

## Key Findings

From the AASL Assessment Rubric Survey (2003)

- The Educationally Effective Elementary School Library Media Specialist. (Table 1.3, page 16) A certified elementary school library media specialist, with experience of at least three years on a full-time basis at the same school, and who performs information access and administrative services at a proficient to exemplary level, is a strong positive predictor of a learning environment in which sixth grade student scores are well above average on all portions of the ISTEP exams that measure language arts development in reading, writing and comprehension. These strong correlations are not a basis for cause and effect, although they are strong enough to state that in a vast majority of cases where an effective full-time school library media specialist is found you will also find sixth graders who have, as a group, higher than average scores on all of the language arts sections of ISTEP. "Library quality, both in terms of better staffing and better collections, is related to reading achievement," according to Stephen D. Krashen (2004) in his analysis of hundreds of research reports documented in the 2nd edition of *The Power of Reading* – a compilation that should be in all professional development collections and read by each principal, classroom teacher, school library media specialist, education and library science professor, education state administrator and consultant, state legislature and parent in Indiana as well as the other 49 states.

- A higher achieving full-time school library media specialist and a larger than average group of high achieving students are likely to be found in the same elementary school. (Table 1.4, page 17) In Indiana elementary schools where a full-time, certified school library media specialist and program have functioned at the proficient and exemplary levels of the AASL Rubric over the past three years the percentage of students who pass the language arts sections of ISTEP range 17% to 20% higher than in Indiana elementary schools where the school library media specialist and program consistently scored in the lower levels. Higher performing school library media specialists and programs may be a function of an overall more enriching learning environment that includes a supportive administration, collaborative teachers and an up-to-date resource and technology base. It seems to take a full-time, experienced school library media specialist performing at high levels of the AASL Assessment Rubric to make such learning environmental components interact and support student learning. Lowest scores on the Rubric as self-reported by full-time school library media specialists seem to be a predictor of learning environments that do not capitalize on the full range of school library media program staff, services and collections and may contribute to the decline of student ISTEP scores in the language arts from third grade to sixth grade.

From the AIME Building and Professional Surveys (2004)

- Full-time school library media specialists, at all levels K-12, are more likely to participate in program and instructional planning, especially in content areas for language arts, social studies, science, health education and reading than in situations where the library media specialist serves on a part-time basis. (Table 2.2, page 23)
- Full-time elementary school library media specialists involve over twice as many students and teachers in meaningful reading promotion activities such as the Young Hoosier Book Award and Read Aloud Books Too Good to Miss, than situations where the library media specialist serves on a part-time basis or there is no certified media specialist employed for the building. (Items 4, 5, 6, page 24)
- The school library media center is more likely to have electronic connections to other school collections and the public library, secure larger amounts of federal funding, provide more frequent instruction in access and use of electronic resources, and maintain a website linking to current and relevant professional resources, when a full-time, certified school library media specialist serves the school on a full-time basis and does not have professional responsibilities scattered among other buildings. (Items 16, 17, 18, pages 39-30)
- Full-time school library media specialists who are assisted by a full-time clerical assistant are more likely to provide services that are relevant to learning standards, access to technology for video and multimedia production, and collections that are more up-to-date and relevant to the curriculum, especially in Indiana elementary schools. Indiana secondary school book collections continue to lag behind the national averages in funding, and in general, contain many nonfiction items that are out-of-date and misleading for today's pre-college education. (Items 16, 18, 19, 29, pages 29-39)
- There has been a decline in the number of professional school library media specialists and clerical assistants in Indiana secondary schools, especially in situations where more than one full-time school library media specialist has been employed per building. Further study is needed to determine the reasons and to identify evidence that may show damage to the academic program caused by such reduction. Professional positions for elementary school media specialists have decreased in some portions of the state and increased in others. (Table 1.2, page 6 and Table 1.6, page 18)