2015

"Repairs are Pending": A Mixed Methods Investigation of the Effects of No Child Left Behind on Rhode Island's Public School Libraries

Laurie Anne Dias-Mitchell
Bethel University

“REPAIRS ARE PENDING”: A MIXED METHODS INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ON RHODE ISLAND’S PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Laurie Dias-Mitchell

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Bethel University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Saint Paul, MN

Abstract

Throughout history, free public and school libraries have been symbols of freedom and democracy, of equitable access to cultural, intellectual, and technical resources. Since the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001, there have been only a narrow cluster of studies on the importance and impact of school libraries. This mixed-methods study explored the unintended impacts of No Child Left Behind on Rhode Island's public school libraries and a potential framework for sustainability from the perspectives of the state's school library leaders regarding the viability of school libraries in an era of high-stakes testing and accountability and a narrowing of the curriculum. Both data sets revealed that standards-based initiatives have contravened with the social, ethical, and aesthetic mission of school libraries and may imperil their viability in the state of Rhode Island; however, a more significant impactor was uncovered: the attributes of school librarians, themselves, and the programs they deliver. This study may serve to fill a gap in the existing research and contribute to the growing body of historical data that may provide perspective to leaders in the field planning the future of our nation's public school libraries.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Joe Mitchell – whose steadfast support, love, and inspiration sustained me on this journey and to my two "saints" – Brigid and Patrick, who, during their own K-12 years, patiently waited for me to pick them up after school or to show up at their athletic or academic events. They knew I was committed to keeping the various school libraries that I directed open beyond the school day for students who needed access. I know Joe and the kids would not mind sharing this dedication with public school librarians everywhere, for my family members not only honor but are proud of my passion for libraries of all kinds, and know the many stories of my career.

For instance, in April of 2005, as I left a public middle school in Southeastern Massachusetts, I wept. As a practicum supervisor for a local graduate school of library science, I had spent the afternoon evaluating a graduate student seeking certification as a school librarian. Before I left the building, she asked me to perform a quick analysis of the library's collection. Within minutes, I weeded out several outdated (if not litigation-prone) encyclopedia sets with articles such as "The Physical Characteristsics of the Negro" and jettisoned dozens of books (though thousands remained), some with archaic titles like *How to Enjoy Being a Girl*. There were no contemporary young adult fiction titles to speak of (except the few on display that my graduate student had purchased from a local discount warehouse with her own funds), and the nonfiction collection was indistinguishable from the one I had read my way through in the early 1970s when I was a middle schooler there myself. I was in a state

of shock and knew immediately why rumors of a state takeover were circulating throughout the depressed former "mill town."

However, just 20 miles north, a city with demographics and a social history similar to my home city's, had recently received the Massachusetts Department of Education's *Vanguard Award*, which recognizes the district with the largest single-year increase in MCAS scores (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System). The superintendent publicly attributed the leap to a recent upgrading of library programs in each of the district's schools. To the Commonwealth's school librarians, this came as no surprise, as several corollary studies (conducted in numerous states as well as in Canada, Australia, and Great Britain) offered irrefutable evidence that one of the most certain predictors of student achievement is the quality and scope of a school library's staff, collections, and programs.

It was that afternoon, while driving down the ten-mile stretch of Route 88 towards my home in the South Coast, that through my tears, I experienced what Paulo Freire (1970) called "conscientizacao" or "critical awareness" (p. 51). This liberating consciousness caused me to become hyper aware of myself, my community, and my place in it. Through it I recognized my potential for being an active agent in schools to advocate for and participate in ensuring equitable access to high-quality library resources and programming for all students. Enrolling in an admin/doctoral program that aligned with my personal beliefs was the logical next step.

Acknowledgments

While there are many people to thank, I must first express my deepest gratitude to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Michael Lindstrom – who is not only a masterful guide but also a remarkable person. He knew when and how to push me and always had affirming words to offer me when I was meandering "off track." I could not have made it to this point without his guidance, wisdom, support, and I am ever grateful to him for everything he has done for me.

In addition to Dr. Lindstrom, I must thank the two other members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Joni Burgin and Dr. Erica Hering.

I would also like to thank Vicki Blaser, of School Librarians of Rhode Island, who was always a wellspring of information, energy, and friendship around all things related to school libraries – and Nordic skiing! I am forever indebted to Patricia Menoche, John McAniff, and the late Betty Quinn who guided me, decades ago, during the K-12 school librarian practicum process. I tip my hat to you!

Finally, to retired Superintendent Dr. Thomas Kelly, Principals Manny Cabral and Donna Dimery – three school administrators who stand out as supporters of school-wide literacy programs and who value the role that school libraries play in student achievement and school culture – your leadership inspires me to this day.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Figure

List of Tables

Table

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

In *The Shame of the Nation*, Jonathan Kozol (2005) wrote: "Libraries, once the glory of the New York City system, were either nonexistent or, at best, vestigial in large numbers of the elementary schools" (p. 41). He elaborated: "…in affluent communities…parents have the means to supplement the public funds with private funding of their own…to build and stock a good school library.…" (p. 46). Kozol indicated that, in school districts across the country, there are gross inequities when it comes to school library media centers. The "socially and economically enforced apartheid" (p. 9) he finds in urban districts around the nation exist in rural districts and in suburbs as well, as school quality is tied to the economic vigor of the community.

There are several other contemporary monographs in the social justice canon, (Jamaica Kincaid (1989), Jonathan Kozol (2005), Nancy Kalikow Maxwell (2006), and Bigelow and Peterson (2002) among them) that portray libraries as sacred spaces, the heart of a people, a community, a school — the library as a marker for the larger institution's health. When a library is destroyed, desecrated, or neglected, each of the authors ascribes the loss to either colonialism or apartheid as inhumane, immoral, undemocratic systems. For example, in *Burning Books and Destroying Peoples: Conquistadores Destroy Native Libraries,* Galeano (as cited in Bigelow and Peterson, 2002, p. 43) illustrated how libraries are the hallmarks of a true democracy. The

author depicted the scene in 1562, when the Spanish Conquistadors, led by Fray Diego de Landa, colonized what is now Central America. Their rampage included the destruction of all of the native Mayas' books — eight centuries of literature, including the "Mayan people's written history, and most of their written knowledge about mathematics and astronomy, two areas of science which they studied a great deal" (p. 38). According to Galeano, the Spanish, coveting all that the Mayas had in the way of raw materials, moved to erase their past, thus denying them a future. In *Burning Books and Destroying Peoples,* Galeano placed libraries at the center of a people's cultural identity and placed librarians in sacred company, among those who "sing the glories of men and of gods, songs that stay on from people to people" (p. 43).

In the same way, Jamaica Kincaid (1989), in *A Small Place*, focused several pages of her small but powerful book on Antigua's post-colonial failure to rebuild its only public library:

> Antigua used to have a splendid library, but in The Earthquake (everyone talks about it that way—the earthquake; we Antiguans, for I am one, have a great sense of things, and the more meaningful the thing, the more meaningless we make it) the library building was damaged. This was in 1974, and soon after that a sign was placed on the front of the building saying, THIS BUILDING WAS DAMAGED IN THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1974. REPAIRS ARE PENDING. The sign hangs there, and hangs there more than a decade later, with its unfulfilled promise of repair. (p. 8)

Throughout history, free public and school libraries have been symbols of freedom and democracy, of equitable access to cultural, intellectual, and technical

resources. It is no wonder that Kincaid (1989) observed that most of Antigua's youth appeared to be illiterate (p. 43). Several research studies (Graham & Gagnon, 2013; Petruzzi & Burns, 2006; Thompson, 2002) have rooted out the strong corollary relationship between the state of a community's public library system and the literacy and educational attainment levels there. The former library seems to be the only British influence on her country that Kincaid (1989) feels wistful for:

> But if you saw the old library, situated as it was, in a big, old wooden building painted in a shade of yellow that is beautiful to people like me, with its wide veranda, its big always open windows, its rows and rows of shelves filled with books, its beautiful wooden tables and chairs for sitting and reading, if you could hear the sound of its quietness (for the quiet in this library was a sound in itself), the smell of the sea (which was a stone's throw away), the heat of the sun…the beauty of us sitting there like communicants at an altar. (p. 42)

Kincaid (1989) went on to describe "the dung heap that now passes for a library in Antigua" (p. 43). Further, Kincaid explained how the one woman who could mobilize the island's various charitable organizations to rebuild the library has chosen to defer that impulse to a corrupt developer who wants to turn the area into yet another tourist trap that sells schlock to the thousands of tourists who arrive on the small island, every day (p. 48).

The ruin of the library in Antigua is symbolic of all the havoc that colonialism and post-colonial corruption have wreaked on the beautiful, small island. Kincaid (1989) addressed the reader: "You might be saying to yourself, Why is she so undone

at what has become of the library, why does she think that it is a good example of corruption, of things gone bad?" (Kincaid, 1989, p. 42).

In her book *Sacred Stacks: The Higher Purpose of Libraries and Librarianship*, Maxwell (2006) offered an etymological and historical primer of sorts: "The word 'library' derives from the Latin *liber*, meaning 'free.' American slaves were forbidden from learning to read because of the power that came with that act. Roman slaves…were forbidden from reading literature, history or philosophy for fear learning these 'liberal arts' might inspire them to unite and rise up" (p.70).

Finally, Carl Sagan, in his book *Cosmos*, noted:

> The library connects us with the insight and knowledge, painfully extracted from Nature, of the greatest minds that ever were, with the best teachers, drawn from the entire planet and from all our history, to instruct us without tiring, and to inspire us to make our own contribution to the collective knowledge of the human species. I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries. (p. 247)

Significance of the Study

Lamenting the lack of a comprehensive book-length history of our nation's public schools libraries, Wiegand (2007) posited: "Nor is there an adequate scholarly body of historical literature available to guide leaders planning the school library's future" (p. 57). He elaborated:

> As of 2006, very few scholars were working on American public school library history topics to help the nation's education community identify the school library's multiple roles, establish a baseline of historical data that would provide perspective to leaders planning its future or outline historically based theoretical frames to ground the construction of policy. The public school library profession itself does not recognize the value of deepening its own historical understanding. (p. 58)

In the years immediately following the implementation of NCLB in 2001, this gap was partially filled by a narrow cluster of studies (Harada, Kam, & Marks, 2007; Lance & Russell, 2004; Research Foundation Paper, 2004; Scott & Plourde, 2007) and other scholarly works focused on the importance and impact of school libraries. This coincided with leaders in the field taking the offensive against the "What is measured is treasured" phenomenon that accompanies an environment where high-stakes testing and accountability measures dominate the educational landscape (Pederson, 2007, p. 287). From reviewing the literature, it is evident that from 2002 to 2010, the school library canon deepened with information about the evolving school library facility, staff, collections, and services and how robust media centers were more necessary than ever before, given the speed and scope of the information economy (Braxton, 2005; Eubank, 2007; Harada, Kam, & Marks, 2007; Starkman, 2007; Whelan, 2008).

However, in the last five years, the focus has shifted from the importance of school libraries to school libraries and their need to adapt and rebrand themselves (Benheim, 2013; Ray, 2014; Todd, 2012). Further, on the micro level, a review of the

literature uncovered no studies about school libraries, media centers, instructional media centers, or learning commons in the state of Rhode Island nor the perspectives of the state's school library leaders regarding the viability of school libraries in an era of high-stakes testing and accountability. On a macro level, this study may be generalizable and serve to fill a gap in the existing research and contribute to the growing body of historical data that may provide perspective to leaders in the field planning the future of our nation's public school libraries.

Statement of the Problem

The push for accountability and the concomitant emphasis on high-stakes testing may lead to a default philosophy of education that holds in high regard a narrow bundle of knowledge and skills (Gunzenhauser, 2007, p. 51). There is a critical need, based on numerical survey data as well as textual data from leaders in the field of school libraries in Rhode Island, to explore the possibility that NCLB and its supervening high-stakes testing may be affecting the state and viability of Rhode Island's school libraries. Rettig (2009) characterized our nation's school, public, and academic libraries as a "unique integrated info-ecosystem" (p. 29) that, together, offer universal, unrestricted access to lifelong learning opportunities, and, as is the case of any ecosystem, weakness within any of the parts threatens the whole.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the unintended impacts of No Child Left Behind on Rhode Island's public school libraries while also exploring a potential framework for sustainability. Driven by an advocacy and participatory worldview,

this mixed-methods study utilized both subject-centered (open-ended questionnaire) and critical-analytical data (ALA/AASL longitudinal study).

Rationale

Standards-based initiatives may contravene with the social, ethical, and aesthetic mission of school libraries to, possibly, imperil their viability. This study considered the idea of free public school libraries as symbols of freedom and democracy, of the importance of equitable access to cultural, intellectual, and technical resources and underscored the corollary between robust school library programs and student achievement, something that many members of the public – including those in the field of education – may not be aware of (Goldberg, 2005, p. 40).

Research Questions

Using this rationale, it is timely to ask the questions:

1. What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of No Child Left Behind on the state's public school library programs?
2. What evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?
3. What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

Limitations

It should be noted that the findings of this study were delimited to public schools in the state of Rhode Island. The state's charter and private schools as well as

schools from other states, were excluded from this study. The findings may not be generalizable to all school environments. Internal validity was based on the library professionals' truthful responses about their perception of NCLB's effects on school library programs. Measures were taken to protect the anonymity of all library professionals who participated in the study.

Nature of the Study

A strong impetus for the advocacy and participatory researcher is to pursue topics that are of personal interest to her]or him] with an eye towards creating a better society while, at the same time, challenging the academy by veering away from the more accepted approaches to inquiry (Creswell, 2009, p. 19). Accordingly, this mixed methods study was weighted towards the qualitative and was written in a more literary and creative style of writing (Creswell, 2009, p. 19). The research questions sought to explore the perspectives of leaders in the field as well as numerical data to consider using as a framework for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

There are five chapters in this research study. There is a general introduction, background, and problem presented in Chapter I. Chapter I also includes the rationale and significance of the study. Chapter II is a review of the literature as it relates to the school libraries, school libraries of the 21st Century, school libraries and student achievement, NCLB and its impact on school libraries, and the potential need for a framework for sustainability. The third chapter is a narrative of the research methodology (mixed method) and includes a description of the research design,

general setting and participants, and data collection and analysis procedures. The findings of this study are presented in Chapter IV. A discussion of the findings and recommendations for future research are included in the final chapter, Chapter V.

Definition of Terms

Several terms were used in the research and writing of this study:

Leaders in the field of school libraries. Leaders in this field refer to school librarians, library directors, state association executive board members, professors in school librarian certification programs, members of the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS), and staff of Rhode Island Library Information Network for Kids (RILINK). These leaders were identified by members of School Librarians of Rhode Island (See Appendix B)

New England Comprehensive Assessment Program (NECAP). In 2005, the Rhode Island Department of Education, the New Hampshire Department of Education, and Vermont Department of Education, in response to the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, developed a common set of Grade-Level Expectations, known as the New England Common Assessment Program Grade-Level Expectations (NECAP GLEs), and test specifications in mathematics, reading, and writing. Member states also developed common assessment targets and test specifications for science. In Rhode Island, the Grade-Span Expectations (GSEs) for high school students in mathematics, reading and writing were replaced by PARCC. Science NECAP continued to be administered in grades 4, 8, and 11 each year in May.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

(ESEA) – the main federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. Proposed by President Bush shortly after his inauguration, NCLB was signed into law on January 8th, 2001. NCLB is built on four principles: accountability for results, more choices for parents, greater local control and flexibility, and an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research (*United States Department of Education*, 2001). NCLB expired in 2007; however, it is still standing in 2015 as alternatives – in both the House and the Senate – await finalization.

Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS). OLIS is the state library agency for Rhode Island whose mission is to support and strengthen library and information services throughout the state to ensure that all residents benefit from free and convenient access to library and information resources and services. OLIS is part of the Executive Branch of state government located in the Department of Administration under the direction of the Chief of Library Services. OLIS works with the Library Board of Rhode Island to establish priorities and policies to carry out its mission. In addition, OLIS plays a major role in planning and providing free and equitable access to online government information for state agencies and the public. OLIS possesses the statutory authority and responsibility to administer state and federal funding and to coordinate and support programs for libraries of all types, for example: public, university, school, and special libraries.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers is a consortium of states – including Rhode Island – that developed a set of assessments that measure whether students are on track to be successful in college and their

careers. The assessments are closely aligned with the new, and widely considered more rigorous Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and they are designed to ensure that every child is on a path to college and career readiness by measuring what students should know at each grade level.

Race to the Top (RTTT). Race to the Top was a $4.3 billion education reform fund, made available by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Awards in the Race to the Top competition went to states that were considered to be leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing comprehensive, coherent, and compelling education reform in the four areas of: adopting rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace; recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices; and turning around the lowest-performing schools. In August 2010, the U.S. Department of Education announced that Rhode Island was a winner of a $75-million Race to the Top grant. The grant was a four-year award, spanning 2010-2014.

Rhode Island Department of Education, Basic Education Program (BEP). This 46-page document, generated by the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education, is a comprehensive set of minimum standards for Rhode Island's public schools. Issued in 1960, it was updated in 2009 to reflect 21st-century skills, the BEP – in concert with federal and state laws, regulations, and

mandates – outline the rights of all public school students in the state of Rhode Island to access a high-quality education, regardless of where they live or go to school.

Rhode Island Library Information Network for Kids (RILINK). RILINK is a cooperative effort by Rhode Island school libraries to share their resources through a comprehensive, integrated, and interactive web-based catalog of library materials. At RILINK member schools, students and teachers are able to use their library catalogs to look for and request books and other items at member libraries. Requested items are then delivered to each school through the statewide library network. Currently, RILINK serves over 50% of Rhode Island public school students. 160 member school libraries from 29 school districts form RILINK – sharing their print, audiovisual materials, and expertise in order to provide optimal services to their 70,000 students and educators.

School librarian (librarian, library-teacher, library media specialist, school library media specialist). A highly-qualified school librarian (sometimes called a school library media specialist or library teacher) holds a master's degree (MLS or M.Ed.) from a program accredited by the American Library Association (or its equivalent accredited or recognized by the appropriate national body of another country) and also holds state certification as a school librarian and will have completed a teacher preparation program and/or educational degree. Overall, most school library programs offer both master's degree as well as post-bachelor's non-degree school librarian certification programs; however, the MLS in concert with state certification is the preferred credential. The school librarian works with both students and teachers to facilitate access to information in a wide variety of formats,

instruct students and teachers in how to acquire, evaluate, and use information and the various technologies needed in this process, and introduces children and young adults to literature and other resources to broaden their horizons. Further, the school librarian develops, promotes, and implements a program that will help prepare students to be effective users of ideas and information, a lifelong skill (American Library Association, Learning about the job, n.d., par. 1).

School Librarians of Rhode Island (SLRI). School Librarians of Rhode Island (SLRI) is the professional organization that represents school library media professionals and paraprofessionals working in the state's public, private, religious, and charter school library media, computer, and instructional technology programs. SLRI is an affiliate of the American Library Association's division of American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT), and the International Society for Technology Integration (ISTE). The purpose of SLRI is to provide leadership, advocacy, and support for school library media professionals and paraprofessionals in the development, promotion, improvement, and evaluation of school library media, computer, and instructional technology programs in all Rhode Island schools (SLRI, 2015).

School library program. Staffed by certified school librarians, a school library is a collection of resources – in print and online, that supports the curriculum and addresses a variety of learning needs – organized according to a known and accepted system with materials cataloged and classified for universal accessibility (School Libraries Work, 2008, p. 5). Through the years, the facility, itself, has been

called a media center, and the most recent iterations are “learning commons” or Makerspaces” (Loertscher & Preddy, 2013, p.48).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

"What a school thinks about its library is a measure of what it thinks about education."

— Harold Howe, former U.S. Commissioner of Education

("Libraries and Literacy," 2001, p. 10)

School libraries were established in this country nearly 100 years ago (Wiegand, 2007, p. 58). Prior to that time, starting in the latter part of the 19th century, school districts had agreements with local free public libraries to meet the extracurricular and independent reading needs of students. In the beginning of the 20th century, things changed, most notably, following the end of World War I when the National Education Association (NEA) advocated for more direct control over academic resources and pressed for school systems to establish separate libraries. NEA proposed that these school-specific libraries be developed, staffed, and organized explicitly for teachers and students and in support of the school curriculum (p. 58).

For the next 80 years, with some stops and starts, notably during the Great Depression and World War II, school libraries transformed themselves into "instructional media centers" or "school library and media centers" (p. 58) and started collecting non-print media. Wiegand (2007) continued: "Then came the Great Society

legislation of 1965, including the Library Services and Construction Acts…and, particularly important to school libraries, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act" (p. 58). Upon signing this landmark decree, President Johnson (as cited in Scott & Plourde, 2007) proclaimed:

> By passing this bill, we bridge the gap between helplessness and hope for more than 5 million educationally deprived children. We put into the hands of our youth more than 30 million new books and into many of our schools their first libraries. (p. 419)

School Libraries of the 21st Century

According to Lowe (2006), modern school librarians not only promote lifelong literacy but also develop a variety of resources – such as online library portals and dashboards, subject-specific pathfinders and bibliographies – in order to teach digital literacy and support student researchers as they navigate the tangled web of print and electronic resources. Today's school librarians recognize that the current information-dense landscape necessitates, more than ever in recent history, a high level of information fluency (p. 27). Wiegand (2007) reported, "…students annually averaged 1.5 billion visits to school libraries, about one and a half times the number of visits to state and national parks" (p. 57). Weigand elaborated: "On those visits they checked out and read billions of books, listened to millions of stories, accessed thousands of computerized databases" (p. 57). In the United Sates, 21st century public school libraries are not what they used to be (Scott & Plourde, 2007, p. 419). Braxton (2005) explained:

> The stereotype of the librarian is one of the most common caricatures around the globe-always portrayed as an aging female with graying hair drawn back in a bun, wearing glasses, a tweed skirt, sweater twinset, pearls, and sensible shoes, and constantly saying Ssshh! There is even an action-figure doll to cement the image for those not yet convinced that the sprightly, trendy, bubbly person who serves them in their local library is actually a librarian. (p. 50)

Braxton (2005) noted that today's students are unlikely to hear: "Be quiet. You are in a library" (p. 50). The author observed that the common stereotype of the school library as a place where one must be silent and somber is no longer relevant in a switched-on, connected library media center. Braxton dispelled the notion that in today's school libraries one's voice must be hushed lest it offend the venerated authors of "those grand works lined up on the shelf like soldiers on a military-day parade" (p. 50).

Not only has the school library changed in terms of function; the facility itself has had to keep up with user needs. According to Starkman (2007), technology and the Internet have taken over and influenced a physically revamped look to the modern library space. With the card catalog's new presence online and also the availability of eBooks, additional square footage has opened up for meetings and group learning configurations, while also making way for more lithe educational devices like netbooks, tablets, digital cameras, sleek headphones, and microphones for videoconferencing.

It can be said that the school library of today has two distinct doors, one that students can physically enter and the other, a web-based portal that is switched on 24/7. Regarding today's school librarians, Starkman (2007) offered: "They aren't merely no-nonsense book providers anymore. In the digital age, they are multitasking information managers ─ part teacher, part technologist" (p. 22). Knezek (as cited in Starkman, 2007) stated "the typical…media center has computers, digital projectors, whiteboards, video distribution systems, ceiling-mounted projectors, and Playaways ─ small devices, like iPods, that each play one preloaded audio book (p. 25). School libraries, while keeping pace with 21st century technologies, continue to maintain their historical commitment to provide the best resources and services, and, while NCLB drives schools to narrow the scope of what they offer to students, school librarians have broadened theirs.

In her article, *Café Society*, Whelan (2008) wrote about the school library as "a place where students could read, do research, and work on classroom assignments, but also socialize" (p. 37). Whelan's report described a number of new schools that recognize this trend among students and, as a result, have included cafés when renovating their school libraries. One high school, rather than the library staff serving as baristas, actually managed to get a Java City to locate in the school library. Featuring the same accommodations and amenities as other Java Cities around the country, the activity in this school library-based franchise gets a daily boost from its captive audience of hundreds of students who are drawn in by displays that highlight the thousands of popular young adult titles therein (p. 37).

School libraries of the 21st century with their wireless networks, automated catalogs, digital collections, comfy chairs, and espresso machines may not resemble their 20th century counterparts. However, as Starkman noted: "While the school library environment and the role of the librarian has transformed, the ultimate purpose of the building and its resources is no different" (2007, para. 23). In all of their new iterations, be it libraries, media centers, "learning commons" or "Makerspaces" (Loertscher & Preddy, 2013, p.48), the literature of the past decade indicates that school libraries continue to promote and protect the right of all students to access all manner of resources to meet their academic, developmental, social, and aesthetic needs.

The Link Between School Libraries and Student Success

In *School Libraries Work!* (2008), the Scholastic Research Foundation provided a meta-analysis of fourteen impact studies conducted in the United States and Canada that root out what many in the school library field have known all along, if only anecdotally: strong school library programs impact student achievement. (See Appendix A.) The paper was well received by leaders in the field – both in the academy and with practitioners in the field, with more than 200,000 copies distributed and numerous presentations, including one before Congress tendered by the National Committee on Libraries and Information Science in June 2007. It offered powerful evidence that school libraries, which are administered by certified library media specialists, are highly impactful on the lives of America's children (School Libraries Work! 2008, p. 1). This monograph summarized the substantial body of research, conducted since the early 1990s, that substantiated the impact that strong school

libraries have on the academic lives of students. Whether student achievement was measured by global assessments of learning or by standardized reading achievement tests (Developmental Reading Assessment or DRA and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills or DIBELS), the research (Scholastic Research Foundation, 2008) confirmed that well-stocked school libraries staffed by certified library media specialists have a positive impact on student achievement, regardless of the socio-economic or educational-attainment levels of the community. The monograph brought together position statements from a variety of organizations and findings from nearly a decade of empirical studies that cited the measurable impact of the school library program, the facility, and the library media specialist(s) on learning outcomes (p. 1). See Figure 2.1.

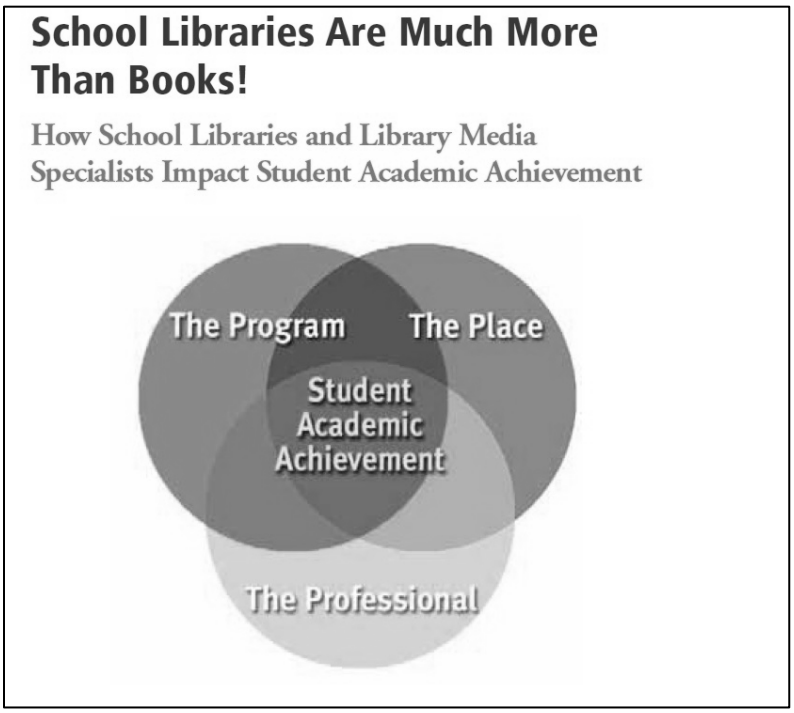

Figure 2.1. Findings from nearly a decade of empirical studies that cited the measurable impact of school library programming, facilities, and library media specialist(s) on learning outcomes. (School Libraries Work! 2008, p. 6). Note: Shared with permission.

Declaring "19 States and 1 Province Can't be Wrong," *School Libraries Work!* (Scholastic Research Foundation , 2008*)* included the results of a 1999 study in Alaska where it was found that students in the state's secondary schools with full-time school librarians were twice as likely as those without school librarians to score average or above-average on achievement tests. It was also found that the more often students received library/information literacy instruction from library media specialists, the higher the test scores (p. 10). According to the monograph (Scholastic Research Foundation, 2008), in 2000, a study in Colorado revealed that the size of the school library staff and collection explained a 21% variation in 7th grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores, while controlling for socio-economic conditions (p. 10). Further, the monograph included data from an Indiana study that revealed the experience and quality of an elementary school's library media specialist was a strong predictor of students' language arts development. Students scored well above average on all portions of the ISTEP (Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress) when the school employed the same full-time library media specialist for at least three years (p. 11). See Figure 2.2.

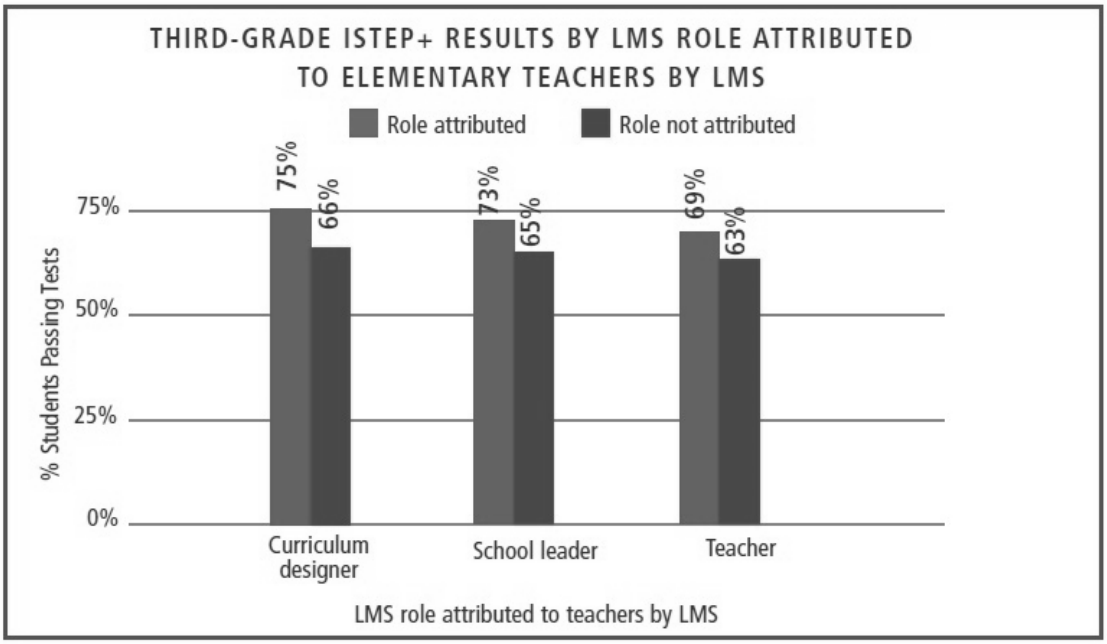

Figure 2.2. Results when library media specialists believed that their principals and teachers saw them as school leaders, curriculum designers, fellow administrators (School Libraries Work! 2008, p. 18) Note: Shared with permission.

Comparing Iowa elementary schools with the highest and lowest ITBS reading scores, the highest scoring students use more than 2 1⁄2 times as many books and other materials during library visits (Scholastic Research Foundation, 2008, p. 12). Iowa reading test scores rise with the development of school library programs. The relationship between library program development and test scores is not explained away by other school or community conditions at the elementary level. Several research studies root out the relationship between flexible versus fixed school library scheduling and student achievement (Gavigan, Pribesh, & Dickinson, 2010; Lance, 2002; Lance & Kachel, 2013; Lance & Russell, 2004; Scholastic, 2008).

Flexible scheduling occurs when school librarians are assigned classes – but are available all day, enabling teachers and students to collaborate with school librarians and other library staff and use the library spaces as a classroom or study space at point of need. In Illinois high schools, 11th grade ACT scores were the highest when there was a high degree of true collaboration between school librarians and classroom teachers in a broad range of activities. See Figure 2.3.

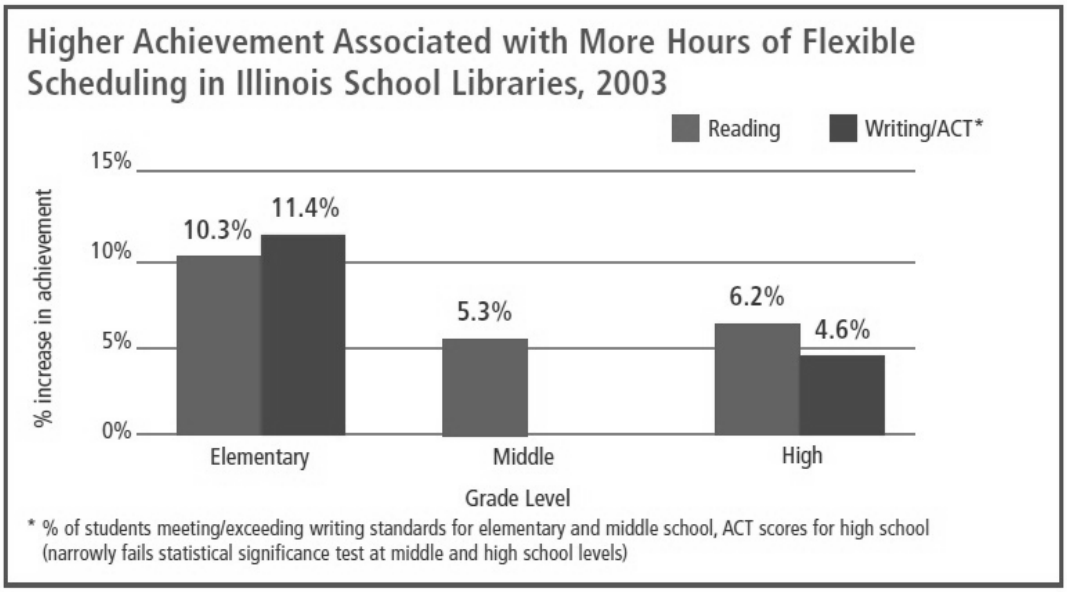

Figure 2.3. ACT scores were the highest when there was a high degree of true collaboration between library media specialists and classroom teachers in a broad range of activities. (School Libraries Work! 2008, p. 20) Note: Shared with permission.

In addition, in Illinois, increased library staffing was linked to higher reading and writing achievement across the elementary and middle school grade levels and higher ACT scores at the high school level. See Figure 2.4.

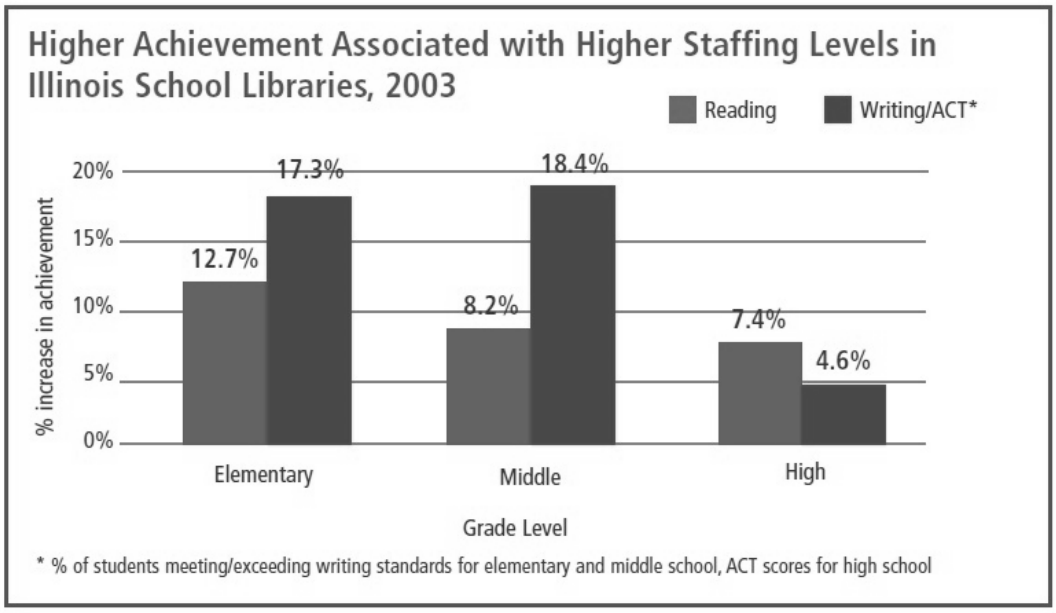

Figure 2.4. Increased library staffing was linked to higher reading and writing achievement across the elementary and middle school grade levels and higher ACT scores at the high school level. (School Libraries Work! 2008, p. 19) Note: Shared with permission.

The meta-analysis (School Libraries Work! 2008) reported that in Florida, in 2002, in high schools where library media programs are staffed 60 hours per week or more, there was a 22.2 % improvement in test scores over those staffed less than 60 hours (p. 11). A study of Iowa's elementary schools, in 2002, conducted by Keith Curry Lance (2002), revealed that the highest scoring students on the ITBS used 2 1/2 times the number of books and other materials during their library visits than students

with the lowest scores (p. 12). Further, the study pointed out that "Iowa reading test scores rise with the development of school library programs" (p. 12).

In addition, in 2002, in Massachusetts, a study conducted by Baughman at Simmons College, revealed that at each grade level students at schools with library programs had higher scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). The report claimed that in 2003 in Michigan, researchers Rodney, Lance, and Hamilton-Pennell found that, at elementary schools with the highest Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) reading scores, teachers and students are four times more likely to be able to visit the library on a flexibly scheduled basis, compared to their counterparts at the lowest-scoring schools, and MEAP scores rise with the extent that the state's school library programs are headed by certified library media specialists (*School Libraries Work!*,2008*,* p. 13).

School Libraries Work! (2008*)* also included data from the state of Minnesota, where, in 2003, researchers found: "Twice as many schools with above-average scores had full-time library media specialists" and "Student reading achievement in elementary and secondary schools is related to increases in school library program spending" (p. 13). Further, in Minnesota schools with above-average student scores (grade 3, 5, and 8 reading tests) nearly 70% had school librarians who worked full-time (p. 13). Similar results also came out of studies conducted in Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Wisconsin, and Ontario (pp. 13-16).

The scientifically based evidence is mounting: robust school libraries correlate with test scores. Lance and Russell (2004) described how they and their colleagues

used available data to test a causal model based on the *Information Power* framework from the American Association of School Librarians school library learning standards and program guidelines. The study answered the questions: "Is there a systematic effect?" and "How is it happening?" The authors reported on a statewide study of Colorado's public school libraries and student achievement. They gave an account of how the study's overall design was then used in more than ten other statewide studies that used multivariate statistical analysis to control for competing predictors of student achievement, such as other school factors (for example, staff qualifications and experience, overall school spending per-pupil, the teacher-pupil ratio) and community conditions (socio-economic characteristics like poverty, adult educational attainment levels, racial and ethnic demographics). These research studies, unlike early studies about school libraries, moved beyond identifying simple correlations and included a conceptual framework, a reliance on previous research in the field, and a reproducible strategy for data collection (Lance & Russell, 2004, p. 14).

Each of the abovementioned research studies offered a response to NCLB's pronouncement, that Scientifically Based Research (SBR) must fuel practice in our nation's schools. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that SBR be the foundation for education programs to ensure federal funding goes towards learning activities that are effective. SBR is built from such components as rigorous data analyses, measurements, or observational methods to obtain reliable and valid knowledge, and research that is replicable (Lance & Russell, 2004, p. 13).

School Library Aesthetics

With all of this evidence, nevertheless, the axiological, the dimension of school libraries that goes beyond the physical facility and even beyond the student achievement data referenced in the literature previously reviewed, there is the unquantifiable; that is the ethical and aesthetic nature of school library programs. School libraries are symbols of equity and democracy. Their very mission is rooted in social justice and access to the community's body aesthetic. Some scholars assert that as researchers calculate students' test scores, there are axiological forces at work in our school libraries that, though unmeasured at this time, are as real or even perhaps more real and valuable to the whole student than even the most stunning statistics (Rettig, 2009, p. 29).

For instance, in *Missing Links: On Studying the Connection of Arts Education to the Public Good*, Silvers (2003) maintained: "Aesthetic experience induces cognitive and affective brain states which, in turn, enable capabilities and understandings" (para. 17). This "aesthetic experience" extends to school libraries (Anderson, 2007, p. 23). Redfield (2007) asserted that "'art' and 'literature' exist as culturally specific objects and experiences" and that their presence serves as a catalyst for providing a positive personal experience (para. 4). He elaborated: "…the state…should support museums, schools**,** libraries, performance spaces…that general schooling should involve…exposure to literature and the fine arts – all these ideas orbit around the notion of the aesthetic as a space, event, or experience" (para. 4).

In *Ethics and the Foundation of Education*, Slattery and Rapp (2003) focused on reclaiming the ethical and aesthetic mission of our nation's public schools. They declared:

> We believe that aesthetic vision, creative imagination, and a passion for justice are in short supply in our contemporary society. In fact, institutions such as schools, churches, businesses, and governments – despite organizational leaders' rhetoric of creative problem solving, critical thinking, bold reform initiatives, social transformation, and individual redemption – often contribute to the very inertia and malaise that render the prophetic voice impotent. (p. 145)

Slattery and Rapp (2003) argued: "Schooling has the responsibility to participate in the quest for critical voice, social justice, and individual transformation." They also noted: "This allows teachers and students to break free from bondage to inert ideas, mastery learning, information transmission, and rote memorization for tests" (p. 89).

No Child Left Behind and its Impact on School Libraries

Over a dozen years ago, David Berliner (1996) in, *The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Fraud, and the Attack on America's Public Schools*, debunked the assertions of *A Nation at Risk* (United States, 1983). He deconstructed the myths of:

- student achievement and aptitude losses;
- the decline in student intelligence;
- the decline in America's college-student performance;
- our schools failing in comparative studies of student achievement;

- the costs of education;
- money not being related to student achievement;
- the costs of public education having skyrocketed;
- the abilities and quality of America's teachers;
- American education not producing enough scientists, mathematicians, and engineers;
- American citizens being dissatisfied with their schools;
- private schools being superior to public schools (pp. 13-114).

Though the claims in *A Nation at Risk* (United States, 1983) were refuted and challenged by many, the quarter-century following the report spawned three movements: the excellence movement, the restructuring movement, and the standards movement (pp. 581-582). John W. Hunt, a former public school administrator and current professor of education – whose administrative career was "bookended by *A Nation at Risk* and *No Child Left Behind*" (2008, p. 580) wrote about the latter: "It has certainly caused a similar stir nationally and in the education community. Some would say that NCLB has brought about an even higher level of activity than its Reagan-era predecessor" (p. 585). Hunt (2008) added: "Both *A Nation at Risk* and NCLB were calls for action" (p. 585). However, Hunt pointed out one titanic difference: *A Nation at Risk* was written on the macro level, as "a more general call to arms" that relinquished control to the education community. Implementation was left to the micro level; whereas, NCLB reaches down and far into education communities: "NCLB, on the other hand, is highly targeted and has had the effect of narrowing the focus of public school educators" (p. 585).

Similarly, in the article, *No Child Left Behind in Art*, Chapman (2005) maintains: “NCLB also capitalizes on several decades of unrelenting criticism of public schools, including crisis rhetoric” (Ohanian, 2003, as cited in Chapman, 2005, Larger Agenda section, para. 1). Goldberg (2005) argued this crisis rhetoric may negatively affect what is taught in our schools resulting in "a real narrowing of the curriculum" as boards, superintendents, and principals fight to hit math and literacy benchmarks and further argued that those in power may be compelled to reapportion all existing human and financial resources in service to test scores. Goldberg added that school librarians should be prepared for these shifting resources and decreases in federal, state, and local funding. As they lose “dollars to the purchase of software that can track achievement-test data” school librarians have to reassert their value as key educators and information managers in the school house (p. 41).

Goldberg (2005) further shared “a series of budgetary-impact snapshots” (p. 39) from across the country, citing reports from Arkansas, California, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas. She declared:

> School's back in session across the nation, but regrettably, there wasn't a school librarian at every media center doorway to welcome students back from their summer vacations. In fact, some locales didn't even have a functioning media center in the doorway of which a school librarian could stand. Despite incontrovertible studies proving that students are most successful in schools that contain fully stocked-and staffed-school libraries, the reality has yet to reflect the research. (p. 39)

Kathy Lowe (2006) maintained, "Today's school librarian may be caught in a paradigm gap between the rigidity of schools structured around 19th and 20th century needs and the flexibility required by the 21st century learner" (para. 1). This "paradigm gap" may lead to an equity gap in our schools, according to Ewbank and Moreillon (2007):

> Equitable access is a cornerstone of our democracy and a hallmark of our work as teacher-librarians. Along with our building level administrators, we share a global view of the learning needs of the school, but our methods for meeting those needs may be in conflict with some of the practices that are currently in vogue. In our schools, it is our mission to serve the literature and information needs of all members of our learning communities at the point of need, and to provide all with access to resources throughout the school day and beyond. Our inclusive worldview requires us to affirm the rights of every student, classroom teacher, administrator, or parent to resources and to instruction that can help them learn and achieve. This belief permeates our work with all the stakeholders in our library programs. (para. 12)

With this foundational premise, school libraries contain the body aesthetic and operate under an ethical framework. According to the American Association of School Librarian's Code of Ethics (American Library Association, 1996), the school librarian's call is to "provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests." Lowe (2006) declared that No Child Left Behind legislated such high standards of accountability

that "teaching to the test" has threatened library programs that promote free-thinking and independent learning (Educational Environment section, para. 2).

Thus, asking the question "What are the perspectives of leaders in the field regarding the impact of No Child Left Behind on Rhode Island's public school library programs and what evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island" is appropriate and timely.

Praxis

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) advances the concept of "praxis" where humanistic objectivity meets engaged subjectivity (p. 125). Freire posits: "Animals do not consider the world; they are immersed in it. In contrast, human beings emerge from the world, objectify it, and in so doing can understand it and transform it with their labor" (p. 125). Freire adds, "But human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world" (p. 125). In an attempt to reverse the observed marginalization of school library programs in this country, the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Association of School Libraries (AASL), in 2005, formed a Special Task Force on School Libraries (Lowe, 2006, para. 4). To date, however, nothing definitive, save a longitudinal study – *School Libraries Count* (2012) – has come out of it. The main goal of the study was to provide "…research and statistics to be used at the national, state and local levels when advocating for school library programs" (p. 13). The survey data, collected from 2007 to 2012, in its original state, cannot inform this research study, as the results are not disaggregated by school type: public, charter, private, religious.

Therefore, the published report does not shed light on NCLB's effects on public school libraries.

AASL continues to look at the current state of school libraries in the country, the critical issues and trends affecting school libraries, the options for responding to the weakening and eliminating of school library programs throughout the country. However, Kenney (2008) asserted, "…the best advocates for libraries aren't librarians. Or authors. Or publishers. Or vendors. The best advocates are the people whose lives are enriched and changed by libraries" (para. 1). In Washington state, a group of parents volunteered to advocate for sustaining school libraries in their states after so many programs were cut.

Kenney (2008) elaborated:

> The Washington Moms' "volunteer" work has had its personal costs. For one thing…the three women are still paying off the credit card bills they used to cover the flights, hotels, and telephone bills that organizing a statewide effort entails. (para. 7)

In contrast, Martin (2007) posited that the state associations, or school librarians themselves, must take up the mantle: Part of a librarian's job description today involves advocacy for both their institution, as evidenced by promotional toolkits on the American Library Association website, and their profession (para. 2). Recognizing the need to promote public awareness of the critical role that libraries play in the lives of people of all ages and to sustain library funding and services, the American Library Association (ALA) launched the Campaign to Save America's Libraries (Tabor, 2005).

On the national level, as previously stated, there is the ALA/AASL. It can be inferred then that currently there is no consensus on the topic of who the "who" is regarding those who may best advocate for school libraries. Edgerton, in *Translating the Curriculum: Multiculturalism Into Cultural Studies* (1996) draws on Paulo Freire: …the oppressed, are the only ones who can understand the full significance of oppression, and are hence the only ones who will have the vision and strength to eliminate it (p. 45). Some would say that this is one of the essential questions this research study may answer. Who may possibly participate in the discourse around school libraries? Further, Edgerton (1996) asked: "What knowledges best enable us to minimize violence to ourselves, one another, and the nonhuman world?" and added, "That is the curriculum question" (p. 174). The triad of discourses of whom we value, what we value, and what we teach in our schools converges in this study that asks the questions: What are the perspectives of leaders in the field regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on Rhode Island's public school library programs? Is it necessary to develop a framework for the sustainability of Rhode Island's school libraries?

Summary

A review of the literature for this research study reveals that school libraries have a long and rich social and aesthetic history in this country, school libraries impact student achievement in numerous ways, school library programs may be vulnerable in the current push for high-stakes standardized testing and accountability in our schools, and a framework may be necessary to ensure their sustainability.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Philosophy and Justification

This concurrent transformative mixed methods study sought to explore both subject-centered and critical-analytical data to develop a potential framework for the sustainability of Rhode Island's public school libraries (Creswell, 2009). In this study, NCLB's effects on school libraries, from the perspectives of leaders in the field, was explored using an open-ended survey. At the same time, data from the American Library Association/American Association of School Librarians longitudinal survey (2006 to 2012) was used to measure the relationship between NCLB and staffing, budgets, and resources. The reason for combining qualitative and quantitative data was to better understand this research problem by converging both qualitative (detailed views) and quantitative (broad numeric trends) data and to advocate for the sustainability of school libraries.

Theoretical Framework

This study embraced an advocacy-participatory worldview (Creswell, 2009, p. 9) and also drew on value theory (axiology). Paulo Freire's (1970) action-oriented "praxis" and John Dewey's (1938) (notable American philosopher, education reformer) concept of empirical ethics converged in this research. Dewey's methodological proposal, advanced in *Theory of Valuation* (1938), argued that we should adopt an empirical standard when dealing with substantial ethical problems like which specific objects deserve the moral terms "good" or "bad" and what particular assertions should be made in value judgments and moral arguments (Faerna, 2011, p. 150). Dewey (1938) postulated:

> The view that value in the sense of *good* is inherently connected with that which promotes, furthers, assists, a course of activity, and that value in the sense of *right* is inherently connected with that which is needed, required, in the maintenance of a course of activity is not in itself novel…. The resulting general propositions provide rules for valuation of the aims, purposes, plans, and policies that direct intelligent human activity. (p. 57)

The "intelligent human activity" and the "aims, purposes, plans, and policies" were at the core of this research study that moved not only to gather the perspectives of leaders in the field of school libraries but also to respond to the problems that arise when the discourse of standards-based initiatives clash with the social, ethical, and aesthetic mission of school libraries to, possibly, imperil their viability. Dewey (1938) expounded:

> Every person in the degree in which he is capable of learning from experience draws a distinction between what is desired and what is desirable whenever he engages in formation and choice of competing desires and interests. (p. 31)

Slattery and Rapp (2003) lamented the current phenomenon of alienation in our schools and, on the macro level, "place-less-ness" (p. 189) and lack of "axis mundi" (meaning "anchor in the world") and asserted: "We must…become grounded in the significance of place. Only by so doing can we hope to be less victimized by the structures that dehumanize us. And yet how can this be accomplished?" (p. 223). This research study explored the *place* of school libraries within the context of what Slattery and Rapp (2003) regarded our educational system's "dehumanizing" movement towards "inert ideas, mastery learning, information transmission, and rote

memorization for tests" (p. 89) in our schools, offering a critical lens through which to view the possible devaluation of school libraries.

Further, this study sought to explore and clarify how the imperatives of NCLB may be a reflection of the values of our educational community and if a framework for action, a "critical intervention" (Freire, 1970, p. 81) is needed if school libraries are to thrive in the state and beyond. Freire asserted, "curiosity and reflection without action is empty 'verbalism" (p. 18). Likewise, Cary (2006) refers to the critical paradigm:

> It is all about peeling back the layers of discourse that frame our lives and the lives of others. This is made possible by the study of individual subject positions, how discourses play out in educational institutions, reform movements and social and educational discourses. Like an onion, if we peel back the layers we can then gain a more adequate understanding and…create spaces of emancipation and equity…. (p. 19)

School libraries, very much like our nation's publicly-funded community and university libraries, are symbolic as well as functional vessels of equity and democracy. Their historical commitment to issues of social justice and access imbue them with an ethical beauty unlike any other social institution. Within this ethical scaffold lies, what this researcher calls, the "body aesthetic": all that is to be known, seen, heard, and experienced by the entire school community can be found within, whether one crosses through the school library's actual or virtual portal. The *School Librarian's Code of Ethics* (1996) is evidence of the axiological framework that drives the mission of school library programs in this country:

1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
4. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
8. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession. (American Library Association, 1996)

AASL's ethical standpoint frames the questions that this study sought to answer.

Procedures and Design – Introduction

This mixed methods study (Glesne, 2006, p. 13) with both quantitative and qualitative components (ALA Longitudinal Study data and an open-ended survey) sought to provide insight into the perspectives of leaders in the field regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on Rhode Island's public school library programs and what sort of framework, if any, should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island.

In *The Foundations of Social Research* under the section "The Great Divide," Crotty (1998) wrote:

> …in most research textbooks, it is qualitative research and quantitative research that are set against each other as polar opposites…this divide – objectivist research associated with quantitative methods over constructionists or subjectivist research associated with qualitative methods – is far from justified. (p. 15)

Crotty (1998) added: "...when we think about investigations carried out in the normal course of our daily lives, how often measuring and counting turn out to be essential to our purposes" (p. 15). There is symbiosis rather than polarity between the two research approaches (qualitative and quantitative) that drove this research study into a mixed-methodology, as both are valid – if not required – in educational research (Creswell, 2009).

Individuals trained in technical and scientific writing as well as statistics and computer statistical programs and with a familiarity regarding quantitative journals in the library would most likely choose a quantitative design (Creswell, 2009, p. 19). On the other hand, researchers who have an affinity for writing in a more literary way or enjoy engaging in personal interviews or making keen close-up observations may gravitate towards a qualitative approach (p. 19). Accordingly, the mixed-methods approach is suitable for a person who enjoys the structure of quantitative research while, at the same time, values the flexibility of qualitative inquiry.

Sampling

Regarding the qualitative component of the study, there are numerous and varied examples of case studies, each possessing one common denominator ─ that each person is a "*bounded* integrated system" (Glesne, 2006, p. 13). In this case, a concurrent transformative mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2009) was employed, starting with a brief, one-question open-ended email inquiry delivered via the School Librarians of Rhode Island listserv (currently at 300 active members) asking the members to identify leaders in the field of school libraries in the state. This purposive sampling, often called snowball (or "chain") sampling (Glesne, 2006) identified subjects who are active in the profession of school libraries and/or education in the state of Rhode Island and are seen as exemplary practitioners and mentors. In research, an advocacy-participatory inquiry framework is empowerment issue-oriented and change-oriented. Creswell (2009) advanced: "It is practical and collaborative because it is inquiry completed *with* others rather than *on* or *to* others. In this spirit, advocacy-participatory authors engage the participants as active

collaborators in their inquiries" (p. 9). Each of the selected subjects (20) earned three or more collegial endorsements via the SLRI listserv query. Each was sent an invitation to the open-ended survey, which was administered through the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey (Gold plan, with skip logic, custom logos, for a more professional look) using the service's email responder option. Fifteen of the selected subjects responded and began the survey. When there were 10 complete surveys, from a diverse group of participants: school building-level practitioners – both practicing and retired; district-level school library directors/supervisors; a leader in the state's school library association (SLRI); a leader in the national school library association (AASL); a leader in the state's school library resource-sharing consortium; and a member from higher education who was engaged in the preparation of school librarians – the survey was closed.

Researchers who engage in case studies strive to better understand human experiences and perspectives and the processes by which their subjects construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 43). Further, the qualitative researcher seeks to "make connections that are ultimately meaningful to themselves and the reader" (Glesne, 2006, p. 164). Words like "human," "meaning," "connections," "behavior," and "experience" form the foundation of educational practice (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 43). When describing how research is undertaken in order to improve the quality of one's practice, Merriam (2009) offered the example of an educational researcher who might be interested in exploring how NCLB is affecting teacher morale. The findings of such a study would

then inform not only legislators who are tasked with revising policy but also school administrators and teachers whose responsibility it is to implement it (p. 4).

A research project is an exercise in remedying the ignorance that exists about a topic (Glesne, 2006, p. 29). This study sought to remedy the lack of information regarding the value of school libraries, their impact on student achievement, and their potential expansive influence on all aspects of students' lives.

Research Questions

The goal, objectives, and purpose of this transformative, mixed methods research study shaped the development of the three research questions. The first question compels qualitative data (open-ended survey), the second embeds quantitative data (ALA Longitudinal Study), and the third was the "integrated" (Creswell, 2009) question that bridges the two distinct data sets and delivers the transformative component of the study.

RQ 1. What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?

RQ 2. What evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

RQ 3. What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

Instruments and Measures/Reliability and Validity

In considering data collection and instrumentation options, the qualitative researcher hones in on techniques that show promise in eliciting the type of data

required to gain an understanding of the phenomenon in question with the goal of exploring different perspectives on the issue, while also making effective use of the time available for data collection (Glesne, 2006, p. 36). The researcher's techniques must correlate with what he or she seeks to learn through study of the phenomenon in question. Further, the questions formulated by the researcher are what drive data collection. Open-ended questionnaires and surveys are effective methods for both eliciting data and gathering perspectives on a topic. Whitman cautioned: "Open ended surveys can be a hassle for participants, and, often, unless they are very motivated and care deeply about the subject they tend to shy away" (M. Whitman, personal communication, November 9, 2014).

However, taking into consideration that school librarians are known to be passionate about their work and to possess a unique "worldview" (Ewbank & Moreillon, 2009, para. 1) and a sense of political responsibility that emanates from that shared worldview, high return and completion rates were anticipated. This "teacher-librarian worldview," is composed of a set of beliefs that are grounded in the profession's beliefs around public education and librarianship ─ beliefs that influence school librarians' practices and noteworthy history of involvement in local, state, regional, and national professional associations (Ewbank & Moreillon, 2009, para. 5).

In addition to augmenting research validity through multiple means of data collection or "triangulation" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 115), selecting cases that cut across some range or variation (Glesne, 2006), called *maximum variant sampling* (p. 35), focusing the study on a range of participants in leadership positions within the field of school librarianship in the state of Rhode Island is a legitimate means towards

augmenting validity in qualitative research. In addition, using a focus group (three local school librarians who did not participate in the study), as well as a brief survey on the School Libraries of Rhode Island (SLRI) listserv to seek input from members regarding who should be included in the study and using those results and recommendations, participants from the following subgroups were selected: school building-level practitioners – both practicing and retired, district-level directors/supervisors, a leader in the state's school library association (SLRI), a leader in the national school library association (AASL), a leader in the state's school library resource-sharing consortium, and a member from higher education who was engaged in the preparation of school librarians.

The validity and trustworthiness of the research was enhanced by not only collecting and analyzing data from three distinct sources – participant documents (open-ended surveys), research documents (researcher's journal and memos to self), and longitudinal survey data from the American Association of School Librarians – disaggregated to reflect Rhode Island/public school-specific results, but also including one or more participants who hold differing opinions "negative cases" regarding the value of school libraries (Glesne, 2006, p. 38). There are educators who are employed as school librarians or as technology directors or technology integration specialists who hold differing views regarding the value of school libraries. Some of these educators are members of SLRI and offered meaningful albeit "discrepant information" (Creswell, 2009, p.192) as participants in the survey, as noted in the "outliers" area of the qualitative data analysis.

Data Collection Procedures

Late fall – October and November – and January through April are known as the optimal times to collect data in schools (Roberts, 2004, p. 142). In March 2015, a query was generated on the School Librarians of Rhode Island listserv (Appendix B) asking members to identify men and women who are active in the school library profession and/or the field of education in the state of Rhode Island and are seen as exemplary practitioners and mentors and also include a rationale. There was an emphasis on the fact that selections need not be restricted to practicing school librarians but may also include professors of library and information science; district school library or media services directors; retired school library professionals; members of state, regional, and national school library associations; and anyone else who may contribute to the study (e.g., technology directors or technology integration specialists or practicing school librarians who may hold divergent views regarding the relevance or value of school libraries).

Setting and Selection

The study focused on participants holding various leadership positions within the field of school librarianship in the state of Rhode Island. The criteria for the selection of the final subjects was delineated in the initial query on the SLRI listerv (See Appendix B) and included:

- credentialed school librarians who are leading or have led exemplary school library programs;
- practitioners who are leading innovative school library-related professional development focused on current and best practices;

- practitioners who are active members or board members of state, regional, national professional organizations (School Librarians of Rhode Island, New England Educational Media Association, American Association of School Librarians);
- other educators or library professionals who are held in high regard by SLRI's active members (professors, district library/media and technology directors), including those who may hold divergent views regarding the relevance or value of school libraries.

Each identified school library leader was asked to complete a 12-item open-ended survey (with "positive influences" and "negative influences" prompts) which best expresses his or her perspective on NCLB's impact on school libraries in Rhode Island and what sort of framework, if any, is necessary to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island. Six of the 12 survey questions were derived from those used in the ALA/AASL longitudinal study (2012), and referenced: Staff Activities; Hours and Staffing; Collection Size; Technology; School Library Expenditures; Visits. The additional survey questions went broader and deeper and derived from the researcher's advocacy-participatory worldview regarding public school libraries: Collection Development; Circulation; Librarian "Voice"; Current and Future State of Rhode Island's Public School Libraries; Is a Framework Needed to Ensure the Sustainability of Public School Libraries in Rhode Island?; If so, What Components Should be Included in the Framework?

In order to assure its face validity, the open-ended survey was field tested using experts in the field of public school librarianship. Three people (non-sample

individuals) took the survey with the objective of looking for issues involving clarity, spelling, writing, and grammar. The field test participants provided feedback on the instructions for completing the open-ended survey and the time commitment necessary to complete the task. The feedback provided by the experts and volunteers was integrated to improve the instrument. For example, the following quoted suggestions from Field Tester #1 resulted in a more effective survey:

> I do think a little background refresher on NCLB would be good. Everyone's so focused on CCSS and PARCC now. I had to look up exactly what it entailed because I forgot what it covered.
>
> I think the questions are pretty clear, but are you asking people to answer for their libraries specifically or for RI in general?
>
> Format: I'd like a bigger box to type in like the current/future question's box, that way I can look over what I've written as a whole block and not just one whole long line. (Respondent #1, March 2015)

See Appendix C, *Open Ended Survey*.

Data Analysis

The ultimate goal of the qualitative researcher is to make connections that are, in the end, critically meaningful to himself or herself and the reader (Glesne, 2006, p. 164). The overarching objective in engaging an advocacy and participatory worldview (Glesne, 2006, p. 12) is to use data from the study to provide a framework to map to the public education landscape in Rhode Island and also to generate insights regarding strategies they could use to sustain school libraries.

Throughout the qualitative research process, when it is unstructured data that is being mined, this is achieved by continuously organizing, classifying, and finding themes in the data through careful coding and analysis (Glesne, 2006). If a researcher expects copious amounts of unstructured data in the form of numerous open-ended surveys, then qualitative analysis software is an option.

For this study, NVivo 10, which is a code-based theory builder, was used. NVivio 10 goes beyond code and retrieve software programs to support theory building (Glesne, 2006, p. 163). The program takes the codes generated by the researcher and creates a relational database that includes hierarchies of classifiers. This software came at a price and a steep learning curve. However, an affordable student license was available upon presenting the required student identification information. The product is supplied as a download via email, and access to online training webinars was included with the license.

Qualitative content analysis can be performed using inductive or deductive methods – or through an integrated approach that uses both inductive and deductive methods. The qualitative data for this mixed methods study were analyzed using an integrated approach. Derived from the researcher's prior knowledge and familiarity with issues related to school libraries, a "top down" deductive approach was employed by using pre-constructed coding schemes, a framework developed by the researcher and based on the content of the 12 survey questions (e.g. the effects of NCLB on: 1) Staff Activities; 2) Hours and Staffing; 3) Collection Size; 4) Collection Development; 5) Technology; 6) School Library Expenditures; 7) Visits; 8) Collection Development; 9) Circulation; 10) Librarian "Voice"; 11) Current/Future

State of Rhode Island's Public School Libraries; 12) Framework for Sustainability of Public School Libraries in Rhode Island) to code the survey data exported from SurveyMonkey and imported into NVivo.

Table 3.1

Pre-constructed Codes

Question	Codes				
1. Staff activities	planning	budget	instruction	collaboration	
2. Hours and staffing	hours open	flex schedule	fixed schedule	hours-librarians	hours-other
3. Collection size	books	periodicals	video	audio	databases
4. Collection development	narrowed	broadened	unchanged		
5. Technology	computers-students	computers-staff	OPAC	online databases	
6. Budgets and expenditures	print	non-print	databases	electronic access	
7. Library usage	individual	small group	whole class		
8. Circulation	print	eBooks	non-print	hardware	software
9. Your voice	collaborator	leader			
10. RI's public school libraries ...?	at risk	steady state	NCLB	CCSS	PARCC/NECAP
11. Is a framework needed?	framework	no framework			
12. If so, what type?	funding	standards	state	national	

In addition to a close reading of the hard copy of the open-ended survey data, text was coded through the text-search query feature in NVivo. Results from word and phrase searches, which can be organized in "Nodes" and archived, are returned in four forms, as: summary (number of instances), references coded (a single file of all respondents' answer sets that contain the word/phrase), data set (a table of the individual responses organized by respondent), word tree (a visual representation of stem statements which include the word/phrase). See Figure 3.1 below, for a search of "NCLB" that was presented using the word tree option.

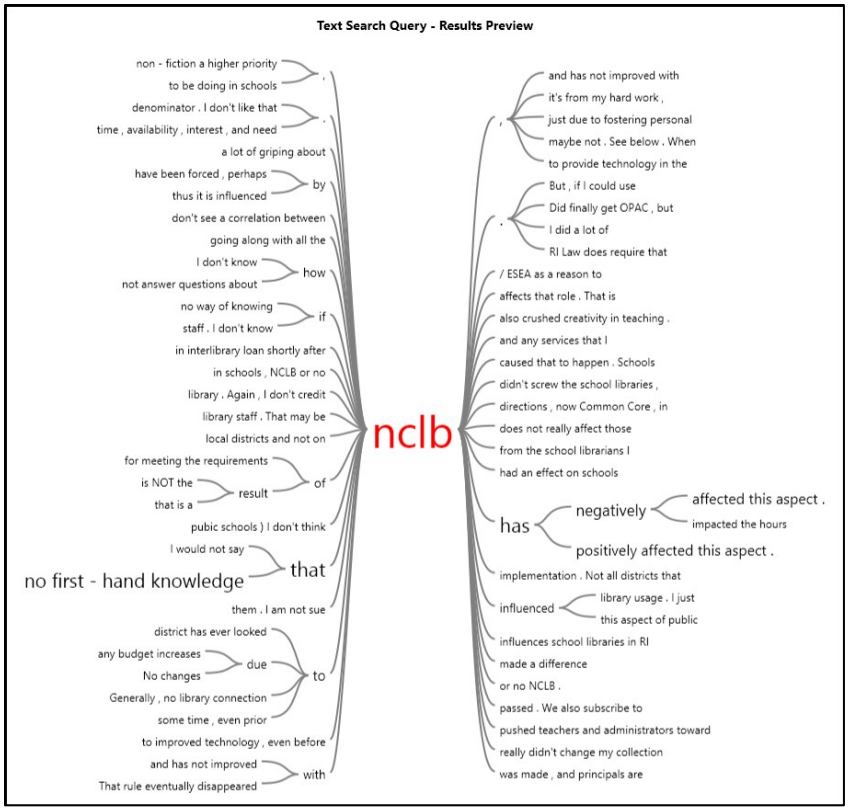

Figure 3.1. NVivo Text Search Query (deductive)

Also, the online program DataCracker was used as a data visualization tool, which uses text analytics to generate "tag clouds" that show the top 100 words or categories for every open-ended survey question. This program, which must be purchased, served to augment the coding process started in NVivo. DataCracker further facilitated an inductive "bottom-up" approach, as obvious themes (e.g., BEP, Attributes of School Librarians, Administration/Scheduling) emerged from the data when project documents (surveys, field notes, memos to self, notecards, daily log on white board divided by "qual" and "quant") were read and analyzed in hard copy as well as in NVivo. DataCracker is more powerful than free web-based options like

Wordle and even more so than the "Word Cloud" query feature in NVivo, as it allowed the researcher to exclude words and also manually combine words that are similar (e.g., "library" and "libraries") – both in a literal sense or in terms of their meaning within the context of the qualitative data being analyzed ("SLMS" – school library media specialist – and "librarian"). Further, Word Cloud in NVivo excludes acronyms (BEP – Basic Education Plan); whereas, DataCracker's analytics includes them. See the DataCracker's word frequency tag cloud (also called a "word cloud") below for question 12: "What components should be included in the framework?"

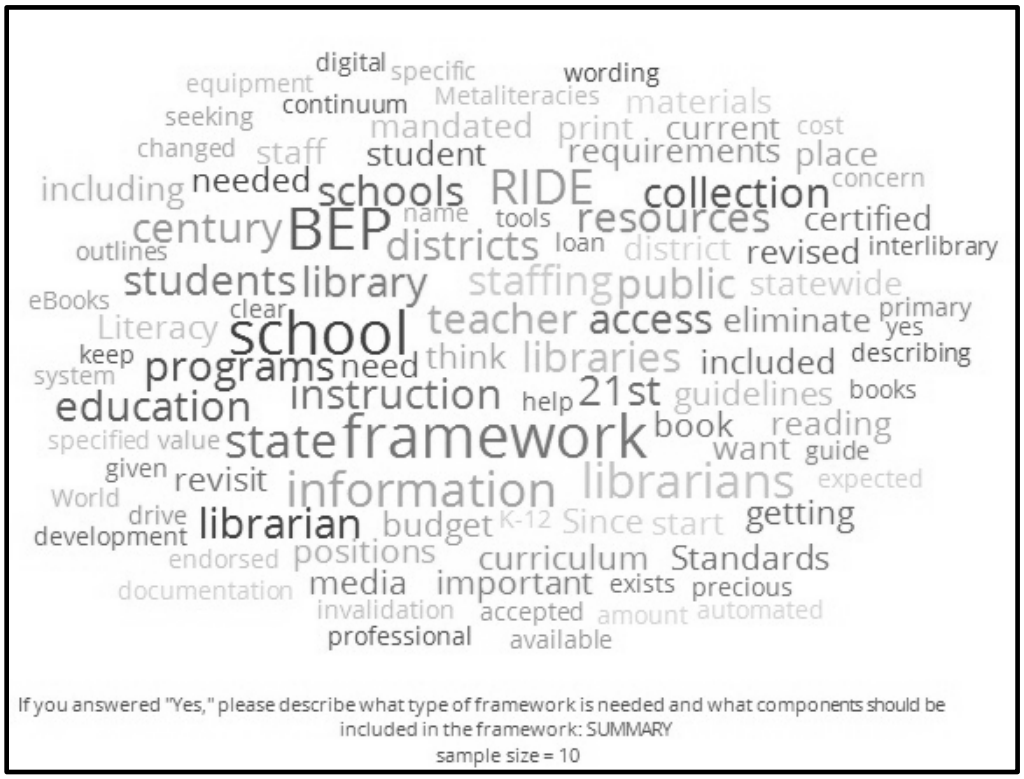

Figure 3.2. DataCracker Text Search Query (inductive)

Numerical Survey Data

Once the research proposal was approved by the Bethel University Institutional Review Board, the requisite documentation went to the American Library Association, in order for the aggregate of the 2007 through 2012 survey data to be released. The raw data from previous administrations of the ALA/AASL survey was accessed. The ALA/AASL data was able to be disaggregated by state –something that had not been determined before the release – then the data was filtered to focus on public school libraries in Rhode Island.

Having the data available without needing to build and administer the survey was a real advantage, but it is also unusual (M. Lindstrom, personal communication, September 14, 2014). Even though the approach to obtaining data was somewhat unique, one can conclude that there will be many more researchers using this method ─ especially when it comes to the mining of "big data" that is being gathered by web companies. Lindstrom projected: "There will be a LOT of rich data for researchers to explore without creating their own instruments" (M. Lindstrom, personal communication, September 14, 2014).

AASL's Original Survey Design

The American Association of School Libraries Count! annual longitudinal survey was an online survey that was open to all primary and secondary school libraries to participate. The survey questions focused on:

- staff activities (planning with teachers, delivering instruction, working on budget);

- hours and staffing (hours open, hours flexibly scheduled, number of school librarians, number of hours worked by school librarians, number of hours worked by other staff);
- collection size (number of books, number of current periodical subscriptions, number of video materials, number of audio materials);
- technology (library and library-networked computers, percentage able to access database remotely);
- visits (individual, group);
- expenditures (print and non-print materials, licensed databases, other electronic access to information).

AASL received a high participation rate during the six years this survey has been offered: 2007, 4,571 respondents; 2008, 6,998 respondents; 2009, 5,824 respondents; 2010, 5,191 respondents; 2011, 4,887 respondents; 2012, 4,385 respondents (AASL, 2012, p. 3).

The estimated margin of error among school libraries that responded (AASL, 2012, p. 3):

- 2007 ±1.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval
- 2008 ± 1.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level
- 2009 ±1.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval
- 2010 ±1.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval
- 2011 ±1.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval
- 2012 ±1.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval

AASL's Selection of Participants

AASL survey participants, for all six years that it was administered, were self-selected. The 2007 to 2012 survey was publicized through various professional library-related organizations and events and through word of mouth.

Data Analysis of ALA/AASL Survey

For the six years of the original ALA/AASL longitudinal study, statistical significance was assessed using the t test of independent samples and the standard minimum criterion, $p < .05$. Translation: No more than five percent of the time would repeated and infinite samples yield meaningfully different results. The results were analyzed in two ways. The first analysis was in overall changes for each data point at three key percentiles: the 50^{th}, the 75^{th}, and the 95^{th}. The second method of analysis employed in ALA/AASL's original longitudinal study was in changes in the average (mean) response, overall and by subgroups: school type – public, private, charter, level and size of enrollment, region, and data points from the National Center for Statistics (NCES, 2012).

An example is below (p. 9), Figure 3.3.

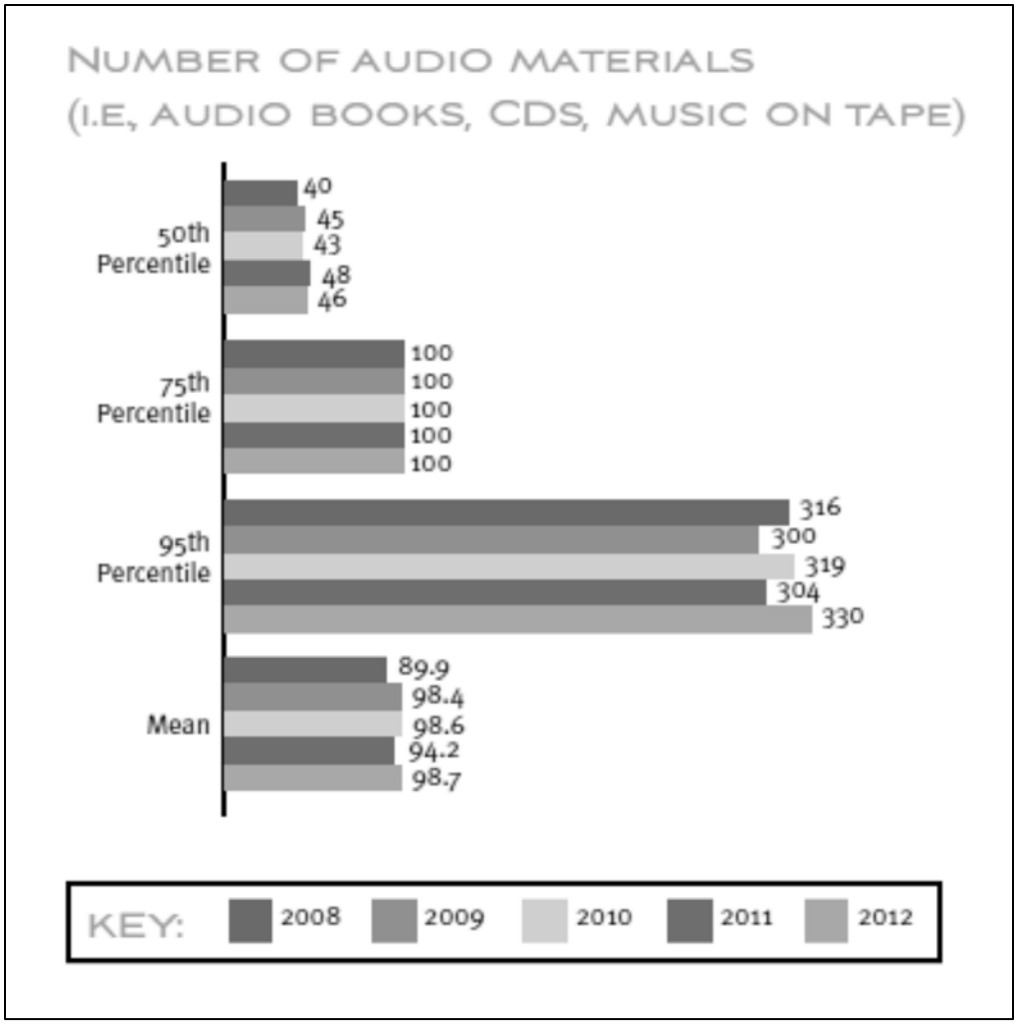

Figure 3.3. Overall changes for each data point at three key percentiles: the 50th, the 75th, and the 95th and in changes in the average (mean) response. Note: Shared with permission.

Analysis of Disaggregated Data (Public Schools in Rhode Island)

The ultimate purpose of this study was to determine the effects of No Child Left Behind on public school library resources in Rhode Island. Using the data from the ALA/AASL longitudinal study, this NCLB-school library study examined the

changes in the average (mean) response by the following discrete group of respondents: state (Rhode Island), school type (public), and level (elementary, middle, secondary) to determine if, since the 2004 enactment of NCLB which also coincided with the years the ALA/AASL survey was administered, school library usage, staffing, collections, and expenditures have held steady, dropped, or increased. The raw data was sent to the researcher from ALA/AASL via email, in the form of an Excel file. The researcher disaggregated the data (Rhode Island public school libraries), and, from the five Rhode Island surveys (2008-2012), a single analyzable file was created using the statistical software program SPSS.

All inferential statistical analyses (ANOVA2), data cleaning, and merging were performed within SPSS with sensitivity of results to conditions such as outliers and inadequate sample size, resulting in the jettisoning of data from 2007, the first year of the survey was administered, as there were less than 20 Rhode Island public school library respondents (Vogt, 2007, p. 84). In the analysis, a pattern was established relating to various library resources over time – 2008 to 2012: ANOVA2 was chosen over t-test (used, year to year, in ALA/AASL study), as a t-test is best used when determining if two averages or means are the same or different. The ANOVA is preferred if comparing three or more averages or means (Muijs, 2011, p. 175).

Ethical Considerations

With a commitment to upholding the ethical tenets of the Bethel University Institutional Review Board (IRB) it was ensured that:

1. Research subjects had sufficient information to make informed decisions (informed consent) about participating – confidentially – in the study.
2. Research subjects knew they could withdraw from the study at any time.
3. All unnecessary risks to the subjects had been removed.
4. Benefits to the participants and the field of school libraries and schools, in general, outweighed the potential risks involved in conducting the study.
5. The researcher acted in such a manner that research subjects were able to infer, at all times, that, as an investigator, the researcher was qualified and proficient and also that reciprocity and collaboration were maintained throughout the study (Creswell, 2009, p. 90).

Delimitations

In consonance with an advocacy and participatory framework, "member checking" (Glesne, 2006, p. 38) and the "open democratic" (p. 140) approach was employed in this study through affording prospective participants the opportunity, individually and as a whole group, not only to determine who should participate (chain sampling) and what data was collected (open-ended nature of the survey), but also to share in research interpretations, to provide continuous feedback, and, ultimately, to enjoy agency over which data were included in the final research report (p. 140). Further, participants could access the survey for the two months it remained opened (from March 31, 2015 to May 30, 2015) and continually change or modify their responses. The member checking process allowed survey respondents to contribute to the integrity of emerging themes. See Appendix D for a copy of an email sent to respondents after the data were collected and analyzed.

Limitations

The advocacy-participatory researcher pursues topics that are of personal interest to her with an eye towards creating a better society (Creswell, 2009, p. 19). "It is all about how we know what we know" (Cary, 2002, p. 52) that must drive the manner in which the qualitative researcher conducts her study, interacts with her participants, organizes, analyzes, and presents her data. Being in the field of education for 32 years and, within the field, a school librarian/library director for 20 of them, this researcher's "positionality" relative to the aforementioned research study was a highly subjective, even emotional one. Throughout this researcher's career in school libraries, terms like: *passionate*, *committed*, and *zealous* were frequently used as personal descriptors.

This advocacy-participatory world view may be considered a limitation of this study. Correspondingly, throughout the study, the researcher endeavored to deconstruct the lens of self-interest through which she may view and process the data. In addition, the researcher was hyper aware of the positionality of each of her subjects, as they, too, by their very professional positions and stature – as identified by their colleagues, possess a professional passion that may be similar or, may be anathema "negative cases" (Glesne, 2006, p. 38) to the researcher's. It was critical to be as objective as possible when analyzing the open ended responses of study participants.

The researcher reached "theoretical saturation" at 60+ pages of source material from a maximum variant sampling of 10 respondents' surveys and chose to stop collecting data (Glesne, 2006, p. 35). The successive examination of the five

incomplete surveys yielded redundancy and the 10 full surveys offered data that seemed complete and integrated (Glesne, 2006, p. 151). However, another limitation of this study was its narrow focus. The study explored the perspectives of 10 leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries concerning the impact of No Child Left Behind on the state's public school library programs. Librarians from the state's charter and private schools as well as schools from other states, were excluded from this study. The findings may not be generalizable to all school environments. Internal validity was based on the library professionals' truthful responses about their perception of NCLB's effects on school library programs. Measures were taken to protect the anonymity of all library professionals who participated in the study.

Timeline of the Study

The following is a timeline of the study beginning with sending a query to solicit participation and concluding with analyzation of both data sets.

March, 2015 – Sent query to the School Libraries of Rhode Island Listserv asking members to identify men and women who are active in the profession of school libraries and/or education in the State of Rhode Island and are seen as exemplary practitioners and mentors.

March 2015 – Provided a verbal and written summary of the study and consent forms to school library leaders selected to participate in the study.

March, 2015 – Distributed, via discrete email invitations, open-ended surveys via the School Libraries of Rhode Island Listserv.

March, 2015 – Submitted formal request to access AASL Longitudinal Survey data for quantitative component of the study.

April and May, 2015 – Sent reminders to participants to finish their surveys and closed the survey at 10 complete documents, 50+ pages of data. See Figure 3.4.

June through August, 2015 – Analyzed both sets of data – quantitative and qualitative. Wrote the report.

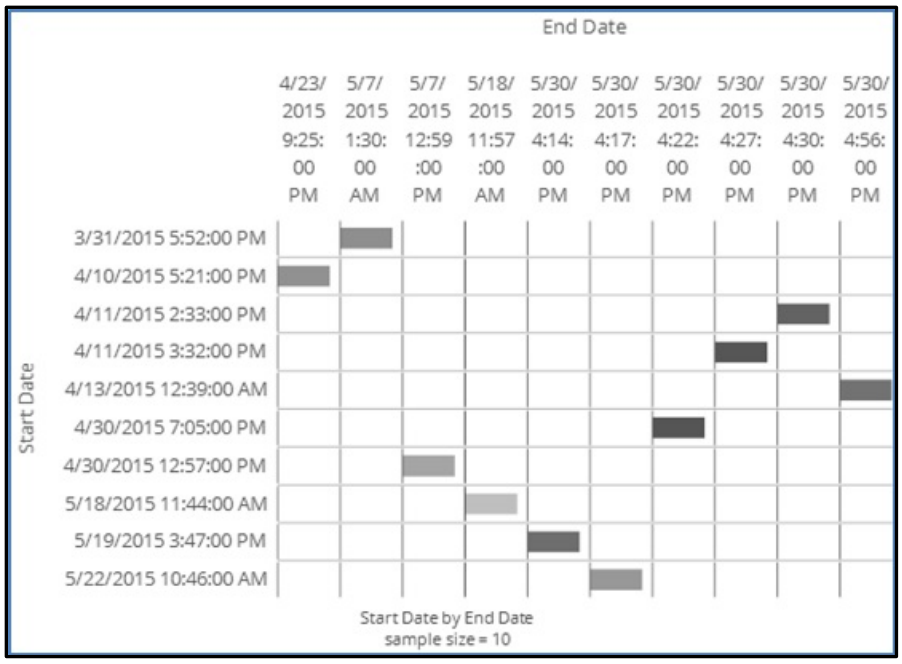

Figure 3.4. Start and end dates/times of respondents

Chapter 4: Results

The researcher employed a mixed-methods study and analyzed subject-centered data (open-ended questionnaire of leaders in the field of Rhode Island school libraries) and critical-analytical data (ALA/AASL longitudinal survey) to discover if, and what type of, a framework is necessary to ensure the sustainability of public school libraries in Rhode Island in this era of accountability and high-states testing. The results of the data analysis for the three research questions are discussed in this section.

Research questions 1 and 3 drive the qualitative component of the study, and question 2 drives the quantitative component:

RQ 1. What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?

RQ 2. What evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

RQ 3. What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

Qualitative Data Analysis

Once the survey instrument was field tested and revised based on participants' feedback, the researcher sent a brief, one-question open-ended email inquiry to the 300-member School Librarians of Rhode Island listserv asking members to identify leaders in the field of school libraries in the state. This purposive sampling (Glesne, 2006) identified subjects who were active in the school library profession and/or in public education in the state of Rhode Island and were seen as exemplary practitioners and mentors. Subsequently, each identified school library leader was asked to complete a 12-item open-ended survey that best expressed his or her perspective on NCLB's impact on school libraries in Rhode Island and what sort of framework, if any, is necessary to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island.

In order to connect the qualitative and quantitative components of the study, six of the 12 survey questions were developed from those used in the original ALA/AASL longitudinal study (2012), and referenced: staff activities; hours and staffing; collection size; technology; school library expenditures; and visits. Six additional survey questions went broader and deeper and were derived from the researcher's years of experience and advocacy-participatory worldview regarding public school libraries: collection development; circulation; librarian "voice"; current and future state of Rhode Island's public school libraries; Is a framework needed to ensure the sustainability of public school libraries in Rhode Island?; If so, what components should be included in the framework?

The researcher organized the data using the hard-copy pages of open-ended survey data using analog methods (folders, highlighters, notecards, a white board) and subsequently uploading the text into the qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software packages NVivo and DataCracker. The researcher also performed word searches using a coding framework the researcher developed from the 12 survey questions. This organization of data resulted in obvious themes (e.g., BEP, attributes of school librarians, administration/scheduling); a question-by-question analysis soon gave way to a whole-text treatment, as the researcher reformulated and refined analysis of the descriptive data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Sample

The ten participants represented all levels of school librarianship, held a variety of professional positions (practicing and retired school librarians, district-level directors/supervisors, a leader in the state's school library association (SLRI), a leader in the national school library association (AASL), a leader in one of the state's school library resource-sharing consortia, and a member from higher education who was engaged in the preparation of school librarians), represented every county in the state, cutting across urban, rural, suburban school districts, and had an average of 19.2 years of experience in fields relating to school libraries. Eight of the 10 participants possessed the degree of Master of Library Science/ Master of Library and Information Studies.

In synthesizing the results of a relatively small sample of participants in a small professional cohort (leaders in Rhode Island's school libraries), in the smallest state in the union, the researcher was sensitive to take precautions that no one could

be identified or identifiable by the information obtained in connection with this study. Accordingly, the researcher chose to eschew identifying respondents by the numbers assigned to them in the organization and coding processes (Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, Respondent 4, Respondent 5, Respondent 6, Respondent 7, Respondent 8, Respondent 9, Respondent 10). The demographic results from the survey are shown in Figures 4.1–4.4 and represent school level, position held, district type, and Rhode Island county.

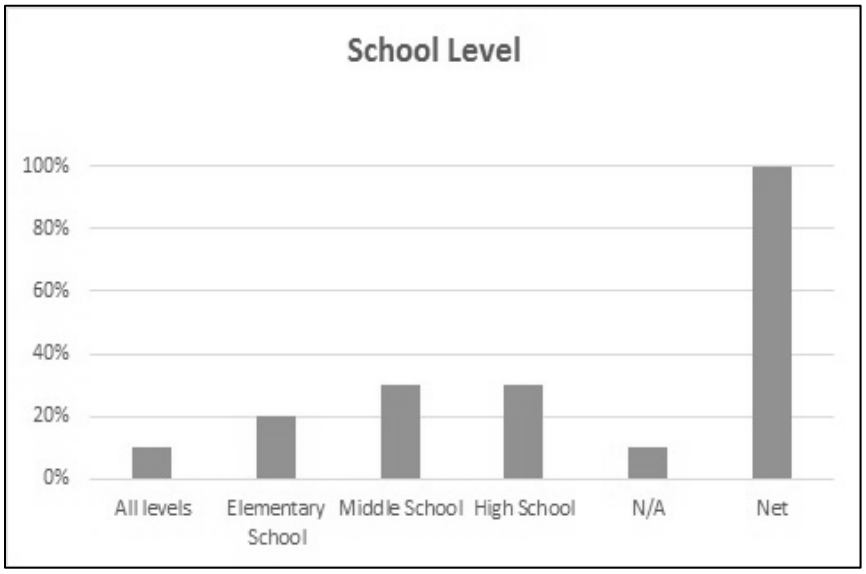

Figure 4.1. School levels represented in the qualitative study

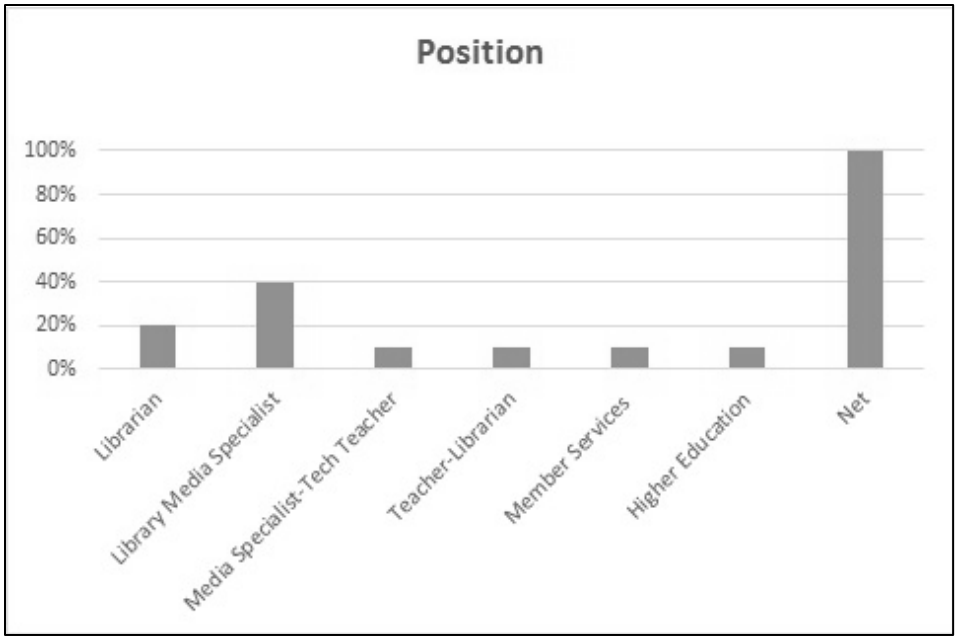

Figure 4.2. Positions held by survey participants

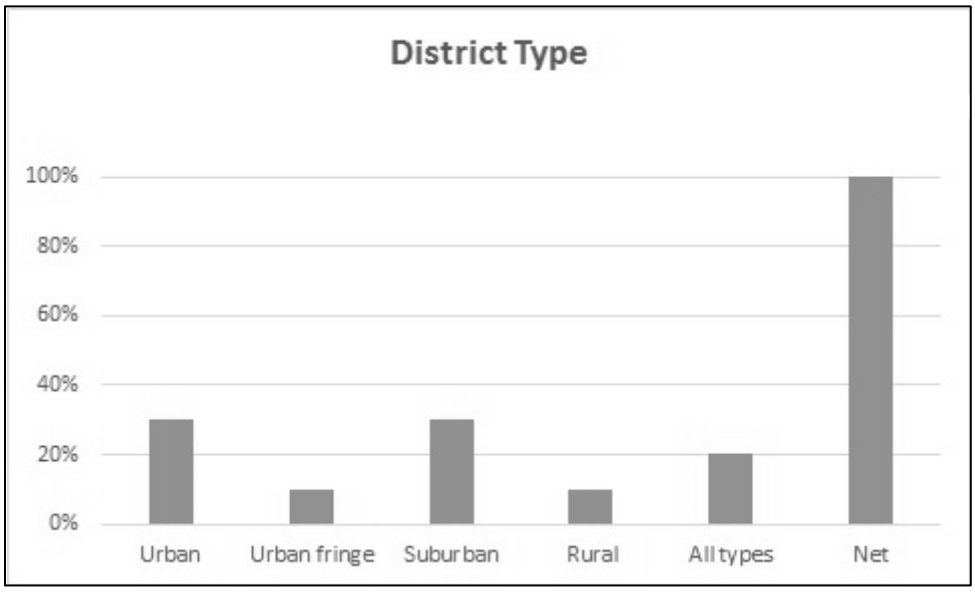

Figure 4.3. Types of public school districts

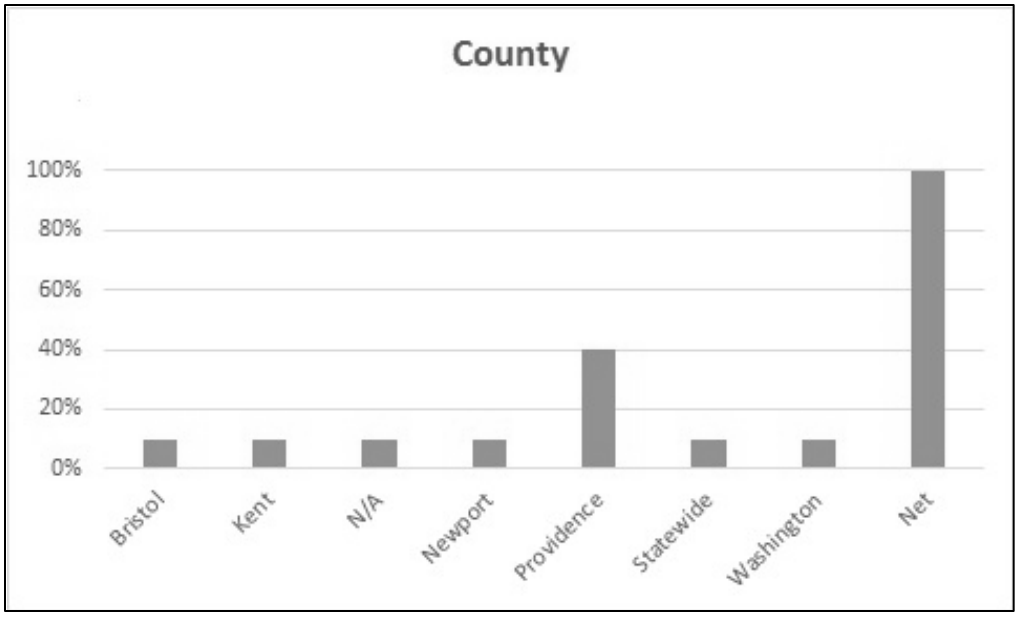

Figure 4.4. Rhode Island counties

Results

Study participants' answers demonstrated inconsistency within each question, with several instances of participants responding and expounding off topic/question. Overriding and then superseding the original coding categories and themes developed from the text from the 12 discrete survey questions (Table 3.1), a new set of themes emerged across the set of 10 surveys that connected to *RQ 1* and *RQ 3* regarding the perspectives of leaders in the field on the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs and the need and type of framework necessary for sustaining them:

> *RQ 1*. What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?

RQ 3. What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

For example, in answering questions 1) Staff Activities; 2) Hours and Staffing Question; 7) Library Usage; and 11) Current State of RI's Public School Libraries, several respondents' referenced the fact that school libraries across the state are regularly shut down and used as NECAP and PARCC testing sites. This critical mass of responses pointed toward a theme around state testing and its marginalizing the library program by co-opting the library space and/or the services of the school librarian:

> Question 11: "Unfortunately, the curriculum support a good school librarian can provide is often overlooked, as administrators look for test coordinators and locations."
>
> Question 1: "Instruction is fragmented when testing happens – schedule must accommodate testing, leading to disjointed instruction."
>
> Question 2: "The library is used for small group, extended time and individual/modified testing, as well as for make-up testing. In the latest iteration (PARCC), the library classroom computers were used for these purposes, effectively shutting down the library classroom for 4 weeks."
>
> Question 7: "Testing in the library...mentioned before…but a big negative.
>
> Question 11: "Many school libraries themselves are used as testing locations, closing the facility to students for the 3-4 week PARCC testing window."
>
> Question 11: "Weeks on end, libraries are closed during testing."

Another example of this sort of cross-pollination of textual data, was evident in respondents' answers to questions 2) Hours and Staffing Question; 11) Current state of RI's Public School Libraries; and 12) What Type of Framework is Needed. Several respondents referred to the 2009 changes in the Rhode Island Basic Education Plan (BEP) and its effects on school libraries.

> Question 2: "RI law (Basic Education Program or BEP) does not specify staffing levels in libraries based on student population; only that schools must have library media programs. The former BEP specified library staffing levels per student enrollment. When the new BEP went into effect in 2009, staffing level requirements were removed. Some school district administrators see this as license to save money by cutting or combining library positions."
>
> Questions 11: "Librarians should be included in the BEP."
>
> Question 12: "The BEP was our framework because it gave clear staffing outlines, book and budget guidelines and had specific wording to keep programs intact. Since the BEP has changed, that wording no longer exists."

These digressions pointed the researcher toward "signal trends" and "master conceptions" that emerged from the aggregate of the text data, as participants demonstrated considerable consistency, not within but across the question sets, with the entirety of the 60+ pages of double-spaced text uncovering, independent of the 12 discrete questions, a pattern of responses that supplanted the original coding scheme (Mills, 1959, p.216 as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The qualitative researcher is sometimes described as a "translator of culture" working to understand her study participants' world and then translating the text into a meaningful account (Glesne, 2006, p. 174). Accordingly, a question-by-question analysis gave way to a whole-text treatment, as the researcher reformulated and refined analysis of the descriptive data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). It became clear that respondents' answers to the 12 survey questions veered away from an absolute focus on NCLB and its effects on school libraries. Often several respondents offered up a culture of marginalization of school librarians in the state of Rhode Island and offered merely generalized references to NCLB or admitted that they saw no correlation between NCLB and some of the question sets:

> **Respondent:** "I've heard a lot of griping about NCLB from the school librarians I serve, who feel stifled by its requirements and the ways in which the state and districts are interpreting and implementing regulations as a result."
>
> **Respondent:** "I don't know if NCLB had an effect on schools this way, but during this time period, many _____elementary schools went to half-time LMS staff, the other half time the library is closed."
>
> **Respondent:** "I have no way of knowing if NCLB influenced this aspect of public school librarianship in RI."
>
> **Respondent:** "I would not say that NCLB caused that to happen."

Subsequently, five predominant themes (with sub-themes), that cut across the 12 survey questions and corresponded with *RQ 1* (What are the perspectives of

leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?) and *RQ 3* (What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?) arose from the open-ended survey data and were considered to have the most powerful impact on the current and future state of Rhode Island's public school libraries. These five agents are listed below, in order of significance, based not only on the number of stem statements pulled from the submitted surveys across the survey questions but also the researcher's interpretation of the respondents' claims based on patterns and trends in the data and also member checking using a follow-up email to participants during and after the survey closed in order to obtain participant reactions to the working draft (Glesne, 2007, p. 165). Relative to *RQ 1*, Theme 3 (Testing) pointed toward the negative impact of NCLB's concomitant testing on the accessibility of school library programs but reflected a mixed impact on school library collections; Theme 4 (Technology and Resource Sharing) uncovered the positive impact NCLB has had on the amount and quality of technology as well as resource sharing programs among the state's public school libraries. Theme 1 (School Librarian Attributes), Theme 2 (Rhode Island Basic Education Program), and Theme 5 (Local and State School Administration), quite apart from the subject of NCLB, manifested as a "data clump" around Research Question 3 to support the need for a framework to sustain Rhode Island's public school libraries (Glesne, 2006).

Themes and Sub-Themes

These themes and sub-themes were identified:

1. Attributes of School Librarians

    a. Expertise of School Librarians
    b. Relationships/Collaborations
    c. School Librarian Preparation/Higher Education
2. Rhode Island Basic Education Plan (BEP)
3. Testing/Curriculum
    a. PARCC/NECAP
    b. Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
4. Technology
    a. Local Technology
    b. Consortia/Resource Sharing
5. Administration
    a. Principal(s)/Superintendent(s)
    b. Scheduling
    c. Rhode Island Department of Education

Theme One: Attributes of School Librarians

A thematic analysis of the open-ended survey data revealed that No Child Left Behind and its concomitant testing were viewed as tangential threats to Rhode Island's public school libraries and not nearly as impactful on the current and future library programs in Rhode Island's public schools as the attributes of school librarians, themselves, and the programs they deliver. Respondents indicated that the quality of school librarians and the programs they develop and administer were critical markers in predicting the health of school library programs. Many Rhode

Island school library leaders emphasized that school librarians must “sell” their programs in order to attract whole-class visits as “…teachers feel overwhelmed by new curriculum, new comprehensive course assessments and new standards and are unwilling to "give up" class time for sustained research projects that take class time away from teaching content.”

This data cluster around school librarian attributes corresponded with *RQ 3* (What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?). All 10 participants referenced the attributes of school librarians and/or the quality of the library media program they deliver, and these references swept across the 12 questions in the survey, interfiled throughout the whole text. Respondents’ stem statements are below:

Table 4.1

Attributes of School Librarians, Respondents Stem Statements

Theme: Attributes of School Librarians	
Coding categories	**Stem statements from surveys**
Expertise	Librarian preparation/higher education
	High functioning librarians
	Library usage is dependent on the program that the librarian provides
	Instructional leader and curriculum expert in the building
	Strong library program contributes to student success
	Libraries must be Learning Commons/Maker Spaces and promote credible digital resources
	Librarian HAS to be the instructional leader, or one of them
	Schools are at a disadvantage if the librarian is weak and ineffective with stakeholders
	Number of people holding positions as LMSs who should not be in those jobs
	Therefore can't document how bad they are as school librarians
	I want hard-working, knowledgeable 21st century librarians in our schools
	Librarians who have limited tech skills
	We need to keep up-to-date with those (technology) skills and evolve as they evolve
	Not all librarians have kept up-to-date and realized the impact for change
	Librarians as instructional leaders
	Schools without much of a voice from librarians
	Budget cuts are used to lose ineffective librarians across the state
	Principals have trouble getting rid of "bad" school librarians
	Individual people in positions
	Librarians with tech skills have stepped up with data, instruction, technology integration
	Worthy librarians should play a huge role in making in-depth learning possible
Relationships/Collaborations	Collaboration is the foundation of great teaching and learning
	Fostering personal relationships
	Teachers do not think to collaborate with the LMS
	Depends on the ability of the librarian and on the way he or she is viewed
	Librarian needs to earn the respect and faith of those around her/him
	Collaborator around student achievement
	Misunderstanding about what a school librarian does
	Principals don't know what the LMSs should be doing
	Must be willing to teach and show administration that what we do improves (student) performance
School Librarian Preparation	Less enrollment in library programs is going to leave us with a dearth of librarians
	Weed out graduate school library candidates who think the job is "easy"
	Graduate schools need to provide better training
	Better pedagogical foundations
	Library student teaching in line with classroom teaching practicums
	Not enough graduates from local library programs

Below, are samples of whole passages that follow each sub theme of Attributes of School Librarians: School Librarian Expertise; School Librarians' Collegial Relationships/Collaborations; School Librarian Preparation/Higher Education:

Expertise of School Librarians

Respondent: "Again, this depends on the ability of the librarian and on the

way he or she is viewed in the school. The librarian needs to earn the respect and faith of those around him or her. The librarian HAS to be the instructional leader or one of them. I am not sure NCLB affects that role. That is just what we are supposed to be doing in schools, NCLB or no NCLB."

Respondent: "Just for the record, there are a number of people holding positions as LMSs who should not be in those jobs. Principals have trouble getting rid of them because the principals don't even know what the LMSs should be doing, therefore can't document how bad they are as school librarians. I want hard-working, knowledgeable, 21st century librarians in our schools!"

Respondent: "I am concerned that schools without much of a voice from librarians are being slowly dismantled. Unfortunately, not all school districts are treated fairly with regard to library services and staff. I believe this sometimes has more to do with the individual people in positions. Sometimes, budget cuts are used to lose ineffective librarians across the state."

School Librarians' Collegial Relationships/Collaborations

Respondent: "Teachers see me as an instructional leader and curriculum expert in the building. Though they may not regularly collaborate to create research projects, they do see me as a collaborator around student achievement. Additionally, I have been involved in task validation for comprehensive course assessments and the creation of school wide rubrics."

Respondent: "Libraries are busy because teachers and students use the

facility. That usage is pretty much dependent on the program that the librarian provides. When teachers and librarians collaborate to create units and lessons, the library is well used by all types of groups. Collaboration takes time. When class time is taken by testing and standardized curriculum, creativity is lost and classes become hum-drum rather than real and alive."

Respondent: "The framework has to allow for teacher/librarian creative instructional planning within a broad spectrum so basics are taught and learned by all, but strategies and materials can be selected by the teacher."

School Librarian Preparation/Higher Education

Respondent: "Sadly though, it is my understanding that less and less enrollment in library programs are going to leave us with a dearth of librarians and more positions that need to be filled than have qualified people to fill them."

Respondent: "I am optimistic as long as we continue to have a school library media program at URI (University of Rhode Island) to produce future school librarians."

Respondent: " …graduate schools of library and information studies need to provide better training, support, and/or oversight in three areas: 1) sustained classroom exposure during the training period before graduation, so that library student teaching practicums are more in line with the rigorous requirements of department of education teaching practicums in terms of length of time spent student teaching; 2) better pedagogical foundations,

especially in the area of classroom management and special education services; and 3) weeding out graduate library student candidates who think that being a school librarian is "easy" or is a way to coast to retirement after a previous career."

Evidenced by the thematic analysis of the open-ended survey data, the attributes of school librarians, the college and university programs that prepare them as well as the programs school librarians create and administer in schools were paramount in significance. This is based not only on the number of stem statements but also respondents' written tone and emphasis regarding what was impacting Rhode Island's public school libraries and their future sustainability, particularly in an atmosphere of accountability and high-stakes testing.

Theme Two: Rhode Island Basic Education Plan (BEP)

State regulations, in the form of the Rhode Island Basic Education Plan – which was revised in 2009 to correspond with No Child Left Behind – was second in significance. This conclusion was based not only on the number of stem statements pulled from the submitted surveys across the 12 questions but also the researcher's interpretation of the respondents' claims based on patterns and trends in the data and also member checking using a follow-up email to participants once the survey closed (Glesne, 2007, p. 165). This particular data cluster corresponded with RQ 3 (What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in

Rhode Island?). Respondents' stem statements are below and samples of whole passages follow and focus on the Rhode Island Basic Education Plan (BEP):

Table 4.2

Rhode Island Basic Education Plan, Library Leaders' Stem Statements

Theme: RI Basic Education Plan (BEP)	
Coding Categories	Stem statements from surveys
	So equity? I'd like to see a framework that provides access and availability to everything the state offers
	BEP was our framework
	BEP should be revised to reflect 21st century literacies
	BEP was obliterated in 2009
	RIDE destroyed the BEP
	BEP no longer dictates size, quantity, or quality of staff and resources
	BEP gave clear staffing outlines, book and budget guidelines
	Since the invalidation of the BEP
	When the new BEP went into effect in 2009, staffing level requirements were removed
	RIDE needs to revisit the previous BEP
	Former BEP specified library staffing levels per student enrollment
	Waivers (BEP) should not be given to schools seeking to eliminate positions
	BEP doesn't specify that certified librarians are required
	RI law (BEP) does not does not specify library staffing levels based on student population
	Old BEP was terribly out of date but needed
	Librarians should be included in the BEP
	No minimal budget, staffing, resources
	Without mandating library staffing, school districts are doing whatever they want to save money
	Very little support for school library positions at the state level
	RI law does require that schools have school librarians
	Needs to be better statewide collaboration among all public school library stakeholders
	Needs to be support for library staff in legislative or regulatory language
	Mandated support at the state level
	Get those minimal standards back in place

Overwhelmingly, responses pointed to the Rhode Island Basic Education Plan as having a forceful impact on the viability of the state's public school libraries. The revised document, unlike its antecedent, focused on school functions, outputs, and outcomes, rather than prescribed staffing, resource, and funding levels. Below, are samples of whole passages that fall under the theme Rhode Island Basic Education Plan:

> **Respondent:** "Many districts in RI, year after year, cut positions or combine positions, thereby reducing the number of librarians on staff district-wide. RI law (Basic Education Program or BEP) does not specify staffing levels in

libraries based on student population; only that schools must have library media programs. The former BEP specified library staffing levels per student enrollment. When the new BEP went into effect in 2009, staffing level requirements were removed. Some school district administrators see this as license to save money by cutting or combining library positions."

Respondent: "The state department of education (RIDE) needs to revisit the previous BEP (which I referred to in a prior answer) and look at the language that speaks to library staffing. Without mandating library staffing, school districts are doing whatever they want to save money by reducing or eliminating library programs. Without some basis of support for library staff in legislative or regulatory language, this trend will likely continue."

Respondent: "BEP should be revised to reflect the 21st century framework on information media and technology skills. OR 21 century framework should be adopted as a statewide model. Include requirements about: Enough devices. Resources (variety, instruction in use). Requiring/promoting staff education about resources and research process. Something about personal growth/recreational reading."

Respondent: "The old BEP was terribly out of date, but needed. I will be working on it for sure."

Respondent: Waivers should not be given to schools who are seeking to eliminate positions."

Respondent: "Since the invalidation of the BEP there is no documentation describing a ratio of student to library teacher."

Evidenced by the thematic analysis of the open-ended survey data, the Rhode Island Basic Education Plan and its necessity as a framework for sustainability was second in significance, based not only on the number of stem statements but also respondents' tone and emphasis. Several respondents implicated the 2009 changes to the document as having perceived negative effects on school libraries.

Theme Three: Testing/Curriculum

The next theme that emerged from the data related to high-stakes testing and parallel curriculum changes. Surprisingly, school library leaders' stem statements, which connected to *RQ 1* (What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?) did not relate to the high-stakes state tests themselves –Partnership for Assessment of College and Careers (PARCC) and the New England Comprehensive Assessment Program (NECAP) – but referred to the way that testing disrupted the school library program and/or co-opted the librarians as test proctors or held the school librarians accountable for teaching students test preparation skills in service to the phased-in computer-based state tests. Further, this data cluster signified that school library leaders held mixed views regarding the impact of the NCLB-driven curriculum changes (CCSS in Rhode Island) and the resultant impacts on collections and services. Respondents' stem statements are below and three samples of whole passages follow each sub theme: PARCC; NECAP; Curriculum/CCSS:

Table 4.3

Theme Three: Testing and Curriculum as an Impactor on School Library Programs

Theme: Testing/Curriculum	
Coding categories	**Stem statements from surveys**
PARCC/NECAP	Testing has negatively impacted the hours open
	Shutting down the library classroom for 4 weeks
	School libraries are used as testing locations
	Elementary school librarians have begun teaching typing (preparation for PARCC)
	Testing is a good motivator
	Testing is crippling in terms of time and data collection
	Weeks on end, libraries are closed during testing
	Schedule must accommodate testing
	Elementary school librarians teach ancillary skills such as keyboarding or test prep
	Data posting and gathering are time consuming
	Class time is taken by testing and standardized curriculum
	Testing in the library is a big negative
	Computers being bought for testing
	Too much testing takes away from teaching time
	Too many data meetings take away from teaching time
	Elementary librarians have been required to teach testing skills
	Schedule must accommodate testing
	Instruction is fragmented when testing happens
	Librarians have to set up computers in the library for NECAP
Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	Purchase of non-fiction a higher priority
	Teachers overwhelmed by new curriculum
	Focus for purchasing some materials is narrowed
	Learning to unlock complex text is important
	We can't leave the classics
	Emphasizing nonfiction to the detriment of fiction
	Less money for books
	More vetted sources
	More money allocated towards non-print materials and databases
	Common Core has had a slight positive effect (library usage) on RI public school libraries
	CCSS and 1-to-1 initiatives are making library instruction more valued
	Common Core is a catastrophe, reading tiny parts of a book, never a whole book
	Common Core touting nonfiction to the detriment of fiction

PARCC/NECAP

> **Respondent:** "Librarians, especially in elementary schools, have been required to teach testing skills rather than focusing on their curricula. Typically in RI public schools, only upper grade librarians have any open time or flexible schedules. Most if not all elementary school librarians have fixed schedules, and many have to teach ancillary skills such as keyboarding or test prep during their library class time."

Respondent: "Many school libraries themselves are used as testing locations, closing the facility to students for the 3-4 week PARCC testing window. I am also alarmed at the trend of moving school librarians into a more technology heavy role."

Respondent: "All of the testing that is a result of NCLB has negatively impacted the hours of the library during testing periods. The library is used for small group, extended time and individual/modified testing, as well as for make-up testing. In the latest iteration (PARCC), the library classroom computers were used for these purposes, effectively shutting down the library classroom for 4 weeks."

Common Core (CCSS)

School library leaders' responses regarding the effect of CCSS on school libraries were mixed. Several respondents noted the narrowed curricular focus:

Respondent: "Common Core has made purchase of non-fiction a higher priority."

Respondent: "Common Core is a catastrophe, reading tiny parts of a book, never a whole book, and touting nonfiction to the detriment of fiction."

Respondent: "I think we in AASL made a huge mistake in going along with all the NCLB directions, now Common Core, in emphasizing nonfiction to the detriment of fiction. I eagerly look forward to the pendulum swinging back. It IS a golden age of YA literature after all."

Two respondents posited that CCSS had a positive impact on their library programs, as more teachers sought out their expertise in a number of areas:

> **Respondent:** "Common Core and one-to-one classroom initiatives are making library instruction more valued. More of my colleagues are coming in asking me to collaborate on projects because they don't have the technical expertise or familiarity with the seemingly infinite range of software available and are looking to me, also, for more book selection on non-fiction, so I actually am pretty positive in my outlook."
>
> **Respondent:** "I would say that the implementation of Common Core and its focus on information text has had a slight positive influence on RI public school libraries."

Others viewed aspects of testing as a positive force in their schools.

> **Respondent:** "I believe testing has influenced curriculum which in turn influences my purchasing. It allows me to support the curriculum in a way I might not have done in the past."
>
> **Respondent:** "Testing is a good motivator." [of students]
>
> **Respondent:** "Schools have been forced, perhaps by NCLB, to provide technology in the school and to make sure there is equal access."

Testing and curriculum changes emerged as strong influences on Rhode Island's public school libraries. The textual data did not relate to the tests themselves (PARCC and NECAP) but referred to the manner in which state testing disrupted the school library program and/or co-opted the librarians as test proctors or held

elementary school librarians accountable for teaching students computer-based test preparation skills. Further, this data cluster revealed that school library leaders held mixed views regarding the impact of the NCLB-driven curriculum changes (CCSS in Rhode Island) and the resultant impacts on collections and services.

Theme Four: Technology

Technology, both local infrastructure as well as state-wide consortia and resource sharing networks, was fourth in significance regarding Rhode Island's public school libraries and the only data cluster that uncovered a positive impact resulting from federal legislation of 2001, NCLB, thus connecting with *RQ 1*: What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?

The overwhelming majority of respondents noted that since NCLB was enacted, there has been an increase in the amount and quality of library technology – both locally and due to state-wide consortia. Respondents' stem statements are below and three samples of whole passages follow each sub theme: Local Technology; Consortia/Resource Sharing:

Table 4.4

Theme Four: Technology

Theme: Technology	
Coding categories	**Stem statements from surveys**
Local technology	Shift towards more technology, internet access, laptops Great improvements More money allocated towards non-print materials and databases Network capabilities increased Integrating technology is now a focus More technology - OPAC More DVDs and recorded books Computers are being bought for testing Libraries narrow equity gaps in information and technology Maker spaces change the physical structure of libraries for various hands-on digital projects 1-to-1 and BYOD works for libraries Schools have been forced by NCLB to provide technology and ensure there is equal access Narrow equity gaps in information and technology
Consortia/Resource sharing	RILINK makes it possible for schools to have access to millions of items as well as the state's shared databases State library system (OLIS) gives us access to EBSCO's suite, World Book, CultureGrams, inter-library loan Reasonable student: librarian ratios, continued inter library loan, integration of OLIS resources State of RI bought EBSCO, World Book and other databases for the use of all Rhode Islanders RI schools now have AskRI which offers the online databases Integration of OLIS resources Sharing resources using RILINK We are so fortunate to have our state library system give us access to EBSCO's suite, World Book, CultureGrams, and interlibrary loan State of RI bought EBSCO, World Book and other databases for the use of all Rhode Islanders RILINK makes it possible for schools to have access to millions of items as well as the state's shared databases

Local Technology

Respondent: "Most libraries are equipped with some technology, that is some computers. RI schools now have AskRI which offers the online databases. I would not say that NCLB caused that to happen. Schools have been forced, perhaps by NCLB, to provide technology in the school and to make sure there is equal access."

Respondent: "STEM is alive…technology is here to stay...one on one or BYOD works for libraries."

Respondent: "…shift toward more technology, internet access, laptops…"

Respondent: "…great improvements, network capabilities increased…integrating technology is now a focus."

Consortia/Resource Sharing

Respondent: "The State of RI bought EBSCO, World Book and other databases for the use of all Rhode Islanders. This is a good thing. They need to do more about getting the Internet available to more. Plus, the computer situation is spotty within the district. Now, with Common Core, all the computers are being bought for t-e-s-t-i-n-g. Less money for books, too."

Respondent: "Sharing resources using RILINK makes it possible for schools to have access to millions of items as well as the state's shared databases. I am optimistic as long as we continue to have a school library media program at URI to produce future school librarians."

Respondent: "RILINK membership dues and the research databases purchased through the consortium are covered by the district technology budget."

The thematic analysis revealed that Rhode Island's public school library leaders viewed technology, both local infrastructure as well as state-wide consortia and resource sharing networks, fourth in significance in terms of impacting Rhode Island's public school libraries. The overwhelming majority of respondents noted that since NCLB was enacted, there has been an uptick in the amount and quality of library technology – both locally and within state-wide consortia.

Theme Five: Administration

The final theme that emerged from analysis of the qualitative data was school, district, and state educational leaders and their views regarding support or lack of support of Rhode Island's public school libraries. School library leaders indicated that principals and superintendents, library scheduling (fixed or flexible), and state-level support were critical markers in predicting the health of school library programs, and this data cluster connected to RQ 3 (What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?). School library leaders' stem statements are below and three samples of whole passages follow each sub theme: Principal(s)/Superintendent(s); Library Program Scheduling; Rhode Island Department of Education.

Table 4.5

Local and State School Administration as an Impactor

Theme: Administration	
Coding categories	**Stem statements from surveys**
Principal(s)/Superintendent(s)	Administrators overlook one of the best literacy resources in the building Principals are a sorry lot Principals don't know what the LMSs should be doing We need to work with more administrators who value libraries Not all districts are treated fairly with regard to library services and staff My administrator buys into what I'm doing and supports me Administrators make a huge difference in attitudes towards the importance of library programs In a small handful of districts, administrators are very supportive Administrators questioning the role of the school librarian – why are the need at all? People in power don't value libraries enough
Scheduling	Fixed schedule prevents collaboration Flexible schedules are out the window Librarians are not included in common planning time School librarians with fixed schedules seen as "teachers" (state eval system) School librarians with "flex schedules" seen as "support staff" (state eval system) Only librarians in the upper grades have flexible schedules Open access is diminishing rapidly Inflexibility does not provide equal access to students or classroom
Rhode Island Department of Education	Commissioner is paying attention and following us (SLRI) on Twitter and Facebook Needs to be better statewide collaboration among all public school library stakeholders

Principal(s)/Superintendent(s)

Respondent: "I am puzzled by why administrators overlook one of the best literacy resources in the building in their efforts to improve reading skills. Allowing school librarians to do the job they are trained to do will help raise test scores."

Respondent: "I don't think a framework will fix the problem. I believe that we need to work with more administrators who believe libraries are valued. With money being so tight and more needs on classroom teachers, as well as the need for more accountability, we are not on the front burner, unless we push ourselves there."

Respondent: "I am hearing about administrators questioning the role of the school librarian – why are they needed at all? And there is very little support for school library positions at the state level."

Library Program Scheduling

Respondent: "Typically in RI public schools, only upper grade librarians have any open time or flexible schedules. Most if not all elementary school librarians have fixed schedules, and many have to teach ancillary skills such as keyboarding or test prep during their library class time."

Respondent: "One of the issues for elementary and some middle school librarians is a fixed schedule that provides planning time for classroom teachers. This schedule prevents both spontaneous collaboration and common planning time. This inflexibility does not provide equal access to students or classroom teachers who may want to collaborate with the librarian. Until

changes are made in how school librarians are scheduled, the public school library programs in RI will continue to be usurped by the latest initiatives."

Respondent: "Pigeonholing school librarians with fixed schedules as "teachers" and school librarians with flex schedules as "support staff" only evaluates a portion of our job. A strong library program [that] contributes to student success and teaching is only one part (albeit an important part) of the equation. The RI Teacher Evaluation system is a direct result of Race to the Top funds, thus it is influenced by NCLB.

Rhode Island Department of Education

Respondent: "I am worried that people in power don't value school libraries enough. I have lobbied and will continue to do so, with RI Board of Ed, PPSD school board, individual principals, Senators Whitehouse and Reed. The 21st century library is totally relevant, and if people really understand what's going on, should remain the focal point of the schools. But, people don't understand."

Respondent: "The Commissioner is following us on Twitter and Facebook, so she is paying attention. That is new and good, so maybe some good is coming of all this."

Respondent: "A great first step would be for RIDE to formally adopt the AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner as the state standards, as Fine Arts and PE/Health have recognized standards. It would be ideal if RI would adopt a framework based on AASL guidelines for school library media programs, as outlined in Empowering Learners."

Two subjects lauded school administrators for supporting them as professionals and valuing school libraries.

> **Respondent:** "My administrator buys in to what I'm doing and supports me each step of the way. I believe administrators make a huge difference in attitudes towards the importance of library programs. Library use is at an all-time high so I hope that with the spotlight continually pointed on the library through state and local advocacy, we can make more improvements in the future."
>
> **Respondent:** "In a small handful of districts, administrators are very supportive, libraries have budgets and are fully (or at least adequately) staffed, and librarians are given the opportunity to fully develop programs and services that support their students and faculty. But this is the exception."

The final theme that emerged as a strong factor regarding the current and future state of Rhode Island's public school libraries was school, district, and state educational leaders and their views, support, or lack of support of school libraries.

Summary and Conclusion

Survey participants demonstrated considerable consistency, within the 60+ pages of double-spaced textual data revealing, notwithstanding the 12 discrete questions, a pattern of responses. Accordingly, a question-by-question analysis gave way to a whole-text treatment.

As a result, five predominant themes (with sub-themes), that cut across the 12 survey questions emerged from the open-ended survey data and were considered to have the most powerful impact on the current and future state of Rhode Island's public school libraries. The two themes – Testing/Curriculum and Technology – connected with *RQ 1* (What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?). The three themes – Attributes of School Librarians, Rhode Island's Basic Education Plan, and School Administration were related to *RQ 3* (What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?).

The next section will discuss the numerical data from the ALA/AASL longitudinal study, disaggregated by state to connect to *RQ 2*: What evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

Quantitative Data Analysis

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to investigate the unintended impacts of No Child Left Behind on Rhode Island's public school libraries while also exploring a potential framework for sustainability. Driven by an advocacy and participatory worldview, this mixed-methods study utilized both subject-centered (open-ended questionnaire) and critical-analytical data (ALA/AASL survey). Research question 2 drives the quantitative component of the study:

RQ 2. What evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

Original ALA/AASL Study

The American Association of School Libraries Count! (2006 to 2012) annual longitudinal survey was an online survey that was open to all primary and secondary school libraries to participate. The survey questions focused on: staff activities (planning with teachers, delivering instruction, working on budget); hours and staffing (hours open, hours flexibly scheduled, number of school librarians, number of hours worked by school librarians, number of hours worked by other staff); collection size (number of books, number of current periodical subscriptions, number of video materials, number of audio materials); technology (library and library-networked computers, percentage able to access database remotely); visits (individual, group); and expenditures (print and non-print materials, licensed databases, other electronic access to information).

AASL received a high participation rate during the six years this survey has been offered (AASL, 2012, p. 3). The estimated margin of error among school libraries that responded (AASL, 2012, p. 3): 2007 ±1.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval; 2008 ± 1.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level; 2009 ±1.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval; 2010 ±1.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval; 2011 ±1.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval; and 2012 ±1.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval.

AASL's Selection of Participants

AASL survey participants, for all six years that it was administered, were self-selected. The 2007 to 2012 survey was publicized through various professional library-related organizations and events and through word of mouth.

Data Analysis of Original ALA/AASL Survey

For the six years of the original ALA/AASL longitudinal study, statistical significance was assessed using the t test of independent samples and the standard minimum criterion, $p < .05$. No more than five percent of the time would repeated and infinite samples yield meaningfully different results. The results were analyzed in two ways. The first analysis was in overall changes for each data point at three key percentiles: the 50^{th}, the 75^{th}, and the 95^{th}. The second method of analysis employed in ALA/AASL's original longitudinal study was in changes in the average (mean) response, overall and by subgroups: school type – public, private, charter, level and size of enrollment, region, and data points from the National Center for Statistics (NCES, 2012). In accordance with the purposes of this study, which sought to focus on the effects of NCLB on various Rhode Island public school library resources over time, ANOVA2 was chosen over t-test, as a t-test is best used when determining if two averages or means are the same or different. The ANOVA is preferred if comparing three or more averages or means (Muijs, 2011, p. 175).

Disaggregated Data: Rhode Island's Public School Libraries – Sample

From 2008 to 2012, 23 to 57 Rhode Island public school librarians participated during one or more years of the ALA/AASL study – cutting across district classifications, school size, and levels. In the state of Rhode Island, there are 141,959 students in 36 public school districts, in a total of 300 schools (Infoworks, 2015). During the first year (2007) of the survey's administration, only seven Rhode Island public school librarians participated. The sample was too small, so it was

jettisoned (Vogt, 2007, p. 84). The following graphs display the demographics of the survey participants.

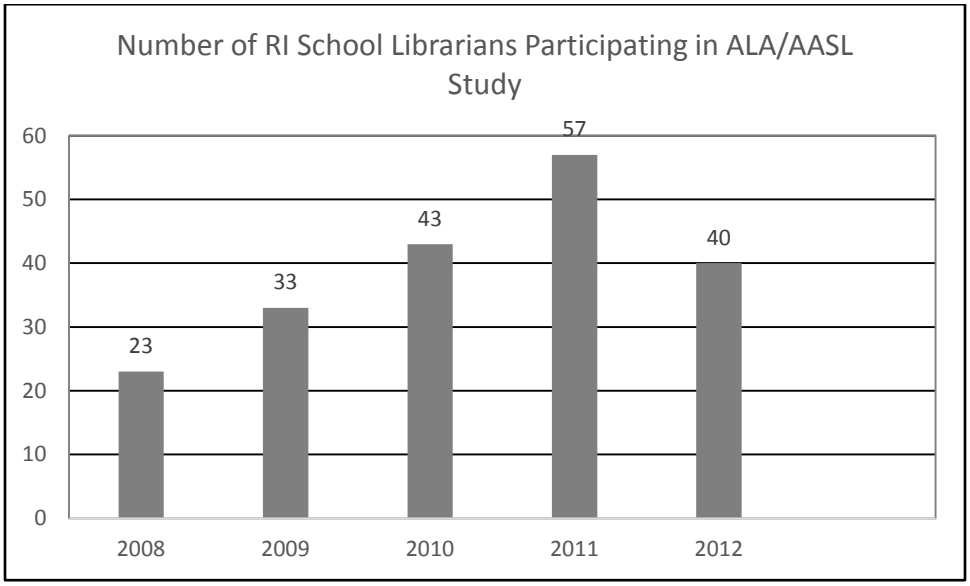

Figure 4.5. Number of RI school librarians participating in ALA/AASL study

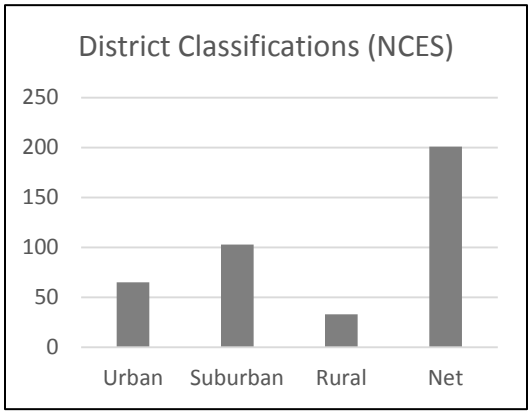

Figure 4.6. District classifications

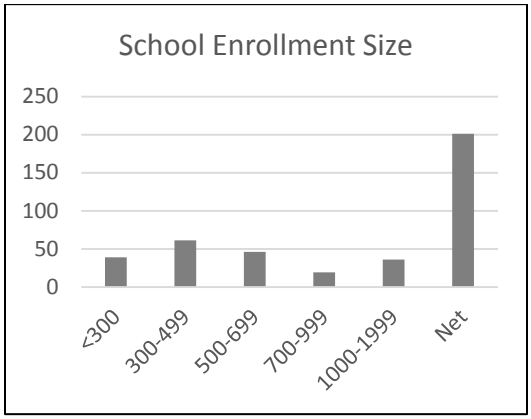

Figure 4.7. School enrollment

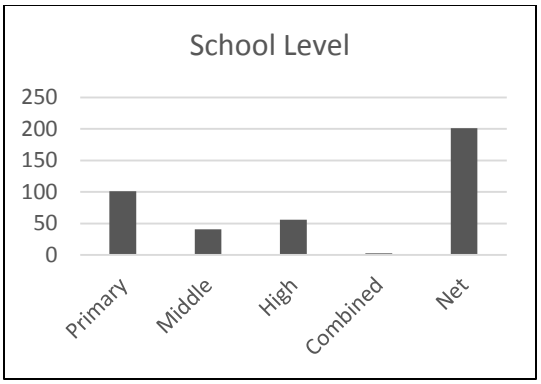

Figure 4.8 School level

Results

The researcher used an established instrument; therefore, instrument testing was not necessary (Vogt, 2007, p. 59). The disaggregated data used for this current study, which excluded the 2007 data as the sample was deemed too small, displayed results similar to those of the aggregate data from the ALA/AASL study. That study evidenced that school libraries were in a steady state, with one exception: the national survey showed that school library staffing remained consistent from 2007 to 2012; whereas, the disaggregated data reflecting Rhode Island's public schools, established the average number of school librarians dropped by half – from 2.23 per school in 2008 to 1.1 per school in 2012, with a five-year average at 1.38.

Using the disaggregated data for this NCLB/Rhode Island School Libraries study, inferential statistics were performed (ANOVA2) and indicated that, with the exception of the number of school librarians and their activities, whole-class visits, and the number of school library computers, Rhode Island's public school libraries were in a steady state. However, in other areas, analysis over time was determined to be an ineffective approach. The series of years to which the researcher had access

(2008-2012) were not particularly turbulent series of years in education in terms of change. It would have been more meaningful if the ALA/AASL survey data covered the entire decade from 2002, when NCLB was being introduced, to 2012. Instead, with the years of data available, which fall in the middle of NCLB, the federal Race to the Top program was initiated and Rhode Island was a winner of a $75-million RTTT grant. The grant was a four-year award, spanning the years from 2010-2014. Though RTTT continued the traditions of NCLB, it also offered access to waivers and allowed more flexibility regarding the implementation of NCLB.

Accordingly, rather than expecting steady change over those years (very few of the ensuing graphs showed a trend, as numbers bounced around instead and landed at a steady average), the more valuable approach entailed looking at those five years as confirming the qualitative data. This was noted in a decrease in the number of public school librarians in the state of Rhode Island and an evident increase in the amount of technology – both within school libraries and throughout school buildings. See Appendix E for the complete report of means by year.

When considering five-year averages, various school librarian activities remained in a relatively steady state over the five years, if one looks at 2008 as a baseline – a "*before* to compare to an *after*" (Vogt, 2007, p. 267). See Figures 9 and 10.

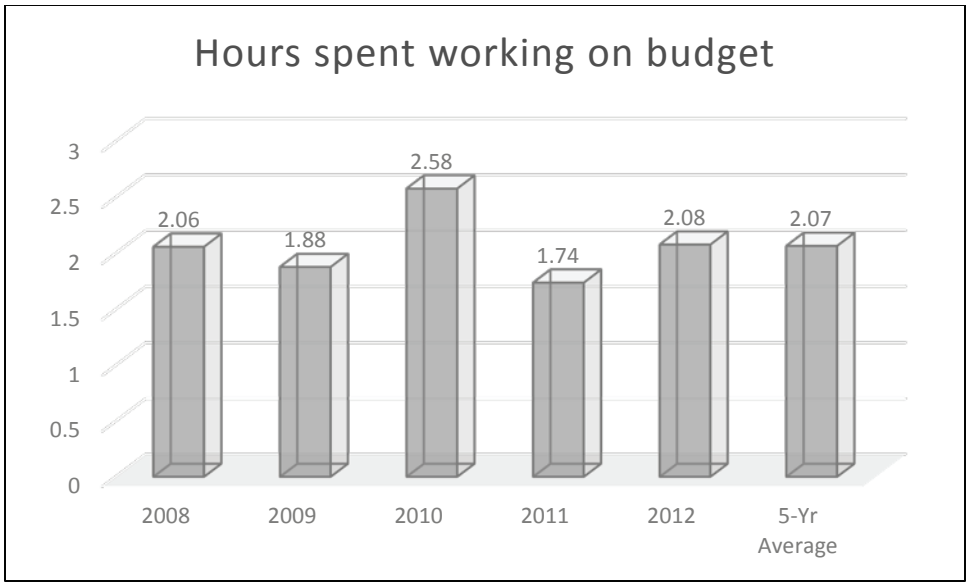

Figure 4.9. Average number of hours school librarians spent each week working on the budget remained in a steady state over the five years with an average of 2.07.

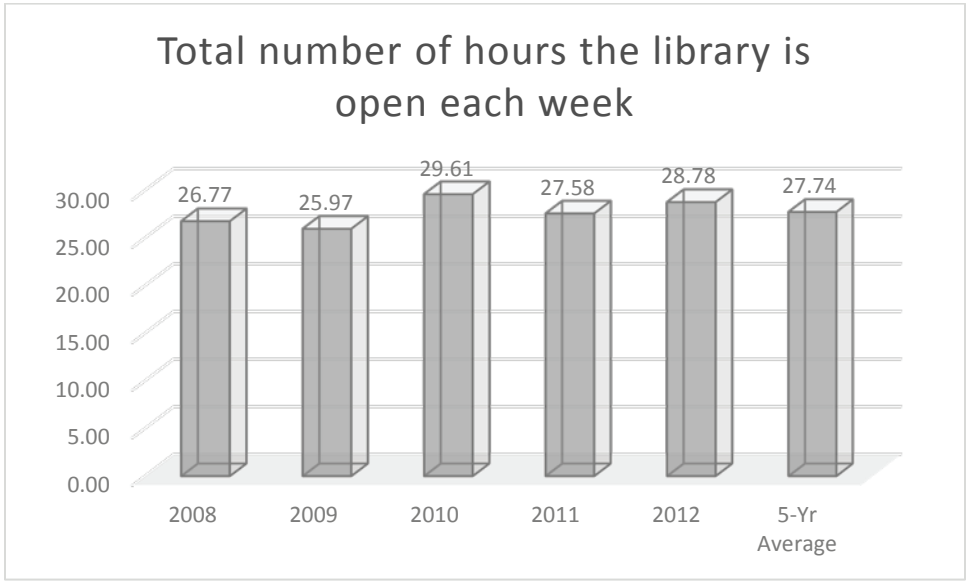

*Figure 4.*10. The number of hours the school library was open each week saw a slight increase, with a five-year average of 27.74.

Additionally, regarding five-year averages from 2008 to 2012, with 2008 as a baseline, there was an increase in the number of hours school librarians spent collaborating with teachers to plan instructional units, in delivering instruction, and hours available for flexible scheduling. This data contradicted the results of the national survey. See Figures 11, 13, 14.

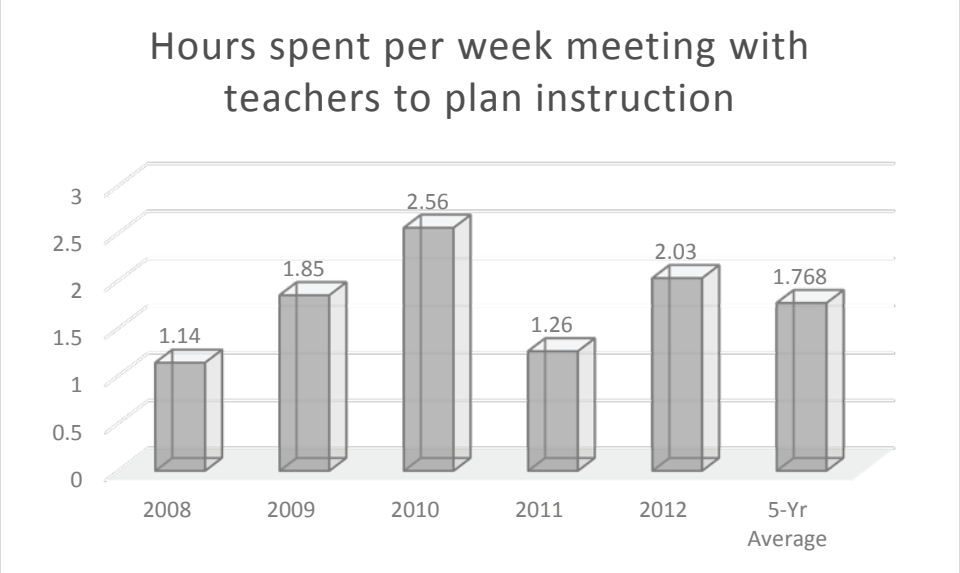

Figure 4.11 Average number of hours per week spent meeting with teachers to plan instructional units.

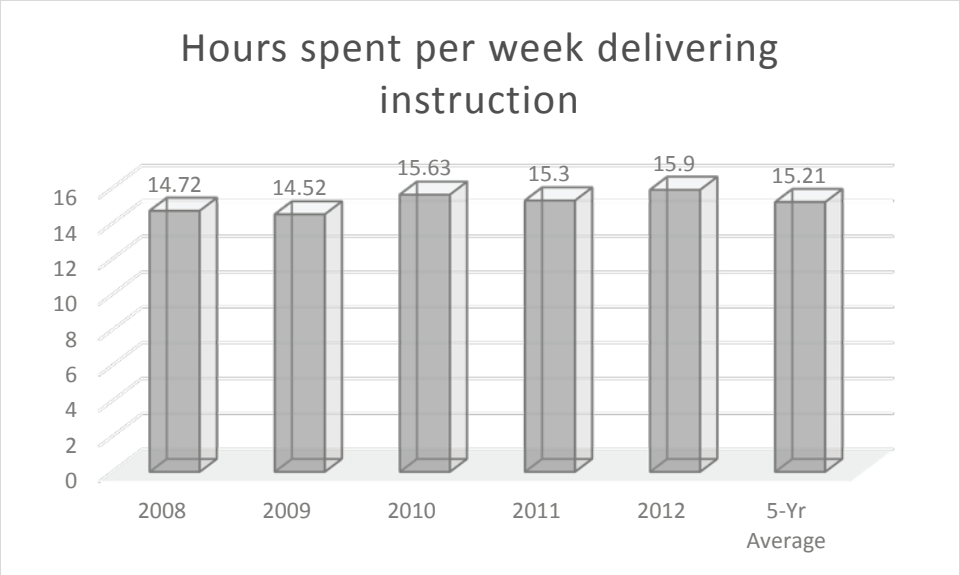

Figure 4.12. Average number of hours spent delivering instruction.

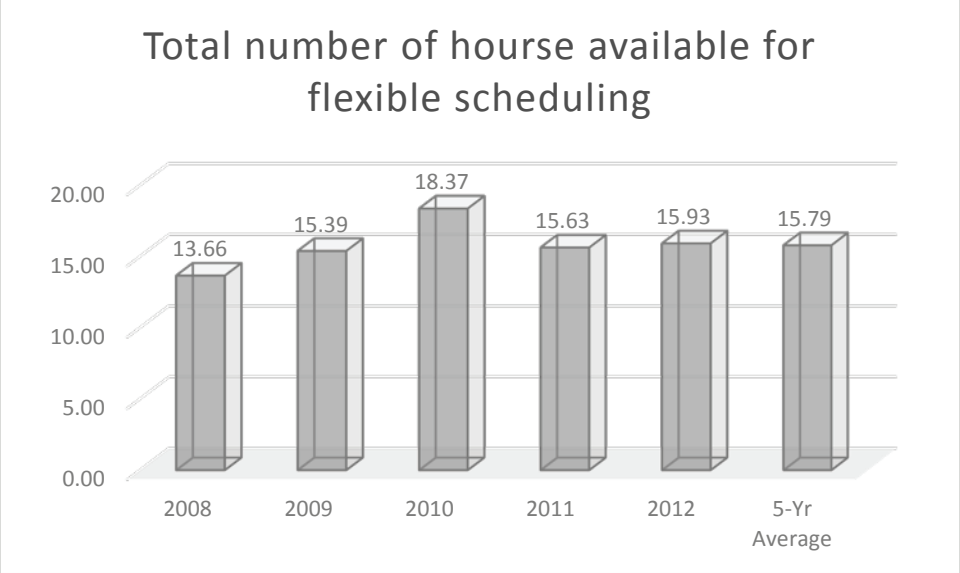

Figure 4.13. Average number of hours available for flexible scheduling

Notably, the number of public school librarians in Rhode Island showed a marked decrease – from a 2008 baseline of 2.23 librarians per school to the five-year

average falling at 1.38. Conversely, the number of hours worked by individual school librarians increased, while number of hours worked by support staff in the library remained consistent.

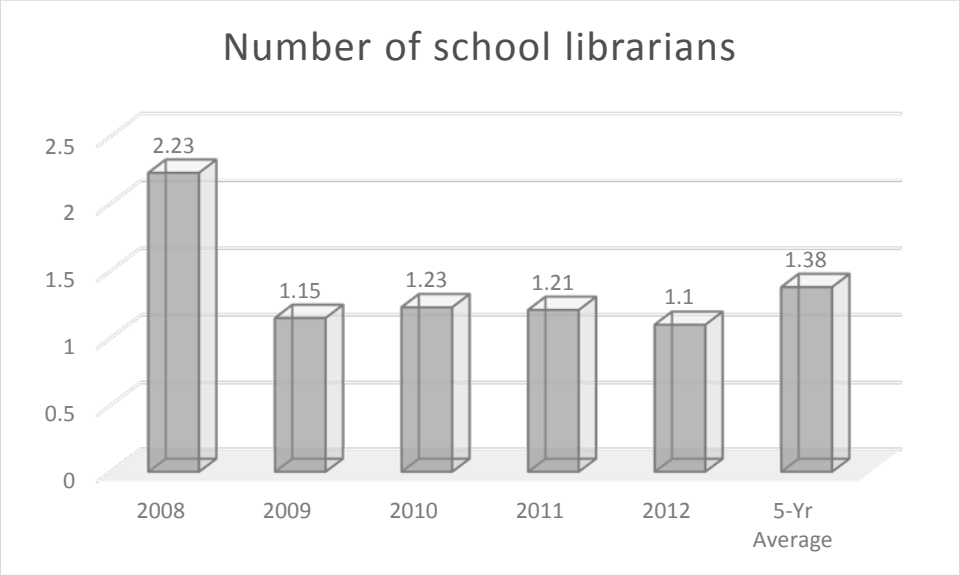

Figure 4.14. Average number of librarians in Rhode Island's public schools.

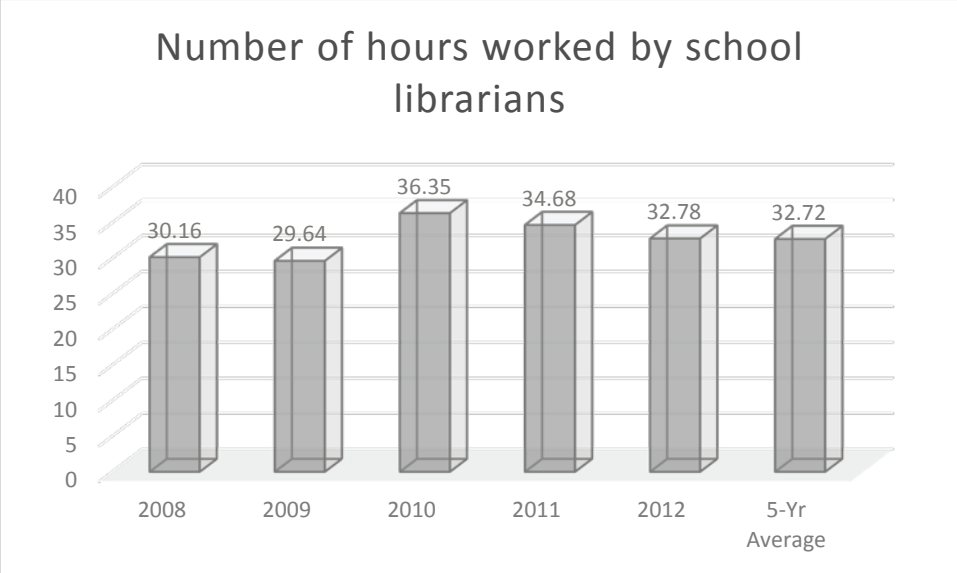

Figure 4.15. Average number of hours worked by librarians in Rhode Island public school libraries.

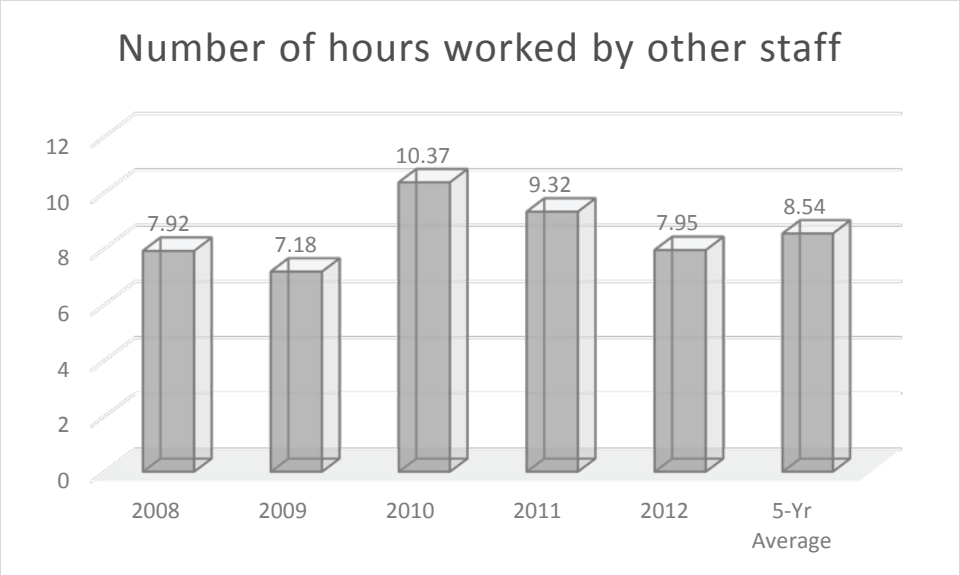

Figure 4.16. Average number of hours worked by support staff in Rhode Island public school libraries, overall, revealed a five-year average that increased slightly.

Over the five-year period, there was no clear trend – either increasing or decreasing – in the number of books in the collections. However, over the same five years, the number of audio-visual materials showed an increase. See Figures 17 –19.

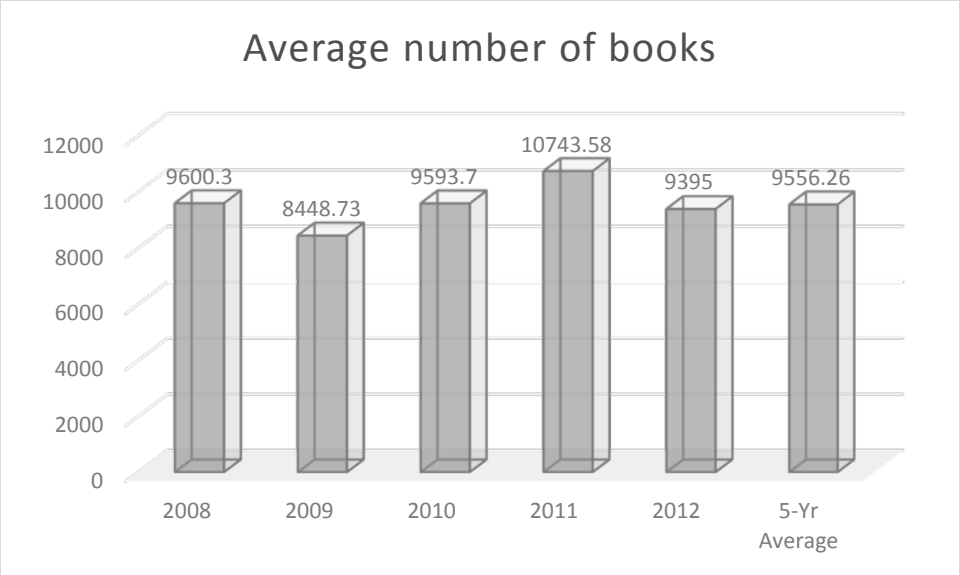

Figure 4.17. Average number of books in Rhode Island public school libraries.

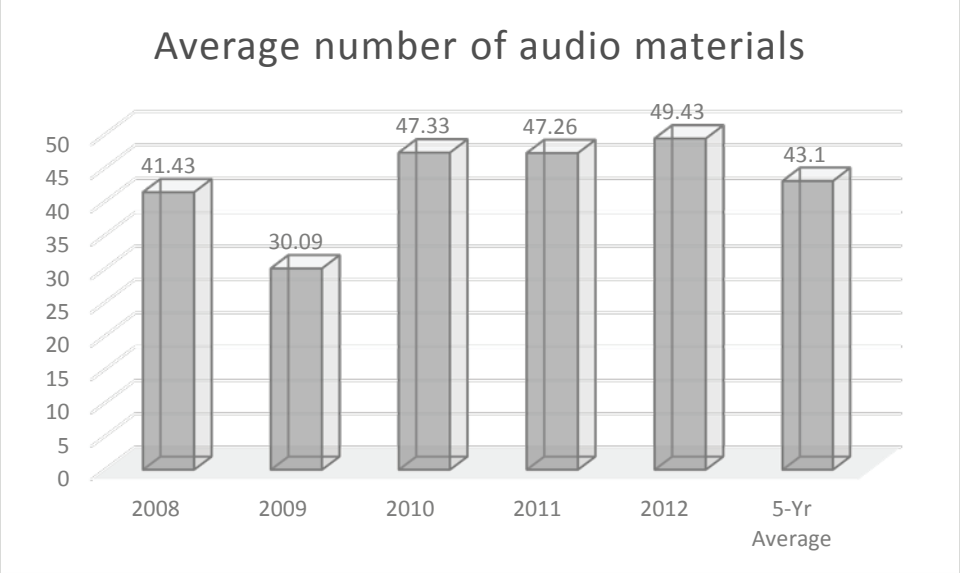

Figure 4.18. Average number of audio materials in Rhode Island public school libraries.

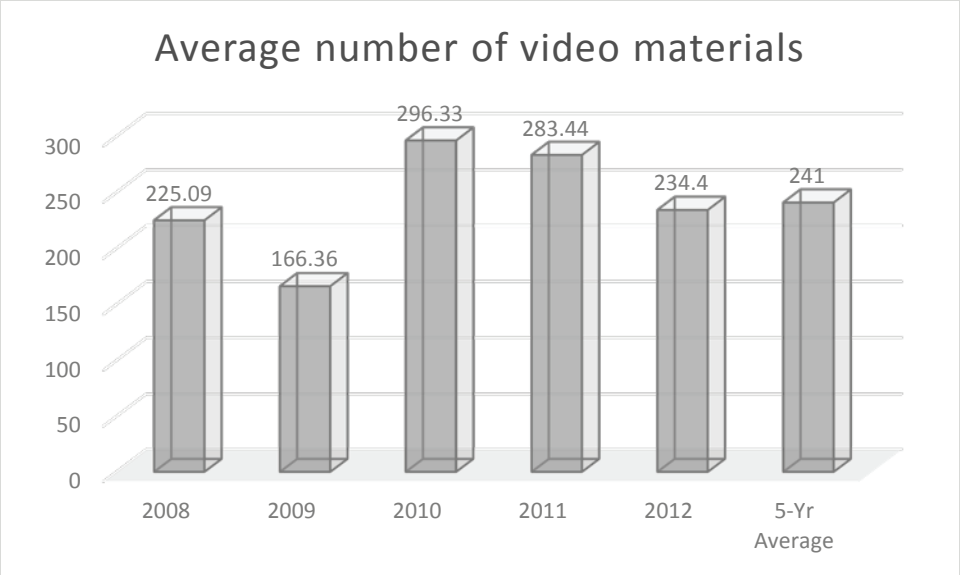

Figure 4.19. The average number of video materials in Rhode Island public school libraries.

From 2008 to 2012, the number of print periodicals remained in a steady state – with 2011 serving as an outlier as the number of periodicals in one school was erroneously reported to be 4,000. Across the state, the number of library computers increased and the number of those, school-wide, that are able to access library resources also grew. The average copyright year for the currency-sensitive Dewey range (610-619, health and medicine) rose from 1991.95 in to 1997.8. See Figures 20 – 25.

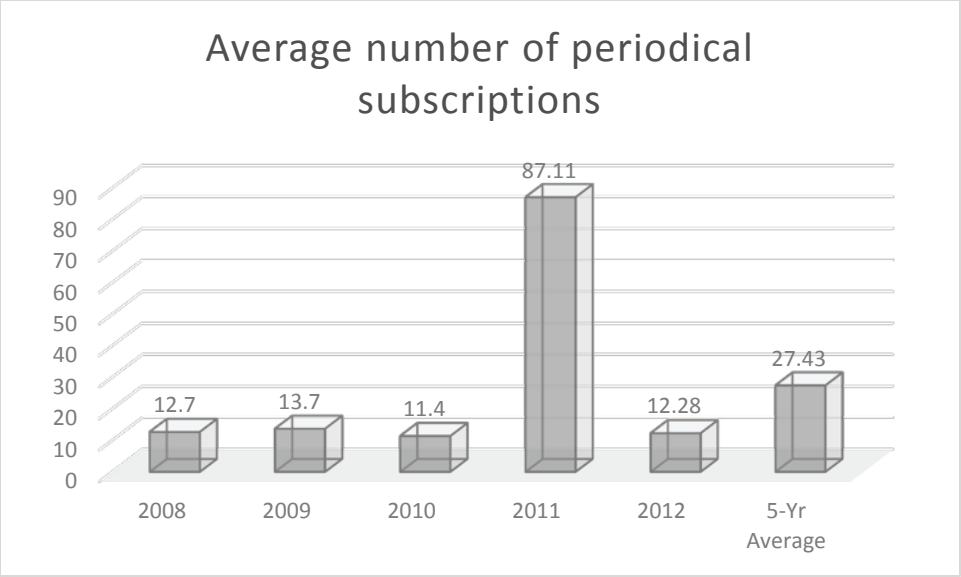

Figure 4.20. Several data points from 2011, including periodical counts, functioned as outliers due to erroneous reporting by one school.

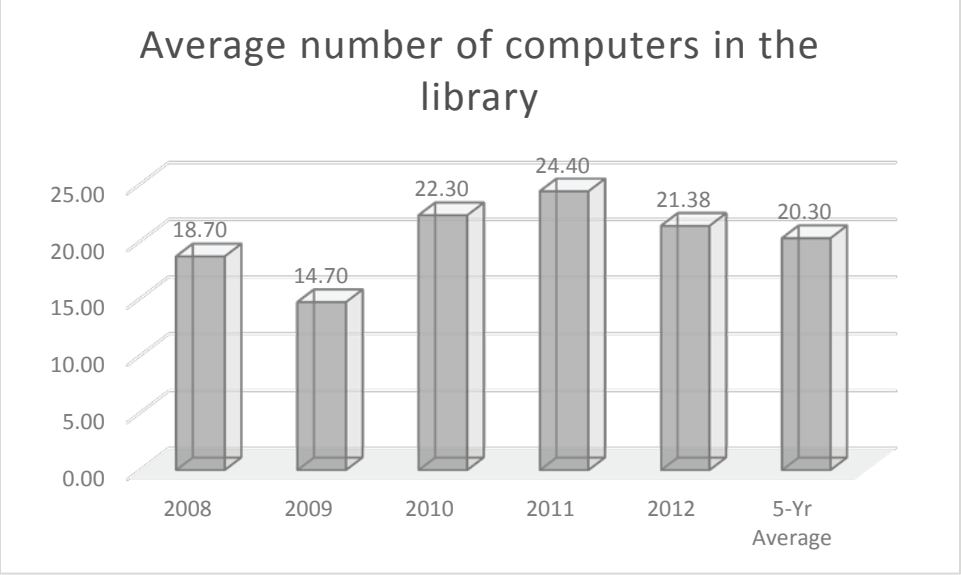

Figure 4.21. Average number of computers in Rhode Island's public school libraries

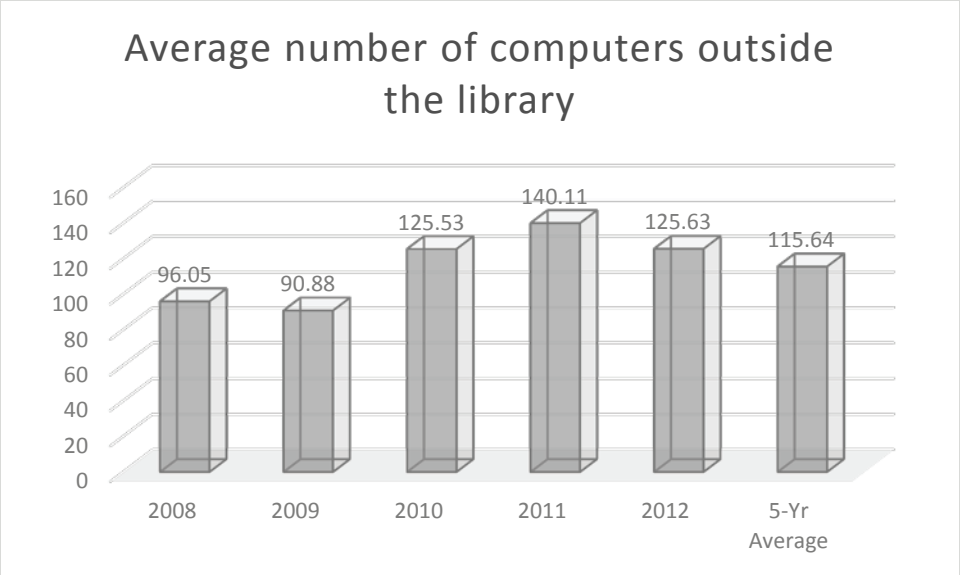

Figure 4.22. Average number of school computers with access to library resources

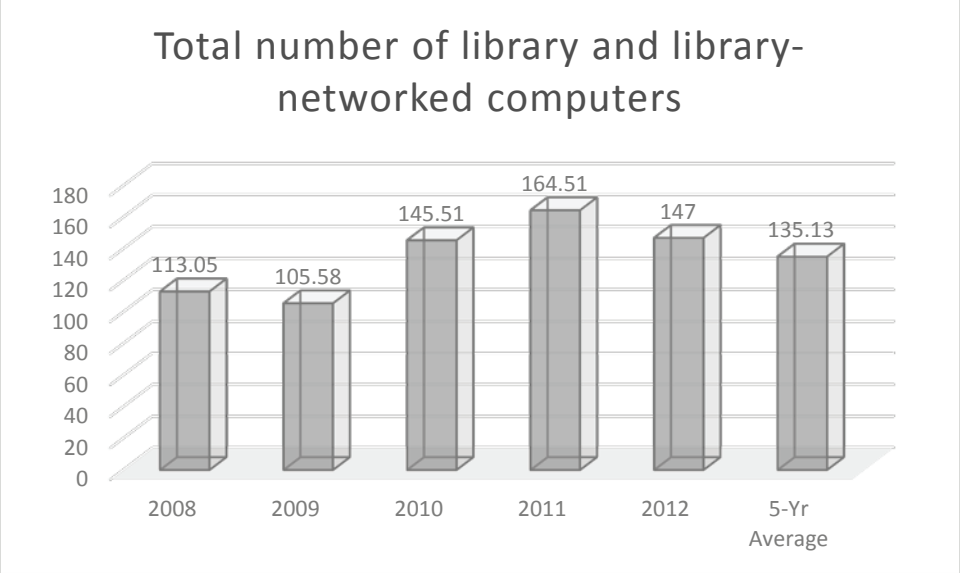

Figure 4.23. Total number of library and library-accessible computers saw a major increase.

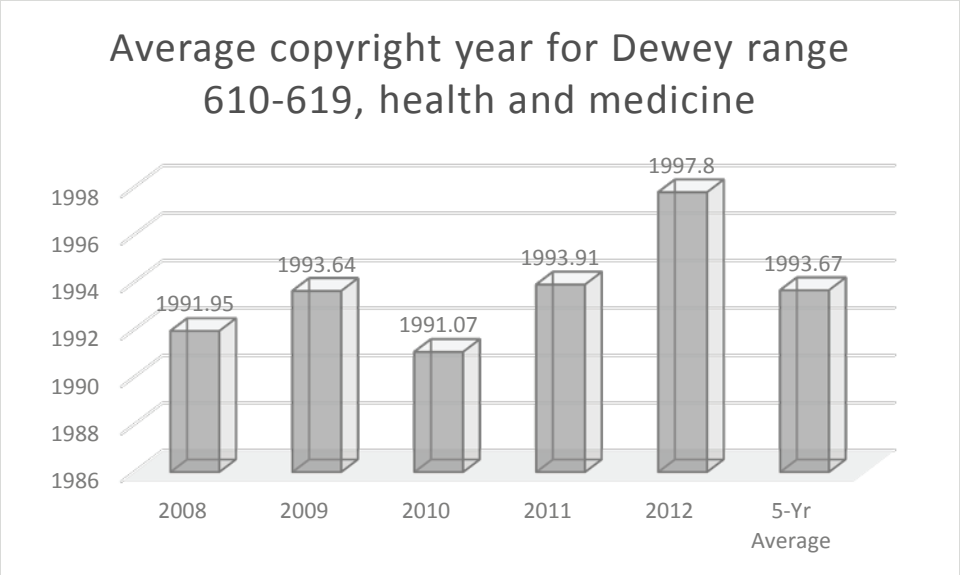

Figure 4.24. The average copyright year for the time-sensitive Dewey range (610-619, health and medicine) saw a slight rise to 1993.

Corresponding with the qualitative data, overall, in Rhode Island's public school libraries the number of individual student visits showed an increase, while the number of whole-class visits per week decreased. The average spent on information resources increased slightly over the span of the survey. See Figures 30 –32.

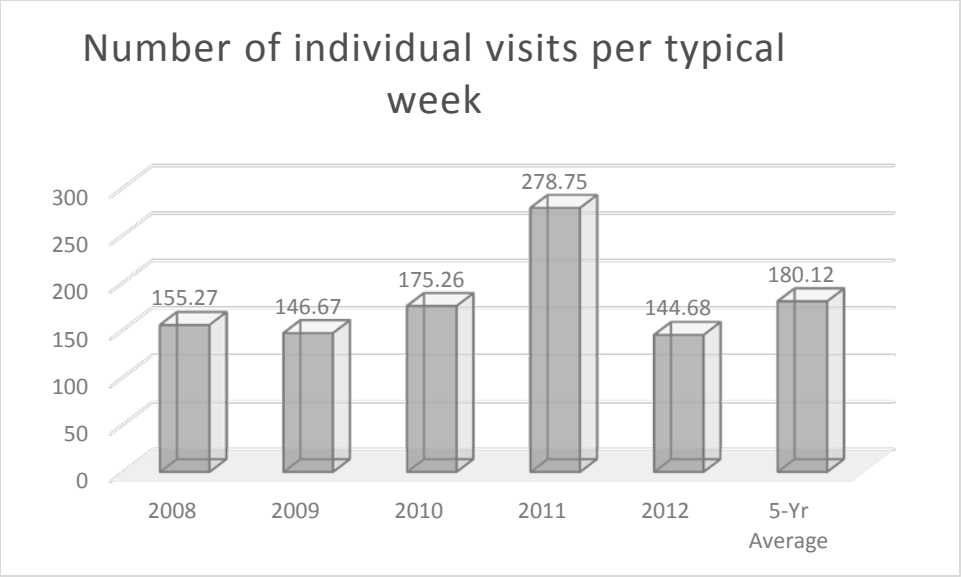

Figure 4.25. Mean number of individual student visits to the school library per typical week

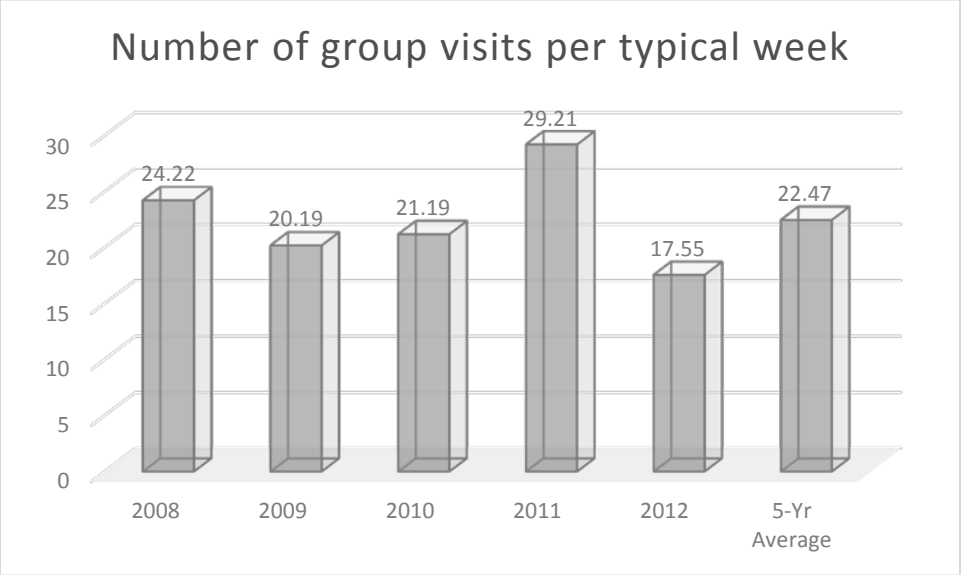

Figure 4.26. Mean number of group visits in the school library per typical week

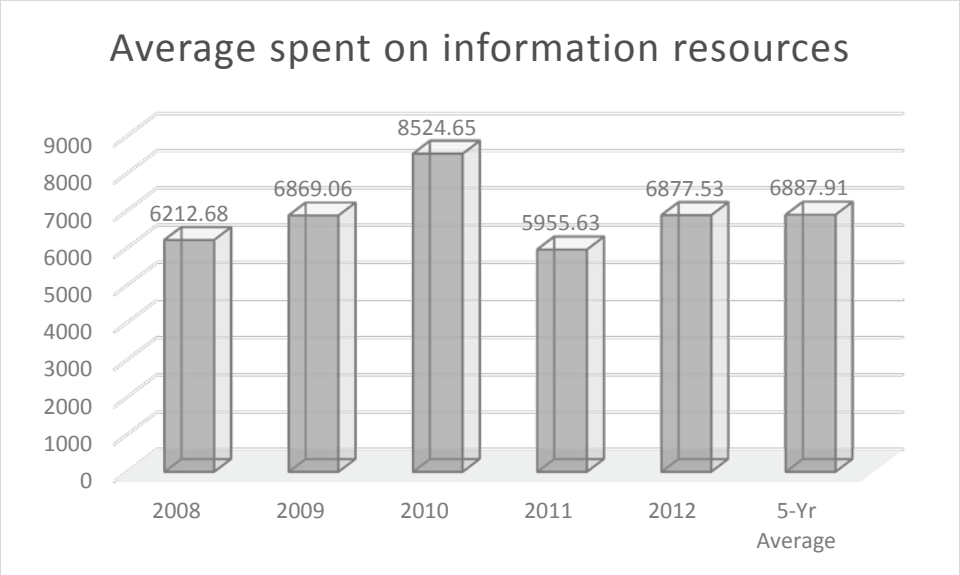

Figure 4.27. Average spent on information resources in Rhode Island's public school libraries

Outliers

Data from 2011, in several survey areas, was skewed. This was due to erroneous reporting by one school and supported the decision to average the years to produce a single "position" that needed to be interpreted.

Validity and Reliability

The researcher used an established instrument, the ALA/AASL longitudinal study; therefore, instrument testing was not necessary (Vogt, 2007, p. 59).

Summary and Conclusion

The disaggregated data used for this study, which focused on Rhode Island's public school libraries, revealed results similar to those from the aggregate data of the six-year national study of multi-type school libraries administered by ALA/AASL, with some exceptions. National survey results showed that school library staffing in

U.S. schools remained in a steady state from 2007 to 2012; whereas, the Rhode Island data indicated a marked decrease in the number of public school librarian positions. The data also uncovered an uptick in individual class visits, as well as an increase in technological resources and library program hours but also a drop in the number of whole-class visits to the library.

Though each of the Rhode Island numerical data points mentioned above conflicted with the numerical results from the national survey, they directly supported the qualitative data collected from the state's public school library leaders in the completed open-ended surveys. A discussion of these connections and their implications, and recommendations for further research are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, Recommendations

Public school libraries, like our nation's publicly funded municipal and university libraries, are symbolic as well as functional agents of equity and democracy. Their historical commitment to issues of social justice and access imbue them with an ethical beauty unlike any other social institution. Within this ethical scaffold lies, what this researcher calls, the "body aesthetic": all that is to be known, seen, heard, and experienced by the entire school community can be found within, whether one crosses through the school library's actual or virtual portal. School libraries and school librarians are especially crucial for those living in high-poverty areas where the school library is often the only way these students can access resources (Bromley, 2011).

Restatement of the Problem

The push for accountability and the concomitant emphasis on high-stakes testing may lead to a default philosophy of education that holds in high regard a narrow bundle of knowledge and skills (Gunzenhauser, 2007, p. 51). There is a critical need, by drawing upon numerical survey data as well as textual data from leaders in the field of school libraries in Rhode Island, to explore the possibility that NCLB and its supervening high-stakes testing may be affecting the state and viability of Rhode Island's school libraries.

The goal, objectives, and purpose of this transformative, mixed methods research study shaped the development of the three research questions. The first question compels qualitative data (open-ended survey), the second embeds quantitative data (ALA Longitudinal Study), and the third is the "integrated"

(Creswell, 2009) question that bridges the two discrete data sets and delivers the transformative component of the study.

RQ 1. What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?

RQ 2. What evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

RQ 3. What framework should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?

Review of the Methods

Driven by an advocacy and participatory worldview, the researcher used a mixed-methods study that examined both subject-centered data (open-ended questionnaire) and critical-analytical data (ALA/AASL longitudinal study) to determine if *No Child Left Behind* has impacted Rhode Island's public school library programs and what sort of framework, if any, advocates should use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island.

Discussion of Findings and Interpretations

This section includes a discussion of the findings and their implications for each of the research questions. Regarding the qualitative component of the mixed methods study, five predominant themes (with sub-themes), that cut across the 12 survey questions and corresponded with *RQ 1* (What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?) and *RQ 3* (What framework

should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?) arose from the open-ended survey data and were considered to have the most powerful impact on the current and future state of Rhode Island's public school libraries.

In addition, the quantitative component of the study responded to *RQ 2* (What evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?) by utilizing data from the ALA/AASL national study disaggregated to highlight Rhode Island's public school libraries. Though each of the Rhode Island numerical data points mentioned above conflicted with the numerical results from the national survey, these same data points directly supported the qualitative data collected from the state's public school library leaders in the completed open-ended surveys.

***RQ 1*. What are the perspectives of leaders in the field of Rhode Island's school libraries regarding the impact of *No Child Left Behind* on the state's public school library programs?**

The first question addressed in this dissertation asked about the perspectives held by public school library leaders regarding the impact of No Child Left Behind on public school libraries in Rhode Island.

Theme 3 (Testing/Curriculum), that emerged from the qualitative data, pointed towards the negative impact that NCLB's concomitant testing has had on the accessibility of Rhode Island's public school library programs. Several library leaders referenced a culture of marginalization of school librarians and the library programs

they administer. Their assertions did not relate to the high-stakes state tests themselves – notably the Partnership for Assessment of College and Careers (PARCC) and the New England Comprehensive Assessment Program (NECAP). Instead, the written passages from the open-ended surveys referred to the way that testing disrupted the school library program and/or co-opted the librarian as test proctor or held the school librarian accountable for teaching students test preparation skills for the computer-based version of PARCC. In 2013, Castelhano offered a warning regarding the way technology was being embedded into the PARCC standards, themselves, as well as into the assessments and the possible strain this posed on staff and also the technology infrastructure within school districts (p. 34).

In 2014, Stephens predicted that the new wave of computer-based assessments would offer a negative counter point to the fresh expertise school librarians had cultivated over the past few years in concert with the implementation of CCSS:

> While it is true that implementation of the CCSS offers many opportunities for school librarians to insert their particular sort of expertise into classroom learning, and, at this precarious moment in our professional practice, might have saved some jobs if implemented sooner, the same Common Core expertise that librarians cultivated might result in school librarians' instructional spaces being repurposed as dedicated testing labs. (p. 32)

In 2015, with the first full implementation of the PARCC assessments in Rhode Island, these predictions came to bear as Rhode Island's school librarians and

the programs they administer were marginalized during the shift from paper-based to computer-based state assessments.

Interestingly, this data cluster around Theme 3 (Testing/Curriculum) indicated that Rhode Island's school library leaders held mixed views regarding the impact of the NCLB-driven curriculum changes (CCSS in Rhode Island) and the resultant impacts on collections and services. McGrath (2015) posited that Common Core State Standards called for a shift from content to process, from rote memorization to problem-solving and that school librarians can take the lead in schools to "embrace innovation, think outside the box, engage in interdisciplinary and community collaboration, embrace sudden learning opportunities, and address real-world problems" (p. 54).

Though in the minority, a few Rhode Island school library leaders affirmed McGrath's (2015) opinion and offered that CCSS had a positive impact on their library programs, as more teachers sought out their expertise in a number of areas. Further, these school librarians believed that an emphasis on testing directed school librarians to focus purchases of resources to support the curriculum in ways that school librarians might not have done in the past.

A counter data cluster that related to *RQ 1*, was established in Theme 4 (Technology and Resource Sharing) and highlighted a positive impact that NCLB had on the amount and quality of technology as well as resource sharing programs among the state's public school libraries. In the open-ended survey, the overwhelming majority of Rhode Island's public school library leaders noted that since NCLB was enacted, libraries saw an increase in the amount and quality of technology – both

locally and due to state-wide consortia. This may be coincidence, as dependence on computers, tablets, and other information technologies was also expanding in other areas of society, not impacted by NCLB. However, the specific shift in NCLB-mandated testing – from paper/pencil to computer-based – was viewed as a possible influencing factor in the increase of library technologies.

There is irony in these results: on the one hand, the state's public school librarians noted NCLB brought about an increase in the amount and quality of technology in their libraries and throughout the school, but they also bemoaned the fact that state assessments held the library space captive and transformed it into a testing center or co-opted the librarian as test proctor and also held the school librarian accountable for teaching students test preparation skills to dovetail with the new computer-based tests.

***RQ 2*. What evidence is there that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?**

The second question addressed in this research study analyzed the numerical data from the ALA/AASL longitudinal study. The ALA/AASL longitudinal study (2012) collected data from school librarians, and revealed that, generally, the nation's school libraries – of all types – were in a steady state. In Rhode Island, the data from responding public school librarians revealed an uptick in the number of individual class visits, as well as an increase in technological resources and library program hours but also a drop in the number of whole-class visits to the library. However, what was missing from the national survey data were the thousands of schools

without school libraries and/or school librarians. Information assembled by the American Library Association (ALA) Washington Office revealed that nearly 9,000 of the country's public schools do not have a school library, and over 22,000 public schools do not have a full- or part-time state-certified school librarian (Ballard, 2012, p. 15). These statistics prompted ALA to shift its attention to school libraries, culminating in the 2012 Presidential Task Force: Focus on School Libraries.

In Rhode Island, which has 300 public schools, a low of 7 and a high of 57 public school librarians participated in the ALA/AASL survey throughout its six-year run. This researcher believes that this low participation rate did not offer a complete picture of the state's public school libraries.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the aggregate as well as the disaggregated Rhode Island ALA/AASL survey data, the quantitative study did offer a chance to look at overall trends, and those trends turned out to correspond to the qualitative data resulting from the open-ended survey of the Rhode Island's school library leaders. Notably, the numerical data uncovered a marked decrease in the number of public school librarian positions in Rhode Island over the course of the survey (years 2008 to 2012, as 2007 data was discarded due to small sample size). Also, the copyright dates of time sensitive material – the Dewey range 610-619, health and medicine – on average, were one to two decades old; whereas, the benchmarking tool for weeding library collections lists five years as the cut-off for materials covering these fast-changing topics (Texas, 2008, p. 59). Current staffing – weeding library collections requires time/human resources – and budget levels may be preventing progress from being made in that area. The movement away from regulatory guidelines and toward

standards-based school library program planning that embraces "goals, priorities, criteria, and general principles for establishing effective school library programs" (AASL, 2015) may be contributing to the destabilization of public school library programs in the state and beyond.

***RQ 3*. What sort of framework, if any, should advocates use to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?**

The third question addressed in this dissertation analyzed both sets of data to determine if and what sort of a framework is necessary to ensure the sustainability of Rhode Island's public school libraries.

Theme 1 (School Librarian Attributes), Theme 2 (Rhode Island Basic Education Program), and Theme 5 (Local and State School Administration), quite apart from the subject of NCLB, manifested as a "data clump" around Research Question 3 to support the need for a framework to sustain Rhode Island's public school libraries (Glesne, 2006).

Concerning Theme 1 (School Librarian Attributes), an obvious lack of consensus around job title emerged early on – in the demographic segment of the open-ended survey – and was prescient concerning the predominant theme that was to emerge from the textual data and point toward the need for a framework for sustainability. Figure 2 from chapter four of this study is reproduced below:

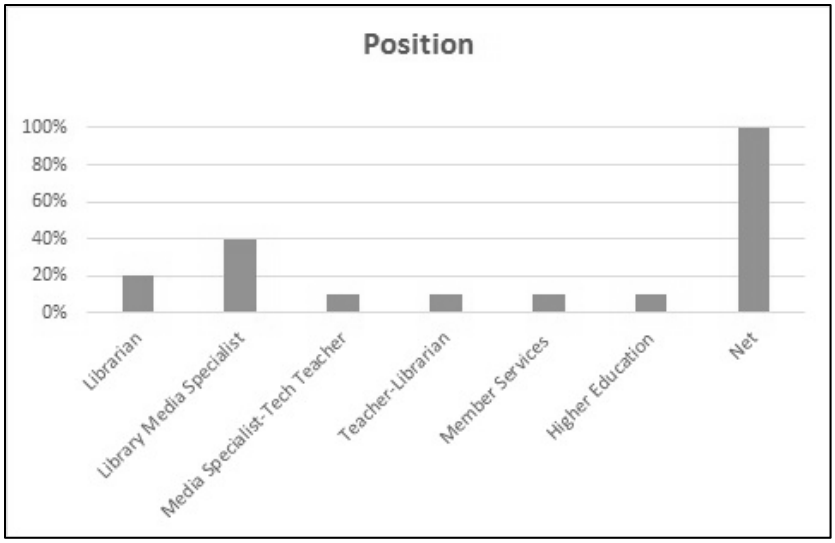

Figure 4.2. Position held in school library

Eight respondents (out of 10 study participants) who were practicing school librarians, used four distinct job titles to describe their role in schools: librarian, library media specialist, media specialist-tech teacher, and teacher-librarian.

From November through December of 2009, AASL administered a survey and the results revealed “confusion, misperceptions, and inconsistencies about various job titles” in the school library profession (Barnett, 2010, p. 7). Based on the data from that survey and other research sources, the AASL executive board examined the advantages and disadvantages of various job titles and AASL's agency and capacity to make a name change. Subsequently, the “mega-issue” up for discussion at AASL's 14th National Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina in 2010 was: "What name should we use to help us achieve universal recognition and be considered indispensable" (p. 7). Barnett posited that what professional school library practitioners should call themselves had been a topic of conversation for decades.

After a lengthy discussion, the board proposed the following resolution for an official vote:

> Therefore be it resolved, AASL officially adopts “school librarian" as the title which reflects the roles of the 21st-century school library professional as leader, instructional partner, information specialist, teacher, and program administrator; be it further resolved that AASL will advance and promote the title "school librarian" to ensure universal recognition of school librarians as indispensable educational leaders." (Barnett, 2010, p. 7).

However, Kiefer argued: “Does the ‘L’ word date us?” She added:

> Teacher-librarian is becoming more and more used in the literature, yet so is learning specialist, along with SLMS. Perhaps the title teacher-librarian is most reflective of the image we wish to portray, perhaps learning specialist, or information specialist; why do we not all embrace the same name? Maybe then others will know who we are, what we stand for. (p. 25)

Evidenced by the thematic analysis of the open-ended survey data, the expertise of school librarians, the college and university programs that prepare them as well as the programs school librarians create and administer in schools were the most critical impactors on Rhode Island’s public school libraries and their future sustainability, particularly in an atmosphere of accountability and high-stakes testing. In the U.S., a lack of a strong research base for school librarian preparation programs is a concern (Church, 2012, p. 216). A variety of certification standards from state to state and also performance standards from various state, regional, and national

professional organizations guide school librarians in executing their multi-faceted roles, and accordingly, inform the curricula of school librarian preparation programs. However, the panoply of standards may likely make it more difficult to determine what standards should be included in school librarian preparation curricula and when and how to include them in preparing future school librarians (Church, 2012, p. 216).

Regarding Rhode Island's school library leaders, the immediate lack of consistency around job title in the demographic segment signaled the pervasive confusion around the role of the school librarian within the greater enterprise. This cacophony of categorizations around job title may prevent a coherent dialogue around what sort of preparation and training, expertise, and professional relationships 21st century school librarians should engage in to ensure the sustainability of public school library programs.

Regarding Theme 2, state regulations, in the form of the Rhode Island Basic Education Plan – originally issued in 1960 and revised in 2009 to correspond with No Child Left Behind – was second in significance regarding the health and sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island. Many respondents noted that the revised document, unlike the original, now focused on school functions, outputs, and outcomes, rather than prescribed staffing, resource, and funding levels, and the lack of mandates, since 2009, resulted in program and staffing cuts and threatened to undermine the remainder of the state's school libraries.

Within the data cluster of Theme 5 (Local and State School Administration), school library leaders indicated that principals and superintendents, library scheduling (fixed or flexible), and state-level support were critical markers in predicting the

health of school library programs. Flexible scheduling occurs when school librarians are available throughout the school day, enabling teachers and students to collaborate with school librarians and other library staff and use the library spaces as a classroom or study space at point of need. Several research studies root out the relationship between flexible school library scheduling and high student achievement, and Rhode Island's public school librarians endorsed this best practice but expressed frustration around the state's elementary schools and predominantly fixed school library schedules where staff teach ancillary skills such as keyboarding or test prep during their library class time (Gavigan, Pribesh, & Dickinson, 2010; Lance, 2002; Lance & Kachel, 2013; Lance & Russell, 2004; Scholastic, 2008).

Shannon (2012) posited that the support of school administrators was critical to the success of school library programs and it is vital to develop ways to inform and educate them about the positive impact of school library programs on student achievement, the role of the school librarian in supporting teaching and learning, and what administrators can do to support school library programs and school librarians in their schools and districts. However, Shannon warned that in order to accomplish this, school librarians, themselves, must be able to articulate their vision for the library programs and, in concert with building and district administrators' agendas, develop program goals and objectives based on that vision (p. 21).

In 2011, Bromley found that school librarians often feel isolated, disconnected, and often unappreciated by colleagues (p. 6). However, she noted: "Librarians may not communicate their work to others thus the librarian role is misunderstood and they fail to function fully as a school resource" (p. 7).

Researcher Reflections

Being in the field of education for 32 years and, within the field, a school librarian/library director for 20 of them, this researcher's "positionality" relative to this research study was a highly subjective, even emotional one. In addition, the advocacy-participatory world view may be considered a limitation of this study. Consequently, throughout the study, the researcher endeavored to deconstruct the lens of self-interest through which she viewed and processed the data. In addition, the researcher was conscious of the positionality of each of her subjects, as they, too, by their very professional positions and stature – as identified by their colleagues through "chain sampling" – possess dedication and passion for school libraries. Accordingly, the researcher endeavored to remain as objective as possible when analyzing the open ended responses of study participants – especially when using analog processes (research notes, folders, white boards, note cards) driven by the researcher. Employing the use of a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package, NVivo, as well as DataCracker assisted in maintaining objectivity. The programs allowed for flexibility in organizing the data; however, analysis was fueled by algorithms, thus mitigating researcher bias and resulting in research conclusions that surprised the researcher.

Implications for Research and Practice

The findings extrapolated from the qualitative data included five themes (attributes of public school librarians, state and federal initiatives, testing, technology, and administration) that state school library leaders perceive as impacting the current and future health of Rhode Island's public school library programs. While the library

leaders' perceived state (BEP) and federal regulations (NCLB) as threats to the current and future state of Rhode Island's school library programs, they indicated that it is the attributes of school librarians, themselves, that have the most impact on a school's library media program. The findings from the quantitative data resulting from disaggregating the ALA/AASL longitudinal study data by Rhode Island public school libraries, revealed a marked drop in the number of school librarian positions in the state. Recommendations invite all stakeholders to participate in the development of a framework that affirms the impact of school library programs on student achievement and their potential expansive influence on all aspects of students' lives in order to ensure their viability.

Dewey argued that we should adopt an empirical standard when dealing with substantial ethical problems like which specific objects deserve the moral terms "good" or "bad" and what particular assertions should be made in value judgments and moral arguments (Faerna, 2011, p. 150). However, in order for something to be valued, it must be named. In 2004, Buckley bemoaned the fact that district, and as a result, state leadership for school library programs was missing in most cities and towns and that, very much like the lack of consistency uncovered in this Rhode Island study around job titles for school librarians, perhaps the lack of district leadership was due to the same job title and role confusion. She maintained:

> District Library Coordinator, Library Consultant, Library Coordinator, Regional School Library Media Specialist, District Head of Library: whatever you call it, whatever title you give it, this role has been nearly completely absent from school library literature for more than 15 years." (p. 1)

She noted that the "challenge to define the role and value of a district-level coordinator of school libraries is the ambiguity and inconsistency of terminology and job-titles related to the position" (p. 1). The lack of consistency regarding the titles of district-level school library leaders as well as the mash-up of nomenclature for building-level practitioners inhibit a coherent dialogue around what sort of preparation and training, expertise, and professional relationships 21st Century school librarians should engage in to ensure the sustainability of public school library programs.

Another point of irony extrapolated from this research study is the fact that the profession that is charged with cataloging and organizing the "body aesthetic" within our educational enterprises has yet to codify the role of the school librarian. Until national and state associations and college and university school librarian preparation programs reach consensus around nomenclature, the future of Rhode Island's public school library programs remains uncertain.

Recommendations include inviting all Rhode Island public school library stakeholders to take the lead, nationally, and participate in the development of a framework that includes consistency of vocabulary, consistency of certification and school librarian preparation standards as well as advocacy for district-level leadership positions to ensure research-based school library scheduling configurations, coordination and program integration that supports teaching and learning and is consistent throughout each district and, consequently, throughout the state.

Additional research should be conducted in the state to determine if there exists pervasive marginalization of school librarians and library spaces during state testing periods and also regarding the co-opting of school librarians as teachers of test preparation skills for computer-based state assessments. Ideas for further research include the replication of this case study within different states and regions of the U.S.

However, in order to increase the accuracy of the quantitative data, researchers should incorporate an instrument with a critical mass of consistent participants from year to year – where there is considerable overlap, making it possible, within the aggregate data, to identify a "cohort" in order to explore similarities and differences between years.

Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 5 concludes this research study that investigated the unintended impacts of No Child Left Behind on Rhode Island's public school libraries while also exploring a potential framework for sustainability. Public school libraries are symbolic as well as functional agents of equity and democracy. Their historical commitment to issues of social justice and access imbue them with an ethical beauty unlike any other social institution. The subject-centered (open-ended questionnaire) and critical-analytical data (ALA/AASL longitudinal study) revealed that standards-based initiatives have contravened with the social, ethical, and aesthetic mission of school libraries and have imperiled their viability in Rhode Island. In a 2010 article, one researcher avowed: "data and ethos" point to the school library as "a phenomenon, a harmonic convergence of multiple literacies, environment

stewardship, community service, and social justice…an organic process" (Dias-Mitchell, 2010, p. 23). Freire's concept of "conscientizacao" or "critical awareness" compels all stakeholders to participate in and advocate for continued open and equitable access to cultural, intellectual, and technical resources – the "body aesthetic" – for all students, and that can only be accomplished within our free public school libraries.

References

American Association of School Libraries. (2012). *School libraries count: National longitudinal survey of school library programs.* Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

American Association of School Libraries. (2015). Learning Standards & Program Guidelines. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines

American Library Association. Learning about the job. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/aasl/education/recruitment/learning

American Library Association. (1996). School librarian's code of ethics. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Anderson, C. (2007). Adequate yearly progress at your library media center. *Library/Media Connection*, Retrieved from http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/23594503/adequate-yearly-progress-ayp-your-library-media-center

Ballard, S. (2012). ALA presidential task force: Focus on school libraries. *School Library Monthly, 28*(6), 15-17. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/926593850?accountid=8593

Barnett, C. (2010). Looking back and moving forward. *Knowledge Quest, 38*(5), 6-9. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/644977310?accountid=8593

Bentheim, C. A. (2013). Continuing the transition work from traditional library to learning commons. *Teacher Librarian, 41*(2), 29-33, 36.

Berliner, D. C., Biddle, B. J., & Bell, J. (1996). *The manufactured crisis: Myths, fraud, and the attack on America's public schools*. New York, NY: Perseus Books Group.

Bigelow, B., & Peterson, B. (Eds.). *(2002). Rethinking globalizaton: Teaching for justice in an unjust world*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, Limited.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. N. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Braxton, B. (2005, December). Make your school library a noisy place. *Teacher Librarian*, *33*(2), 50.

Bromley, K. (2011). "Learning about the endangered librarian." *The Language and Literacy Spectrum, 21*, 3-11.

Buckley, J. (2004). The role and value of a district-level coordinator of school libraries: A review of the literature. *School Libraries in Canada, 24*(2), 15-19. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/222548649?accountid=8593

Cary, L. J. (2007). *Curriculum spaces: Discourse, postmodern theory and educational research*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Castelhano, J. (2013). PARCC: Is this the next big thing? *Tech & Learning, 33*(9), 34-36. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1349936806?accountid=8593

Chapman, L. (2005, January 25). No Child Left Behind in art? *Arts Education Policy Review, 106*(2), *3-17.*

Church, A. P., Dickinson, G. K., & Everhar, N. (2012). Competing standards in the education of school librarians. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 53*(3), 208-217. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1030424523?accountid=8593

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage Publications.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Theory of valuation.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Dias-Mitchell, L. (2010). A harmonic convergence in the school library. *Teacher Librarian, 38*(1), 32-33. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/808410851?accountid=8593

Edgerton, S. H. (1996). *Translating the curriculum multiculturalism into cultural studies*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ewbank, A. D., & Moreillon, J. (2007, January). Is there a teacher-librarian worldview? *Knowledge Quest*, *36*(1), 12-15.

Faerna, A. (2011). Dewey's value theory and the analytic tradition of moral philosophy. In L. Hickman (Ed), *The continuing relevance of John Dewey: Reflections on aesthetics, morality, science, and society* (pp. 139 -151). New York, NY: Rodopi.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Trans. M.B. Ramos. New York, NY: Seabury Press.

Gavigan, K., Pribesh, S., & Dickinson, G. (2010). Fixed or flex? Schedule impacts on school library circulation. *Library and Information Science Research, 32*(2), 131-137.

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Goldberg, B. (2005, September 1). Why school libraries won't be left behind. *American Libraries*, 38-41.

Graham, S., & Gagnon, A. (2013). A Quasi-experimental evaluation of an early literacy program at the Regina Public Library. *Canadian Journal of Information & Library Sciences*, *37*(2), 103-121.

Gunzenhauser, M. G. (2003, January). High-stakes testing and the default philosophy of education. *Theory Into Practice*, *42*(1), 51-58.

Harada, V. H., Kam, L., & Marks, L. (2007, March/April). School librarians help students achieve: Here's the evidence! *MultiMedia & Internet@Schools*, *14*(2), 25-28.

Holy Bible. (2011). Retrieved from https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible/

Hunt, J. W. (2008, April 1). A Nation at Risk and No Child Left Behind: Deja vu for administrators. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 580.

Infoworks. http://infoworks.ride.ri.gov/state/ri

Kenney, B. (2008, June). To Spokane, with love and gratitude. *School Library Journal*. *54*(6), 11.

Kiefer, M. (2008). What can teacher-librarians do to promote their work and the school library media program? Define who we are. *Teacher Librarian, 36*(2), 24-25. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/224887532?accountid=8593

Kincaid, J. (1989**).** *A small place.* New York, NY: N A L Trade.

Korwitts, K. (2013, September 17). Get the most out of open-ended survey responses with NVivo & SurveyMonkey. Retrieved from https://www.surveymonkey.com/blog/en/blog/2013/09/17/nvivo-and-surveymonkey/

Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America***.** New York, NY: Crown Publishers.

Lance, K. C. (2002, January). What research tells us about the importance of school libraries. *Knowledge Quest*, *31*(1) 17-22.

Lance, K. C., & Kachel, D. (2013). Achieving academic standards through the school library program: Administrator perceptions and student test scores. *Teacher Librarian, 40*(5), 8-13. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1372164701?accountid=8593

Lance, K. C., & Russell, B. (2004, May). Scientifically based research on school libraries and academic achievement. *Knowledge Quest*, *32*(5), 13-17.

Libraries and literacy. (2001). *Reading Today, 18*(5), 10.

Loertscher, D. V., Preddy, L., & Derry, B. (2013). Makerspaces in the school library learning commons and the uTEC maker model. *Teacher Librarian, 41*(2), 48-51.

Lowe, K. (2006, July/August). Addressing a potential crisis in school library programs: The work of the ALA Task Force on School Libraries. *MultiMedia & Internet@Schools*, *13*(4), 26.

Maxwell, N. K. (2006). *Sacred stacks: The higher purpose of libraries and librarianship*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

McGrath, K. G. (2015). School libraries & innovation. *Knowledge Quest, 43*(3), 54-61. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1643157911?accountid=8593

OLIS. Rhode Island. Retrieved from http://www.olis.ri.gov/libraries/liblist.php?type=s

Pederson, P. V. (2007). What is measured is treasured: The impact of the No Child Left Behind act on non-assessed subjects. *The Clearing House, 80*(6), 287-291.

Petruzzi, T., & Burns, M. F. (2006). A literacy center where? A public library finds space to promote and provide family learning activities. *Public Library Quarterly*, *25*(1/2), 191-197. doi:10.1300/J118v25n01_14

Pinar, W. (2003). *What is curriculum theory?* Danbury, CN: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ray, M. (2014). 2014 resolution embrace failure. *Teacher Librarian, 41*(3), 55-56, 67. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1504427849?accountid=8593

Redfield, M. (2007, February). Aesthetics, theory, and the profession of literature: Derrida and romanticism. *Studies in Romanticism*, *46*(2), 227-246.

Rettig, J. (2009). School libraries and the educational ecosystem. *Change*, *41*(2), 28-29.

Rhode Island Department of Education. (2015). Retrieved from http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/PARCCAssessment.aspx

Rhode Island Library Information Network for Kids. RILINK. (2015). http://guides.rilink.org/about

Roberts, C. M. (2010). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Sagan, C. (1985). *Cosmos*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

School Libraries of Rhode Island. (2015). Retrieved from http://www.slri.info/About-Us

School Libraries Work! (2008). *Research Foundation Paper***.** Danbury, CT: Scholastic Library Publishing.

Scott, K., & Plourde, L. (2007, March). School libraries and increased student achievement: What's the big idea? *Education*, *127*(3), 419-429.

Shannon, D. M. (2012). Perceptions of school library programs and school librarians: Perspectives of supportive school administrators. *Teacher Librarian, 39*(3), 17-22. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/924153868?accountid=8593

Silvers, A. (2003, March). Missing links: On studying the connection of arts education to the public good. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *104*(3), 21-23.

Slattery, P., & Rapp, D. (2003). *Ethics and the foundations of education: Teaching convictions in a postmodern world*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Starkman, N. (2007, August). The new librarians. *THE Journal: Technological Horizons in Education*, *34*(8), 22.

Stephens, W. (2014). Testing under the microscope. *Knowledge Quest, 43*(1), 30-35. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1561141319?accountid=8593

Texas State Library and Archives Commission (2008). CREW: A weeding manual for modern libraries. Retrieved from http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/crew

Thompson, S. (2012). Public libraries: Central to adult learning and literacy. *Aplis*, *25*(4), 190-191.

Todd, R. J. (2012). Visibility, core standards, and the power of the story: Creating a visible future for school libraries. *Teacher Librarian, 40*(1), 8-14.

United States. National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform : A report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education*. Washington, D.C: The Commission : [Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O. distributor].

United States Department of Education. (2010). No Child Left Behind. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html

Whelan, D. L. (2008, January). Café society: Do school libraries need a double shot of espresso? *School Library Journal*. Retrieved from http://www.slj.com/2008/01/buildings-design/cafe-society-do-school-libraries-need-a-double-shot-of-espresso/#_

Wiegand, W. (2007, February). The rich potential of American public school library history: Research needs and opportunities for historians of education and librarianship. *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, *42*(1), 57-74.

Yin, R. K. (1993). *Applications of case study research: Applied social research methods series (2nd. ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendix A

Meta-Analysis of Impact Studies

Impact of School Libraries and Library Media Specialists on Student Academic Achievement

ALASKA

http://www.library.state.ak.us/pdf/anc/infoemxs.pdf

Lance, Keith Curry, et. al. (1999). Information Empowered: The School Librarian as an Agent of Academic Achievement in Alaska Schools. *Anchorage: AK: Alaska State Library.*

COLORADO

http://www.ala.org/aasl/SLMR/slmr_resources/select_lance.html

Lance, Keith Curry, Lynda Wellborn, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. (1993). The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement. *Spring, TX: Hi Willow Research and Publishing.*

http://www.lrs.org/documents/lmcstudies/CO/execsumm.pdf

Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. (2000). How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards: The Second Colorado Study. *Spring, TX: Hi Willow Research and Publishing.*

DELAWARE

http://www2.lib.udel.edu/taskforce/surveys/titlepage.doc

http://www2.lib.udel.edu/taskforce/phasetwo.doc

Todd, Ross J. (2005). Report of the Delaware School Library Survey 2004. *Georgetown, DE: Governor's Task Force on School Libraries.*

FLORIDA

http://www.sunlink.ucf.edu/makingthegrade/

Baumbach, Donna. (2002). Making the Grade: The Status of School Library Media Centers in the Sunshine State and How They Contribute to Student Achievement. *Spring, TX: Hi Willow Research and Publishing.*

ILLINOIS

http://www.islma.org/pdf/ILStudy2.pdf

Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell (2005). Powerful Libraries Make Powerful Learners: The Illinois Study. *Canton, IL: Illinois School Library Media Association.*

INDIANA

http://www.ilfonline.org/Units/Associations/aime/Data/index.htm

Callison, Daniel et al. 2004 Survey of Indiana School Library Media Programs: A Collaborative Project Between the Association for Indiana Media Educators & Indiana University—Indianapolis, School of Library and Information Science. *Presented at the 2004 AIME Conference, Indianapolis, IN, November 2004.*

INDIANA

http://www.ilfonline.org/AIME/INfinalreportNextSteps.pdf

Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Becky Russell. How Students, Teachers, and Principals Benefit from Strong School Libraries: The Indiana Study—2007. *Indianapolis, IN: Association for Indiana Media Educators.*

IOWA

http://www.iowaaeaonline.org/about/Make%20The%20Connection1.pdf

Rodney, Marcia J., Keith Curry Lance, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. (2002). Make the Connection: Quality School Library Media Programs Impact Academic Achievement in Iowa. *Bettendorf, IA: Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency.*

MASSACHUSETTS

http://web.simmons.edu/~baughman/mcas-school-libraries/Baughman%20Paper.pdf

Baughman, James. (2002). School Libraries and MCAS Scores, (Preliminary Edition). *A Paper Presented at a Symposium Sponsored by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College. Boston, MA.*

MICHIGAN

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_lm_schllibstudy03_76626_7.pdf

Rodney, Marcia J., Keith Curry Lance, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. (2003). The Impact of Michigan School Librarians on Academic Achievement: Kids Who Have Libraries Succeed. *Lansing, MI: Library of Michigan.*

MINNESOTA

http://metronet.lib.mn.us/survey/final_report.pdf

Baxter, Susan J. and Ann Walker Smalley. (2003). Check It Out! The Results of the School Library Media Program Census, Final Report. *St. Paul, MN: Metronet.*

MISSOURI

http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/curriculum/librarystudy/plainenglish.pdf

Quantitative Resources, LLC. (2003). Show-Me Connection: How School Library Media Center Services Impact Student Achievement, 2002–2003. *Jefferson City, MO: Missouri State Library.*

NEW MEXICO

http://www.stlib.state.nm.us/files/NMStudyforDistribution.pdf

Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. (2002). How School Librarians Improve Outcomes for Children: The New Mexico Study. *Sante Fe, NM: New Mexico State Library.*

NORTH CAROLINA

http://www.rburgin.com/NCschools2003/

Burgin, Robert and Pauletta Brown Bracy. (2003). An Essential Connection: How Quality School Library Media Programs Improve Student Achievement in North Carolina. *Spring, TX: Hi Willow Research and Publishing.*

OHIO

http://www.oelma.org/studentlearning/default.asp

Todd, Ross J., Carol C. Kuhlthau, and OELMA. (2004). Student Learning through Ohio School Libraries: The Ohio Research Study. *Columbus, OH: Ohio Educational Library Media Association.*

OREGON

http://www.oema.net/Oregon_Study/OR_Study.htm

Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. (2001). Good Schools Have School Librarians: Oregon School Librarians Collaborate to Improve Academic Achievement. *Terrebonne, OR: Oregon Educational Media Association.*

PENNSYLVANIA

http://www.statelibrary.state.pa.us/libraries/lib/libraries/measuringup.pdf

Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia J. Rodney, and Christine Hamilton-Pennell. (2000). Measuring Up to Standards: The Impact of School Library Programs & Information Literacy in Pennsylvania Schools. *Greensburg, PA: Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries.*

TEXAS

http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/schlibsurvey/index.html

Smith, Ester G. (2001). Texas School Libraries: Standards, Resources, Services, and Students' Performance. *Austin, TX: Texas State Library and Archives Commission.*

WISCONSIN

http://www.dpi.wi.gov/imt/lmsstudy.html

Smith, Ester G. (2006). Student Learning through Wisconsin School Library Media Centers: Case Study Report. *Madison: WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.*

ONTARIO, CANADA

http://www.accessola.com/data/6/rec_docs/137_eqao_pfe_study_2006.pdf

Klinger, Donald. (2006). School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario (Canada). *Toronto: CA: Ontario Library Association.*

(School Libraries Work! 2008, pp. 24-25)

Appendix B

Email to Listserv Members

Dear Library Professional,

I am seeking the perspectives of leaders in the field on the effects of NCLB on Rhode Island's public school library programs. Please reply to this email (not to the list but addressed to me, personally, l-dias-mitchell@bethel.edu) identifying men and women (and their contact information if available) who are active in the profession of school libraries and/or education in the State of Rhode Island and are seen as exemplary practitioners and mentors. Your selections (which will remain confidential and be destroyed once my dissertation is completed) need not be restricted to practicing school librarians but may also include professors of library and information science; district school library or media services directors; retired school library professionals; members of state, regional, and national school library associations; and anyone else you feel can contribute to my study (e.g., technology directors who may hold divergent views regarding the relevance or value of school libraries). Please provide a rationale for your selection(s). Below are specific criteria for participants in the final study:

1. Credentialed school librarians who are leading or have led exemplary school library programs.
2. Practitioners who are leading innovative school library-related professional development focused on current and best practices.

3. Practitioners who are active members or board members of state, regional, national professional organizations (School Librarians of Rhode Island, New England Educational Media Association, American Association of School Librarians).
4. Other educators or library professionals who are held in high regard by SLRI's active members (professors, district library/media and technology directors), including those who may hold contrarian views regarding the relevance or value of school libraries.

Appendix C

Draft of Open Ended "Survey"

Name: _____

School District: _____

School / Level: _____

Position: _____

Years of experience: _____

Degrees / Certifications: _____

District type (urban, rural, suburban, other): _____

County where workplace is located (Bristol. Kent, Newport, Providence, Washington): _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Introduction to the Survey

You have been selected to participate in this open-ended survey because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal of expertise to share about school libraries in the state of Rhode Island. My doctoral research project focuses on the effect(s) of No Child Left Behind on public school library programs in Rhode Island

I will use the text analysis software NVivo to analyze respondents' content. Further, I am also collecting and analyzing numerical/quantitative data from the American Association of School Librarians' longitudinal survey from 2006 through 2012,

disaggregated by state (Rhode Island) and made available through the American Library Association. With your cooperation and expertise, this mixed methods research study is sure to be informative and valuable to the Rhode Island school library community as well as policy makers in the public school arena.

NOTE: If you are interrupted, know that you may save your work and come back to complete the survey. Please do not use browser navigation buttons to move through the survey. Use the "Previous" and "Back" buttons.

Informed Consent

Bethel University

You are invited to participate in a study of the Effects of No Child Left Behind on Rhode Island's Public School Libraries. I hope to learn about the perspectives of leaders in the field regarding the impact of No Child Left Behind on Rhode Island's public school library programs and if there is evidence that a framework is necessary for the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study, performed under the auspices of the Graduate School, Bethel University, because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal of expertise to share about public school libraries in the state of Rhode Island.

If you decide to participate, I hope to receive your completed questionnaire by April 15, 2015. Know that I will share my research interpretations and provide you with continuous feedback, and, ultimately, offer you agency regarding the data included in the final research report: you will be allowed to edit answers at any time -- even after you submit your survey and up until my final draft (May 7, 2015).

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel University's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please call Laurie Dias-Mitchell tel. _____ or Dr. Michael Lindstrom tel. _____.

Your completion of this survey denotes your willingness to participate and allows the researcher (Laurie Dias-Mitchell) to use your data. For your information, I am the sole researcher on the project who will be privy to the contents of the completed surveys -- which will be destroyed once my dissertation is completed. Note that: (1) all information will be held confidential; (2) your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time if you feel uncomfortable; and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Here is a brief overview of the law:

The **No Child Left Behind Act** authorizes several federal education programs that are administered by the states. The law is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Under the 2001 law, states are required to test students in reading and math in grades 3–8 and once in high school. All students are expected to meet or exceed state standards in reading and math by 2014 and beyond.

The major focus of No Child Left Behind is to close student achievement gaps by

providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. The U.S. Department of Education emphasizes four pillars within the bill:

Accountability: to ensure those students who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency.

Flexibility: Allows school districts flexibility in how they use federal education funds to improve student achievement.

Research-based education: Emphasizes educational programs and practices that have been proven effective through scientific research.

Parent options: Increases the choices available to the parents of students attending Title I schools.

Do you agree to the above terms? By clicking "Yes" you consent that you are willing to answer the questions in the survey.

1. **Staff activities** (planning with teachers, delivering instruction, working on budget, other):
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:
2. **Hours and staffing** (hours open, hours flexibly scheduled, number of school librarians, number of hours worked by school librarians, number of hours worked by other staff):
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:

3. **Collection size** (number of books, number of current periodical subscriptions, number of video materials, number of audio materials):
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:
4. **Collection development** (a narrowing, broadening, or unchanged focus):
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:
5. **Technology** (library and library-networked computers, usage of OPAC, online databases, other online resources):
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:
6. **Budgets and expenditures** (print and non-print materials, licensed databases, electronic access to information, other):
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:
7. **Library usage** (individual students, small group and whole-class visits, other)
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:
8. **Circulation** (print, eBooks, non-print, hardware, software):
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:

9. **Your voice** ("at the table" as an instructional leader, as a collaborator around student achievement):
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:
10. What is your perspective on the current and future state of Rhode Island's public school libraries?
    - Positive influences:
    - Negative influences:
11. Is a framework needed or recommended to ensure the sustainability of school libraries in Rhode Island?
12. If so, what type of framework is needed and what components should be included in the framework?

Appendix D

Example of Member Checking

Dear Rhode Island School Library Leaders:

I can't thank you enough for taking the time from your busy lives to complete the open-ended survey I sent in the spring.

Now is your chance to add anything further to your responses, via replying to this email now or at any time within the next few weeks.

After analyzing your responses, both in hard copy form and using text analysis software (NVivo and DataCracker), an overarching theme became clear. NCLB (and its concomitant testing) is a threat to school libraries in RI
-- but not nearly as impactful as the attributes of school librarians, themselves are. As a research cohort, your responses were loud and clear: the quality of the librarian has the most powerful impact on current and future library programs in Rhode Island's public schools.

Here are the five major themes in order of significance, based on the number of stem statements mentioning/referencing them in your submitted surveys:

1. Attributes of School Librarians
2. State and Federal Initiatives (most notably, the BEP)
3. Testing (shutting down the library, shift elem librarians towards teaching keyboarding, etc.)
4. Technology (positive impact of OLIS, RILINK, etc. on public school libraries)
5. Administration (principals, superintendents / flex or fixed scheduling)

What are your thoughts?

With gratitude,
Laurie Dias-Mitchell

Appendix E

Means by Year in Rhode Island's Public Schools

Hours per week spent working on the budget

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	2.06	2.713	23
2009	1.88	3.814	33
2010	2.58	2.93	43
2011	1.74	2.683	57
2012	2.08	3.382	40

Hours per week spent meeting with teachers to plan instructional units

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	1.14	1.30	25
2009	1.85	3.47	33
2010	2.56	4.38	43
2011	1.26	2.18	57
2012	2.03	3.93	40

Hours per week spent delivering instruction

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	14.72	8.30	25
2009	14.52	8.65	33
2010	15.63	8.37	43
2011	15.3	8.76	57
2012	15.9	10.03	40

Total number of hours the library is open each week

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	26.77	11.87	28
2009	25.97	11.22	33
2010	29.61	10.68	43
2011	27.58	11.91	57
2012	28.78	10.64	40

Total number of hours available for flexible scheduling

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	13.66	14.72	27
2009	15.39	13.96	39
2010	18.37	16.00	43
2011	15.63	15.37	57
2012	15.93	15.03	40

Number of school librarians

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	2.23	5.67	26
2009	1.15	0.36	33
2010	1.23	0.48	43
2011	1.21	0.56	57
2012	1.1	0.38	40

Number of hours worked by school librarians

Years	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**
2008	30.16	13.38	26
2009	29.64	13.87	33
2010	36.35	16.73	43
2011	34.68	18.57	57
2012	32.78	16.51	40

Number of hours worked by other staff

Years	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**
2008	7.92	14.67	26
2009	7.18	13.71	33
2010	10.37	15.58	43
2011	9.32	15.58	57
2012	7.95	13.93	40

Average number of books

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	9600.3	4631.46	23
2009	8448.73	5223.97	33
2010	9593.7	4543.75	43
2011	10743.58	4508.36	57
2012	9395	4545.14	40

Average number of periodical subscriptions

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	12.7	9.16	23
2009	13.7	16.49	33
2010	11.4	9.27	43
2011	87.11	528.41	57
2012	12.28	12.48	40

Average number of video materials

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	225.09	225.112	23
2009	166.36	150.706	33
2010	296.33	339.575	43
2011	283.44	377.174	57
2012	234.4	336.73	40

Average number of audio materials

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	41.43	51.601	23
2009	30.09	47.835	33
2010	47.33	62.009	43
2011	47.26	65.839	57
2012	49.43	80.846	40

Average copyright year for the Dewey range 610-619, health and medicine

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	1991.95	7.78	20
2009	1993.64	7.01	33
2010	1991.07	22.81	43
2011	1993.91	7.77	57
2012	1997.8	5.01	40

Average number of computers in libraries

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	18.70	16.23	23
2009	14.70	9.12	33
2010	22.30	17.49	43
2011	24.40	19.27	57
2012	21.38	18.37	40

Average number of school computers outside library, with network access to library services

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	96.05	93.09	21
2009	90.88	83.34	33
2010	125.53	100.54	43
2011	140.11	169.81	57
2012	125.63	140.24	40

Total of library and library-networked computers

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	113.05	96.14	21
2009	105.58	87.36	33
2010	145.51	113.76	43
2011	164.51	178.66	57
2012	147	149.36	40

Percentage able to access database remotely

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	1.32	0.48	22
2009	1.18	0.39	33
2010	1.14	0.35	43
2011	1.19	0.40	57
2012	1.1	0.30	40

Number of individual visits per typical week

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	155.27	249.40	22
2009	146.67	279.05	33
2010	175.26	208.80	43
2011	278.75	1090.71	57
2012	144.68	240.92	40

Number of group visits per typical week

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	24.22	39.86	23
2009	20.19	14.48	33
2010	21.19	19.74	43
2011	29.21	84.38	57
2012	17.55	10.74	40

Average spend on information resources

Years	Mean	SD	N
2008	6212.68	7356.02	22
2009	6869.06	9323.22	33
2010	8524.65	12280.69	43
2011	5955.63	7969.85	57
2012	6877.53	7777.86	40