

SASS School Library Media Center Survey (SLS)

Website: <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/index.asp>

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1. OVERVIEW

Federal surveys of school library media centers in elementary and secondary schools in the United States were conducted in 1958, 1962, 1974, 1978, and 1985. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) asks questions about libraries in public and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools as part of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) (see SASS chapter for details on SASS). The School Library Media Center Survey was introduced as a component of SASS in the 1993–94 school year. The survey was administered to both public and private schools in the 1993–94 and 1999–2000 SASS, but only to public schools (including BIE-funded schools) in the 2003–04 and 2007–08 SASS. It is sponsored by NCES and administered by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Purpose

The purpose of the School Library Media Center Survey is to provide a national picture of school library collections, expenditures, technology, and services. The survey furnishes national estimates for public school libraries (by school grade level and urbanicity) and for libraries operated by BIE schools; state estimates are also provided for public school libraries.

SAMPLE SURVEY OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL LIBRARIES:

The School Library Media Center Survey collects data on:

- Collections
- Expenditures
- Technology
- Services

Components

The School Library Media Center Survey was introduced in the 1993–94 SASS.

The 1993–94 School Library Media Center Survey consisted of two components, one on the school’s library media center and the other on the library media specialist. The 1999–2000, 2003–04, and 2007–08 SASS administrations included only the library media center component. The survey is sent to public schools, including BIE schools, in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Until the 2003–04 SASS, the survey was also sent to private schools.

School Library Media Center Survey. The library survey is designed to provide a national picture of school library media center facilities, collections, equipment, technology, staffing, income, expenditure, and services. A section on information literacy was added to the 2003–04 and 2007–08 surveys. The respondents are school librarians or other school staff members familiar with the library.

The School Library Media Center survey was designed to profile the school library media specialist workforce, including demographic characteristics, academic background, workload, career histories and plans, compensation, and perceptions of the school library media specialist profession and workplace. The eligible respondent was the staff member whose main assignment at the school was to oversee the library.

Periodicity

The library survey was conducted in the 1993–94, 1999–2000, 2003–04, 2007–08 SASS, and will be conducted again in 2011–12. The 1993 and 1999–2000 collections covered public, private, and BIE schools; collections since then covered only public and BIE schools.

Data Availability

Information on SLS data files is available at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/getpubcats.asp?sid=003>.

2. USES OF DATA

School libraries and library media centers are an important component of the educational process. Data from the library survey provide a national picture of school library collections, expenditures, technology, and services. The information can be used by federal, state, and local policymakers and practitioners to assess the status of school library media centers in the United States. It also contributes to the assessment of the federal role in supporting school libraries. The librarian survey provided, for the first time, a national profile of the school library media specialist/librarian workforce.

These data can also be used to address current issues related to school libraries. Recent interest has focused on the contribution that libraries could make to the current education reform movement. Education reform has prompted increased attention to the role that school libraries/media centers might play in applying new technology and developing new teaching methods. Some analysts argue that libraries have a crucial role in developing computer literacy and educating students in the use of modern information technologies. A number of observers also have argued that expanding the function of libraries is a key prerequisite to meeting the National Education Goals.

3. KEY CONCEPTS

Some of the key concepts and terms in the School Library Media Center Survey are defined below.

Librarian. A school staff member whose main responsibility is taking care of the library.

Library Media Center. An organized collection of printed, audiovisual, or computer resources that (a) is administered as a unit, (b) is located in a designated place or places, and (c) makes resources and services available to students, teachers, and administrators.

Library Media Specialist. A teacher who is state certified in the field of library media.

4. SURVEY DESIGN

Target Population

The universe of library media centers/ libraries in elementary and secondary schools with any of grades 1–12 in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Sample Design

In 1993–94, the library media center sample was a subsample of the SASS school sample. Drawn from the 13,000 schools in the SASS, the library sample consisted of 5,000 public schools, 2,500 private schools, and the 180 BIE schools in the United States.

The strata used for library sampling were the same as those used in the public school sampling of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) (see SASS chapter for details) (state and grade level). All BIE schools were selected for the library survey, so no stratification or sorting was needed. Within strata, public schools in the 1993–94 sample were sorted on the following variables:

- local education agency (LEA) metro status: 1 = central city of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), 2 = MSA (not central city), 3 = outside MSA;

- Common Core of Data (CCD) LEA ID;
- school enrollment; and
- CCD school ID.

The sample schools were then systematically subsampled using a probability proportionate to size algorithm, where the measure of size was the square root of the number of teachers in the school as reported in the CCD (the public school sampling frame for SASS) multiplied by the inverse of the school's probability of selection from the public school sample file. Any school with a measure of size larger than the sampling interval was excluded from the library sampling operation and included in the sample with certainty.

The private school library frame for 1993–94 was identical to the frame used for the SASS private school survey, except that it excluded schools with special program emphasis (special education, vocational, or alternative curriculum schools). Private schools were stratified by recoded affiliation (Catholic, other religious, nonsectarian); grade level (elementary, secondary, combined); and urbanicity (urban, suburban, rural). Within each stratum, sorting occurred on the following variables: (1) frame (list frame and area frame); and (2) school enrollment.

Within each stratum, private schools were systematically selected using a probability proportionate to size algorithm. The measure of size used the school's measure of size (i.e., the square root of the number of teachers in the school as reported in the CCD) multiplied by the inverse of the school's probability of selection. Any library with a measure of size larger than the sampling interval was excluded from the probability sampling process and included in the sample with certainty. In all, 2,500 private schools were selected for the library sample in the 1993–94 SASS. In 1999–2000, the Library Media Center questionnaire was administered to all school within the SASS sample.

In 2003–04 and 2007–08, the Library Media Center questionnaire was administered to public and BIE SASS school samples, excluding private schools. Each sampled school received a library media center questionnaire. The sampling design for Library Media Center Survey follows that of the public school sample and BIE school sample of SASS. The BIE schools were selected for the sample with certainty. A number of changes were made in the sample design (i.e., stratification, sample sizes, sample sort, and school definition) from the 1999–2000 SASS to the 2003–04 SASS to the 2007–08 SASS. See more information on the 2007–08 public and BIE school sampling in Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) (see SASS chapter).

Data Collection and Processing

The U.S. Bureau of the Census is the collection agent for the School Library Media Center Survey. Data collection and processing procedures are discussed below.

Reference dates. Most data items refer to the most re-cent full week in the current school year. Questions on collections and expenditures refer to the previous school year.

Data collection. The School Library Media Center Survey is delivered with other SASS components beginning in October of the survey year. The survey is delivered to the school librarian or another staff member familiar with the library. (The follow-up procedures are described in SASS chapter.)

Editing. Once data collection is complete, data records are processed through a clerical edit, preliminary interview status recode (ISR) classification, computer pre-edit, range check, consistency edit, and blanking edit. (See SASS chapter for details.) After the completion of these edits, records are processed through an edit to make a final determination of whether the case is eligible for the survey and, if so, whether sufficient data have been collected for the case to be classified as an interview. A final ISR value is assigned to each case as a result of the edit.

Estimation Methods

Weighting. In the SASS School Library Media Center component, data are used to estimate the characteristics of schools with library media centers as well as schools without library media centers. Whenever possible, sampled schools with library media centers and sampled schools without library media centers are adjusted separately. Thus, interviewed library media centers are weighted up to the weighted estimate of sampled schools known to have library media centers, as determined at the time school library media center questionnaires were distributed. Likewise, the number of interviewed schools without library media centers is weighted up to the weighted number of all schools without library media centers as determined from the questionnaire distribution. This is done to study the characteristics of each type of school.

When it is not possible to adjust the library weights by the type of school, all sampled school library media centers and schools without library media centers are adjusted as a whole. This is necessary to handle instances in which the existence of the library media center cannot be established during data collection. Due to reporting inconsistencies between the school library media center questionnaire and the school questionnaire, school library media center survey data are not adjusted directly to schools reporting to have library media centers on the school questionnaire.

Imputation. Items from the SASS School Library Media Center questionnaire that still had items that were “not answered” went through a first stage of imputation in which unanswered items were imputed from other items on the same library media center record or items on the corresponding school record. The library media center data then went through the second stage of imputation in which some of the remaining “not answered” items were filled using either the data record from a similar record, regression imputation, or random ratio imputation. The third stage of imputation filled in the remaining “not answered” items that were not resolved during the first two stages of imputation (i.e., imputed clerically). After all stages of imputation were completed and no more “not answered” items remained, the library media center data from BIE-funded schools were separated into a single dataset.

Recent Changes

The School Library Media Center Survey has not been administered to private schools since the 1999–2000 school year.

5. DATA QUALITY AND COMPARABILITY

Although data are imputed for nonrespondents, caution should be exercised when analyzing data by state, sector, or affiliation. Since nonresponse varies by state, the

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7. METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION REPORTS

General

Bitterman, A., Gray, L., and Goldring, R. (2013). *Characteristics of Public Elementary and Secondary School Library Media Centers in the United States: Results From the 2011–12 Schools and Staffing Survey* (NCES 2013–315). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for

reliability of state estimates and comparisons are affected. Users should be especially cautious about using data at a level of detail where the nonresponse rate is 30 percent or greater. See below for more information on the types of errors affecting data quality and comparability.

Sampling Error

The estimators of sampling variances for SASS statistics take the SASS complex sample design into account. (See SASS chapter.)

Nonsampling Error

Nonresponse error. *Unit nonresponse.* The weighted unit response rates for the 2007–08 School Library Media Center Survey were 76.9 percent for public schools and 82.1 percent for BIE schools.

Item nonresponse. Some 95 percent of the items in the public school version of the 2007–08 School Library Media Center Survey had response rates above 85 percent and 93 percent of the items in the BIE version had response rates above 85 percent. All items in both versions had response rates above 70 percent, and there was no substantial evidence of bias in either case.

Measurement error. A reinterview was conducted for the 2003–04 SASS, but it did not include questions from the School Library Media Center Survey.

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U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. *School Library Media Centers: 1993–94*, NCES 98–282, by Bradford Chaney. Project Officer, Jeffrey Williams. Washington, DC: 1998.

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