

Colorado School Library/Media Center Salaries: Mixed News

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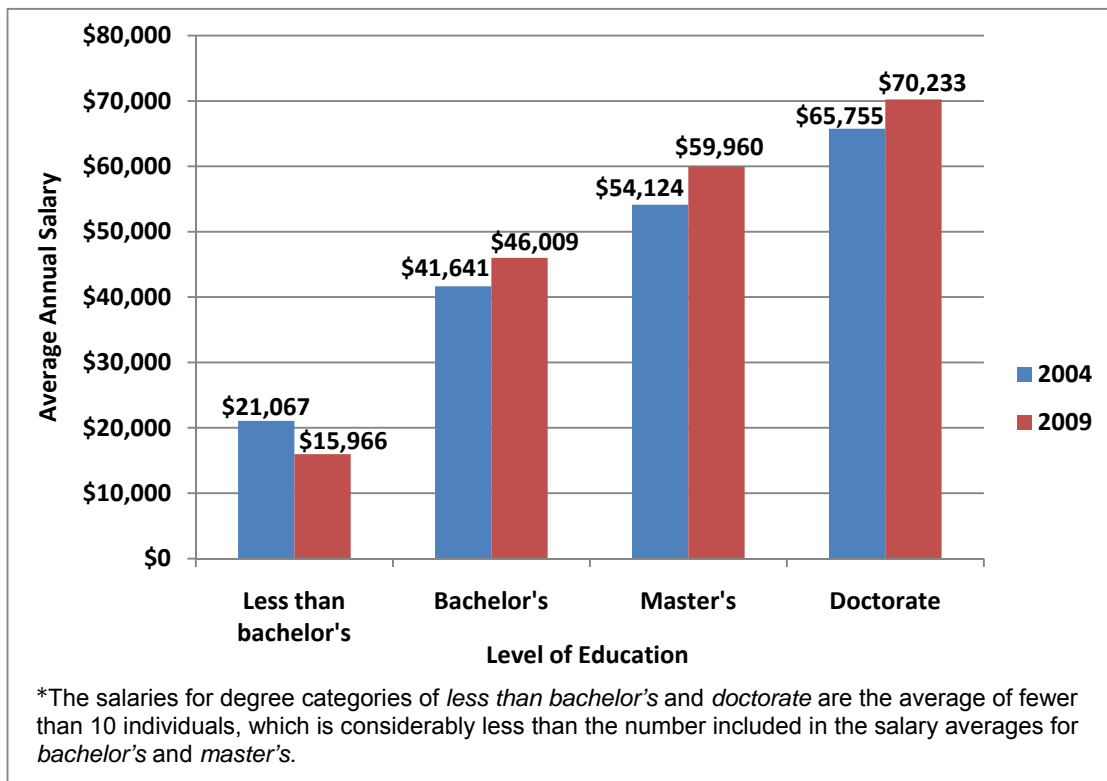
The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has released fall 2009 staffing statistics for schools statewide. On the whole, average annual salaries for school librarian/media consultants and assistants¹ have improved considerably in the last five years. This salary growth has librarians/media consultants in Colorado schools earning slightly more than the national average, but not all of the news was positive. Library/media *assistants'* annual salaries still fall well behind those for similar positions nationwide.

Librarian/Media Consultant Salaries

CDE reports school librarian/media consultant salaries based on full-time equivalence by level of education. As expected, average salaries increase with higher levels of education such as master's and doctorate degrees, reaching nearly \$60,000 and just over \$70,000, respectively, in 2009. For all college degrees, average salaries increased by a considerable percentage: 6.8% for doctorate, 10.7% for master's, and 10.4% for bachelor's. In contrast, librarian/media consultants without a bachelor's degree were the only group to see a decrease in salary, earning only 76 cents for every dollar they made in 2004 (see Chart 1).

Librarian/Media Consultant
CDE and the National Center for Education Statistics, the collectors of state and national data about school staffing in the state and nation, define a librarian/media consultant as someone who "develops plans for and manages the use of teaching and learning resources, including the maintenance of equipment, content material, and services." This definition does not include endorsement status; i.e., the librarian as defined in this data set may or may not have a school library endorsement and/or teacher certification.

Chart 1
Colorado Department of Education
Average Annual Salary of Colorado School
Librarian/Media Consultants by Education Level
2004 & 2009



¹ For this report, school librarian/media consultants and assistants are defined according to CDE's job classification descriptions, available at <https://cdeapps.cde.state.co.us/jobdefs.htm>.



Average Annual Salaries for Librarians in Elementary and Secondary Schools Nationwide

Bureau of Labor Statistics

 May 2009: \$57,950
 May 2004: \$48,870

Colorado school librarian² salaries seem to be on pace with national averages. In May 2009, the national annual wage for librarians working in elementary and secondary schools was \$57,950, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This was an 18.6 percent increase over the \$48,870 school librarians earned five years before.

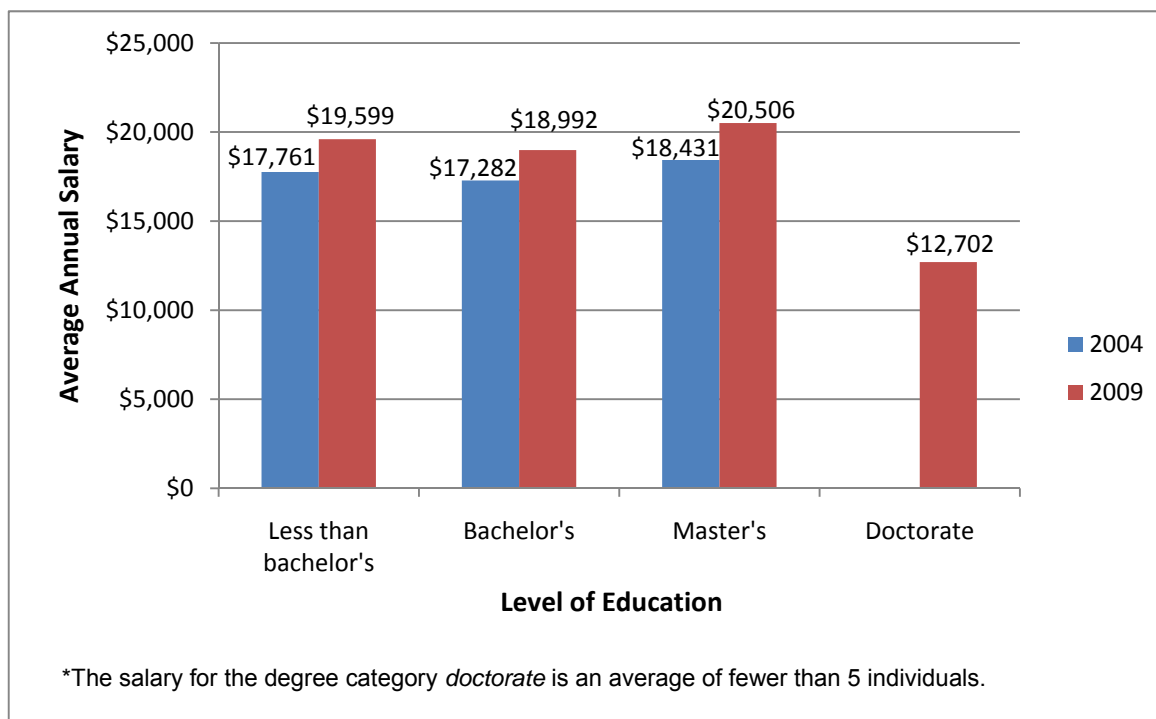
Library/Media Assistant Salaries

Similar to librarian/media consultants, school library/media assistants in Colorado have seen a notable increase in salaries (around 10%) in the last five years, regardless of education level (see Chart 2). Unlike the previous group, however, Colorado school library/media assistants are well behind the national salary average of \$28,960 for library technicians, which BLS defines as assistants who may have a certificate or associate's degree.

Library/Media Assistant

Assists in the maintenance and operation of a library/media center by aiding in the selection, ordering cataloging, processing, and circulation of all media and/or serving as specialist, etc.

Chart 2
Colorado Department of Education
Average Annual Salary of Colorado School
Library/Media Assistants by Education Level
2004 & 2009



² The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines librarians as those who administer or perform a wide range of library services, generally *after earning a master's degree*. As a benchmark, the BLS librarian salaries would be most comparable to CDE's figures for librarian/media consultants holding a master's or doctorate degree.



Average Annual Salaries for
**Library Technicians
 (Assistants)** in Elementary and
 Secondary Schools Nationwide

Bureau of Labor Statistics

May 2009: \$28,960

May 2004: \$24,090

According to CDE's figures, even library/media assistants with higher degrees earn considerably less (for example, a third less for those holding a bachelor's) than the national average for library technicians. In fact, the discrepancy between Colorado and national salary averages for library technicians or assistants has grown wider from 2004 to 2009. While the national average salary increased by 20 percent over those 5 years, Colorado salaries increased by only half that amount.

Conclusion

Overall, Colorado school librarian/media consultants and assistants have seen notable increases in their salaries in the last five years. For consultants, that increase has kept them in the ballpark of national salary averages for school librarians, but Colorado school library assistants continue to earn much less than the nationwide average.

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