

FAST FACTS

Recent Statistics from The Library Research Service

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WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES A SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST MAKE?

In 1995, there are more than 75 fewer library media specialists in Colorado schools than there were in 1994. This dramatic development raises a pressing question: *what difference does a library media specialist make?*

According to 1995 data, the presence of a library media specialist is associated with two factors that have been linked with high academic achievement by students.* LMCs with specialists are more likely to play a variety of roles in the instructional process and spend more on print and non-print materials.



In addition, LMCs with specialists are more likely to schedule access to the LMC flexibly, promote the integration of information literacy training and content areas, and provide access to cutting-edge information technology.

FIXED VS. FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

LMCs with library media specialists are almost twice as likely to have classes visit on a flexible schedule.

Table 1. Fixed vs. Flexible Scheduling of Access to the LMC for LMCs With and Without Library Media Specialists, 1995

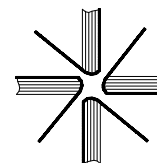
Classes visit the LMC on a ...	LMCs with specialists	LMCs without specialists
Flexible schedule	96%	59%
Fixed schedule	47%	91%

* Keith Curry Lance, Lynda Welborn, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell, **The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement** (Castle Rock, CO: Hi Willow, 1993).

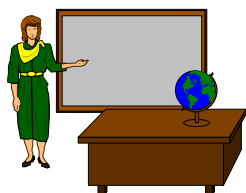
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INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES OF LIBRARY MEDIA STAFF



Library media specialists spend twice as much time identifying materials to support teacher-designed instructional units, more than three times as much time planning instructional units with teachers, and more than twice as much time teaching cooperatively.

Curiously, the only instructional activity on which library media specialists and aides operating LMCs appear to spend comparable amounts of time is evaluating students' work.

Table 2. Average Hours Spent in Selected Instructional Activities for LMCs With and Without Library Media Specialists, 1995

Activity	LMCs with specialists		LMCs without specialists	
	Hours	Percent	Hours	Percent
Identifying materials to support instructional units developed by teachers	6.1	10.0%	2.6	5.9%
Planning instructional units with teachers	3.0	4.5%	0.8	1.6%
Teaching cooperatively	6.8	8.8%	1.5	3.5%
Evaluating students' work	2.1	3.3%	1.8	3.0%
Total	18.0	26.6%	6.7	14.0%

Another important instructional role of library media staff in today's schools is being involved in standards-based education. While LMCs with library media specialists are only slightly more likely to be in schools that are integrating information literacy standards with content standards, such LMCs are almost three times as likely to have LMC staff participating in the development of such standards.

Table 3. Involvement in Standards-Based Education for LMCs With and Without Library Media Specialists, 1995

Type of involvement	LMCs with specialists	LMCs without specialists
Information literacy standards integrated into content standards	94%	84%
LMC staff involved in development of standards	78%	27%

ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

A library media center's first steps into the electronic information age are usually developing an online catalog and searching remote databases online. LMCs with library media specialists are more than twice as likely to participate in district-wide online catalogs. Such LMCs are also much more likely to be providing online database search services.

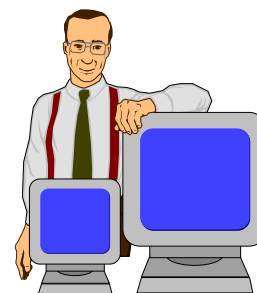


Table 4. District-Wide Online Catalogs & Database Searching for LMCs With and Without Library Media Specialists, 1995

LMC has...	LMCs with specialists	LMCs without specialists
District-wide online catalog	34.6%	15.0%
Online database search services	59.5%	37.7%

An important role for LMCs in Colorado to play in the electronic information age is making the Access Colorado Library and Information Network (ACLIN) available to teachers, staff, and students. LMCs with library media specialists are half again as likely to have library media staff who use ACLIN and to be making it available to teachers and other staff. Such LMCs are about one-third more likely to be making ACLIN available to students.

Table 5. ACLIN Use by User Group for LMCs With and Without Library Media Specialists, 1995

ACLIN use by user group	LMCs with specialists	LMCs without specialists
LMC staff	78.5%	49.0%
Teachers and staff	75.0%	45.2%
Students	67.7%	44.7%

Of course, the ultimate electronic avenue for accessing remote information is the Internet. LMCs with library media specialists are more than twice as likely to be providing Internet access to all user groups.

Table 6. Internet Access by User Group for LMCs With and Without Library Media Specialists, 1995

Internet access by user group	LMCs with specialists	LMCs without specialists
LMC staff	55.5%	22.0%
Teachers and staff	50.7%	22.9%
Students	34.8%	16.2%

LMCs with and without library media specialists also differ in terms of the availability of basic resource sharing technology. LMCs with library media specialists are half again as likely to have computer modems, more than twice as likely to have photocopiers, and almost three times as likely to have fax machines, but only somewhat more likely to have touch tone telephone service.

Table 7. Availability of Basic Resource Sharing Technology for LMCs With and Without Library Media Specialists, 1995

Basic Technology	LMCs with specialists	LMCs without specialists
Telephone with touch tone service	90.5%	82.5%
Computer modem	88.9%	58.5%
Photocopier	64.2%	23.2%
Fax machine	40.7%	18.1%

LIBRARY MEDIA EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT



LMCs with library media specialists spend almost twice as much on print materials and more than three times as much on non-print materials. They also spend close to twice as much on supplies and other operating expenditures.

The latter fact may reflect the greater likelihood of there being a library media budget where there is a specialist. As the **Impact** study demonstrated, the relationship between an LMC having a specialist and spending more on materials per student is explained only partly by the school's overall wealth. Specialists are able to justify higher budgets by virtue of their greater involvement with the instructional process and their more collaborative relationships with classroom teachers.

Table 8. Median Per Student Expenditures for LMCs With and Without Library Media Specialists, 1995

Median per student expenditures by category	LMCs with specialists	LMCs without specialists
Print materials	\$12.82	\$7.64
Non-print materials	\$3.08	\$1.01
Supplies & other	\$1.71	\$1.08
Total materials	\$19.28	\$12.38

Note: Categories do not add to total for two reasons: First, median figures are being used, and they do not necessarily add up. Second, some respondents did not provide category detail.

For a comparison of 1994 and 1995 data on Colorado LMCs, see **FAST FACTS** No. 111, October 17, 1995: *School Library Media Centers in Colorado: A 1994-95 Status Report*.

Each LMC that participated in the survey will receive a Colorado Library Media Profile, a customized report for its school level and enrollment range. Profiles are available to other LMCs and interested parties on request.