

School Libraries Survey Report 2022-23

Between February and March of 2023, a survey was sent out to school library professionals across Colorado. We wanted to gain a better idea of staffing, services provided, and the needs of school libraries and their staff. This information will help guide the Colorado State Library and other organizations invested in Colorado school libraries to improve their services to the staff and by extension Colorado students. While reading this report, please remember that not all schools reported on all questions, therefore total numbers may differ between charts.

The number of responses by district was as follows:

- Adams: 5
- Arapahoe: 42
- Boulder: 16
- Denver: 52
- Douglas: 40
- El Paso: 34
- Larimer: 5
- Weld: 19
- Other: 15 (Other includes: Alamosa, Baca, Clear Creek, Delta, Hinsdale, Huerfano, Kit Carson, Mesa, Montezuma, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, and Routt.)

Who works in our school libraries?

There were more than 40 unique position titles for the person working in the library. The most frequent titles were Teacher Librarian, Library Technician, Librarian, and Paraprofessional. The most common type of credential and position was Full Time Certified Teachers at just over 37% of all respondents. 136 of 225 or about 60% of respondents are full-time regardless of credential. Please note that certified teachers include teachers with CDE-Issued Teacher Librarian Endorsement, District-Issued Librarian Endorsement, or are just certified without endorsement.

Speaking of paraprofessionals, roughly 47% of respondents chose “paraprofessional” as the credential that best describes them. 51.5% of respondents were “certified” at various levels, and 1.3% of respondents were “Community or Parent Volunteers”. The number of library workers by credential and position is as follows:

Full time certified teacher: 85

Part time (less than 40 hours) certified teacher: 23
Part time (less than 20 hours) certified teacher: 9
Full time paraprofessional: 50
Part time (less than 40 hours) paraprofessional: 37
Part time (less than 20 hours) paraprofessional: 20
Full time volunteer: 1

What do we have in our school libraries?

Most schools in our survey have between 5,001-10,000 print books in their collection. There were only a few schools with more than 45,000 books. The largest collection we found was 242,502 and the smallest was 8. The average age of the print collections was 15 years old. Availability of databases (not including access to the public library) revealed that access to databases is an issue. Roughly 50% of schools have access to only 1-5 databases. 21% have access to 6-10 databases, and 25% have access to greater than 11.

Interestingly, there wasn't any significant correlation between number of students enrolled, and number of print volumes available nor enrollment and number on online databases (for reporting schools). However, without representative district data, we cannot determine if this has to do with district-level funding or something else.

It was also interesting to note that just because a library had a higher number of eBooks and eAudiobooks, it did not necessarily mean that their print collection got smaller.

When can students visit their school libraries?

During a regular school day, the vast majority of libraries are open for 6-8 hours with only 2 schools responding "The library is not open during school hours." The following are the number of schools open during the school day for various amounts of hours:

- 4 school libraries are open 1-3 hours
- 12 school libraries are open 4-6 hours
- 86 school libraries are open 6-8 hours
- 2 school libraries are not open

Most schools (86%) are open for 2 hours of less before and/or after school. The "Light on After School" program calls the 3 hours after school "critical." Only 15%

of school libraries are open during this time. The following are the number of schools open before and/or after school for various amounts of hours:

- 30 school libraries are open 1-2 hours
- 6 school libraries are open 2-3 hours
- 3 school libraries are open 3-4 hours
- 7 school libraries are open 4 or more hours
- 27 school libraries are open for less than 1 hour
- 30 school libraries are not open

How are our school libraries funded?

There is a mixture of funding sources among school libraries in CO with most money coming from school budgets, district-level funding, and books fairs. Keep in mind that this question asked for the *primary* funding source, and that other funding may be used. It's important to note that the primary funding source varied by school within district. The options for funding source were book fair, other grants, school budget, district, state grants, and other fundraising. The following are the breakdowns of percentage of budget coming from different funding sources for different districts and the following only reflects funding for school that reported and may not always generalize across a district. Note that not all percentages will add up to 100 due to rounding.

- Arapahoe: 9% book fair, 9% other grants, 82% school budget
- Boulder: 42% book fair, 50% school budget, 8% district
- Denver: 6% book fair, 76% district, 6% state grants, 12% other fundraising
- Douglas: 47% book fair, 53% school budget
- El Paso: 15% book fair, 5% other grants, 65% school budget, 10% district, 5% state grants
- Weld: 10% book fair, 80% school budget, 10% district
- Adams: 50% book fair, 50% other grants
- Alamosa: 100% school budget
- Clear Creek: 100% district
- Larimer: 67% school budget, 33% district
- Mesa: 100% district
- Montezuma: 100% State Grants
- Prowers: 100% school budget
- Pueblo: 100% school budget
- Routt: 100% district

Advocacy, Policy and Training

When asked if the school district has a policy or contractual obligation regarding library staffing, only 6 of 234 respondents said “yes” with the majority of respondents saying “unsure.” The following were listed as policies or contractual obligations:

- “The school library media program is an integral part of the educational process in providing instructional resources and services that support the district curriculum and education goals of individual schools.”
- “A yearly ‘Notice of Assignment’.”
- “Within the entire district, there needs to be at least 1 certified librarian that has a Master’s in Library and Information Science.”
- “Every library has a certified teacher librarian (if possible) and at least a part-time paraprofessional.”
- “Full-time librarian for 350 students or more.”
- “Certified teacher comes with class.”

We received a lot of input about training for library staff. The most frequent request was for help with collection development which includes purchasing, weeding, cataloging, and collection diversification. 21st Century Librarian skills were another big hit; these include topics such as maker spaces, Chat GPX, and other basic librarian skills. Advocacy is also clearly at the top of peoples’ minds as we’ve seen a significant decrease in funding and staffing for our school libraries across the state. The following details training request by certification of respondent:

- Advocacy: 12 requests by certified teachers, 4 requests by paraprofessionals
- Censorship: 5 requests by certified teachers, 0 requests by paraprofessionals
- Classroom management: 1 request by certified teachers, 3 requests by paraprofessionals
- Collaboration: 4 requests by certified teachers, 0 requests by paraprofessionals
- Collection development: 12 requests by certified teachers, 13 requests by paraprofessionals
- Lesson planning: 8 requests by certified teachers, 7 requests by paraprofessionals
- Programming: 4 requests by certified teachers, 2 requests by paraprofessionals

- 21st Century Librarian Skills: 10 requests by certified teachers, 8 requests by paraprofessionals
- Readers' Advisory: 1 request by certified teachers, 2 requests by paraprofessionals

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