

Findings from a Census of K-12 School Libraries

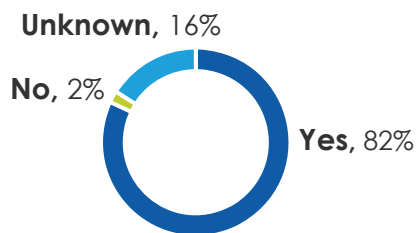
Central Minnesota Libraries Exchange Region

Central Minnesota Libraries Exchange (CMLE) is the state-funded library support organization for 12 counties in east central Minnesota. In spring 2024, the Multicounty Multitype Library Systems, supported by State Library Services, conducted a census of K-12 public and charter schools in Minnesota to learn about the status of school libraries. A total of 178 out of 212 eligible schools in the CMLE region completed the census. This summary highlights data from the CMLE region.

82% of schools in CMLE reported that they have a library media center

In the CMLE region, 46% of schools do not have a licensed media specialist, regardless of full-time/part-time status

1. Library media center status (N=212)



Note. The census survey did not provide respondents with the statutory language. School staff might not be aware or know that school library media centers must be served by licensed professionals. Had the census provided respondents the statutory language, fewer schools might have reported having a school library media center.

10% of schools with a library media center share it with another school.
*This includes schools that share a building

Though state statute requires a school library media center be served by a licensed media specialist or licensed school librarian,¹ most are not.

In the CMLE region, the largest proportion of schools (52%) are staffed by one person, most often a paraprofessional.

Ideally, library media centers are staffed by a full-time licensed media specialist and a full-time support staff.²

2. Library media center staffing (N=121)

Licensed media specialist	Non-licensed media specialist	% of schools
None	Two (Full-time or Part-time)	45%
One (Part-time)	None	2%
One (Part-time)	One (Part-time)	15%
One (Part-time)	None	7%
One (Full-time)	None	7%
One (Full-time)	One (Part-time)	12%
One (Full-time)	One (Full-time)	12%

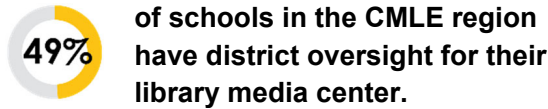
● Full-time
 ● Part-time
 ● None

Note. The remaining 1% of schools reported volunteer or no staff. Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

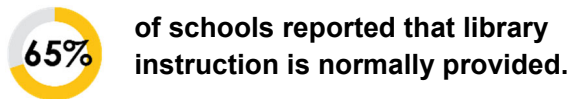
¹ Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 124D.911

² American Association of School Librarians (AASL). (2018b). *AASL position statement on appropriate staffing for school libraries.*

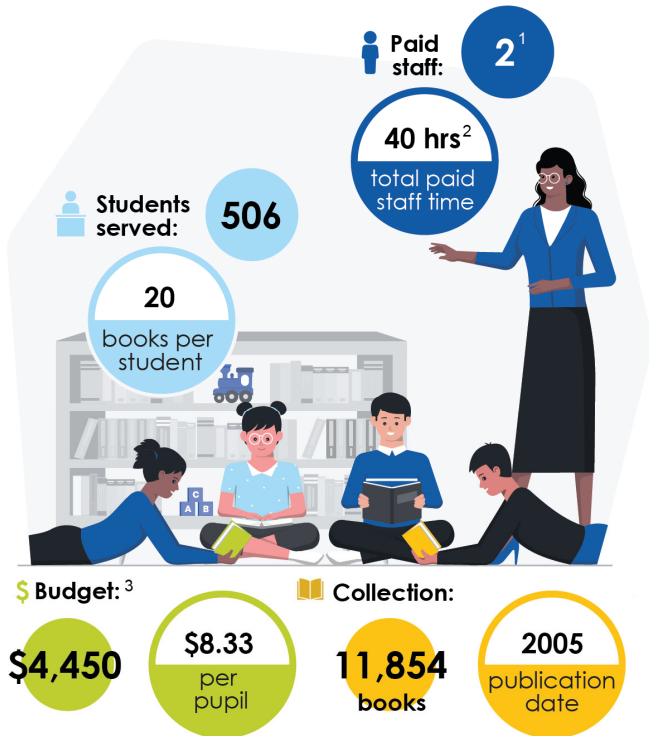
Ideally, school library media centers have district oversight.



Library instruction helps students learn how to find trustworthy information, use library resources effectively, and develop research skills they will need throughout their education and beyond.

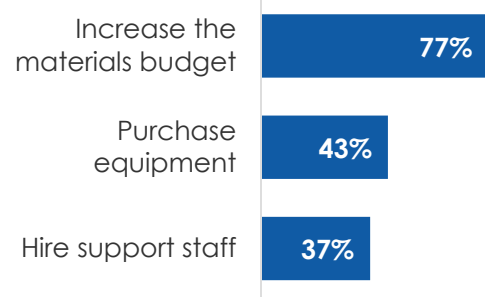


CMLE average school library media center statistics



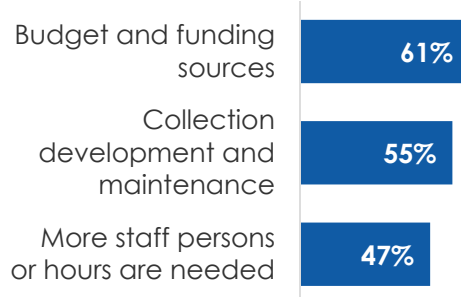
¹ most likely a paraprofessional
² among all Library Media Center staff (regardless of licensure or FTE status)
³ without grants and excluding salaries, furniture, and printing

3. Top priorities for staff (N=115)



Note. Respondents were asked to select their top priority, their second priority, and their third priority. This analysis combines responses and reports the percentage of respondents that selected each option as one of their three top priorities.

4. Greatest challenges experienced by staff (N=122)



Note. Respondents were asked to rank their top three challenges. This analysis combines responses and reports the percentage of respondents that selected each option as one of their top three.

Critical insights

For critical insights about action to improve school libraries in Minnesota, see the full census report:

<https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/minnesota-multicounty-multitype-library-systems>

