

2024 Minnesota K-12 School Library Census Results

A Presentation Prepared for: Minnesota
Senate, Education Finance Committee

February 20, 2025



Wilder Research.



MINNESOTA MULTITYPE
LIBRARY SYSTEMS

Why school libraries are important to support and protect

Effective school libraries:

- Improved student achievement
- Address educational inequities
- Support overall literacy
- Play a crucial role beyond housing books





GOAL

To understand how to best support school library programs across Minnesota



IMPLEMENTATION

Spring 2024

- Conducted a statewide census of K-12 public and charter schools in Minnesota



PARTICIPATION

1,528 out of 1,777 eligible school completed the census



About the respondents

Characteristics of participating schools (N=1,528)

Categories	Census respondents	
School type	#	%
Independent District and Schools and Special Districts and Schools (includes only Minneapolis Public Schools and South St. Paul Public Schools)	1,336	87%
Charter Schools	192	13%
School classification		
Elementary Schools (Grades PK-6)	885	58%
Middle Schools (Grades 5-8)	221	15%
Junior High Schools (Grades 7-8 or 8-9)	13	1%
Senior High Schools (Grades 9-12)	205	13%
Secondary Schools (Grades 7-12)	204	13%
Organization-run online learning programs (Comprehensive and/or State-Approved Supplemental)	0	0%



About the respondents

Characteristics of participating schools (N=1,528)

Categories	Census respondents	
Region		
Twin Cities 7-county metro	669	44%
Greater Minnesota	859	56%
Population size		
Urban centers (district population 50,000 or greater)	576	38%
Urban (district population 2,500-49,999)	835	54%
Rural (district population less than 2,500)	117	8%

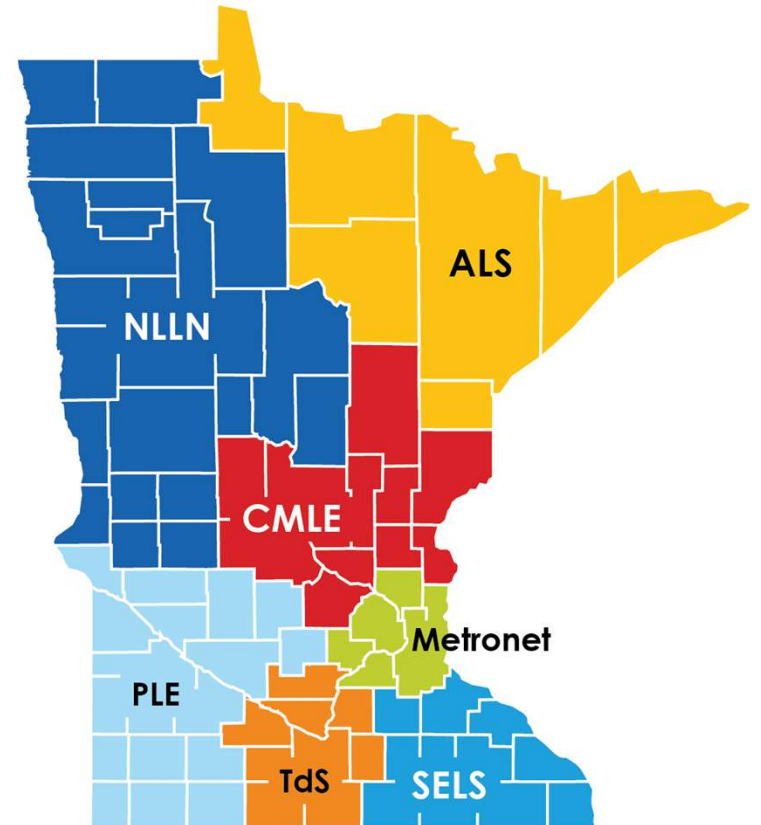


About the respondents

Characteristics of participating schools (N=1,528)

Categories Census respondents

MCMT Library System		
Arrowhead Library System (ALS)	100	7%
Central Minnesota Libraries Exchange (CMLE)	178	12%
Metronet	670	44%
Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN)	206	13%
Prairieland Library Exchange (PLE)	132	9%
Southeast Library System (SELS)	158	10%
Traverse des Sioux Library System (TdS)	84	5%



What Did We Learn?

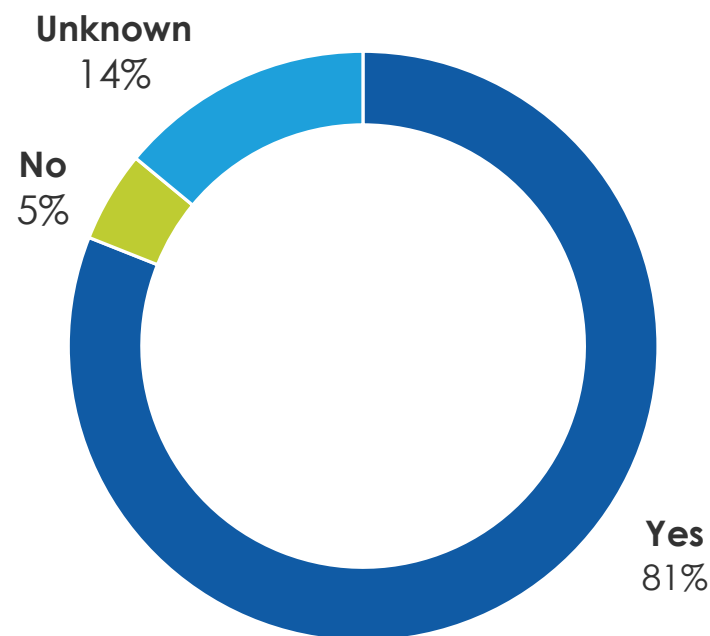


Access to library media centers

1 | KEY FINDING

81% of schools in Minnesota reported that they have a library media center

Percentage of schools with a library media center (N=1,777)



Note. Of schools that responded to the census (N=1,528) versus all eligible schools (N=1,777) as illustrated in the figure, 94% reported that they have an LMC.

Management and staffing of LMCs

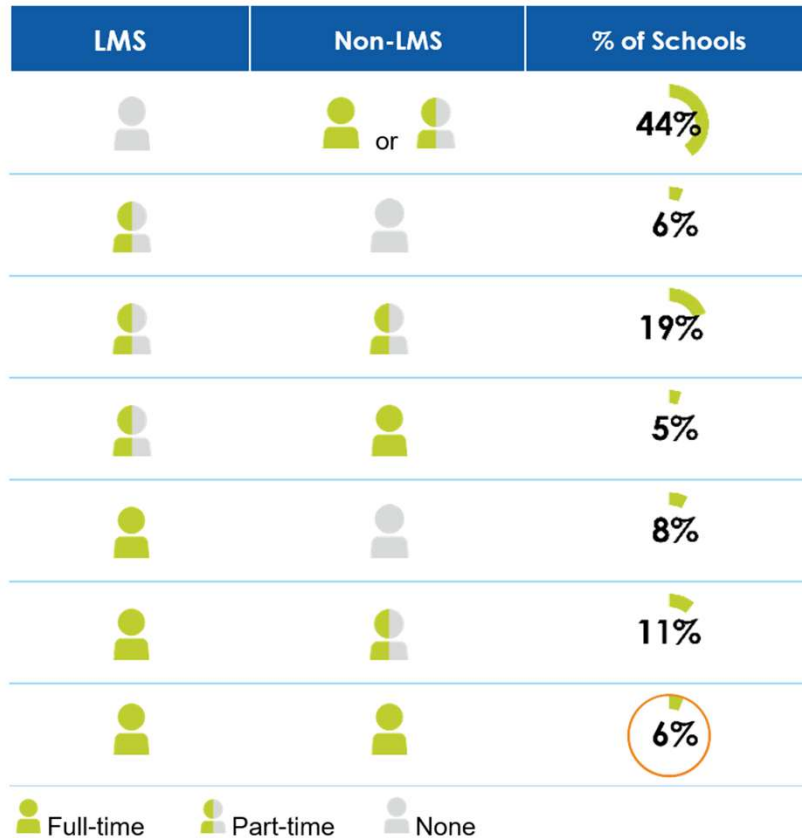
2 | ► KEY FINDING

Nearly one-half of schools (46%) do not have a licensed media specialist managing the LMC

- In Minnesota, a media specialist must hold a K-12 Library Media Specialist license issued by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board.



LMC Staffing (N=1,057)



Many schools are not fulfilling the statutory requirement that an LMC is served by a licensed media specialist, even with the support of School Library Aid from the state.

Note. The remaining 2% of schools reported volunteer or no staff. Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

“

For the 2024-25 school year, our district is proposing to have one librarian share the middle school/high school, and one librarian teach at three elementary schools on the prep rotation. The elementary LMS will also be responsible for managing all three library collections with the support of part-time para help in each building. We feel this model is unsustainable at best and disastrous to our library programming at worst.

”



What is the work of LMC Staff?

3 | ► KEY FINDING

On average, LMC staff spend the most time on administrative work and student instruction and less on collaborating and planning with teachers and professional development of staff



LMC Staffing (N=1,057)

Task	Proportion of time
Conducting library-related administrative work	38%
Providing library-related instruction for students	35%
Collaborating and planning with teachers	7%
Providing professional development of teachers/staff	3%
Traveling (paid time to travel to other locations)	<1%
Other	17%

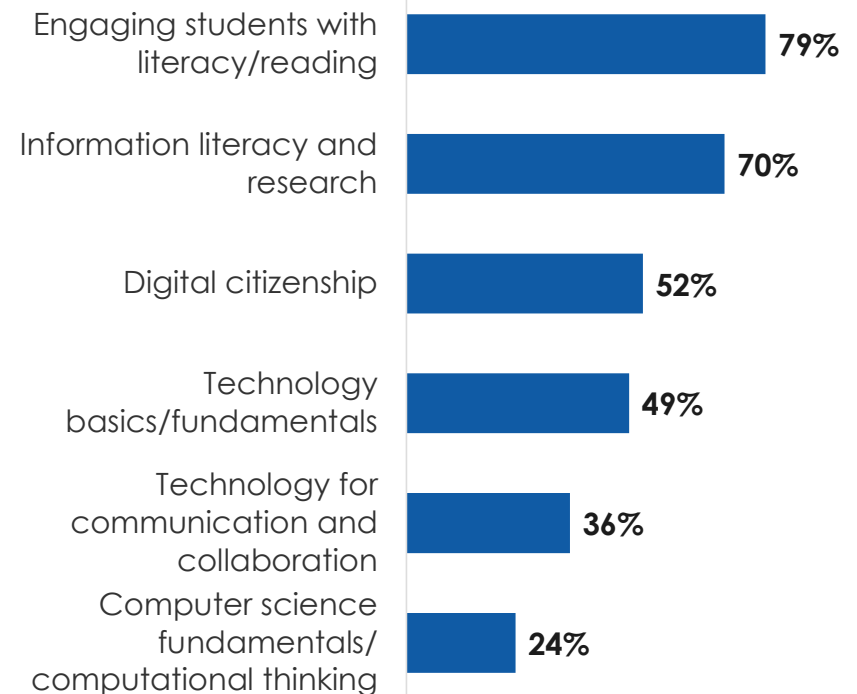
Note. Totals do not equal 100%. The proportion of time is reported as the mean of responses to each task.

What is the work of LMC staff?

4 | KEY FINDING

Library staff most often engage students in literacy/reading, information literacy, and research during student instruction

Content taught by respondents who provide student instruction (N=861)



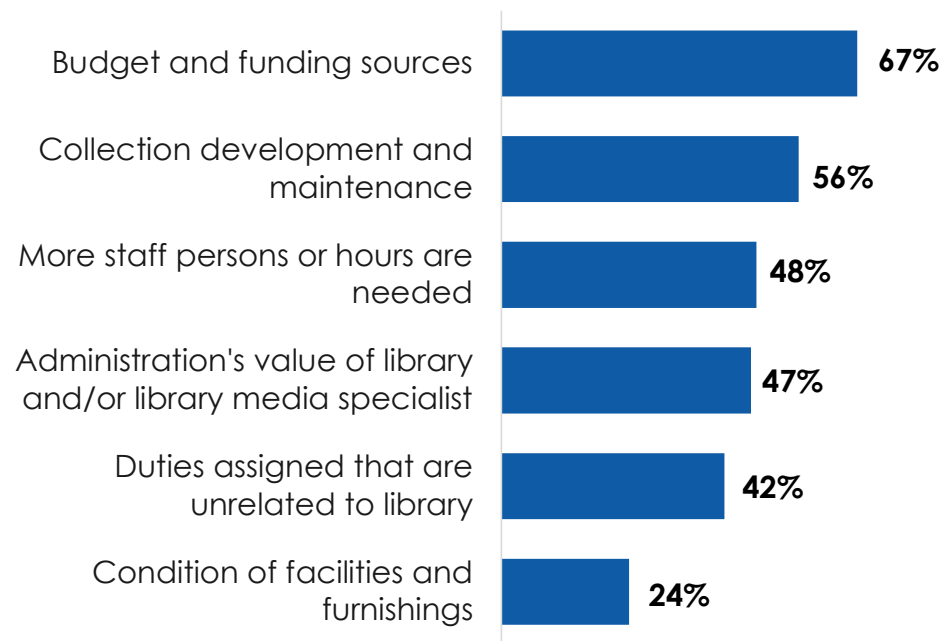
Note. A "none of the above" option was not provided, so it is unknown if respondents wanted to indicate that none of the options apply. Respondents could select all that apply.

Greatest challenges for LMC staff

5 | KEY FINDING

School library budgets and funding sources are the most common challenge identified by LMC staff

Greatest challenges LMC staff face in their job (N=1,061)



Top priorities for LMC staff

6 | ► KEY FINDING

Increasing the library materials budget is a top priority for 76% of respondents

- Following top priorities (in order):
 - Hiring support staff (39%)
 - Purchasing furniture (37%)
 - Purchasing equipment (33%)
 - Hiring a new LMS (30%)
 - Other (30%)

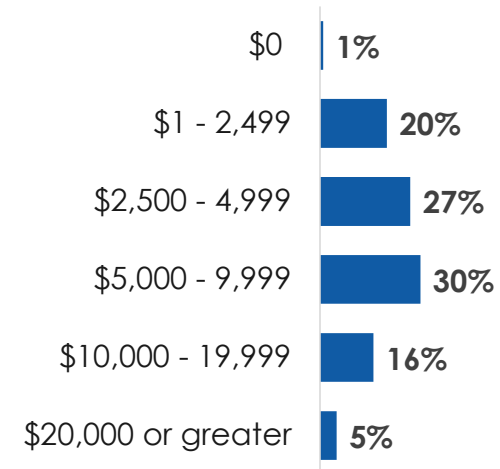


Library media center budgets and resources

7 | KEY FINDING

LMC staff feel under-resourced with a median budget of \$5K

LMC budget totals across census respondents (N=974)



School Library Aid from the state

- Passed during the 2023 Minnesota legislative session,
 - Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 134.356, subdivision 1
- Library Aid must be reserved and used for directly funding the costs of the following purposes within a library:
 - Salaries and benefits of a school library media specialist
 - Electronic, computer, or audiovisual equipment
 - Information technology infrastructure or digital tools
 - Electronic or material resources
 - Furniture, equipment, or supplies



School Library Aid from the state

8 ► KEY FINDING

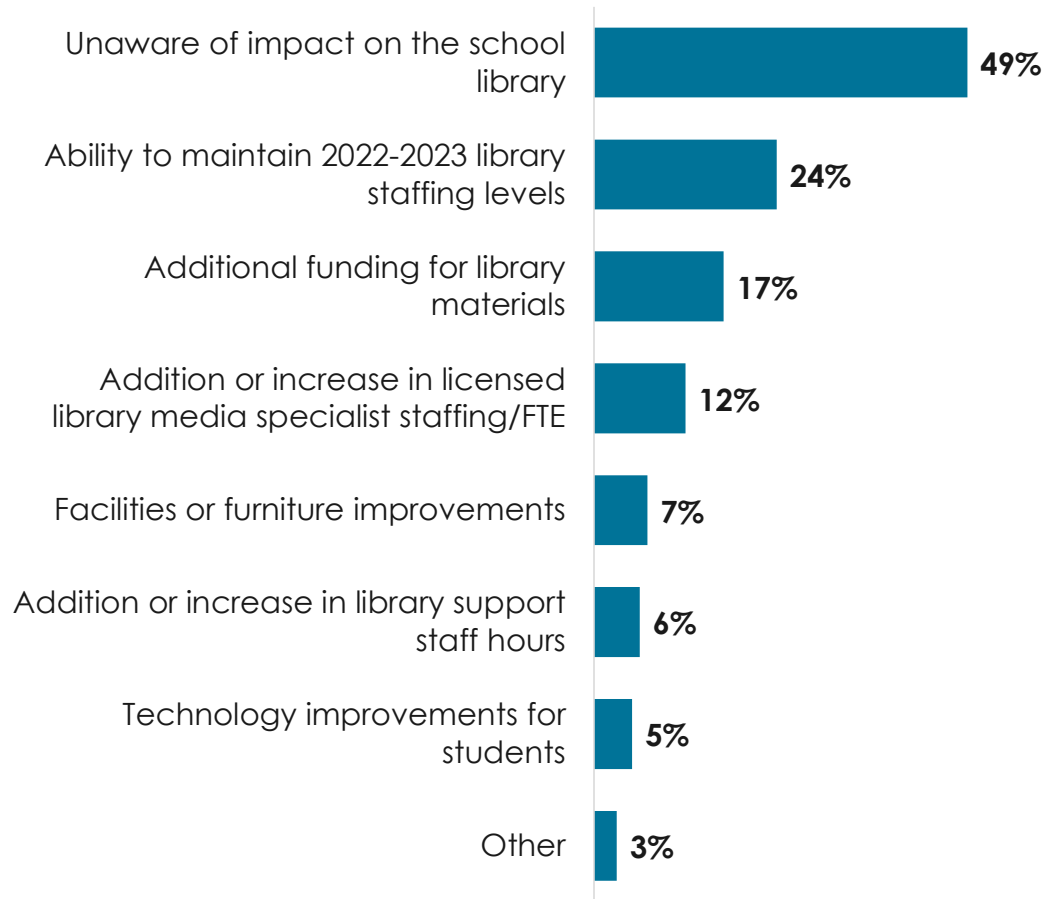
All public school districts and charter schools received aid from the state for school libraries in 2023, but 40% of respondents were unaware of aid or impact

9 ► KEY FINDING

School Library Aid was most commonly used to maintain library staffing levels and fund library materials



Use of School Library Aid (N=580)



“ Legislation: There needs to be more specificity guiding the use of the funds to impact libraries at the building level, especially for any district that already has a library program in their schools. The "new" funds appear to have been pushed into funding existing positions and budgets, ultimately allowing districts to free up money to fund other desired positions outside of library programs. ”



So what can you do in your role as a legislator?



1. Update state statute regarding the use of School Library Aid.

- Eligibility tied to statutory definition of a school library
- Include library media center staff input and suggestions



2. Support school and district leadership to hire licensed media specialists and support staff, support teachers and other staff in seeking licensure, and increase overall capacity of LMCs

- Licensed media specialists for each library media center – adhering to requirements in state statute
- Protection of their time to run the center
- Proper training for license, additional support staff, and increase in hours



Questions?

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Find the report at: <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/minnesota-multicounty-multitype-library-systems>

