Phase 1One Common Goal: Student Learning

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Report of Findings and Recommendations of the New Jersey School Library Survey

Phase 1:
ONE COMMON GOAL: STUDENT LEARNING

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On behalf of the
New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL)
USA

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Executive Summary

The school library is a vital and important part of New Jersey's schools. The findings of this survey show that New Jersey school libraries and the work of school librarians contribute in rich and diverse ways to the intellectual life of a school, and to the development of students who can learn and function in a rich, complex and increasingly digital information environments. School libraries in New Jersey that are staffed by certified school librarians provide common information grounds for supporting learning across the school through engagement with information, with particular emphasis on developing students' abilities to interact with information and to use it to learn well. This contribution is underpinned by an information and technology infrastructure and enabled through strong instructional, service, and administrative roles of school librarians. It is the instructional role of school librarians that stand out in these findings. The large number of collaborations developing information literacy capabilities, as well as large numbers of cooperations and coordinations, show a strong level of engagement in teaching and learning. The qualitative survey responses collectively show the contribution of the school library to the development of the whole child and to the mission of its school. The school library is portrayed as an agency for intellectual development and for the social and cultural growth of students as they grow up in a complex and diverse information world.

Based on the evidence the school librarians provided in this study, the school library contributes to school life in the following ways by:
- Helping students meet core curriculum content standards;
- Developing a wide range of information handling competencies;
- Providing students with the intellectual and technical scaffolds they need to learn and to be ethical and productive users and consumers of information;
- Nurturing and supporting students as readers by contributing to the reading and literacy agenda of schools.

Responses of participants, particularly to open questions, convey a sense of strong and active commitment and participation to a whole-school team approach that works toward meeting curriculum standards, engaging students, and helping them achieve academically. This commitment extends beyond the provision of library services to embrace and support all aspects of school life.

The high level of employment of school librarians with state certification in New Jersey, coupled with their strong instructional role, demonstrate that many school decision-makers recognize the importance of professional qualifications of school librarians. These decision-makers exhibit an understanding of the value and contribution of school libraries to the teaching and learning agenda of the school and the intellectual and social development of students. The service, administrative, and instructional roles of school librarians, as documented in this study, demand this professional expertise. School librarians in New Jersey clearly utilize their professional expertise to ensure the effective functioning of a school library.

Certainly there are areas for continuous improvement and ongoing development in the provision of school library infrastructure: resources, full-time professional staffing, support staffing,

collection currency and capacity, and availability of information technology. Participants in the study also recognize that there are challenges ahead for both school libraries and school decision makers in ensuring that school libraries maintain the necessary levels of information resources, staffing, information literacy and information technology instruction, and reading initiatives to support learning and achievement in the schools. School librarians in the study are aware of limitations and barriers, yet they remain optimistic about the future and their capacity to provide high quality instruction and services that affect student learning. These challenges are not insurmountable and mutual negotiations at all levels are essential.

The strength of the findings, coupled with challenges in the findings, highlight the complexity of student learning in an increasingly globalized and technological world with its rich abundance of information both in print and in digital form. These findings also highlight the importance of responding innovatively to the challenges. In this information environment school librarians in New Jersey are committed to intellectual quality as a key learning outcome, underpinned by authentic and powerful pedagogy centering on information literacy, intellectual engagement and relevance, and supportive learning environments. The school librarians clearly recognize the centrality of a dynamic technology and media-suffused information environment. Such a learning environment demands complex capabilities related to timely and expert use of information, technology and media for building knowledge of curriculum topics, and for providing instruction in a diverse range of skills which foster the development of citizens of a digital world.

Summary of findings
The bulleted points below summarize the findings based on quantitative and qualitative analyses undertaken. Page references refer to pages in the data analysis and findings section of the report where full statistical details and findings are presented.

General
- 765 participants took part in the survey. This represents 30% of the school libraries in New Jersey, both public and private.

- Data were collected from all counties of New Jersey. Middlesex and Bergen Counties provided the highest number of responses – 82 and 77 respectively. Salem and Cape May Counties provided the lowest number of responses – 10 and 8 respectively. (See pages 42-58)

- The average enrollment of participating schools was 733 students. The average enrollment of elementary schools was 490; middle schools was 695, and high schools was 1,278. (See pages 58-59)

- Total number of students enrolled at the participating schools was approximately 560,740 students. (See pages 58-60)

- 53% of the sample of participating schools was elementary schools. 18.5% of the participating schools were middle schools and 24.5% were high schools. (See page 61)

- 96.9% of schools participating schools were public schools. There was a very small number of private schools participating in the survey. (See pages 60-61)

- Consistent with distribution of participating school by type, there is a higher representation of elementary grades in the study, compared to middle and high schools. (See pages 62-63)

Personnel
- 95.2% of the participants in the study were professional librarians. (See pages 63-65)

- 27.2% of participants have 1-3 years experience, 39.3% have 4-10 years experience, 20% have 11-20 years experience, and 13.5% have more than 20 years experience. (See pages 63-65)

- The most common job title is School Library Media Specialist (43.5% of sample). 24.9% of the sample is called Educational Media Specialists. 12.2% of the sample have the official AASL title of School Librarian. (See pages 64-68)

- 84.5% of the sample are New Jersey state certified school librarians, either at the master's level of certification (58.9%) or associate certification level (having completed 18 credits). (See pages 68-75)

- 85.5% of elementary school librarians have state certification, 89% of middle school librarians have state certification, and 86.8% of high schools have state certification. There is a higher percentage of associate school librarians in elementary schools (31%) compared to middle schools (23.4%) and high schools (20.9%). (See pages 68-75)

- More than 50% of participants have acquired certification in the last 10 years. 35.5% of the participants have held certification from 1-5 years. There is no significant difference between the length of certifications held and employment in the types of schools – elementary, middle, high. (See pages 68-75)

- 91% of the participants in the study have full-time employment. There are no significant differences according to school type. In notes provided in the survey, participants in elementary and middle schools indicated that their full-time positions were spread between two or three schools. (See pages 76-79)

- On average, 52.5% of school libraries have some level of support staff working in the school library, and this is more likely to be in high schools. This support gap is particularly noticeable in relation to the elementary schools and middle schools, with 54.5% and 43.3% respectively) having no support staff. There was no significant difference between elementary and middle schools in the pattern of support staff. (See pages 79-85)

- The larger the enrollments of schools, the more full-time equivalent support staff schools

employed. (See pages 84-85)

- 70.9% of the participants indicate some level of responsibility for technical hardware support. This may indicate that school librarians are perceived to have expertise with the school library's technology infrastructure. (See pages 86-91)

- There is no statistically significant difference in responsibility for technology support by school type. In other words, librarians in all types of schools provide this technical support. It does not differ by school type (elementary, middle or high school). (See pages 86-91)

- 42% of the participants provide one or more hours of time in technical support. Time in technology support within the school library differed depending on the level of school. The higher level of school, the more time school librarians spend on technology support within the school library, with the least amount of time spent in elementary schools. (See pages 92-103)

- 50.9% of requests for technology support are met within a day, and an additional 31.8% are met within two to three days. (See pages 96-99)

- 50% of the participants in the study provide some level of technical support outside of the school library each week. School librarians in middle schools spent significantly more time supporting technology outside of school library than elementary schools, yet comparisons between elementary and high and between middle and high did not present any significant differences. (See pages 100-103)

Teaching and Professional Activities
- School librarians in New Jersey engage actively with New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards through a substantial number of cooperations, coordinations and collaborations. 19,320 cooperations, 11,179 coordinations and 3,916 collaborations were undertaken during the 2008-2009 school year. (See pages 104-105)

- On average, school librarians contributed 27 cooperations, 15 coordinations and 5 instructional collaborations with classroom teachers during the school year. Elementary school librarians contributed 14 cooperations, 6 coordinations, and 3 instructional collaborations during the school year. Middle school librarians contributed an average of 35 cooperations, 20 coordinations, and 8 instructional collaborations during the school year. High school librarians contributed an average of 45 cooperations, 32 coordinations, and 9 instructional collaborations during the school year. (See pages 104-105)

- Instructional collaborations typically take place in all schools in Language Arts Literacy, Social Studies and Science. (See pages 104-105)

- Many school librarians in New Jersey have actively participated in various school and community forums. There is some variation according to the type of activity and school

type (elementary, middle, and high). (See page 106)

- 48.5% of school librarians take the opportunity to interact with classroom teachers at grade level meetings when these are held in schools. (See pages 106-108)

- 51.5% of school librarians take the opportunity to interact with classroom teachers at team level meetings when these are held in schools. (See pages 108-109)

- 58% of participants in the study take the opportunity to interact with classroom teachers at department level meetings where available in a school. The results indicate that the higher the school level, the more opportunities school librarians took to make presentations at department level meetings. (See pages 109-110)

- 66.4% of participants take the opportunity to interact with school colleagues at faculty level meetings. The results indicate that the higher the school level, the more opportunities school librarians took to make presentations at faculty meetings. (See pages 110-113)

- 45.7% of participants in the study take the opportunity to interact with school colleagues at Parent / Community Organization meetings. The results indicate that the higher the school level the more opportunities school librarians took to make presentations at these meetings. (See pages 113-115)

- 63% of participants are involved in the provision of professional development in relation to information literacy in their schools. Elementary school librarians provided formal/informal professional development on information literacy fewer times than in middle and/or high schools. There was no significant difference between middle and high schools in terms of the frequency of provision. (See pages 115-118)

- 72.8% of participants are involved in the provision of professional development in relation to information technology in their schools. This takes place more frequently in high schools than in elementary and middle schools. (See pages 118-120)

- The data show active communication with school principals. 96.1% of school librarians meet with their school principal during the school year. High school librarians meet more frequently than do librarians in middle or elementary schools. 51.7% of the school librarians meet more than 5 times a year. (See pages 120-122)

- There is a strong pattern of communication with curriculum supervisors. 74.4% of school librarians meet with curriculum supervisors during the school year. High school librarians meet more frequently than do librarians in middle or elementary schools. 24.3% of the school librarians meet more than 5 times a year with curriculum supervisors. (See pages 122-125)

- 38.3% of school librarians meet with their superintendent during the school year. There were no significant differences in frequency according to school type. (See pages 125-

127)

- The data show a robust contribution by a number of school librarians to the work of various committees in schools and districts, outside the immediate arena of the school library, indicating an active participation in the decision making processes of the school. (See pages 127-131)

- School librarians show a high level of belonging to professional associations, both within the library community as well as the educational community. Of the 765 participants, 98.9% have membership or affiliation with at least one professional association. This is predominantly, but not solely, the New Jersey Association of School Librarians. 83% of the participants are members of more than one professional association, including regional library and school library associations, and educational associations. (See pages 132-133)

- School librarians in New Jersey engage in a diverse range of professional development activities. 2261 instances of professional development were documented, representing an average of three discrete professional development activities by each of the 756 participants who engaged in professional development (98.8% of sample). (See pages 133-135)

Information Literacy Instruction
School librarians make an extensive contribution to information literacy instruction in their schools. This instruction primarily centers on:
- Knowing about the school library
- Knowing about different sources and formats and developing strategies for doing effective research
- Learning how to use the resources
- Evaluating information for quality
- Learning to use information ethically (See pages 135-147)

Despite issues with staffing in the elementary schools, school librarians where available are contributing substantially to this instruction.

At least 70% of school librarians provide information literacy instruction in relation to:
- Knowing about the school library (92.5%)
- Accessing information efficiently and effectively (89.1%)
- Knowing how to use the different sources and formats of information (85.9%)
- Strategizing for finding, evaluating, and selecting appropriate sources to answer questions (84.8%)
- Knowing about different sources and formats of information (82.1%)
- Using information ethically (plagiarism, citation, bibliography (80.8%)
- Using information technology responsibly (78.8%)
- Accommodating differentiated learning styles and abilities (75.7%)

- Evaluating information for its relevance to the task (74.3%)
- Seeking information for personal and recreational pursuits (73.8%)
- Sharing knowledge and information with others (71.5%)
- Evaluating information for quality (70.2%)

All school types have the following skills on their top 10 skills lists for students' information literacy:
- Knowing about the school library
- Accessing information efficiently and effectively
- Knowing how to use the different sources and formats of information
- Strategizing for finding, evaluating, and selecting appropriate sources to answer questions
- Knowing about different sources and formats of information
- Using information technology responsibly
- Using information ethically (plagiarism, citation, bibliography)

"Knowing about the school library" ranked #1 in all school types.
"Accessing information efficiently and effectively" ranked #2 in all school types.

Highest ranked information literacy instructional initiatives in elementary schools are:
- Knowing about the school library (93.5%)
- Accessing information efficiently and effectively (88.1%)
- Knowing how to use the different sources and formats of information (84.3%)
- Strategizing for finding, evaluating, and selecting appropriate sources to answer questions (82.5%)
- Knowing about different sources and formats of information (78.0%)
- Accommodating differentiated learning styles and abilities (77.2%)
- Seeking information for personal and recreational pursuits (75.4%)
- Sharing knowledge and information with others (75.1%)
- Using information technology responsibly (72.4%)
- Using information ethically (plagiarism, citation, bibliography) (71.8%)

Highest ranked information literacy instructional initiatives in middle schools are:
- Knowing about the school library (93.6%)
- Accessing information efficiently and effectively (92.2%)
- Using information ethically (plagiarism, citation, bibliography) (90.8%)
- Knowing how to use the different sources and formats of information (90.1%)
- Strategizing for finding, evaluating, and selecting appropriate sources to answer questions (89.4)
- Knowing about different sources and formats of information (87.9%)
- Using information technology responsibly (87.2%)
- Identifying inaccurate and misleading information (82.3%)
- Evaluating information for its relevance to the task (79.4%)
- Understanding the different strategies in doing effective research (79.4%)

Highest ranked information literacy instructional initiatives in high schools are:
- Knowing about the school library (92.0%)
- Accessing information efficiently and effectively (90.4%)
- Using information ethically (plagiarism, citation, bibliography) (87.7%)
- Strategizing for finding, evaluating, and selecting appropriate sources to answer questions (86.1%)
- Knowing how to use the different sources and formats of information (85.0%)
- Knowing about different sources and formats of information (85.0%)
- Using information technology responsibly (84.5%)
- Evaluating information for quality (80.2%)
- Evaluating information for its relevance to the task (77.0%)
- Identifying inaccurate and misleading information (77.0%)
- Understanding the different strategies in doing effective research (77.0%)

All school types have the following skills in their lowest rank for students' information literacy:
- Deriving meaning from information presented in a variety of formats
- Forming questions based on information needs
- Developing creative products in a variety of formats
- Applying new knowledge and skills to different contexts
- Strategizing for revising, improving, and updating existing knowledge.

These dimensions of information literacy focus on knowledge construction, and are generally considered to be in the domain of classroom teachers. Accordingly, the extent of participation in these instructional activities is impressive.

Comparative analysis across school types shows that there is some significant – and appropriate – variation in the range of information literacy competencies, especially between high and middle schools, compared to elementary schools. Upper school levels give more attention to critical evaluation of diverse information sources, the identification of main and supporting ideas (the hierarchical and associative structuring of information), the responsible and ethical use of information, and the development of critical thinking capacities. Overall, there is an information resource orientation, but also some knowledge-outcomes focus to information literacy. The focus appears to be on essential skills of accessing and locating information, and evaluating its appropriateness for task and authority. (See pages 142-147)

Instruction In Information Technology
School librarians in New Jersey take a strong instructional role in providing students with the intellectual and technical scaffolds to engage with information technology in efficient and productive ways. Teaching search strategies, both in relation to the World Wide Web and specialized databases, library catalogs and directories is given the most widespread emphasis. There is evidence of the early adoption and integration of a range of Web 2.0 technologies, tools and techniques to support curriculum content standards. This is taking place more strongly in the high schools and middle schools, rather than in the elementary schools. School librarians in New Jersey show considerable capacity to lead this important journey in their schools. Percentages of instructional involvement are shown below:

- Using library catalogs (91.7%)
- Searching strategies for the World Wide Web (80.9%)
- Using the Internet and other electronic sources ethically (78.3%)
- Using electronic searching in subscription databases (75.1%)
- Evaluating the quality of websites (73.6%)
- Using software applications, such as PowerPoint or Excel, to do school work (58.0%)
- Using e-books (26.7%)
- Using Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, podcasts, or Twitter (18.4%) (See pages 148-152)

Comparative analysis by school type shows that this is taking place more strongly in the high schools and middle schools, rather than in the elementary schools.

A substantial number of school librarians in New Jersey actively provide a range of information technology related professional development activities to teaching faculty. It shows a commitment to whole school development in term of effective use of information technology. The percentage of school librarians involved in this professional development is shown below:
- Using library catalogs (76.2%)
- Using electronic searching in subscription databases (68.0%)
- Searching strategies for the World Wide Web (42.3%)
- Using software applications, such as PowerPoint or Excel, to do school work (40.8%)
- Using the Internet and other electronic sources ethically (38.2%)
- Evaluating the quality of websites (33.2%)
- Using e-books (22.3%)
- Using Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, podcasts, or Twitter (19.2%) (See pages 153-157)

Comparative analysis shows that the highest levels of involvement are in high schools, with lowest levels of participation mostly by elementary school librarians.

Data on specific aspects of professional development provided to school faculty in relation to information technology in addition to ideas mentioned above generated five categories of professional development. These focus on professional development in relation to:
- Technical mastery of information technology hardware
- Technical mastery of a range of information technology software
- Technical mastery and use of library-specific software and technology tools
- Pedagogical integration of hardware and software into classroom and library-based instruction, and on-going instructional support
- Use of information technology tools to develop ethical use of information and information technology by students. (See pages 158-160)

This professional development typically takes place through formally scheduled workshops as part of the school's professional development program, or more informal one-on-one instruction. (See page 161)

School Library Impact on Student Learning
Do New Jersey's school libraries impact student learning?
- Overall, the qualitative responses of the participants collectively show the contribution of school libraries to the development of the whole child. The school library is portrayed as an agency for intellectual development, for social and cultural growth of students as they grow up in a complex and diverse information world. According to the evidence provided by the school librarians, the school library works to meet core content standards, to develop a wide range of information handling competencies and to provide students with the intellectual and technical scaffolds they need to learn and be ethical and productive users and consumers of information.

- Based on qualitative responses by 721 school librarians, New Jersey's school libraries appear to contribute to learning outcomes in six key ways:
    1. Contribution to development of curriculum standards, including mastery of content standards and contribution to test score achievement
    2. The development of resource-based competencies, centering on library operations, mastery of a diverse range of information literacy competencies
    3. The development of research process and learning management competencies, centering on the mastery of explicit aspects of the research process, inquiry processes, strategies of independent learning, and research project management
    4. The development of thinking-based competencies, in particular the processes of thinking, analysis and synthesis that create knowledge and the representation of knowledge though a range of products
    5. The development of affective, personal and interpersonal competencies, including the development of positive and ethical values in relation to the use of information, increased motivation and interest for engaging with information for learning and working effectively with others in research activities
    6. Outcomes related to the development of reading, including increased interest in reading increased participation in reading, the development of wider reading interests, becoming more discriminating readers. (See pages 160-168)

Contribution to Reading and Related Activities
School librarians in New Jersey make an extensive and diverse contribution to reading and related activities in the school. The top 10 reading and related activities, with percentage of involvement, are:
- Literature displays (89.4%)
- Book talks to promote literature for recreational reading (77.5%)
- Encouraging any free voluntary reading outside of school (77.1%)
- Use databases and/or websites to encourage reading (75.7%)
- Any reading incentive program within the school (59.7%)
- Book talks to promote curriculum related reading (57.7%)
- Encouraging any voluntary reading activities, such as DEAR, inside of school (56.7%)
- Self-help information such as brochures, web links, or book lists (55.5%)

- Books or information to help students cope with challenges or sensitive topics (54.4%)
- Summer reading programs (43.8%) (See pages 168-173)

The top 10 reading and related activities in elementary schools, with percentage of involvement, are:

- Literature displays (89.4%)
- Book talks to promote literature for rereational reading (88.1%)
- Encouraging free voluntary reading outside of school (81.6%)
- Reading incentive program within the school (74.4%)
- Book talks to promote curriculum related reading (72.5%)
- Use of databases and/or websites to encourage reading (71.9%)
- Encouraging voluntary reading activities, such as DEAR, inside of school (71.6%)
- Storytelling (68.8%)
- Music and rhymes (58.1%)
- Readers' theater (57.5%) (See page 173)

The top 10 reading and related activities in middle schools, with percentage of involvement, are:

- Literature displays (94.0%)
- Book talks to promote literature for recreational reading (79.1%)
- Use of databases and/or websites to encourage reading (76.9%)
- Encouraging any free voluntary reading outside of school (74.6%)
- Reading incentive program within the school (61.9%)
- Self-help information such as brochures, web links, or book lists (60.4%)
- Encouraging voluntary reading activities, such as DEAR, inside of school (59.7%)
- Book talks to promote curriculum related reading (56.0%)
- Books or information to help students cope with challenges or sensitive topics (52.2%)
- Book clubs or literature discussion groups, where students share ideas and discuss their reading (45.5%) (See page 173)

The top 10 reading and related activities in high schools, with percentage of involvement, are:
- Literature displays (87.9%)
- Use of databases and/or websites to encourage reading (79.9%)
- Encouraging free voluntary reading outside of school (70.1%)
- Self-help information such as brochures, web links, or book lists (70.1%)
- Books or information to help students cope with challenges or sensitive topics (63.8%)
- Book talks to promote literature for recreational reading (55.7%)
- Book clubs or literature discussion groups, where students share ideas and discuss their reading (36.8%)
- Production of print and digital images (34.5%)
- Collaboration with public libraries in reading or writing programs (33.9%)

- Book talks to promote curriculum related reading (33.9%) (See page 173)

Findings show that all school types have the following reading-related activities in their top 10:
- Literature displays
- Book talks to promote literature for recreational reading
- Encouraging any free voluntary reading outside of school
- Book talks to promote curriculum related reading
- Use of databases and/or websites to encourage reading
- "Literature displays" ranks #1 in all school types. (See page 174)

All school types have the following reading-related activities in their lowest rank:
- Electronic gaming
- Integrating reading for understanding strategies in units of inquiry
- Literature-related programs for students with special needs
- Interpretation of print and digital images (See pages 174-175)

Some librarians provided additional activities such as the following: Reading race, book giveaways, reading buddies, compile booklist/bibliography, create podcast/book trailer (min-commercials), have students create promotional materials for library, run family reading programs, book swaps, track what the teachers are reading, readers' advisory, Paws to Literacy (read to pet), as examples. (See page 182)

Statistical analyses of data on reading and related activities revealed the following trends:
- Elementary and middle schools were more likely to provide the following activities, regardless of their rankings: book talk to promote recreational reading, book talk to promote curriculum related reading, author visit, encouraging free volunteer reading inside of school, storytelling, reading incentive program within the school, integrating reading for understanding strategies in units of inquiry, and readers' theater
- Compared with middle and high schools, elementary schools were more likely to provide the following activities, regardless of their rankings: creative writing activities related to literature, music and rhymes, and interpretation of print and digital images
- Compared with middle and high schools, elementary schools were less likely to provide self-help information
- A chi-square statistics test revealed that school type was not significantly related to the following activities regardless of their rankings (that is, school type did not make these activities more or less probable): use of databases and/or websites to encourage reading; literature display; production of print and digital images. (See pages 175-182)

Findings also show that reading and related activities in elementary schools focus largely on literacy skills development and interest-building to encourage children to read better and read more and to become steady readers, though most of the top ranked activities such as literature displays and book talks do not guarantee student interaction. The majority of reading activities in middle and high schools are passive too, except for a few activities such as creative writing and book discussion clubs that show a slightly higher level of demand for student interaction. (See pages 175-185)

Continuous Improvement

In working towards the future and identifying key areas for continuous improvement, school librarians identified seven key priorities for change. These are:

1. Adopting flexible scheduling for school libraries across the grades.
2. Developing richer and comprehensive understanding of the role of the school library, the work of the school librarian, and the contribution of the school library to learning outcomes for teachers, administrators and community members.
3. Building a sustainable culture of curriculum-centered collaboration in the school focusing on integrating information, technical and critical literacies into curriculum.
4. Providing adequate support staff to enable the professional role of the school librarian to be undertaken, particularly for instructional collaborations.
5. Continuing to provide state-of-the-art information technology for access to information, as well as access to technology tools, to support the production and presentation of knowledge.
6. Providing adequate budgets and participation in budget decisions.
7. Enhancing and upgrading library facilities and space. (See pages 185-193)

School Library Administration

- 91% of school librarians in New Jersey are engaged in administrative tasks related to acquisition and circulation of resources at least on a daily or weekly basis, with 78% of them involved in this on a daily basis. It is a time-consuming task, one of critical importance to maintaining the highest quality collection targeted to curriculum needs, reading abilities, and learning styles. When this is broken down by school type, 75.1% of elementary school librarians engage in this task on a daily or weekly basis; 79.5% for middle school librarians, and 84.3% of high school librarians. (See pages 193-195)

- A similar pattern emerges with clerical tasks. When this is broken down by school type, 82.4% of elementary school librarians engage in this task on a daily or weekly basis; 80.6% for middle school librarians, and 77% of high school librarians. (See page 196)

- School librarians in New Jersey clearly undertake supervisory responsibilities of paraprofessional and volunteer staff, when they are available or assigned as part of their daily routines. When this task is broken down by school type, 73.3% of elementary school librarians engage in supervision on a daily or weekly basis; compared to 69.0% of middle school librarians, and 78.3% of high school librarians. (See page 197)

- To a lesser extent, school librarians in New Jersey also undertake responsibilities in relation to the everyday maintenance and management of equipment, such as computers, projectors and recorders. These are also part of their daily routines. When this is broken down by school type, 31.5% of elementary school librarians engage in this task on a daily or weekly basis; compared to 44.4% of middle school librarians, and 48.4% of high school librarians. (See page 198)

- Overall, there is little variation in the range of broad responsibilities undertaken across school types (elementary, middle and high), apart from some maintenance of equipment,

which appears to have a stronger presence in high schools, and the performance of assigned duties such as bus, cafeteria and the like. These seem to be more assigned to elementary school librarians, who are already shared between schools which has an impact on the potential full provision of library services. (See pages 199-202)

Service to the School Community

School librarians give considerable service to their schools in a multitude of ways. Five key areas of contribution were identified. These are:

- Information service roles, including school publishing and school-wide media responsibilities, publicity, school website and community information links
- School wide reading and literacy initiatives, involving clubs, reading challenges and competitions, reading incentive schemes and specialized reading celebrations
- General school services utilizing the expertise of school librarians, such as school committees and grant writing
- Student leadership, including participation in and coordination / leadership of school events targeted to developing student responsibility, leadership and civic participation
- A range of extracurricular activities focusing on student responsibility and civic participation. (See pages 202-204)

Collection Analysis

Data on school library book collections came from two sources in the study. Participants either gave permission for CISSL to access the *TitleWise* database maintained by Follett Library Resources, or they provided data on their book collections by responding to survey questions. Survey responses from a maximum of 61% of the original sample of 765 school libraries supplies data on the book collections from school librarians. In addition, survey data describes non-book materials for all participants in the study. A summary of these survey responses follows. (See pages 204-229)

- The mean, or average number of school library materials reported by survey participants is 13,846.9. The average number of books in the collections is 13,028.3. The average number of new materials added to the collections in 2008-09 is 580.1. The average number of new books added is 532.7. (See pages 205-206)

- While the mode, or most frequent response given for total and added numbers of books/materials in the collections does not vary that much from the mean, the range of responses indicate large differences among school library collections. The lowest number of materials in a school library is 300; the highest number is 115,000. The lowest number of books in a school library collection is 150; the largest is 115,000. The lowest number of new materials added is 12; the largest is 8,000. The lowest number of new books added is zero; the largest is 8,000. This wide variation indicates substantial inequities in size of school library collections and in the size of their acquisitions, or new materials added. These data indicate inequities in the funding of school library budgets. The high values of the standard deviations, or differences among the averages values, support these conclusions. (See page 205-206)

- The mode, or value most frequently reported for the number of magazine and newspaper subscriptions in school libraries is zero, indicating that there are more school libraries that do not take subscriptions for periodicals in print format than libraries that do subscribe. Inequity is also indicated in the range of minimum and maximum number of periodical subscriptions reported, with a range of zero to 301 for magazines, and a range of zero to 250 for newspapers. (See page 207)

- The mode reported for electronic (subscription) database availability in collections is one; the mode response for purchased databases is zero. This indicates that there are more school libraries with access to one or no databases than school libraries that have database access. There were wide ranges in the number of databases available through purchase or from another source, indicating substantial inequities among school library access to electronic databases. (See page 208)

- The means, or averages of DVDs and videocassettes are, respectively, three and ten times greater than the numbers of CDs and audiocassettes in the reporting school libraries. The modal value for each of these four types of non-print materials is zero, indicating that more school libraries have none of these kinds of non-print materials than those who do. The ranges of minimum and maximum values also indicate the inequities among reporting school libraries. The average reported number of audio cassettes is higher than the number of CDs, but maximum values indicate that audio cassettes collections scattered across school libraries are not more than 1,000, while the largest CD collection reported is 5,500. This probably indicates the declining frequency of audiocassettes in the collections as a whole. (See pages 208-209)

The *TitleWise* accounts for a 39% of the original sample of 765 school libraries provided data on the book collections of those school libraries who hold *TitleWise* accounts and gave CISSL permission to access their accounts for analysis. This analysis yielded the following findings. (See pages 210-229)

- An overview of the collections shows the total number of books in New Jersey school libraries is 3,018,667. Of these, 2,420,983 (62%) are non-fiction; 1,497,684 (38%) are fiction. The average number of books per student is 15.7. The average non-fiction, fiction, and overall copyright date is 1989. (See page 210)

- The largest number of non-fiction books are Geography/History (11.4%), followed by Social Sciences (8.5%) and Natural Sciences/Mathematics (8.5%). 6.4% of non-fiction is Reference; 6.6% is Biography. The categories with the fewest books are Generalities (.8%) and Philosophy/Psychology (.8%). (See pages 211-212)
- General Fiction comprises 20% of the collections; Easy Books is 11.2%. The categories with the fewest books are Paperbacks (2.8%) and Story Collections (.8%). (See pages 211-212)

- An analysis of non-fiction by school type indicates a trend toward more non-fiction than fiction books for every level of schooling from elementary through high school. This phenomenon is labeled the "fiction-non-fiction gap." (See pages 213-214)

- The trend in the size of fiction collections indicates a slight decrease in elementary and elementary/middle school libraries. The fiction-non-fiction gap originates with the sharp drop of almost 50% in the number of fiction books in middle and middle high school libraries. This trend corresponds with a national decline in the amount of sustained reading among middle school students and a decline in their reading scores. High school libraries indicate a slight increase in the number of fiction titles, but the size of these fiction collections are about half of elementary school fiction collections. This trend raises the question of accessibility of narrative reading materials for older students many of whom become disengaged from reading in their secondary years of schooling. (See pages 215-216)

- The categories that exhibit the most difference when elementary and high school collections are compared are Social Sciences (300s), Literature/Rhetoric (800s), Geography/History (900s), and Reference. It is interesting to note that Science and Mathematics (500s) books decline by more than 50%, from 11.36% of elementary collections to 4.61 of high school collections. (See pages 216-217)

- Four Dewey categories present a difference of more than 5% between the sizes of elementary and high school non-fiction collections: Social Sciences, Literature/Rhetoric, Geography/History, and Reference. These four categories have a common denominator: they contain the subject matter content of the school libraries' most frequent users. Teachers in secondary schools can exercise choice to use school library resources because typically these schools operate on flexible, rather than fixed scheduling. English/Language Arts and Social Studies classes are the most frequent users of school library print collections. The increase in non-fiction purchasing for secondary collections reflects differences in elementary and secondary curriculum, and points to a focus on reading and literacy development in lower grades. (See page 217)

- A comparison of the percentages of the four Dewey categories that present the largest difference between elementary and high school library collections shows the relational similarities between elementary and high school libraries.
  - Social Sciences: Elementary (6.4%); High School (12.3%)
  - Literature/Rhetoric: Elementary (2.5%); High School (9.8%)
  - Geography/History: Elementary (6.9%); High School (15.1%)
  - Reference: Elementary (2.3%); High School (11.81%)

  Although there is more than a five percent difference between each of the categories when elementary and high schools are compared, both school types have the about the same proportionate number of books in these Dewey categories books relative to the sizes of the collections. (See page 218)

- A Balanced Dewey Comparison that compares the percentages of non-fiction books in each Dewey category with the recommended percentages from H.W. Wilson Company and with Follett Library Resources shows that there are plus or minus differences of 4.6% or less in almost every category. The exception is Reference, which is 14.7% below the

Wilson recommendation and 8.6% below the Follett recommendation. (See pages 218-221)

- An analysis of the currency of fiction books shows an average copyright date of 1989. Books that are custom catalogued, i.e., assigned a material type other than the types specified in the *TitleWise* database, have the most recent average copyright date of 1993, followed by Paperbacks (1992). Story Collections and Easy Books have the oldest average copyright date of fiction types: 1985. Reluctant and struggling readers are most affected by this trend since they tend to choose short books and books that are written on low reading levels. (See pages 221-222)

- General fiction, which is comprised of novels, has an average copyright date that is 20 years old (1990.7). This indicates that the ficton collections are dominated by classics (i.e., classic adult novels, classic children's books, and classic Young Adult novels.) This statistic strongly indicates that new titles (e.g., Caldecott, Newbery, and other award winning titles) and high interest books, e.g., best-sellers, books that have entered other media such as film, and new books that appeal to specific sub-groups or cultures, such as urban fiction and manga, are not accessible in school libraries to a large number of young readers. Old, worn, outdated, and irrelevant literature will not motivate youth to read in the sustained and meaningful way that develops reading comprehension. (See pages 221-222)

- An analysis of the currency of non-fiction books shows that eight of the 13 Dewey categories have copyright dates prior to 1990. The oldest category is 1984 for Literature/ Rhetoric (800s), which includes essays, drama, and poetry. Again, the opportunity to provide young readers with access to contemporary literature is lost. Religion (200s) and Geography/ History (900s) have copyright dates of 1986 and 1987 respectively. Middle/high schools and elementary schools have the oldest collections, with average copyright dates of 1987 and 1988 respectively. The "newest' collections have average copyright dates of 1991. (See pages 222-223)

- An analysis of currency for fiction by school type shows middle/high school libraries have the oldest copyright date (1987), followed by elementary schools (1988). High school libraies have a average fiction date of 1990; elementary/middle and middle school libraries have an average copyright date of 1991. (See page 223)
- An analysis of currency of non-fiction by school type shows middle/High school libaries have the most aged non-fiction with an average copyright date of 1984, followed by high school libraries (1987) and middle school libraries (1990). Elementary/middle and elementary school libraries have the most recent average date of 1992. (See page 224)

- Age sensitivity, as established by the Continuous Review, Evaluation and Weeding (CREW) guidelines (Larson, 2008) and adapted by Follett Library Resources, targets vulnerable Dewey subjects to establish the percentage of books outside the acceptable range, which is either three or five years from copyright date. The analysis found:
  - 93% of Geography/History books are five years old or older;
  - 90% of computer and program and system books are three years old or older.;

- 92% of books on commerce, transportation, and communication are in the unacceptable range of five years or older;
- 87% of political science books are five years old or older;
- 85 % of books on astronomy and life sciences are five years old or older;
- 80-82% of books on social problems and services, medicine and disease, and education are five years old or older;
- The average percentage of age sensitive non-fiction books that are in jeopardy of carrying misinformation is 85%. (See pages 224-226)

- An analysis of the average percentage of age sensitive books by school type reveals that 92% of the age sensitive books in middle high school libraries are in the unacceptable range of three to five years old, followed by elementary/middle school libraries (87%). High, middle, and elemntary school libraries have fewer age sensitive books that are likely to be outdated, with a range from 82% to 84%. The average of the percentages of aged titles for all five types of school libraries is 85.6%. This means that 14.4% of all the non-fiction books in the five types of libraries that participated in this study are less than five years old for the nine categores identified as age senstive. (See page 227)

- Using five categories of school types, for the 2008-2009 school year elementary school library budgets average $11,855; elem/middle school library budgets average $11,415; middle school libraries average $13,395; mid/high libraries average $12,789; and high school library budgets average $17,190. The average budget for elementary school libraries is 44% less than for middle school libraries. The average middle school library budget is 62% less than for high school libraries. Elementary, middle, and high school libraries fare better than libraries in hybrid schools, i.e., elementary/middle and middle/high libraries. Elementary/middle libraries receive more than middle school libraries; middle/high libraries receive less than high school libraries. These inequities are reflected in size and currency of the hybrid school library collections. (See page 228)

- Books added since 1949 were charted to look for patterns in the number of acquisitions by decade since 1949. A calculation of books added to these collections since 1949 provides some insight into funding. A steady increase in books added from 171 in 1949 to 3,949 in 1990 illustrates a strong trend. The decline in books added dropped in the years after 2000 to 3, 571. The strong and steady growth of school library collections from the 1960's to 1990 is attributed to federal funding for schools through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which contributed substantial funding for the development of school library collections, including audio visual equipment and materials. In the 1990's that growth trend was reversed when the ESEA was replaced with No Child Left Behind. (See page 229)

- A grouping and analysis of New Jersey school libraries using an adaptation of the New Jersey Department of Education's District Factor Grouping (DFG) shows that the size of high socioeconomic school (SES) library collections is larger, with the largest discrepancies in the social sciences (300's) and geography and history (900's). There is consistency within each Dewey category showing a strong trend that school libraries in low and low-mid SES DFGs have fewer books than school libraries in mid-high and high

SES DFGs and fewer new acquisitions. (See pages 230-231)

- A comparison of the percent of fiction and non-fiction by socioeconomic school (SES) categories shows less difference in the ratio of fiction to non-fiction than when this ratio is analyzed by school type. However, regardless of SES status, non-fiction outnumbers fiction by almost 20% or more in all DFG categories. (See pages 231-232)

- A comparison of the percent of non-fiction and fiction in school libraries by their schools' socioeconomic status (SES) shows that across school types low and mid-low SES school libraries have consistently fewer fiction and non-fiction books than mid-high and high SES school libraries. The fiction-non-fiction gap increases from 15% in low SES school libraries to 22% in high SES school libraries. Low-mid SES school libraries have the largest fiction-non-fiction gap with a difference of 28%. (See page 233)

- Analysis of the average sample age sensitivity by SES type reveals the difference in age sensitivity of school library collections by SES type. Collections in low SES school libraries have a slightly higher percentage of books that are considered age sensitive, or more than three to five years old in categories designated as age sensitive. (See page 234)

- One third of the variance in the size of a collection of a school library was explained by the school's socioeconomic status: the lower the SES, the fewer books in the collection. (See pages 234-237)

- Libraries in mid-low socioeconomic groups purchased significantly fewer book than the mid-high and high SES schools. (See page 237)

- 47.2% of school librarians make use of interlibrary loans to meet resource needs in their schools. 12.4% of the sample make extensive use of this process, with more than 50 loans per year provided through interlibrary loans. The differences between school types are significant. High school librarians make greater use of interlibrary loans than do middle and elementary school librarians. (See pages 238-240)
- 83.2% of the school libraries in the study have membership in a regional library co-operative. High schools and middle schools are more likely to be members, as compared to elementary schools. (See pages 240-243)

- There is a high level of penetration of key information technologies that enable access to and use of information resources. 96.4% of school libraries have internet access; 92.1% make available word processing software; with a slightly lower level of availability of presentation software (87.8%); and spreadsheet software (82.2%). 81.6% of the school libraries in the sample have a school library website. Other technologies, such as wireless access, email access have a lower level of penetration (44% and 34.3% respectively). Overall, high school libraries and middle school libraries in particular have a significantly stronger provision and access to a range of information technologies through the school library compared to elementary school libraries. (See pages 244-249)

- At least 90% of school libraries in the sample have automated circulation systems.

Elementary schools have statistically significantly less numbers of automated circulation systems than middle and/or high schools. There was no significant difference between middle and high schools. (See pages 249-250)

- 98.7% of the school libraries in the sample have automated catalogs. Follett, Destiny and Sagebrush are the predominant providers (30.3%, 25.3% and 21.3% respectively). Follett predominates in elementary schools, Destiny in high schools and Sagebrush in middle schools. Largest gap in provision is in middle schools. (See pages 251-252)

- 46.4% of school libraries in the sample provide access to web-based catalogs. Specifically, 63.6% of high schools, 54.0% of middle schools and 46.5% of elementary schools provide web-based catalogs. There is a statistical difference in relation to the availability of web-based catalog in school libraries, with high school and middle school libraries more likely than elementary schools to provide these. (See pages 252-254)

- 90.6% of school libraries provide computers for student use, and 84.7% of these computers have internet access. Overall, there is a high correspondence with availability of computers and availability of internet access through them. The average number of computers with internet access in elementary school libraries is 12; in middle schools it is 31, and in high schools it is 44. High schools have significantly more computers than elementary and middle schools. (See pages 254-255)

- Printers, VCR players, DVD players, Televisions, Overhead Projectors, and copiers are the most common equipment available in school libraries. To a much lesser extent, digital cameras, scanners, SmartBoards, video cameras, whiteboards, and video data projectors are available, although less than half of the school libraries have these equipments. High schools are significantly more equipment enriched than middle schools and elementary schools. Elementary schools in particular are missing out on major access to contemporary technologies. (See pages 256-262)

Access
- 36.2% of the schools provide full flexible access (including access out of school hours), and 61.8% of school libraries provide all or some flexible access. (See pages 263-265)

- There is a significant difference in types of access according to school type. 98% of elementary schools operate on a fixed or modified fixed schedule (compared to 33.6% of middle schools and 19% of high schools). 2% of elementary schools provide flexible and open access, compared to 66.4% of middle schools and 80.9% of high schools. (See pages 264-266)

- 99.1% of school libraries operate as single rather than shared facilities. (See page 266)

School Library Budget
- The average elementary school library budget is $8,299; average middle school library budget is $17,932; and average high school budget is $29,228.

- The highest average budget allocations are in Morris, Cape May, Gloucester, Burlington and Mercer Counties, and the lowest average budget allocations are in Warren, Essex,

Passaic and Hudson Counties. 13 counties have average budgets below the statewide average of $15,603. (See pages 270-272)

- 54.5% of school library budgets remained unchanged from the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years. 18.5% of school library budgets increased, and 27.2 decreased during these times. The data analysis shows that no one school type – elementary, middle or high – appeared to suffer more budget cuts than the others. (See pages 270-272)

- There is considerable variation across school libraries in terms what is purchased with school library budget allocations, and this variation also occurs across different school types. While trade and library books, periodicals, and library furnishings are common budget expenditures across school libraries, there is little consistency as to other expenditure items. (See pages 273-282)

Personnel Changes
- 94% of participants indicated that they will be returning to their position in the 2009-10 school year. Elimination of school library position and retirement are the predominant reason for 6% of the participants who indicated that they will not be returning to their school in the new school year. (See pages 283)

Recommendations

Part A: School Libraries and Transformation

A1. NJASL establishes mechanisms for the production and distribution of the findings of this study in multiple forms and formats to all educational stakeholders in New Jersey, to ensure that the findings are visible and provide the basis for the development of continuous improvement initiatives in schools. Underpinning this is the identification of key audiences for the findings, and establishing the most appropriate and effective means of presenting the findings and follow-up actions.   These should include:

- Press releases;
- Concise fact sheets for distribution to school administrators, faculty, school board;
- Summaries posted on school library web sites;
- Evidence-based advocacy materials to celebrate school libraries in New Jersey;
- Conference presentations;
- Papers in peer-reviewed and practitioner journals.

A2. NJASL establishes a formal feedback meeting inviting New Jersey Department of Education leaders, school principals and superintendents, representatives of school board associations, targeted community organizations, and district school library supervisors and school librarians to participate. The purpose of this meeting would be:

- To present an overview of the findings of this study, with emphasis on the holistic contribution of the school library to the learning agenda of the school and the development of the intellectual and technical capabilities of students;
- To identify key challenges and issues in school library provision (e.g., staffing patterns, flexible scheduling, budget allocations and expectations regarding school librarian-classroom teacher collaborations);
- To identify enablers and barriers to enacting the recommendations of this report;
- To discuss an agenda of continuous improvement so that all school libraries can continue to grow and flourish.

The list of seven priorities identified by school librarians may serve as a useful framework for establishing this agenda and a professional development agenda for stakeholders / professional associations to enable school librarians to take steps to achieving these goals. It is recommended that this meeting take place in Fall 2010 so that actions and development plans can be initiated as whole-school activities for Spring 2011.

A3. NJASL, in conjunction with various educational and community stakeholders, develops a shared vision document for the future of school libraries in New Jersey. In the context of the state's current financial crisis, the challenges confronting school libraries and their role in learning and in the digital landscape of the 21st century are significant. A statewide innovative, visionary statement on imagining and re-engineering school libraries, with buy-in from all stakeholders is critical. The findings of this study, with its emphasis on the development of the intellectual capacity of students, should be a key starting point.   We suggest:

- The development of futuristic and research-based documents such as, "New Jersey School Libraries: Towards a 2020 Vision." This futuristic document would acknowledge the dramatic changes in the digital information world. It would chart the development of creative and powerful pedagogies that engage the information landscape in all its richness to foster curriculum standards and deep knowledge outcomes.

- That NJASL leadership carefully examines the work being done in terms of conceptualizing school libraries as "learning commons" where the central focus is on: inquiry-based learning through information; intervention and socialization for learning; how to function effectively in the complex informational and technological world beyond school; and knowledge-centered outcomes and intellectual engagement.

- Positioning the school library as a pedagogical center where instructional teams engage in innovative design and instruction to access and use information and web tools to empower learning through creativity, discovery, inquiry, cooperation, and collaboration. The center would be fueled by the development of expertise of learning with and through information and IT tools to create, produce and share knowledge.

- Engaging the information technology expertise as evidenced in this study to position the future school library as a 24/7 learning environment: one which supports the knowledge building process out of school and operates as a central portal for knowledge development.

A4. School librarians use the findings of this study as a guide to benchmarking in their own schools, and to negotiate and establish continuous school improvement plans (i.e., each not more than a three-year plan) that focus on meeting targeted standards of professional and paraprofessional support for school libraries. Each school community should review these findings and tailor a school library improvement plan which is responsive to the context of the particular school. The plan should establish annual improvement goals, (e.g., increases in budget allocations; building collections to recommended levels of resources, increasing paraprofessional support, and the opening up of fixed library schedules to more flexible schedules; the initiation of school librarian-teacher collaborations in targeted curriculum areas, and development information technology competencies for teaching faculty and students.)

A5. School librarians engage in professional development that helps them create and implement information literacy instructional interventions linked to knowledge creation and sharing. It is clear the school librarians in New Jersey engage actively in the development and instruction of an extensive range of information and technical literacies. This instruction primarily centers on knowing about the school library, knowing about different sources and formats, with sound levels related to understanding the different strategies in doing effective research, learning how to use resources, evaluating information for quality, and learning to use information ethically. It is also pleasing to see that despite issues with staffing in the elementary schools, school librarians, where available are contributing substantially to this instruction. Overall, there is an information – resource orientation. The focus appears to be on essential skills

of accessing and locating information, and evaluating its appropriateness for task and authority. There is no question that these are important competencies. With increasing emphasis in New Jersey on intellectual quality and the development of deep knowledge as key curriculum outcomes, we recommend that the "use" dimension of information literacy be strengthened in instructional teams. These are the abilities and dispositions that explicitly focus on knowledge building, critical thinking, problem solving, and the creation, construction and sharing the products of knowledge that demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding. This is an extension of the instructional role: moving from instruction centering on "finding information" to "doing something with the found information" which constitutes individual and collective knowledge building.

A6. **School librarians undertake further professional development in relation to evidence-based practice to develop their skills at identifying, documenting, and disseminating student learning outcomes enabled by the school library program, particularly emphasizing curriculum outcomes and knowledge outcomes, rather than library-based outcomes.** One of the key challenges emerging out of this study is the need for school librarians to be able to state learning outcomes and impacts of school library initiatives with greater precision. It is encouraging that school librarians can articulate improvements in terms of reading, information literacy, use of information technology, and improved attitudes towards the library. However, only a small number could articulate specific learning outcomes in relation to the students' development of deep knowledge and deep understanding of content areas. At best, outcomes were expressed generally as "meet curriculum standards" in subject areas. While this may be an artifact of the question asked, school librarians appeared to have some difficulty articulating the outcomes of library initiatives in terms of specific curriculum standards / goals. There were few responses to the survey that provided specific evidence-based claims of specific gains in knowledge and skills. It is a question of precision and specificity. Secondly, a substantial number of school librarians did not focus on student outcomes, rather, they articulated (often at length) what they did, identifying instructional inputs and processes, rather than clarifying outcomes from the perspective of the learner. There is an assumption that through articulating what is done, i.e., the inputs, some kind of outcomes are enabled, even if they are not identified. This is a case of the elusive outcomes that may be present, but are not documented, evaluated, and communicated.

A7. **Given the importance of the instructional role of the school librarian, we recommend school librarians strive to meet the state Department of Education's master's level School Library Media Specialist certification requirements, enabling them to undertake a stronger instructional role in the school.** The findings show that there is a high level of state certified school librarians in New Jersey. All the research clearly and unequivocally points to the fact that the presence of a certified school librarian in every school is a fundamental starting point to school libraries playing a key role in students effectively learning though complex and diverse information resources. Such a high level of staffing enables development of the necessary intellectual scaffolds that help school librarians use information meaningfully to build knowledge and understanding in diverse content areas. This baseline finding parallels the richness of the school librarians' contributions to the intellectual life of the school, as presented further on in the data report: 31% of the sample possess associate certification level (having completed 18 graduate credits).

A8. NJASL should provide professional development to support evidence-based advocacy by encouraging school libraries to take an active stance in parent and community organizations. More than half of the school librarians do not speak at parent and community organizations. This suggests a missed opportunity to share with significant audiences the role of the school library in achievement and literacy development. It may be argued that they are not actively invited to participate, or the nature of parent and community organization meetings do not lend themselves to participation. On the other hand, given multiple calls on budgets across any school, the current climate of educational accountability, and the vital importance of significant audiences knowing the central role of the school library (an essential element in sustained commitment), it is important that school librarians take a proactive stance. The findings also show opportunity for increasing participation in district and school committee meetings. While it is acknowledged that it may be difficult to get representation on these and other committees identified in this survey, the results highlight the challenge and need for school librarians to convey the message of the learning dynamics of their role and the significant learning outcomes that they enable, even though they are not represented on these committees. The importance of school librarians being proactive in their participation in various school forums is stressed. This pro-action may take several forms such as presentation of reports which highlight the school library's contribution to learning, summaries of learning outcomes of collaboratively taught curriculum units, requests to be on the agenda to raise important library issues and initiatives, and presentations of summaries of significant research findings in relation to information literacy and reading engagement.

A9. We recommend that in the ongoing professional development of school librarians in New Jersey attention needs to be given to continuing to develop library-classroom teaching partnerships so that contextualized information literacy instruction targeted to curriculum standards can take place, with a focus on knowledge development. The findings show a substantial number of school librarians are involved in cooperations, coordinations and collaborations with classroom teachers. This is highly commendable. An extensive body of educational research concludes that quality teachers and quality teaching have the most significant effect on student achievement. We believe that instructional collaborations should be the key feature of the role of the school librarian. The Guided Inquiry based framework, underpinned by the Information Search Process developed by Kuhlthau, and explicated in Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari (2007) is recommended as the research-based and research-validated approach. We recommend that NJASL establish an instructional policy underpinned by a Guided Inquiry approach and provide professional development centering on Guided Inquiry.

A10. It is recommended that school libraries establish a strong web presence, both within the school and as part of a broader learning-centered advocacy program. Such websites should, in the long term, provide access to electronic resources and databases both onsite and remotely. These websites should highlight the collaborative instructional partnerships, identify learning outcomes enabled in the school through the school library, and provide access to research guides, learning techniques and knowledge building strategies and tolls, with guidance and online support for their development.

A11. School librarians are encouraged to negotiate professional development / continuous

improvement plans for their schools so that the development information technology competencies for teaching faculty and students are maximized, with particular emphasis on Web 2.0 technologies for content creation and representation. School librarians in New Jersey clearly take a strong instructional role in providing students with the intellectual and technical scaffolds to engage with information technology in efficient and productive ways. Teaching search strategies in relation to the World Wide Web, specialized databases, library catalogs, and directories, is given the most widespread emphasis. School librarians are bringing to the school community a unique set of information technology capabilities related to accessing and using information technology, not just for finding and evaluating resources, but for using technology tools to create innovative representation of knowledge. It is particularly encouraging to see the early adoption and integration of a range of Web 2.0 technologies, tools, and techniques to support curriculum content standards. School librarians show considerable capacity to lead this important journey in their schools.

Part B: School Libraries and Reading
The findings in relation to reading and related activities show a commitment to reading development in schools. The work of school librarians in nurturing reading appears both diverse and sustained. Some key challenges and opportunities for continuous improvement are also posed by the findings. First, school librarians seem to be in the old paradigm as book/information providers. The reading motivation activities that are most typically undertaken are primarily passive activities. Book display, book promotions, promotion of reading programs may, but do not necessarily engage students. Secondly, the low use of online, visual, and audio media to create and interpret information is of concern. Reading and information literacies are no longer text- or print-based only. Students in current society need to be able to master the use of different media to integrate information and construct knowledge. Finally, findings show that some reading / writing initiatives are more pervasive in the elementary school, and these mostly decline in frequency through middle school and high school. The reduction of certain activities conveys a perception that high school libraries are not about reading for enjoyment and pleasure, and this is a serious issue, especially for literacy development and fostering an ongoing love of reading for pleasure after schooling.

This report consequently makes the following recommendations in relation to reading and related activities:

B1. School librarians develop and implement more active or interactive reading programs to engage students. We would encourage all school librarians in New Jersey to plan and implement at least one major reading / writing initiative that engages students actively in thinking, discussing, sharing ideas, reflecting and participating through the use of multiple media, rather than activities where students primarily remain as the passive recipients.

B2. School librarians work actively to make use of the new possibilities for interaction created by the media such as magazines, games, music, and videos. Because reading is no longer exclusively book- or print-based, more use of multimedia and print alternatives in reading programs is encouraged, particularly integration of social networking technologies and tools to create interactive and multiplatform reading communities.

B3.   Given a central focus in New Jersey on reading for learning, meeting curriculum standards, and reading for comprehension and understanding of curriculum content, it is recommended that school librarians focus some attention on implementing more reading programs and initiatives that involve the creation, integration, and sharing of information to meet curriculum content standards.

B4. **It is recommended that middle and high schools in particular explore and provide a wider range of reading programs, suited to age, grade and curriculum standards to engage students and maintain a vibrant and active reading culture to support both curriculum-centered reading and personal reading interests.** Data show that elementary schools provide the most diverse reading programs, and such diversity declines through middle school and high school.

B5. **It is recommended that school librarians work in and support programs and / or workshops on creative writing and to support youth publication of creative endeavors across the school.** School librarians are encouraged to collaborate with students, teachers, other librarians, and even parents in creating new reading and writing programs. School librarians are encouraged to be on the watch for reading practices that are taking place in other types of libraries or institutions and organizations with interest in reading and writing development. School librarians are encouraged to take steps to model the new reading and writing activities.

Part C: School Library Collections

Three themes emerge from the analysis the *TitleWise* accounts of 298 New Jersey school library collections that are critical for the sustainability of school libraries. Recommendations are structured around issues of sustainability and equity, and are intended for the continuous improvement of these collections.

C1. To address the Fiction-Non-Fiction Gap, it is recommended that secondary school librarians give priority to building their fiction collections to comprise 50% of the total print collection in middle and high school libraries to support literacy development as foundational to supporting school curriculum. The following criteria are recommended for selecting fiction for the print collection that encourages reading motivation and engagement, particularly for middle and high school students:

- Weed, weed, and weed some more to raise the copyright date of the fiction section, eliminate unused materials, and connect books with other media formats
- Engage in collaborative collection development. Gather input from students and staff to make purchasing decisions and give priority to students' reading interests and behaviors. Conduct surveys and focus groups to determine what students are reading and want to read;

- Give priority to purchasing fiction books that appeal to boys, ethnic groups specific to the school population, and relevant sub-cultures. Cultivate a strong bilingual collection that reflects community demographics;

- Develop the concept of satellite libraries in classrooms, rotating books on a regular basis. Encourage teachers to designate students to choose books to be checked out to the classrooms and purchase several multiple copies of home-run books. Build a strong collection of paperbacks to support heavy demand from the satellite libraries and allocate a healthy portion of future budgets to updating this section;

- Update the Literature/Rhetoric (800s) section, adding contemporary authors, and connect the literature with the fiction section of the collection and with other media versions of books;

- Monitor use and circulation of short stories, weed and update accordingly, consider labeling these books as "fiction" and integrating them with novels to legitimize this genre as reading that counts;

- Build a strong, integrated collection of fiction and non-fiction Easy Books and validate them as reading that counts by including them in reading lists, summer reading programs, and reading activities;

- Expand alternative print reading materials, e.g., magazines, newspapers, comic books, that appeal to struggling and reluctant readers and validate them as reading materials that count, rather than privileging books only on reading lists and in reading activities;

- Eliminate analog forms of alternative media (audiocassettes, videocassettes) and consider streaming video to increase access to non-print resources;

- Raise the profile and legitimacy of digitized print and diverse, digitized, alternative media;

- Revise the school library Selection Policy to include these criteria and secure Board approval.

C2. School librarians weed collections to raise the average copyright date, eliminate unused materials, avoid duplication of what is available in digital formats, and connect books with other media formats. Guidelines for extensive weeding include:

- Weed, weed, and weed some more! Decrease Geography/History and Social Sciences in print formats since they are age-sensitive and can be supplemented by free digital sources;

- Increase the size and update Science and Mathematics (500s) books in high school collections;

- Coordinate purchases of all non-fiction with what is available in digital formats, especially in secondary school libraries;

- Re-evaluate Balanced Dewey Comparison (H.W. Wilson and Follett Library Resources) for non-fiction categories of a print collection to reflect digital access. This cost-effective measure releases funds to expand fiction and digital resources.

C3. It is recommended that school librarians engage in an active and critical appraisal of the status of their reference collections, with a particular focus on aligning acquisitions with what is available digitally. School librarians are encouraged to:

- Weed, weed, and weed some more! Continue to decrease the number of reference purchases and eliminate duplication, e.g., print and electronic encyclopedias, even though New Jersey school library collections are 14.7% below the Wilson recommendation and 8.6% below the Follett recommendations;

- Give priority to limiting the number of reference books in age-sensitive categories, as identified by the CREW guidelines, and supplement with digital resources;

- Re-evaluate Balanced Dewey Comparisons to align with a more integrated approach to developing print-electronic school library reference collections;

- Increase subscriptions in schools that have no or few databases and coordinate with what is available in digital formats and in the print collection.

C4. School librarians conceptualize an integrated collection of print and digital materials that coordinates the content of the collection with the most appropriate formats. Outmoded principles of collection development do not integrate digital resources with print collections. The current model of collection development is struggling with sustainability. Despite healthy school library budgets and certified professional staff, print collections cannot compete with instantaneous and free digital access to informational and recreational media. Isolated from the dynamic world of digital text, print resources are slipping out of the hands of youth and into obscurity as they quietly age on library shelves.

- Develop a vision for a physical-virtual library collection which bridges the print-digital divide with digital forms of narrative text, including emerging genres of literature, as well as informational text. It is not enough to develop print and digital components of a collection in parallel. Their intersection is critical, not only for the sustainability of school library collections, but for the literacy development of youth.

- Harness Internet content as part of a collection development strategy while preserving high standards for authority, accuracy, and appropriateness.

- Envision the school library as a multi-institutional organization, rather than as a stand-alone entity, and explore resource sharing and other cost-effective measures.

- Engage in cooperative collection development with all stakeholders. Adopt radical approaches to building collections, and developing shared collections, policies and

procedures.

- Coordinate print and digital resources that are text-based to support student reading to transition between print and digital text, and to develop multiple literacies specific to these formats. An integrated library collection facilitates this kind of literacy support.

- Protect print formats as tools for literacy development and engagement in reading, especially for struggling and reluctant readers. Information users read differently in print and digital contexts, where they skim, scan, and power browse (Rowlands and Nicholas, 2008). The deep and sustained reading that develops comprehension occurs in print environments (Guthrie, J.T., Hoa, A.L.W., Wigfield, A., Tonks, S.M., Humenick, N.M., & Littles, E., 2006).*

  *These conclusions are specific to the Internet and may not apply to e-books and reading in digital environments that simulate reading books (e.g., ipads, Kindles, and other digital reading devices.)

C5. School librarians address the inequities in funding school libraries on the national, state, and local levels.
The most vulnerable socioeconomic populations, for whom school libraries may be the only access to the world of reading, rely on smaller and older school library collections that share the same weaknesses related to size and currency as school libraries in districts with higher socioeconomic status. We recommend that:

- NJASL takes a leadership role in advocating for legislative action that eliminates inequities in learning resources so that school libraries in New Jersey across school districts in every county receive per pupil funding as mandated by state legislation to correct inequities among types of schools by grade level and socioeconomic status of school districts. Access to reading materials is too critical for literacy development and learning to depend on local control.

- NJASL works on the state level to develop regional consortia for resource sharing within and among school districts.

- NJASL adopts a statement of concerns about inequities in school library funding on the national level and submits these concerns to the Affiliate Assembly of the American Association of School Librarians through the Regional Director. Concerns should include pro-active initiatives to address inequities in school library funding, including ALA lobbying in Congress;

- NJASL works to raise consciousness among school administrators for including shared learning resources in Race to the Top applications for funding;

- NJASL works to identify Title I and other funding for supporting the development of multiple modes of literacy through school libraries;

- NJASL works to identify funding for technology to support the shift from non-fiction

print to digital resources that requires technology equipment;

- NJASL forms alliances with professional reading and technology organizations on the national level to promote awareness of the role of school libraries in their respective missions.