

School Library Survey

Summary of Results

Accountability and Reporting
System Improvement Group

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Executive Summary

This report reflects the responses of 629 survey respondents who were mostly principals representing their schools. Respondents were given the option of completing the survey in either English or in French. In total, 605 individuals (96%) chose to complete this survey in English and the remaining 24 individuals (4%) completed the survey in French. All responses have been combined and reported as a whole in this report.

Information about School and Student Enrollment

For the purpose of analysis, schools were divided into three grade groups. Since many schools offer more than one grade group, the following percentages add up to more than 100%. Grades K – 6 are offered by 88% of responding schools, Grades 7 – 9 by 45%, and Grades 10 – 12 by 19%.

Almost half (49%) of respondents indicated having fewer than 300 students enrolled in their school for the 2008/2009 school year, followed by 31% having between 300 – 499 students. 20% of respondents stated that their school had 500 or more students registered in their schools. The noted proportions are in line with the actual population demographic for all Alberta schools.

General Information about School Libraries

Nearly all respondents (97%) indicated having a library within their school, with 5% of these school libraries also serving as community libraries. 75% of respondents indicated that their school library was open to students all the time during the school day, while 21% indicated that their school library was open only at selected times during the week.

When asked whether their school reported student learning outcomes linked to school library service in their annual school education plan, a large majority of respondents (83%) stated that their school did NOT report such outcomes.

School Library Plan

58% of respondents indicated that their school did not have a current school library plan, while 38% stated that their school did have a current school library plan. Approximately 37% of schools that participated in this survey have a budget plan, 34% have a collection development policy, and 19% stated that their school library has a learning outcome plan.

Library Staff and their Qualifications

The vast majority of schools (90%) do NOT have a teacher-librarian, where a teacher librarian is defined as someone with a Bachelor of Education with a graduate degree/diploma in school

libraries. Approximately three-quarters (74%) of respondents mentioned having less than 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) assigned to their teaching staff for coordinating school library services.

35% of respondents indicated that their school uses the services of library technicians, followed by another 35% who indicated that their school uses the services of library assistants/clerks. Only 2% of respondents indicated using the services of a librarian, identified as someone with a Master of Library Science without a B.Ed. 25% of respondents indicated using the services of someone other than a library technician, library assistant/clerk, or librarian.

Current State of Library Collections

Most respondents (85%) indicated that with the exception of some items that are missing components, most resources are complete and in good repair. On the other hand, 12% of respondents believed that a significant number of their current library resources are dated, damaged, missing components or need repair.

Type of Study Areas Provided by School Library Facilities

Most respondents (90%) mentioned that their schools provide reading areas. Group instructional area(s) were mentioned by 85% of the respondents, and individual instructional area(s) were mentioned by 80% of the respondents. Less than three-quarters of respondents (73%) mentioned that their school library provides class instructional area(s).

Type of Services Provided by School Library Facilities

Most school libraries surveyed (81%) provide their students with Internet access and 77% of libraries provide an automated circulation area. 43% of the libraries provide their students with e-mail access to school accounts, while less than one-quarter of school libraries (23%) provide their students with access to videoconferencing. About 19% of school libraries allow their students to access their personal email accounts from school.

Availability of School Library Online Information

59% of school libraries provide an online library catalogue to their users, and similarly 59% of school libraries make use of Alberta Education's Online Reference Center through LearnAlberta.ca. However, fewer respondents (30%) mentioned having their school library catalogue available on the Internet, and 29% indicated that their school library has a web page that students can access from the Internet.

Student Access to Various Types of School Library Services

Most (95%) of school libraries offer recreational reading services to their students, and 91% offer reference services. Fewer than half (43%) of school libraries offer their students cooperative program planning and teaching.

School Libraries' Support for Various Types of Learning Outcomes

80% of school libraries support inquiry based learning, while 75% support information literacy learning and 59% support Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning.

Additional Comments

As a final question, respondents were asked to provide any additional comments that they had in mind. The three most frequently mentioned negative comments were:

- school library services are in definite need for some funding (42 mentions)
- schools not having regular access to qualified librarian or library technician during the entire school day (34 mentions)
- the lack of or limited amount of physical space allocated for their school library (21 mentions).

All other negative comments were mentioned by 8 or fewer respondents.

The positive or neutral comments included respondents speaking about the good quality of work done by individual(s) designated to school library services (14 mentions), their continuous work to revitalize and improve their own library (12 mentions) and having an overall good library with adequate library collection materials (10 mentions).

Concluding Remarks

According to the survey results, there are some key issues that should be taken into consideration when reviewing the 1984 provincial policy and standards.

- 21% of surveyed schools have libraries that operate only at select times during the week.
- More than half of survey respondents (58%) indicated that their schools do not have a current school library plan.
- Today, the Internet and technology play an important role in students' everyday living and learning activities. Yet the survey results revealed that only 30% of schools have their school library catalogue available on the Internet, followed by 29% of schools that have their own school library web page that students can access from the Internet. This does not support "any time, any place, any pace" access to K – 12 school library services.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents mentioned having less than 0.5 FTEs assigned for coordinating school library services.

- 42 respondents indicated that school library services need more funding.
- 34 respondents indicated a concern with schools not having regular access to a qualified librarian or library technician during the entire school day.
- 21 respondents indicated a concern with the lack of or limited amount of physical space allocated for their school library.

Background Information

School library services are seen as a significant part of school support where all learners can pursue intellectual engagement in both real and virtual landscapes. In collaboration with staff, students, and other libraries and the community, school library services support and stimulate learning and teaching innovation as a gateway to seamless access to information services.

The objective for the School Library Services Initiative is to explore models of seamless access to school library services and enhance K – 12 learning outcomes. The initiative focuses on two phases:

- 1) **Standards Phase:** Provincial policy and standards for school libraries have not been revised since 1984. Thus, it is important to review the 1984 provincial policy, guidelines, procedures and standards, and to determine future needs to facilitate seamless student access to K – 12 school library services in support of learning that occurs anywhere and anytime.
- 2) **Collaboration Phase:** Collaboratively explore innovative models that re-examine school library services to meet the revised K – 12 standards for supporting students across the program of studies.

The primary goal of Phase 1 (Standards Phase) is to engage school authorities, Alberta Education staff, stakeholder organizations and post-secondary institutions to collaboratively assess the current environment, understand current and future needs of all participants and create a plan to address a provincial approach to school library education and services. In addition, this phase will help create sustained commitment and shape a common vision and future direction of school library services.

It is understood that Phase 1 of this project can only be successful through ongoing participation and communication among stakeholders. Joint ownership and collaboration between Alberta Education and other educational stakeholders will directly influence the future outcomes of Alberta's school library services. Thus, there is a great need for a phased-in approach to library services in Alberta and for a comprehensive needs analysis prior to implementing an updated provincial solution.

Research Methodology:

Alberta Education has established a School Library Services Initiative that focuses on reviewing Kindergarten to Grade 12 school library services and support resources. The School Library Inventory Survey was designed to develop an inventory of the current state of school libraries in the province of Alberta. Specifically, the purpose of this survey was to gather current information on Kindergarten to Grade 12 library staffing, facilities, and access to technology, resources and services.

On June 12, 2009, Keray Henke, Deputy Minister of Education, sent an e-mail to superintendents indicating that Alberta Education was requesting feedback from school principals about the current state of school library services. The School Library Inventory Survey was administered from June 17, 2009 to June 26, 2009; school principals were e-mailed invitation letters, with a link to the online survey, to participate in the survey. A complete list of public, private, separate, chartered, and francophone schools was obtained from Education's data warehouse. In total, 1,778 survey invitations were e-mailed out with most (1,695) reaching their intended recipients. A total of 629 respondents completed the survey, making the response rate 37%.

In surveys, larger response rates narrow the confidence interval and reduce the margin of error, which increases the ability to generalize the survey results and apply them to the overall population. For this study, the survey results are accurate to plus or minus 3.3% with 95% confidence. For example, for a question with a 70% satisfaction level indicated over all respondents, there is a 95% probability that if the whole population responded to the survey, the satisfaction rate would actually lie between 66.7% and 73.3%. The other important consideration is how representative the respondent group is of the overall survey population, which is discussed in the Results section.

Limitations:

One of the main limitations of this study was the inability to break down the survey data to further analyze the results based on different groups (e.g. on-reserve schools, versus others) and based on various types of school authorities (public, private, charter, etc.). In total, 52 on-reserve schools were invited to participate in this survey, but only one of these schools responded, making it impossible to do any type of analysis on these groups. Also, the authors of this report were unable to break down results by types of school authorities, as the school codes given by 10% of the respondents were not valid and thus could not be used to link schools to authorities.

Results

The results in this report reflect the opinions of 629 respondents who were mostly principals representing their schools. Respondents were given the option of completing the survey either in English or in French. In total 605 individuals (96%) chose to complete this survey in English and the remaining 24 individuals (4%) completed the survey in French. Responses in both languages have been combined and reported as a whole in this report.

Information about School and Student Enrollment

For the purpose of analysis, schools were divided into three grade groups. Since many schools offer more than one grade group, the following percentages add up to more than 100%. Grades K – 6 are offered by 88% of responding schools, 7 – 9 by 45%, and 10 – 12 by 19%. Figure 1 shows that compared to the all-schools distribution, higher grades were under-represented in the survey respondent population.

Figure 1: Distribution of Grades Offered by Schools for 2008/2009.

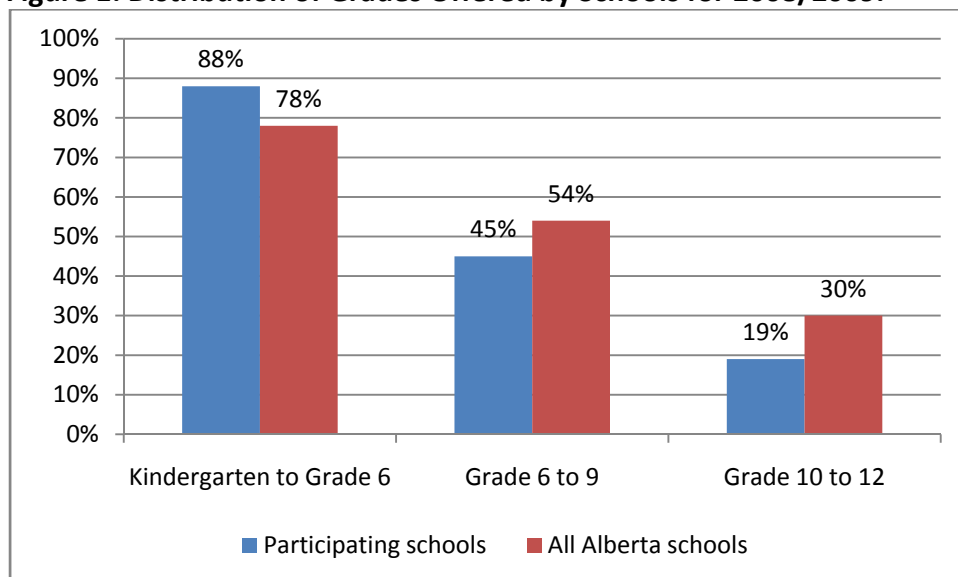


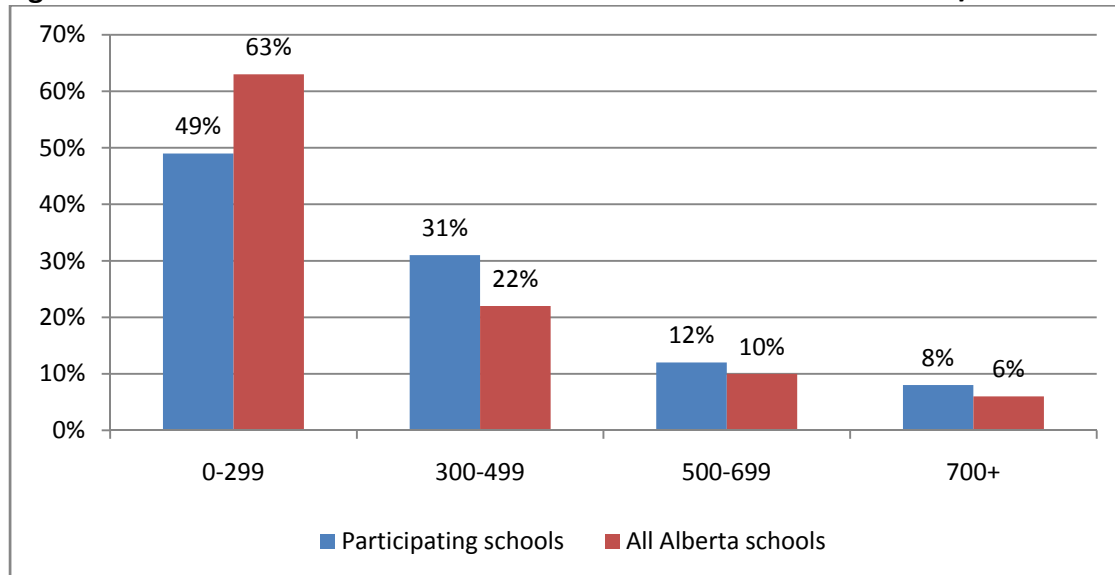
Table 1: Distribution of Grades Offered by Schools for 2008/2009.

School Classification	Participating Schools	Total # of Schools
K – 6	88%	78%
7 – 9	45%	54%
10 – 12	19%	30%
Total	152%	162%

Note: Total percentage is greater than 100% due to many schools covering two or more grade groups.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of students enrolled in their school for the 2008/2009 school year. Approximately half (49%) of respondents indicated having fewer than 300 students registered in their schools. This is lower than the actual percentage of schools in Alberta that have fewer than 300 students registered in their schools (63%). Thirty-one percent (31%) of respondents mentioned having between 300 to 499 students registered in their schools. This percentage is higher than the actual percentage of schools in Alberta that have between 300 to 499 students registered in their schools (22%). Twelve percent (12%) of respondents mentioned having between 500 to 699 students registered in their schools, similar to the actual percentage of schools in Alberta (10%). Eight percent (8%) of respondents mentioned having 700 or more students registered in their schools, similar to the actual percentage of schools in Alberta (6%). Overall, this indicates some degree of under-representation of small schools.

Figure 2: Percent of students enrolled in different sized schools for 2008/2009 school year.

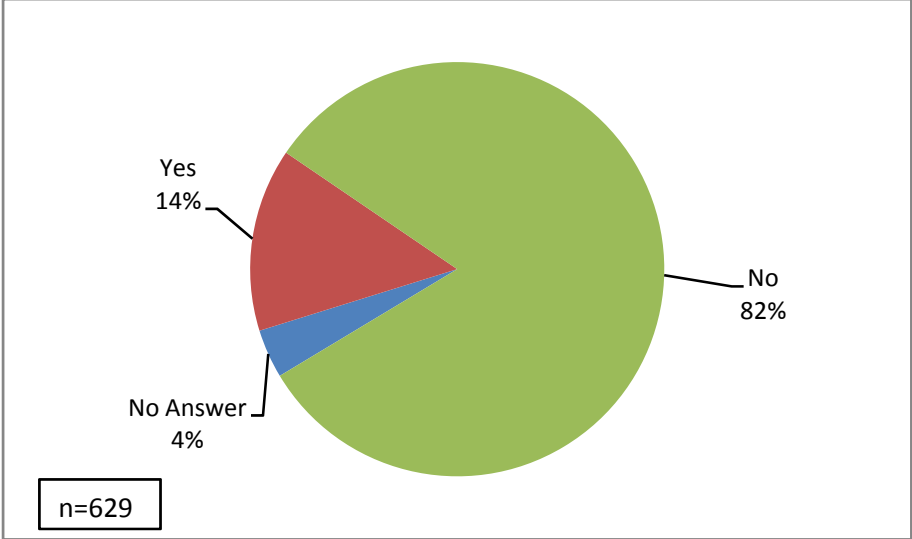


General Information about the School Library

Nearly all respondents (97%) indicated having a library within their school.

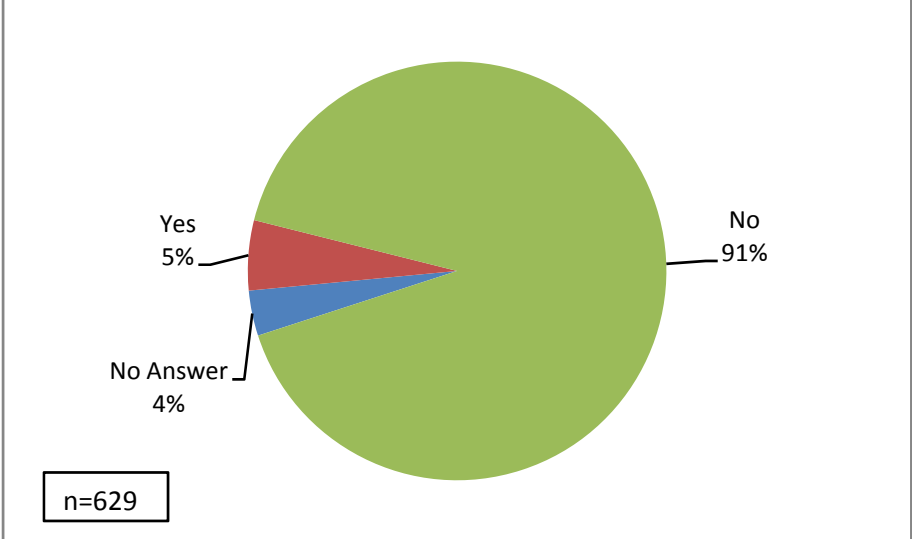
When asked whether their school reports student learning outcomes linked to school library service in their annual school education plan, a large majority of respondents (82%) indicated their school does NOT report such outcomes, while 14% indicated that their school does report such outcomes. Four percent (4%) of respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

Figure 3: Percent that report student learning outcomes in annual school education plan.



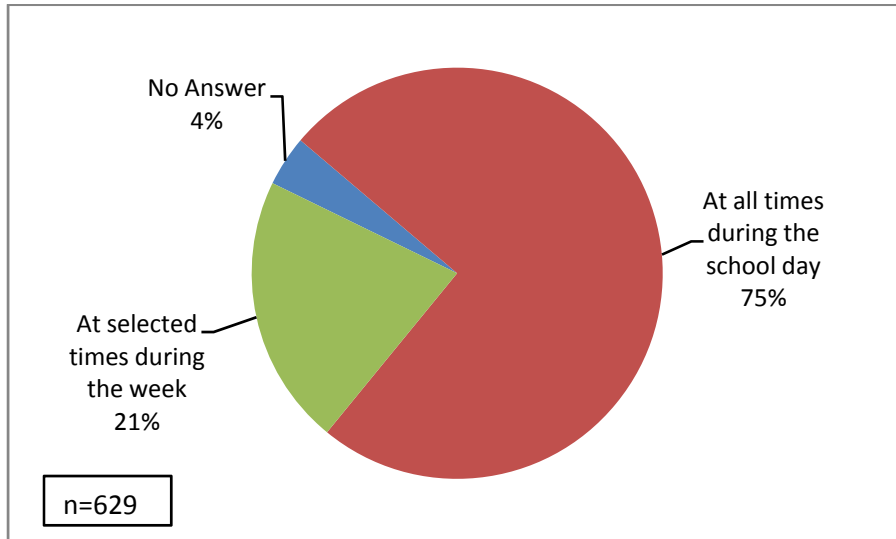
Next, respondents were asked if their library also serves as a community library. Most school libraries (91%) do not serve as community libraries, while 5% of school libraries also serve as community libraries. Four percent (4%) did not provide an answer to this question.

Figure 4: Percent of school libraries also serving as community libraries.



Respondents were asked whether their school library is open to students all the time during the school day or part-time during selected times. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents stated that their school library is open at all times during the school day, while 21% indicated that their school library is open only at selected times during the week. Four percent (4%) of respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

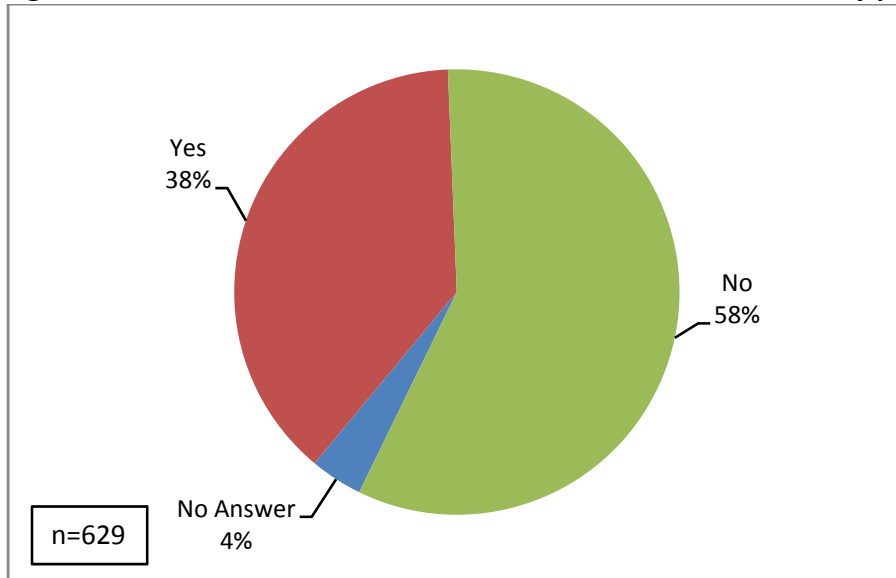
Figure 5: Percent reporting different amounts of time that school libraries are open to students.



Questions Related to the School Library Plan

In this section, respondents were asked a series of questions related to their school library plan. More than half of respondents (58%) indicated that their school does not have a current school library plan, while 38% stated that their school does have a current school library plan. Four percent (4%) did not provide an answer to this question.

Figure 6: Percent of schools with/without a current school library plan.



Respondents were asked whether their school library plan included a school library learning outcome plan. Most respondents (62%) did not answer this question because their school library does not have a school library plan, or because of the lack of information about their school library plan. Approximately 19% stated that their school library does have a learning outcome plan, while 18% said that their school library does not have such a plan.

When asked if their school library plan included a collection development policy, a majority of respondents (62%) were unable to answer this question due to not having a library plan. Approximately 34% of respondents stated that their school library does have a collection development policy, while 4% said that their school library does not have such a policy.

Respondents were then asked if their school library plan included a budget plan. A majority of respondents (62%) were unable to answer this question because their school did not have a library plan. Approximately 36% stated that their school library has a budget plan, while 3% said that their school library does not have a budget plan.

The following table summarizes the respondents' answers to questions regarding their school library policy and plans.

Table 2: School library policy and plans

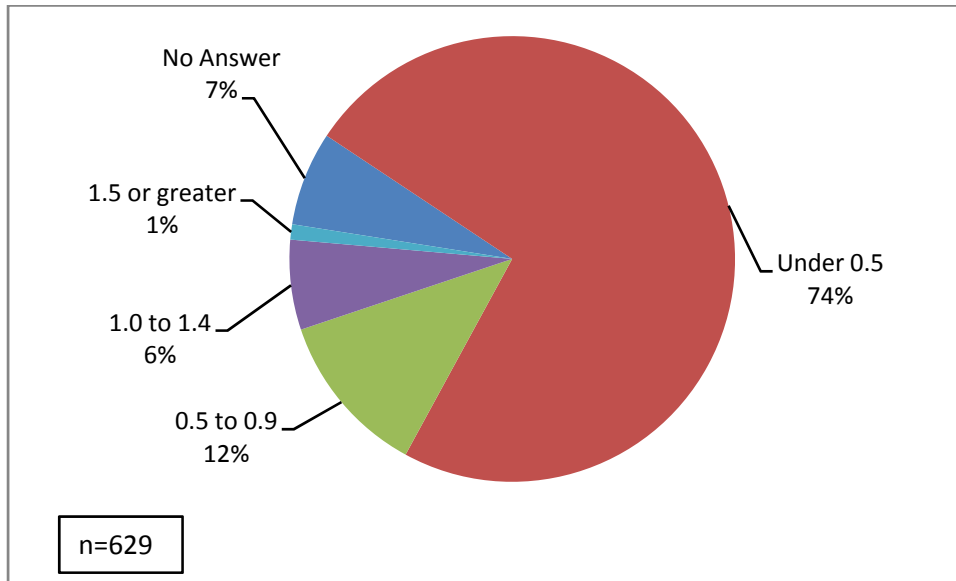
	Total Answering	Do have a School Library Plan		Do not have a School Library Plan
Does your school library plan include:	n = 629	Yes	No	Not Applicable
School Library Learning Outcome Plan	n = 629	19%	18%	62%
Collection Development Policy	n = 629	34%	4%	62%
Budget Plan	n = 629	36%	3%	62%

Information about Library Staff and Their Qualifications

The vast majority of schools (90%) do NOT have a teacher-librarian, where a teacher-librarian is defined as someone with a Bachelor of Education with a graduate degree/diploma in school libraries. Respondents were asked how many FTEs were assigned to teacher-librarians for flexible work time in the library. As most schools do not have an assigned teacher-librarian, the majority of respondents (93%) were unable to answer this question. From the total of 45 respondents able to answer this question, 56% stated that their school employed less than 0.6 FTEs to work as a teacher-librarian at their school.

Respondents were then asked about the number of FTEs from the teaching staff who have been assigned to coordinate school library services. Approximately three-quarters (74%) of respondents mentioned having less than 0.5 FTEs assigned for coordinating school library services. Another 19% mentioned having 0.5 or more FTEs assigned for coordinating school library services. Approximately 7% of respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

Figure 7: Percent of FTEs from the teaching staff assigned to coordinate school library services.



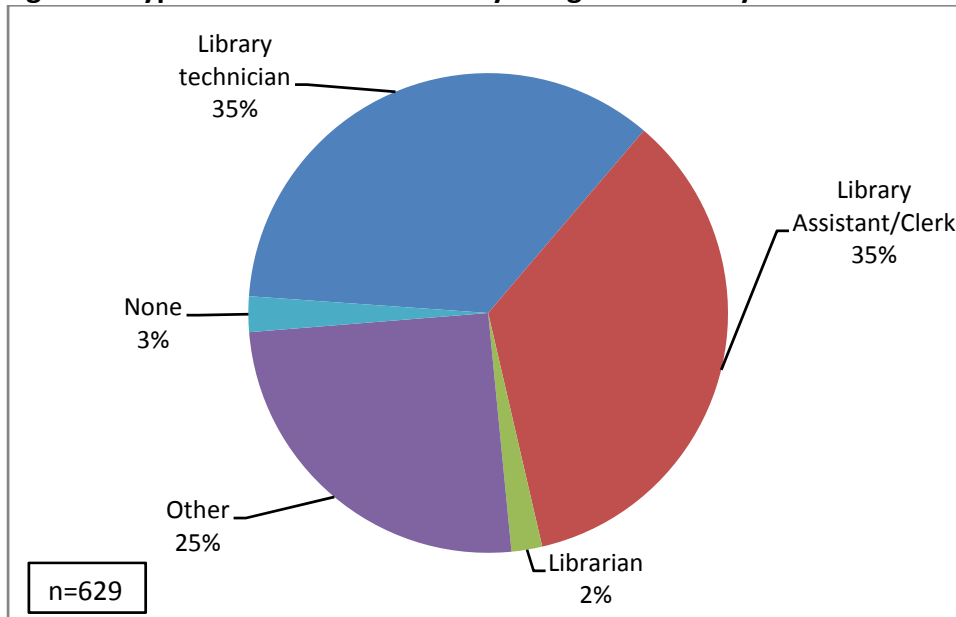
As a follow up question, respondents were asked to state the type of certification held by teaching staff designated to coordinate school library services. The table below breaks down the types of certificates held by school staff.

Table 3: Type of certification held by teaching staff designed to coordinate school library services.

# of mentions:	Comments:
128	Teaching staff with university degree such as B.Ed., M.Ed., D.Ed., M.S., and MBA
85	Educational or teaching assistant/Clerk
69	Library technician
11	Other miscellaneous
6	Librarian with Master of Library Sciences without B.Ed.
75	No certification/NA

Respondents were also asked to indicate the type of credential carried by their designated library attendant. The results show that 35% of respondents indicated that their school uses the services of library technicians, followed by another 35% who indicated that their school uses the services of library assistants/clerks. Only 3% of respondents indicated using the services of a librarian, identified as someone with a Master of Library Science without a B.Ed. One-quarter (25%) of respondents indicated using the services of someone other than a library technician, library assistant/clerk, or librarian. The remaining 3% of respondents did not indicate using the services of any individual to assist them with school library services.

Figure 8: Type of credential carried by designated library attendants.



As a follow up question, respondents were asked to indicate how many FTEs were assigned to work in their school library services as a: (1) library technician, (2) library assistant/clerk, (3) librarian, and (4) other staff. Overall, the results showed that those schools with library technicians have a combined total of 154 FTEs assigned with such a title, and an average of 0.79 FTEs per school. Schools that have library assistants/clerks have a combined total of 139 FTEs assigned with an average of 0.71 FTEs per school. As for schools with librarians, a short list of schools had a combined total of 10 FTEs assigned, with an average of 0.79 FTEs per school.

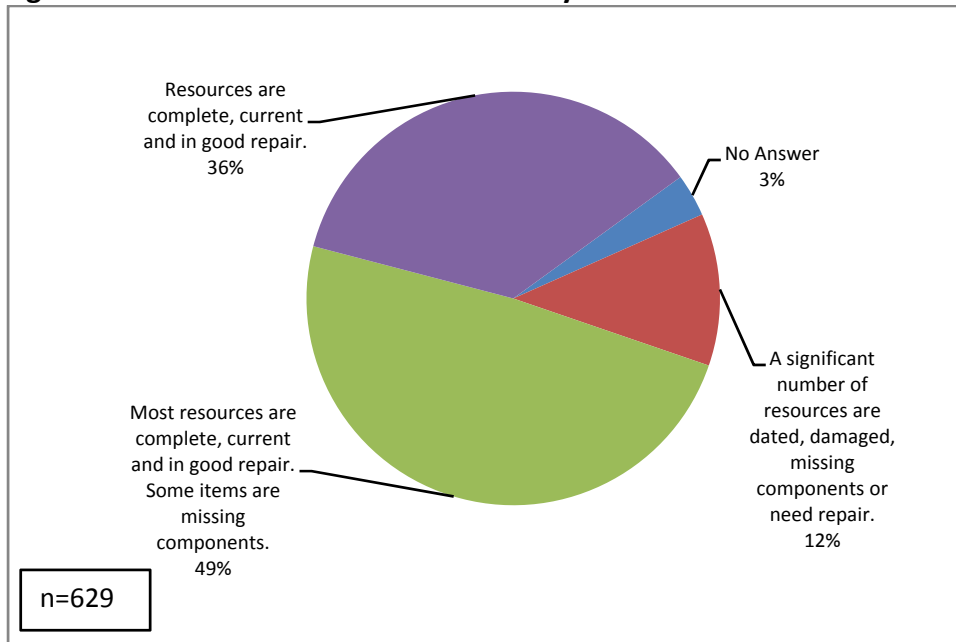
Table 4: Number of FTEs assigned to work at school library services broken down by the type certificate held.

	Library Technician	Library Assistant/Clerk	Librarian
Average FTE per school	0.79	0.71	0.79
Total FTE for all schools	154	139	10

Current State of Library Collection

Respondents were provided with three statements describing the possible state of their library collection and asked to choose the one statement that most closely reflects the current state of their library collections. Approximately half (49%) of respondents felt that their current library collections are mostly complete, current and in good repair, while only some items are missing. Thirty six percent (36%) of the respondents felt that their current library collections are complete, current and in good repair. About 12% of respondents believed that a significant number of their current library resources are dated, damaged, missing components or need repair. Three percent (3%) of the respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

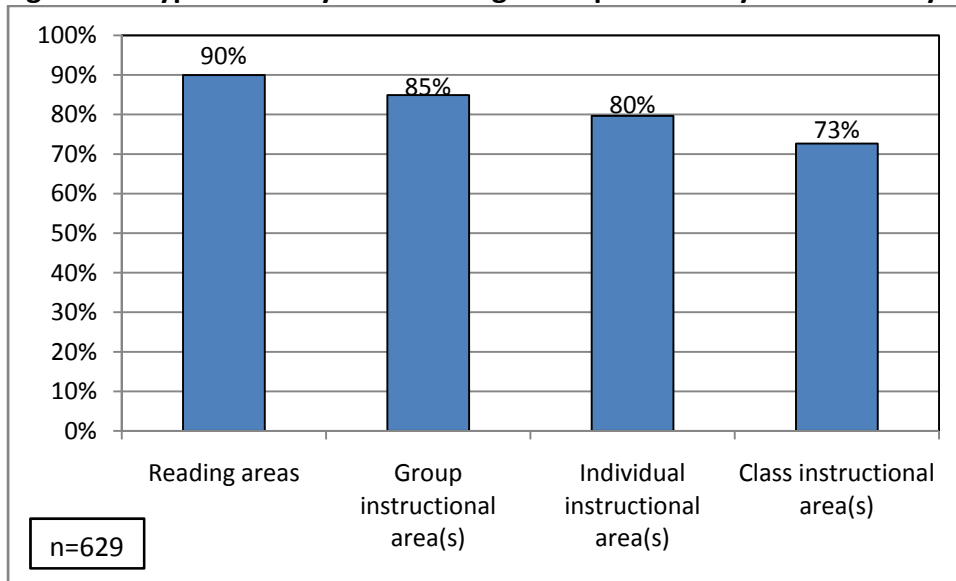
Figure 9: The current state of school library collections



Type of Study Areas Provided by School Library Facilities

Respondents were asked if their school libraries provide individuals with various types of study and learning areas. Most respondents (90%) mentioned that their schools provide people with reading areas, followed by group instructional area(s) mentioned by 85%, and individual instructional area(s) mentioned by 80%. Less than three-quarters of respondents (73%) mentioned that their school library provides class instructional area(s).

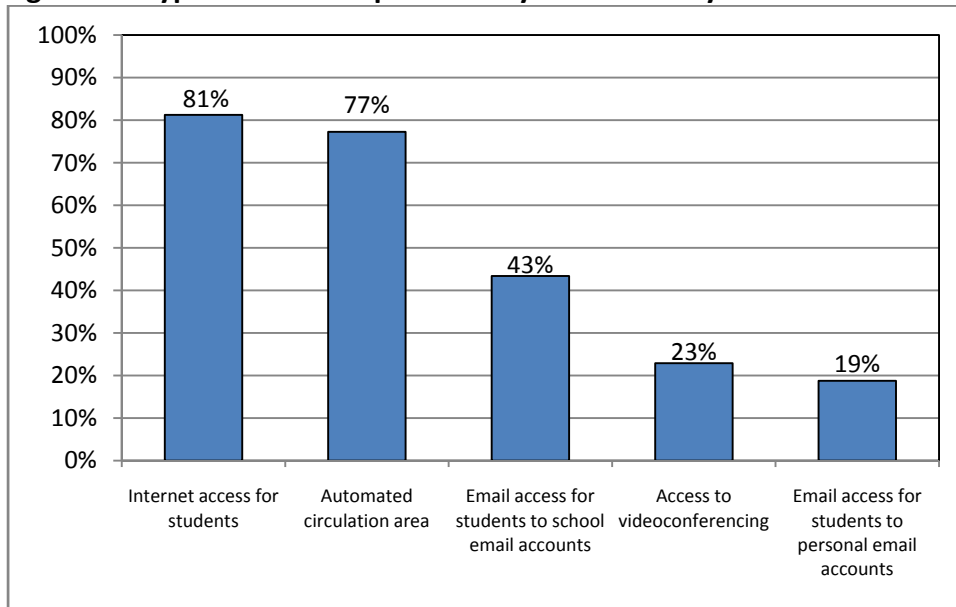
Figure 10: Types of study and learning areas provided by school library facilities.



Types of Services Provided by School Library Facilities

In this section, a series of questions were asked to better understand the type of services offered by school libraries. According to the results, most school libraries surveyed (81%) provide their students with Internet access and 77% of libraries provide an automated circulation area. Less than half (43%) of the libraries provide their students with e-mail access to school e-mail accounts, while fewer than one-quarter of school libraries (23%) provide their students with access to videoconferencing. About 19% of school libraries allow their students to access their personal e-mail accounts from school.

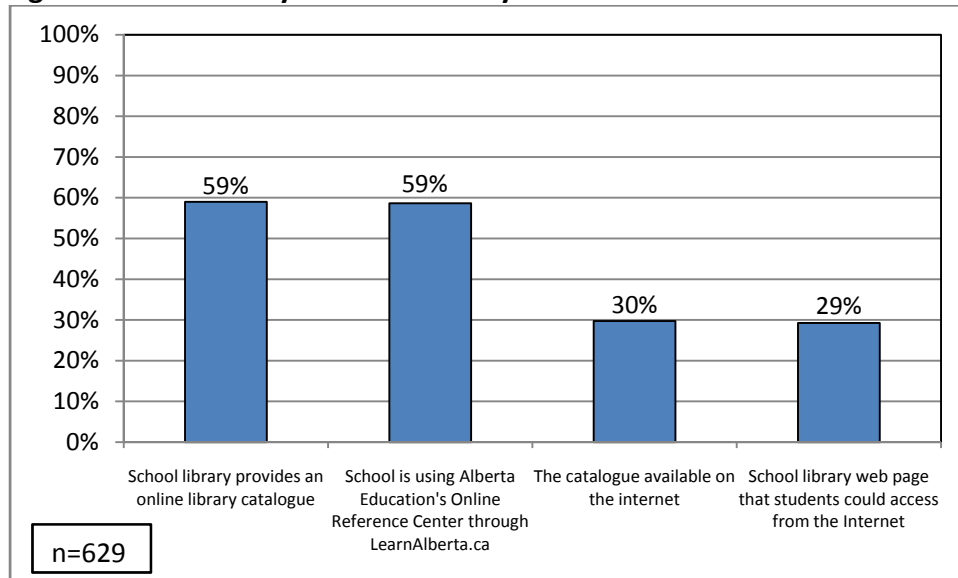
Figure 11: Types of services provided by school library facilities



Availability of School Library Online Information

Respondents were asked a number of questions related to the availability of school library information online. The results indicate that 59% of school libraries provide an online library catalogue to their users, and 59% make use of Alberta Education's Online Reference Center through LearnAlberta.ca. However, fewer respondents (30%) mentioned that their school library catalogue is available on the Internet, and 29% mentioned that their school library has a web page that students can access from the Internet.

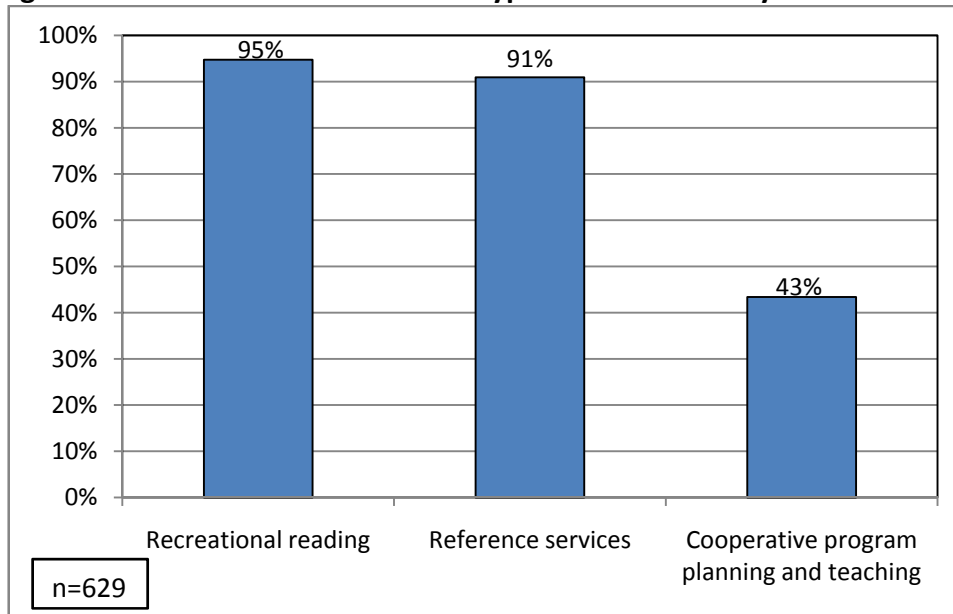
Figure 12: Availability of school library online information



Student Access to Various Types of School Library Services

Respondents were given a list of various types of school library services and asked whether their students have access to such services at their school. Most (95%) school libraries offer recreational reading services to their students, with reference services offered by 91%. Fewer than half (43%) of represented schools offer their students cooperative program planning and teaching.

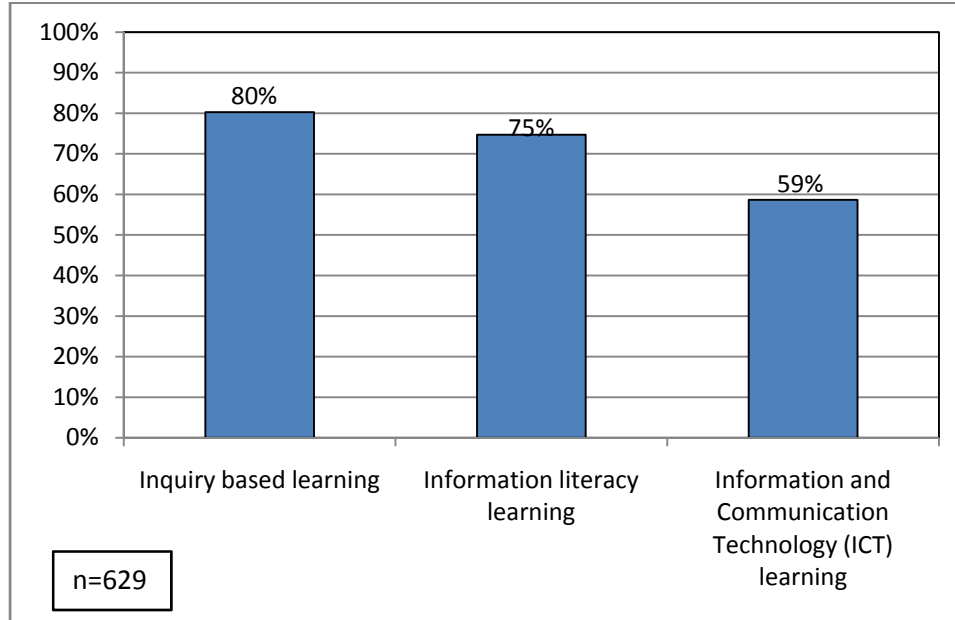
Figure 13: Student access to various types of school library services



School Libraries' Support for Various Types of Learning Outcomes

Respondents were asked if their school library program provides support for various types of learning outcomes. Most school libraries (80%) support inquiry-based learning, followed by information literacy learning (75%). Approximately six out of 10 libraries (59%) support Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning.

Figure 14: School Libraries' Support for Various Types of Learning Outcomes



Next respondents were asked to indicate whether they had other services or agencies (e.g. career centre, literacy program) coordinate activities through their school libraries. Less than one-quarter of respondents (22%) indicated that other services or agencies coordinate activities through school libraries, while 74% stated that they do not. Respondents who indicated having other services or agencies coordinate activities through their school libraries (n=139 or 22%) were asked to provide a brief description of these services or agencies. The following is a summary of the open-ended responses on this topic.

Table 5: Other services and agencies which coordinate learning activities through school libraries

# of mentions:	Comments:
60	Literacy program/accelerated reading/Early literacy
30	Career centre/corner
3	Community access program
5	Other single mentioned comments

Additional Comments

As a final question, respondents were asked to provide any additional comments that they had in mind. The three most frequently mentioned negative comments were:

- school library services are in definite need for some funding (42 mentions)
- schools do not have regular access to a qualified librarian or library technician during the entire school day (34 mentions)
- schools lack enough physical space for their school library (21 mentions).

All other negative comments were mentioned by 8 or fewer respondents.

The positive or neutral comments included respondents speaking out about the good quality of work done by individual(s) designated to school library services (14 mentions), the continuous work to revitalize and improve their own library (12 mentions) and having an overall good library with adequate library collection materials (10 mentions).

Table 6: Additional comments

# of mentions:	Negative Comments:
42	Need more funding to support school library activities/limited resources due to lack of funding.
34	Schools are in need to have regular access to qualified librarian/library technician during the entire school day/many teachers do not have the time or training to do the work/need professional librarians instead of relying on parent volunteers.
21	Physical space needs improvement and is very limited/library is used to teach regular classes due to lack of space.
8	Library collection needs improvement
8	Access to technology at school libraries needs improvement/online access
2	There is a need for greater staff training and expertise in the area of Internet and web-based resources to help students as they increasingly rely on these technologies.
# of mentions:	Neutral – Positive Comments:
14	Happy with the work of individuals designated to school library services
12	Working to revitalize and make improvement to our library.
10	Library collection is adequate/good library
4	Have a community library at school

Concluding Remarks

According to the survey results, there are some key issues of concern voiced by a significant number of respondents that should be taken into consideration when reviewing the 1984 provincial policy and standards:

- school library services need more funding (42 mentions)
- schools do not have regular access to a qualified librarian or library technician during the entire school day (34 mentions)
- schools lack enough physical space for their school library (21 mentions).

In addition, survey results showed that 21% of surveyed schools have libraries that operate only at select times during the week. As well, more than half of survey respondents (58%) indicated that their schools do not have a current school library plan. It is important to take note of these findings when reviewing and updating the 1984 provincial policy and standards to reflect some of today's essential school library needs and to facilitate seamless student access to K – 12 school library services.

Today, the Internet and technology play an important role in students' everyday living and learning activities. Yet the survey results revealed that only 30% of schools have their school library catalogue available on the Internet, followed by 29% of schools that have their own school library web page that students can access from the Internet. This does not support "any time, any place, any pace" access to K – 12 school library services.

Some of the key issues voiced by a significant number of respondents include the lack of funding to carry out some of the school library services and not having regular access to qualified librarians or library technicians during the entire school day. This finding was also supported by the survey data, where almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents mentioned having less than 0.5 FTEs assigned for coordinating school library services. Finally, respondents voiced their concern about the lack of physical space assigned for their library and how many schools have no choice but to teach regular classes in their library.

The types of concerns voiced by school administrators need to be considered carefully when revising the 1984 provincial policy and standards.