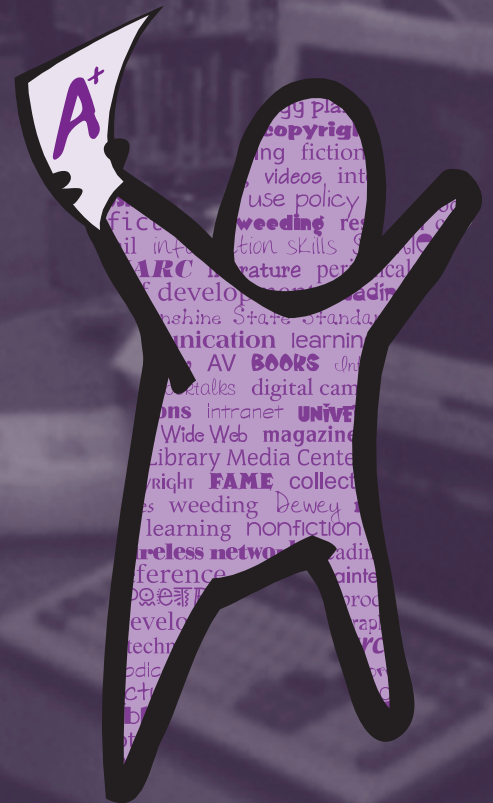


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# Making the Grade

## The Status of School Library Media Centers in the Sunshine State and How They Contribute to Student Achievement



## Can You Make the Grade?

Take this quiz to see what you know about Florida's K-12 school library media programs!

1. What portion of Florida high schools have at least one university-trained, certified school library media specialist?
    - a. 78%
    - b. 88%
    - c. 98%
    - d. 100%
  2. What percentage of Florida's K-12 school library media specialists are in the DROP program, indicating that they will retire in the next few years?
    - a. 6%
    - b. 13%
    - c. 18%
    - d. 25%
  3. Florida's K-12 elementary school library staff spend  $\frac{1}{4}$  the time planning with teachers as they spend on
    - a. shelving books
    - b. assisting students
    - c. ordering and cataloging materials
    - d. non-media related duties such as bus duty, lunchroom monitoring, etc.
  4. 83% of school library media specialists say they use SUNLINK on a regular basis. How many teachers use SUNLINK?
    - a. 15%
    - b. 29%
    - c. 54%
    - d. 87%
  5. In schools with university-trained, certified library media specialists
    - a. There are more books per student
    - b. There are more computers in the library media center per 100 students
    - c. Students visit the library media center more often
    - d. Circulation is higher
    - e. All of the above
  6. In Florida's schools, FCAT scores are higher where:
    - a. The total number of paid staff is higher and there are more hours per week of staffing
    - b. Circulation is higher
    - c. Schools have access to the library media center catalog through the school's computer network
    - d. There are more books and videos
    - e. There are more computers in the library media center and those computers provide Internet access
    - f. All of the above
  7. Florida's "A" elementary schools
    - a. Are more likely to have an information skills curriculum in place
    - b. Are more likely to have a school website
    - c. Are more likely to have a main web page or media center web page that links to SUNLINK
    - d. Have significantly larger book collections and subscribe to more periodicals
    - e. All of the above
  8. True or False: The more students with disabilities a school has, the less technology to accommodate their needs is found in the library media center.
  9. True or False: Most school library media specialists feel their collections are thoroughly weeded.
  10. True or False: Florida schools spend less per pupil on books and non-print resources each year than the national averages.
  11. True or False: Most school library media specialists must depend upon bookfairs, candy sales, profits from a school store and/or PTAs, grants and gifts to begin to meet the needs of their students and teachers.
- Answers on page 12*

Answers on page 12

## Making the Grade: The Florida School Library Media Study

What is the status of collections, services, staff and programs in Florida's K-12 public school library media centers? Do school library media programs and school library media specialists contribute to student achievement in today's assessment-driven learning environments? And if so, what factors are most likely to contribute to student success?

The purpose of the Florida School Library Media Study was 1) to examine the library media resources, services and usage to capture an accurate picture of the status of Florida's school library media programs and 2) to determine the role of media programs and media specialists on student achievement. The study was designed to

replicate and expand existing studies in other states that have examined the role library media programs play in today's teaching and learning environments and to examine several variables and relationships unique to Florida's K-12 public schools.

All Florida K–12 public schools received a survey form early in 2002. 1715 usable surveys were returned (60%). Additional data were received from the Florida Department of Education related to test scores, student population, school budget, qualifications of instructional staff, and other demographic data.

## What was learned?

What is the status of Florida's school library media specialists, programs and resources?

## School Library Media Centers and School Library Media Specialists

Most Florida K–12 public schools have a library media center, but only 84% have a university-trained, certified library media specialist. 98% of high schools have university-trained, certified library media specialists, but only 80% of elementary schools do.

62% of elementary library media specialists have a master's degree or higher with certification in educational media compared with 75% at the middle school and 84% at the high school level.

Schools at all levels with a university-trained, certified library media specialist and better staffing (more than 60 hours per week) have higher FCAT scores.

In Florida's public school schools where there is a university-trained, certified library media specialist:

- There are more total library staff hours per week.
- There are more books per student.
- There are more subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals.

- There are more computers in the library media center per 100 students.
- There are more computers in the school per 100 students.
- The library media budget per student is higher.
- Students visit the library media center more often.
- Circulation is higher.

Each of these contributes to higher academic achievement as measured by the FCAT.

## Professional Activities

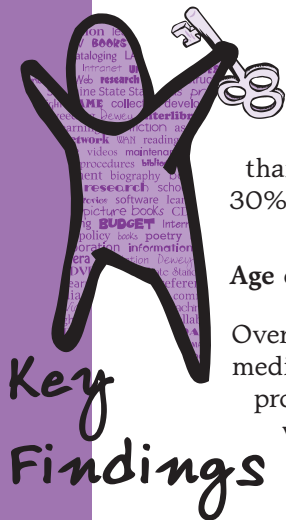
Over 75% of school library media specialists are active members of a local professional association. 61% are members of FAME, the state professional association for school library media specialists. 16% report no professional memberships.

About ½ of all Florida library media specialists attend the annual FAME conference or the Florida Educational Technology Conference (FETC), two

## Key Findings







primary professional development opportunities for Florida's school library media specialists. More than 30% attend both conferences, but 30% attend neither conference.

### Age of the Profession

Over 25% of Florida school library media specialists are in the DROP program, indicating they will retire within the next several years.

Over 40% of high school library media specialists are in DROP.

### Staff Activities

Library media specialists at the middle and high school level are twice as likely to report flexible access programs as are those in elementary schools.

School library media staff spend about  $\frac{1}{5}$  of their time each week on teaching and learning activities,  $\frac{2}{5}$  on information access and delivery, and  $\frac{2}{5}$  on program administration.

Elementary library media specialists spend  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the time on teaching and learning activities as their middle and high school counterparts. Elementary library media staff also report spending 4 times as much time on duties unrelated to the school library media program such as bus duty and lunchroom monitoring as they do in planning with teachers.

Performing basic library media center activities takes about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a library media staff's time each week. Since most tasks in this area (checking books in and out, reshelving books, barcoding, etc.) might be performed by paraprofessionals or volunteers where the media center is adequately staffed, it is an area from which time might be reallocated to allow more collaborative efforts with teachers or more instructional activities with students.

Elementary school library media specialists spend twice as much time providing reading incentive programs as high school library media specialists, but only  $\frac{1}{2}$  the time in electronic program administration.

While managing library media technology consumes a great deal of time at the elementary level, larger numbers of students, school staff, and technology result in middle school library media staff reporting 50% more time on this task, and high school library media staff reporting 100% more time working with technology in the school library media center than elementary library media staff.

### Policies and Procedures

Less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of school library media specialists prepare and submit an annual budget.

Only 57% of schools report having a specific information skills curriculum. 46% of those report that information skills are integrated throughout the curriculum and taught with other teachers. However, 41% of those who said they had an information skills curriculum did not answer the question about how information literacy skills are taught.

School library media centers contain huge amounts of non-print resources, digital information and a wide variety of technologies, yet are not consistently included in school technology plans.

Fewer schools have collection development policies than copyright policies.

Over 90% of school library media specialists feel the library media program is very important to school reading programs. Of those who do not feel it is important, over 80% are not certified in educational media.

### Library Media Collections and Technology Resources

Over 83% of Florida's K-12 schools are SUNLINK schools and 83% say they use the state-funded union database and its resources in a wide variety of ways including technical processing and interlibrary loans. Only 29% of teachers and 27% of students use SUNLINK on a regular basis.

There is a negative correlation between the number of students with disabilities in a school and the number of computers

Most schools have automated circulation systems; fewer have automated catalog systems. Less than 40% report having a catalog that is Internet accessible. Less than ½ of Florida schools have a district catalog that is Internet accessible. Schools report using SUNLINK as their school and district automated catalogs where they do not have their own, a cost-effective solution.

Almost 80% of all schools have a school website. However, only about 42% of those link to a school library media center page or resources. Only 35% of school library media specialists report web pages designed and/or maintained by the school library media specialist. Less than 20% of school web pages or library media center pages link to SUNLINK.

Florida schools spend less than the national average for books each year and far less per pupil. Per pupil spending for books is only  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  the cost of a new book. The result is that each student can expect a new library book only every 3 to 4 years.

Almost 60% of books in Florida school library media centers have publication dates before 1990. The average age of an item in Florida school library media collections is 1983.

Most school library media specialists must depend upon bookfairs, candy sales, profits from a school store and/or PTAs, grants and gifts to begin to meet the needs of their students and teachers; approximately 45% of their budgets are from these “extra” sources. Local and state budgets are simply not adequate.

The presence of a district level school library media supervisor or coordinator makes a significant difference in collections, technology, budgets, staffing, policies, and activities of building level school library media programs and therefore on student achievement.

The study indicates that Florida's school library media specialists may benefit from professional development opportunities in a number of areas: budgeting; information skills curriculum, instruction and integration; time management and task delegation; flexible access benefits and methods; collection development policies and procedures; weeding; distance learning technologies and opportunities; new and emerging technologies; research-based reading strategies and Florida reading initiatives; developing and maintaining school library media center web pages and resources; working with school webmasters; SUNLINK (for non-SUNLINK schools) and how SUNLINK can be used (for all schools); teaching students and teachers to use SUNLINK; working with technology coordinators; technology for special needs and universal access; leadership and public relations.



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- More computers in the library media center provide access to the Internet.

In middle schools that scored in the top one-third on the FCAT:

- Library media centers were staffed an average of 17% more hours per week.
- There were 34.8% more videos in the collection.

## High Schools

High schools showed even larger differences in test scores where there was better staffing:

- 55.1% of students passed the FCAT reading test in higher scoring schools with library media staffing of 80 HPW or more, while only 37% passed in schools with poorer staffing.

In high schools where library media programs are staffed 60 hours per week or more, there is a 22.2% improvement in test scores over those staffed less than 60 hours.

In high schools where library media programs are staffed 80 hours per week or more, there is a 20% improvement in test scores over those staffed less than 80 hours.

In Florida high schools, FCAT scores are higher where:

- The library media center is staffed more hours per week.
- There are more certified library media specialists.
- There are more paid library media staff members.
- There are more interlibrary loans provided to other schools in the district.
- There are more visits to the library media center to use technology.
- There are more networked computers in the school and more computers with Internet access.
- There are more computers in the library media center and more computers have Internet access.

*"Last year when I weeded 2000 books, I received money from school and PTA funds to purchase 2500 new books without even asking. We and what we do in the library information center are respected as vital parts of this school."*



In high schools scoring in the top-third on the FCAT:

- Certified, university-trained library media specialists provided an average of 20% more hours of professional staffing per week.
- There are 34% more paid library media staff and 31% more hours of total staffing per week.
- There are 66% more interlibrary loans provided to other schools in the district.
- There are 50% more computers in the library media center and 42% more library media center computers were connected to the Internet.

Both high school FCAT and ACT scores are significantly higher where there is increased library usage (visits by individuals to the library media center).

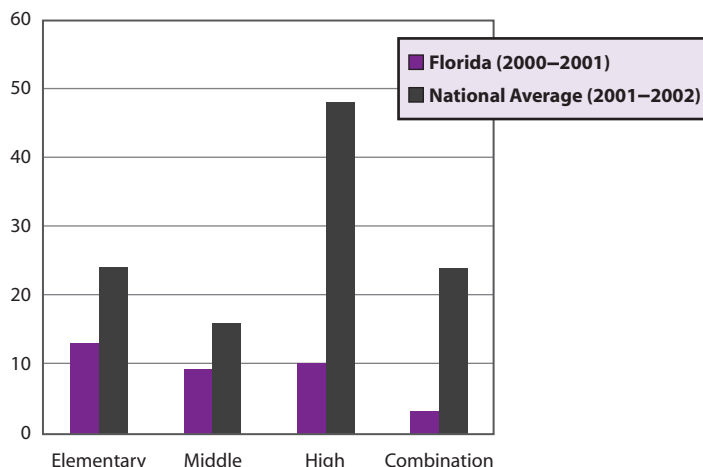
Library usage at the high school level increases with:

- The number of certified, university-trained library media specialist hours per student.
- The total library staff hours per student.
- The number of networked school computers per student.
- The number of books per student.
- The number of subscriptions, videos and software packages per student.
- The library expenditures per student.

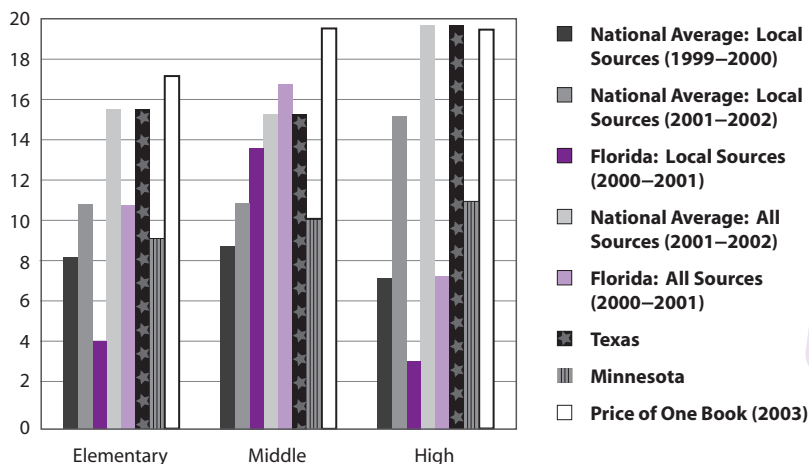
Strong high school library media programs—those with more certified, university-trained staff and staff hours, technology, and books—have more usage by high schools students, and increased usage leads to higher academic achievement as measured by both the FCAT and the ACT.

"SUNLINK has been a way for this media center to connect with the community. Our resources have multiplied!"

Book Collections per Pupil in Florida School Library Media Centers Compared with National Averages

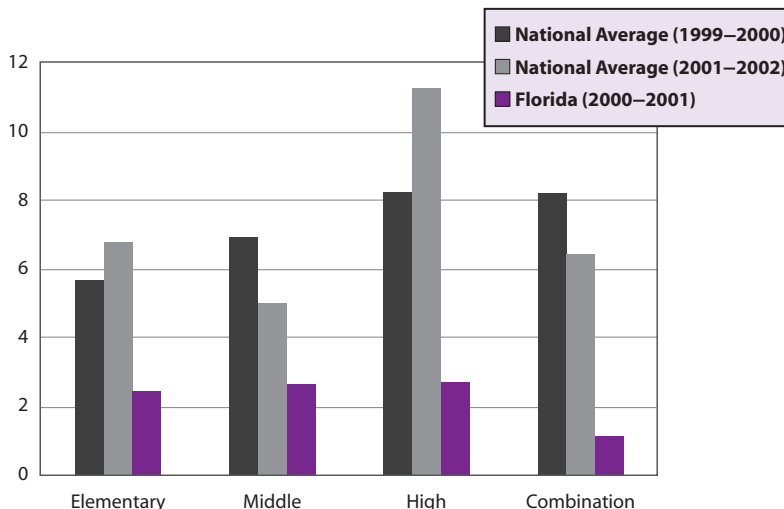


National Averages per Pupil Expenditures for Books Compared with Florida's Schools' per Pupil Expenditures



"We have a poor, inadequate 45 year old building with no renovation and an aging collection. It died around 1980!"

National Averages per Pupil Expenditures for Non-print (Audiovisual, Software, and Web-based Products) Compared with Florida's Schools' per Pupil Expenditures





# What school library media factors may be related to school grades in Florida's School Accountability Reports?

Florida's "A" elementary schools:

- Are more likely to have an information skills curriculum in place.
- Are more likely to have a school website.
- Are more likely to have a main web page or media center web page that links to SUNLINK.
- Have significantly larger book collections.
- Subscribe to more periodicals.

School library media specialists in "A" elementary schools

- Are more likely to work with individuals visiting the media center than with groups.
- Spend more time planning for lessons taught independently of teachers.
- Spend more time working collaboratively and teaching with teachers.
- Spend more time involved in reading incentive activities and programs.

"Non-A" elementary schools in Florida are more likely to improve their school grade when they report:

- Having an information skills curriculum in place.
- Having a school website.
- Having a link from the main school web page or the media center web page to SUNLINK.
- Having more encyclopedias and reference materials on CD-ROM.
- Spending more time teaching with teachers.

Additional factors in improving a school's grade include:

- Having a link from the school website to a library media center web page.
- Working collaboratively with the public library on summer reading programs.
- Reporting that the school library media specialist participates in professional development by attending the annual

conference of the Florida Association for Media in Education.

School library media specialists in "Non-A" elementary schools, however, continue their efforts toward improved student achievement and report:

- A significantly larger budget for books, a larger budget for books per student, and more total volumes (total and per student) purchased in the 2000–2001 school year.
- A larger budget for electronic access to information (total and per 100 students).
- A larger budget for other operating expenditures from sources other than the school budget (total and per 100 students).
- A significantly larger overall budget (total and per student).
- More time assisting teachers with state initiatives (such as FCAT, Sunshine State Standards, etc.) per 100 students.
- More visits by groups to the library media center for information skills instruction.
- More time in meetings with district staff.

Schools are less likely to lower their standing (school grade) when they have:

- More computers with access to SUNLINK in the library media center.
- More networked computers in the library media center.
- More networked computers in the library media center with Internet access.
- Use of encyclopedias and other reference materials on CD-ROM.
- More total staff hours.
- More visits to the media center by individuals for information skills instruction and assistance.
- A copyright policy in place.
- Funding from of the school budget for other operating expenses.

## Conclusions

Florida's school library media programs are active, vital contributors to teaching and learning in Florida's K-12 schools. Findings of this Florida library media study parallel those from numerous research studies on the impact of school library media centers. School library media programs positively impact student achievement when:

- ◆ **A professionally trained, full-time certified library media specialist leads the program.** Where school library media specialists have the educational background and training necessary to provide school library media services, to coordinate paid staff and volunteers, to work collaboratively with teachers, and to communicate effectively with administrators, to provide instruction and research assistance to students, and to manage collections, information, technology and fiscal resources, students learn and achieve.
- ◆ **Adequate support staff is present.** Test scores rise incrementally with more hours of staffing. Competent support staff can provide time for the school library media specialist to engage in more instructional activities with students and teachers and to provide assistance to more individuals and groups each day.
- ◆ **School library media collections are strong both in quantity, in quality, and in variety.** Test scores were higher in schools with more books, periodicals and newspapers, videos, electronic subscriptions, non-print materials, technology, Internet connections, and adequate budgets for building and maintaining collections.
- ◆ **Students have access to resources beyond the library media center.** More computers, more networked computers, and more computers with Internet access in the school library media center and throughout the school with access to media resources lead to higher student achievement. Schools with websites, links to selected school library media resources and to SUNLINK, and subscriptions to high quality online databases integrate technology tools that appeal to students, help them access information, and help them use information from the library shelves and beyond the library media center walls. The use of interlibrary loan through SUNLINK is beneficial to students and teachers and highly cost-effective.
- ◆ **Literacy, information literacy, and technology literacy are taught.** School library media specialists provide students with skills that will last a lifetime: learning to locate, evaluate and use information; to read, listen, view and think critically and creatively; to understand the research process; to read fluently and to value reading; to use technology effectively as a tool for accessing, organizing, analyzing and presenting information. These skills are integrated throughout the school curriculum and support the Sunshine State Standards.
- ◆ **Students use the library media center and its resources.** Where media resources are valued and used, academic achievement increases. Usage increases with the size and quality of the collection, staffing, technology, electronic and non-print resources, and the school library media center budget.
- ◆ **Technology is available.** Computer technology and online resources are common tools to today's students, and online databases and the World Wide Web give new meaning to "current" information resources. Technology resources extend library media resources to classrooms, homes and other public spaces and increase usage of other traditional print and non-print resources.

## Recommendation #1

**All schools deserve a competent, university-trained, certified school library media specialist, and each school and every community must ensure they have qualified leaders for their school library media programs.**

Qualified, certified school library media specialists have substantial specialized coursework and experience in a school library media center, including an internship or working with experienced mentor. Not all school library media centers in Florida have a university-trained, certified school library media specialist. In addition, many Florida schools have large student populations, and as schools increase in size, the number of certified school library media specialists must also increase. Without qualified staff, significant investments in collections and technology resources may be lost. Without competent library media specialists, reading programs are not supported, and information and technology skills are not integrated into the curriculum where they are best taught. Special attention should be given to elementary school library media programs where there is the greatest lack of university-trained, certified library media specialists and where many programs do not yet have flexible schedules. The effects of this will be cumulative on those elementary students, and will most certainly be felt as they enter middle and high schools without the foundation in reading and information skills that they will need to succeed.

## Recommendation #2

**Quantitative and qualitative guidelines should be established for Florida's school library media programs.**



*"We are very fortunate to have an extremely supportive administration that has continued to support our staffing which reflects the Southern Association standards of 3 professionals and a full-time secretary. With our current staffing, we are able to provide optimum service and support to our students, faculty and staff."*

School library media specialists and other members of the school community need criteria and benchmarks by which to measure many elements of their programs: resources, facilities, technology, usage, collaboration, communication, services, and budgets. Clear, concise quantitative guidelines would be helpful in assessing strengths and weaknesses, in setting goals and in measuring improvement. Florida guidelines, both quantitative and qualitative, should reflect research findings, Sunshine State Standards and other state initiatives as well as national standards guidelines for media programs and school library media specialists.

## Recommendation #3

**Funding and collections must be improved to a *minimum* of the national average.**

If Florida is serious about improving student achievement and producing information and technology literate citizens, findings from this and previous studies cannot be ignored.

In studies in six states where library media programs are better staffed, better stocked and better funded, academic achievement tends to be higher. Increases in per pupil expenditures in school library media centers positively influence test scores, while overall school expenditures do not. School libraries have been shown to influence reading scores while classroom libraries do not, and print-rich environments, like the library media center with a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books, electronic and digital resources, encourage voluntary reading, the best predictor of literacy.

To bring local spending and books per student in Florida's school library media centers up to *the minimum* of the national average should be an immediate and primary goal.

Budgets for non-print, electronic resources and online databases should also equal or exceed national averages. Research indicates there would be an immediate return on the investment in terms of student achievement. To go beyond the national average would demonstrate an understanding of what it takes not only to raise test scores, but also to create readers who enjoy books and who know how to use information resources to solve problems and increase understanding of our complex world, skills that will endure throughout life.

## Recommendation #4

### Address equity issues.

*Assist schools in lower socio-economic areas.*

All students need access to information resources, quality literature, literacy instruction, high quality databases, interlibrary loan services, and research assistance. Schools with strong library media programs have higher test scores; but students in schools with lower test scores have an equal or greater need for quality resources and services. Students in poorer schools and from poorer homes may find that the school library media program provides their best access to books, technology, online databases, and non-print materials. For those students, strong library media programs are even more critical.

*Provide district level staffing.* Collections are stronger and budgets are larger in schools in districts with library media supervisors or coordinators.

*Enable students with disabilities.* The negative correlation between technology accommodations for students with special needs and the numbers of students with disabilities in our schools means those students do not have equitable access to

digital and electronic information sources. All school library media centers should have at least one universal access workstation with appropriate technology accommodations to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

*Make SUNLINK membership and participation a priority.* Schools not yet in SUNLINK should be provided with incentives to meet criteria for acceptance within a reasonable time frame. All schools should be provided with minimal budgets to cover the cost of interlibrary loans beyond the school district, the value of which would far exceed any costs. Schools must fully participate in resource sharing, at least until equity can be achieved.

*Provide statewide licenses to high quality online databases.* In addition to substantial per pupil cost-savings, online databases including full text magazines, newspapers and reference materials, guarantee access to students no matter the size or location of their school. They may also provide access to information resources from the classroom or from home.

## Recommendation #5

**The new information skills document, *Information Literacy: Florida's Library Media Curriculum Connections*, should be widely publicized and disseminated to schools and integrated into a comprehensive Florida information literacy guide, developed in conjunction with other professional organizations and groups.**

The new document clearly identifies Florida's Student Information Literacy Descriptors K-12 and provides correlations to national information literacy standards and to Sunshine Standards, benchmarks and grade level expectations. A document developed collaboratively with other professional groups describing collaborative goals, exemplary



"We are in the process of developing a non-fiction collection aimed at students in grades K-2. We feel this is necessary to help improve reading achievement. We also have an established Spanish collection to help meet the needs of our Hispanic parents who use these materials at home with their children."



activities, and assessments between school library media specialists and teachers across the curriculum would be of great benefit to Florida students, teachers and school library media specialists.

## Recommendation #6

**Each school library media program should undertake a self-evaluation and create an action plan for improvement.**

School library media specialists are the best change agents within their own programs. Begin the change process with a program assessment. Identify areas needing change, establish priorities, set goals, identify strategies, involve others, keep and use data, and celebrate success.

## Recommendation #7

**School library media specialists must become active advocates for school library media programs.**

That school library media programs impact student learning is clear, but we must communicate that clearly and effectively to parents, administrators, boards of education, and legislators. We must find ways to convince them that staffing, facilities, collections, resources, budget, activities and technology in our library media centers make a difference.

We need success stories we can share from throughout the state. We need to use data with stories and stories with data to convince administrators that school library media programs are good investments in attaining overall school goals, and are not just expensive collections of books and technology. Requests for funding should be framed in terms of student outcomes and how the new books, staff, databases, or services will help students reach and exceed standards.

We must leverage success. Team with teachers and administrators to present at *their* conferences and to publish in *their* publications about collaborative efforts, team goals that have been reached, how their instruction has changed with the help of the school library media center and its resources,

*"Don't be afraid to dream. Hold the vision and work toward it. Make your library media center the place everyone wants to come."*



and how school library media programs enhance student achievement.

## Recommendation #8

**Create professional development opportunities for administrators and teachers, both preservice and inservice, to learn about the role of the school library media program and its resources.**

We need to be sure opportunities are in place to allow administrators and teachers to learn more about the school library media center and how to benefit from its resources. Preservice experiences for teachers should include opportunities to work with school library media specialists from their first observations through internships and into the first years of teaching. Those formative experiences must show how library media specialists help develop and deliver instruction and how school library media centers create avid readers, skilled users of information and technology, critical thinkers and effective communicators.

School administrators and administrators-in-training also need experience in evaluating school media programs, empowering collaboration, and bringing library media resources to bear on school improvement efforts. Checklists, case studies, research findings and practical experiences should be included.

District staff can help provide these experiences and resources for experienced teachers and administrators through collaborative efforts with other district staff, involvement in development of workshops, courses, and other district efforts. Current efforts to improve reading, math and science performance must be tied to school library media resources and services, and school and district library media staff must be involved in these efforts.

*Continued on back cover*

## Can You Make the Grade?

Take this quiz to see what you know about Florida's K-12 school library media programs!

However only 80% of Florida's elementary schools have a university-trained, certified school library media specialist.

1. What portion of Florida high schools have at least one university-trained, certified school library media specialist?
  - a. 78%
  - b. 88%
  - c. 98%
  - d. 100%

...and over 40% of high school library media specialists are in DROP!

2. What percentage of Florida's K-12 school library media specialists are in the DROP program, indicating that they will retire in the next few years?
  - a. 6%
  - b. 13%
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  - d. 25%

Non-media related duties!

3. Florida's K-12 elementary school library staff spend  $\frac{1}{4}$  the time planning with teachers as they spend on
  - a. shelving books
  - b. assisting students
  - c. ordering and cataloging materials
  - d. non-media related duties such as bus duty, lunchroom monitoring, etc.

We must get SUNLINK into the hands of teachers and students. SUNLINK is free, it provides equitable access to school library media materials throughout the state, and it serves as an online catalog for many schools and districts.

4. 83% of school library media specialists say they use SUNLINK on a regular basis. How many teachers use SUNLINK?
  - a. 15%
  - b. 29%
  - c. 54%
  - d. 87%

All of these! And all are positively correlated with student achievement!

5. In schools with university-trained, certified library media specialists
  - a. There are more books per student
  - b. There are more computers in the library media center per 100 students
  - c. Students visit the library media center more often
  - d. Circulation is higher
  - e. All of the above



6. In Florida's schools, FCAT scores are higher where:

- a. The total number of paid staff is higher and there are more hours per week of staffing
- b. Circulation is higher
- c. Schools have access to the library media center catalog through the school's computer network
- d. There are more books and videos
- e. There are more computers in the library media center and those computers provide Internet access
- f. All of the above

7. Florida's "A" elementary schools

- a. Are more likely to have an information skills curriculum in place
- b. Are more likely to have a school website
- c. Are more likely to have a main web page or media center web page that links to SUNLINK
- d. Have significantly larger book collections and subscribe to more periodicals
- e. All of the above

8. True or False: The more students with disabilities a school has, the less technology to accommodate their needs is found in the library media center.

9. True or False: Most school library media specialists feel their collections are thoroughly weeded.

10. True or False: Florida schools spend less per pupil on books and non-print resources each year than the national averages.

11. True or False: Most school library media specialists must depend upon bookfairs, candy sales, profits from a school store and/or PTAs, grants and gifts to begin to meet the needs of their students and teachers.

Unfortunately it's true. All schools need computers that can provide accommodations for students with physical and cognitive disabilities. Universal access workstations can make the difference in providing access to digital information and curriculum resources.

Less than 30% of school library media specialists feel their collections are adequately weeded. The average age of Florida's school library media collections is 1983; there is a fear that funds to replace weeded materials will not be provided.

Elementary and middle schools have about  $\frac{1}{2}$  the number of books per student as the national average; high schools have about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the national average; and combination schools, a startling  $\frac{1}{8}$ . Florida's mean expenditure for books from the local school budget was \$4.18 at the elementary level, \$13.89 at the middle school level, and \$3.28 at the high school level per student. Combination schools reported a paltry \$1.23 per student for book purchases. National averages for books per student 2001-2002 were \$11.17 at the elementary level, \$11.11 at the middle school level, and \$15.44 at the high school level. Florida's non-print expenditures per pupil were similarly low compared to national averages.

45% of spending for school library media resources and programs comes from sources other than the school budget.

## Recommendation #9

This study revealed a number of areas in which school library media specialists could benefit from ongoing professional development. While many of these topics are addressed by sessions at FAME and FETC, more intensive opportunities are needed and can be addressed through workshops, online courses, university coursework, summer institutes, listservs, and directed self-study. Every school library media specialist should create and implement an annual professional development plan to address these and other areas for professional growth.

## Recommendation #10

In order to ensure continued progress, monitor change, and document successes, data collection related to school library media programs and resources needs to be continued. Data can be easily collected online, and results can be disseminated the same way. Priority should be given to collecting data related to factors that contribute to student achievement and, when qualitative and quantitative guidelines are created, to measuring those elements of quality programs. Progress and accomplishments should be widely publicized and celebrated, and assistance and resources should be targeted to areas of continued need.

To know how to do something well is to enjoy it."

– Pearl Buck



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