

Budget Note for Media Program Standards Study Report

Report to the Legislature

December 2021



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This document is available for download from the Library and Media Education webpage of the Oregon Department of Education Website at <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/library/Pages/default.aspx>.

Executive Summary

The 2021 Oregon Legislature adopted a Budget Note directing the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to convene a group to study the media program standards and submit a report by December 30, 2021 describing the study's results and any recommendations. Specifically, the Media Program Standards Budget Note stipulates the following:

- The Department of Education shall convene a group to study the State Board of Education developed media program standards.
- The study must evaluate the appropriateness of the standards, whether they adequately address student media needs, and methods to measure and ensure compliance with the standards.
- The Department of Education should consult with organizations that represent public school educators and those who promote school libraries in selecting members of the group.
- The Department of Education shall report the study's results and any recommendations by December 30, 2021.

In partnership with the State Library of Oregon, ODE convened a Media Program Standards Advisory Group to advise ODE on the structure of the study called for in the Media Program Standards Budget Note. Ultimately, the Advisory Group established a study design comprised of two central strategies:

1. A Media Program Standards Survey soliciting feedback regarding Oregon's media program standards from educators and library staff with knowledge and expertise around school media programs; and
2. An examination of resources that detail best practices for library / media instruction, exemplars for strong school library programs, as well as the Quality Education Model (QEM) report that includes baseline recommendations for school library staffing and budgets for collections.

Media Program Standards Survey Findings

The study resulted in nine findings, six of which came from the Media Programs Survey and the remaining three from the Advisory Group through their resource review:

- **Finding 1.** The survey results reflect alignment around the value for instruction in library, media literacy, and information literacy; however, the survey results do not reflect alignment around who in the system should be charged with providing instruction in library, media literacy, and information literacy.
- **Finding 2.** The media program standards do not adequately address school library best practices in library, media literacy, and information literacy.
- **Finding 3.** *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* and *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan* adequately address how to measure compliance with most of the media program standards, but ambiguity remains in the area of staffing requirements.
- **Finding 4.** System-level barriers make compliance with *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* difficult.
- **Finding 5.** System-level barriers lead to inequitable and inconsistent opportunity for student access to school library facilities, collections, and instruction.
- **Finding 6** system is not adequately equipping high school and first-year college students to lead research and inquiry projects required for secondary and post-secondary coursework.

Advisory Group Findings from the Resource Review

- **Finding 7.** The quality of school library programs is strongly correlated to student achievement.
- **Finding 8.** After an 82% decrease in licensed librarian FTE over the last 20 years, Oregon ranks in the bottom five across the nation for teacher-librarians per school and students per teacher-librarian.
- **Finding 9.** Oregon educators seeking a library media endorsement no longer have an in-state option for obtaining one.

Media Programs Budget Note Recommendations

Based on these findings and the stipulation of the Media Programs Budget Note to “evaluate the appropriateness of the standards, whether they adequately address student media needs, and methods to measure and ensure compliance with the standards,” ODE puts forth three recommendations to address the charge of the Media Programs Budget Note.

Recommendations that Do Not Require Additional Oregon Department of Education Staffing

- **Recommendation 1.** To support compliance, the Oregon Department of Education recommends that the Legislature amend ORS 329.095 to remove (4)(a)(J) to focus compliance on the media program standards in Rule Division 22. ODE should then recommend to the State Board of Education the consolidation of all media program standards within a single rule.

The media program standards are housed within two separate rules under Division 22: [OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs](#) and [OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan](#). The study findings highlighted how this bifurcated approach has created both ambiguity in interpreting the standards and discrepancies in how districts report their compliance with the standards. ODE recommends revising [OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs](#) to incorporate those media program standards currently housed within [OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan](#) and removing them from [OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan](#).

Recommendations that Require Additional Oregon Department of Education Staffing

- **Recommendation 2.** A strong standard is only as good as the implementation. Therefore, to support compliance, the Oregon Department of Education should recommend to the State Board of Education to strengthen the media program standards, update terminology, and develop academic content standards through a process of statewide engagement. To support this, we recommend that the Legislature provide funding for media staff support to provide technical assistance to districts in implementing the standards.

In addition to strengthening the media program standards, ODE recommends engaging education and community partners to explore the possibility of formally adopting academic content standards in information and media literacy.

- **Recommendation 3.** To address student media needs, the Legislature should consider the current funding landscape for school library and media staffing and programming when creating the budget for the K-12 school system, and prioritize funding to support school library and media staffing and the adoption of stronger media program standards.

Implementation of this recommendation would also necessitate that ODE provide districts with support and technical assistance.

Introduction

The 2021 Oregon Legislature adopted a Budget Note directing the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to convene a group to study the media program standards and submit a report by December 30, 2021 describing the study's results and any recommendations. Specifically, the Media Program Standards Budget Note stipulates the following:

- The Department of Education shall convene a group to study the State Board of Education developed media program standards.
- The study must evaluate the appropriateness of the standards, whether they adequately address student media needs, and methods to measure and ensure compliance with the standards.
- The Department of Education should consult with organizations that represent public school educators and those who promote school libraries in selecting members of the group.
- The Department of Education shall report the study's results and any recommendations by December 30, 2021.

In partnership with the State Library of Oregon (SLO), ODE convened an advisory group composed of individuals representing public school educators and those who promote school libraries to evaluate the media program standards adopted by the State Board of Education. At the recommendation of the Media Program Standards Advisory Group, ODE and SLO designed and administered a survey to collect widespread feedback from across the state on the media program standards. This report summarizes the process followed by ODE and SLO in convening the Media Program Standards Advisory Group; the design, methodology, and findings of the Media Program Standards Study; and ODE's resulting recommendations.

Background

Standards for media programs are adopted by the State Board of Education through the administrative rule process. Division 22 of the Oregon Administrative Rules includes two rules establishing media program standards:

- [*OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs*](#) was adopted in 1996. The statutory authority for this rule is ORS 326.051, which sets forth the State Board's general authority to establish state standards for public K-12 schools, adopt rules for the general governance of public

K-12 schools, and prescribe required or minimum courses of study. The rule outlines the minimum requirements for school libraries in relation to:

- Staffing
- Instructional programming
- Facilities
- Collections and resources;
- [*OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan*](#) was first adopted in 1980. The statutory authority for this rule is ORS 329.095, which requires school districts to set local goals, including goals to implement a “strong school library program.” The rule provides a definition for “strong school library program.”

As part of Division 22, Oregon school districts must adhere to these two media program standards and submit annual assurances to ODE and their communities regarding their compliance with both standards.

Media Program Standards Advisory Group Process

In partnership with SLO, ODE convened a Media Program Standards Advisory Group comprised of members representing academic instruction librarians at colleges and universities, classified school library staff and licensed teacher-librarians, classroom teachers, district administrators and school principals, Education Service Districts (ESDs), the Oregon Association of School Libraries (OASL), and the Oregon Education Association (OEA). Appendix A contains additional information regarding the composition of the Media Program Standards Advisory Group. The Media Program Standards Advisory Group met via Zoom six times in fall 2021:

- September 14: developed a shared understanding of the Budget Note, established tasks for the Advisory Group, and created project timeline
- September 21: participated in equity activity, and drafted survey questions
- October 27: reviewed survey data
- November 9: reviewed and provided feedback on first draft of report
- November 22: reviewed process and progress on draft of report
- December 8: reflected on final report and overall process

Ultimately, the Media Program Standards Advisory Group adopted a study design comprised of two central strategies:

1. A survey soliciting feedback regarding Oregon’s media program standards from educators and library staff with knowledge and expertise around school media programs; and
2. An examination of resources that detail best practices for library / media instruction, exemplars for strong school library programs, as well as the Quality Education Model (QEM) report that includes baseline recommendations for school library staffing and budgets for collections.

The following sections detail the survey design and methodology, the survey findings, and the advisory group resource review findings. Appendices B - E contain more detailed information regarding survey questions, survey respondent demographic information, survey response data, and an annotated bibliography of the resources consulted as part of the resource review.

Media Program Standards Survey Design & Methodology

The purpose of the Media Program Standards Survey, designed with support from the Media Program Standards Advisory Group, was to collect information from specific audiences regarding the media program standards that appear in *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* and *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan*. ODE and SLO administered the survey electronically from October 7 to October 22, 2021. In order to reach as many potential respondents from around the state as possible, ODE distributed both the survey request and a reminder through multiple listservs reaching school district administrators and superintendents, building principals, classroom educators, the Oregon Association of School Libraries, Oregon school library licensed staff, classified school library staff, and academic instruction librarians.

Survey Design

The Media Program Standards Survey consisted of six parts collecting information regarding *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs*; *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan*; barriers districts encounter in meeting the OAR requirements; barriers students face in accessing school libraries; library, media literacy, and information literacy instruction and who should be responsible for teaching those subject areas; and demographic information about respondents. Advisory Group members developed the survey questions, which were reviewed by data analysts at ODE and by a data consultant contracted by SLO, approved by ODE and SLO leadership, and then further refined based on feedback from an informal survey usability test. The majority of survey questions focused on these categories from the Media Program Standards Budget Note:

1. Appropriateness of the standards;
2. The degree to which the standards meet students' media needs; and,
3. The methods to measure and ensure compliance with the standards.

Appendix B provides the complete set of the Media Program Standards Survey questions.

Survey Participant Demographics

Due to the technical nature of the standards, ODE and SLO administered the survey to people in roles that require familiarity with school media programs. There were six audience groups overall:

- District administrators or superintendents
- School principals
- Licensed teacher-librarians
- Classified school library staff
- Classroom teachers
- Academic instruction librarians from colleges and universities

School principals, licensed teacher-librarians, and classified school library staff were grouped together and received the same batch of questions in the survey. Throughout this report, this group is referred to as "school-level educators." Survey questions were developed and administered based on participants' audience group.

Appendix C contains a more complete description of survey respondent demographic information.

Participation Rates

The survey was distributed to licensed and classified educators (including administrators and academic librarians) across the state of Oregon and received 682 responses. Classified school library staff made up the majority of survey respondents, followed by classroom teachers and licensed teacher-librarians. The following table summarizes the full breakdown of respondents by audience group. Appendix C contains more

detailed demographic information about survey respondents in relation to geographic location, school student population size, and school grade levels.

Classified school library staff	30% (207)
Classroom teachers	23% (159)
Licensed teacher-librarians	20% (135)
District-level administrators or superintendents	10% (70)
School principals	10% (68)
Academic instruction librarians at a college or university	6% (43)

Based on a crosswalk analysis of survey respondents compared to the total number of staff positions included in the [2020-21 Oregon Statewide Report Card](#), survey respondents represent 92% of all licensed teacher-librarians and 31% of all classified school library staff in Oregon public schools.

Media Program Standards Survey Findings

The overarching goal of the survey was to solicit feedback from those responsible for implementing school library programs regarding the three study areas called out in the Media Program Standards Budget Note. Findings from the survey are summarized below, and Appendix D provides more detailed information regarding the survey response data.

Finding 1. The survey results reflect alignment around the value for instruction in library, media literacy, and information literacy; however, the survey results do not reflect alignment around who in the system should be charged with providing instruction in library, media literacy, and information literacy.

Principals, teacher-librarians, classified school library staff, district administrators, and classroom teachers were all asked this question:

Below is a list of some broad instructional components of library, media literacy, and information literacy. How important is it for Oregon students to acquire skills in these areas of library, media, and information literacy? (Do not focus on where the instruction takes place or on who delivers the instruction -- library/librarian vs. classroom/teacher.)

Across the board, audience groups that responded to the survey indicated they generally value library, information literacy, and media literacy instruction. Overall, about 90% of principals, teacher-librarians, and classified school library staff who answered these questions agreed that instruction in these components of library, media literacy, and information literacy are very important or moderately important. However, responses also indicate a disconnect between who they think is essential for teaching those topics, per their responses to this question:

Please indicate the importance of these staff for the teaching of library, media, and information literacy content, as described in the question above. Please select either “essential” or “optional” for each of the three staff choices for each of the three rows.

Survey responses to this follow-up question reveal the following:

- The district administrator responses (and possibly the principal responses, if viewed as a subset of the “principal and all school library staff” group) indicate that they do not think teacher-librarians are essential for teaching library skills, and they think classified library staff are essential.

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- A theme in the comments indicates a need for professional development and training, due to a lack of trained library staff. This is supported by comments indicating the perception that licensed teacher-librarians are not needed for library, media literacy, and information literacy instruction while at the same time indicating that classified staff could fulfill the job duties of the licensed teacher-librarian, though they are not legally permitted to provide instruction. One classified school library staff respondent commented, “Confused about the role of the Library Media Assistants that are fully in charge of running the library program in their schools (with very little oversight) and how they are supposed to implement/teach all of the information listed.”
- Similarly, a theme from the comments indicates the perception that classroom teachers can cover the information. While licensed teacher-librarians complete coursework about teaching research in their preparation program, it is unclear whether or not classroom teachers receive the same training. Respondent comments from the district administrator group indicate that they believe that classroom teachers should/are covering those areas in the classes they teach, but there was no mention of evidence to support that claim.
- Last, all audiences indicated the perception that those three skill sets (instruction in library, information literacy, and media literacy) are important, but no Oregon academic content standards require these skills or content areas be taught. In the absence of state academic standards in these areas, the Oregon Association of State Libraries (OASL) provides a resource called “Oregon School Library Standards” and related Grade-Level Learning Goals, but neither are adopted by the State Board of Education or otherwise required by ODE.

Finding 2. The media program standards do not adequately address school library best practices in library, media literacy, and information literacy.

All audiences, except academic instruction librarians and classroom teachers, were asked to review *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* one segment at a time and to review the school library portion of *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan*. Then they answered a series of related questions designed to determine the adequacy of these rules in their articulation of best practices for school library programs and what is required for compliance with the OARs.

Through a series of five questions, the survey asked respondents to rate their agreement with whether the staffing, instructional programs, facilities, and collections and resources language in *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* and the school library portion of *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan* adequately address school library best practices. In general, only 50-60 percent of respondents indicated agreement that the standards in these areas addressed best practices of instructional program standards, library facilities, library collections and resources, and the indicators of a strong school library. Compared to other best practices, a slightly smaller percentage of survey respondents rated that they strongly or moderately agreed that the standards addressed staffing best practices, with about 40 percent of classified library staff and licensed teacher-librarians rating moderate or strong agreement, and about 50-60 percent of district administrators and school principals rating moderate to strong agreement (see Figure 4 in Appendix D).

A similar theme emerged throughout the open-ended comments section of the survey relating to questions about how adequately the OARs address school library best practices. Of the respondents who left a comment about the topic, 54 percent indicated that there is a lack of trained library staff and that there is an overall need for professional development and training. This theme is summarized by the comments from one licensed teacher-librarian who noted,

We know that access to strong school library programs have a disproportionately positive impact on our traditionally underserved students, which makes them an equity issue. Many students in our state have no access to services from an appropriately licensed teacher-librarian, which means they do not have access to equal opportunities to learn skills that are essential to living healthy and happy lives in our society. The problem isn't just one of lack, however. When we continue to provide library services and deliver them through people who don't have the knowledge and skills to deliver them well, we do a different kind of harm through misteaching ... In today's media landscape, which is rife with misinformation and manipulation, it is more important than it has ever been for our students to have access to knowledge and skills that will help them find accurate and reliable answers to questions that determine the quality of their lives.

Finding 3. OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs and OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan adequately address how to measure compliance with most of the media program standards, but ambiguity remains in the area of staffing requirements.

Through a series of five questions, the survey asked respondents to rate their agreement with whether *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* and *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan* adequately address how to measure compliance with the media program standards. About 80 percent of district administrators and 60 to 80 percent of school principals and licensed teacher-librarians rated strong or moderate agreement that the OARs adequately address how to measure compliance. Fewer classified library staff (50-70%) rated that they strongly or moderately agree that the OARs adequately address how to measure compliance, specifically on school library staffing (see Figure 5 in Appendix D).

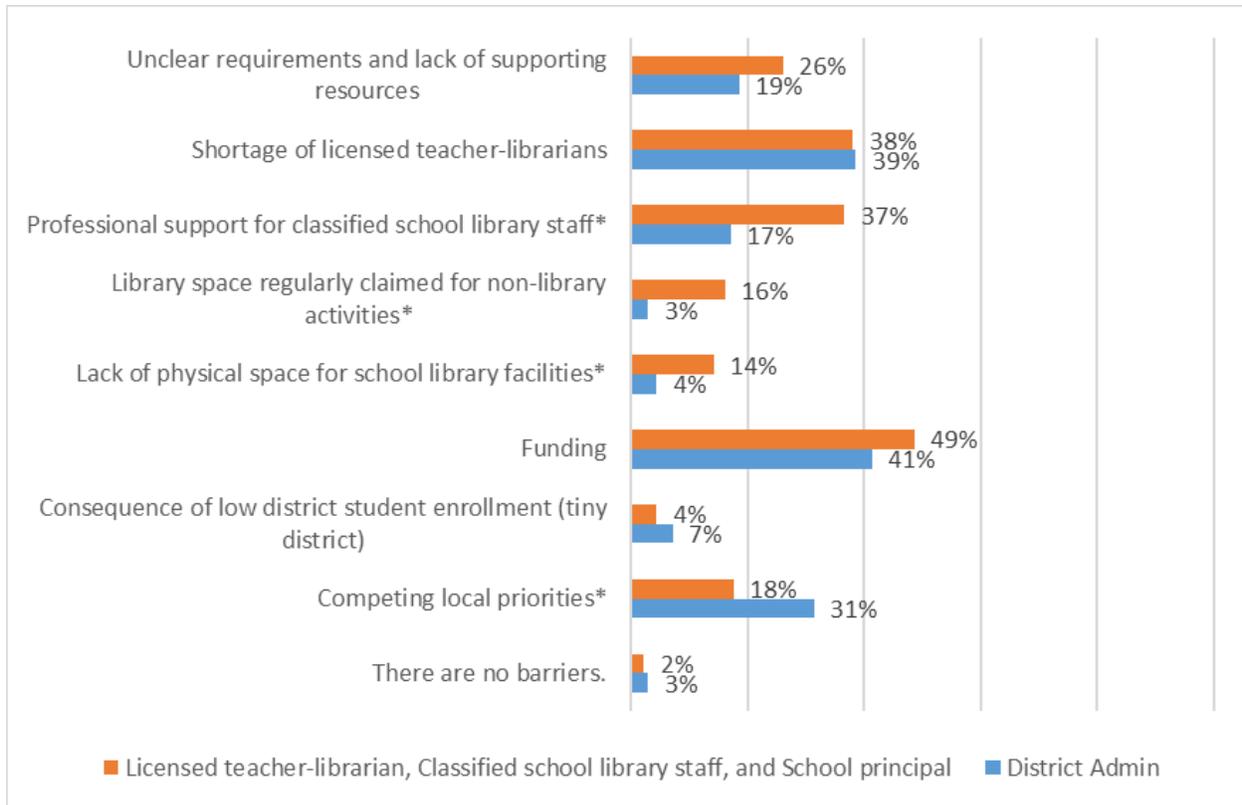
Respondents, particularly school-level educators, also named some specific challenges with measuring compliance with the media program standards outlined in *OAR 581-022-2340* and *OAR 581-022-2250* and cited the need for additional tools and guidance to support the evaluation process for school library programs. The following patterns emerged:

- Respondents named the need for greater specificity in *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* regarding how to determine compliance. There was general consensus among respondents that the OAR lacks specifics that would make the OAR easier to implement, particularly around the requirements for staffing. This theme emerged across several respondent audiences in the open-ended comments section. Respondents said the lack of clarity around how many staff are required and whether licensed teacher-librarians are required creates challenges around determining compliance. They also noted that this lack of clarity leads to equity issues as flexible interpretation and application of the standards across the state result in some students having greater access to instruction provided by licensed teacher-librarians, and some students having no access at all.
- Respondents across audience groups named the need for greater clarity in *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* regarding staffing requirements. Specifically, respondents said that the OAR needs to be more specific about the job requirements for licensed teacher-librarians and for classified school library staff. Respondents indicated that they would like to see a clearer distinction between the roles of licensed teacher-librarians and classified library staff. This need for greater clarity around staffing requirements is a theme that emerged in the open-ended comments, as well.
 - Respondents indicated a need for training for all staff around the roles and responsibilities of licensed and classified staff.
 - Respondents indicated that lack of staff, necessary funding, and staff working out of class are barriers to meeting the requirements of the media program standards. Survey responses and the comments revealed that it is common practice for classified school library staff to do the work of a certified teacher-librarian, although they lack the training and the compensation to do so. As one classified school library staff noted, “Classified staff are often expected to fulfill the duties of certified staff without proper training or compensation.”
 - Of the classified school library staff who responded to the question, “*What else do you want us to know about OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs and the related questions that were not addressed in response options above?*”, 52 percent made comments citing a lack of staff/funding or that the job was being done by staff with the wrong classification, and hence the staff doing the job are often underpaid. A classified school library staff said, “In my district, certified teacher librarians were eliminated in 2012. Now the work of a licensed teacher and a full or part time Para is being done by a Classified staff member/para. Although we have prep time for library organization and maintenance, we are responsible for student supervision before, after, and the middle of the school day as well as supervising/teaching an entire class during Specials (aka Teacher Planning Periods). Instruction time is basically non-existent other than what is done by classroom teachers and library is basically story time and book check out time.”
 - Of the school principals who responded to the same question, 45 percent indicated there was a lack of staff/funding or the wrong classification of staff doing the job. One school principal commented, “We have classified staff teaching and solely responsible for student learning in the library. This should be a certified and library-licensed position with state standards. This is at the heart of ELA and needed to move the dial.”

- Respondents across audience groups indicated a perception that there is a lack of enforcement of the OARs, which seems to signal that following the OARs does not matter. Among the licensed teacher-librarian respondent group, there was a general sentiment that though school libraries are important, either their schools, or the state does not seem to value what libraries have to offer. A licensed teacher-librarian respondent indicated, “Because of budget crises over 10 years ago, there are no longer certified teacher librarians working in any schools in this district, and no consequence for not having a ‘strong library media program’ with a certified librarian or instruction. Until the state requires the district to hire school librarians in the schools, they will use the money elsewhere and continue to have understaffed libraries with no instructional program. Additionally, another licensed teacher-librarian respondent noted, “ODE needs to work with OASL and the State Library to determine what is best for updated wording [of the OARs]. There are a lot of vague terms that allow for anything to be accepted. Also, there is no one at ODE to actually hold districts accountable or provide clear and transparent guidance.” This theme of lack of accountability emerged in the school principals’ respondent group, with 18 percent of respondents making comments related to this theme.
- Both school-level educators and district-level administrators also indicated that a checklist or rubric for evaluating school library programs would help them more easily determine compliance. Sixty percent of respondents said that the OAR requirements were unclear, and they would benefit from supporting resources, such as a rubric or library program checklist. This emerged as a theme not only through the quantitative survey results, but also in the open-ended comments. A district administrator or superintendent respondent said, “In our district, libraries in elementary schools are largely used for ‘babysitting’ for lack of a better word, because the main reason for their existence is to provide a place for students to go while their teacher is having prep. It is called a ‘Specials rotation.’ While this is a real need in those schools, the priority during that time is certainly not on learning library standards, but more on keeping the kids busy with literally anything that works. I think that in order to change this priority, administrators need to see data that reinforces the positive impact that a school library program can have. A second thing that would be helpful in our district, where we are struggling to find a district-level librarian, is a curated collection of ‘ready to use’ lesson plans for librarians that tie directly to the standards. We need a certified teacher librarian to make these lessons, and we are struggling to find one after trying for two years.”

Finding 4. System-level barriers make compliance with OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs difficult.

The survey assessed whether school districts face barriers in meeting the requirements of *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs*. Just 3 to 4 percent of all respondents indicated there to be no barriers. Shortage of funding and licensed teacher-librarians were the most prevalently cited barriers, followed by unclear requirements and lack of supporting resources. For a few barriers (see * on chart below), there was a notable difference across audience groups.



Barriers to meeting OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs requirements

Clear themes appeared in the open-ended comments about barriers to meeting the media program standards. All respondent audience groups who received this question indicated that there is a lack of licensed teacher-librarians available and/or that there are classified school library staff who are fulfilling the duties of a licensed teacher-librarian, and therefore working out of class.

- One licensed teacher-librarian noted, “Define Teacher-Librarians as those who are certified in a Library Media program. Our district was listed as having sixteen ‘librarians,’ when in fact there were five Teacher-Librarians, a high number in [our] county, with eleven paraprofessionals, one for each of the elementary schools. This was very misleading.”
- Similarly, one classified school library staff noted, “A LOT of responsibility has been placed upon LMA (Library Media Assistants-Classified staff) to run school libraries. They are paid minimum wage and expected to teach entire classes. They are performing all tasks and duties of a Licensed Librarian, but without the hours needed to execute it properly or be paid appropriately. There is 1 district Librarian to ‘over see’ the entire district. I question if this is in-line with the OAR. I also question classified staff teaching Library fundamentals and continuing lessons to students as classified staff do not have a teaching license.”
- It is worth noting that some district administrators believe that licensed teacher-librarians are not necessary to meet the OAR standards and that the role of the library itself is antiquated. One district administrator commented, “The role of libraries has drastically changed with the increased use of devices. These standards are a bit antiquated in that regard. For example...kids don’t research in libraries anymore.” Another district administrator said, “We do not need a licensed librarian to operate an effective library to meet the needs of the students and staff.”

Another clear theme that emerged through the open-ended comments was the overarching role that lack of funding for media programming plays in creating or exacerbating other barriers to compliance with the media program standards. Respondents cited funding issues in relation to other barriers and challenges impacting library staffing, hours of operation, and development and maintenance of the library collections. As one licensed teacher-librarian described, “Underfunding is one of the primary issues for school library facilities and personnel throughout the state. This creates a huge equity issue for serving students to improve their learning and meet their academic needs.” Similarly, one district administrator noted, “Libraries can’t be what the standards outline. There isn’t funding nor time to make it such except at the elementary level.” Another district administrator noted, “If the OAR is going to exist, then the Legislature needs to fund schools to support one teacher-librarian per school building in the digital learning era.”

Finding 5. System-level barriers lead to inequitable and inconsistent opportunity for student access to school library facilities, collections, and instruction.

The survey asked respondents whether students face barriers in using their school libraries. Survey respondents indicated an array of barriers Oregon students encounter when trying to use their school libraries. The most prevalent of these are:

- The library is not open before or after school. (58% of respondents agree)
- The library does not have enough staffing. (50%)
- The library collection does not contain enough materials that represent diverse experiences, perspectives, and cultures. (46%)
- The library’s collection of books is largely outdated. (45%)
- The library has limited open hours during the school day. (45%)
- The library does not have enough space to accommodate multiple purposes. (45%)
- The technology available in our library does not meet student needs. (37%)
- Students are not allowed to use the library on a drop-in basis. (36%)

An examination of the leading barriers cited by survey respondents reveals a connection with constraints in school library staffing that impacts hours of operation and limitations in school library collections. These factors are explored more fully below.

Constraints in library staffing that impact hours

A majority of school-level educators, classroom teachers, and district-level administrators responding to the survey identified limitations in student use of the library because it is not staffed to be open before, after, and during the school day. This suggests that basic student access to a school library facility is a recurrent barrier across Oregon, as was noted in the quantitative survey data, and also thematically in the open-ended comments.

A classified school library staff said, “Time is a factor. Schools determine how much time is given to library. Mine has 20 minutes. Nobody could possibly do a completed lesson *and* allow for checkout in 20 minutes. How could I possibly hope to meet even the most basic instructional goals?”

A classroom teacher noted, “As an ELA teacher, I feel that it is completely unacceptable for my students not to have library access outside of one school period per day. We have an incredibly skilled librarian and an excellent collection of books, but there is not enough funding for the library to remain open all day. It is utilized as a classroom in the afternoons which completely eliminates its ability to meet students’ literacy needs.”

Limited diversity in school library collections

Sixty-three percent of district-level administrators view the fact that their school library collections do not represent diverse experiences, perspectives, and cultures as a barrier to student access. School-level educators echoed this theme, although to a slightly lesser extent. Respondents noted that the constraints in school library staffing and hours indicate a fundamental access barrier: many students simply cannot get into their school library. The limitations in library collections, notably their outdatedness and lack of diversity, reflect that around half of all types of respondents understand that even when students can physically use a school library, they will face challenges finding current and inclusive books and information. These concerns are mirrored in the open-ended comments regarding library collections and funding.

A classroom teacher said, “Students need access to up-to-date books with characters that reflect diverse backgrounds, situations, and needs.”

Similarly, a school principal stated, “Funding for libraries in schools is at the discretion of building principals (in our district). While requests for funds to update the physical collection come from district librarian / school classified assistants, this means that funds have to move from somewhere else in the building. Thus, inconsistent implementation/purchasing/etc. occurs across like schools and programs.”

Finding 6. Based on initial survey results, findings 2, 4, and 5 suggest the system is not adequately equipping high school and first-year college students to lead research and inquiry projects required for secondary and post-secondary coursework.

In the survey, classroom teachers who work with high school freshmen were asked how important it is for 9th graders to begin high school with the ability to do research effectively. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated it is very important, and the remaining 11 percent indicated it is moderately important. However, when asked if Oregon 9th graders they work with are generally prepared for the basics of high school-level research, 86 percent indicated they are not.

Academic instruction librarians serving colleges or universities were asked similar questions. In response to how important it is for first-year college students to begin college with the ability to do research effectively, 74 percent of respondents indicated it is very important, and the remaining 26 percent indicated it is moderately important. However, when asked if Oregon first-year college students not long out of high school are generally prepared for the basics of college-level research, 72 percent indicated they are not.

As one academic instruction librarian indicated, “I’ve been an academic librarian in Oregon for 15 years. During that time, I’ve been involved in various efforts to bridge the gap between the information literacy students learn in K-12 and what they need to succeed in college...Over and over I hear from these students that they don’t have anyone in their public schools teaching them how to do research and critically evaluate information. It is vital to have appropriately credentialed school media specialists / librarians in the schools to provide students with a baseline of information literacy instruction. Students who don’t receive this instruction are at a disadvantage when they get to college.”

Another stated, “I work with students every. single. day. who come to college not understanding the difference between a random website and a source created by someone or an entity that has the knowledge or background to speak to the issue at hand... are unable to synthesize information from the sources they are able to pull together... are unable to distinguish opinion from empirical research...K-12 librarians in every school...are critical to helping lay the groundwork and provide opportunities for practice for students to develop these critical thinking and analysis skills, even at a very young age. These skills are desperately needed well before students reach college or graduate high school.”

Advisory Group Findings from the Resource Review

As part of the study process, the Media Program Standards Advisory Group engaged in an examination of research related to school library programs and of the school library landscape in Oregon. This is a summary of major findings from this research process.

Finding 7. The quality of school library programs is strongly correlated to student achievement.

A body of research exists that is known as school library impact studies. In a 2018 *Phi Delta Kappan* article, Keith Curry Lance and Debra Kachel synthesized findings from 34 of those statewide studies conducted over 16 years to determine the impact of school library programs on student learning and components of library programs that have a positive impact on student achievement. The studies show that students in schools with strong library programs have higher scores on standardized tests and that strong school library programs correlate to such measures of student outcomes as graduation rates and achievement of academic standards. The authors noted that the presence of “full-time, qualified school librarians” has the most significant positive impact on student achievement, which can be maximized when librarians spend most of their time engaged in delivering high-quality instruction, collaborating with staff, providing instructional leadership and staff development, and promoting reading. Researchers determined that factors such as socio-economic status, school funding levels, teacher-student ratios, etc. do not explain the correlations. The authors also noted that researchers “often found that the benefits associated with good library programs are strongest for the most vulnerable and at-risk learners, including students of color, low-income students, and students with disabilities.”

A study by Christy Lao, Sy-ying Lee, Jeff McQuillan, and Stephen Krashen that lies outside of the school library impact studies was reported on in the summer of 2021. The team recently analyzed results of the 2006, 2011, and 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) examination, which is administered every five years to 10-year olds in at least 45 countries. More reading instruction did not result in higher test performance. Instead, in all three analyses, low socio-economic class was associated with lower reading test scores, and the presence of a school library was associated with higher scores. “In 2006, the positive effect of having a library was nearly as large as the effect of poverty was negative.”

Finding 8. After an 82% decrease in licensed librarian FTE over the last 20 years, Oregon ranks in the bottom five across the nation for teacher-librarians per school and students per teacher-librarian.

Last year, Antioch University Seattle received a three-year grant to conduct research to “determine patterns in the continuing, national decline in school librarian positions and how school districts decide to staff library, learning resources, and instructional technologies programs for K-12 students.” The project is known as the School Librarian Investigation – Decline or Evolution? (SLIDE). [On the State Profile page of the SLIDE website](#), information is shared about the number of FTE of school librarians for the 2015-16 school year through 2019-20. For the most recent year of data, Oregon had 0.12 licensed teacher-librarians per public school, which ranked 47 out of the 51 states (including Washington D.C.). For the same year, if you divide the number of students in Oregon public schools by the FTE of licensed teacher-librarians, Oregon had 4,047 students per librarian, which ranked 48 out of the 51 states. The chart on the [State Profile page](#) titled “Change Since 2009-10 in Selected Educator FTEs” indicated that while the FTE for the position of licensed teacher-librarian has dramatically declined since 2010-11, which was the first year of data SLIDE includes, FTE for positions such as school administrators and instructional coordinators have increased between 2010-11 and 2019-20.

The statistics about the decline in licensed teacher-librarian FTE begged a question: when did school libraries in Oregon generally thrive? That question was posted in December 2021 on two listservs that reach Oregon school library staff. In response, school library staff reported that prior to the start of budget cuts in the 1990s, libraries were generally thriving places that were staffed with licensed teacher-librarians and classified library staff and had moderate to robust budgets for books and other materials. Respondents pointed to two events that created lasting, negative impacts on school libraries. One was the passage of tax measures in 1990 and 1997 that changed the way funds were collected for public education. The other was the Great Recession of 2008 caused by the crash of the housing market and banking industry, which resulted in budget reductions for education. Schools saw drastic reductions in funding, which took a disproportionate toll on school libraries and licensed teacher-librarians. As one teacher-librarian noted, “I came to Oregon in 1985 from California where due to Prop 13, my position as a certified elementary librarian had been relegated to an aide after which I moved to the classroom as a teacher. Moving to Oregon and hired as a full-time librarian with a full-time assistant with nine copies of *Ramona the Brave* was Nirvana to this book lover. Our middle and high schools had two librarians (one focused on AV) plus an assistant. As Prop 5 [Measure 5] eroded school funding including library staffing and book budgets, I watched as the libraries sadly slid into shadows of their former impact in our students’ lives. Therefore I would say the early nineties marked the end of “thriving” of Oregon school libraries.”

Finding 9. Oregon educators seeking a library media endorsement no longer have an in-state option for obtaining one.

To work as a teacher-librarian in Oregon, a licensed teacher must obtain a library media endorsement, which involves master’s-level coursework about library and information literacy, literacy, children’s and young adult literature, cataloging library materials, and more. The number of FTE licensed teacher-librarians on staff in Oregon public schools has decreased 82%, from 818 FTE in 1980-81, when it was first tracked by SLO, to 147 FTE for the 2020-21 school year ([2020-21 Oregon Statewide Report Card, p. 13](#)). Sustained cuts in licensed teacher-librarian positions over multiple decades led to a decline in the number of teachers who sought their library media endorsement. That led to low enrollment in library media endorsement programs in Oregon, and eventually all Oregon universities offering the credential shuttered their programs. There is not a single Oregon university that currently offers a library media endorsement program. This creates a hurdle for Oregon teachers who would like to obtain the credentials to work as a school librarian. Currently, an Oregon teacher interested in obtaining their library media endorsement must enroll in an out-of-state program and pay out-of-state tuition. That combined with an unstable job market for teacher-librarians in Oregon has recently led to some open positions remaining unfilled.

Recommendations

Recommendations that Can Be Absorbed with Current Department Staffing Levels

Recommendation 1. To support compliance, the Oregon Department of Education recommends that the Legislature amend ORS 329.095 to remove (4)(a)(J) to focus compliance on the media program standards in Rule Division 22. ODE should then recommend to the State Board of Education the consolidation of all media program standards within a single rule.

The media program standards are housed within two separate rules under Division 22: [OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs](#) and [OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan](#). The study findings highlighted how this bifurcated approach has created both ambiguity in interpreting the standards and discrepancies in how districts report their compliance with the standards. ODE recommends revising *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* to incorporate those media program standards currently housed within *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan* and removing them from *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan*.

Because school libraries are only one small portion of *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan*, the specific school library standards named in this rule are often overlooked by districts when reporting their overall compliance with the rule. As a result, a contradiction sometimes occurs when districts report that they are in compliance with *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan* while reporting that they are out of compliance with *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs*. For example, for the 2018-19 school year,¹ 24 districts reported out of compliance with *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* while 0 districts reported out of compliance with *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement*.

Consolidating all media program standards within a single rule will bring greater clarity and focus to the media program standards and enable ODE to reconcile ambiguities and discrepancies that exist between the standards. Consolidating the standards will also allow for more transparent compliance monitoring.

Recommendations that Would Require Additional Department Staffing

Recommendation 2. To support compliance, the Oregon Department of Education should recommend to the State Board of Education to strengthen the media program standards, update terminology, provide professional learning and technical assistance, and develop academic content standards through a process of statewide engagement. To support this, we recommend that the Legislature provide funding for media staff support to provide technical assistance to districts in implementing the standards.

Through the rule revision process proposed under Recommendation 1, ODE will also have the opportunity to conduct further engagement of education and community partners to gain input around specific revisions to the media program standards that may be necessary to better reflect school library best practices in the areas of staffing, instructional programs, facilities, collections and resources to ensure that media programs adequately address student needs. Specifically, ODE anticipates the need for additional engagement, research, and potential policy shifts addressing the following areas identified through the study findings:

¹ The most recent school year for which districts submitted assurances for all Division 22 standards. Districts submitted assurances for the 2018-19 school year in February 2020.

- Media program staffing requirements, with a specific focus on clarifying the role of the licensed teacher-librarian and the role of classified school library staff in supporting media programs.
- Professional learning for school library staff and district and building administrators overseeing school library programs to deepen knowledge and understanding of how to implement best practices for media programs.
- Definitions of terminology to bring greater clarity and consistency to districts' interpretations of the media program standards and what they require.²

In addition to strengthening the media program standards, ODE recommends engaging education and community partners to explore the possibility of formally adopting academic content standards in information and media literacy. *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* currently requires a coordinated media program with instructional goals; however, there are no explanations or details in the OAR that define what should be covered in a media program with instructional goals. Contingent upon further outreach and engagement, one potential solution to this challenge could be the development and inclusion of academic content standards for information and media literacy in *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs*.

Implementation of this recommendation would also necessitate that ODE provide districts with support and technical assistance. This may include developing exemplars of strong school library programs and how to most appropriately leverage the skills and expertise of teacher-librarians and classified school library staff as well as other resources identified as helpful during the engagement process. However, ODE's ability to act on this recommendation at speed may be impacted by availability of staff to contribute given that media program standards development, implementation, research and communication are not included in the position description for any employees at ODE.

Recommendation 3. To address student media needs, the Legislature should consider the current funding landscape for school library media staffing and programming when creating the budget for the K-12 school system, and prioritize funding to support licensed and classified school library media staffing and the adoption of stronger media program standards.

Funding constraints can impact all aspects of school library program implementation. For instance, survey respondents indicated school library staffing shortages and limitations in school library collections both of which may correlate to underlying funding limitations. However, further research and analysis would be needed beyond the scope of this study to better understand the potential interplay between funding constraints and other barriers identified through the Media Program Standards Study. A starting point could be to review Oregon's Quality Education Model cost model, which includes guidelines for school library staffing FTE and how much to budget for books and periodicals for a prototype elementary, middle, and high school. Additionally, a study of the funding landscape in other states with strong media programs and correlated student outcomes is merited.

² For example, the American Association of School Librarians dropped the title of library media specialist [in favor of school librarian in 2010](#), while others prefer the title of teacher-librarian to highlight a librarian's instructional role. Additionally, the term media is no longer the preferred term to describe school library facilities or standards because it is narrow in focus and is vague, which can create confusion.

Appendix A: Media Program Standards Advisory Group Members

The Media Program Standards Budget Note directed the Department of Education (ODE) to “convene a group to study the State Board of Education developed media program standards” and to “consult with organizations that represent public school educators and those who promote school libraries in selecting members of the group.” In partnership with the Oregon State Library (SLO), ODE formed a Media Program Standards Advisory Group composed of members representing the following roles and organizations: academic instruction librarians (at colleges and universities), classified school library staff and licensed teacher-librarians, classroom teachers, district administrators and school principals, educational service districts (ESDs), the Oregon Association of School Libraries (OASL), and the Oregon Education Association (OEA). Additionally, consideration was given to ensuring demographic and regional representation across Oregon. The table below provides a list of advisory group members and the role or organization they represent.

Name	Title	Representative Group(s)
Angie Arriola	Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Malheur ESD	ESDs / small, rural schools
Michele Burke	Academic Instruction Librarian for Chemeketa Community College	Academic Instruction Librarians
Colleen Henry	Director of Instructional Technology for Sweet Home School District	Administrators
Jennifer Maurer	School Library Consultant	State Library of Oregon
Rita Ramstad	Classroom Teacher, newly-retired Licensed Teacher-Librarian	Oregon Association of School Libraries / Licensed Teacher-Librarians
Tina Roberts	English Language Arts Education Specialist for Oregon Department of Education	N/A
Andrea Shunk	Education Policy & Practice Strategist	Oregon Education Association
Laura Stewart	Library Media Assistant for Tigard-Tualatin School District	Classified School Library Staff

Appendix B: Media Program Standards Survey Questions

The Media Program Standards Survey consisted of six parts collecting information regarding *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs*; *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan*; barriers districts encounter in meeting the OAR requirements; barriers students face in accessing school libraries; library, media, and information literacy instruction and who should be responsible for those subject areas; and demographic information about respondents. The survey administered questions to participants based on the following roles:

- District administrators or superintendents (DA)
- School-level educators (school principals, licensed teacher-librarians, and classified school library staff) (SLE)
- Classroom teachers (CT)
- Academic instruction librarians (from colleges and universities) (AL)

Below are the survey questions and the respondent audiences who received each question. Listed above are the various audiences who participated in the survey. Next to each audience is an abbreviation; those abbreviations appear in the table below. If there is an X in the audience column, that particular audience received that question. If there is no X, that audience did not receive that question.

Survey Questions	SLE	DA	CT	AL
The following list includes indicators of strong school library programs. Please respond to the following statements about the degree to which your school library program meets student needs in these areas.	X	X	X	
Below is a list of some broad instructional components of library, media, and information literacy. How important is it for Oregon students to acquire skills in these areas of library, media, and information literacy? (Do not focus on where the instruction takes place or on who delivers the instruction -- library/librarian vs. classroom/teacher.)	X	X	X	
Please indicate the importance of these staff for the teaching of library, media, and information literacy content, as described in the question above. Please select either "essential" or "optional" for each of the 3 staff choices for each of the 3 rows.	X	X	X	
What barriers do you think that students in your school / district face in using the school library? Check all that apply.	X	X	X	
What resources do you consult and what input do you seek when making decisions about your school's / district's library program? Check all that apply. (District-level administrators: Consider this question from the district level and not the school level.)	X	X		
Based on my understanding of this section, I would know how to determine if my	X	X		

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Survey Questions	SLE	DA	CT	AL
school library staffing is in compliance with OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs.				
This section of the OAR adequately addresses best practices for school library staffing.	X	X		
Based on my understanding of this section, I would know how to determine if my school library instructional program is in compliance with OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs.	X	X		
This section of the OAR [2340] adequately addresses best practices for school library instructional programs.	X	X		X
Based on my understanding of this section, I would know how to determine if my school library facility is in compliance with OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs.	X	X		
This section of the OAR adequately addresses best practices for school library facilities.	X	X		
Based on my understanding of this section, I would know how to determine if my school library collections and resources are in compliance with OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs.	X	X		
This section of the OAR adequately addresses best practices for school library collections and resources.	X	X		
What are some barriers to meeting the requirements in OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs? Check all that apply.	X	X		
What would help you evaluate your school library program and help you determine compliance with OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs? Check all that apply.	X	X		
What else do you want us to know about OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs and the related questions that were not addressed in response options above?	X	X		
Based on my understanding of this definition, I would know how to determine if my school library program is in compliance with OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan.	X	X		

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Survey Questions	SLE	DA	CT	AL
This section of the OAR [2250] adequately addresses best practices for school library programs.	X	X		
What else do you want us to know about the school library portion of OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan?	X	X		
For the school(s) where you primarily work / for your entire district, please identify which of these position(s) does the work for the following? Check all that apply for each of the 3 rows.	X	X		
What grade levels does your school primarily serve?	X		X	
How many students does your school / district serve?	X	X	X	
Which county group is your school / district office / college / university in?	X	X	X	X
What else do you want to tell us about students' library, media, and information literacy needs and/or school libraries?	X	X	X	X
How important is it for freshman students to begin high school with the ability to do research effectively? (If you do not currently teach or have not recently taught high school freshmen, please choose the "does not apply" answer option.)			X	
Please rate your response to this statement. Freshmen generally arrive at my high school prepared to handle the basics of high school-level research.(If you do not currently teach or have not recently taught high school freshmen, please choose the "does not apply" answer option.)			X	
Some school libraries are staffed by a licensed teacher-librarian. Others are staffed by classified library staff. Some schools are staffed by both. Are you able to determine the job classification of the library staff in your school and thereby know what you can/should ask of that person? (ex: whether or not the staff are permitted to provide instruction in the research process according to their job classification)			X	
How important is it for first-year students to begin college with the ability to do research effectively?				X
Please rate your response to this statement. Oregon freshmen (first-year college students not long out of high school) generally arrive at my college or university				X

Survey Questions	SLE	DA	CT	AL
prepared to handle the basics of college-level research.				
At which type of institution do you work?				X

A complete set of survey questions across all roles is available on the [Library and Media Education webpage](#) of the Oregon Department of Education website.

Appendix C: Media Program Standards Survey Respondent Demographic Information

The following charts provide some context about the demographics of the survey respondents, in relation to geographic location (Figure 1), as well as school student population size (Figure 2) and school grade levels (Figure 3).

Notes:

Regarding the county region information, while some regions have low participation, not every survey participant responded to this question. Therefore, there could be more participation from each region than is reflected in the data. Counties were grouped by region in order to maintain anonymity for respondents.

Not all survey respondents completed all of the questions on the survey. Therefore, here is the response rate for each group for all demographic questions (Appendix C, Figures 1-3) and the questions in Appendix D, Figures 4 and 5.

Survey Respondents Group	Total Count	Response rate
Licensed teacher-librarian	135	75%
Classified school library staff	207	66%
School principal	68	50%
Classroom teacher	159	70%
District administrator or superintendent	70	63%

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Figure 1. Demographics of Survey Respondents by Geographic Location

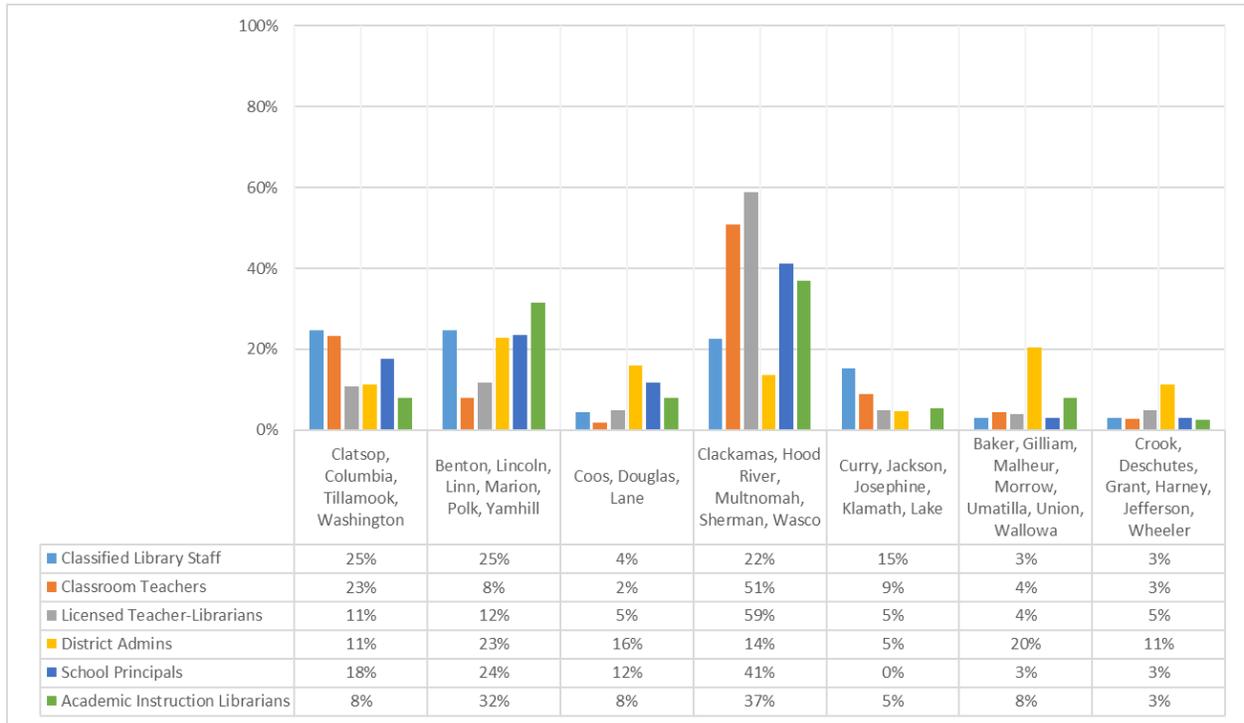


Figure 2. Demographics of Survey Respondents by School Student Population Size

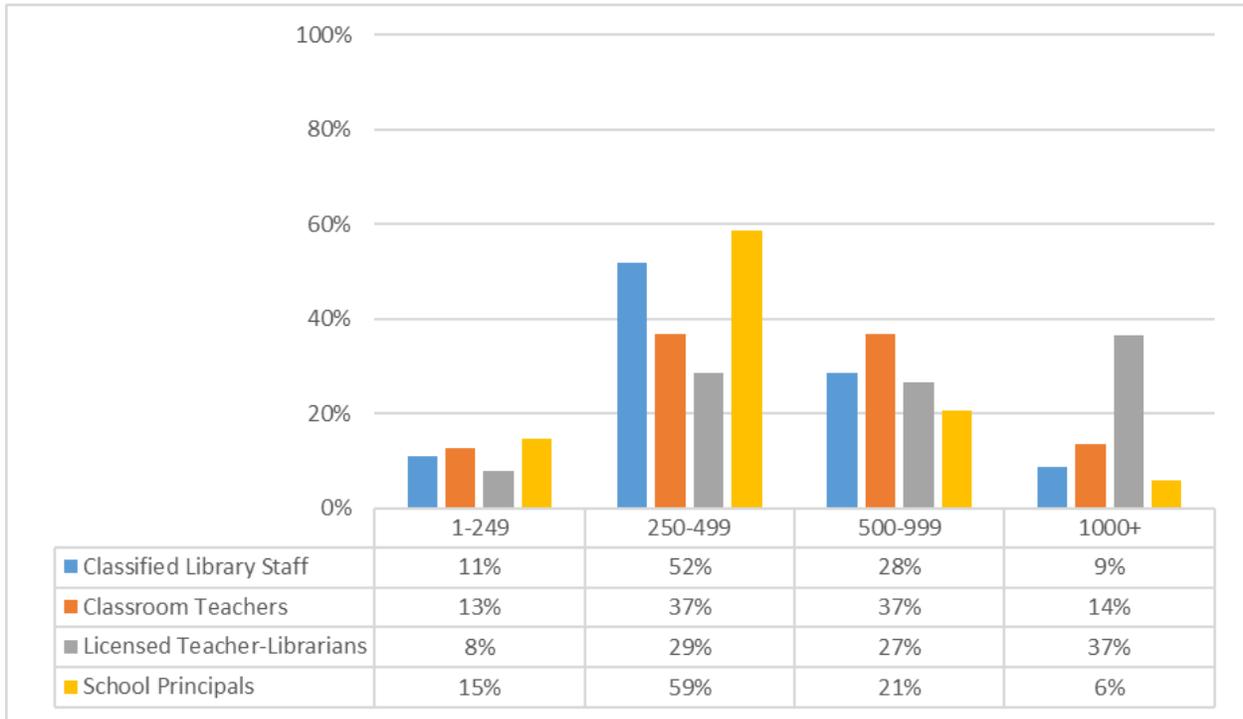
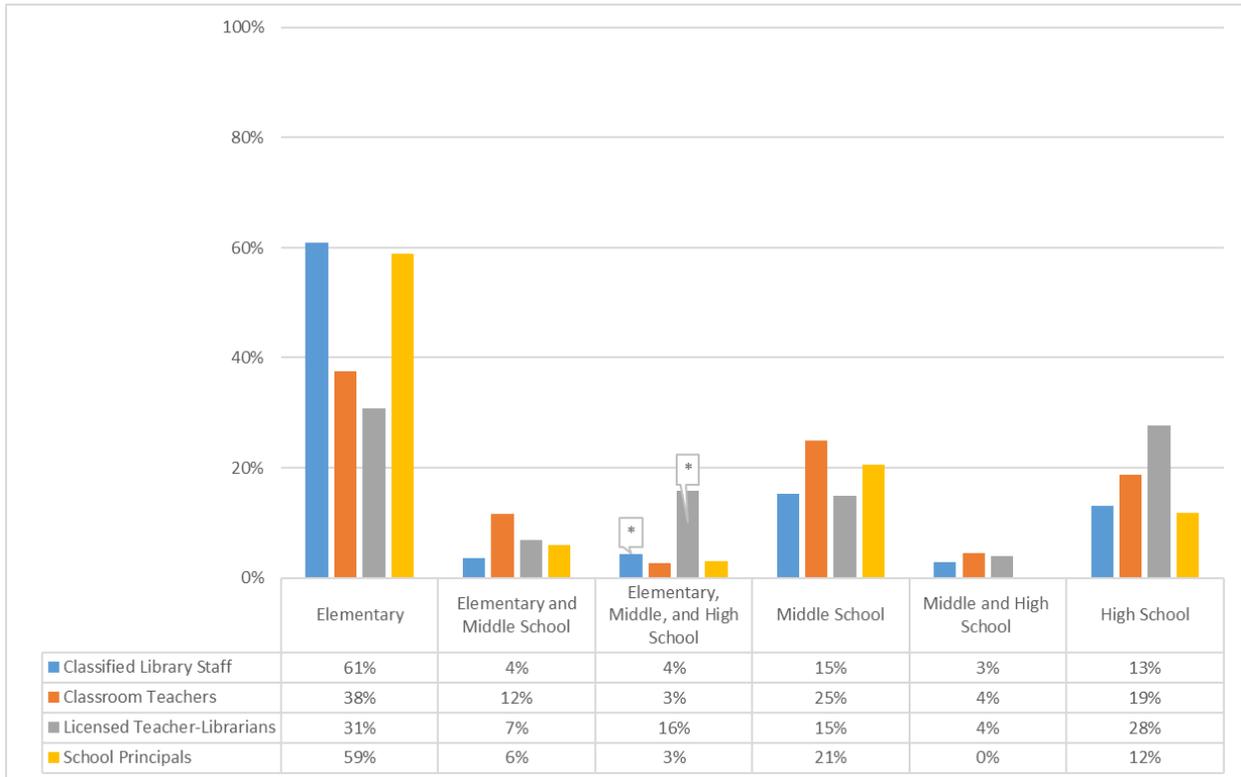


Figure 3. Demographics of Survey Respondents by School Grade Levels



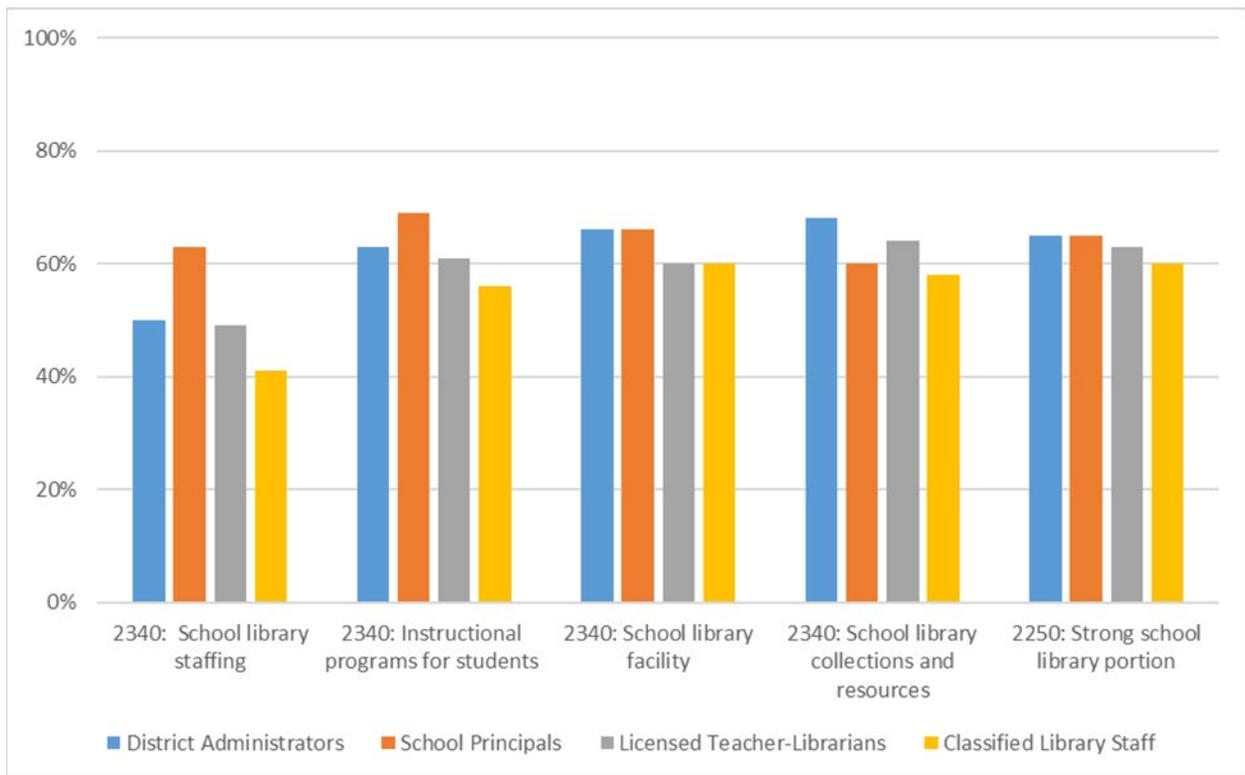
Note: * The number of responses in the Elementary, Middle, and High School category seems high compared to the actual number of K-12 schools in Oregon. This is likely a result of library staff who work at a district level or in more than one school choosing that option to account for their situation.

Appendix D: Survey Response Data

Appropriateness of the Standards--Do They Adequately Address Student Needs?

Figure 4 below shows what percentage of each participant group strongly agrees or agrees (combined total) that *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* and *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan* meet best practices in each of these categories addressed in the OARs: school library staffing, instructional programs for students, school library facilities, and school library collections and resources. The components directly impact student needs.

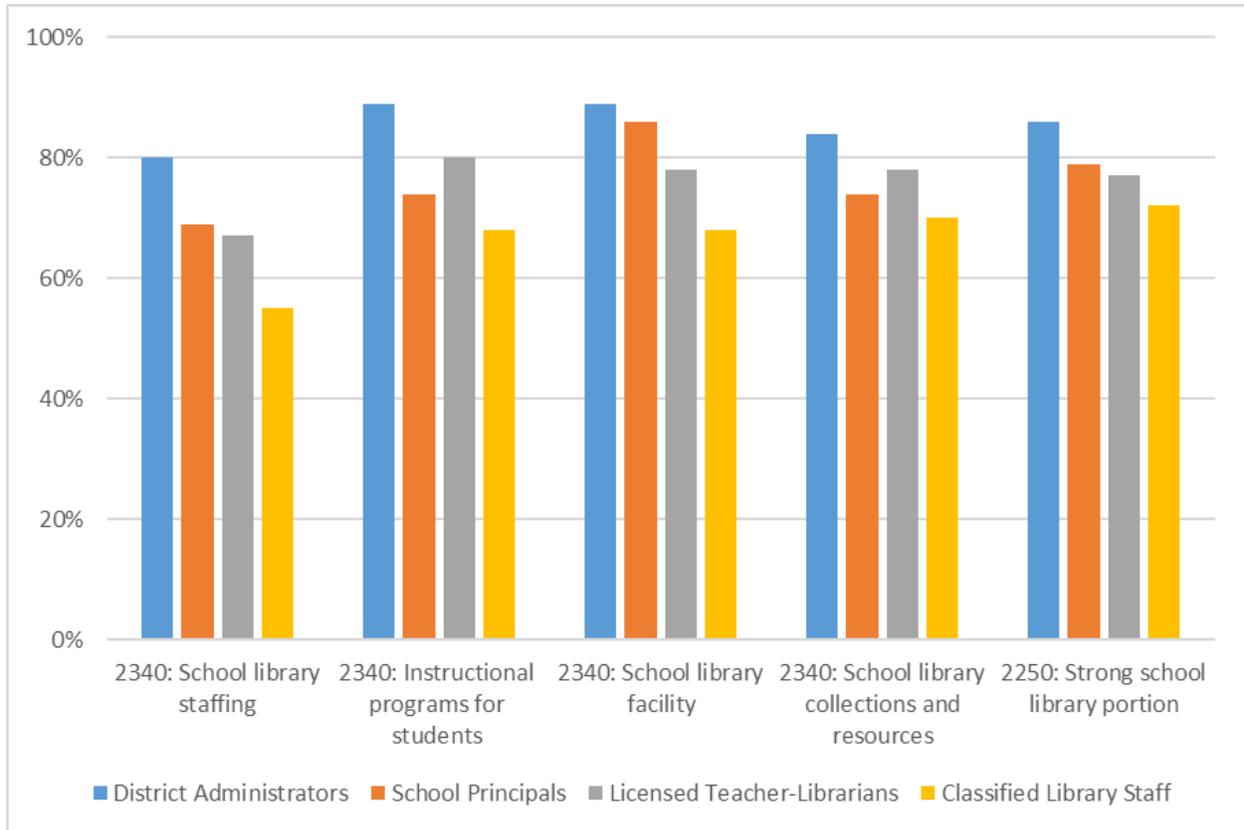
Figure 4. Do the Standards Accurately Address Student Needs?



Appropriateness of the Standards--Methods to Measure and Ensure Compliance

Figure 5 below shows what percentage of each participant group strongly agrees or agrees (combined total) that they understand how to comply with the major components in *OAR 581-022-2340 Media Programs* and *OAR 581-022-2250 District Improvement Plan* based on the text of the OARs. Questions were asked about these categories addressed in the OARs: school library staffing, instructional programs for students, school library facilities, and school library collections and resources.

Figure 5. Do the Standards Provide Appropriate Methods to Measure and Ensure Compliance?



Appendix E: Media Programs Advisory Group Resource Review Annotated Bibliography

American Association of School Librarians. (2017). *National school library standards*.
<https://standards.aasl.org/>

The American Association of School Librarians established standards for learners, librarians, and library programs. Among other things, those standards make apparent the role a teacher-librarian has in providing instruction to students in inquiry (research) and other aspects of information and media literacy.

American Association of School Librarians. (2017). *School library evaluation checklist*.
<https://standards.aasl.org/project/evaluation/>

The American Association of School Librarians provides a checklist to help school and district administrators and library staff evaluate their school library programs. The checklist is aligned to the national school library standards. The Oregon Association of School Libraries will soon publish a rubric designed to highlight major components of a strong school library program.

Aspen Institute. (2021, November). *The commission on information disorder final report*.

https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Aspen-Institute_Commission-on-Information-Disorder_Final-Report.pdf

The Aspen Institute created the Commission on Information Disorder to address what they describe as a “crisis of trust and truth. Bad information has become as prevalent, persuasive, and persistent as good information, creating a chain reaction of harm” (p. 1). The Commission’s report is the “culmination of an in-depth investigation aimed at better defining the causes and challenges of information disorder, and offering a viable framework for action” (p. 2). One of the recommendations is to provide funding to libraries, schools, and other institutions “with an emphasis on community-level protections against misinformation” (p. 64). “The Commission firmly believes that such investment into our infrastructure is critical to advancing each citizen’s ability to make well-informed decisions and engage in productive public discourse, and, ultimately, shaping our democracy” (p. 65). While not highlighted in the report, licensed teacher-librarians are experts in information literacy, and helping students evaluate information is an integral element of standard information literacy instruction.

Lance, K. C., & Kachel, D. E. (2018, March 26). Why school librarians matter: What years of research tell us. *Phi Delta Kappan*. <https://kappanonline.org/lance-kachel-school-librarians-matter-years-research/>

In this 2018 article, authors Lance and Kachel synthesize findings from 34 statewide studies conducted over 16 years to determine the impact of school library programs on student learning and components of library programs that have a positive impact on student achievement. The studies show not only that students in schools with strong library programs have higher scores on standardized tests, but also that strong school library programs correlate to such measures of student outcomes as graduation rates and achievement of academic standards. Researchers have used methodologies to account for other factors that might explain the correlations (such as socio-economic status, school funding levels, teacher-student ratios, etc.) and have found that the correlations cannot be explained by such factors. In fact, the authors note, “they have often found that the benefits associated with good library programs are strongest for the most vulnerable and at-risk learners, including students of color, low-income students, and students with disabilities.”

The authors note that the presence of “full-time, qualified school librarians” has the most significant positive impact on student achievement, which can be maximized when librarians spend most of their time engaged in delivering high-quality instruction, collaborating with staff, providing instructional leadership and staff development, and promoting reading. Other aspects of strong school library programs that impact student achievement include: access to free and subscription-based digital resources, as well as traditional print resources; frequency of access to the library; flexibility of library scheduling; and ability to use library materials outside of the library.

The authors suggest practices that can best leverage library programs to improve student achievement:

- Aligning library resources, including the librarian’s time and activities, to school and district priorities, so that library programs do not operate as silos within school programs and are instead integrated into them;
- Rethinking librarian roles to include professional leadership and development, particularly with respect to educational technology;
- Expecting and supporting collaboration between librarians and other instructional staff, in which librarians function as instructional partners and resource curators, assisted by support staff that free librarians from routine library tasks so that they have time for others that require their specialized skills.

The authors conclude by noting that with declining school funds and increasing costs, schools must make decisions about how to get the best return on their investments, and they argue that those who leverage the assets of strong school library programs “will realize what research has shown: Quality school library programs are powerful boosters of student achievement that can make important contributions to improving schools in general and, in particular, closing the achievement gap among our most vulnerable learners.”

Lance, K. C., & Kachel, D. E. (2021, July). *Perspectives on school librarian employment in the United States, 2009-10 to 2018-19*. SLIDE: The School Librarian Investigation – Decline or Evolution? <https://libslide.org/pubs/Perspectives.pdf>

School Librarians: In Decline or Evolution?, or the SLIDE project, is a current three-year research study funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services that aims to determine national patterns in school library staffing and to understand how school library staffing decisions are made. What follows is selected information from the Conclusions section of the SLIDE report that relates to our Budget Note tasks to “evaluate the appropriateness of the standards and whether they adequately address student media needs, and methods to measure and ensure compliance with the standards.”

The authors note the “stark gap” between the professional standards espoused by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) – which states that all schools, regardless of size, should have at least one full-time, state-certified librarian – and the current reality that even if all existing school librarians were equitably distributed among schools, there would not be enough to meet that standard. This situation, they say, creates a situation in which school library programs cannot deliver the results educators hope for, further eroding perceptions of their value and support for the programs.

At the state level, two variables were most strongly associated with librarian staffing levels: state mandates and the existence of institutions to prepare librarians. [Note: While Oregon has some mandates, there are questions about enforcement of them, and Oregon no longer has a program to prepare educators for a library media endorsement.]

While there are disparities of several kinds among states, the authors are most concerned about disparities at the district level. Poor, rural, minority, and English language learner students are less likely to have access to librarians than students in other demographic groups. This is especially true for Oregon, one of 7 states in which at least half of the state's districts have no librarian. (See the SLIDE citation below for data about how Oregon ranks in comparison to other states.) They identify a trend to replace licensed teacher-librarians with paraprofessional staff, and Oregon is noted as being one of 4 states in which 2 out of 5 districts employ library support staff with no librarians to provide guidance or other services. They note that while this type of staffing may be adequate for maintaining and circulating library materials, they are not qualified (unless under-employed) to select materials, collaborate with teachers, integrate educational technology into instruction, or teach information literacy and inquiry-based learning skills to students. Even in districts that do have librarian FTE, the high ratio of students to librarians makes it unlikely that librarians in those positions can meet professional standards. It is pointed out that the data they are drawing from reports only at the district level, and that many librarians may have multiple building and teaching assignments, which increases the number of students and teachers per librarian.

Lao, C., Lee, S., McQuillan, J., & Krashen, S. (2021, August 4). Predicting reading ability among ten-year olds *Language Magazine*. <https://www.languagemagazine.com/2021/08/04/predicting-reading-ability-among-ten-year-olds/>

The authors recently analyzed results of the 2006, 2011, and 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) examination, which is administered every 5 years to 10-year olds in at least 45 countries. More reading instruction did not result in higher test performance. Instead, in all three analyses, low socio-economic class was associated with lower reading test scores, and the presence of a school library was associated with higher scores. "In 2006, the positive effect of having a library was nearly as large as the effect of poverty was negative."

Maurer, J. (2019, December 18). *Oregon school library staffing: 1980-2018* [Data set]. State Library of Oregon. <https://www.oregon.gov/library/libraries/Documents/SchoolLibrary/History.Oregon.SchoolLibraryStaffing.1980.2018.pdf>

Staff at the State Library of Oregon have collected data from the Oregon Department of Education about teacher-librarian FTE in Oregon public schools since the 1980-81 school year and about classified school library staff FTE since the 2006-07 school year. This PDF presents the statistics from 1980-81 through 2018-19. The teacher-librarian FTE in Oregon declined from 818 to 165 in 2018-19. For the 2018-19 school year, there were 1,256 public schools in Oregon.

Maurer, J. (2021, December 2). *When did Oregon school libraries thrive?* [OSLIST listserv post]. State Library of Oregon. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PSab82q0rQdYyc-dS3pGVqUrj14VcXDAHQZ73RdcOoA/edit?usp=sharing>

The School Library Consultant at the State Library of Oregon posted a question to two listservs that reach Oregon school library staff -- OSLIST and Oregon Association of School Libraries: When did Oregon school libraries thrive? Measures 5, 47, and 50 from the 1990s and the Great Recession of 2008 were listed as markers that signaled a decline in the state of Oregon's school libraries.

Budget Note for Media Programs Standards Final Report

Oregon Association of School Libraries. (2019). *Oregon school library standards*.
<https://www.olaweb.org/school-library-standards>

The Oregon Association of School Libraries' school library standards were updated in 2019 and include strands for information literacy, reading engagement, and social responsibility. Additionally, there are related grade-level learning goals for grades K through 14. "A strong school library program prepares students to become future-ready citizens in an information-rich society, fostering critical thinking skills and collaborative learning opportunities among students and staff. Library instruction encompasses information literacy and educational technology, and includes purposeful attention to social responsibility skills, digital citizenship, and reading engagement for all students."

Oregon Department of Education. (2018). *Oregon's framework for comprehensive school counseling programs*.
https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/comprehensive_school_counseling/Documents/2018%20Framework%20for%20CSC%20Programs.pdf

The thorough and extensive school counseling framework could serve as a model to develop supports that put everyone on the same page about expectations for Oregon school library programs.

Oregon Department of Education. (2020). *Quality education commission reports*.
<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/taskcomm/Pages/QEMReports.aspx>

The Oregon Quality Education Model (QEM) seeks to establish an objective and research-based link between student achievement and the resources devoted to Oregon schools to use as a guide in future efforts to adequately fund Oregon schools. The Quality Education Commission produces a cost model every two years that, among other things, lists recommended staffing and funding levels for a prototype elementary, middle, and high school. These are the recommended guidelines related to school libraries per the 2018 cost model:

	FTE Teacher- Librarian	FTE Support Staff	Funding for Books & Periodicals per Student
Elementary School	0.5*	0.5*	\$16 base; \$28 full
Middle School	1.0	1.0	\$16 base; \$34 full
High School	1.0	1.0	\$16 base; \$40 full

*** 0.5 FTE of library staff at the elementary level is an estimate because the cost model suggests a set amount of FTE for a category of staff who are not classroom teachers.**

The School Library Consultant at the State Library of Oregon annually requests school library [staffing and funding](#) data from the Oregon Department of Education. It is clear from that information that it is rare for an Oregon public school to meet the minimum QEM guidelines related to school libraries.

Oregon Education Association, Oregon PTA, & AFT-Oregon. (2016).

Decades of disinvestment: The state of school funding in Oregon. Oregon Live.

https://media.oregonlive.com/education_impact/other/Decads%20of%20Disinvestment.pdf

“This report gives an overview of how schools in Oregon are funded, illustrates the consequences of disinvestment in public education, and offers comparisons to states that are committed to better funding their schools” (p. 2). “The impact of Oregon’s funding structure and resulting disinvestment has had serious consequences for Oregon’s students. Important programs and strategies to prevent dropout and increase graduation have suffered; school offerings have decreased; class sizes have risen to some of the largest in the nation; libraries and other foundational tools for instruction have disappeared; investment in school infrastructure has sharply declined—which has created significant safety concerns — and opportunity gaps, sometimes referred to as achievement gaps, have widened. Oregon no longer provides the kind of well-rounded education that other states are able to offer. For example, one study shows that 20% of K-12 Oregon public schools did not offer any regular, stand-alone arts courses and only 6% provided instruction in all five disciplines of dance, media, music, theater and visual arts... While it is true that many states struggle to provide adequate funding for public education, Oregon falls far below the average” (p. 6).

SLIDE: The School Librarian Investigation – Decline or Evolution? (2021). *State profile: Profile for Oregon.*

<https://libslide.org/data-tools/state-profile/>

School Librarians: In Decline or Evolution?, or the SLIDE project, is a current three-year research study funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services that aims to determine national patterns in school library staffing and to understand how school library staffing decisions are made. As part of the SLIDE project, the researchers presented school library staffing data from the last several years about each U.S. state. In much of Oregon, students are not served by any librarian FTE, and in all measures of the SLIDE project for 2019-20, Oregon ranks among the lowest states in the country:

- Number of librarian FTE: 150.90 (43 of 51 states, including D.C.)
- Librarian FTE per school: 0.12 (47 of 51)
- Students per librarian FTE: 4,047 (48 of 51)
- Teacher FTE per librarian FTE: 200 (48 of 51)

SLIDE: The School Librarian Investigation – Decline or Evolution? (2021, July 19). *Most vulnerable students impacted by declining numbers of school librarians* [Press release]. <https://libslide.org/news/june-15th-press-release/>

Research from year one of the SLIDE project has documented declining numbers of school librarians across the U.S. and has also revealed inequities in student access to school librarians. Students living in poverty, minorities, and students with disabilities are less likely to have librarians than districts with fewer such students.

Funding for school librarian positions does not correlate directly with available funding: “Districts spending the most (over \$15,000) and the least per pupil (less than \$10,000) had better librarian staffing than districts spending between \$10,00 and \$15,000 per pupil.” This suggests that decisions about how to spend staffing resources are being driven by something other than available funding. Determining what factors are driving the decline in school librarians is the focus of the SLIDE project.