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PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY COLLABORATION
IN ATLANTIC AND CAPE MAY COUNTIES

by
Jennifer Jamison
Terri Lee Tabasso

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
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Approved by.

Date Approved May 11, 2006

ABSTRACT

Jennifer Jamison and Terri Lee Tabasso
PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY COLLABORATION
IN ATLANTIC AND CAPE MAY COUNTIES
2005/06

Dr. Marilyn Shontz
Masters of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

The purpose of this study was to identify the elements necessary for a successful collaboration between public libraries and school libraries, as well as to measure the collaborative efforts between the school and public libraries. This study was geographically limited to all school libraries and public libraries in Atlantic and Cape May Counties of Southern New Jersey. This study of public and school library collaboration utilized applied research techniques. Mailed questionnaires were sent to public and school libraries in Atlantic and Cape May Counties. The response rate was 58% for public libraries and 54% for school libraries from the two. The results of this study provided an awareness of the collaborative efforts that existed among the public and school libraries in two New Jersey counties. As a result of this study, the researchers concluded that the collaboration efforts between the school and public libraries in Atlantic and Cape May Counties were dismal. A definitive and measurable lack of communication was apparent. The most promising effort seemed to be in the area of providing summer reading lists to the public library. Since the results reflected a lack of collaboration between the two libraries, the researchers recommended establishing partnerships to help increase student achievement.

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We would like to dedicate this thesis to our families. This major accomplishment would not have been possible without the love and support from those we hold most dear.

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Public librarianship in the United States has a long history of commitment to providing the public with the educational and information needs for lifelong learning. The library remains a true community service institution. Public libraries and school libraries have assumed the roles of “information specialists.” Today there is distinct change in the relation of the public library to society. Bill Crowley said it best when he wrote: “The public library must rededicate itself to the educational purposes for which it was founded” (Crowley, 2005).

According to the No Child Left Behind Act 2001, Title I, Section 101, all children should have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and State assessments (Bush, 2001). School libraries are primarily responsible for offering needed resources, but school libraries are limited by funding. At the end of the school day, children without home access to the Internet, electronic databases, print periodicals and books, and basic word processing are at a disadvantage.

The public library working with the school library can help meet the needs of the students by offering such services during and after school hours. School media specialists and public librarians must commit to a partnership based on the educational

goals and resources needed to accomplish such a mission. Strong partnerships between the two entities can exist only if both are dedicated contributors to the partnership. Several existing collaborative programs, where public librarians partnered with school media specialists in the community served as model studies. The programs and reports that served as a guide for this study documenting successful collaboration are: A+ Partners in Education (Gross, 2005) the New York Public Library CLASP program (Tice, 2001), and a report posted by the American Library Association examining school and public library relationships (Fitzgibbons, 2000).

Significance of the Topic

This study stems from the need to refocus the school and public library as cooperative educational institutions, therefore promoting library advocacy in communities. To meet the guidelines of national legislation, compete with the explosion of information accessible electronically, and to continue to provide superior service to patrons, a repositioning of the public and school library is necessary. The importance of collaboration is represented in studies and reports nationally; however, there is no such evidence of successful results in Atlantic and Cape May Counties. Results of this study can help ensure that both types of libraries are adequately funded, technologically equipped, and appropriately staffed to assure continued and equitable access to information.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the elements necessary for a successful collaboration between public libraries and school libraries, as well as to measure the collaborative efforts between the school and public libraries in the Atlantic and Cape

May Counties. If collaborative efforts do not exist, or exist on a minimum basis, students in these two counties cannot meet their full academic potential. This study could also serve as a standard against which to measure the effectiveness or success of similar collaborative efforts on state or federal levels.

This study was based on the following research questions:

1. To what extent did the elements necessary for successful communication between public and school libraries exist?
2. To what extent were services that enhance a successful partnership offered by public and school libraries?
3. To what degree were public and school library resources evaluated, compiled, and shared?

Definitions

Public librarians: A professionally trained person responsible for the care of a library and its contents, including the selection, processing, and organization of materials and the delivery of information, instruction, and loan services to meet the needs of its users in the public library system or public library. In the United States, the title is reserved for persons who have been awarded the M.L.S. or M.L.I.S. degree, or certified as professionals by a state agency. The term also refers to the person responsible for the overall administration of a library or library system and is synonymous in this sense with library director. Classified by functional specialization (acquisitions librarian, cataloger, instruction librarian, reference librarian, serials librarian, systems librarian, etc.), librarians in the United States are organized in the American Library Association (ALA) and its affiliates and the Special Libraries Association (SLA) (Reitz, 2004).

Public libraries: A library or library system that provides unrestricted access to library resources and services free of charge to all residents of a given community, district, or geographic region, supported wholly or in part by public needs (Reitz, 2004).

Educational needs: The knowledge or skill obtained or developed by a learning process that is required or wanted (Reitz, 2004).

Information needs: A gap in a person's knowledge that, when experienced at the conscious level as a question, gives rise to search for the answer. If the need is urgent, the search may be pursued with diligence until the need is fulfilled (Reitz, 2004).

Lifetime learning: One of the goals of bibliographic instruction and information literacy programs is to help library users obtain the skills they need to pursue knowledge at any age, independent of a formal educational institution (Reitz, 2004).

School library: A library in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves the information needs of its students and the curriculum needs of its teachers and staff, usually managed by a school librarian or media specialist. A school library collection usually contains books, periodicals, and educational media suitable for the grade levels served. Another term for school library is school media center (Reitz, 2004).

Internet: The high-speed optic networks that uses TCP/IP protocols to interconnect networks around the world, enabling users to communicate using the World Wide Web, and access remote computer systems such as online catalogs and electronic databases.

Electronic databases: Digital versions of large, regularly updated file of digitalized information related to a specific subject or field, consistent records of uniform format organized for ease or speed of search and retrieved and managed with the aid of database management system software (Reitz, 2004).

Print periodicals: A serial publication with its own distinctive title, containing a mix of articles, editorials, reviews, columns, short stories, poems, and other short works written by more than one contributor, issued in soft cover more than once, generally at regular stated intervals throughout the year. Although each issue is complete in itself, its relationship to preceding issues is indicated by enumeration, usually issue number and volume number printed on the front cover. Content is controlled by an editor or an editorial board (Reitz, 2004).

Book: A collection of leaves of paper, parchment, vellum, cloth, or other material (written, printed, or blank) fastened together along one edge, with or without a protective case or cover (Reitz, 2004).

Basic word processing: A method of converting information into readable text in which personnel, procedures, and equipment are organized for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Word processing systems usually include a microcomputer with a keyboard for typing input, a monitor for the display of text, and a laser printer for producing high-quality output (Reitz, 2004).

Partnership: An alliance or association of persons joined together involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities (Reitz, 2004).

Collaboration: To work jointly with others, especially in an intellectual or educational endeavor (Reitz, 2004).

Collaborative efforts: An earnest and conscientious activity of multiple individuals or work groups to accomplish a task or project (Reitz, 2004).

School media specialist: The person who manages a library in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves the information needs of its students and the curriculum needs of its teachers and staff (Reitz, 2004).

Cape May County: One of the seven counties that make up South Jersey which includes the municipalities of Avalon, Cape May, Dennis, Lower, Middle, North Wildwood, Ocean City, Sea Isle City, Stone Harbor, Upper, West Wildwood, Wildwood, Wildwood Crest (FAQs and maps).

Atlantic County: One of the seven counties that make up South Jersey, specifically the municipalities of Absecon, Atlantic City, Brigantine, Buena Boro, Buena Vista Township, Corbin City, Egg Harbor City, Egg Harbor Township, Estell Manor, Folsom Boro, Galloway Township, Hamilton Township, Hammonton, Linwood, Longport, Margate, Mullica, Northfield, Pleasantville, Port Republic, Somers Point, Ventnor, Weymouth Township (Atlantic county and municipality maps).

Assumptions and Limitations

One assumption was related to achievement. A higher level of collaboration between school media centers and public libraries produces higher student achievement levels as well as reduces student achievement gaps. A second assumption was related to validity of the responses from the survey. The researchers assumed that public librarians and school media specialists responded truthfully to the survey instruments. A third assumption involved the response rate of the parties surveyed. It was assumed that the response rate of the surveys distributed was at least 50%. A valid analysis of the degree of collaboration, was obtained from this documented response range. Results were limited to the group studied; however the study can be replicated.

This study was geographically limited to all school libraries and public libraries in Atlantic and Cape May Counties of Southern New Jersey.

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CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The following literature review focuses on school and public library collaboration. The public library, historically, dedicated itself to supporting communities' need for information. Between 1880 and 1920, the public library incorporated children's services, by initiating direct book loans to teachers' classrooms and by forming "school departments" within the public libraries (Fitzgibbons, 2000). Beginning in 1920, the high school library came into existence to support the instructional and educational needs of teachers and students. A 1941 NEA and ALA Committee report recommended mandating elementary and high schools to have on site libraries to support the educational needs of the school community (Fitzgibbons, 2000); thus indicating the birth of school libraries. This shifted the direct responsibility of library educational services from the public library to the school library.

Cooperation between the public and school library was acknowledged, but how the two should collaborate was never fully established. Both institutions share a history of working to provide educational services, but how does each institution complement the other? The importance of collaboration was noted in various reports, but practical guidelines were not established on how to carry out a productive collaboration. The literature reviewed demonstrated the two institutions' attempts to define their symbiotic relationship within the educational realm of the communities they served. It is clearly

apparent when public and school libraries share the commitment of providing educational services within the community that the outcome is a high quality, well informed citizen, equipped with the skills necessary for lifelong learning.

Historical Perspective

It is important to understand the role that libraries play in education. Statistics from the United States Department of Education in 1983 cited that there were 27 million functionally illiterate adults in the country (Davidson, 1988). In 1983, a report published by the National Commission of Excellence in Education titled *A Nation at Risk*, stated that education was in state of crisis arising from the mediocrity within our school systems. The national agenda placed educational reform at the top of the list. How did libraries respond? The U.S. Department of Education responded through a report titled: *Alliance for Excellence: Librarians Respond to a Nation at Risk* (U. S. Ed., 1984). The role of the library was seen as an integral part of improving student achievement.

The American Library Association, a nationally recognized organization supporting both school and public libraries, responded through the report *Realities: Educational Reform in a Learning Society* (ALA, 1984). Four major concepts of this report stressed the need for cooperation between school and public libraries. Specifically, the four goals were: learning begins before schooling, good schools require good school libraries, people in a learning society need libraries throughout their lives, and public support of libraries is an investment in people and communities (Fitzgibbons, 2000).

Congress responded by providing appropriations through the Library Services and Construction Act, which supported a variety of literacy programs. A total of 214 library literacy programs in 47 states were funded in 1990 through LSCA Title VI, and received

support (Humes & Cameron, 1990). In 1991, the White House Conference on Library and Information Services pushed for federal and state legislation to fund literacy programs. Two examples of federal legislation that allocated funds for literacy programs were the National Literacy Act, and Literacy for All Americans (Fitzgibbons, 2000).

Through these acts and initiatives, several developments, or advocacy programs surfaced. The America Reads Challenge initiated by President Clinton, had a goal to ensure that all third graders can read at nationally tested standards, and included remedies for those who could not (Fitzgibbons, 2000). In 2001, President Bush initiated the No Child Left Behind Act, with the goal to create the best educational opportunities for children and to ensure they have every opportunity to succeed (Bush, 2005). However, the American Library Association recognized loopholes in the federal programs, that excluded libraries from being eligible for grant money, and made recommendations. The recommendations were that the public and school libraries should collectively be eligible for funding to purchase materials and resources necessary for these programs to be successful (U.S. Ed., 1984). The researchers for this study recognize that adequate funding is an essential element for a successful joint effort between public and school libraries.

Examples of Successful Programs

New York Public Library Clasp Program

In the early 1990s, the Dewitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund sponsored a questionnaire that was distributed to 1,500 public libraries serving a community population of 100,000 or more. This survey was innovative because it sampled a nationwide sample of public libraries, on the types of programs offered to school-aged

youth, the distinct groups they served, and the level of commitment of service provided to programming (Bush & Oehilke, 2001). This questionnaire targeted special interest population groups at risk for gaps in literacy skills; specifically, immigrants, families where English was not the predominant language, low income, rural youth, disabled youth, and at risk youth (institutionalized, crime offenders, drug offenders, or pregnant youth). The Dewitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund agreed to allocate \$3.6 million to the New York Public Library: Connecting Libraries and School Project, (CLASP), (Fitzgibbons, 2000). The Foundation was committed to three objectives:

- Strengthening educational leadership to improve student achievement.
- Improving out of school learning opportunities.
- Expanding participation in arts and culture (Wallace Foundation).

In 1991, the Dewitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund supported, and disseminated funds to finance a pilot program, titled CLASP. The CLASP program involved public library services to children and young adults, grades kindergarten through eighth grade. The school and public systems that were contributors to CLASP included the New York Public Library, the Brooklyn Public Library, Queens Public Library, and their underlying school systems. CLASP initially worked with community school districts containing 23 public library branches and 102 schools (Tice, 2001).

The CLASP program identified service needs and goals accumulated from the results of the DeWitt Wallace 2001 survey. They identified a need to foster collaboration between New York City Public schools and public libraries, to encourage reading for educational as well as recreational purposes, and to promote the public library as a place where student information needs could be met. Information was gathered, via the survey,

and the goals were established. The first mission of the new project was to make sure that every student had a library card. Patrons needed to obtain a library card to utilize the public library. Once this relationship was established, patrons were educated and exposed to the resources available at the public library. Establishing this connection to the community and library resources was the reigniting of the relationship between the public library and the educational community. The key people involved in the project were the school superintendent, school board, parents, and community leaders (Tice, 2001).

Key players within the community must commit to the mission and maintain a service oriented personality. The appointments of liaisons ensured that communication channels were kept open and the goals of the CLASP program remained top priority. One example of good communication in this area was for school and public librarians to collaborate on the development of summer reading lists. School libraries were closed in the summer; therefore student access was limited within the school library setting. As a response, the public library purchased the recommended titles and developed the specific juvenile collection encompassing the literature gained from the summer reading lists (Tice, 2001).

The CLASP librarians offered various teacher workshops bridging the technology gap between the two entities. Some examples of workshops were: using the library technology such as databases, providing reading for fun, and doing an author study (Tice, 2001). A main by-product of the CLASP program was the change of attitude of the school librarian. The school librarian was no longer viewed as an independent staff worker with a cushy job, but as a professional colleague with valuable resources that

connected students, teachers, and communities to the public library (Tice, 2001).

Eventually the CLASP project was administered by the coordinator of community youth services, who works closely with the office of the school library services and others at the Control Board of Education in New York City (Tice, 2001).

A+ Partners in Education

The A+ Partners in Education was one of the most successful examples of school and public collaborations to date. It was conceived in September of 2002, at the Howard County Library (HCL), Maryland. The library wanted to establish itself as a vital institution committed to the Howard County Public schools system. Some basic public library services already existed for the community, such as, library card drives and a presence at back-to-school nights. However, the staff at the public library felt more improvements could occur. The Howard County Library staff sought out the participation of community members such as school superintendents, library staff, media specialists, and school administrators to accomplish these improvements (Gross, 2005). Once these key players were on board, they brainstormed how the public library could supplement and support the existing services available in the school libraries. Within a year, the vision, goals and mission were established; as well as the identification of school and public library liaisons. These people were responsible for keeping the lines of communication open. After all parties involved signed an official agreement, public library staff met with individual principals, assistant principals, media specialists, and reading specialists at all 69 schools to explain how the collaboration would enhance student achievement (Gross, 2005).

One of the first priorities was to make sure that every student and their parents, had in their possession, a Howard County Library card; the library card opened doors to library services and resources. The Howard County Library had a clever solution; all incoming kindergarten and new students were given library card applications as part of their school registration packets. The applications were processed at the library and library cards were mailed to the homes of new incoming students. More than 14,000 library cards were processed through the partnership (Gross, 2005). Special cards were made available to teachers giving them longer circulation periods for resources checked out of the public library. Assignment alerts were well received by the public library; materials were set aside for students, if materials were scarce, the collection was bolstered to meet the students' needs. Free online tutors were available for homework reference help via the Howard County Library website during the hours of 2:00 p.m. until midnight. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive; nearly 20,000 sessions were recorded in September 2002. The school library and the public library split the cost of the popular tutoring service (Gross, 2003).

A number of other programs were implemented through collaboration. Howard County Library purchased an extensive collection of full-text online databases for reference services; with 24/7 remote access to the databases through entering the Howard County Library card barcode authentication. Maryland had a 24/7 reference service, called "Ask us Now", which was similar to the New Jersey Q and A project. Howard County Public Library offered a number of creative programs including the "Dogs Education and Assisting Readers." This program was designed to encourage reluctant readers to read to their canine friends. "Book Club for Boys" was designed to bridge the

gap of low reading scores for boys that needed just a little extra motivation to embrace reading for fun. Programs for summer reading and families with limited English including spelling bees, were developed and flourished at Howard County Library. Collectively, these programs sparked the popularity of the public library within the community. The Howard County Library measured success through recorded statistics. The statistics showed:

- Over the three years visits to the public library doubled from 1 million to 2.1 million.
- Borrowing soared from 3 million to 5 million.
- Program attendance climbed nearly 200%, from 60,000 to 177,000 participants.
- Reference questions increased 41%, from 760, 000 to 1,072,000.
- Electronic visits tripled, from 5 million to 12 million. (Gross, 2005)

At the time of this writing, the Howard County Library continues to evaluate and expand the A + Partners in Education Program. In October 2004, the HCL was awarded non-profit business of the year award by the Chamber of Commerce (FY 2004: The Year in Review, 2004). The Howard County Library received various awards acknowledging their valued contribution to education and the field of librarianship.

Liz Lancaster, Associate Director at the Howard County Library, put it best when she said: “I believe the most important outcomes of the partnership are not exclusively the ones measured by numbers. The relationships we have built between library staff and school staff have resulted in increased access by librarians to students, teachers, and parents” (L. Lancaster, personal communication, October 4, 2005).

The A+ Partners in Education Program continued to shine as a successful example of a steadfast commitment of partnership between school and public libraries. Both library types have become vital components in the educational process. Librarians are seen as essential to the educational process by providing expertise, services, and resources to the entire communities.

Elements of a good partnership

“True collaboration is not spontaneous. It involves building a relationship-like a marriage, friendship or business partnership” (Baxter, 2003). The three traits necessary in any partnership as defined by Brown were shared vision, mutual trust, and distinctive goals (Brown, 2004). In 1997 the United States Library Services and Technology Act formulated specific goals for public and school libraries to adhere to, in order to form productive collaborations (Brown, 2004). The key elements to successful collaboration were “identifies tasks, responsibilities, timeframes, funding and outcomes” (Spelman & Kelley, 2004).

For a successful partnership to prevail, key elements were identified that can serve to integrate the following library services that exist between the school and public library:

- Assignment Alert Programs
- Book Collection/Kits
- Book Discussion Groups
- Community Reading Project
- Library Card Campaigns
- Library Cards for Educators/Schools

- Public Library Visits to Schools
- Publicity (including Newsletters)
- School Visits to the Public Library
- Summer Reading Programs and Lists
- Tutoring/ Student success programs (School and Public Library Cooperative Programs).

In conclusion, implementing one or many of these defined library services expands the level of cooperation and increases the success rate of the partnership.

Barriers to Collaboration

Three barriers were identified by the researchers that the public and school libraries needed to understand concerning a successful collaboration; specifically they were, staffing, collection development, and technology issues.

Many public libraries cannot afford to hire specialized children's or young adult librarians. This deficit creates a loss of vision in services necessary to meet the libraries' educational and informational needs. A 1994 United States Department of Education survey set out to measure children and young adult library services in public libraries. The results proved the lack of special services to children within the public library system. Consider the following:

- Less than half (39%) employed a children's librarian.
- Only 24% had a youth services specialist. (Fitzgibbons, 2000)

If there are not educated, specialized, professional librarians working in the public library; how can one guarantee successful youth services?

School libraries experience the same staffing problem because of budget cuts. The lack of vision from trained professionals, results in a school library inadequately prepared to meet the educational needs of the school community. In 1994, the National Center for Education Statistics conducted a survey on school staffing. The study concluded that in 18 states, approximately ¼ of the elementary schools did not have either a full or part-time librarian or media specialist (Fitzgibbons, 2000). Both of these studies provided evidence that supported the need for specialized, trained youth services professionals in both the school and public library.

Before the birth of electronic databases, basic technology necessary for education, such as computers, wiring, Internet connections, CD ROMS, and licensing took precious amounts of money in library budgets. Money allocated to collection development suffered as a result of this. In 1994, the *School Library Journal* conducted a survey to measure the amount of money school media centers were spending on collection development and technology. The survey found that approximately \$6.80 per pupil was spent on books, with 77% of the schools having books and encyclopedias in CD ROM format (Miller and Shontz, 1995). Collections in both school and public libraries suffered tremendously in the areas of non-fiction to support educational needs, as well as fiction materials to foster the love of recreational reading.

Summary

The literature clearly illustrated the historical perspective on both school and public library collaboration. In the 1980s, the federal government and American Library Association responded aggressively to *A Nation at Risk*. One of the first recommendations to remedy the level of illiteracy in the United States was to fund public

libraries so they could equip themselves with trained librarians and superior resources. Good schools also needed to include good school libraries. In order to support lifelong learning, it is imperative that school and public libraries partner their resources to fully support the educational and informational needs of the entire community.

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overall Design and Justification

This study of public and school library collaboration utilized applied research techniques. Powell stated “applied research tends to be more pragmatic and emphasized providing information that is immediately usable in the resolution of actual problems” (Powell & Connaway, 2004 p.53). The results of this study provided an awareness of the collaborative efforts that existed within the public and school libraries in two New Jersey communities.

The measurement tool for this study was survey/descriptive. The survey allowed the researchers to generalize about a larger population, from data collected from a smaller sample group. “The basic purpose of a descriptive survey is to describe characteristics of the population of interest, estimate proportion in the population, make specific predictions, and test associational relationships” (Powell & Connaway, 2004 p.87).

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify the elements necessary for a successful collaboration between public libraries and school media specialists, as well as to measure the collaborative efforts between the school media centers and public libraries in two New Jersey counties. If collaborative efforts do not exist, or exist on a minimum basis,

students in the Atlantic and Cape May County cannot meet their full academic potential. This study could also serve as a standard against which to measure the effectiveness or success of similar collaborative efforts on state or national levels.

This study was based on the following research questions:

1. To what extent did the elements necessary for successful communication between public and school libraries exist?
2. To what extent were services that enhance a successful partnership offered by public and school libraries?
3. To what degree were public and school library resources evaluated, compiled, and shared?

Sample and Population

This study focused on public and school libraries from Atlantic and Cape May Counties. The population and sample size of public and school libraries were the same. The sample was chosen for their geographic and economic similarities. The researchers identified the following sample from Atlantic and Cape May Counties:

- School Libraries: 103
- Public Libraries: 24

The researchers surveyed 127 public and school libraries combined.

Variables

The independent variable in this study was the degree of collaboration that existed between public and school libraries. The dependent variables were the elements necessary for a successful collaboration, specifically, actions that boost the levels of communication, services and resources.

Data Collection

Public and school librarians of Atlantic and Cape May Counties were mailed a survey. Two separate surveys were developed, one appropriate for the public library (Appendix A), and one appropriate for the school library (Appendix B). The intent of the researchers was to create comparable surveys that measured similar elements from both library settings. The researchers mailed the questionnaires, rather than choosing online or phone surveys. The primary reason was to allow flexibility for the respondents and increase the return rate. The public and school libraries were given ten days to respond and return the completed survey in a self addressed return envelope. Cover letters (Appendixes C, D) were enclosed with the surveys. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study to the public and school librarians and ensured confidentiality.

Each survey asked the respondents to answer eleven questions. The survey focused on three specific areas; communication, services, and resources shared between the public and school library.

Validity and Reliability

The survey was determined reliable after a pretest was administered to public and school librarians who were not identified as part of the population. After the pretest, the survey was revised to obtain consistent measurement of data. The survey was valid because the questions were objective, clear in vision, non-biased and based on the purpose of the study.

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CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Survey Procedure and Response Rate

On January 29, 2006, the researchers mailed out a total of 127 public and school library collaboration surveys. Each survey “mirrored” the other by measuring the same element; the wording was different to accommodate public and school libraries’ abilities to measure collaboration with each other. A total of 24 public library surveys (Appendix A) and 103 school library surveys (Appendix B) were mailed to corresponding libraries in Atlantic and Cape May counties. The surveys were addressed to the library director or school media specialist; each party was informed that the deadline for response was February 13, 2006. The researchers extended the return date to February 25, 2006.

A total of 24 public library surveys were mailed, 14 were returned, yielding a response rate of 58%. A total of 103 school library surveys were mailed, 56 were returned, yielding a response rate of 54%. The total combination of school and public library surveys mailed was 127, 70 were returned, yielding an overall response rate of 55%. Questions not answered were assigned a number value of 9, to ensure the integrity of the measurement of the survey. All surveys returned were answered correctly and were sanctioned valid.

Variables Identified

The researchers identified ten elements necessary for a successful school/public library collaboration relationship. Questions 1 through 10 were based on each of the elements. Question 11 asked both parties to rate their level of collaboration after completing the survey. Both library communities were asked to rate library resources and services in existence. The eleven elements measured were:

1. School/public library communication status.
2. School/public library liaison appointments.
3. Public library attendance in back to school/open house nights.
4. Provision of teacher in-services with public libraries on resources and services available to school libraries.
5. Specific resources available.
6. Availability of school textbook collection in the public library.
7. Assignment alerts made available to the public library.
8. Summer reading list made available to the public library.
9. Public library card applications included in school registration paperwork.
10. Special teacher library cards that increase circulation periods.
11. School/public library collaboration rating.

The elements and the collaboration rating questions were assigned a variable name and number. Variable responses were assigned coded identification number, or real numbers, to measure responses.

Statistical Analysis

After identifying variables and values, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was created to summarize and measure data from the returned surveys. Surveys were given a coded identification number. The coded number was entered into the mentioned spreadsheet.

Presentation of Results

Results in this section are organized in the following fashion:

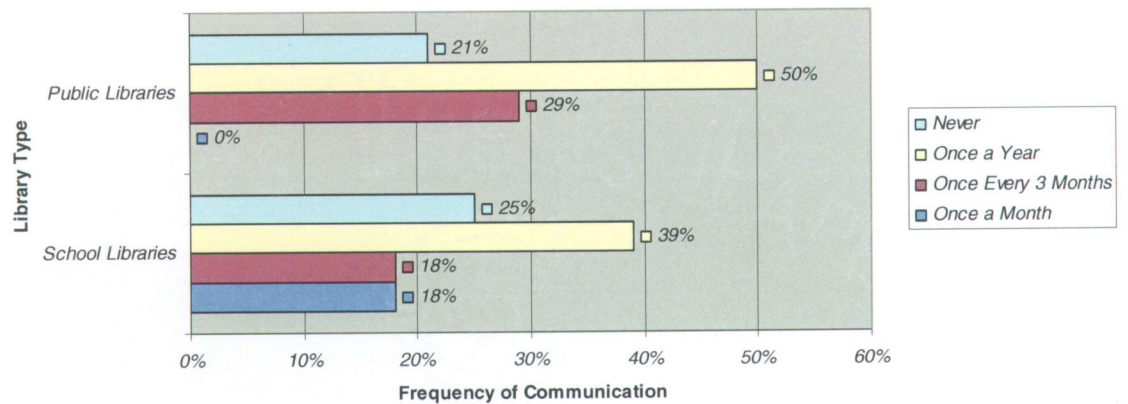
- Survey question/variable posed. The public library survey question is identified as PL; the comparable school library is identified as SL.
- Bar chart of data collected. Responses to both surveys are presented in each bar chart.
- Narrative explanation of each chart.

Question 1: Communication Frequency

PL 1. How often does your public library communicate with the school media specialists in your local community?

SL 1. How often does your school library communicate with the public library in your local community?

Figure 1: Communication Between School and Public Libraries



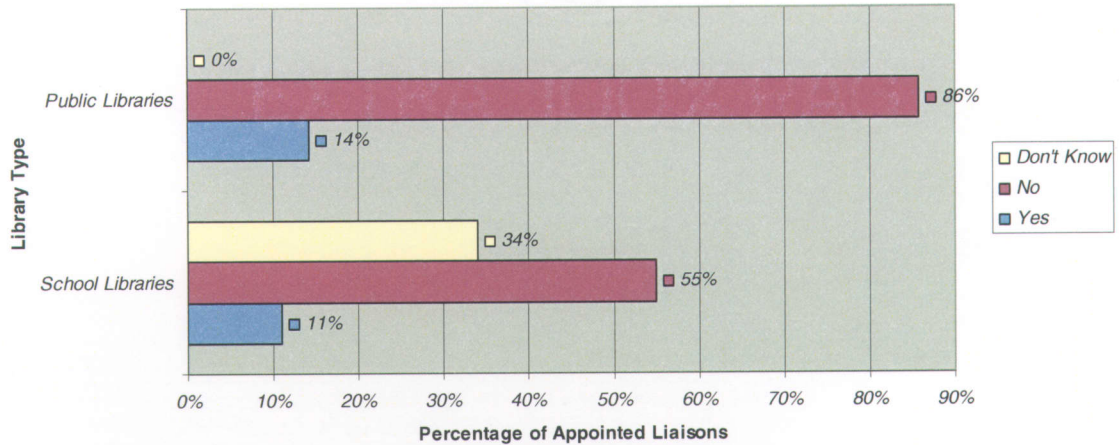
The public libraries survey reported that 21% never communicated with local school media specialists, 50% communicated once a year, 29% talked once every three months, and none communicated as often as once per month. School libraries responding to question 1 reported that 25% never communicated with the local public library, 39% talked once a year, 18% talked once every three months, and 18% communicated once per month.

Question 2: Library Liaison Appointments

PL 2. Has your public library appointed a school liaison, to keep up with curriculum trends within your local school community?

SL 2. Has your school or school library appointed a public library liaison, to keep them up with curriculum trends within your local school community?

Figure 2: Appointed School or Public Library Liaison



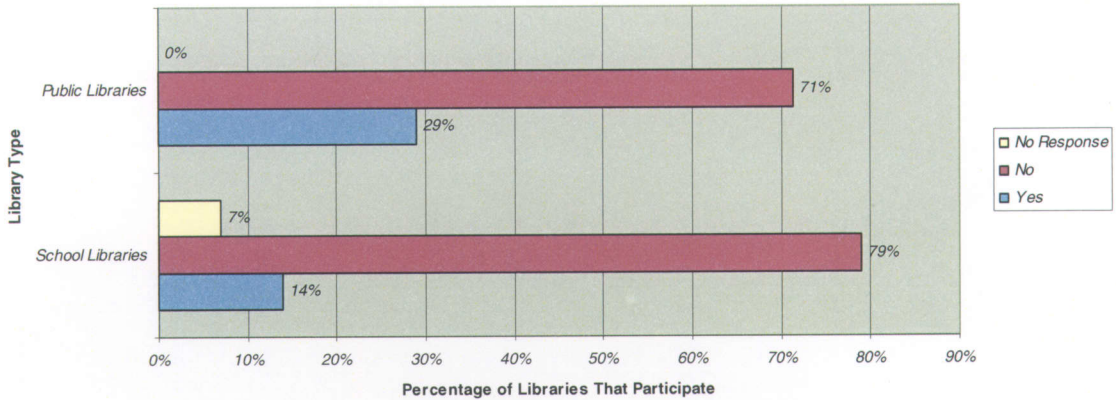
A total of 86% of public libraries surveyed answered that they did not have an appointed liaison, with 14% of public libraries having an appointed liaison. School libraries reported that 34% did not know, 55% answered no to an appointed liaison, and 11% answered yes.

Question 3: Public Library Attendance in Open House Night

PL 3. Does your public library make a presentation at your school's "back to school or open house" to promote public library services?

SL 3. Does your public library make a presentation at your school's "back to school or open house" to promote public library services?

Figure 3: Public Library Participation at Back to School or Open House



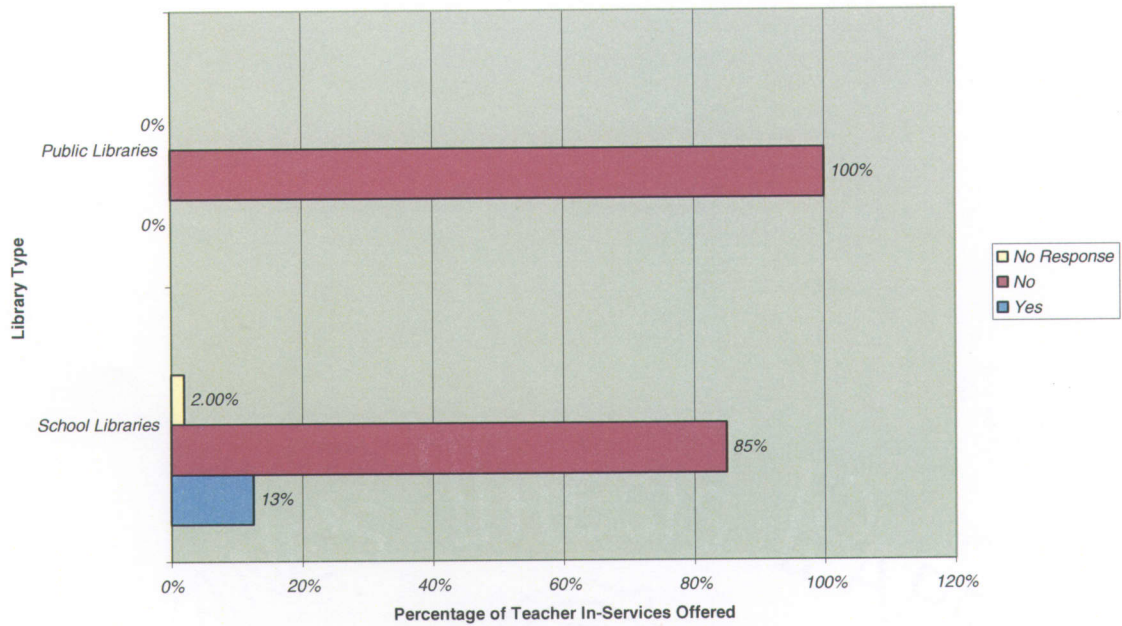
The public libraries surveyed reported that 71% did not make a presentation at open house while 29% reported that they did. The school libraries surveyed reported that 79% did not request the public library staff to make presentations at their open house, 14% did have the public library staff, and 7% of school libraries did not respond to this question.

Question 4: Public Library Teacher In-Services Provided

PL 4: Does your public library provide “teacher in-services” on public library resources and services available to your local school community? (If yes, answer question #5, if no, skip #5).

SL 4: Does your public library provide “teacher in-services” on public library resources and services available to your local school community? (If yes, answer question #5, if no, skip #5).

Figure 4: Teacher In-Services Provided by Public Libraries



All or 100% of public libraries surveyed responded no to offering teacher-in services to their local schools. A total of 85% of school libraries did not have public library staff offering teacher in-services, 13% answered yes, and 2 % of school libraries did not respond to the question.

Question 5: Resources and Services Provided

PL 5 and SL 5. If yes, check all resources and services offered.

- Reference
- Homework help,
- Readers advisory
- Database instruction
- Library orientation tours

- Juvenile programs
- Young adult programs
- After School computer internet access
- After school Microsoft office software
- Other, Please List: _____

Only 5 school libraries responded to this question that identified teacher in-service topics. From the responses the researchers identified 10 areas of library in-service topics; the number next to the library in-service topic in the following list represents the number of school libraries that responded.

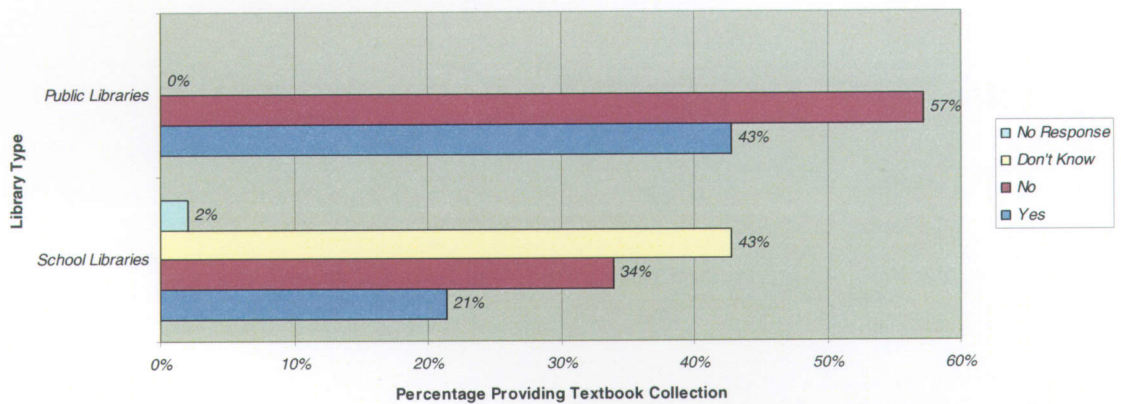
- Reference: 3
- Homework help: 4
- Readers advisory: 1
- Database instruction: 2
- Library orientation tours : 2
- Juvenile programs: 4
- Young adult programs: 3
- After school internet access: 3
- After school Microsoft Office software: 3
- Others please list: no one selected this answer.

Question 6: Special Textbook Collection

PL 6. Does your public library have a special collection of your local school textbooks for the students who “forgot” their books in school?

SL 6. Does your school library provide your local public library with a special collection of your local school textbooks for students who “forgot” their books in school?

Figure 5: School Textbook Collection in Public Library



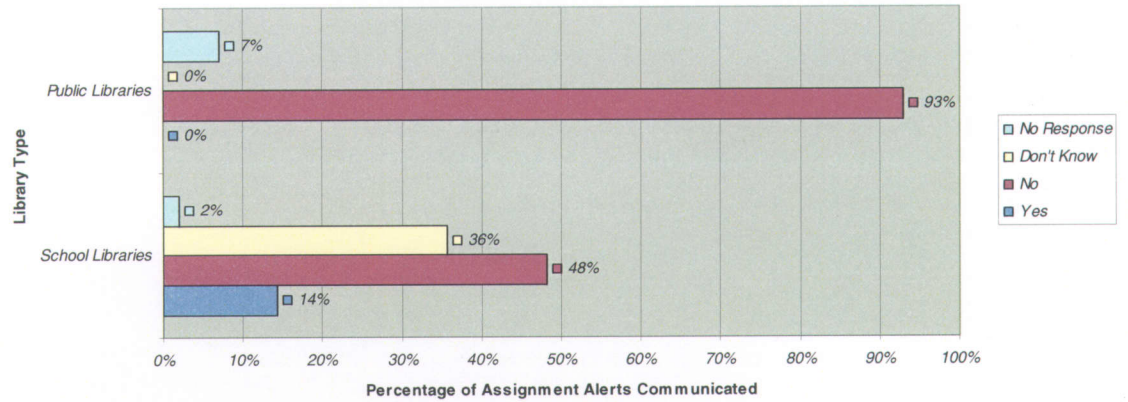
A total of 57 % of public libraries surveyed answered that they did not provide a textbook collection, 43% answered yes. A total of 43% of school libraries surveyed reported that they did not know, 34% answered no, and 21% answered yes. A total of 2% of school libraries did not respond to this question.

Question 7: Assignment Alerts

PL 7. Do your local schools provide your public library with “assignment alerts”?

SL 7. Does your school library provide your local public library with “assignment alerts”?

Figure 6: Assignment Alerts Communicated Between School and Public Libraries



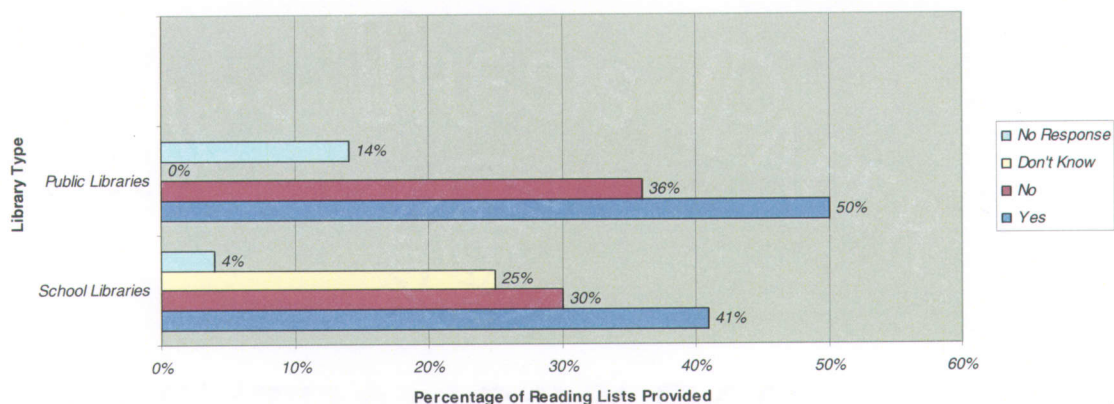
A total of 93% of public libraries surveyed responded that they did not receive assignment alerts from local schools. A total of 7% of public libraries did not respond to this question. A total of 36% of school libraries responded that they did not know if their schools provided assignment alerts to the public library, 48% of school libraries did not provide assignment alerts, and 14% responded that they did provide assignment alerts to the public library. A total of 2 % of school libraries did not respond to this question.

Question 8: Summer Reading Assignments

PL 8. Do your local schools update your public library on summer reading assignments?

SL 8. Does your school library provide your local public library with information and updates to summer reading assignments?

Figure 7: Summer Reading List Communicated Between School and Public Libraries



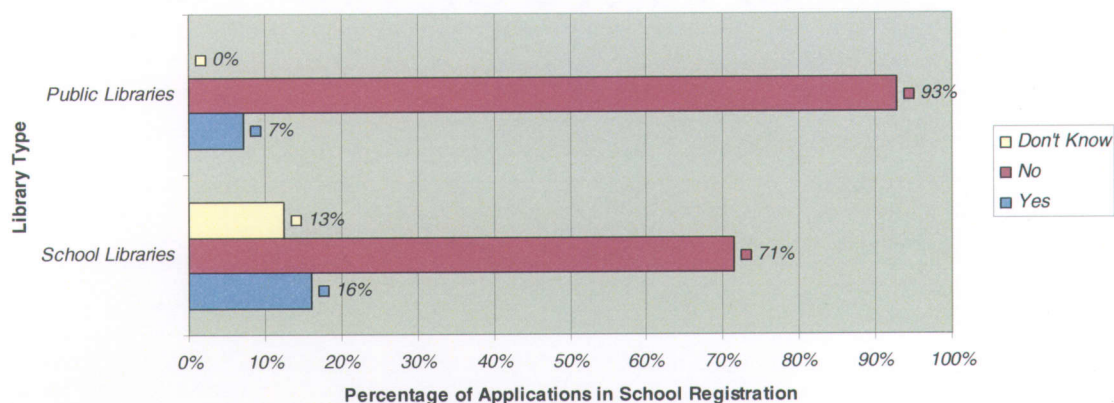
A total of 36% of public libraries surveyed responded that they did not obtain information or updates to summer reading lists from their local schools. However, 50% of public libraries surveyed responded that they did obtain information and updates to the summer reading lists from their local schools. A total of 29% of school libraries surveyed did not know if they provided summer reading list information and updates to their local public library. A total of 41% of school libraries did provide their local public library with information and updates to summer reading lists; and 30% of school libraries did not share summer reading list information with their local public library.

Question 9: Public Library Card Applications Availability

PL 9. Are your public library card applications included in the new student, or incoming student, school registration paperwork?

SL 9. Are your local public card applications included in the new student, or incoming student, school registration paperwork?

Figure 8: Public Library Card Applications Available at School Registration Process



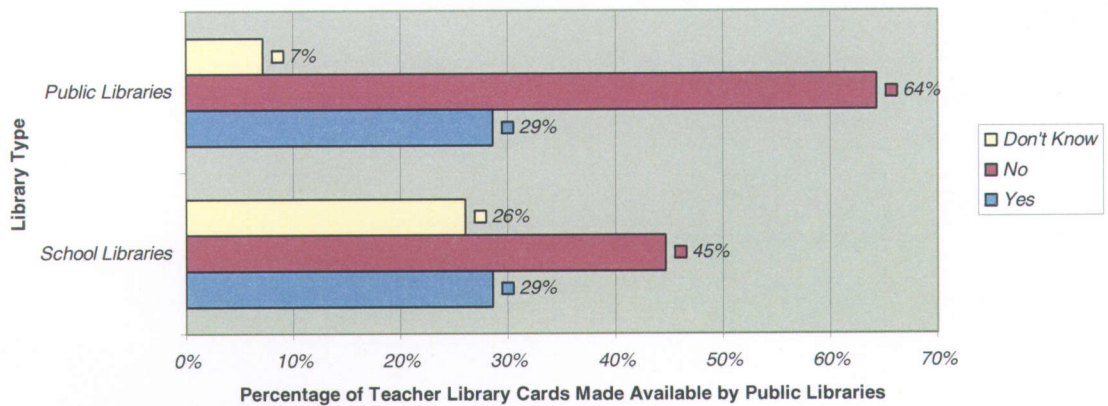
A total of 93% of public libraries surveyed answered that applications were not part of the school registration process, however, 7% of public libraries answered that applications were part of their local school registration process. A total of 13% of school libraries surveyed said that they did not know if library card applications were in the school registration paperwork. A total of 71% of school libraries reported that public library applications were not part of the school registration process, with 16% reporting that they did have library card applications as part of the school registration process.

Question 10: Teacher Library Cards

PL 10. Does your public library offer a special “teacher library card” that extends circulation privileges?

SL 10. Do your teachers have a special “public library card” that extends public library circulation privileges?

Figure 9: Teacher Library Cards Provided by Public Library



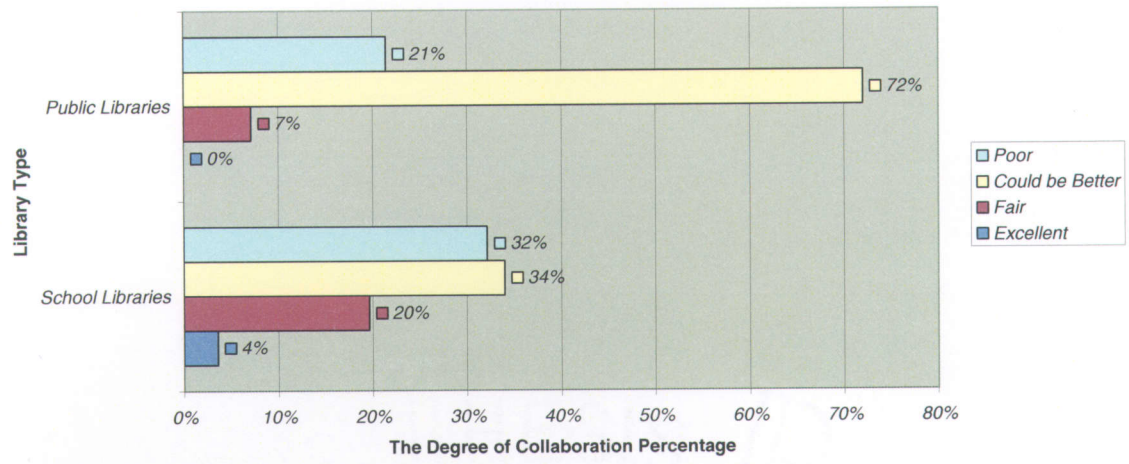
A total of 64 % of public libraries did not provide teacher library cards to teachers in their local school community, and 7 % of public libraries did not know if they provided teacher library cards. However, 29% of public libraries responded that they provided teacher library cards with special public library circulation privileges. A total of 45% of the school libraries surveyed reported that they did not receive special public library cards for their teachers from the public library, and 26 % of school libraries did not know if their local public library provided special public library cards for teachers. A total of 29% of school libraries responded that their local public library provided special public library cards for teachers.

Question 11: Collaboration Rating

PL 11. After taking this survey, how well do you believe your public library is collaborating with your local school library?

SL 11. After taking this survey, how well do you believe your school library is collaborating with your local public library?

Figure 10: School and Public Library Collaboration Rating



A total of 21% of public libraries surveyed reported their collaboration as poor, 72% answered it could be better, 7% answered fair and none stated it was excellent. A total of 32% of school libraries surveyed reported public library collaboration as poor, 34% answered could be better, and 20% answered fair. Only 4% of the school libraries surveyed reported that collaboration between the public library and school was excellent.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Historically, public librarianship in the United States has played a major role in providing the community with the educational and informational needs for lifelong learning. In 1941 the NEA and the ALA Committee report recommended the inclusion of school libraries in elementary and high schools to support the educational needs of the school community; thus indicating the birth of school libraries (Fitzgibbons, 2000). The school and public library are two separate library institutions, with each domain committed to the public they serve. Can the commitment to lifelong learning be shared? Should each library entity orbit the other or should they partnership? How do both institutions complement the other? What is happening in Atlantic and Cape May Counties?

One purpose of this study was to identify the elements necessary for a successful collaboration between public libraries and school libraries, as well as to measure the collaborative efforts that existed in the Atlantic and Cape May Counties.

Library literature revealed that communication was an essential element for a successful collaboration. Survey questions 1, 7, and 8 were created to measure school and public library communication. The researchers found that 21% of public libraries never communicated with local school libraries, 50% communicated once a year, and 29% once every three months. School libraries reported that 25% never communicated with their

local public library, 39% once a year, 18% once every three months, and 18% once a month. The researchers were dismayed to discover that 71% of public libraries never communicated with, or communicated once a year with their local school library. The same scenario held true for school libraries, 64% never communicated with, or communicated only once a year with their local public library.

One form of communication, assignment alerts, also provided negative results. Question 7 revealed that 93% of public libraries did not receive assignment alerts from their local school libraries. A total of 7% of public libraries did not respond to the question. School libraries reported 48% did not provide assignment alerts to their local public libraries, 36% did not know, 14% said they did, and 2% did not respond to the question. Perhaps the non-respondents from both library institutions did not know what assignment alerts were.

Another form of communication about summer reading was more positive. Question 8 focused on the provision of school summer reading lists being communicated to public libraries. Public libraries reported that 36% did not receive summer reading lists from their local school libraries while 50% did receive summer reading lists. School libraries reported that 30% did not provide summer reading lists to their local public library and 41% said that they did. How well were the school and public libraries communicating? The researchers concluded not too well, although the statistics on the provision of summer reading lists promised some hope.

Another purpose of the study was to determine to what extent services that enhance successful partnerships between school and public library existed. Question 2 addressed the issue of staffing, specifically, the appointment of a public library liaison to

keep up with curriculum trends in the local school community. Public libraries reported that 86% did not appoint a school liaison and 14% did report a liaison in place. School libraries reported that 55% did not have a public library school liaison communicating with the public library, 34% did not know, and only 11% reported that they had a school liaison in place.

Question 3 focused on public library presence at back to school or open house meetings to promote public library services. Public libraries reported that 71% did not make presentations at back to school or open house events, 29% reported that they did. School libraries reported that 79% did not have the public library make presentations at back to school or open house events, 14% reported that they did, and 7% did not respond to the question.

Question 4 addressed the provision of in-service presentations on public library resources and services available to the local school community. Public libraries reported that none of them provided in-service presentations in their local schools communicating specific services that may be useful in their school community. School and public libraries surveyed were told to skip question 5 if they responded to question 4. Of the school libraries that responded yes to question 4, question 5 directed them to choose from a list of 10 specific topics of library in-services provided by public libraries. Only 5 school libraries responded to this question. The following list identifies the specific library in-service topics, and the number next to the topic represents the number of school libraries:

- Reference: 3
- Homework help: 4

- Readers advisory: 1
- Database instruction: 2
- Library orientation tours: 2
- Juvenile programs: 4
- Young adult programs: 3
- After school Internet access:3
- After school Microsoft Office software: 3
- Others please list: no responses provided

Question 6 focused on the availability of the local school textbooks in the public library collection. Public libraries reported that 57% did not have a local school textbook collection and 43% did; school libraries reported that only 21% did. A large percentage of school libraries, 43%, did not know if their textbooks were in the local public library.

Question 9 focused on the importance of public library card drives within the community. The literature presented agreed that a good way to promote public library services was to provide public library card applications in the new student or incoming student, school registration paperwork. Public libraries reported that 93% did not include library card applications in their local school registration paperwork. School libraries reported that 71% did not provide public library card applications in their new student or incoming school registration paperwork. This opportunity to the community was also lost.

Question 10 addressed the availability of special teacher library cards that extended circulation loan periods for materials. Both school and public libraries reported that only 29% said did provide or have access to special teacher library cards.

The researchers posed the final question to both school and public libraries to survey their opinion of their current collaboration level with each other. The majority of public libraries reported that they felt they could do better, with 39% of school libraries reporting similar results. The public libraries did not rate their collaboration with the schools as excellent. However, a total of 4% of school libraries rated their collaboration with the public library as excellent, with 20 % reporting collaboration as fair. Through communication, there is collaboration between the two library types, and the survey results support the deficiency of collaboration in both counties. The compelling results from question 11 indicate the rate of collaboration as virtually non-existent, thus the lack of communication negatively affects Atlantic and Cape May Counties. The lack of a liaison presence guarantees limited communication between the school and public library. The irony is that the two entities both are serving the same community, but are limiting services to their communities by not collaborating. The lack of a presence of the public library in the school library and vice versa is a disservice to Atlantic and Cape May Counties. The original goal of the library was to serve the community; however, the libraries surveyed seem to be self-determining what community members they are serve.

Conclusions

As a result of this study, the researchers concluded that the collaboration efforts between the school and public libraries in Atlantic and Cape May Counties are dismal. A definitive and measurable lack of communication was apparent. The most promising effort seems to be in the area of providing summer reading lists to the public library.

One especially discouraging finding by the researchers was the lack of an appointed school and public liaison. How can appropriate library resources and services

be analyzed and developed, if the public library had no idea of curriculum trends in the local school community? Another discouraging finding was the absence of public library staff at back to school or open house events. Public library resources and services were not being communicated to the school community. The public school is the perfect venue to promote public library resources and services to parents, teachers, pupils, and the entire school community. The value in connecting to the community as shared entities provides a more powerful library that can better serve the community.

The researchers found it was distressing to learn that 100% of public libraries do not provide in-service presentations on specific topics to promote library resources and services available to the local school community. The library literature documents that school libraries were a prime target for budget cuts. Public libraries must step in to help soften the blow to this fiscal dilemma. Teachers and students suffer greatly from these budget ramifications; school and public libraries need to collaborate now more than ever, to rectify the void in library resources available to the community. Both library institutions need to partnership to ensure that the tools for lifelong learning are not compromised.

The researchers concluded that the very best way to promote library service is to guarantee everyone in the community a library card. A library card opens the door to the resources and services necessary for lifelong learning. The best way to accomplish this is to provide a public library card application in school registration paperwork. Public libraries reported that 93% do not include public library card applications in school registration paperwork. The researchers recommend public library cards should immediately be included with all school registration information.

Perhaps the researchers planted a seed for the necessity for school and public libraries in Atlantic and Cape May counties to collaborate. Budget cuts are a reality to local school libraries; budget needs to the public library are equally demanding. The two library entities, school and public, must work together, side-by-side, to ensure that all people of its community have the resources necessary for lifelong learning.

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APPENDIX A
PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY

APPENDIX A

Public library survey

PUBLIC & SCHOOL LIBRARY COLLABORATION SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to measure the level of collaboration between public and school libraries in Atlantic and Cape May Counties. It will only take a few moments to complete. Please choose one response to each question, unless otherwise directed. Thank you.

1. How often does your public library communicate with the school media specialists in your local community?
 - At least once a month
 - Once every three months
 - Once a year
 - Never

2. Has your public library appointed a school liaison, to keep up with curriculum trends within your local school community?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

3. Does your public library make a presentation at your school's "back to school or open house" to promote public library services?
 - Yes
 - No

4. Does your public library provide "teacher in-services" on public library resources and services available to your local school community? (If yes, answer #5, if No, skip #5).
 - Yes
 - No

5. If yes, check all resources and services offered.
 - Reference
 - Homework help
 - Readers advisory
 - Database instruction
 - Library orientation tours
 - Juvenile programs
 - Young adult programs
 - After school computer internet access
 - After school Microsoft office software

Other, Please list:

6. Does your public library have a special collection of your local school textbooks for the students who “forgot” their books in school?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

7. Do your local schools provide your public library with “assignment alerts”?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

8. Do your local schools update your public library on summer reading assignments?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

9. Are your public library card applications included in the new student, or incoming student, school registration paperwork?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

10. Does your public library offer a special “teacher library card” that extends circulation privileges?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THIS SHORT SURVEY, PLEASE ANSWER JUST ONE MORE QUESTION!

11. After taking this survey, how well do you believe your public library is collaborating with your local school library?
 - Excellent
 - Fair
 - Could be better
 - Poorly, I better call tomorrow to spark partnership.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY PLEASE ANSWER YES OR NO AND INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS FOR FURTHER COMMUNICATION.

- Yes Email Address: _____
- No

APPENDIX B
SCHOOL LIBRARY SURVEY

APPENDIX B

School library survey

PUBLIC & SCHOOL LIBRARY COLLABORATION SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to measure the level of collaboration between public and school libraries in Atlantic and Cape May Counties. It will only take a few moments to complete. Please choose one response to each question, unless otherwise directed. All responses are confidential. Thank you.

1. How often does your school library communicate with the public library in your local community?
 - At least once a month
 - Once every three months
 - Once a year
 - Never

2. Has your school or school library appointed a public library liaison, to keep them up with curriculum trends within your local school community?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

3. Do you invite your public library to make a presentation on "back to school nights or open house" to help promote public library services?
 - Yes
 - No

4. Does your public library provide "teacher in-services" on public library resources and services available to your school community? (If yes, answer #5, If No, skip #5).
 - Yes
 - No

5. If yes, check all resources and services offered.
 - Reference
 - Homework help
 - Readers advisory
 - Database instruction
 - Library orientation tours
 - Juvenile programs
 - Young adult programs
 - After school computer internet access
 - After school Microsoft office software

Other, Please list: _____

6. Does your school library provide your local public library with a special collection of your school textbooks for the students who “forgot” their books in school?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
7. Does your school library provide your local public library with “assignment alerts”?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
8. Does your school library provide your local public library with information and updates to summer reading assignments?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
9. Are your local public library card applications included in the new student, or incoming student, school registration paperwork?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
10. Do your teachers have a special “public library card” that extends public library circulation privileges?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THIS SHORT SURVEY, PLEASE ANSWER JUST ONE MORE QUESTION!

11. After taking this survey, how well do you believe your school library is collaborating with your local public library?
 - Excellent
 - Fair
 - Could be better
 - Poorly, I better call tomorrow to spark a partnership.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY PLEASE ANSWER YES OR NO AND INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS FOR FURTHER COMMUNICATION.

- Yes Email Address: _____
- No

APPENDIX C
PUBLIC LIBRARY COVER LETTER

APPENDIX C

Public library cover letter



January 30, 2006

Dear Library Branch Manager/Director,

As a professional librarian, I would appreciate your cooperation with an important research project. I am conducting a research project, a required element, of my Master's thesis. Presently, I am the reference librarian at the Margate City Public Library, in Margate, New Jersey. My partner in this research project is Jennifer Jamison, school media specialist at the Eugene Tighe School, in Margate, New Jersey. The purpose of our research is to measure the current levels of collaboration between public libraries and school libraries. My research will concentrate on the public libraries in Atlantic and Cape May Counties. Jennifer's research will concentrate on the school media centers in the identical geographic areas. Dr. Marilyn L. Shontz, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Secondary Education/Foundations of Education, is supervising this research project.

Your participation in this mail survey is voluntary, but I would appreciate your time to complete it. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Please complete this survey and return it to me by February 13th, in the enclosed stamped-addressed envelope. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at tletabasso@comcast.net. You may also contact Dr. Marilyn Shontz at (856) 256-4500 Extension 3858 at Rowan University. You may also contact her by email at shontz@rowan.edu.

I thank you in advance for taking your time to be a part of this research project.

Sincerely,

Terri Lee Tabasso

APPENDIX D
SCHOOL LIBRARY COVER LETTER

APPENDIX D

School library cover letter



January 30, 2006

Dear School Media Specialist,

As a school library media specialist, I would appreciate your cooperation with an important research project. I am conducting a research project, a required element of my Master's thesis. Presently, I am the media specialist at the Eugene A. Tighe Middle School, in Margate, New Jersey. My partner in this research is Terri Lee Tabasso, reference librarian at the Margate City Public Library. The purpose of our research is to measure the current levels of collaboration between public libraries and school libraries. My research will concentrate on the school media centers in Atlantic and Cape May Counties. Terri Lee's research will concentrate on the public libraries in the identical geographic areas. Dr. Marilyn L. Shontz, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Secondary Education/Foundations of Education, is supervising this research project.

Your participation in this mail survey is voluntary, but I would appreciate your time to complete it. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Please complete this survey and return it to me by February 13th, in the enclosed stamped-addressed envelope. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at mjjamison@comcast.net. You may also contact Dr. Marilyn Shontz at (856) 256-4500 Extension 3858 at Rowan University. You may also contact her by email at shontz@rowan.edu.

I thank you in advance for taking your time to be a part of this research project.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jamison

