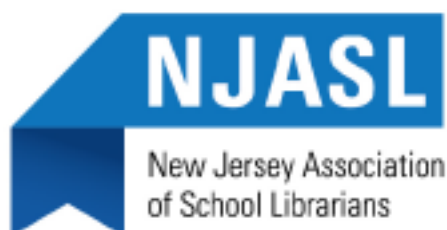# School Library Programs in New Jersey: Building Blocks for Realizing Student Potential with ESSA Legislation Opportunities

Report by:

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April 2016

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Acknowledgements:

Maureen Donohue and James Keehbler were primary researchers gathering the census data, administering the survey and preparing the report.

Maureen is a Teen Librarian at the Piscataway Public Library, a member of the New Jersey Library Association Public Policy Committee, and a 2016 New Jersey Library Association Rising Star.

James is the Director of the Piscataway Public Library and a past chair of the New Jersey Library Association Public Policy Committee, as well as 2015/2016 New Jersey Library Association President.

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- John Chrastka of EveryLibrary for the additional insight in the ESSA legislation, the state level implementation process for New Jersey and its potential for school library programs.
- Special thanks to all school library employees that shared their inspiring and sometimes heartbreaking stories and their notes of thanks. You inspired us to dig deep and carry on.

Background, Purpose and Methodology

In late 2015 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed by Congress and approved by President Obama. This act updates the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that was last reauthorized in 2001 under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). ESSA includes specific references to "effective school library programs" and "school librarians." The legislation provides resources to:

- Develop effective school library programs to provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement.
- Provide professional development to support instructional services provided by effective school library programs and develop, administer, and evaluate high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction initiatives.
- Provide time for teachers (and other literacy staff, as appropriate, such as school librarians or specialized support personnel) to meet to plan comprehensive literacy instruction
- Promote literacy programs in low income communities. May include providing professional development for school librarians, books and up-to-date materials to high need schools
- Block grants can be made available to increase "access to school libraries" and provide training to "use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology, to improve instruction and student achievement

(American Library Association, 2015)

The federal legislation leaves much of the implementation to the states. The regulations in New Jersey will be written by the New Jersey Department of Education.

The New Jersey Association of School Librarians and the New Jersey Library Association recognized a need to determine the current situation of the school library programs in New Jersey in order to act as a foundation for ESSA implementation in New Jersey.

Step One was a census to determine how many School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) were working in New Jersey School districts, utilizing the NJ School Directory from the NJ Department of Education, and comparing this number with the data from 2007/2008 to determine if a trend was revealed.

Step Two was a survey sent out to the SLMSs and school library staff to gain further insight into the current status of school library programs across New Jersey.

Note:
The literature on the value of literacy, information literacy, school library programs and certified school library media specialists is extensive. In the report we have included select examples, but we have only scratched the surface. To find further research, there exist three excellent tools:

Kachel, Debra E., School Library Research Summarized: A Graduate Class Project, Revised Edition, Mansfield University, PA. http://keithcurrylance.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/MU-LibAdvoBklt2013.pdf

School Libraries Work: a Compendium of Research Supporting the Effectiveness of School Libraries, (2016), Scholastic. http://www.scholastic.com/SLW2016/

Gretes, Frances, (2013), School Library Impact Studies: A Review of Findings and Guide to Sources, Gretes Research Services. http://www.baltimorelibraryproject.org/download/Library-Impact-Studies.pdf

Executive Summary

In an effort to determine the current status of School Library Media Specialists (SLMS), School Libraries, and funding for School Library programs in New Jersey, The New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) and the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) collaborated on:

1. A census of certified School Library Media Specialists (SLMS)
2. A survey to gain further insight into New Jersey School Library Programs

The survey was developed to coincide with the recent signing of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which includes School Librarians and school library programs as an essential component in education. This reauthorization provides new opportunities for school librarians and school library funding. Based on survey results, NJLA and NJASL believe ESSA presents a critical opportunity to reinvest in school library programs, to unlock the potential in New Jersey students and prepare them for college and beyond.

In New Jersey, as well as many states, the economic downturn and expanding expectations from schools has forced difficult fiscal decisions for many New Jersey school districts. Survey results found that 89% of school libraries are receiving flat, decreased, or no funding for their school library programs. The census and survey both show a reduction in SLMS positions as well as a reduction in the support staff for school libraries. In some districts this situation is complicated by SLMS having to cover multiple schools or numerous other non-traditional SLMS roles.

Results determined that SLMSs spend 40% of their time performing non traditional duties. Some of these duties include art teacher, basic skills instructor, electives teacher, locker room monitor, administrative assistant, and substitute teacher. In addition, 71% indicated they "never" or "rarely" have time to collaborate with teachers to promote library resources. The survey results confirm SLMSs with more support and funding can provide greater opportunity for New Jersey school students.

Survey respondents repeatedly voiced concerns that a result of eliminating certified SLMSs would see the staff, the students, and the school as a whole suffer. They believe curricula become unsupported, test scores decrease, and students become unprepared for higher education. Schools will "lack a professional guide to credible, relevant, and high-quality resources which is vital to the development of information literacy." These statements are strongly supported by recent relevant research cited in this report.

The ESSA legislation offers an opportunity for all stakeholders to work together to create vibrant, forward-thinking and valued school library programs in all New Jersey schools to increase literacy levels, critical thinking, and information literacy and research skills. It is time to reinvest in our school library programs with ESSA related funding and support to provide New Jersey students with the opportunity that is provided by strong literacy and information literacy skills.

Discussion of Tools

Stage 1 - Census

In early December 2015 through the middle of January 2016 we worked to determine the current school library staffing levels in New Jersey Schools in order to find comparative data to use with the 2007-2008 New Jersey Association of School Librarians data. We utilized the New Jersey School Directory from the State of New Jersey Department of Education for our starting point. Our inquiries, where possible, gathered the names and e-mail addresses of the staff responsible for the school library.
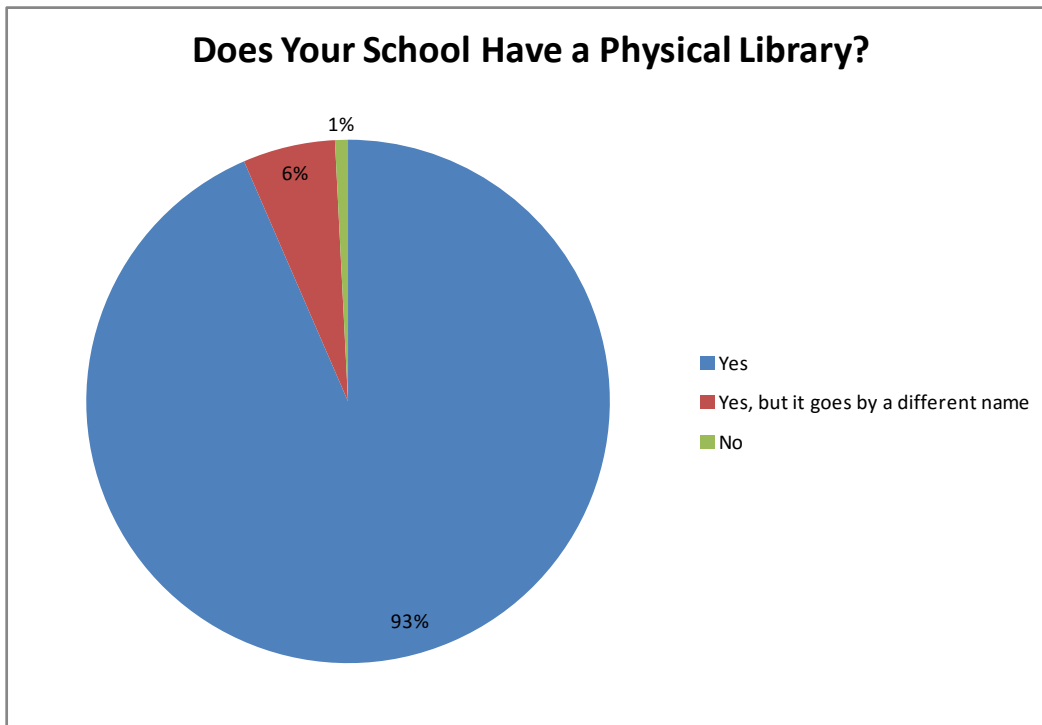
Our tools included:
1. Reaching out to public librarians in the communities to ascertain the school library scenario
2. Researching school web sites
3. Reaching out through NJASL to members
4. Directly contacting school administrators
5. Verifying our findings with National Center for Education Statistics Database (http://nces.ed.gov/ ccd/districtsearch/index.asp) 2013-2014 School Year data, accounting for changes since report.

Key findings:
*   There are approximately 20% fewer School Library Media Specialists(SLMS) in New Jersey than there were in 2007-2008

*   Over 20% of High Schools have no certified School Library Media Specialist available to students.

*   Over 150 School Library Media Specialists cover more than one school. One SLMS covers 7 schools in one district.

*   91 School Districts have no School Library Media Specialists (Not including charter schools)

*   33 districts have no School Library Media Specialists at the Elementary Level

*   Over 280 Elementary Level schools are without certified School Library Media Specialists

*   In the nearly 100 charter schools, there are fewer than 10 School Library Media Specialists.

Stage 2 - Survey
The survey was distributed to school library contacts throughout the state. The survey was open for a 3 month period and over 600 responses were collected. Utilizing the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey, we distributed a 20 question survey to 1,518 email addresses gathered from the census process, with a bounce rate of 3.3%. E-mailing the survey through SurveyMonkey insured no one person would be able to respond twice to the survey. The survey was available from February 23, 2016 to April 1, 2016. We received 611 responses, accounting for the bounced e-mails, the response rate was 41.6%.

Does Your School Have a Physical Library?

1%
6%
93%

■ Yes
■ Yes, but it goes by a different name
■ No

Findings:

This question was designed based on some limited stories of school libraries being closed, and school library staff working "from a cart." It is clear that most respondents still worked in a school library or media center. However, a number of respondents commented on how their spaces were being made unavailable for PARCC testing or used as cafeterias. ESSA provides new opportunities for funding to enhance literacy through the *Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN)* program and the now codified *Innovative Approaches to Literacy* (IAL) program.
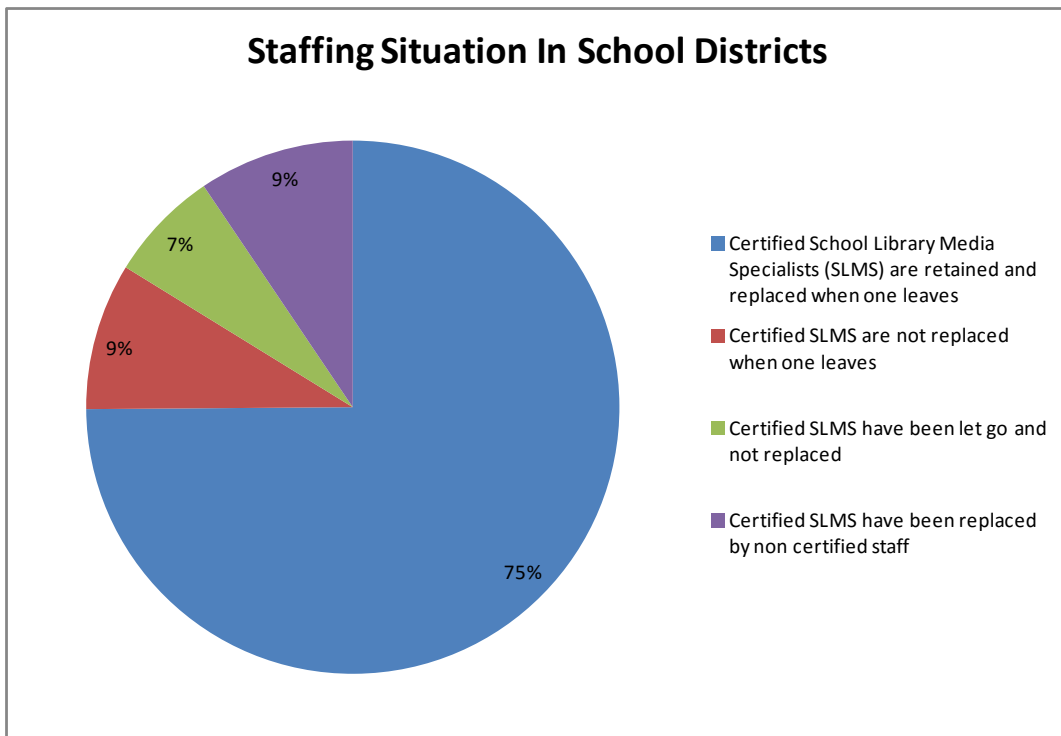
Recent Relevant Research:

- Children who are more proficient in comprehension and technical reading and spelling skills read more; because of more print exposure, their comprehension and technical reading and spelling skills improved more with each year of education. In preschool and kindergarten print exposure explained 12% of the variance in oral language skills, in primary school 13%, in middle school 19%, in high school 30%, and in college and university 34%. (Mol, S.E., Bus, A.G., 2011)

- Consistently, all students and all studied cohorts at schools with larger book collections are more likely to earn Advanced and less likely to earn Below Basic scores than their counterparts at schools with smaller book collections. (Lance, C.K., Schwarz, B., *2012*)

From New Jersey SLMS in the field:

- "From working in an urban, high poverty, low functioning district, I have seen first hand the positive effects a school library with a certified media specialist has on a population like this. Most students do not have books at home or anyone at home to read to them. The simple opportunity to visit the library to pick their own book is very empowering and special."

- "We were closed last year for 3 months due to PARCC testing. We will be closed for 4 weeks this year and although this is an improvement, we will still be without the physical library resources and a teacher-librarian for a considerable amount of time."

- "Please continue to fight for School Library Media Specialist and School Libraries. It appears as if the Common Core and PARCC testing has moved into our spaces…"

Staffing Situation In School Districts

	Percentage
Certified School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) are retained and replaced when one leaves	75%
Certified SLMS are not replaced when one leaves	9%
Certified SLMS have been let go and not replaced	7%
Certified SLMS have been replaced by non certified staff	9%

Findings:

Nearly 10% of Certified SLMS are not replaced when one leaves and 7.63% work in districts where Certified SLMS have been let go and not replaced. Finally, 10.61% work in districts where the SLMS have been replaced with non-certified staff. The Census revealed entire districts without certified SLMS as well as none at various levels of instruction. The 20% reduction of certified SLMS's in the past eight years, combined with the continuing trend of not replacing or eliminating SLMS positions moving forward, will impact literacy and information literacy for all New Jersey students if not reversed through thoughtful implementation of ESSA state regulations.

Recent Relevant Research:

- Students who attend schools with certified teacher-librarians and quality library facilities perform better on standardized tests and are more likely to graduate, even after controlling for school size and student income level.

- The presence of a certified teacher-librarian on staff has a particularly high relationship to a school's five year graduation rate. (85% compared to 79% without certified teacher-librarians). The five year graduation rate in high poverty schools was 78.8% "five-year" graduation rate versus 43.2% without a certified teacher-librarian.

(Coker, E., 2015)

- After controlling for the level of resources available to schools, the study found that students at schools with certified SLMSs have, on average, higher fourth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) scores than students at schools without a certified SLMS.

(Small, R.V., Snyder, J., Parker, K., 2009)

- It (the study) shows that having at least a part-time LMS (and preferably, a full-time LMS) tends to yield notably higher proficiency rates in all five subject areas than does having no LMS.

(Dow, M.J., McMahon-Lakin, J., 2012)

- We found that students at schools that gained or maintained an endorsed librarian to manage the library program averaged higher CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program) reading scores and higher increases in those scores over time than students at schools whose library programs were run by either non-endorsed librarians or library assistants.
(Lance, C. K., Hofschire, L., 2012)

- On average, almost nine percent (8.6%) more students score Advanced in Reading where students have a full-time, certified librarian with support staff than where there they have a full-time, certified librarian alone. Further, almost eight percent (7.9%) more students score Advanced in Reading where students have a full-time, certified librarian than where they do not (i.e., anything from a part-time librarian to none at all).

- On average, the percentage of students scoring Advanced in Writing is two and a half times higher for schools with vs. schools without a full-time, certified librarian (13.2% vs. 5.3%). Similarly, the average percentage of students scoring Advanced in Writing is almost twice as high for schools with a full-time, certified librarian with support staff vs. those with a full-time certified librarian alone (16.7% vs. 9.2%).
(Lance, C. K., Schwarz, B., 2012)

- For elementary schools that have at least one full-time endorsed librarian, the percentage of third, fourth, and fifth grade students scoring proficient or advanced in reading is consistently higher than for schools with lower staffing levels – a 4 to 5 percent absolute difference and a 6 to 8 percent proportional difference.
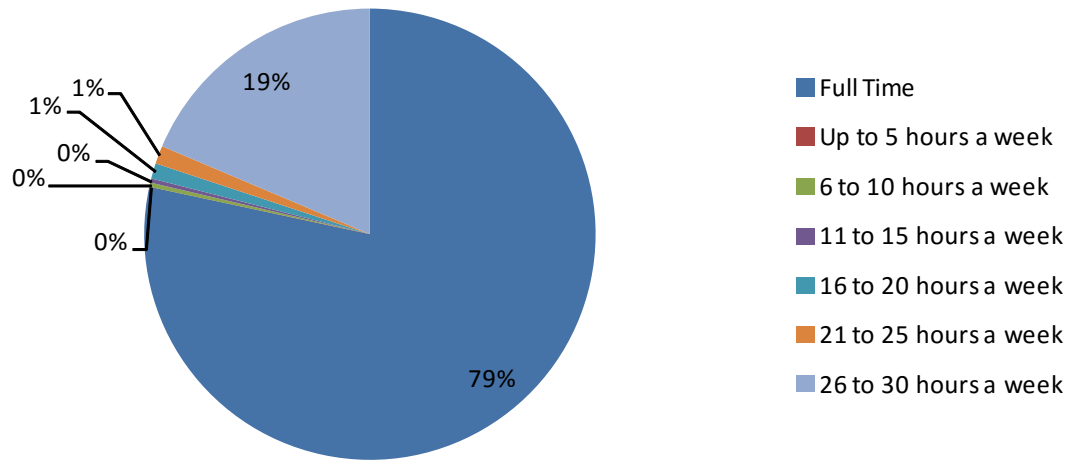(Francis, B.H, Lance, C.K. & Lietzau, Z., 2010)

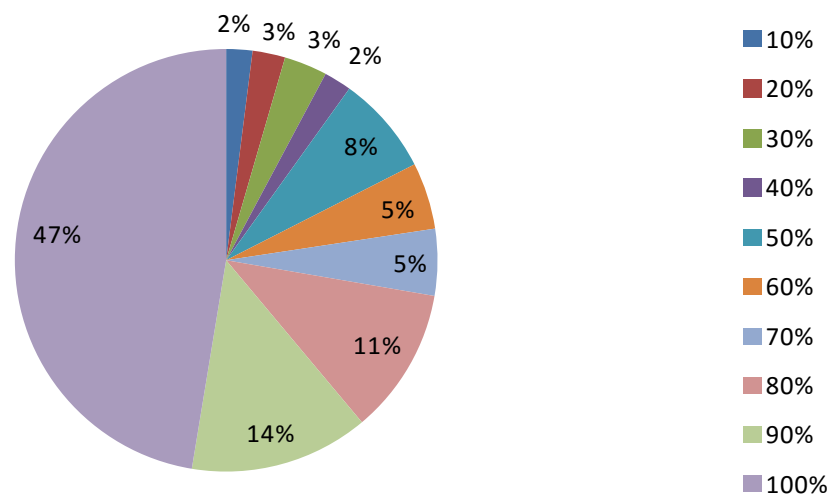**From New Jersey SLMS in the field:**
- "SLMSs must remain the connective, collaborative force within the school to maintain both 21st Century Skills and Common Core Standards."

- "I have spent over 60 years visiting and working in libraries, I have seen the difference a librarian can make in the life of a child. Reading is everything."

School Library Media Specialist Availability

How Many Hours a Week Do Respondents Work for the District?

- Full Time — 79%
- Up to 5 hours a week — 0%
- 6 to 10 hours a week — 0%
- 11 to 15 hours a week — 0%
- 16 to 20 hours a week — 1%
- 21 to 25 hours a week — 1%
- 26 to 30 hours a week — 19%

What percentage of your time is dedicated to SLMS tasks?

- 10% — 2%
- 20% — 3%
- 30% — 3%
- 40% — 2%
- 50% — 8%
- 60% — 5%
- 70% — 5%
- 80% — 11%
- 90% — 14%
- 100% — 47%

Number of Schools Covered by One SLMS

■	One
■	Two
■	Three
■	Four
■	Five or more

One: 84%
Two: 13%
Three: 1%
Four: 1%
Five or more: 1%
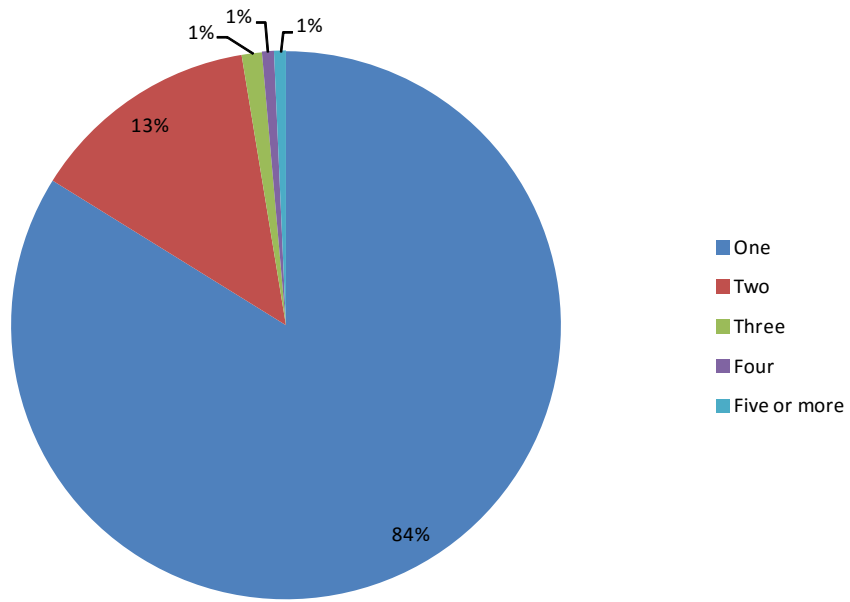
Responsibilities Beyond Traditional School Library Activities

■	Gifted & Talented programs
■	STEM Education/Makerspace
■	Managing Technology
■	Covering Classroom Absences
■	Teaching non-library classes
■	Other (please specify)

Gifted & Talented programs: 6%
STEM Education/Makerspace: 14%
Managing Technology: 26%
Covering Classroom Absences: 18%
Teaching non-library classes: 14%
Other (please specify): 22%
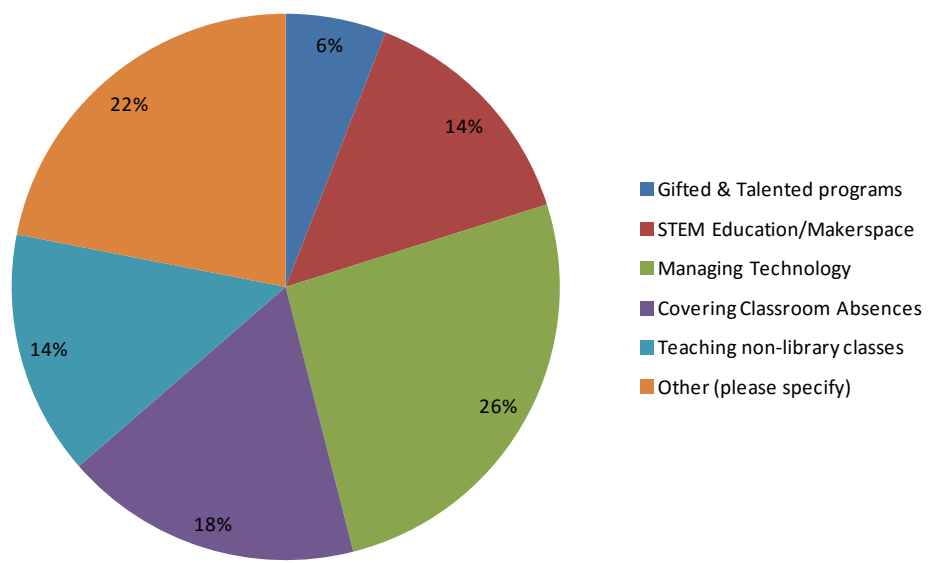
Findings:
21.7% of the respondents are part time employees, with 18.56% working between 26 to 30 hours a week. We can also see that the reduced time available to focus on SLMS tasks with 28% of respondents spending 70% or less of their time on SLMS tasks. The SLMSs have clearly taken on other responsibilities with 26% managing technology for the school and 18% covering classroom teacher absences.

"Other" responsibilities listed included cover lunch times, 10 times a week 40 minutes a lunch, PARCC Test Coordinator, Computer/Technology Teacher, managing school technology, making copies for teachers, bus duty, teaching special education classes, maintain school web site and substituting. Finally, 16% of SLMS cover more than one school, with one SLMS covering 7 schools in one district. The research demonstrates the potential in improving student outcomes with a well supported school library program.

Recent Relevant Research:
- All three groups of educators associate flexible scheduling of library access and instructional collaboration between teachers and librarians with library excellence in teaching all four 21st Century Learner standards. Where such teaching is assessed as excellent, administrators are more likely to value flexible scheduling and teacher-librarian collaboration as essential and teachers and librarians are more likely to report them occurring at least weekly.
(Lance, C. K., Schwarz, B., 2012).

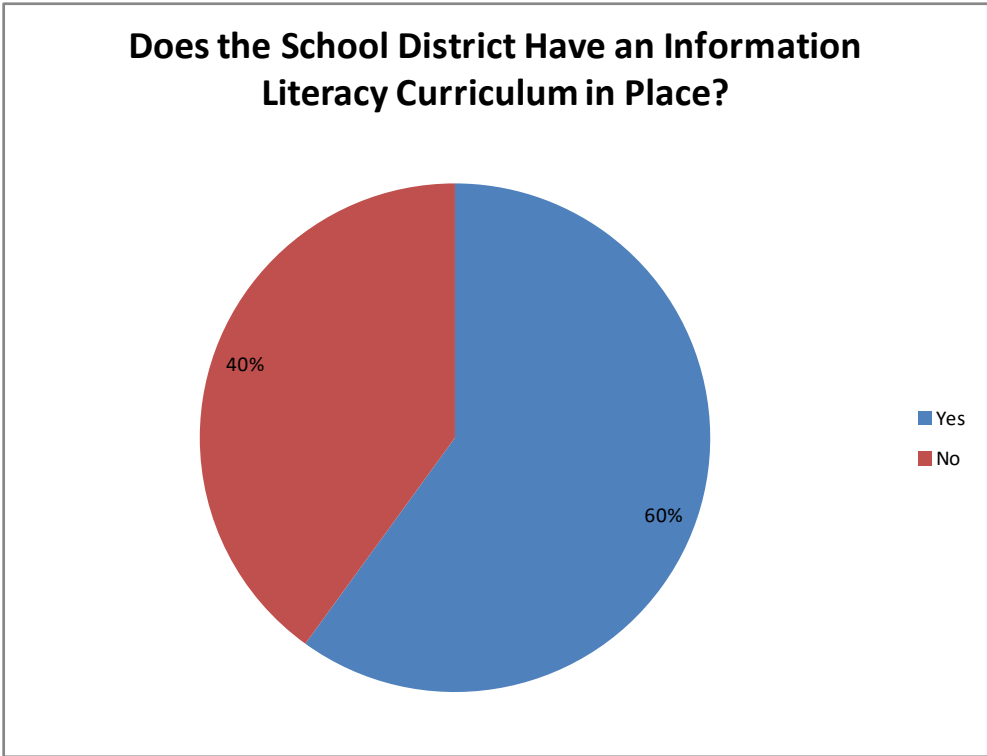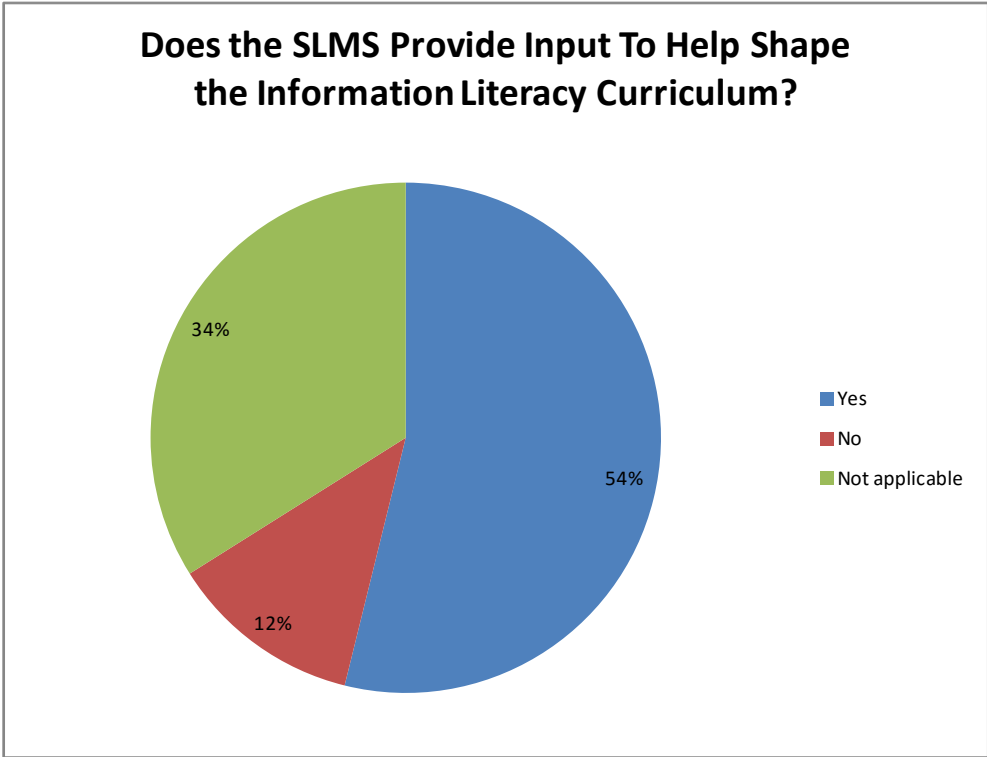- A Rubric to Evaluate Highly Effective School Library Programs

The school librarian has...

- One or more full-time support staff (para-librarian) assigned to the library. He or she assists users with non-instructional needs and runs daily operations and support of the library. Volunteers assist with other duties as well. **(Highly Effective)**
- One full-time support staff assigned to the library to assist users with non-instructional needs; some volunteers provide assistance to the para-librarian. **(Effective)**
- One part-time support staff assigned to the library to assist users with non-instructional needs; volunteers may or may not provide assistance to the para-librarian. **(Progressing Toward Effective)**
- Volunteers replace para-librarian role and sporadic library assistance occurs. **(Ineffective)**
(Colorado Department of Education, *2016)*

From New Jersey SLMS in the field:
- "I love my job, and do feel appreciated, but my teaching load has increased by over 50% in the last two years. All "library maintenance" time was taken out of my schedule to get the most bang for the buck."

- "...I am circulating over 1000 books a week...that's a lot of records to maintain, books to shelve and keep organized, etc. There is NEVER time to actually read a review of even prepare a dynamic lesson... I'm tired of running."

- "We have 12 elementary schools that are serviced by 2 librarians."

- "My paid help is here one and a half periods a day (not full time). Our middle school librarians are half-time in the library and half-time in a classroom; our elementary libraries do not have librarians any more and instead parent volunteers run the library program."

Information Literacy Curriculum in NJ Schools

Does the SLMS Provide Input To Help Shape the Information Literacy Curriculum?

- Yes — 54%
- No — 12%
- Not applicable — 34%

Does the School District Have an Information Literacy Curriculum in Place?

- Yes — 60%
- No — 40%

Findings:
40% of districts do not have an Information Literacy Plan in place while another 12% are not able to provide input to shape the curriculum. The research reveals the need for Information Literacy to be taught at all levels of instruction, and the SLMS has the training and expertise to provide consistent training throughout New Jersey schools with supported school library programs.

ESSA authorizes school districts to include in their local plans how schools will "develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement." (American Library Association, 2015)

For college readiness, one can look to the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* from the Association of College and Research Libraries:

"Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning."

Recent Relevant Research:
* 75% have no idea how to locate articles and resources they need for their research.
* 60% don't verify the accuracy or reliability of the information they find.
* 44% do not know how to integrate knowledge from different sources.
(New Jersey Association of School Librarians, *2*015)

* 49% of teachers report that student's access to technology is one of the "biggest barriers to incorporating technology into their teaching" because the students are "often not digitally literate enough."

* 56% of teachers of the lowest-income students say that lack of resources among students to access digital technologies is a "major challenge" to incorporating more digital tools into their teaching

Today's Digital Technologies Teachers Report:

* 83% Information available online is overwhelming for most students
* 60% Digital technologies make it harder for students to find and use credible sources of information
* 71% Digital technologies discourage students from finding and using a wide range of sources
(American Association of School Librarians, 2014)

* School librarians have deep expertise in digital literacy skills; have well-developed instructional strategies based on thinking critically, communicating creatively in a variety of media, and solving problems creatively; and are often role models for strong leadership, initiative, and other career and life skills.
(Trilling, B., 2010)

From New Jersey SLMS in the field:
* "Our district does not have elementary school librarians and it is a disservice to our students. They enter middle school lacking basic library skills."

# In your own words, how would the absence of a certified SLMS impact the school, students, and/or staff?

Examples of how students would be affected according to respondents:

- Students will lack research skills and this will leave them unprepared for higher education
- There would be no support for literacy through various programs that the library offers. This will affect students' interest in reading as well as their scores
- Literacy rates would decline
- Students will lack skills necessary to decipher quality resources
- Test scores would decrease due to lack of curriculum support
- Digital literacy would disappear: just because "digital natives" are born in the age of computer technology does not mean they have the proper skills
- Students would not learn how to ethically access, use, create, and share information which is crucial to succeed in today's world
- Students would lack a professional guide to credible, relevant, and high-quality resources which is vital to the development of information literacy
- Students would not have instruction in finding reliable, authoritative digital resources, using resources responsibly, creating citations, and avoiding plagiarism
- Students' test scores would plummet
- Students' reading levels would decrease
- Students would be unprepared for college level research
- Low income/urban students will not have access to a fully staffed and fully stocked library
- Students would lack knowledge on plagiarism and intellectual property

Examples of how staff would be affected according to respondents:

- Staff would miss the resources that the library provides in support of the curriculum that they are handling in the classroom
- Teachers would be overburdened with struggling readers and have no assistance with research process
- Staff would not know how to navigate, evaluate, and utilize information.
- Staff would lack a professional guide to credible, relevant, and high-quality resources which is vital to the development of information literacy
- Staff would not have expert assistance selecting books for independent or whole class reading, for research, or to supplement or extend the curriculum
- Staff would not have access to a library filled with resources that effectively support the curriculum
- Staff would suffer from lack of help selecting appropriate resources for curriculum units

School Library Funding Over Past Several Years
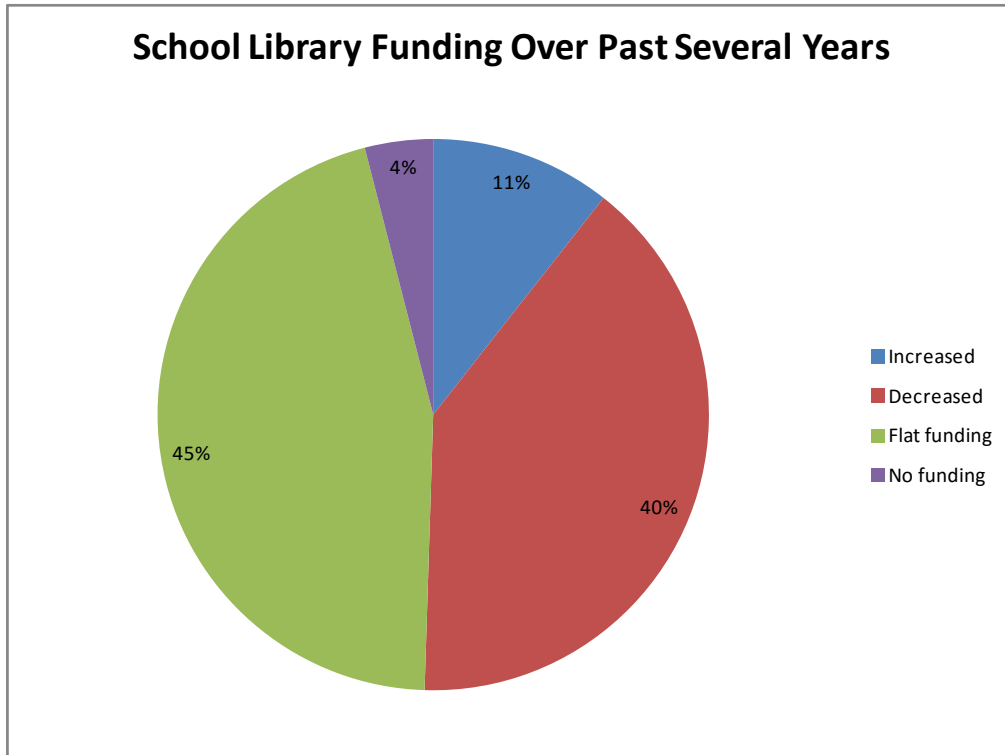
Findings:

89% of respondents cite Flat, Decreased or No Funding for their school library. There is opportunity moving forward: "ESSA includes new provisions that authorize States, as well as school districts, to use grant and sub-grant funds for "supporting the instructional services provided by effective school library programs" also block grants are available for school libraries through Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. (American Library Association, 2015)
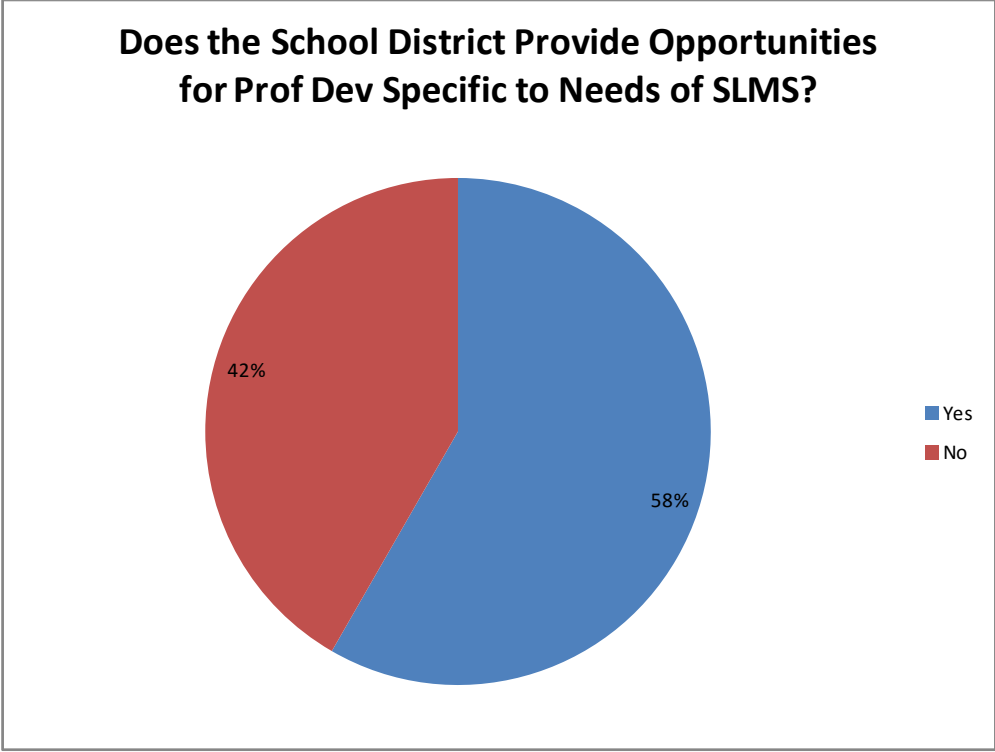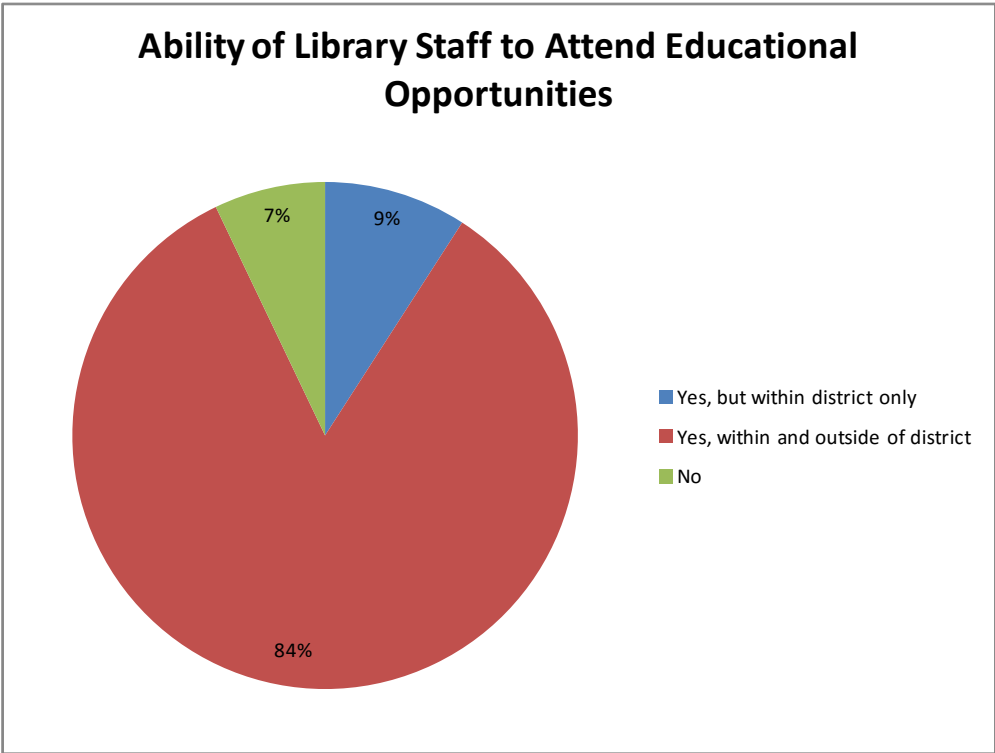
Recent Relevant Research:

- The clearest results were for elementary schools. When elementary schools with stronger school libraries (more weekly staff hours, larger collections, more visits, larger budgets) were compared to those with weaker libraries, library variables were associated with proportional increases in third-grade test results of seven to eleven percent (6.8% to 11.0%).

(Lance, C.K., Rodney, J. & Russell, B.I., 2007)

- For all students, excellence on PASS Writing and English Language Arts (ELA) standards was associated with the following characteristics of school library programs:
  - a. Having at least 1 full-time librarian and a full- or part-time library assistant
  - b. Spending $7,500 or more annually and $13.33 or more per student
  - c. Logging 20,000 or more checkouts and 36 or more items per student

(Lance, C.K., Schwarz, B. & Rodney, M.J., 2014)

From New Jersey SLMS in the field:

- "When I started working here in 1992, I had a budget of approximately $30,000 for my school alone which covered all facets of the position at that time…my budget has shrunk to approximately $4,000.00 per year to cover all facets of the position."

- "We are being asked to wear many hats and the shift to digital materials is challenging. This is particularly true when budgeting. We have to decide if we are going to buy print or digital with half the money than we had in the past. Our district has been cutting our funds across the board…"

Professional Development Opportunity

Ability of Library Staff to Attend Educational Opportunities

- Yes, but within district only
- Yes, within and outside of district
- No

9%

7%

84%

Does the School District Provide Opportunities for Prof Dev Specific to Needs of SLMS?

- Yes
- No

42%

58%

Findings:

84% of library staff responding are able to attend educational opportunities inside and outside the school district. 7% reply that they are not able to attend educational opportunities inside or outside of the school district. The earlier question about responsibilities demonstrates the critical roles the SLMS plays in technology in many districts, which requires constant updating of knowledge. In professional development, ESSA once again provides opportunity to invest in the SLMS and the school library staff.

"ESSA also authorizes (but does not require) States to use funds to assist school districts in providing SLMS and other school personnel with knowledge and skills to use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology, to improve instruction and student achievement." (American Library Association, 2015)

Further focus on professional development is necessary as the roles of the SLMS continue to expand, including hosting STEM based training in makerspaces and managing technology.

Regarding STEM education and makerspaces for example, 63 New Jersey Schools participated in *New Jersey Maker's Day* in 2016.

Examples of School Libraries with Makerspaces in New Jersey:

- Park Ridge Middle/High School Media Center
- Waldwick Middle and High School Media Center
- Von E Mauger Middle School (Middlesex)
- Woodbridge High School

"Public and school libraries are spearheading the makerspace movement in K-12 education."
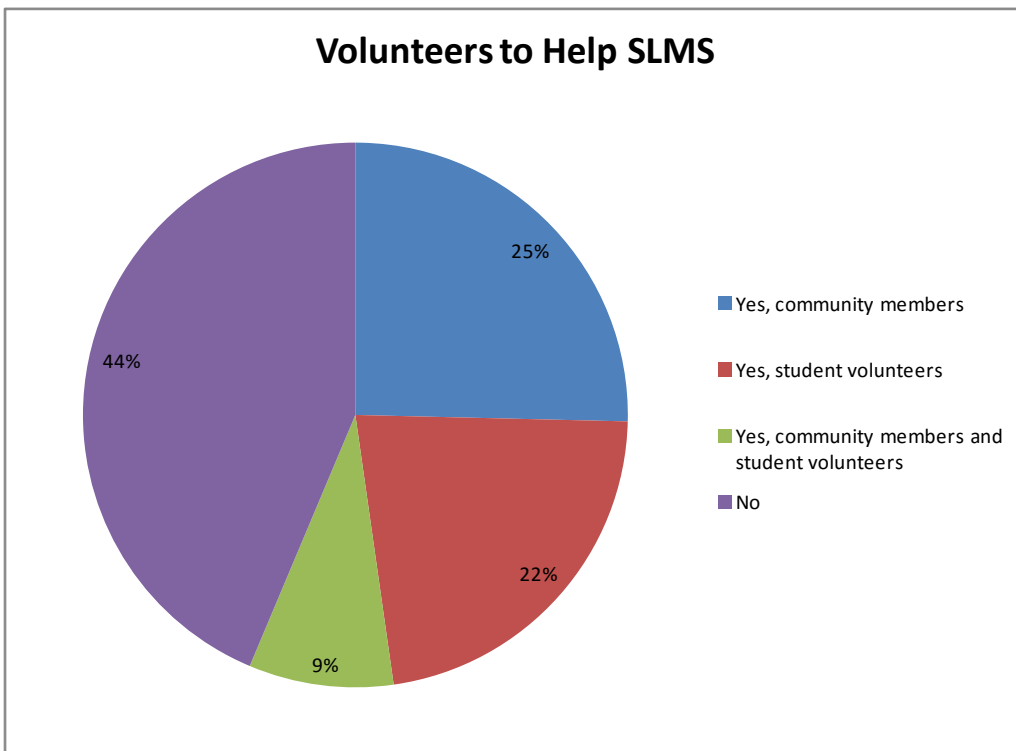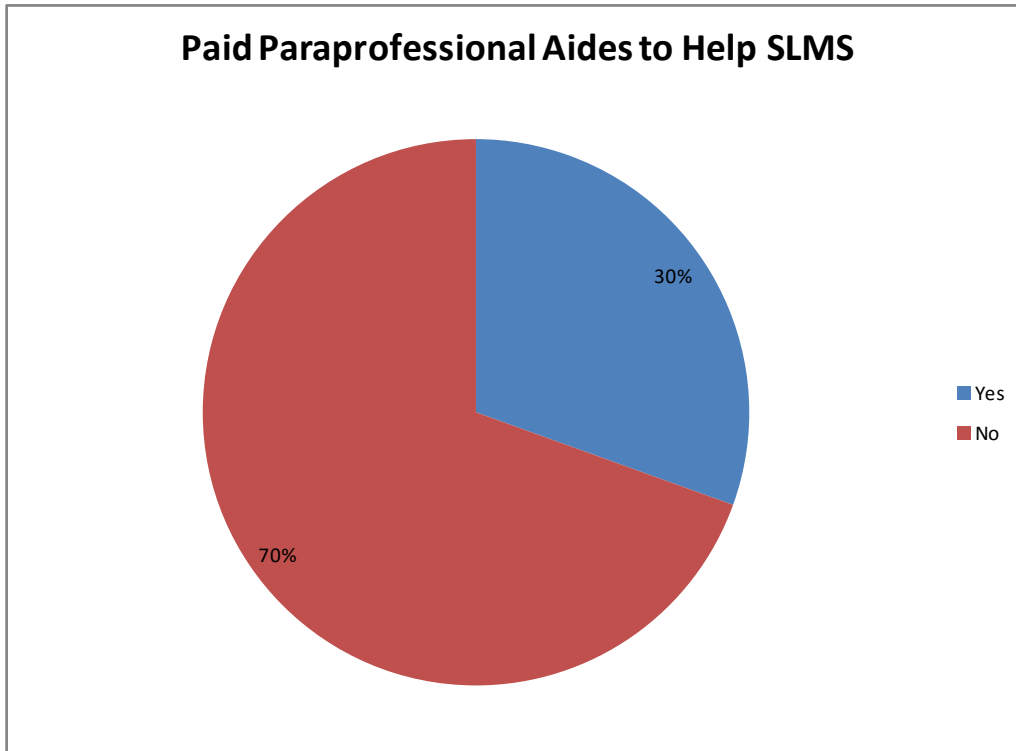(Horizon Report 2015)

Recent Relevant Research:

We propose the active participation of the school library media program toward the development of STEM identities among young people by having school librarians

(1) provide advisory information on the science-infused books and programs that young people can read—the school librarian as the information specialist;
(2) collaborate with STEM teachers and provide intellectual and physical access that further enrichs the STEM learning—the school librarian as the instructional partner; and
(3) act as technology allies to help educators and students experiment with new media tools and online communities."
(Subramaniam, M.M., Ahn,J., Fleischmann, K.R & Druin, A., 2012)

Support Staffing in School Libraries

Paid Paraprofessional Aides to Help SLMS

30%

70%

- Yes
- No

Volunteers to Help SLMS

25%

44%

9%

22%

- Yes, community members
- Yes, student volunteers
- Yes, community members and student volunteers
- No

Findings:
70% of SLMS do not have paid paraprofessional aides to help. Compounding this is that 44% do not have volunteers to help. The concern would be the inability to fully develop and administer the information literacy program and be fully integrated into the school without clerical assistance.

Recent Relevant Research:
- Higher library staffing levels are linked to higher reading performance for elementary, middle, and high schools (increases of almost 13 percent, over eight percent, and more than seven percent, respectively). At elementary and middle school levels, the positive relationship between better-staffed libraries and writing performance is even stronger (increases of more than 17 and 18 percent, respectively). At the high school level, better-staffed libraries help to increase their schools' average ACT scores by almost five percent over schools with more poorly-staffed libraries.

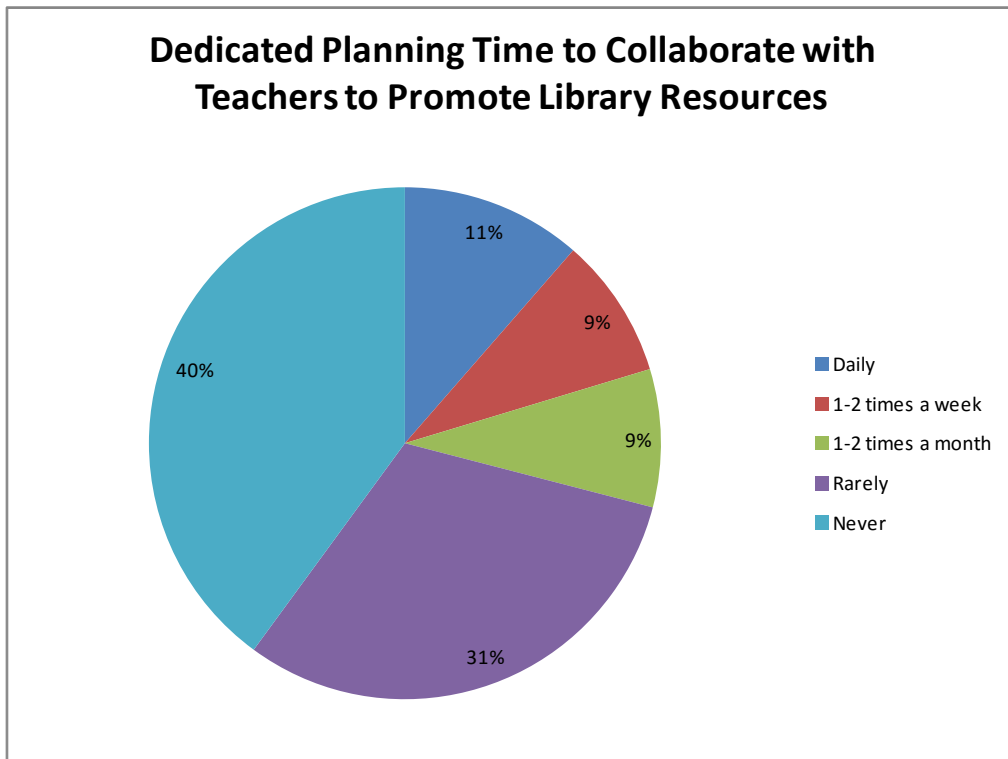(Lance, C.K., Rodney, M.J. & Hamilton-Pennell, C., 2005)

- For all students, excellence on PASS Writing and English Language Arts (ELA) standards was associated with the following characteristics of school library programs:
    a. Having at least 1 full-time librarian and a full- or part-time library assistant
    b. Spending $7,500 or more annually and $13.33 or more per student
    c. Logging 20,000 or more checkouts and 36 or more items per student
    d. Providing access to 40 or more e-books
    e. Having public access computers in the school library and 18 or more (versus fewer than 6) elsewhere in the school

(Lance, C.K., Schwarz, B. & Rodney, M.J., 2014)

- On average, almost nine percent (8.6%) more students score Advanced in Reading where students have a full-time, certified librarian with support staff than where there they have a full-time, certified librarian alone. (Lance, C. K., & Schwarz, B., 2012)

- Our research shows that the strongest relationship between school libraries and STAR test scores occurs at the high school level, which has, as a percentage, over 3 ½ times more fully-staffed libraries (a full-time teacher librarian and a full time clerk) than the middle schools, and over 25 times more fully staffed libraries than the elementary schools.

(California Department of Education)

Dedicated Planning Time to Collaborate with Teachers to Promote Library Resources

Legend:
- Daily
- 1-2 times a week
- 1-2 times a month
- Rarely
- Never

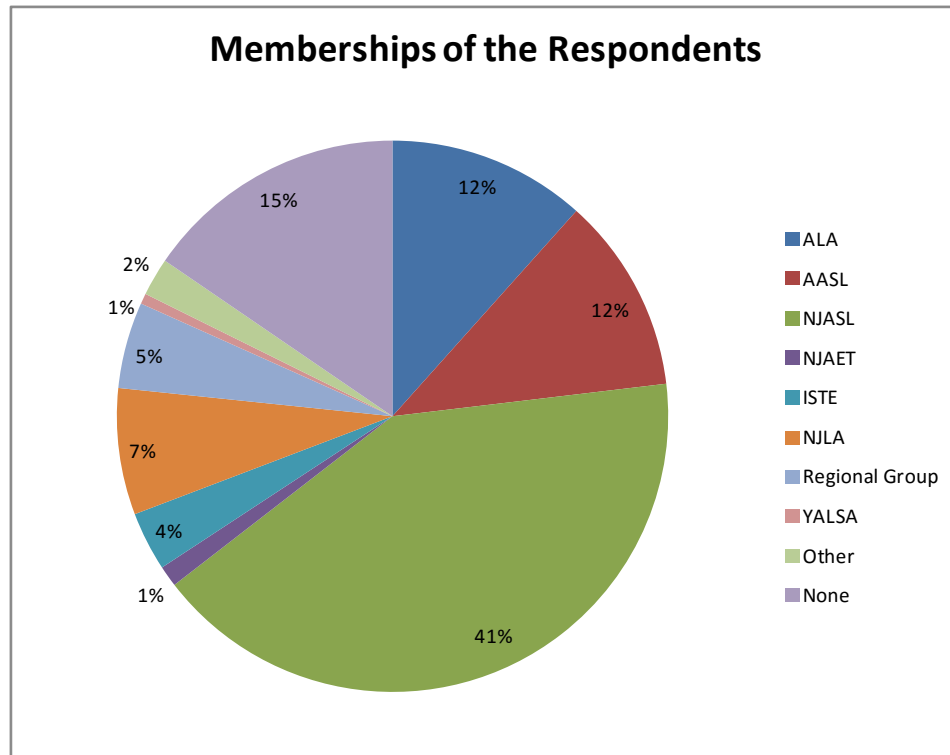Pie chart values: 11%, 9%, 9%, 31%, 40%

Findings:

71% of respondents have indicated they "never" or "rarely" have time to collaborate with teachers to promote library resources. Previously cited research has shown the importance of school library programs for literacy and reading scores.

"In addition, ESSA allows for all local subgrants to be used to provide time for teachers and school librarians to meet, plan and collaborate on comprehensive literacy instruction."
(American Library Association, 2015)

Recent Relevant Research:

- Across grade levels, better-performing schools tended to be those whose principals placed a higher value on:
  - a. LMSs providing in-service opportunities to classroom teachers (proportional inc. of 29.5%)
  - b. regular meetings between themselves and their LMSs (16.9%)
  - c. having their LMSs serve on key school committees (10.2%)
  - d. collaboration between LMSs and teachers in the design and delivery of instruction (7.8%)

(Lance, C.K., Rodney, M.J. & Russell, B.I., 2007)

- The study results identified key indicators within the library program that impact student academic achievement: access to high-quality library facilities and resources, and collaborative planning with professional library staff.

(Farmer L., 2006)

Memberships of the Respondents

Pie chart legend:
- ALA — 12%
- AASL — 12%
- NJASL — 41%
- NJAET — 1%
- ISTE — 4%
- NJLA — 7%
- Regional Group — 5%
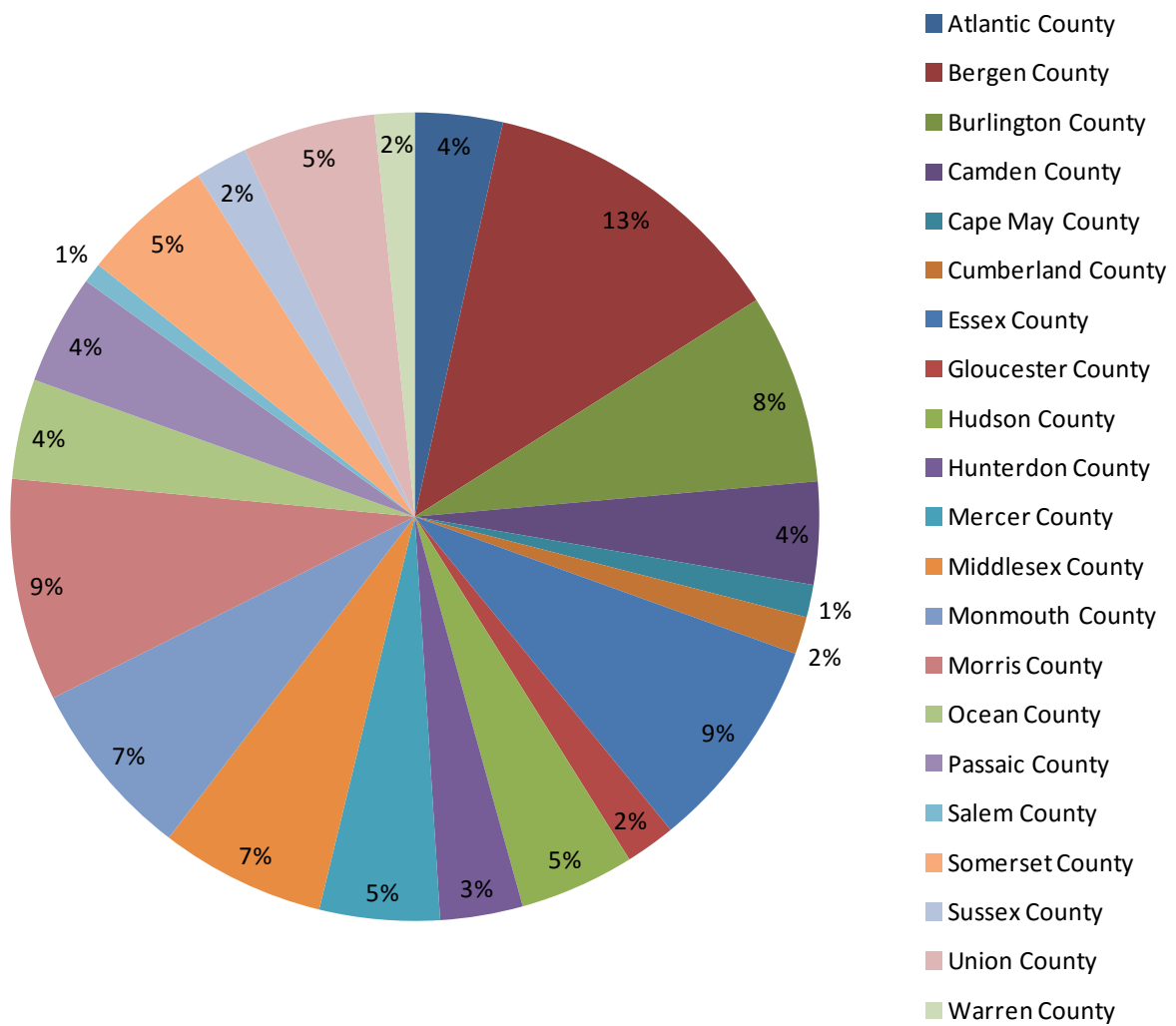- YALSA — 1%
- Other — 2%
- None — 15%

Findings:

Participation in organizations is a key method of communication for professionals. Unfortunately, no single organization even accounts for half of those who responded to the survey. Also, 15% of the respondents said they were not a member of any organization, which is a higher percent than any group outside of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians.

In the "Other" field respondents cited reasons for not joining, including "the district used to pay for membership but no longer does", "dues are too expensive", and "the organizations do not meet my needs."

Moving forward, in particular with a discussion of ESSA application in New Jersey, there will need to be considerable outreach through a variety of venues for communication.

Respondents by County

Legend:
- Atlantic County
- Bergen County
- Burlington County
- Camden County
- Cape May County
- Cumberland County
- Essex County
- Gloucester County
- Hudson County
- Hunterdon County
- Mercer County
- Middlesex County
- Monmouth County
- Morris County
- Ocean County
- Passaic County
- Salem County
- Somerset County
- Sussex County
- Union County
- Warren County

Findings:

The *Respondents by County* data reflects the population of the state, where the more populous areas have a higher number of responses than the less populated counties such as Salem, Cape May and Cumberland counties. Respondents were not asked to supply specific information about their locations beyond which county they worked in. Survey designers believed respondents would be more forthcoming if the respondents felt their anonymity was secure.

Conclusion

The 2015/16 SLMS Census depicts a stark reduction of School Library Media Specialists at our New Jersey Schools. Contributing factors most likely include the economic downturn, changing priorities in our schools and the lack of focus for school library programs in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The 2015/16 SLMS Census also revealed particularly dire situations for school libraries in the major urban areas in New Jersey, where literacy rates are also among the lowest and school reorganizations are common. According to the *Kids Count Data Center*, http://datacenter.kidscount.org/, in 2015 79% of New Jersey fourth grade students *eligible for free/reduced school lunch* scored below proficient reading level compared to only 43% of those *not eligible for free/reduced lunch*.

The census revealed approximately only 46% of schools in the Former Abbott Districts have SLMSs. On the following page we have included 2015 PARCC results for English Language Arts for 3rd Grade and 11th Grade for the Former Abbott Districts. In the Former Abbott Districts 81.2% of 3rd Grade students and 73.2% of 11th Grade E*conomically Disadvantaged Students* * are not meeting expectations, compared to 56% and 59% statewide respectively. The differences are more extensive when you compare the *Economically Disadvantaged Students* in the Former Abbott Districts, to the *Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students* Statewide numbers. *Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students* have considerably higher rates of meeting expectations, 39.1% higher for 3rd Grade and 20.2% higher for 11th Grade than the *Economically Disadvantaged Students* in the Former Abbott Districts.

The threat to New Jersey's School Library Media Specialists continues even outside the Former Abbott Districts. In early 2016, the South Orange/Maplewood school district announced the elimination of the SLMSs at the middle school level due to budget issues.

The 2015/2016 Census also revealed that there is little clear consensus around support for school library programs from New Jersey school districts. Some districts had eliminated all elementary level SLMS, while others had eliminated their high school level SLMS, while others continue to support fully staffed school library programs. When reviewing the extensive research demonstrating the importance of school library program for literacy and information literacy, it appears to have major disadvantages to not support school library programs at any grade level.

The challenges of the SLMS and the school library continue as we observed that the majority of budgets were reduced or at best stayed flat. The vast majority of SLMSs did not have paid para-professional aides, which is particularly concerning with the increasing roles the SLMSs are responsible for. Adding to the difficulties for offering effective school library programs, 97 of the respondents reported they were responsible for more than one school.

ESSA reflects a major opportunity for New Jersey education to reinvest in school library programs. The research about the positive effect of school library programs and information literacy is extensive, only a few of which are sampled in this report. Literacy, critical thinking, and research and information literacy skills are building blocks that New Jersey students require to achieve their goals.

2015 PARCC Results - English Language Arts - Former Abbott Districts

Former Abbott District	PARCC ELA 3rd Grade (Economically Disadvantaged Student Data, When Available)			PARCC ELA 11th Grade (Economically Disadvantaged Student Data, When Available)		
	Median Scale Score	Not Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Median Scale Score	Not Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations
Pleasantville**	723	79.3%	20.7%	714	87.5%	12.5%
Garfield	733	65.0%	34.9%	722	81.6%	18.4%
Burlington City	710	84.3%	15.8%	729	76.2%	23.8%
Pemberton Twp.	719	81.6%	18.4%	721	66.7%	33.3%
Camden City	696	95.6%	4.3%	703	93.3%	6.8%
Gloucester City	732	64.2%	35.8%	742	56.4%	43.8%
Bridgeton	706	92.1%	7.9%	740	61.7%	38.4%
Millville	709	86.0%	14.1%	731	66.2%	33.9%
Vineland	722	78.5%	21.4%	721	82.9%	17.1%
East Orange	726	73.8%	26.2%	716	85.7%	14.1%
Irvington	711	85.8%	14.2%	725	77.9%	22.0%
Newark	713	84.8%	15.3%	725	74.0%	26.0%
Orange	710	86.5%	13.6%	724	73.6%	26.3%
Harrison	734	67.6%	32.3%	725	76.5%	23.5%
Hoboken	724	77.3%	22.7%	719	77.2%	22.8%
Jersey City	726	74.9%	25.2%	733	67.7%	32.3%
Union City	728	74.5%	25.7%	749	49.2%	50.9%
West New York	727	75.4%	24.6%	738	61.9%	38.1%
Trenton	711	87.6%	12.4%	722	75.9%	24.1%
New Brunswick	715	88.1%	11.9%	740	58.1%	41.8%
Perth Amboy	723	76.9%	23.2%	705	89.3%	10.7%
Asbury Park *	707	91.6%	8.5%	705	88.6%	11.4%
Keansburg	716	76.7%	23.3%	722	69.5%	30.4%
Long Branch	708	89.4%	10.6%	732	66.8%	33.1%
Neptune Twp.	712	87.5%	12.4%	718	82.1%	17.9%
Passaic City	712	85.7%	14.3%	721	79.3%	20.7%
Paterson	716	84.8%	15.2%	711	89.1%	10.9%
Salem City *	713	87.1%	12.9%	725	65.9%	34.0%
Elizabeth	725	75.9%	24.0%	756	33.6%	66.3%
Plainfield	714	85.2%	14.9%	708	89.5%	10.5%
Phillipsburg	730	72.1%	27.9%	739	64.9%	35.2%
Former Abbott Dist Averages	**718**	**81.2%**	**18.9%**	**725**	**73.2%**	**26.8%**
Statewide Non-Econ Disadvantaged	757	43.0%	58.0%	746	54.0%	47.0%
State Average	743	56.0%	44.0%	740	59.0%	41.0%
* No Data Breakdown for Economically Disadvantaged, Utilized All Student Data						
** No Data Breakdown for Economically Disadvantaged for Grade 11, Utilized All Student Data						

(Source: New Jersey Statewide Assessment Reports: 2015 PARCC Results,
http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/achievement/15/parcc/)

Recommendations:

With the passage of the ESSA legislation and the development of the regulations in New Jersey as the determining factor of implementation, it is critical that all school library program stakeholders collaborate in short order.

Stakeholders could include representatives from:

1. New Jersey Association of School Librarians
2. New Jersey Library Association
3. New Jersey Education Association
4. New Jersey Department of Education
5. Rutgers School of Information
6. LibraryLinkNJ - Statewide New Jersey Library Cooperative
7. College and University Section of the New Jersey Library Association
8. The New Jersey State Library

The American Library Association has prepared a document, *P.L. 114-95, The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015: Opportunities for School Librarians,* (http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/esea/ALA-ESSA_Library_Opportunities.pdf) which outlines the steps to be taken at the various levels of government.

Suggested Framework for Progress:

1. Organize a meeting for the stakeholders to review the current status of New Jersey school library programs and the related research as discussed in this document.
2. Request resolutions from the New Jersey Library Association and other related organizations to state the need for well-funded and supported school libraries.
3. Host a stakeholder meeting to discuss and create action plans for the recommended *Next Steps* sections of the ALA document in relation to ESSA legislation. Ensure NJ Department of Education develops regulations for well-funded and supported school library programs in all districts.
4. Plan a statewide advocacy program about the value of New Jersey School Libraries.
5. Work with stakeholders to develop a rubric for New Jersey Highly Effective School Library Programs.

New Jersey Specific Recommendations from John Chrastka of EveryLibrary:

1. When the DOE announces if and how an ESSA Implementation task force or work group is set up, it's key for library advocates to have a seat at the table.
2. Recommend that NJ library advocates look at Title 18A for specific places to map NJ school library programs and school librarian positions, as now authorized by ESSA, into NJ state code. What would it look like to create a "Teaching of Information Literacy" mandate as a new Chapter 40B, or a new 53A that would allow for the maintenance of school libraries and collections, specifically?
3. The DOE Rules (via http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/) need to reviewed for places to insert and extend specific mention of school librarians and school libraries.
4. Stakeholders need to anticipate an active, targeted, and engaged series of comments by NJ library advocates even if we influence phase one of the Rulemaking and Title 18A amendment process.
5. There is also a 'public process' for Rulemaking that stakeholders should get familiar with as a Plan B: http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/petitions/.

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2016 New Jersey School Library Media Specialist (SLMS) Census Results

There are approximately 20% fewer School Library Media Specialists(SLMSs) in New Jersey than there were in 2007-2008

SLMS Math

91 School Districts have no School Library Media Specialists *

+

33 districts have no School Library Media Specialists at the Elementary Level

=

Over 280 Elementary Level schools without School Library Media Specialists

Additional Data:

- Over 20% of High Schools have no Certified School Library Media Specialist available to students.

- Over 150 School Library Media Specialists cover more than one school. One SLMS covers 7 schools in one district.

- In the nearly 100 charter schools, there are less than 10 School Library Media Specialists.
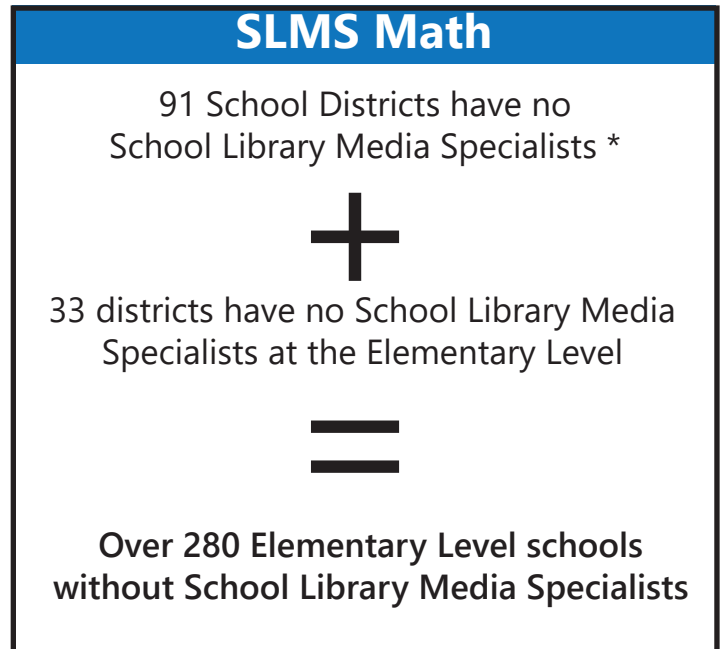
* does not include Charter School Districts

NJASL
New Jersey Association of School Librarians

NEW JERSEY NJLA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
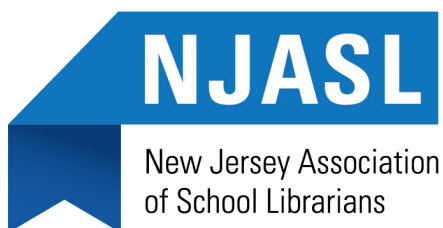
Survey Questions

1. Does your school have a physical school library?
Yes
Yes, but it goes by a different name
No

2. Check those that correspond to the staffing situation in your district?
Certified School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) are retained and replaced when one leaves
Certified SLMS are not replaced when one leaves
Certified SLMS have been let go and not replaced
Certified SLMS have been replaced by non certified staff

3. How many hours a week do you work for the district?

4. What percentage of your time is dedicated to SLMS tasks?

5. Beyond traditional school library activities, what, if any, responsibilities fall to the certified SLMS in your school?
Gifted & Talented programs
STEM Education/Makerspace
Managing Technology
Covering Classroom Absences
Teaching non-library classes
Other (please specify)

6. In your own words, how would the absence of a certified SLMS impact the school, students, and/or staff?

7. Does your school or district have a Information Literacy curriculum in place?
Yes
No

8. If so, are you able to provide input and help shape that curriculum?
Yes
No
Not applicable

9. Has school library funding increased, decreased, or remained stagnant over the past several years?
Increased
Decreased
Flat funding
No funding

10. Which technology does the school library include:
PC's
iPads
Laptops
Chromebooks
Other (please specify)

11. Does your school or district provide opportunities for professional development specific to the needs of the certified SLMS?
Yes
No

12. Are you able to attend educational opportunities both within the building/district and outside (state conferences, professional association meetings, etc.)?
Yes, but within district only
Yes, within and outside of district
No

13. How many schools do you cover as a SLMS?

14. Do you have paid paraprofessionals aides to help?
Yes
No

15. Do you have volunteers to help?
Yes, community members
Yes, student volunteers
Yes, community members and student volunteers
No

16. Do you have dedicated planning time to collaborate with teachers to promote library sources?
Daily
1-2 times a week
1-2 times a month
Rarely
Never

17. What professional organizations are you a member of?
American Library Association (ALA)
American Association of School Librarians (AASL)
New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL)
Association for Educational Communications & Technology (AECT)
International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
New Jersey Library Association (NJLA)
None
Other(s) or if multiple organizations from above please list all of them here:

18. Please select the county where you work
Name
Preferred Email Address

19. If you like to be contacted about advocacy and education efforts in relations to ESSA legislation, please enter your name and preferred email address(OPTIONAL) Learn more about ESSA, http://www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/legislation/essa

20. Anything else you would like to share?

Fact Sheet: Public Libraries and School Libraries

NEW JERSEY NJLA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

NJASL New Jersey Association of School Librarians
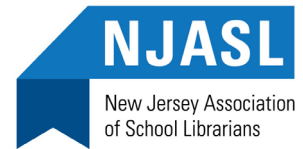
To meet the needs of communities across the United States, both school and public libraries are vital.

Public and school libraries help learners of all ages access information and technology to further their interests and education. These essential institutions, in neighborhoods and schools across the United States, provide complementary services in the pursuit of shared goals:

- Equity of access to information and resources
- Appreciation of reading
- Lifelong learning
- Critical use of information and technology
- Knowledgeable and informed citizens

Both public and school libraries pursue these goals by providing:

- A safe, welcoming environment
- Responsive, knowledgeable, well-trained staff
- Convenient access to the Internet
- Information in a variety of media

Although each type of library works in similar ways to achieve these goals, important differences exist. The chart below contrasts some key information about public and school libraries.

Public Library		School Library
To meet the informational, learning, and recreational needs of customers, providing an open environment for our community	*MISSION*	To prepare students to become effective, efficient, and ethical users of information and ideas, capable of lifelong learning, problem solving, knowledge creation and communication
General public, all ages - pre-schoolers to senior citizens	*USERS*	Specific, known community of youth and those who teach them
• Broadest spectrum of community needs and interests • Popular interests • Homework/research assignments • Summer reading requirements	*FOCUS OF COLLECTION*	• Support for curricular and instructional needs of school • Personal reading interests and abilities of students • Professional needs of teachers and administrators
• Loan a variety of materials • Reference Services • Homework/research support • Community networking and outreach • Independent selection of resources • Programming to meet community needs and interests of all ages	*PRIMARY SERVICES*	• Instruction in research skills and use of information and communication technologies • Curriculum planning and support • Guided selection of resources • Collaborative planning and teaching • Programming to promote reading for students/school community
Year-round, all day, with evening, and weekend hours	*HOURS*	Generally open when school is in session, with some before and after school hours
• Meeting Rooms • Open public access	*FACILITIES*	• Flexible instruction space • Secure access within school for student safety

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