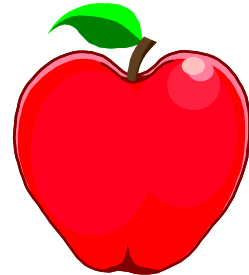


SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS

BENCHMARKS

COLORADO 2000



The benchmarks for school library media centers (LMCs) in the state are ratios that should make it easier to compare your LMC's figures with those for other LMCs, either individually or grouped by school level or enrollment range. These ratios address both LMC resources (examples: staffing, the collection, funding) and services (examples: cooperation between LM staff and classroom teachers, circulation).

STAFFING RATIOS

Benchmarks for LMC staffing are provided by two ratios: endorsed library media specialists per 100 students and total LMC staff per 100 students.

Hours of Endorsed Library Media Specialists per 100 Students

Hours of endorsed library media specialists per 100 students is calculated as follows: the number of hours per week of library media specialists endorsed by the Colorado Department of Education divided by the number of students enrolled in the school, divided by 100:

$$\text{LMS hours} \div (\text{Students Enrolled} \div 100) = \text{LMS hours per 100 Students}$$

This ratio is a measure of the extent to which an LMC's operations are supervised by a library media professional whose training has been endorsed by the state.

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Total LMC Staff per 100 Students

Total LMC staff hours per 100 students is calculated as the total number of weekly hours of LMC staff divided by the number of students enrolled in the school, divided by 100:

$$\text{LMC Staff Hours} \div (\text{Students Enrolled}) \div 100 = \text{LMC Staff Hours per 100 Students}$$

This ratio is a measure of the extent to which an LMC is adequately staffed, taking into consideration the number of students served by the LMC.

WEEKLY SERVICE RATIOS

Benchmarks for weekly LMC services are provided by six ratios: LMC visits per student, LMC group visits per 100 students, information skills instruction (IS) visits per student, IS group visits per 100 students, circulation transactions per student, and the ILL per 100 circulation ratio.

LMC Visits by Individual Students and by Groups

LMC visits per student is calculated as the number of visits to the LMC by individual students divided by the number of students enrolled in the school. Each of the weekly service ratios is calculated in the same manner as LMC visits per student. For example:

$$\# \text{ of Student visits to LMC} \div \text{Students Enrolled} = \text{LMC Visits per Student}$$

This ratio is a measure of the frequency with which students use the LMC in general. In lieu of figures on uses of electronic information resources, this ratio is an important supplement to the circulation ratio.

Circulation Transactions per Student

Circulation transactions per student is calculated as the number of times library media materials are charged out to users divided by the number of students enrolled in the school:

$$\text{Charge-outs} \div \text{Students Enrolled} = \text{Circulation Transactions per Student}$$

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This ratio is the traditional library use measure, but also includes non-book formats such as issues of print magazines, video materials, and computer software packages, when such items are circulated.

Interlibrary Loans per 100 Circulation Ratio

The *ILL/100 circulation ratio* is calculated as the number of items borrowed or rented by the LMC divided by circulation of materials from the LMC collection, divided by 100:

$$\text{Items Borrowed/Rented} \div (\text{Items Circulated} \div 100) = \text{ILL per 100 Circulation Ratio}$$

This ratio is another measure of the extent to which the LMC participates in resource sharing among libraries and exploits other resources available commercially.

Caution: While generally it is good for an LMC to have a high figure for this ratio, an excessively high one--especially if coupled with low collection and circulation ratios--may indicate the need to review the LMC's collection development policy.

PERCENTAGE OF WEEKLY LMC STAFF HOURS SPENT IN LEADERSHIP OR COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

In 1999, the Library Research Service did a major study of Colorado school media center statistics, evaluating the impact of school library media staff, services, and resources on test scores. Published in 2000, *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards* clearly demonstrates that library media staff involvement in leadership activities such as committee service and technology management as well as increased staff collaboration with faculty and students positively impacts test scores.

Time spent in Leadership

There were four variables identified as leadership hallmarks: meeting with LMC staff, working with or meeting with school principal/administration, attending faculty meetings, and participating in standards and/or curriculum committees. Each variable was calculated in the same manner as the percentage of time spent in meetings with principal/administration.

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The percentage of staff hours spent meeting with the principal or other administration is calculated as follows: the number of hours paid LMC staff spend in such meetings divided by the total number of hours worked by such LMC staff.

$$\text{LMC Staff Hours Working/Meeting with Administration} \div \text{LMC Staff Hours Worked} = \text{Percentage Hours Meeting with Administration}$$

Time spent in Collaboration

There were six variables identified as hallmarks of a collaborative approach: planning with teachers, teaching cooperatively with teachers, providing in-service to faculty, offering reading incentive activities, developing collections, and managing technology that links the students to the LMC or to other information resources. Each variable was calculated in the same manner as the percentage time spent planning with faculty.

The percentage of staff hours spent planning with faculty is calculated as follows: the number of hours paid LMC staff spends divided by the total number of hours worked by such LMC staff.

$$\text{LMC Staff Hours Planning with Teachers} \div \text{LMC Staff Hours Worked} = \text{Percentage Hours Planning with Teachers}$$

COLLECTION RATIOS

Benchmarks for LMC collection development are provided by five ratios: volumes per student, print subscriptions per 100 students, audio materials per 100 students, video materials per 100 students, and computer software per 100 students.

Volumes per Student

Volumes per student is calculated as the number of print volumes in the LMC collection divided by the number of students enrolled in the school:

$$\text{Print Volumes} \div \text{Students Enrolled} = \text{Volumes per Students}$$

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This ratio indicates the size of the LMC book collection in relation to the size of the student body it is designed to serve.

It is important to consider this ratio in relation to collection ratios for other formats (examples: electronic subscriptions, videos, software) as well as the circulation ratio. If volumes per student is relatively high, the percentage of non-circulating materials in the collection is relatively low. If circulation per student is relatively low, it may be time to consider weeding the collection and/or revising the LMC's collection development policy.

Print Subscriptions per 100 Students

Print subscriptions per 100 students is calculated as the number of periodicals (magazines and newspapers) to which the LMC subscribes in print divided by the number of students enrolled in the school, divided by 100:

$$\text{Print Periodicals} \div (\text{Students Enrolled} \div 100) = \text{Print Subscriptions per 100 Students}$$

This ratio indicates the scope of the LMC's print periodical holdings in relation to the size of the student body.

Over the next few years, it will be particularly important to monitor changes in this ratio relative to those for electronic subscriptions. Changes in the ratio should also be related to the change in per student spending for print and electronic subscriptions as well as the capital investment in equipment required to access electronic formats.

Video Materials per 100 Students

Video materials per 100 students is calculated as the total number of video materials* in the LMC collection divided by the number of students enrolled in the school, divided by 100:

$$\text{Video Materials} \div (\text{Students Enrolled} \div 100) = \text{Video Materials per 100 Students}$$

This ratio indicates the size of the video collection in relation to the size of the student body. Notably, unlike electronic subscriptions and computer software, video materials tend to be used by whole classes or groups of students rather than by individuals.

*(examples: videocassettes, video disks)

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Audio Materials per 100 Students

Audio materials per 100 students is calculated as the total number of audio materials in the LMC collection divided by the number of students enrolled in the school, divided by 100:

$$\text{Audio Materials} \div (\text{Students Enrolled} \div 100) = \text{Audio Materials per 100 Students}$$

Computer Software Packages per 100 Students

Computer software packages per 100 students is calculated as the total number of licensed computer software packages included in the LMC collection divided by the number of students enrolled in the school, divided by 100:

$$\text{Licensed Software Packages} \div (\text{Students Enrolled} \div 100) = \text{Software Packages per Student}$$

FUNDING RATIOS

Benchmarks for LMC funding are provided by five ratios: print materials expenditures per student, electronic format expenditures per student, non-print materials expenditures per student, electronic access expenditures per student, and total operating expenditures per student.

Print Materials Expenditures per Student

Print materials expenditures per student is calculated as total spending for print formats divided by the number of students enrolled in the school:

$$\text{Print Expenditures} \div \text{Students Enrolled} = \text{Print Expenditures per Student}$$

This ratio indicates the level of spending on print materials relative to the size of the student body. From year to year, maintenance of an LMC's buying power depends on increases in such funding to account for increases in enrollment and/or increases in average costs for books and periodicals.

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Electronic Format Expenditures per Student

Electronic format materials expenditures per student is calculated as total spending for electronic formats* divided by the number of students enrolled in the school:

$$\text{Electronic Format Expenditures} \div \text{Students Enrolled} = \text{Electronic Format Expenditures per Student}$$

This ratio indicates the level of spending on electronic format materials relative to the size of the student body. As with print expenditures, maintenance of an LMC's non-print buying power relies on increases in such funding to support increases in enrollment and/or increased charges from vendors of electronic resources.

*(examples: software, CD-ROM, laser disk, locally-mounted databases)

Non-Print Materials Expenditures per Student

Non-print materials expenditures per student is calculated as total spending for non-print formats* divided by the number of students enrolled in the school:

$$\text{Non-print Expenditures} \div \text{Students Enrolled} = \text{Non-print Expenditures per Student}$$

This ratio indicates the level of spending on non-print materials relative to the size of the student body.

*(examples: audio, video, microform)

Potentially, the shift from "just in case" print collections to "just in time" electronic access to information could stabilize--even reduce--the costs of LMC operation. Alas, among the many changes being wrought in the "information age" are those of how information as a commodity is priced. Whether or not savings occur as a result of the shift from print to electronic resources may depend largely on how electronic information is "packaged" (examples: CD-ROM, laser disk, mini-disk, online access) and priced (examples: quarterly or annual subscriptions, fee-for-use).

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Total Operating Expenditures per Student

Total operating expenditures per student is calculated as the sum of print materials, electronic format acquisitions, electronic access, and other non-print materials costs and supplies and other operating costs divided by the number of students enrolled in the school:

$$\text{Print} + \text{Non-print} + \text{Access} + \text{Other Operating Costs} \div \text{Students Enrolled} = \text{Total Materials Expenditures per Student}$$

This ratio indicates the overall cost to the LMC of providing access to its collection and electronically networked information.