surveys.

**Table 1: Number of Endorsed School Library Media Specialists**

Endorsed School Librarians	State Totals	Elementary Schools	Jr. High/Middle Schools	High Schools	Combined Schools
2000	928	465	202	219	41
2002	930	481	195	221	33

Source: Colorado School Library Statistics, available at [http://www.lrs.org/School\\_stats.asp](http://www.lrs.org/School_stats.asp)

The number of pupils in Colorado's public schools grew by 27,354 from Fall 2000 to Fall 2002, according to the Colorado Department of Education. But despite the evidence of the importance of endorsed librarians presented in ***How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards***, there were only two more endorsed media specialists employed in Colorado schools in 2002 than in 2000.

Another important finding from the study was that test scores rise in both elementary and middle schools when school librarians and teachers work together. Every year the Colorado School Library Survey gathers information from respondents about how the school library staff uses time on the job. Table 2 shows the annual benchmarks for leadership and collaborative activities stated as percentages of time on the job from the 2002 school library survey.

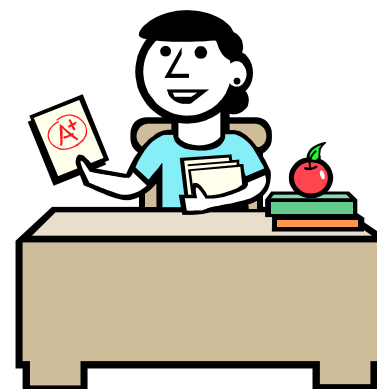
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**Table 2: Percentage of Time Spent by School Library Staff by Type of Professional Activity, 2002**

School Level	Identify materials for Teachers	Teaching Information Skills	Provide in-service training	Reading incentive activities	Collection Development	Meetings	Curriculum Committees	Managing Technology
<b>All Colorado</b>	8	23	2	11	9	6	2	13
<b>Elementary</b>	7	23	2	15	8	6	2	11
<b>Jr./Middle</b>	10	23	3	6	9	7	2	13
<b>High</b>	11	22	3	5	10	8	2	18
<b>Combined</b>	8	16	2	9	11	5	2	15

Source: Colorado School Library Statistics, 2002 available at [http://www.lrs.org/asp\\_school/stats\\_2002.asp](http://www.lrs.org/asp_school/stats_2002.asp)

At every grade level school library staff are spending a significant percentage of time in direct contact with students teaching information skills, over 20% at all but combined level schools where only 16% of time is spent on this activity. In elementary schools 15% of school library staff time is spent with students on reading incentive activities, but this activity takes less of the library staff time in the older grades. Another significant demand on library staff time, over 10% at every school level, is managing technology. Technology management and collection development are important librarian competencies covered in school library media graduate work and have direct impact on the quality of library services offered in the school library. This supports increasing the number of school libraries with at least one endorsed school library media specialist. The table also shows that in addition to direct student contact, Colorado school library staff are collaborating with other school staff and administration on identifying appropriate materials, training, and curriculum.



While the 2002 Colorado School Library Survey showed that the number of certified school librarians in the state did not increase, it also showed that incumbents are spending the vast majority of their time on the types of activities that have been shown to impact student achievement. In other words, Colorado's school librarians are doing a good job.

**Sources:**

Lance, Keith Curry; Rodney, Marcia J. and Hamilton-Pennell, Christine. *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards: The Second Colorado Study*. Hi Willow Research & Publishing. April 2000.

Library Research Service, Colorado State Library, Colorado School Library Statistics available at [http://www.lrs.org/School\\_stats.asp](http://www.lrs.org/School_stats.asp)

Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Education Statistics available at [http://www.cde.state.co.us/index\\_stats.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_stats.htm)

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