

**2008 Trend Analysis of
Indiana K-8 Library Services
Since the
School Library Printed Materials Grant**

September 2008



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Executive Summary

The Indiana General Assembly highlighted the importance of updating school library book collections by appropriating \$4 million for K-8 schools during the 1997-1999 school years, \$6 million for K-12 schools during the 1999-2001 school years, and \$6 million for K-12 schools for the 2001-2003 school years. However, due to state budgetary restraints, only \$3 million was actually provided in the 2001-02 school year and no funds have been provided in the subsequent years. Our 2002 and 2004 reports indicated that the funding provided between 1997 and 2001 resulted in sharp increases in purchasing and circulation of library materials followed by significant decreases in purchasing in 2002, 2004, and 2006. An increase in circulation in 2002 was followed by a decrease in 2004 and 2006. It is assumed that the initial increase seen in 2002 was due to a lag in circulation as new materials were introduced into the library system. Additional data gathered by the National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) from the 50 states and the District of Columbia demonstrated that as time passes Indiana tends to sink lower in state rankings when it comes to financing and stocking its K-12 school libraries. This report reviews the current state of library services in Indiana public schools in light of these developments, and looks at the trend in school enrollment and book purchasing and circulation between 2000 and 2008.

Two types of data analysis were utilized in preparing this report. Survey results (n=3,876) from Indiana public schools serving children kindergarten through Grade 8 were compared across the 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 school years. In addition, the comments of 49 Indiana public school librarians in response to an open-ended question on the 2008 survey were analyzed. The full report includes text, tables, and graphs illustrating both sets of analysis, as well as representative quotes from survey respondents.

Results

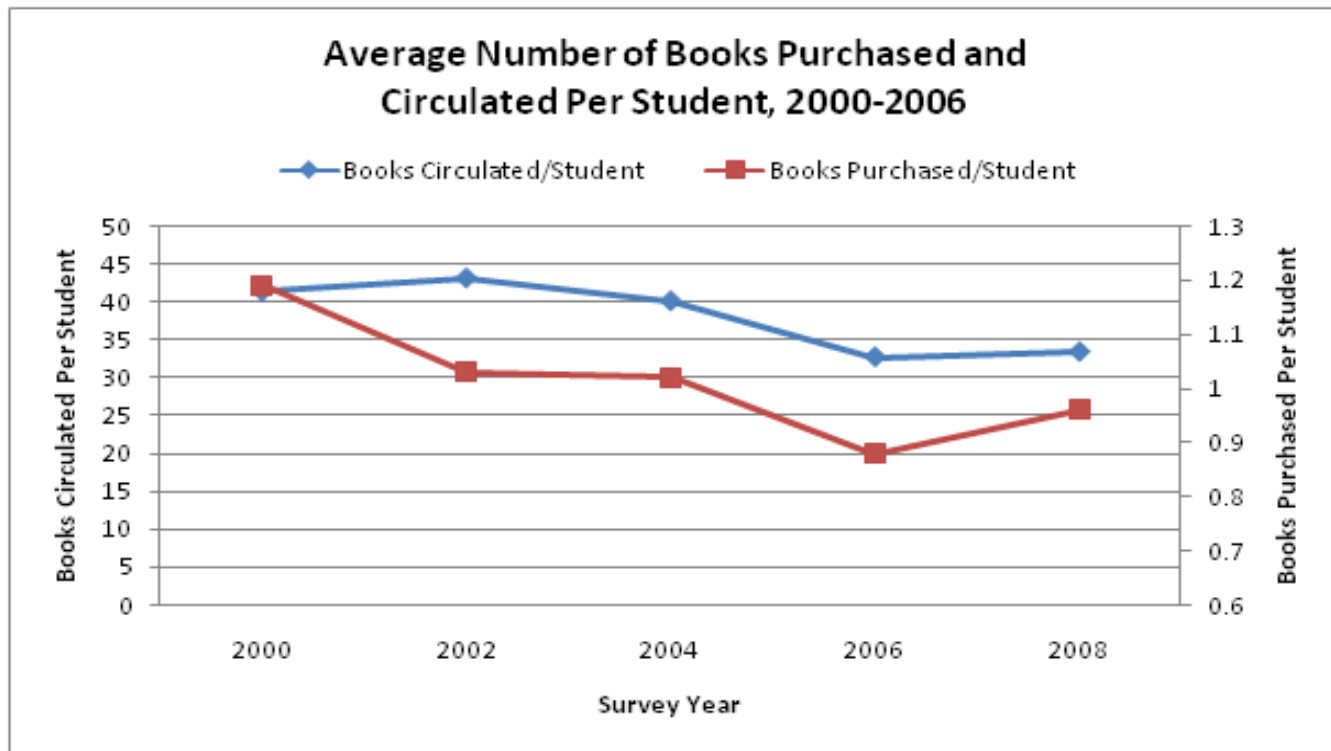
The results further support the conclusion made in the 2004 and 2006 reports that schools libraries are unable to maintain the levels of book purchases and circulation that were seen during the fully funded 2000 cycle. School librarians report experiencing financial stress, resulting in understaffing and an inability to purchase up-to-date materials, which they view as important to the academic growth of school children.

Table 1 provides a summary of statistics for schools that participated in the past five administrations of the Middle Grades Reading Network School Library and Acquisition Survey. As seen in Figure 1, book purchases per student have dropped since the 2000 fully funded cycle and have not recovered. Circulation numbers showed an increase in 2002, presumably as those new purchases found their way into circulation. Since 2002 the number of purchases has been steadily increasing, however, student enrollment has also been increasing, resulting in a decreasing number of books purchased per student each year.

TABLE 1. Library Statistics, 2000-2008

Year	Average School Enrollment	Average Books Purchased/School	Average Books Purchased/Student	Average Books Circulated/School	Average Books Circulated/Student
2000	470.7	524.2	1.19	17,510	41.35
2002	493.7	479.2	1.03	19,180	43.12
2004	506.9	493.0	1.02	18,393	40.11
2006	587.3	495.0	0.88	17,174	32.72
2008	552.1	530.2	0.96	18,448	33.41

FIGURE 1. Average Number of Books Purchased and Circulated per Student, 2000-2008



A qualitative analysis of participant responses to an open-ended question revealed that school librarians within the state of Indiana continue to be concerned about school finances and how this strain affects student literacy. Many librarians are finding it difficult to adequately address the needs of the students and the school due to insufficient library staffing and low materials budgets. A frequent concern was the inability to properly address student needs given current financial situations. To deal with this, many of the librarians indicated that they are finding alternative methods of funding to help supplement the purchase of library materials. These methods often included book fairs, donations, Title V funds, and applying for various grants. It is through these methods that they are able to obtain the library materials that their schools need. Although many librarians are finding ways to improve the situations of their libraries, several indicated that they are still not able to address their student's needs. Problems such as out-of-date materials and insufficiently staffed libraries were also noted. Two of the participants reminisced about the days when the Printed Materials Grant was instated; others simply offered general pleas for additional funds.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

1. Although the average number of books purchased per school was higher in 2008 than in 2000-2006, with continued high enrollment for survey respondents the average number of books purchased per student continues to be significantly lower than in 2000. Similarly, circulation figures for 2008 were significantly lower than in 2002. In response, many of the librarians indicated that they have been utilizing additional sources of funding other than district monies to obtain the library materials. The methods used, such as relying on money received from book fairs and donations, are not necessarily stable or long-term. If librarians continue to rely on these methods to supplement the funds they receive from their respective districts, they may not be able to maintain the purchasing power seen in the current year.
2. A surge in circulation in 2000-2002 was followed by a decline from 2002-2008. Declines in circulation can be expected when purchases of library books decrease as students lack library access to new reading materials. With previous research showing a link between well developed library media programs and increased student achievement, such declines in circulation are worrying.
3. Literacy continues to be a central focus of educational initiatives in Indiana schools, yet librarians report that they are having difficulty meeting the educational needs of their students given the current financial climate. A lack of up-to-date materials paired with an insufficient number of literacy support staff make it difficult for librarians to work with teachers and students to promote literacy.
4. In a comparison between Indiana public school libraries to those in other states concerns are evident. While at one time Indiana ranked highly in terms of financing and stocking its K-12 school libraries, over time it has continued to sink lower in the rankings. The decline found by the federal Schools and Staffing Survey mirrors the Printed Materials Trend Analysis. If Indiana residents want their students to remain competitive at the national level, then Indiana school libraries also have to remain viably attractive to students as a resource for printed materials.
5. Despite the state's considerable financial challenges, the role of library materials should be considered in any comprehensive plan to improve the literacy of Indiana's students. Resources for the support of school libraries are increasingly strained, making it difficult to support critical academic and student needs. We are able to see the long-term effects of the budget cuts on book circulation per student, but further negative outcomes on student reading levels and achievement may also become evident in the near future.

2008 Trend Analysis of Indiana K-8 Library Services Since the School Library Printed Materials Grant

There is strong evidence to support the importance of school library media centers in the educational achievement of students. Studies in Alaska, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Oregon, Iowa, and New Mexico suggest that when school libraries have well developed library media programs, adequate staffing (meaning at least one full-time media specialist and one support staff member), a good-sized library collection, an organized library system, and higher levels of funding, improvements in student reading achievement are observed (Hamilton-Pennell et al., 2000; Lance, 2002; Roberson, Schweinle, & Apple, 2003; Smith, 2006). In addition, the federally sponsored National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides evidence that students who read for fun every day have significantly higher reading achievement scores than students who read less frequently (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). A study by Whitehead (2004) demonstrated that students with more access to printed media spent more time voluntarily reading in the home and consequently had higher scores in reading comprehension and accuracy.

In 2007, a study of Indiana schools demonstrated findings similar to previous research. Results showed that schools with higher ISTEP+ scores also had better staffed, stocked, and funded libraries (Lance, Rodney, & Russell, 2007). Specifically, after controlling for poverty and ethnicity, ISTEP+ results correlated positively and significantly with how often the library was open, how often it was staffed, the number of print volumes, the number of library visits per week, and the library's budget.

The National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) collects data from schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia on a number of issues, including information pertaining to school libraries. Information is available

from before the School Library Printed Materials Grant was established for the 1993-94 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), during the grant for the 1998-99 school year (Holton, Bae, Baldrige, Brown, & Heffron, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2004), and after the grant was discontinued for the 2003-04 school year (Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006). A general trend is that as time passes, Indiana tends to sink lower in the rankings compared to other states when it comes to financing and stocking its K-12 school libraries.

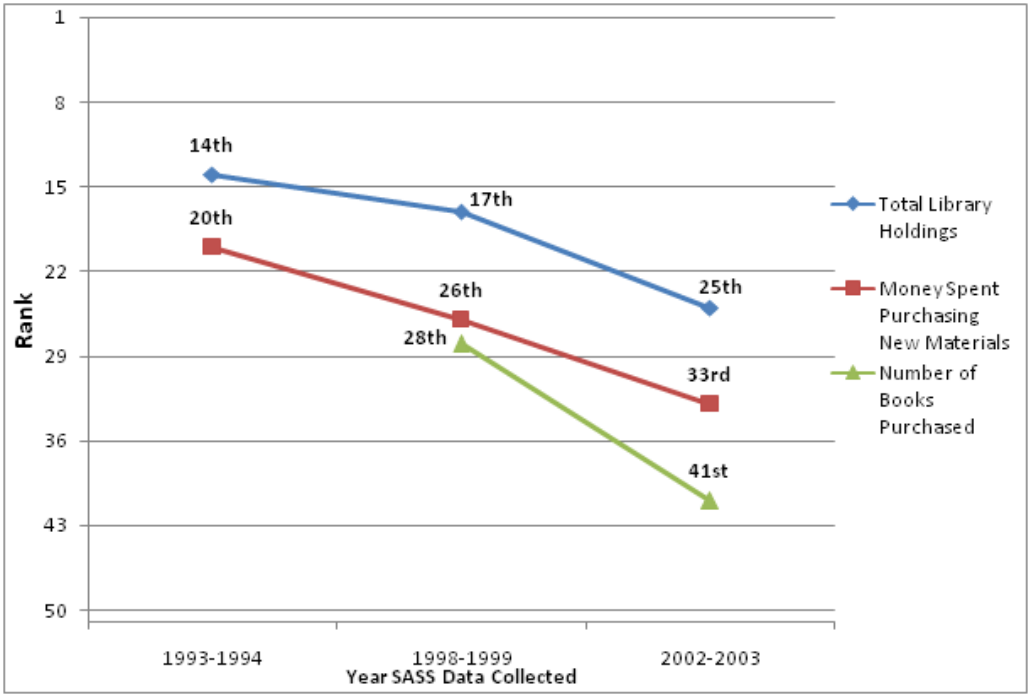
One consistent measure from the various survey administrations was how many books the school libraries hold on average. During the first round of data collection in the 1993-94 school year Indiana schools averaged 2,192 books per 100 students, placing Indiana well above the national average of 1,832 books per 100 students and ranking 14th overall. During the 1998-99 school year Indiana ranked 17th overall with an average of 2,177 books per 100 students and was still well above the national average of 1,803 books per 100 students. However, during the 2003-04 school year (after the end of the Printed Materials Grant) there were, on average, fewer books per student on Indiana library shelves, with an average of 1,977 books per 100 students. While this was still higher than the national average of 1,891 books per 100 students, Indiana dropped in the standings to 25th place.

The SASS also reported how much money was spent purchasing new library materials. In this category Indiana ranked 20th overall in 1993-94, spending an average of \$13.92 per student on new library materials, above the national average of \$12.74 per student. During the next wave of data collection, while the Printed Materials Grant was funded by the state of Indiana, Indiana schools reported spending almost an additional \$10 per student to purchase new materials, at an average of \$23.93 per student. However, other states also reported spending additional funds with a national average of \$23.37 per student, placing Indiana in 26th place. Indiana slipped even lower when the data were collected after the termination of the Printed Materials Grant in 2003-04, as Indiana schools dropped almost to the spending levels reported in the 1993-94 collection with an average of \$14.90 spent per student to purchase new library materials.

This placed Indiana well below the national average of \$16.20 per student tying for 33rd place with Mississippi.

Although not collected during the initial wave (1993-94), subsequent surveys also examined how the number of library books purchased varied from state to state. The data collected during the Printed Materials Grant for the 1998-99 school year indicated that on average Indiana school libraries bought 402 books during the school year, ranking 28th in comparison to other states and slightly below the national average of 488 books. However, the next round of data collection in 2003-04 after the termination of the Printed Materials Grant showed another decrease in Indiana’s standings. This time the data were reported as how many books the school purchased per 100 students. Across the nation while public schools on average acquired 99 books per 100 students, Indiana only purchased on average 84 books per 100 students, tying with Utah and Rhode Island for 41st place (see Figure 2.)

FIGURE 2. Trend in Indiana’s Ranking Relative to Other States on Public School Library Spending and Holdings



Note: Data from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). Rankings based on information from schools in all fifty states and the District of Columbia.

Recent History of State Funding of School Libraries in Indiana

The Indiana General Assembly established the School Library Printed Materials Grant as part of the 1997 Reading and Literacy Initiative for a Better Indiana and appropriated \$4 million to K-8 schools for the 1997-99 school years. The grant was expanded to K-12 schools for the second funding cycle (1999-2000 and 2000-01) and the funds increased to \$6 million, or \$3 million per year. School corporations could spend the funds for any grade levels from kindergarten through Grade 12.

Another \$6 million was appropriated for a third funding cycle (2001-02 and 2002-03). School corporations received \$3 million for the 2001-02 school year with the expectation that another \$3 million would follow in 2002-03. However, the funds for the 2002-03 school year were eliminated through Governor Frank O'Bannon's Deficit Management Plan due to the state's budget difficulties. In a move to eliminate budget shortfalls, some programs were cut 7-15%, while other programs, such as the Printed Materials Grant, were eliminated entirely.

School corporations received and spent most of the funds for each biennium during the first year of funding. Thus, school corporations spent most, if not all, of the \$4 million for 1997-99 in 1997-98, the \$6 million for 1999-2001 in 1999-00, and the \$3 million in 2001-02.

The Indiana Administrative Code (511 1AC 6.1-5.6 Media Program) states that each school shall spend at least \$8 per student from its 22200 account to maintain its media program. The \$8 minimum figure was set in 1989 when the average cost of a book was about \$9 compared to the present average cost of over \$20 (St. Lifer, 2005). However, even this small amount might not be spent exclusively on books, since salaries for library-related staff can also be drawn from the 22200 account. Therefore, while satisfying their legislative requirements for support of school media programs, Indiana public schools may not necessarily be purchasing books for their libraries with these funds.

Methodology

Librarians in Indiana public schools enrolling students in kindergarten through Grade 8 were sent a survey in the spring of 1997 to determine the numbers of books purchased and circulated during 1997. This information was collected prior to state funding for school library books. Subsequent library surveys were sent to schools in 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004. Reports were completed in 2002 and 2004 summarizing those results (Plucker et al., 2002; Plucker et al., 2004).

In spring of 2006, the survey was sent to librarians in all Indiana public schools, this time including schools enrolling students in Grades 9-12. A report by Plucker et al. was completed in 2006 summarizing the results for 2000-06 (Plucker et al., 2006).

The survey was distributed again to all Indiana public schools enrolling students in kindergarten through Grade 12 in the spring of 2008. A copy of the survey, which was distributed by the Middle Grades Reading Network, is included as Appendix A. In 2008, 303 schools out of 1,897 containing at least one grade in the K-12 range returned the surveys (as with the 2006 results, only K-8 data were included in the analysis; see explanation below).

The survey requested information on the school name, school corporation, and grade levels served by the school. Additional questions included: a) number of students in the school, b) number of books purchased that year, and c) number of books circulated that year. Respondents were also able to provide open-ended comments on the survey.

Included in the analyses were Grades K-8 data from all five years for schools that answered all of the questions on the survey. Grades 9-12 data from the sample were excluded because those schools only appeared in large numbers in the 2006 and 2008 sample (approximately 16% of the 2006 and 13% of the 2008 sample were 9-12 schools). Because schools containing Grades 9-12 tend to be high schools, their enrollment tends to be higher. Thus, including schools in the 9-12 range would bias the enrollment estimates for the samples. Excluding these schools from the analysis made the proportions of each type of school included in the sample more similar to the sam-

ples analyzed in previous years (see Appendix B for complete breakdown of school types in sample) and provided a more accurate interpretation of the data.

Also excluded from the analysis were those schools indicating a “0” for number of books circulated, because these cases tend to indicate atypical circumstances at that school, such as the library being closed for renovations or computer problems that made assessing accurate information impossible (n= 6). Also, those schools with extreme scores (z scores greater than 5) on purchases per student or circulation per student were treated as statistical outliers and excluded from the analyses (n= 3). Lastly, schools which did not report their student populations were also excluded (n=2).

As shown in Appendix B, samples for the five survey administrations were similar with regard to the grade level taught within the schools. Analysis of variance was used to compare results for the five survey years, with conservative post-hoc Sheffé tests used to compare results between any pair of survey years. A limitation to this approach is the quasi-independent nature of the data, in that some schools participated in more than one survey year.

The 2008 sample size is considerably lower than the samples in the previous years. Although the data in Appendix B suggest that the samples are similar enough to be generalized across years, results should be interpreted with caution.

Quantitative Results

Demographic and library statistics from the schools appear in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2. Demographic and Library Statistics, 2000-2008

Year	Average School Enrollment	Range in School Enrollment	Average Books Purchased/School	Range in Books Purchased/School	Average Books Circulated/School	Range in Books Circulated/School
2000	470.7	75 - 2,132	524.2	0 - 5,090	17,510	150 - 133,964
2002	493.7	102 - 4,200	479.2	0 - 4,014	19,180	210 - 81,000
2004	506.9	80 - 2,200	493.0	0 - 6,116	18,393	30 - 102,600
2006	587.3	100 - 5,868	495.0	0 - 4,925	17,174	25 - 90,204
2008	552.1	116 - 1,402	530.2	0 - 5,510	18,448	456 - 98,000

Note: Throughout this report, the year listed represents the spring of the academic year in which the survey was administered. For example, “2000” represents the spring of the 1999-2000 school year.

In order to control for enrollment changes across years, the purchase and circulation data are adjusted per student, with results presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. Library Statistics, Adjusted per Student, 2000-2008

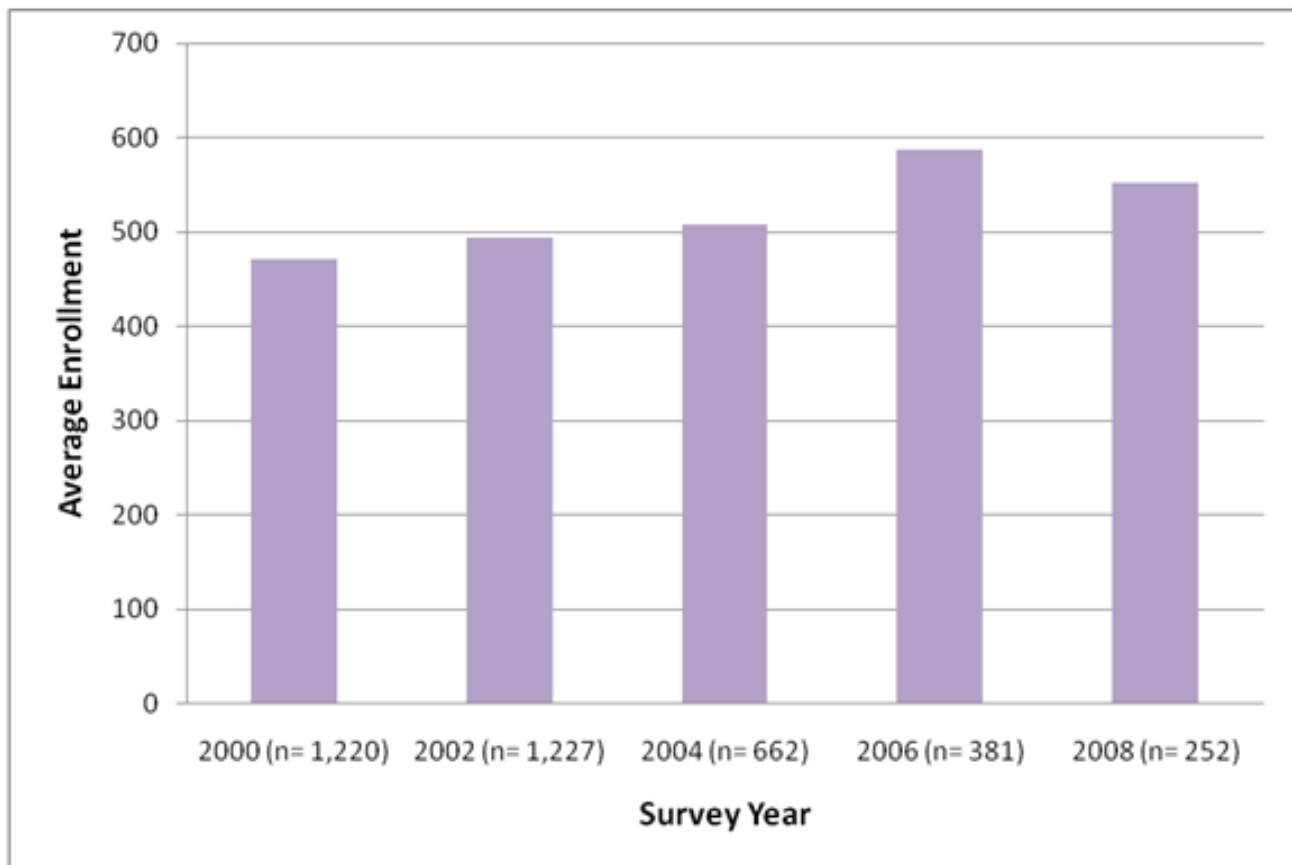
Year	Average Books Purchased/Student	Range in Books Purchased/Student	Average Books Circulated/Student	Range in Books Circulated/Student
2000	1.19	0.00 - 7.77	41.35	0.24 - 256.64
2002	1.03	0.00 - 6.61	43.12	0.98 - 170.00
2004	1.02	0.00 - 7.20	40.11	0.11 - 184.34
2006	0.88	0.00 - 8.46	32.72	0.19 - 146.65
2008	0.96	0.00 - 4.68	33.41	0.79 - 145.33

Analysis of variance was used to compare means across the five survey years for a) enrollment, b) purchases, c) circulation, d) purchases per student, and e) circulation per student. Findings regarding each measure are presented below.

Enrollment

School enrollment has continued to increase since the Printed Materials Grant was discontinued. There was a significant effect of survey year on enrollment, $F(4, 3737)=17.258, p<.001$. Post-hoc Sheffé tests indicate that enrollment was significantly higher in 2008 than in 2000 and 2002. While enrollment in 2008 was lower than in 2006, it was not significantly different from 2006 or 2004. The results are shown below in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3. Average School Enrollment by Survey Year

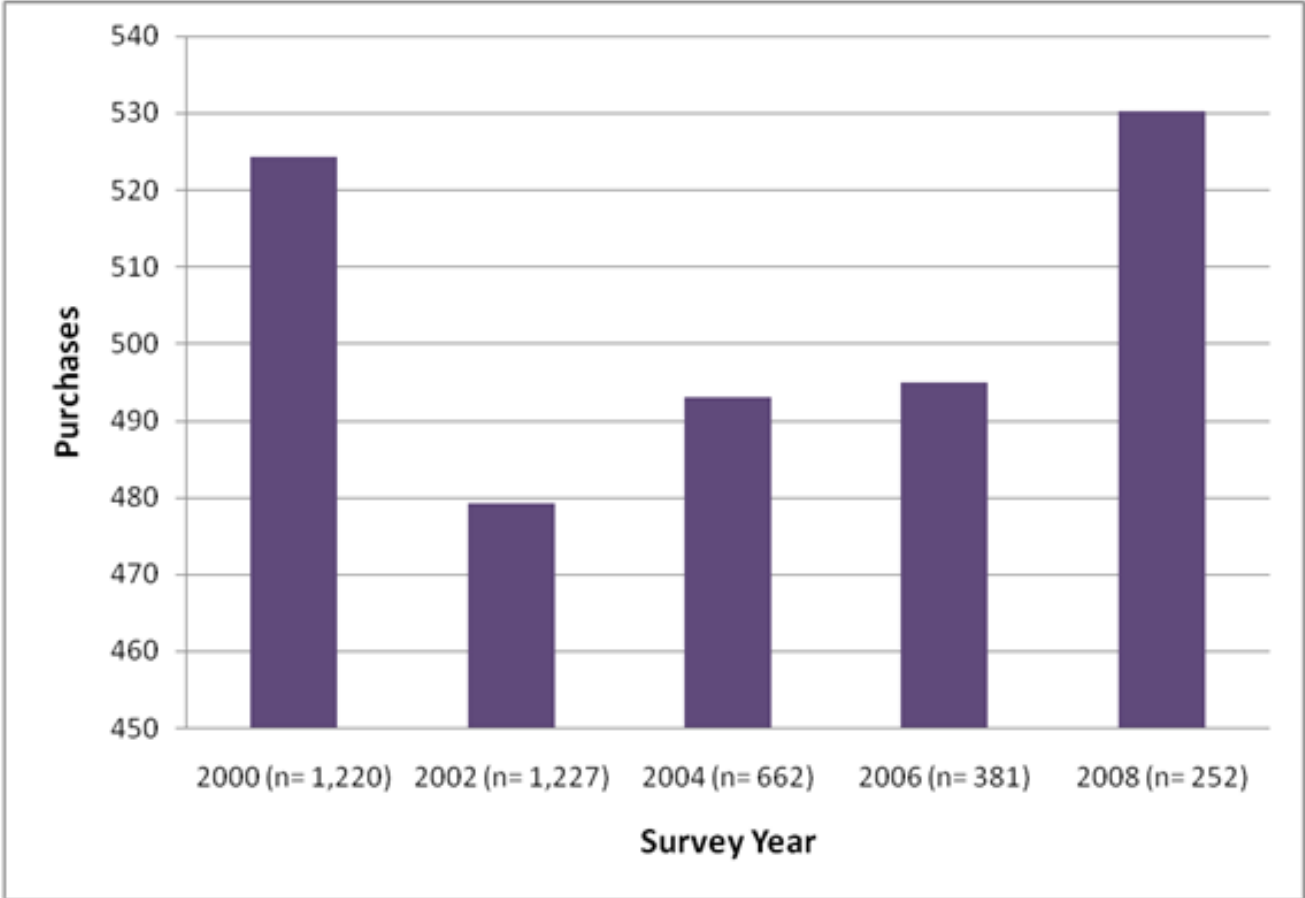


Book Purchases

The number of books purchased per school decreased when the Printed Materials Grant funds were cut in 2002, but remained relatively stable until 2008, in which the average number of books purchased per school was higher than in previous years.

However, while there does seem to be an increasing trend in book purchases, the findings were not statistically significant, $F(4, 3737) = 2.161, p = .071$. Results are shown in Figure 4 below.

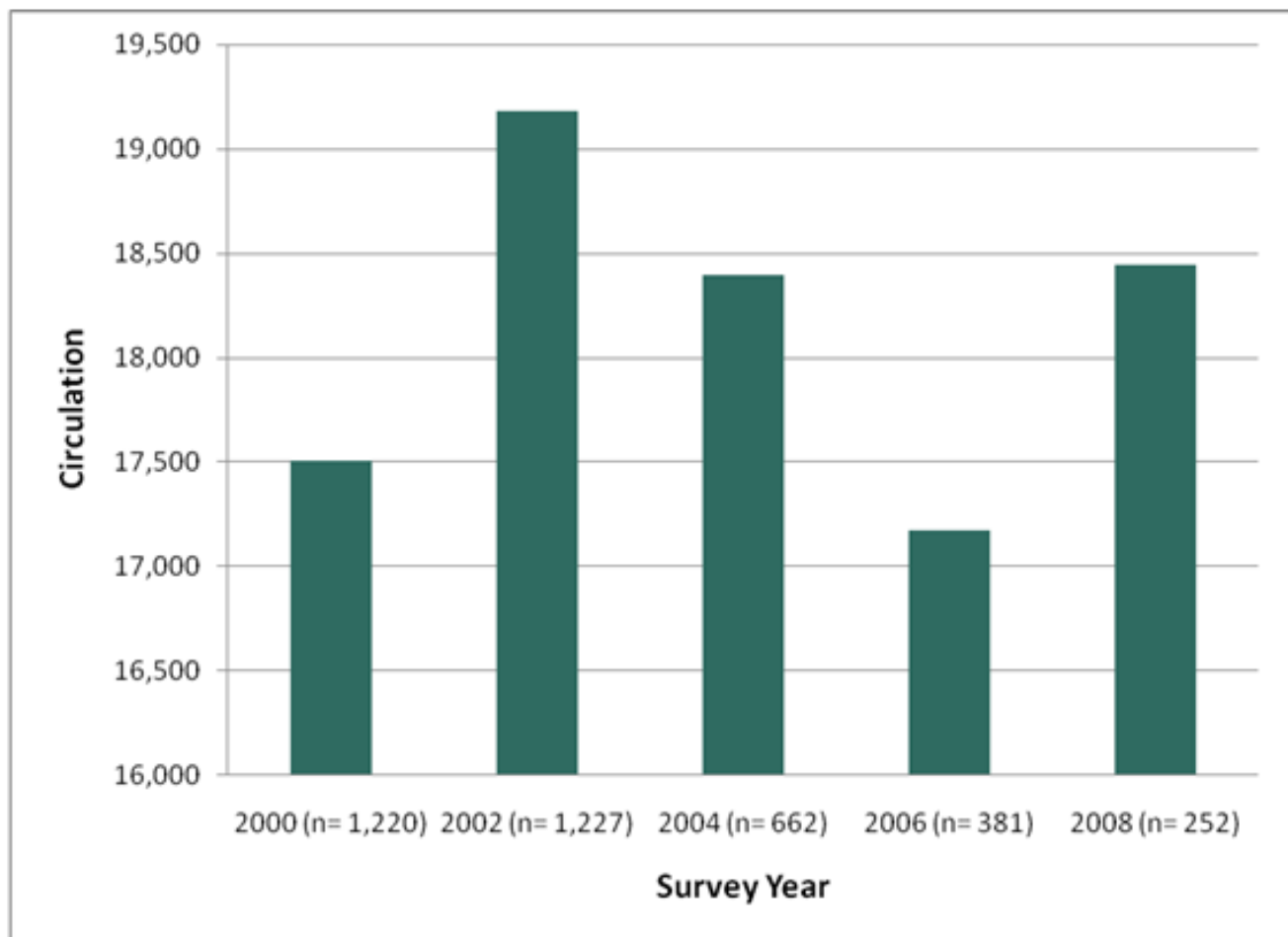
FIGURE 4. Average Number of Book Purchases per School



Circulation

As previously reported, the Printed Materials Grant appears to have resulted in large increases in book circulation in the years immediately following funding (Plucker et al., 2002). A significant difference across survey years was found, $F(4, 3737) = 3.028$, $p = .017$. However, post-hoc analyses did not find any significant differences between the survey years. Although the numbers for 2008 appear to have increased since 2006, these differences did not reach significance. Results shown in Figure 5 below.

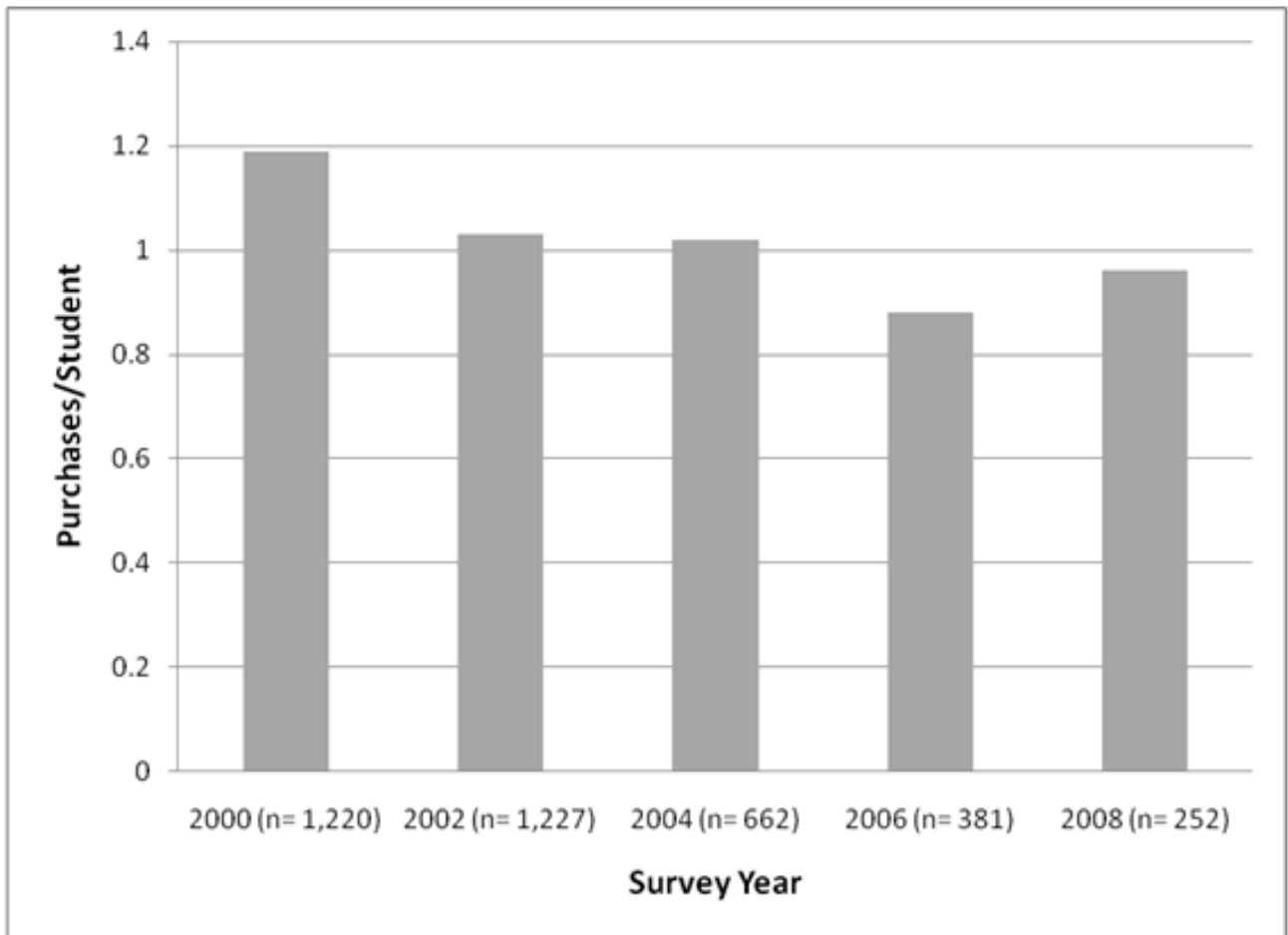
FIGURE 5. Average Book Circulation per School



Purchases per Student

As shown in Figure 5 below, the average number of books purchased per student was significantly different across the survey years, $F(4, 3737) = 16.922$, $p < .001$. Post-hoc tests revealed that the average number of books purchased per student was significantly higher in 2000 than in any of the following years. Conversely, the average number of books purchased per student was significantly lower in 2006 than in any previous years. However, while the average number of books purchased per student increased from 2006 to 2008, the data from 2008 were not significantly different from any year other than 2000. Refer to Figure 6 below.

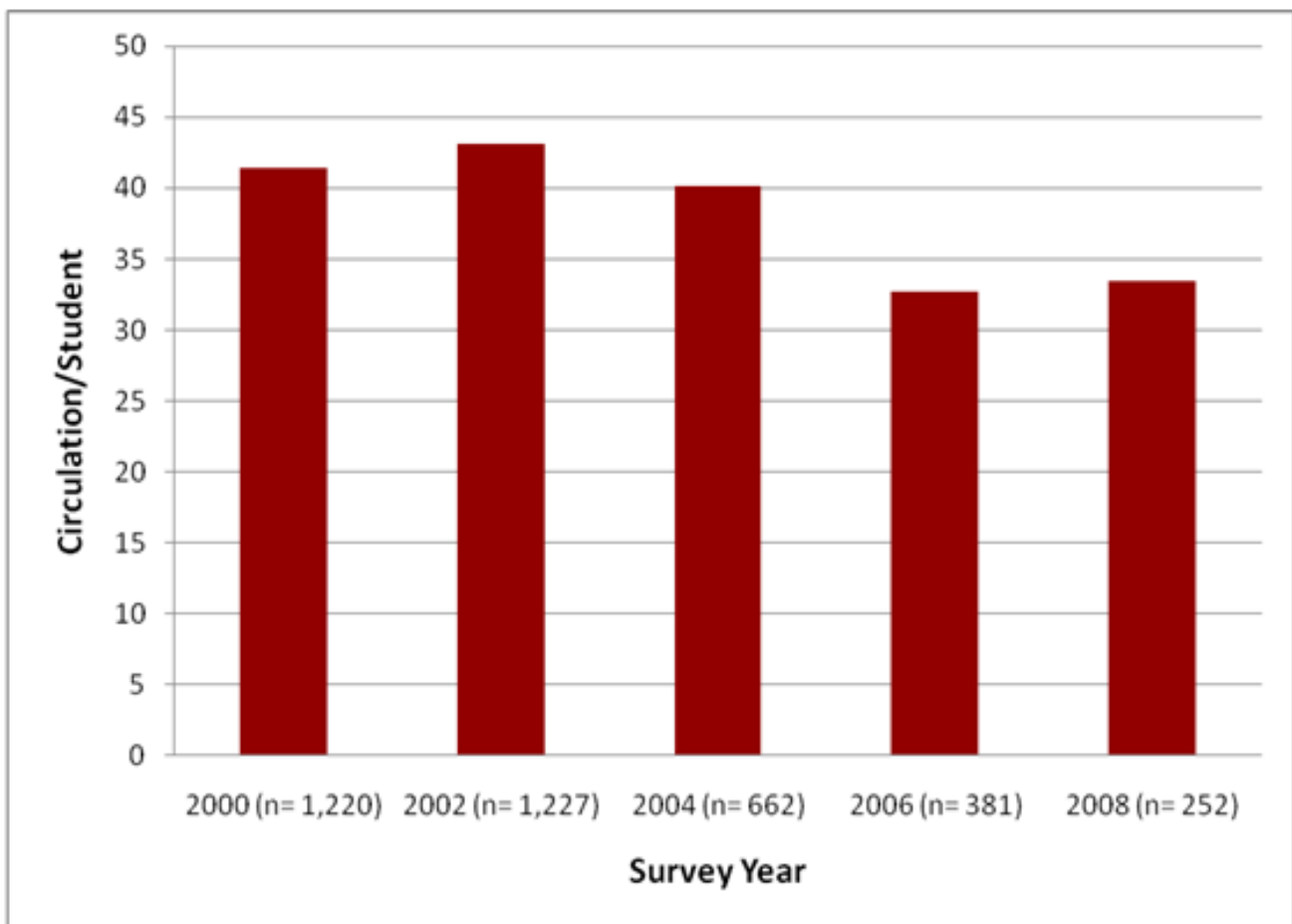
FIGURE 6. Average Number of Books Purchased per Student



Circulation per Student

Findings from the 2002 report indicated a steady increase in circulation per student from 1997-2002. However, the 2006 report found that circulation per student was significantly lower than in any other of the previous survey years. Current findings indicate circulation underwent a significant decline from 2002 to 2008, $F(4, 3737)=10.850, p<.001$. Post-hoc tests showed that circulation per student in 2008 is significantly lower than in 2002. Results are shown in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7. Average Number of Books Circulated per Student



Summary of Quantitative Results

The number of books purchased per school increased nearly 25% from 1997 to 2002 under the School Library Printed Materials Grant (Plucker et al., 2002). The 2002 report also provided evidence that the number of books circulated per school and per student increased nearly 18% and 16% respectively over the course of that funding program. However, from 2002 to 2006, significant decreases in book purchases were observed following the last year of full funding in 2000, with a 26.3% drop in average book purchases per student (Plucker et al., 2006). Book circulation has also experienced a significant decline, with circulation decreasing 20.9% per student from 2000 to 2006 (Plucker et al., 2006).

The current results indicate that while it may appear that book purchases and circulation have increased since 2006, the differences were not statistically significant. Since 2000, during the Printed Materials Grant, enrollment has continued to increase and in 2008 was still significantly higher than when the grant was implemented. When taking enrollment into account, the current average number of books purchased per student remains significantly lower than in 2000 during the Printed Materials Grant. Also, while initial numbers for circulation per student peaked in 2002, with the addition of books purchased in 2000 they have been declining ever since and remain significantly lower than in 2002.

Qualitative Results

Of the 303 respondents to the Middle Grades Reading Network survey, 62 individuals provided responses to an open-ended prompt for additional comments. Of these, 13 comments were unusable in the qualitative analysis. Comments were excluded from the analysis if the content was merely clarifying their responses on the questionnaire (e.g., “The circulation does not include in-house use.”)

The comments were analyzed by identifying themes and subthemes recurring throughout respondents. Four major themes were identified: a) library finances, b) concerns about the lack of school resources, c) the need for books to promote reading growth, and d) comments about the positive effects of the Printed Materials Grant. Some responses were additionally categorized into subthemes for each major theme. Those subthemes are listed in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4. Themes in 2008 Survey Comments

Theme	Frequency	Subthemes
Library Finances	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional Sources of Funding• Budget Frozen or No Budget• Intend to Buy Additional Materials
Concerns about the Lack of School Resources	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insufficient Budget to Address Student Needs or Obtain New Materials• Insufficient Library Staff• Problems Affecting Library Functioning
Need for More Books to Promote Reading Growth	2	
Positive Effects of Printed Materials Grant	2	

Note: Many comments contained elements of several different subthemes, thus some of the comments were represented multiple times in the frequency counts. Seven comments were double coded.

Library Finances

Additional Sources of Funding (n=27)

A major theme identified in the analysis was a concern about the current financial state of the library. The majority of comments dealt with how the respondents are supplementing any funds received by their districts with outside funding in order to obtain needed library materials. In particular, many individuals mentioned using tactics such as book fairs (n= 19), receiving books as donations (n= 10), using Title V money (n= 7), and applying for grants (n= 4) in order to obtain library materials. Other sources (n= 3) used to obtain materials were public libraries and funds from overdue book fines. For many of the responses pertaining to a reliance on alternative sources of funding, problems with current district funding were also frequently mentioned. Quotes exemplifying participant responses are listed below.

Majority of books were purchased with profits from book fairs.

Of books purchased, only 84 were funded with monies from school corp. All other books were purchased using profits from book fair and magazine sales, a grant for substance abuse books, and Title V funds.

Many of the books were given to us!

Books purchased were 30 with book profit from our book fair. We have no budget for books. We also had a donation of a set of encyclopedias.

We are asking staff, student,s and alum to donate new books they purchase but don't want to keep. We give them a tax receipt. If I don't want to put a donated book in my collection, I add it to our bank of silent sustained reading. We received 157 new books last year as gifts.

Please note all books were purchased with monies from three separate sources—two private individuals and the overdue fine/lost book fund.

117 from library budget, 111 from donations, 75 from book fair profits.

We are fortunate to host a very successful book fair each year. We take cash profit and use it for books.

Budget Frozen or No Budget (n= 6)

Another financial theme in the responses was the inability to obtain new materials using school district funds due to either a budget freeze or having the budget eliminated entirely. Quotes best demonstrating this concern appear below.

We had a budget freeze preventing us from ordering in 2007.

...The elementary library receives no money from the school. Our books are bought with public library money and one donation.

I have not yet received my budget for 2007-2008.

Intend to Buy Additional Materials (n= 3)

Other comments referenced the intent to purchase additional materials before the end of the school year with remaining funds. These respondents indicated that they currently have funds to purchase additional materials, but have not yet done so. An exemplar is included below.

However, I expect to purchase approx. 200 books before May 31, 2008, but they have not been ordered.

Concerns about the Lack of School Resources

Another theme in the comments was the concern about the lack of school resources. In particular, concerns were voiced about an insufficient number of library personnel and a lack of up-to-date materials. Individuals cited having library personnel stretched too thin and having certified specialists replaced with library aids. Respondents also commented on how their current finances do not allow them to address student needs or update library materials. Other comments dealt with problems that affect library functioning, such as lacking computer systems, stolen materials, and library closings due to construction or weather. Quotes exemplifying each of these concerns are listed below.

Insufficient Library Staff (n=3)

We are staffed with one full-time library media specialist and one full-time library media assistant that each divides their time between two library media centers (a K-2 facility and a 3-5 facility). This has been a budgetary decision that directly impacts the accessibility to the media center.

Insufficient Budget to Address Student Needs or Obtain New Materials (n=9)

The telling number is the new books that we are able to purchase with limited funding for school corp. We purchase new titles annually from money donated but it's not enough to maintain an up to date book list.

We need several more dollars (3,000+) each year to update our collection, especially in the science and social studies areas.

We do not have enough \$ to purchase books needed to keep library current.

Because we receive just \$7/student for purchasing books, we have gone to more paperbacks and other inexpensive books in order to add some variety to our collection.

Problems Affecting Library Functioning (n=4)

Please note that due to storm damage over the summer our library was not able to open until mid March 08.

Number of books stolen this year: 280; total cost of stolen books \$3,787.

Need Books to Promote Reading Growth

Other respondents commented on how they needed more books in order to promote reading within their schools. These two comments exemplified an overall feeling throughout the survey's responses of the relationship between acquiring library materials and encouraging literacy in their schools.

Our number of books circulating is up because we are working so hard promoting reading, lit circles, a reading counts program, and county battle of the books program. We need more books!

We have a very old collection, so any new books we acquire are very popular. If we were able to afford more new books, more students would check them out and therefore, read!

Positive Effects of Printed Materials Grant

A final theme in the survey comments was how much the respondents appreciated the Printed Materials Grant. These two comments exemplified how the loss of the Printed Materials Grant has hurt school libraries' ability to service their students.

The loss of the library printed material grant has diminished the number of new books we can acquire.

We desperately miss the extra \$\$ provided by the state. In an attempt to keep our book purchases as high as possible, we have drastically cut reference material purchases. Unfortunately, our reference collection is very outdated now.

Conclusions from Qualitative Analysis

Results of the qualitative analysis indicate that public school librarians within the state of Indiana continue to be concerned about school finances and how this strain affects student literacy. Many librarians find it difficult to adequately address the needs of the students and the school due to insufficient library staffing and low materials budgets. A concern addressed by many of the comments was the inability to properly address student needs given current financial situations. To deal with this, many of the librarians indicated that they were finding alternative methods of funding to help supplement the purchase of library materials. These methods often included book fairs, donations, Title V funds, and applying for various grants. It is through these methods that they are able to obtain the library materials that their schools need. Although many librarians are finding ways to improve the situations of their libraries, several indicated that they are still not able to address their student's needs. Problems such as out-of-date materials and insufficiently staffed libraries were also noted. Two of the participants reminisced about the days when the Printed Materials Grant was instated; others simply offered general pleas for additional funds.

Study Limitations

The results of this study should be interpreted with caution. It is important to note that school librarians voluntarily completed and returned the surveys. Although in 2000 and 2002 the numbers of librarians returning the surveys were quite large, this still does not represent the views of every public school librarian in the state of Indiana. This becomes more problematic when looking at the significantly smaller survey return rates of 2004, 2006, and finally 2008, which had the lowest response rate yet.

It should also be noted that although findings showed a significant increase in enrollment for the years since the Printed Materials Grant, there has been small growth comparatively in school enrollment in Indiana schools overall. Thus, the increase in enrollment is found for the schools choosing to participate in our survey, and is not due to an overall increase in Indiana school enrollment.

The self-reporting nature of the survey may also be considered a limitation to the study. Respondents may have made reporting errors which will influence some of the data. In particular, some comments made in the open-ended portion of the survey suggested difficulty reporting exact purchase and circulation figures due to problems with record keeping or complex library situations. Thus, for many of these cases, circulation and purchase numbers may be approximate at best. Along the same lines, the possibility for bias exists in the open-ended responses in that respondents' hopes of influencing decisions regarding funding may have influenced their responses.

A third limitation to the study is the lack of data collected regarding the actual source of book-purchasing funds within each school across the survey years. In the 2004, 2006, and 2008 surveys, many responses to the open-ended question addressed alternative sources of funding being used after the end of the fully funded cycle. Although an important assumption of this study is that a substantial portion of the 2000 and 2002 funds for book purchases within each school year came from K-12 grants, no data of this nature were collected during the 2000 and 2002 survey years.

Funding was limited to K-8 schools during the first funding cycle but expanded to K-12 schools in subsequent cycles. Therefore, conclusions about when funds were spent are limited. At best, readers can assume that \$4 million was spent during 1999-2001, and \$3 million during 2001-2002. The last two figures probably amount to less of a per-student increase in grade levels eligible for the targeted funds. Indeed, the \$3 million during 2001-02 may even represent a decrease in per-student funding relative to the first funding cycle.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

In a previous study (Plucker et al., 2004), researchers found that increases in state funding for school libraries from 1997-2001 resulted in substantial increases in book purchases and circulation that were reflected in the 2000 data on the number of book purchases per school and per student. Subsequently, with a new pool of printed materials available to students, book circulation per school rose substantially as reflected in the 2002 data. The decline in book circulation in 2002-06 was presumably due to the decrease in funding during the 2002 school year.

Book purchases per student declined dramatically from 2000 to 2003, remained relatively flat from 2002 to 2004, and were significantly lower in 2006. From 2000 (the last full year of funding) to 2006, book purchases per student decreased 26.3%, reflecting the consequences of the exhaustion of state funding for printed materials, the rising cost of books, and increased school enrollments that reduced purchases per student and caused schools to be unable to rebound from the loss of funds. This trend has continued into 2008. While total book purchases appeared to be growing from 2002 to 2008, school enrollment has increased at a faster rate, causing the number of purchases per student to decrease dramatically. In the face of significant decreases in funding, however, librarians have shown considerable resourcefulness at finding new methods for funding book purchases which have likely prevented school libraries from falling further behind.

Based on the 2008 data, new conclusions can be drawn:

1. Although the average number of books purchased per school was higher in 2008 than in 2000-06, with continued high enrollment for survey respondents the average number of books purchased per student continues to be significantly lower than in 2000. Similarly, circulation figures for 2008 were significantly lower than in 2002. In response, many of the librarians indicated that they have been utilizing additional sources of funding other than district monies to obtain the library materials. The methods used, such as relying on money received from book fairs and donations, are not necessarily stable or long-term. If librarians

continue to rely on these methods to supplement the funds they receive from their respective districts, they may not be able to maintain the purchasing power seen in the current year.

2. A surge in circulation in 2000-02 was followed by a decline from 2002 to 2008. Declines in circulation can be expected when purchases of library books decrease as students lack library access to new reading materials. With previous research showing a link between well developed library media programs and increased student achievement, such declines in circulation are worrying.
3. Literacy continues to be a central focus of educational initiatives in Indiana schools, yet librarians report that they are having difficulty meeting the educational needs of their students given the current financial climate. A lack of up-to-date materials paired with an insufficient number of literacy support staff make it difficult for librarians to work with teachers and students to promote literacy.
4. In a comparison between Indiana public school libraries and those in other states, concerns are evident. While at one time Indiana ranked highly in terms of financing and stocking its K-12 school libraries, over time it has continued to sink lower in the rankings. The decline found by the federal Schools and Staffing Survey mirrors the Printed Materials Trend Analysis. If Indiana residents want their students to remain competitive at the national level, then Indiana school libraries also have to remain viably attractive to students as a resource for printed materials.
5. Despite the state's considerable financial challenges, the role of library materials should be considered in any comprehensive plan to improve the literacy of Indiana's students. Resources for the support of school libraries are increasingly strained, making it difficult to support critical academic and student needs. We are able to see the long-term effects of the budget cuts on book circulation per student, but further negative outcomes on student reading levels and achievement may also become evident in the near future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

2008 Survey

Middle Grades Reading Network

School Library Book Acquisition and Circulation Survey

Grade levels served by the school:

___ K-5 ___ K-6 ___ 6-8 ___ 7-12 ___ 9-12

___ Other (Grade Levels _____)

_____ Number of students

_____ Number of books purchased from June 1, 2007, to May 31, 2008, including those ordered but not yet received.

_____ Number of books circulated from June 1, 2007, to May 31, 2008, including an estimate of the number of books that will be circulated from now to May 31, 2008.

Comments:

Please return in the addressed and stamped envelope. The results of the survey will be widely distributed. No individual school results will be shared with anyone. A copy of the 2006 Survey results can be found at <http://mgrn.evansville.edu/Library%20Report%202006.pdf>

Appendix B

Grade Level Taught in Schools by Survey Year

Table B-1. Schools Included in Analysis

Grades Taught	Schools in 2000 Survey (N=1222)		Schools in 2002 Survey (N=1227)		Schools in 2004 Survey (N=662)		Schools in 2006 Survey (N=462)		Schools in 2008 Survey (N=303)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
P-K	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
P-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
P-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.4	0	0
P-5	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1.1	0	0
P-6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
P-8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
K	4	0.3	1	0.1	2	0.3	1	0.2	0	0
K-1	1	0.1	2	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
K-2	11	0.9	14	1.1	5	0.8	4	0.9	1	0.3
K-3	12	1.0	10	0.8	8	1.2	0	0	0	0
K-4	44	3.6	44	3.6	37	5.6	24	5.2	10	3.3
K-5	472	38.6	460	37.5	217	32.8	140	30.3	70	23.1
K-6	269	22.0	273	22.2	116	25.1	35	7.6	35	11.6
K-7	1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K-8	21	1.7	25	2.0	15	2.3	2	0.4	6	2.0
K 6-8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
K-9	1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K-12	8	0.7	8	0.7	10	1.5	5	1.1	4	1.3
1-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.4	0	0
1-5	20	1.6	18	1.5	3	0.5	9	1.9	2	0.7
1-6	2	0.2	1	0.1	1	0.2	0	0	0	0
2-5	2	0.2	3	0.2	2	0.3	0	0	0	0
2-6	1	0.1	3	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3-5	9	0.7	10	0.8	5	0.8	2	0.4	3	1.0
3-6	1	0.1	2	0.2	1	0.2	2	0.4	0	0
4-5	1	0.1	1	0.1	2	0.3	1	0.2	0	0
4-6	8	0.7	8	0.7	5	0.8	0	0	2	0.7
4-8	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
5-6	7	0.6	5	0.4	3	0.5	7	1.5	6	2.0
5-7	1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5-8	14	1.1	10	0.8	9	1.4	7	1.5	8	2.6
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.4	1	0.3
6-7	2	0.2	2	0.2	2	0.3	0	0	0	0
6-8	165	13.5	176	14.3	119	18.0	60	13.0	62	20.5
6-9	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	2.4	0	0
6-12	14	1.1	15	1.2	11	1.7	9	1.9	2	0.7
7-8	48	3.9	57	4.6	30	4.5	28	6.1	31	10.2
7-9	5	0.4	8	0.7	3	0.5	0	0	1	0.3
7-12	74	6.1	67	5.5	56	8.5	16	3.5	20	6.6
8-9	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
9-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	78	16.9	38	12.5
10-12	2	0.2	0	0	0	0	2	0.4	1	0.3

