

Statistics about California School Libraries

This is the annual data collection of trends pertaining to California School Libraries and the level of library resources made available to students from year to year.

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The California Department of Education annually collects information about school libraries using an online survey process. In 2006-2007, 5,287 California schools completed the survey, appropriately representational of elementary, middle, and high school numbers. The following statistical snapshot is based on this data as well as data collected by the California Basic Educational Demographic Survey (CBEDS). When possible, previous and national data are provided for comparison.

Number of libraries

Among California public schools, 97 percent have a place designated as the library, although staffing, collections, and programs range from exemplary to substandard.

Staffing

Approximately 24 percent of California schools have a credentialed teacher librarian on campus part time or longer; the majority of professional staffing is found at the high school level. A teacher librarian has both a California teaching credential and a California teacher librarian services credential. Although the average national ratio of teacher librarians to students in the fall of 2004 was 1:916, California ranks fifty-first in the nation with a current ratio of 1:5,124 (2006-07 CBEDS Report and Digest of Education Statistics Tables and Figures 2006, [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (Outside Source). In 2006-07, 89 percent of the schools reported classified staff in the library.

Library books

The latest figure for the average number of school library books per kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) student in California is 17.9, an increase of 0.3 over the previous year. In 1986, the number reported per student was ten. Nationally, the top quarter of school libraries average 26 books per student according to School Libraries Count, a national survey of school library media programs. [School Libraries Count](#) (Outside Source) See [ratio chart](#) (PDF; 194KB; 1p.).

Age of collection

The age of the library books is as important as the number of books available to students. In 1995 the average copyright date of a California school library nonfiction book was 1972. In 2004-05 the average copyright date rose to 1993 and remained there through 2006-07. See [ratio chart](#) (PDF; 194KB; 1p.).

Book costs

The average cost of a children's and young adult hardcover book in 2007 was \$20.82. In the first half of 2008, it rose to \$21.10.

Funding

The primary source of library funding for 44 percent of California schools comes from the School and Library Improvement Block Grant. The second-most important source of funding comes from fund-raising activities. In its first year, 5 percent of the block grant was invested in school libraries. See [An Overview of California School Library Funding History](#) (PDF; 20KB; 1p.).

Electronic access to resources

Eighty-nine percent of the 5,287 responding school libraries reported the use of an electronic catalog and automated circulation system. Eighty-one percent reported providing access to the Internet. Internet access increases with grade levels: 75 percent of school libraries reported offering access at the elementary school level, 93 percent at the middle school level, and 98 percent at the high school level (CDE Online School Library Survey for 2006-07).

Need for books

The Internet does not replace the need for books and often increases the demand for up-to-date library materials. Library resources come in various formats—both print and electronic—and are selected based on the best format for the intended user and use.

Library hours

The average number of hours that a California school library is open to students is 28 hours per week. Seventy-six percent of school libraries reported being open during breaks, 71 percent during lunch, and 61 percent before school. Only 10 percent of schools reported having the library available during summer school.

Comparative analysis of school libraries nationwide

The following sites contain statistical information about school libraries across the country:

Digest of Education Statistics, 2006
[National Center for Education Statistics](#) (Outside Source).

[Institute of Education Services](#) (Outside Source)

Library Research Service, Colorado
[Research and Statistics About Libraries](#) (Outside Source)

Library Statistics Program
[National Center for Education Statistics](#) (Outside Source)