

**TEXAS SCHOOL LIBRARIES:  
STANDARDS, RESOURCES, SERVICES, AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE**  
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**Introduction**

In 1995 the 74<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature mandated that voluntary school library standards be developed by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in consultation with the State Board of Education. No authority to implement, evaluate, or monitor the effectiveness of school library standards was given to the Texas State Library. Historically, school library standards had been defined and monitored by the Texas Education Agency

As a bridge between two state agencies, the Texas Library Association appointed a School Library Standards Ad Hoc Committee at Annual Assembly in July, 1995. The committee included school librarians, educators, district coordinators, and representatives from educational service centers from across the State, and Mary D. Lankford was appointed chairman of the Steering Committee. Liaisons to the committee included Gretchen Staas for the TLA Executive Board, Cheryl Bybee for the TASL Executive Board, and Jeanette Larson for the Texas State Library.

The following subcommittees were formed to develop the Standards:

- Mission and Paradigm Shift
- Library Learning Environment
- Curriculum Integration
- Resources
- Facilities
- Library Program Management

The committees recommended that each of the five components be ranked, using the same terminology in use for ranking schools: exemplary, recognized, acceptable, and below standard. The final report of the committee was given to both the Texas Library Association and to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

In February of 1996, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) appointed a School Library Standards Advisory Committee that included librarians, educators, teachers, administrators, and parents. Julie Todaro served as chairman. The recommendations of the TLA Ad Hoc Committee and TSLAC Advisory Committee became the School library Program Standards: Guidelines and Standards for Texas which the Texas State Library and Archives Commission formally adopted on May 19, 1997. The Standards and Guidelines are available on the Texas State Library web site at <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/schoollibs/index.html>

Technology and library services have changed rapidly in recent years. Both national and state school library standards have moved from quantitative to qualitative measures for determining library program development. Although neither the Texas Education Agency nor the Texas State Library had the means to monitor implementation of the standards, many districts had set goals to achieve the exemplary rating and the Standards and Guidelines no longer clearly represented the resources and activities in school library media centers.

Following the appointment of Peggy D. Rudd as Director and Librarian of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, a dialogue began between TSLAC staff and the TEA Library Services staff. Research in Colorado<sup>1</sup>, Alaska<sup>2</sup>, and Pennsylvania<sup>3</sup> had focused national attention on the role of librarians and libraries in student achievement. The need for revisiting the School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas had been identified. Peggy D. Rudd initiated a study in Texas to correlate student achievement with School Library Standards implementation. The study, "Texas School Libraries: Standards, Resources, Services and Students' Performance" was designed to provide support for updating the Standards.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission contracted with EGS Research and Consulting of Austin to conduct the study which was completed in April of 2001. The study report will be published by the Texas State Library and will be available on the TSL web site at [www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/schlibsurvey/index.html](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/schlibsurvey/index.html).

## **Objectives**

The Texas Study had three objectives.

- Examine school library resources, services, and use, on the basis of the School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas and determine the need for updating these standards and guidelines so that they better serve communities across the State.
- Determine the impact of school libraries on student performance as measured by the percent of students who met minimum expectations on the reading portion of the statewide-standardized test, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS.)
- Highlight library practices in the best performing schools.

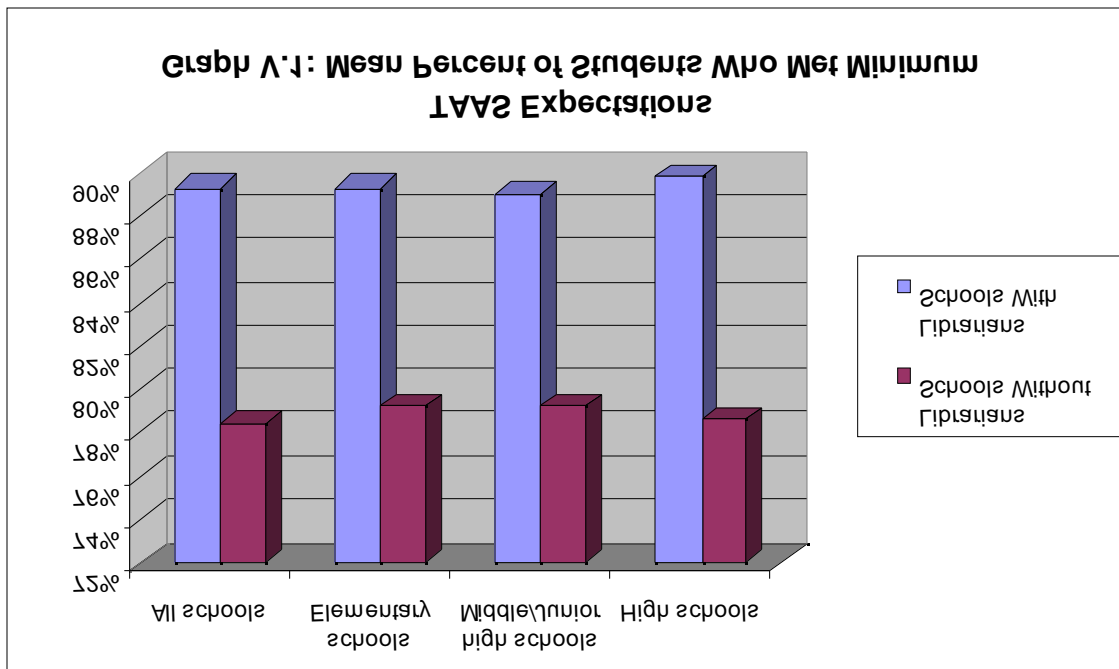
## **Data Collection**

Representatives of the TEA and TSLAC, librarians, and EGS Research and Consulting developed a questionnaire to gather data for the study. National research, as well as research available from various states, was considered in the formulation of the

questionnaire. In September of 2000, the questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 600 Texas schools with librarians and 503, or 84 percent, responded. The survey data were supplemented with secondary data on school characteristics and student TAAS performance from the Texas Education Agency's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), and community economic data extracted from the Federal Reserve Boards' Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) web site.

## Key Results

The Texas Study demonstrated higher TAAS performance at all educational levels in schools with librarians than in schools without librarians. Over 10 percent more students in schools with librarians than in schools without librarians met minimum TAAS expectations in reading.

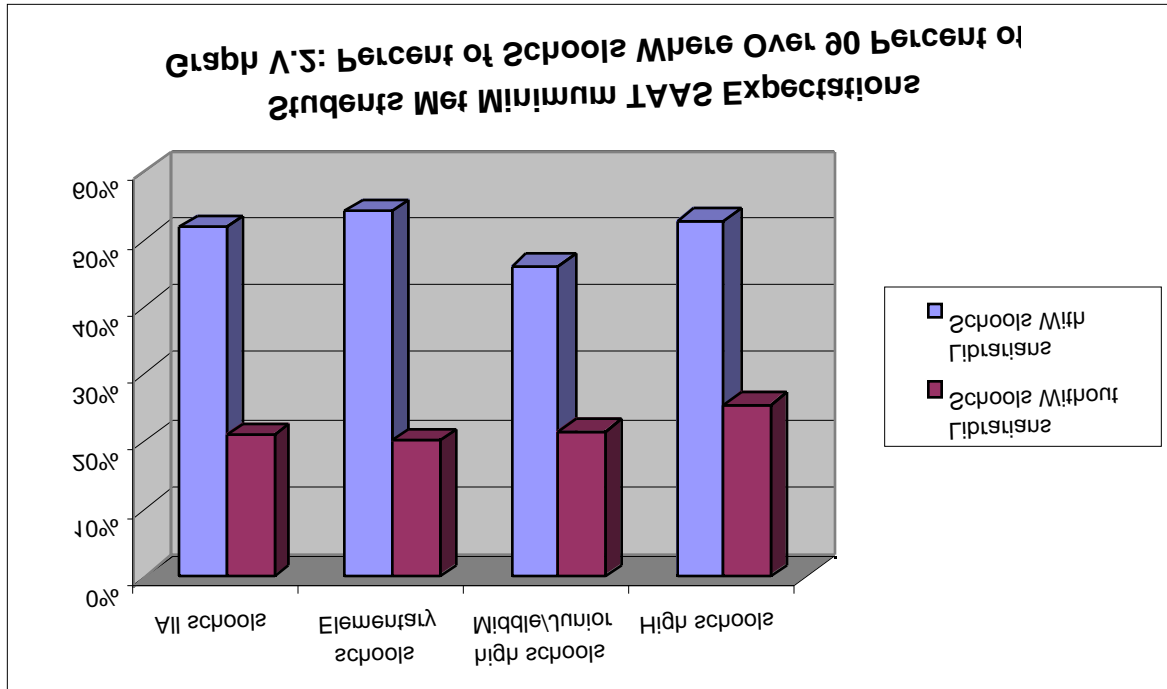


On average, 89.3 percent of students in schools with librarians compared with 78.4 percent in schools without librarians met minimum TAAS expectations in reading.

## Mean Percent of Students Who Met Minimum TAAS Expectations

Level	Schools With Librarians	Schools Without Librarians
All schools	89.3%	78.4%*
Elementary schools	89.3%	79.2%
Middle/Junior high schools	89.0%	79.2%

In 2.5 times more schools with librarians than schools without librarians, over 90% of students met minimum TAAS expectations in reading.



In 51.0 percent of the schools with librarians, and 21.1 percent of the schools without librarians, over 90% of students met minimum TAAS expectations.

**Percent of Schools Where Over 90 Percent of Students Met Minimum TAAS Expectations**

Level	Schools With Librarians	Schools Without Librarians
All schools	52.0%	21.1%*
Elementary schools	53.9%	20.3%
Middle/Junior high schools	46.1%	21.6%
High schools	52.7%	25.5%

\* Includes elementary/secondary schools.

The Texas Study showed that socio-economic factors such as the percentage of white students, Hispanic students, and economically disadvantaged students generally explained most of the variance in TAAS performance. These variables explain more of TAAS performance as students progress through the educational system. In schools with librarians, at the elementary school level, socio-economic variables explain 26 percent of

the variance; at the middle school level they explain 44 percent; and at the high school level they explain 55 percent of the variance in TAAS performance.

In schools that had librarians, library variables explained a smaller but still very significant portion of the variance. They explained approximately four percent of the variance in TAAS at the elementary and middle school levels and 8.2 percent at the high school level.

In schools with librarians, TAAS performance was associated with different library factors at each educational level. Library variables found to be important were:

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Library volumes purchased in 1999-00 per 100 students
- Library operational expenditures per student
- Library computers connected to a modem per 100 students
- Library software packages per 100 students

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Identifying materials for instructional units developed by teachers
- Providing information skills instruction to individuals or groups

#### HIGH SCHOOL

- Library staff per 100 students
- Library staff hours per 100 students
- Library hours of operation per 100 students
- Volumes per students
- Current subscriptions to magazines and newspapers per 100 students
- Planning instructional units with teachers
- Providing staff development to teachers

**These library variables are generally more important in explaining the variance in TAAS results than school variables such as the number of school computers per student, teacher experience, and teacher turnover ratio.**

While these library variables, in addition to the socio-economic variables, play a primary role in explaining the variance in TAAS performance, the association between TAAS performance and library resources and activities can not be inferred as a causal relationship solely on the basis of statistical analysis, although a causal relationship is highly plausible. Moreover, the statistical relationship between library resources and

activities and students' TAAS performance may even be underestimated due to the nature of TAAS pass rate as a measure of performance.

### **Library Program Management: Staffing**

The Texas Study revealed that there are significant gaps between staffing levels recommended in the School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas and actual staffing levels. Libraries in schools with more than 350 students are generally understaffed. Currently, 38.5 percent of elementary school libraries, 35 percent of middle/junior high school libraries, and 22.5 percent of high school libraries have only one staff member. Lower than recommended staffing levels and especially the absence of library aides significantly curtail the range and type of services that librarians can provide. The study provides solid, systematic data on the contribution of libraries and librarians.

- One-quarter of the schools in Texas do not have librarians.
- Schools without librarians are lower performing on TAAS than schools with librarians. On average, 10 percent more students in schools with librarians meet minimum TAAS expectations in reading than in schools without librarians.
- Librarian activities that have an impact on student performance include planning and teaching collaboratively with teachers and training teachers. In libraries with professional librarians and aides, staff expends a larger portion of time engaging in these high-priority collaborative (curriculum integration) activities, which are associated with higher TAAS performance.
- In libraries with only a librarian, these key collaborative, curriculum integration activities are not being performed because, without the assistance of an aide, the librarian does not have the time to engage in these activities.
- In libraries staffed by library aides only, these activities are not being performed because library aides are not trained in performing them.
- Libraries staffed with librarians and aides are associated with increased library use as measured by more visits to the library by individual students, more information skills instruction, and more books and materials checked out.
- For libraries to have the greatest impact on student performance, libraries need to be staffed, at minimum, with both a librarian and an aide.
- The growing presence of networked resources in the library has increased the importance of the training role of the librarians with regard to the integration of these technology resources into the curriculum.

### **Library Program Management: Funding**

The Texas Study showed that there are significant gaps between funding levels recommended in the School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas and actual funding levels in elementary, middle/junior high, and high school libraries. The Standards and Guidelines for Texas recommend that libraries “receive sufficient funds, but

not less than one (1%) percent (acceptable library program), two (2%) percent (recognized library program) or three (3%) percent (exemplary library program) of the total instructional budget annually to acquire library materials, equipment and supplies in support of school library program.” **On average, library budgets, at all educational levels, constitute less than one percent of the respective school’s instructional budget.** At the elementary and middle/junior high school levels, the average library’s budget is one-half of one percent of the school’s instructional budget. At the high school level, the average library budget is closer to one percent of the school’s instructional budget. Among all libraries in our sample, only two elementary school libraries and three high school libraries had a budget that was three percent or more of the school’s instructional budget.

There is a wide variation in library operating budgets statewide. On average, libraries' operating expenditures (funded by the school) per student ranged from \$16.45 to \$26.69. When taking all funding sources into account, libraries operating expenditures per student ranged from \$22.14 at the elementary school level to \$31.45 at the high school level.

**Table III.19 – Library Operating Budget Per Student**

<b>Library</b>	<b>Mean Library Operating Budget per Student (School Funds Only)</b>	<b>Mean Library Operating Budget per Student (All Funding Sources)</b>
Elementary school libraries	\$16.45	\$22.14
Middle/Junior high school libraries	\$16.64	\$24.26
High school libraries	\$26.69	\$31.45

Libraries’ operating budgets are strongly associated with collection size, the currency of the collection, and libraries’ staffing resources. Libraries with larger operating budgets have larger and more current collections and more staffing resources to support student needs.

The Texas study, similar to studies conducted in other states, has clearly shown the important role that libraries, librarians, and library aides have in student academic performance.

**Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Curry Lance, Marcia J. Rodney, Christine Hamilton-Pennell, *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards; The Second Colorado Study*; Colorado State Library, Colorado Department of Education, Denver, Colorado; April, 2000.

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<sup>2</sup> Keith Curry Lance, Christine Hamilton-Pennell, Marcia J. Rodney, Lois A. Petersen, Clara Sitter, *Information Empowered; The School Librarian as an Agent of Academic Achievement in Alaska Schools*; Alaska State Library, Juneau, Alaska, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Curry Lance, Marcia J. Rodney, Christine Hamilton-Pennell, *Measuring Up to Standards; The Impact of School Library Programs & Information Literacy in Pennsylvania Schools*; Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries, Greensburg, Pennsylvania; February, 2000.

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