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Abstract

The school district library supervisor occupies a pivotal position in library and information services programs that support and enhance the instructional efforts of a school district: providing leadership; advocating for the programs; supporting, advising, and providing

professional development to building-level librarians; and representing school library programs to stakeholders in the school system and the community at large. With funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Lilead Project was founded at the University of Maryland in 2011 to "study, support, and build community among school district library supervisors" (Lilead Project n.d.). To gain a better understanding of supervisors—who they are, the duties they perform, and the challenges they face—and to establish baseline data upon which further research can be built, in 2012 the project team conducted a survey of supervisors nationwide: the Lilead Survey. In this paper, which is the first of two planned reports on the results of the survey, we present findings related to the position and office of the supervisor; demographic information, qualifications, and career paths of the incumbents of the position; and changes in policies, curriculum, and resources that impact the supervisor's responsibilities for library services. Survey findings related to responsibilities and tasks assigned to the position, professional development needs of supervisors and staff, and challenges and needs that supervisors face will be presented in the second report.

Introduction

The Lilead Project

The school district library supervisor (referred to as "supervisor" throughout this paper) occupies a pivotal position in the library and information services program that supports and enhances the instructional efforts of a school district. It is the supervisor who provides leadership in establishing the school library vision, mission, and policy and serves as the primary advocate for school library programs at the district level. The supervisor provides immediate support and expert advice to building-level librarians and plans and delivers professional development for them. Also, within a school district the supervisor is the primary authority on matters related to school library services and spokesperson for the services when speaking to the district superintendent and administrative staff, principals, parents, school board, or the community at large.

To gain a better understanding of supervisors—who they are, the duties they perform, and the challenges they face—and support them in meeting those challenges, the Lilead Project (rhymes with *Iliad*) was initiated in 2011 at the University of Maryland with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (Grant #RE-04-11-0050). The goals of the Lilead Project were to:

1. Collect and analyze baseline information through a national workforce study regarding the demographics, job titles, staffing patterns, educational background, professional development needs, responsibilities, and challenges of individuals responsible for library and information services in the largest school districts in the United States.

2. Disseminate information collected through the national workforce study to a broad professional audience of stakeholders, including national, state, and regional teachers' and administrators' associations, and other policymaking groups.

3. Through a freely available website and interactive online community, encourage communication and collaboration among district supervisors, library and information science educators and researchers, and others committed to improving library and information services for young people.

To accomplish its first goal and establish the basis for reaching its other goals, in 2012 the project team conducted a survey of supervisors nationwide: the Lilead Survey. In this paper, which is the first of two planned reports on the results of the 2012 Lilead Survey, we report survey findings related to the position and office of supervisor; demographic information, qualifications, and career paths of the people who occupy this position; and recent changes and their effect on the supervisor's role. Survey findings related to responsibilities and tasks assigned to the position, professional development needs of supervisors and staff, and challenges and needs that supervisors face will be reported in the second report.

The data presented in this paper are baseline data that describe the current role of the supervisor, the environment in which the supervisor works, and characteristics of supervisors at the time of the survey. Some of the data can and will be compared to findings from a survey conducted forty-five years earlier, but the primary purpose of the data is to establish a foundation upon which future studies can be built. For example, the data can be seen as the starting point in constructing a longitudinal study of the supervisor position, a study in which the effects of trends in educational policy and practice on school library services or changes in the demographics of the library profession can be detected. The data may generate ideas to enable graduate programs in library and information science education to better prepare or support supervisors in their work. Longitudinal data may enable researchers to explore the relationship between district-level support for school libraries and the quality of programs and services at the building level. Lilead Survey data are of immediate interest and use for what is revealed about supervisors today and of continuing value for research in the future.

Overview of the Literature

Creators of school library standards long held that a supervisor at the district or state level was integral to the success of school library programs. In *Standards for School Library Programs* (AASL 1960), the entirety of chapter 6 is devoted to supervision of school library programs at the state and district levels. In 1975 the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) jointly created standards published by the American Library Association (ALA) in *Media Programs: District and School*. That book included consideration of district-level responsibilities for program patterns and relationships, planning and operation, collection development, personnel, and facilities.

In 1988 AASL and AECT again collaborated on standards, which were published in *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*. This book established a high point of support for the district supervisor position. It stated, "All school systems must employ a district library media director to provide leadership and direction to the overall library media program" (AASL and AECT 1988, 102). Guidelines in the 1988 *Information Power* describe more than forty principal functions of the supervisor in leadership, consultation, communication, coordination, and administration. According to the 1988 standards, the effective supervisor must be a specialist in library resources, knowledgeable about new information technologies, and a skilled administrator (AASL and AECT 1988, 102–06).

However, the visibility of the district supervisor in statements of standards diminished sharply after that time. The description of the district supervisor and consideration of the position is noticeably absent from school library standards in AASL and AECT's 1998 *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, and from *Empowering Learners*, the AASL 2009 school library program guidelines. In 1994 AASL published a position statement on the importance of

the district library supervisor and updated this statement in 2012, but in recent years the omission from national standards of a clear statement about the role and value of the supervisor may have contributed to the existing dearth of research about the position (AASL 2012). (For example, AASL's *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* (2007) focus on students' skills, dispositions, and actions rather than on educators'.)

In this paper we will review literature related to those aspects of the supervisor position that are discussed later in the report: the supervisor's title, office, reporting structure, and administrative aspects of the position; and the professional and personal attributes of currently serving supervisors. Literature related to other aspects of the supervisor position will be presented in the second report to come.

The first national study of supervisors in the U.S. was conducted as part of a large, multipart research program that examined workforce requirements for academic, public, special, and school libraries. The Manpower Project, as it was informally called, was conducted by Mary Lee Bundy and Paul Wasserman at the School of Library and Information Services (now the College of Information Studies), University of Maryland, in the period 1967–1970. The project was funded by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the National Science Foundation; and the National Library of Medicine. The purpose of the project was to provide information on workforce requirements of librarianship and other information professions, information that would be useful in addressing questions related to the selection, recruitment, training, and utilization of personnel. The part of the larger project that specifically focused on school library supervisors was the survey on leadership and change conducted by Bundy and Wasserman. (This landmark project under discussion here should not be confused with the School Library Manpower Project, which was conducted during approximately the same time period, funded by the Knapp Foundation, and focused only on building-level school librarians.)

Bundy and Wasserman collected and analyzed data on the background, attitudes, and behaviors of library administrators and characteristics of libraries across four types of library environments—academic, public, school, and special libraries—to test the researchers' assumptions that the relationship between human and organizational variables and organizational attitudes and behaviors were indicators of a capacity for change. The survey was distributed to chief administrators of large public, academic, school, and special libraries. The same questionnaire template was used for each type of library, modified as required by differences among organizational forms and issues involving change. The population of school library administrators was drawn from districts with at least 25,000 enrolled students and with a designated library supervisor position. In addition to the public school districts that qualified, six large private school systems that met the qualifications were also included. The survey was typed, duplicated, and sent by postal mail to participants.

Selected findings from the Bundy and Wasserman survey relevant to the topics discussed in this article are listed below. All listed findings were reported in *The School Library Supervisor and Her Situation. Final Report* (Bundy, Wasserman, and O'Connell 1970). Parenthetical numbers in the list below are page numbers in that 1970 report.

1. The position of district supervisor of library services was relatively new, and the title for the new position was not standardized. Examples of titles found in the survey included supervisor of school libraries, coordinator of instruction, and director of library services (46–47).

2. The department within which the district library services office was located varied; the assistant superintendent for instruction was named most frequently (by 32 percent of respondents) as the person to whom the supervisor directly reported (55).

3. Eighty percent of supervisors were female; 53 percent were over fifty years old (13–14).

4. Approximately half of supervisors had a graduate degree in library science; 54 percent were former high school teachers. Fifty-seven percent had been in the supervisor's position for five years or less (14–19).

5. Supervisors identified three recent changes that had affected their role and brought about fundamental shifts in the concept of a school library, the resources and services it was expected to provide, and the required competencies and skills of its staff. The changes were these:

   a. Wide acceptance of the "instructional resource center" concept with its emphasis on multimedia resources and services in one unit. Bundy, Wasserman, and O'Connell characterized supervisors as "...clearly oriented toward a single direction for change—the multimedia concept" (66).

   b. Increased funding (primarily from federal sources) for materials, equipment, and staff. Staff positions for paraprofessionals were introduced, and school media center facilities were being renewed or expanded. According to Bundy and her colleagues, the most dramatic change was the expansion of collections primarily through the introduction of audiovisual materials (66).

   c. Application of computer technology and the use of outside sources for library operations, such as acquisition and processing (66).

Findings of the Bundy and Wasserman study of school library supervisors were extensively compared to findings from the Lilead Survey in "A Tale of Two Surveys: A Comparison of Studies of School District Library Supervisors" (Barlow et al. 2015). More detailed information about the survey conducted by Bundy and Wasserman can be found there and in the 1970 final report by Bundy, Wasserman, and O'Connell.

Twenty years later after the Bundy and Wasserman study, Stephanie Nelson (1987) surveyed what she called "district library media directors" for her dissertation research. There are important differences between Nelson's survey and the Lilead Survey in intent, composition of the survey population and sample, and methodology. The critical differences between the two studies in each of these aspects are as follows.

- **Intent**. The intent of Nelson's study was to determine the supervisor's influence on library media program development (Nelson 1987, 33). The purpose of the Lilead study was to understand the role of the supervisors of large school districts in leadership, personnel, collection development, teaching and learning, facilities, technology, finances, and professional organizations, and the characteristics of incumbents of the position. The Lilead Survey was also intended to establish baseline data for further study.

- **Survey population**. Nelson defined her target population as district media directors and the district superintendents or assistant superintendents to whom the library supervisors reported in school districts of all sizes in forty-eight states and the District of Columbia (Nelson 1987, 23). Survey responses came primarily from smaller school districts; 66.3 percent of respondents served districts with student populations of 20,000 or fewer

(Nelson 1987, 35). The Lilead Survey focused on supervisors in school districts with at least 25,000 students in all 50 states, without exclusion, and the District of Columbia.

- **Methodology.** The critical methodological difference between the Nelson survey and the Lilead Survey was in the selection of school districts for the survey population. Nelson used state offices of education (Nelson 1987, 27) and professional organizations (Nelson 1987, 32) as means for identifying potential pairs of participants (district supervisor and superintendent). The decision to use the state office and others as filters in building the survey population introduced the possibility of unknown biases. In fact, when state officials in New Jersey and Ohio did not respond to Nelson's request for assistance, the states were eliminated from the study, compromising Nelson's hope for a national population. The Lilead Survey was sent to all school districts with populations of at least 25,000 students as determined from reported data on district size and to the largest school district in states not represented among districts that qualified by size (NCES 2010). Because all states and the District of Columbia were included in the survey sample, the Lilead Survey was a national survey.

Because of these differences, the Nelson study is noted, but findings are not compared to findings from the Lilead study.

Research Design

Research Goals

The goals of the Lilead Survey were to collect baseline data about the following facets of the supervisor and the supervisor position:

1. Position profiles (e.g., position title, primary responsibilities, percentage of time spent on supervision of school library programs and on other responsibilities, size of staff, placement in district structure, reporting relationships, etc.)

2. Knowledge and skills required for the position (e.g., career path, formal education, certification requirements, professional development needs of supervisors and staff, etc.)

3. Greatest challenges and needs (e.g., personnel shortages, recent changes in certification requirements, recent changes in the support provided to building-level programs, etc.)

4. Demographic data (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, education, training, other professional experience, length of time in the position, etc.)

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was developed in a multistage process. First, questions were created to collect data that would directly address the research goals. In the second stage, experts in school librarianship reviewed the first draft of the survey, and changes were made in response to their comments. Next, the revised survey instrument was used in a pilot test with a group of supervisors whose districts did not qualify for the survey population or who themselves had recently retired from a supervisor's position. Final changes were made to the instrument based on the results of the pilot test and comments from the pilot participants. Both the review by experts and the pilot test resulted in significant refinements to the survey instrument.

The final survey instrument included both closed- and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were considered crucial to providing a wealth of information on topics that had not been considered in previous research; the professional development needs that supervisors have is an example of such an area. While impressionistic information about such needs existed, the range and depth of topics of importance to supervisors had not previously been explored or documented. Open-ended questions began the exploration of such topics.

The web-based questionnaire of fifty-eight questions, many with multiple parts, was divided into five sections.

- *Section 1. Your Office and Your School District*. This section asked for information about the title of the supervisor's position and its location in the district's organizational structure, the size and composition of the district library staff, and whether the supervisor's district responsibilities were full-time.

- *Section 2. Your Tasks and Responsibilities*. This section contained questions that asked the supervisor to rate the importance of tasks related to finance, personnel, collection development, teaching and learning, leadership, professional organizations, technology, and facilities. Also in this section were questions about the nature of the supervisor's role (responsible, advisory, or not responsible) for tasks or decisions related to personnel, selection and evaluation, professional development, and technology support.

- *Section 3. How You Spend Your Time*. The third section asked about the frequency with which the supervisor engaged in tasks related to finance, personnel, collection development, technology, teaching, leadership, and professional development. This section also included a question about the supervisor's need for professional development.

- *Section 4. Changes in Your Program*. This section asked the supervisor about changes from the previous school year in funding, personnel, standards and curriculum, policy, and other issues relevant to the supervisor's position.

- *Section 5. Your Personal Information*. The final section asked about the supervisor's age, gender, race/ethnicity, length of time in the district and in the supervisor position, educational background, previous professional positions, and certifications and qualifications held. The final two questions asked about the salary schedule for the supervisor position and whether the position was part of a collective bargaining unit.

Survey Population

The target population for the survey was district library supervisors in all school districts nationwide with student populations of more than 25,000; 280 districts qualified for the survey by size. The population was limited to larger districts because they were considered more likely than smaller districts to have someone in the position of supervisor at the district level. Because of the difficulty of obtaining contact information for district library supervisors, it was deemed too time-consuming to find supervisors in smaller school districts (DiScala, Moses, and Weeks 2015). In addition to districts that qualified by size, the largest school district in each of the ten states not represented in the initial population was included, bringing the final number of potentially participating districts to 290 in 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Data Collection

The web-based survey was conducted during a five-week period in fall 2012. Supervisors in the 290 districts received an e-mail inviting them to participate in the study. Follow-up e-mails urged nonresponding supervisors to join the study.

Some districts were unable to participate in the survey. Of the 290 school districts initially identified, 13 were verified as having no supervisor for school libraries at the district level. Three districts had a supervisor, but no contact information could be located. One participant could not get approval from her school district to take the survey. This reduced the number of districts receiving the survey to 273. The final response rate was 61 percent or 166 of 273 eligible districts. Thirty-eight states were represented among the respondents.

Survey Results

Introduction

In this section we present information from sections 1, 4, and 5 of the Lilead Survey as described above. The *n* for all tables and figures is 166 unless noted otherwise.

Supervisor's Position

Question Overview

Survey questions elicited information about the title of the supervisor's position and its location in the school system's organizational structure, the size and composition of the district library staff, and whether the supervisor's district responsibilities were full-time.

Position Title

Information about position titles and organizational departments was gained through open-ended questions. The administrative titles of "coordinator," "director," and "supervisor" are used for 71 percent of the respondents' positions.

Table 1. Titles of school district library supervisors.

Title	Frequency	Percentage
Coordinator	50	30.1
Director	41	24.7
Supervisor	27	16.3

Other titles include "district librarian," "lead librarian," "manager," "teacher," "administrator," "chair," and "consultant." The word "library," "librarian," "library services," or variations appear in ninety-four titles (56.6 percent). "Media" is part of 71 titles (42.8 percent). "Instruction" or "instructional" appear in 32 titles (19.3 percent). "Technology" or its variants are part of seventeen titles (10.2 percent). Some titles are broad and lacked specificity, such as "education officer," "supervisor," and "curriculum specialist." Other titles are more specific, such as

"director of technology and media," "district library media specialist," and "library services coordinator."

Required Qualifications

Responses to questions about certifications or qualifications, such as formal education and professional experience, required for the supervisor position by their school district or state are shown in table 2. The most-frequently reported requirements are the Master of Library Science degree or its equivalent (63.9 percent), the School Librarian Certificate (56 percent), the Teaching Certificate (62 percent), and experience as a teacher or school librarian (57 percent).

Table 2. Required qualifications for the supervisor position.

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Master of Library Science or equivalent	106	63.9
Other Master's degree	40	24.1
School Librarian Certificate	93	56.0
Administrator's Certificate	65	39.2
Teaching Certificate	103	62.0
Teaching/school library experience	93	57.0
Administrative experience	33	19.9

More than half of districts that require teaching or school library experience specify five or more years of experience. In contrast, three-quarters of the districts that require administrative experience require only one to four years. Respondents reported other qualifications, including service as a building grade-level chair, coursework in curriculum and instruction, evidence of leadership, curriculum and instructional certification, and involvement with professional associations.

Other Findings

More than 90 percent of respondents are full-time members of the district-level staff, and 56 percent spend the entirety of their work hours on tasks related to library services. Respondents who have other responsibilities spend on average 41 percent of their time on tasks related to library supervision. Close to ten percent are building-level librarians, in addition to being supervisors. Sixty-four respondents (38.6 percent) have defined responsibilities not directly related to library services. Examples of such non-library responsibilities are education technology, professional development, instructional materials and textbooks, and curriculum and instruction.

Fourteen respondents (8.4 percent) reported that they share the supervisor position with another person or, in one instance, with two others. In half of these instances, responsibilities are divided by grade level (elementary and secondary), while in the other half, responsibilities are split by task or functional area (technology, technical processing, budgeting, etc.).

District Library Services Office

Question Overview

Information about the location and structure of the district library services office was requested in the survey.

Location

By far the most-frequently reported location for the office (71.1 percent) is within a department or division of curriculum and instruction. The department or division of educational or instructional technology is the home for 21.7 percent of district library services offices. Together, these two departments are home to over 90 percent of the district offices for library services. The remaining offices are located in either support services or in various other departments.

Staff

Half of the respondents (51.3 percent) reported other full-time professional staff in addition to themselves in the district library office; one to four additional full-time professionals is the most common number reported. The district office appears less likely to employ part-time professional staff; less than 15 percent of respondents report part-time employees. Staffing patterns for administrative, clerical, and other support staff (called "support staff" below) indicate a preference of full-time staff, as well. Approximately three-quarters of district offices employ full-time support staff, again with one to four members the most common number of support staff. Table 3 shows the distribution of district offices by the total number of professional and support staff.

Table 3. Staff of district library services office.

	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	Professional Staff in Addition to the Supervisor			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0	80	48.2	142	85.5
1–4	71	42.3	21	12.7
5–8	3	1.8	1	0.6
9 or more	12	7.2	2	1.2
	Administrative, Clerical, and Other Support Staff			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0	46	27.7	122	73.5
1–4	80	48.2	38	22.9
5–8	25	15.1	1	0.6
9 or more	15	9.0	5	3.0

According to survey responses, seventeen (10 percent) district library services offices do not have professional staff other than the supervisor and have no support staff; the supervisor is the only employee in these district library services offices. The largest staff found is thirty-six individuals in addition to the respondent. The total number of staff in addition to the respondent, both professional and support, in the district office is shown in table 4.

Table 4. Number of staff in addition to the supervisor.

Number of Staff in Addition to the Supervisor	Frequency	Percentage
0	17	10.2
1–4	86	51.8
5–9	37	22.3
10–14	10	6.0
15–19	11	6.6
20 or more	5	3.0

District Organization and Reporting Relationships

Question Overview

Respondents were asked several questions to elicit information about the organizational structure in which the library services office functions and the office's place within the hierarchy relative to top administrative levels of the school system.

Supervisor's Immediate Superior

One question asked for the title of the library services supervisor's immediate superior, the person to whom the supervisor reports. More than three-quarters of respondents (80 percent) report to a director; assistant, associate, or deputy superintendent; or executive director. Other administrative titles of the respondents' superior reported were a supervisor, administrator, coordinator, manager, assistant chief officer, superintendent, assistant supervisor, and state administrator, each of which was reported by fewer than 3 percent of respondents. The distribution of responses about the supervisor's immediate superior is in table 5.

Table 5. Title of the supervisor's superior.

Title	Frequency	Percentage
Director	63	38.0
Assistant, Associate, or Deputy Superintendent	39	23.5
Executive Director	30	18.1

Chief Officer	13	7.8
Other	21	12.7

While there is consistency in the rank (director, assistant/associate/deputy superintendent, etc.) denoted by the superior's title, there is considerable variation in the designation of scope of responsibility. Curriculum and instruction is the only topic or subject area commonly reported. Almost half (48.1 percent) of the respondents' superiors are directors; assistant, associate, or deputy superintendents; or executive directors of curriculum and instruction; or a close variation. Other topic or subject areas include general administration, technology services, educational and instructional technology, accountability, professional development, and twenty other designations.

Upward Reporting Structure

Information about the person to whom the respondent's superior reports (referred to as the "senior superior" for clarity) was requested to add more information about the location of the district library office within the district's administrative structure. More than 70 percent of immediate supervisors report to either the superintendent of the school district (36.7 percent) or an assistant, associate, or deputy superintendent (33.1 percent). Over 14 percent of immediate supervisors report to the chief officer. Responses to this question are shown in table 6. Other responses, each of which was reported by less than 5 percent of respondents, include director, school board, assistant chief officer, and assistant director.

Table 6. Title of the supervisor's senior superior.

Title	Frequency	Percentage
Superintendent	61	36.7
Assistant, Associate, or Deputy Superintendent	55	33.1
Chief Officer	24	14.5
Executive Director or Director	15	9.0
Other	11	6.6

Titles for almost half (47.2 percent) of the senior superiors were reported by rank only or as part of the larger district administration. Slightly more than one quarter (27.9 percent) of the senior superiors are part of curriculum and instruction.

Profile of the Supervisor

Question Overview

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their personal demographics, education, and careers.

"Typical" Supervisor

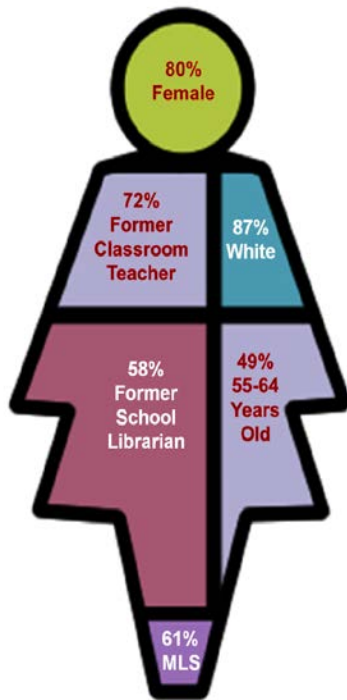A "typical" supervisor constructed from the attributes reported most frequently is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1. Attributes of the typical supervisor.

The "typical" supervisor is a white female, not of Hispanic origin, between fifty-five and sixty-four years of age, who has been in the supervisor position between six and ten years, and has worked in her district for more than sixteen years. She holds a Master's degree in library and information studies and certifications as both a teacher and a school librarian. Immediately prior to assuming the supervisor position, she was a building-level school librarian. She also has experience as a classroom teacher.

Personal Attributes

Eighty percent of respondents are female.

Data about the race/ethnicity of respondents are shown in figure 2.
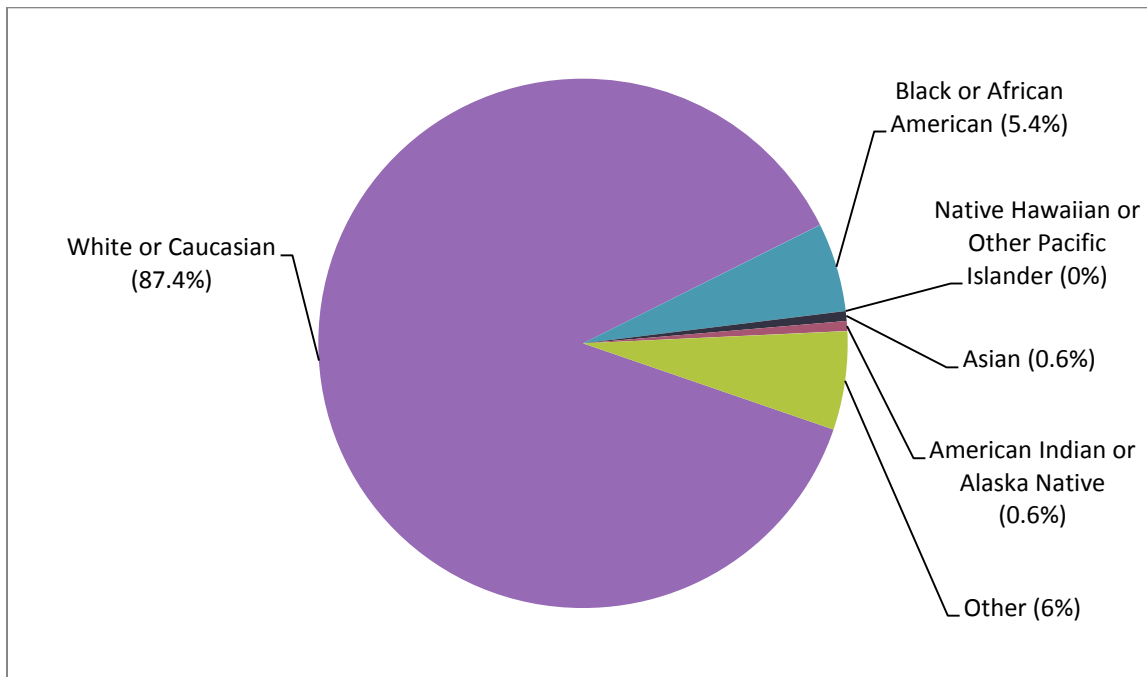
Figure 2. Race/ethnicity of supervisors.

Almost nine out of ten supervisors (87.4 percent) are White or Caucasian; 5.4 percent are Black or African American. Other racial or ethnic categories are represented by 1 percent or less of respondents. Almost five percent of respondents did not respond to the question about race/ethnicity. In addition to the responses shown in figure 2, seven (4.2 percent) of respondents reported that they are of Hispanic or Latino origin.

Almost 85 percent of respondents are at least forty-five years old, and a little over half of the respondents are fifty-five to sixty-four years of age. The distribution by age is shown in figure 3.
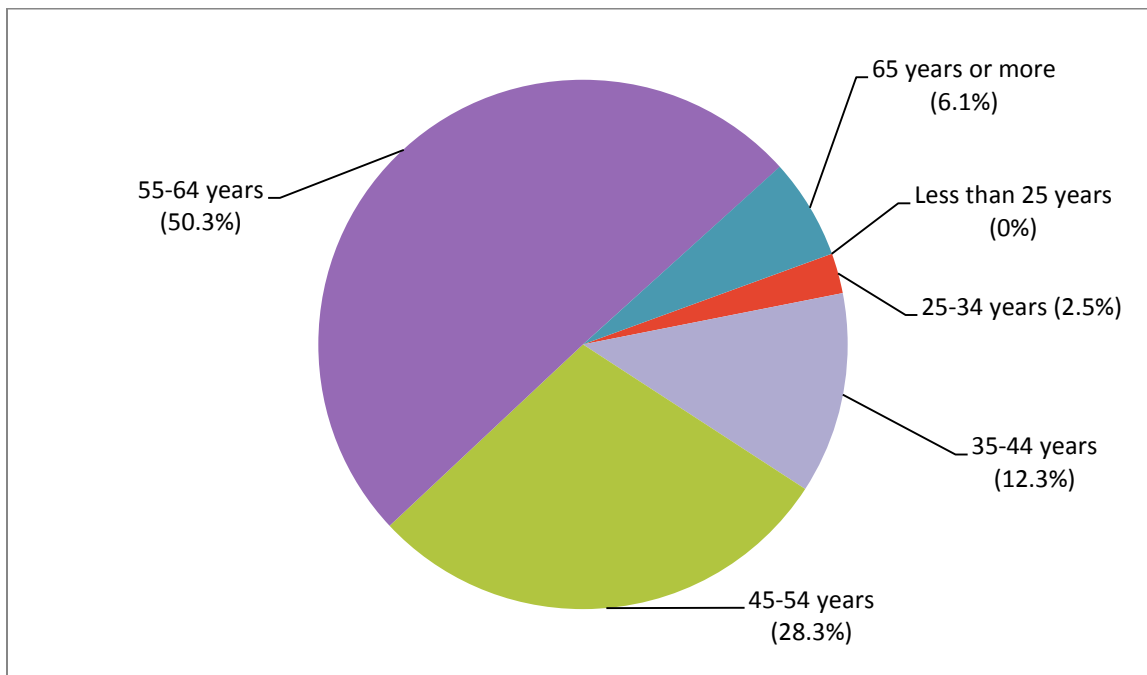

Figure 3. Age of supervisors.

Personal Qualifications

When asked to indicate all of the degrees and certificates that they had earned, the respondents presented a broad and rich array of credentials, as shown in table 7. The percentages do not total 100 percent because respondents were asked to check all of the choices that applied. The Master of Library Science is the most-frequently found degree; 61 percent of respondents hold that degree. Of these, twenty-six have also earned a Master's degree in education; twelve, a Master's degree in another field; and fourteen, a certificate of advanced study. Among the other credentials reported are doctoral degrees, National Board Certification, and specialized training in administration.

Table 7. Degrees and credentials held by supervisors.

Degree or Credential	Frequency	Percentage
Master of Library Science or equivalent	101	60.8
Master of Science in Education or equivalent	68	41.0
Other Master's degree	27	16.3
Certificate of advanced study	30	18.1
PhD	8	4.8
EdD	5	3.0
EdS	5	3.0
Other	19	11.4

Respondents reported a wide variety of other professional positions they had held; responses for the most-frequently mentioned categories are shown in table 8. More than 70 percent of respondents have experience as a classroom teacher, and almost 60 percent as a school librarian. Other positions held (not shown in table 8) include website editor, instructional coach, adult educator, preschool director, and positions in the business world.

Table 8. Previous professional positions held by supervisors.

Professional Position	Positions Previously Held		Position Immediately Before Becoming Supervisor	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Classroom teacher	121	72.9	5	3.0
School librarian	97	58.4	87	52.4
Librarian other than school	33	20.0	3	1.8
District-level administrator other than library services	23	13.9	12	7.2
College professor/academic	27	16.3	2	1.2

Technical services coordinator or specialist	20	12.5	10	6.0
Building-level administrator	19	11.5	7	4.2
Information technology specialist	17	10.2	6	3.6
Other	36	21.7	34	20.5

More than half (52.4 percent) of respondents were school librarians immediately prior to becoming supervisor. The remaining responses are distributed widely among other positions at the building, district, and state levels.

Respondents tend to be longtime employees of their current district. Twenty-five percent have been employed by the district for at least ten years; 16 percent for eleven to fifteen years, and 59 percent for sixteen years or more. Less than 5 percent have been employed by their current district for two years or less. The distribution of respondents by the length of time in their current position is interesting: 25 percent have held the position for two years or less; 49 percent, three to ten years; and 26 percent, eleven or more years. More data are shown in table 9.

Table 9. Time employed in the district and as supervisor.

	In the District		As Supervisor	
Time	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	5	3.0	19	11.5
1 or 2 years	2	1.2	22	13.3
3–5 years	12	7.2	36	21.7
6–10 years	22	13.3	46	27.7
11–15 years	27	16.3	29	17.5
16 years or more	98	59.0	14	8.4

Changes Affecting Library Services

Question Overview

The Lilead Survey included questions related to recent changes in content standards and curriculum, technology policies, funding, and staffing levels and personnel—all changes that impact the supervisor's position. For each of these topic areas, supervisors were asked if they had seen any changes during the current school year at the time of the survey (2012–2013) in comparison with the previous year.

Changes in Content Standards and Curriculum

In comparison to the previous school year, a large number of respondents reported increases in emphasis on classroom content standards and on helping students become information literate. Almost eight out of ten (78.3 percent) reported increased emphasis on classroom content standards, while less than one percent reported decreased emphasis. The distribution of responses is shown in figure 4.
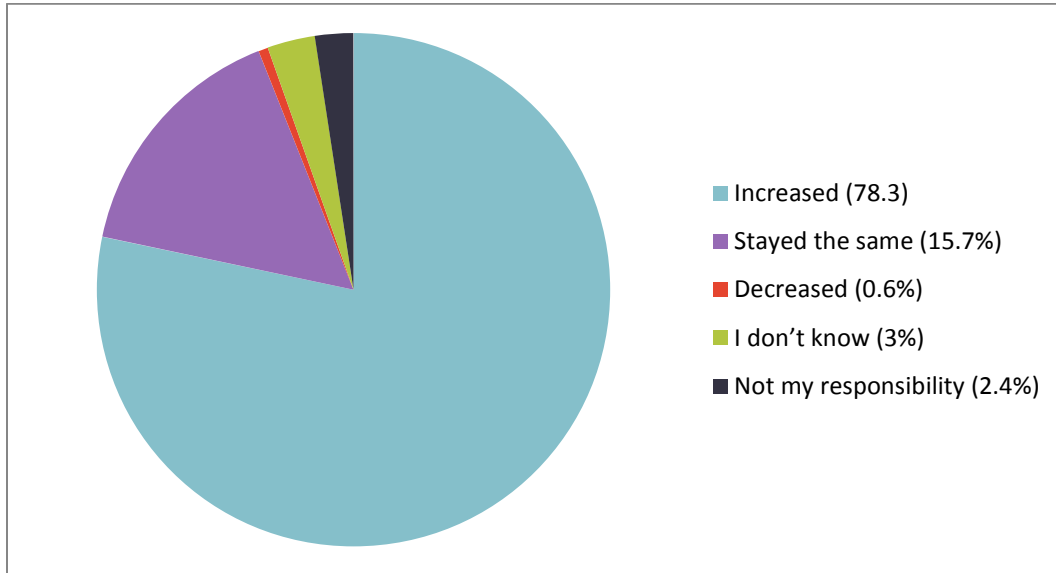

- Increased (78.3)
- Stayed the same (15.7%)
- Decreased (0.6%)
- I don't know (3%)
- Not my responsibility (2.4%)

Figure 4. Changes in emphasis on classroom content standards.

The number of respondents reporting increased emphasis on helping students become information literate is smaller but still significant (60.2 percent). Almost one-third of respondents reported that emphasis on information literacy stayed the same. The distribution of responses is shown in figure 5.

- Increased (60.2%)
- Stayed the same (31.1%)
- Decreased (3%)
- I don't know (3.6%)
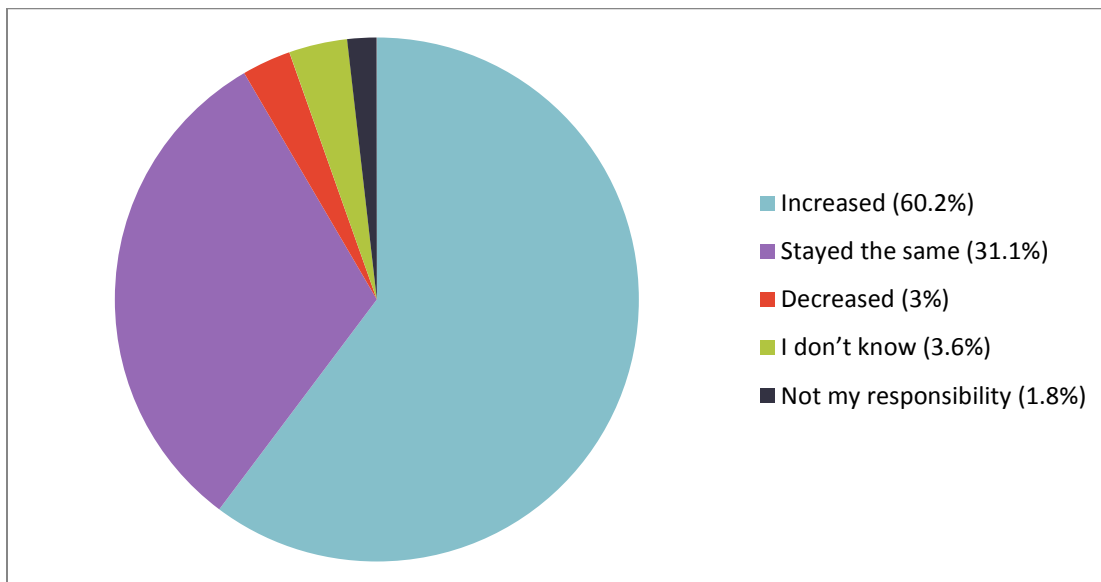- Not my responsibility (1.8%)

Figure 5. Changes in emphasis on information literacy.

Respondents commented on the effect of policies and initiatives on library services. One respondent described the situation in this way:

> High stakes testing has taken its toll on library services. Many principals are advising their teachers not to take time for students to go to the library, unless it is weekly and for a brief time. Students have less time to read for leisure and [less] time to browse in the library. Many teachers are not reading aloud because they feel they must spend every moment preparing for the high-stakes testing.

Another respondent described the problem that the supervisor has in connecting library services and student learning: "…assessment is a huge time commitment now and working to prove that librarians help individual students grow is different from gathering global data."

Somewhat surprisingly, 5.4 percent of respondents said that they either do not know about these changes or that these curricular changes do not fall into their area of responsibility.

Changes in Technology Policies

District policies regarding use of social media and mobile devices in schools are topics of current interest and debate. The survey asked respondents about changes in such policies in comparison to the policies in effect during the previous school year. Almost half (48.2 percent) of the respondents reported that policies regarding the use of social media in schools had not changed, but more than one-third (35.5 percent) said that the policies had become less restrictive.

According to survey respondents, policies regarding the use of mobile devices in school had become less restrictive in half of the districts (49.4 percent) and stayed the same in 38.6 percent. Approximately five percent responded that they do not know about changes in policies on the use of social media or mobile devices. Complete data on policies regarding the use of social media and mobile devices in schools are shown in figures 6 and 7. One respondent described the problem that restrictions on technology use create for the supervisor as being "how to keep up with technology when there are too many restrictive blockages."
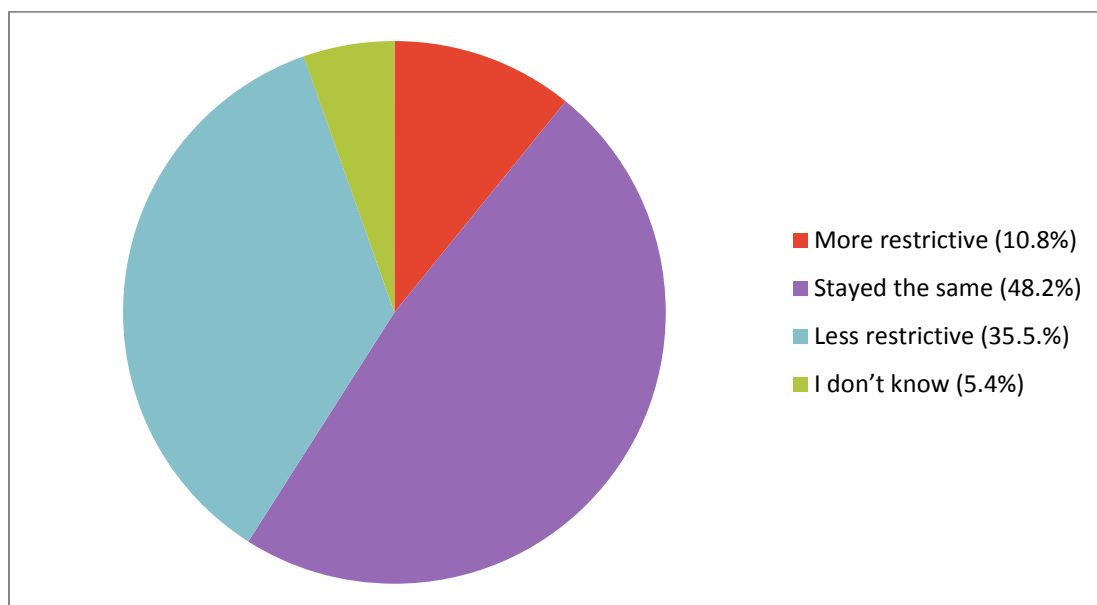

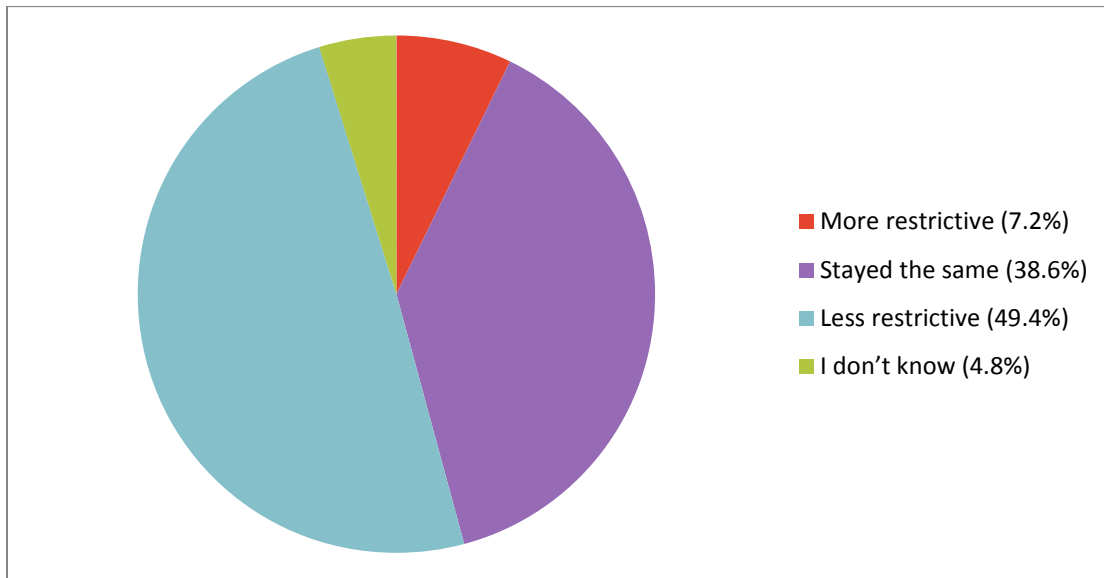Figure 6. Changes in policies on the use of social media.

- More restrictive (10.8%)
- Stayed the same (48.2%)
- Less restrictive (35.5.%)
- I don't know (5.4%)

Figure 7. Changes in policies on the use of mobile devices.

Changes in Funding

Funding is always a critical issue for library services and programs. The survey asked three questions to capture data about changes in funding between the current year and the previous school year. The questions focused on funding for district-level library services, funding for building-level library services, and funding for technology. Complete data on changes in funding for district- and building-level library programs and services are shown in figures 8 and 9.
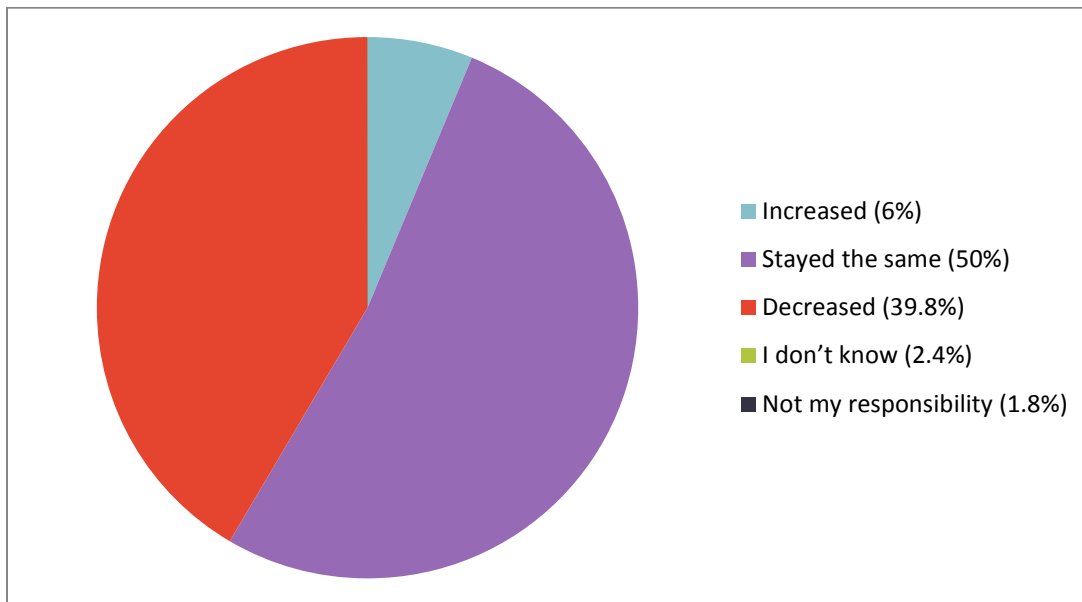

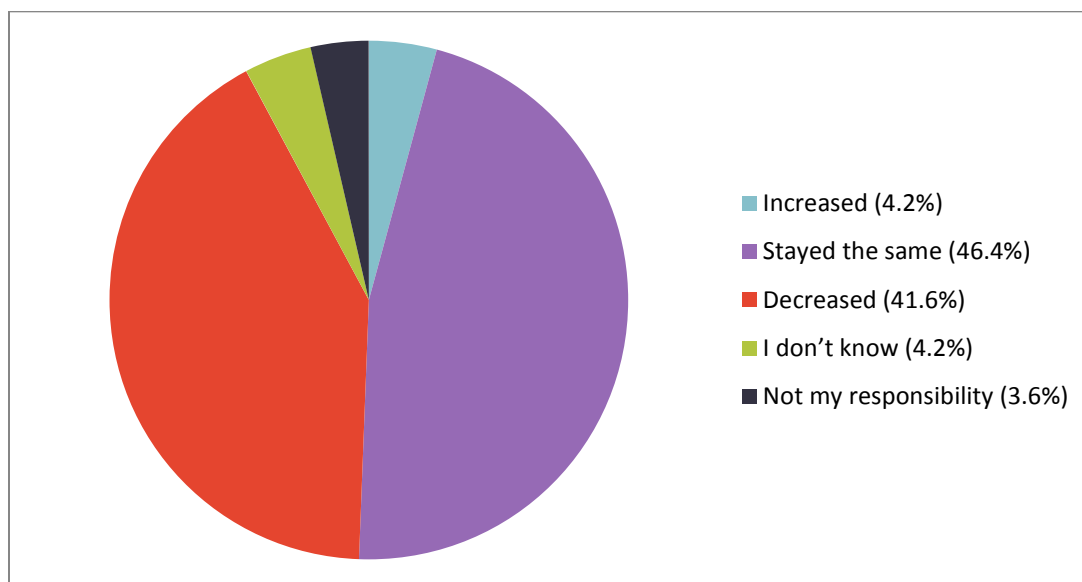Figure 8. Changes in funding for library services and programs at the district level.

Figure 9. Changes in funding for library services and programs at the building level.

Half of the respondents reported no change in funding for district-level library services, but 40 percent reported a decrease. Funding increased in only ten districts (6 percent).

Funding for building-level library programs and services has stayed the same, according to 46.4 percent of respondents but has decreased in almost as many districts (41.6 percent). Respondents indicated that funding for building-level programs has increased in only seven districts (4.2 percent). Respondents commented about decreases in funding for library services and programs. According to one respondent, "During the 2011–2012 school year, we had NO district funds for books or magazines. This year we were given the same amount of money as we received in 2010–2011. We have been warned that we may not get money again next year." The comment from one respondent went straight to the point: "Book budgets are gone; databases are gone; staff are gone."

Responses to the question of changes on funding for technology presented a mixed pattern. According to respondents, funding is stable in seventy-two districts (43.4 percent), increased in thirty-five districts (21.1 percent), but decreased in thirty-six districts (21.7 percent). Data on changes in funding for technology are shown in figure 10.
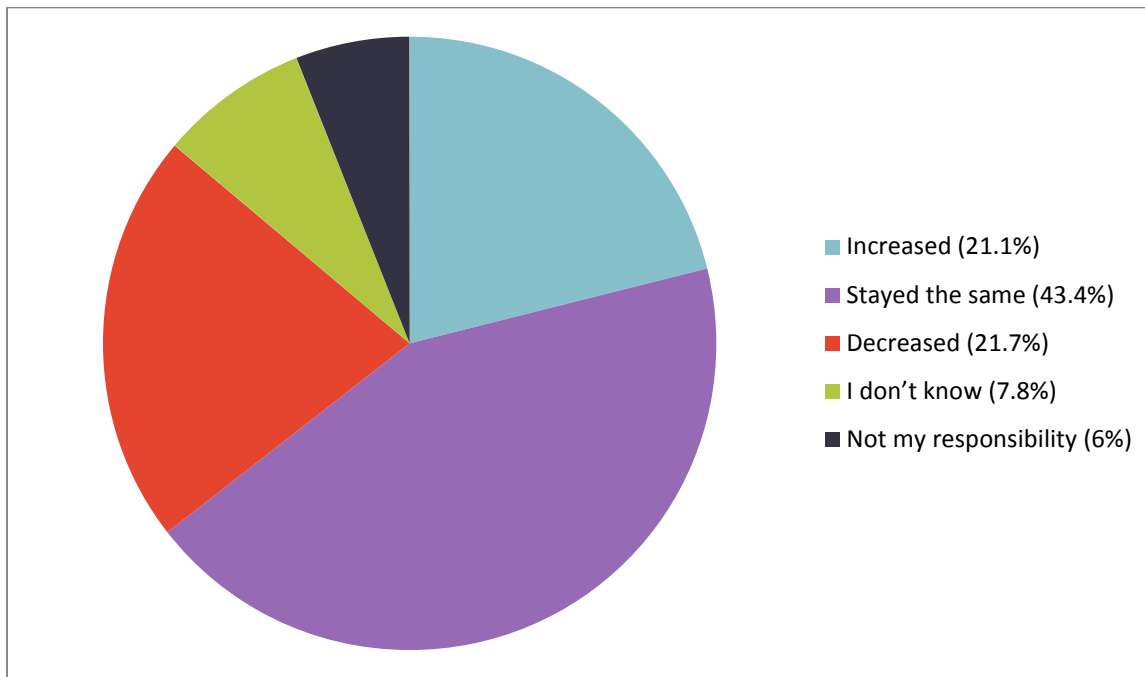
Figure 10. Changes in funding for technology.

Changes in Staffing Levels and Personnel

Changes in staffing for library services and programs were investigated through questions about changes in district-level staffing, building-level staffing, and in the availability of qualified candidates for school library positions.

While almost 60 percent of respondents reported that staffing at the district level is stable, almost one-third (32.5 percent) reported a decrease in district-level staff. Increases in district-level staff were reported by eight respondents (4.8 percent).

The data for changes in building-level staffing reveal that the level is stable in 45.8 percent of districts, but decreased in 41.6 percent of districts. Increases in building-level staff were reported by 13 respondents (7.8 percent). More information about changes in staffing levels is shown in figures 11 and 12.
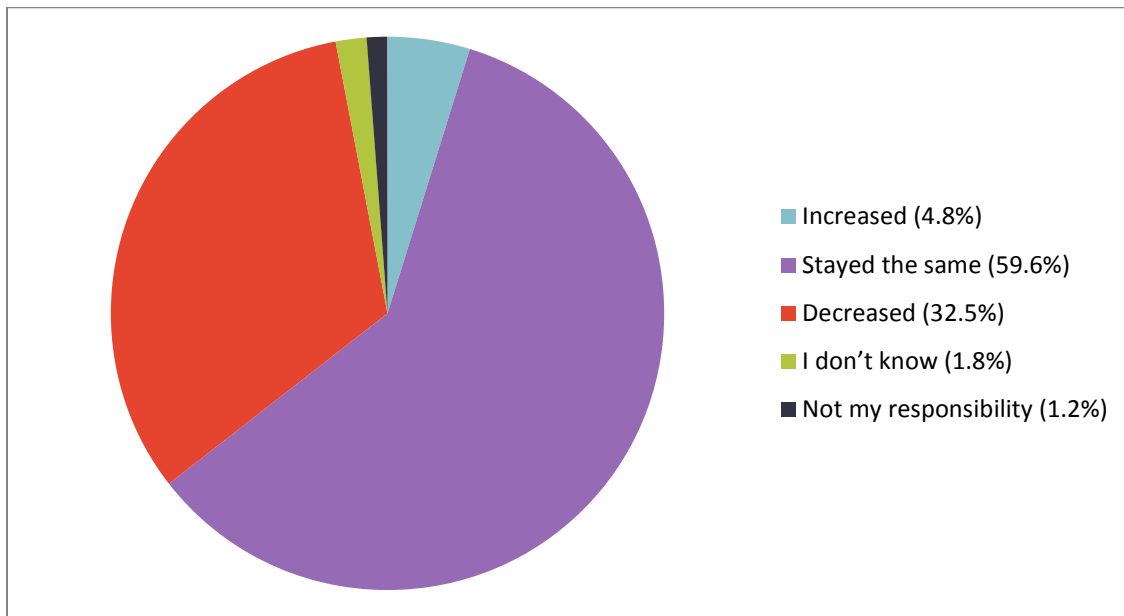
Figure 11. Changes in staffing for library services and programs at the district level.
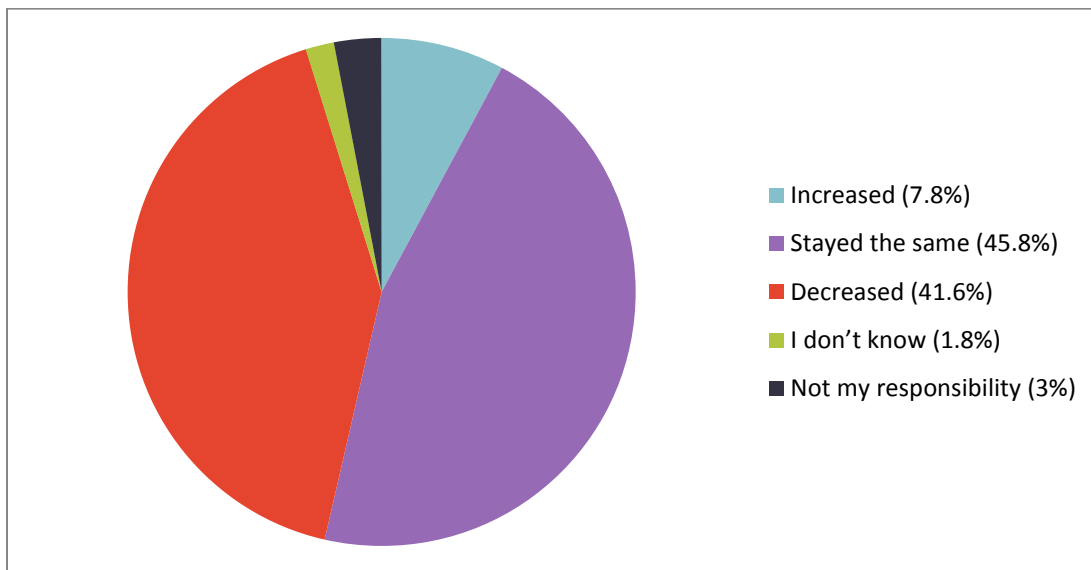

Figure 12. Changes in staffing for library services and programs at the building level.

Many respondents commented on issues related to staffing. One supervisor who addressed staffing at the district level said, "As a result of the extremely limited time, and no support staff, I am limited in what I can accomplish." The response of another supervisor summarizes the effect of staff reductions at the district level and the interplay between the reductions, new programs, and other factors:

> Overall, the volume and required pace of administrative work…has greatly increased due to district-level staff reductions, continual staff reorganizations due to senior leadership changes and budget deficits, and many district-level initiatives that have created increased workloads for all departments at the district level. Staff at all levels are, frankly, exhausted.

In spite of the problems created by growing demands and shrinking resources at the district level, most of the concerns expressed by supervisors about staffing are related to building-level libraries, not to their problems at the district level. One respondent said, "Schools have been forced to lay off elective teachers and library media specialists, so that they can hire more classroom teachers. We have many school libraries operating with library clerks only."

While layoffs are one action that depletes staffing levels, others exist. According to one respondent, "Library personnel (including librarians and clerks) are being pulled from their regular assignments and that decreases the amount of time for them to spend on library duties." Another respondent reported that because of staff cuts, all of the district's school libraries have been closed.

Several respondents reported anecdotally that school libraries in their districts were being kept open with clerks and volunteers as staff. One respondent gave a vivid description of the situation and ramifications for the profession:

> Over 60 percent of those staffing our libraries now do not have a university background in library science nor do they see themselves as part of the library profession as a whole. Therefore, these "media specialists" see little value in attending professional development for "librarians" or belonging to professional organizations for librarians. Programs across the country are struggling to advocate for libraries in schools, but I feel that this particular practice has made it extra difficult to maintain and promote quality programs in our schools.

Responses to the question about changes in the availability of qualified candidates for library positions reveal a mixed pattern of change. While about 40 percent of respondents indicated that the size of the pool of qualified candidates has not changed, one-third reported that it decreased and approximately 16 percent reported an increase in qualified candidates. The distribution of responses is shown in figure 13.
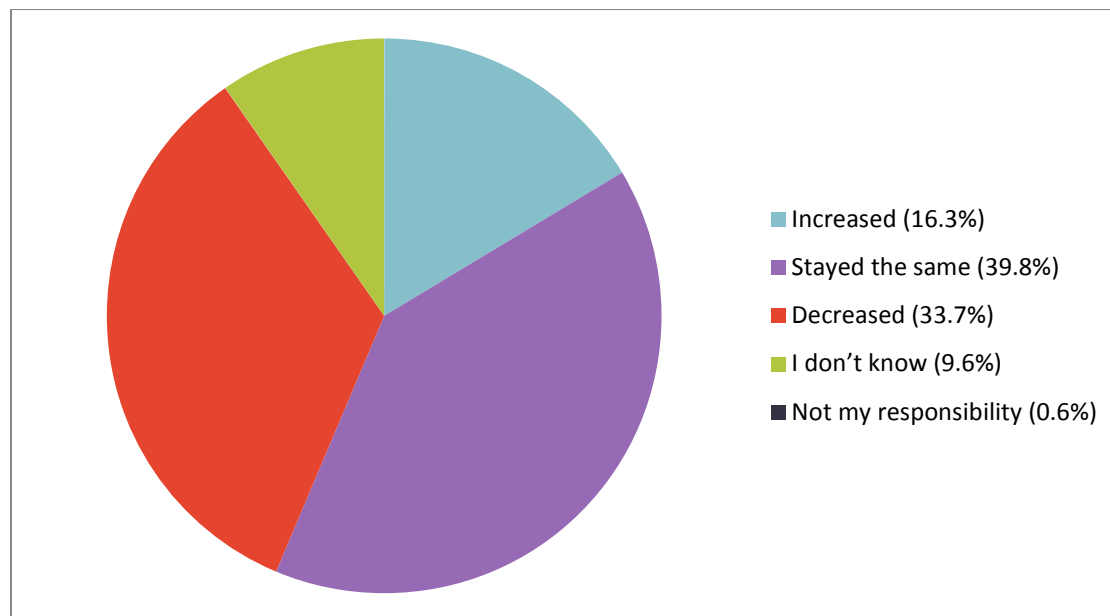

Figure 13. Changes in the availability of qualified job candidates.

It is important to note that the survey question was phrased to address the availability of job candidates who meet qualifications as defined in the respondent's district. One respondent

reported, "Our state does not require schools to even have a librarian or media specialist, certified or not certified." In their comments, several supervisors talked about the issue of qualified staff from the perspective of training. This statement from a respondent describes the situation from the supervisor's perspective: "My priority is to support and train the building librarians, particularly the elementary people, since they are all classified employees, most with no teaching degrees, and no library background at all."

Discussion

Supervisor Position

The individual responsible for library services in a school district, the individual we in the Lilead Project refer to as the "supervisor," is likely to be called "coordinator" or "director," both of which are used more frequently than "supervisor." The individual's title is likely to include the word "library" or "media" and variants of each, as well. Titles such as "library services coordinator," "district librarian," and "director of media services" are examples of the more-specific titles used for the position. Other titles are less specific, lacking an indication of the specialty area of the supervisor: "education officer," "program administrator," and "manager."

The lack of a title that is generally accepted creates problems in identifying the supervisor position in organizational charts and system staff directories, not only for those outside the system but also for other system employees. Lilead Project researchers encountered these problems when compiling contact information for the survey. This situation is more than an annoyance; it affects and reflects the perception of the supervisor by persons inside and outside the school system. Jeffrey DiScala, Alexandra Moses, and Ann Carlson Weeks pointed this out, saying:

> Knowing who runs things and who can get things done most efficiently is critical in nearly every business or organization. Customers can identify an authority figure who can solve problems, and employees all know who is "in charge" and who can provide feedback and guidance on their work. (2015, 29)

That said, it seems unlikely that a single title for the position and uniformity in where the district office of library services is placed administratively would gain wide support, and are probably not desirable given the myriad ways that school districts divide responsibilities and frame an administrative structure.

Requirements for the individual who is responsible for library services at the district level generally include graduate education, usually a Master of Library Science or Master of Education or the equivalent of either, teacher or librarian certification, and more than five years of experience as a librarian.

The supervisor is likely to have a small staff of between one and five full-time employees. The office is most often located within the curriculum and instruction division or department. The supervisor reports to an individual with the rank of director or executive director, or of assistant, associate, or deputy superintendent, and who, in turn, reports to an individual at the level of superintendent or assistant superintendent. It appears from the survey data that the library services office is located at the third or fourth level within the administrative structure of the school district's administrative hierarchy.

Incumbents of the Supervisor Position

Demographic Profile

A closer look at the demographic profile of the supervisor reveals details that are interesting in themselves and that contribute to a longer view of the supervisor position when placed alongside data from the earlier survey by Bundy and Wasserman. More than 80 percent of supervisors, according to the Lilead Survey, are forty-five years old or older, and half are between fifty-five and sixty-four years of age. These data are not surprising given the required qualifications and level of responsibility of the position. Six percent of supervisors are sixty-five or older, while nine percent of all librarians are in that age group, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015). The difference between the proportion of supervisors and the proportion of all librarians in the over-sixty-five age group suggests that supervisors are more likely to retire by the age of sixty-five years or move to a different position than are librarians as a whole. The data may indicate a coming wave of vacancies in the supervisor position.

Eight out of ten supervisors are female, as was the case in the late 1960s when Bundy and Wasserman conducted their survey.

The racial/ethnicity composition of supervisors differs from that of the library profession as a whole. While the proportion of White or Caucasian respondents is almost exactly the same as in the library profession (87.7 percent), there are significant differences between survey respondents and all library professionals in the proportion of Black/African American (5.4 percent among respondents; 7.7 percent in the profession) and Asian (0.6 percent among respondents; 2.1 percent in the profession). Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin comprised 4.2 percent of respondents, and 5.1 percent of the profession (U.S. Dept. of Labor 2015). A comparison of the pattern found in the Lilead Survey with the racial/ethnic composition of building-level school librarians, the primary pool from which supervisors are drawn, could give further insight into the underrepresentation of certain minorities among supervisors. It is important to note that 4.2 percent of respondents did not provide information about their racial/ethnic group; this set of respondents is large enough that their data could change the picture of racial/ethnic diversity significantly had they responded to this question. Bundy and Wasserman did not collect data about the race or ethnicity; therefore, the Lilead data provides the first look at this characteristic of supervisors of school libraries.

The typical supervisor is a full-time and longtime employee of the school district and, while not a newcomer to the supervisory position, cannot be considered a long-term incumbent. The results from the Bundy and Wasserman survey indicated a larger group of incumbents with five years or less experience as supervisor (57 percent) than did the Lilead Survey (46.5 percent), possibly because the supervisor position was relatively new in the late 1960s when the Bundy and Wasserman survey was done.

Qualifications

The supervisor has earned a Master's in Library Science or Education or both and has or is completing other credentials. According to data from the Lilead Survey, 95 percent of supervisors have earned at least one graduate degree and 23 percent have earned multiple graduate degrees. It is highly likely that the supervisor was a classroom teacher and a school librarian prior to becoming supervisor.

Seventy-three percent of respondents reported experience as a classroom teacher, and 58 percent as a school librarian; 39 percent have experience in both roles. One quarter of respondents have either building-level administrative experience or district-level administrative experience, or both. Bundy and Wasserman asked about prior work experience of supervisors in a different way. They found that 75 percent of supervisors had experience as a building-level school librarian and that 47 percent had worked in only one library. Their findings about classroom teaching experience were reported in this way:

> ...a high proportion of school library supervisors have had some teaching experience in either elementary or secondary schools. Of this group, 54% have taught at the high school level alone. With the exception of 13% who have been high school principals, no other significant occupational pattern emerged from the data collected. (Bundy, Wasserman, and O'Connell 1970, 11)

Recent Changes

Recent changes in the field of education and public support for schools have directly affected the supervisor position. Just as we constructed a profile of the incumbent supervisor based on survey data, we can draw a profile of changes in standards and curriculum, technology policies, funding, and staffing levels and personnel with which the supervisor must contend.

Comments from respondents provide real-world insight into the effects of changes in curricular emphasis and resources. One respondent wrote:

> How did district/department support for libraries change? Here they decreased; the fewer librarians we have, the fewer principals get to see what a good program can do; then few principals see the value for hiring a professional.

And from another:

> I am semi-retired and only work part time. The district could not afford to replace me with a full-time position when I retired, so I am doing this to try to hold things together for the time being. It is simply not enough…As a result of the extremely limited time, and no support staff, I am limited in what I can accomplish.

In general, resources—staff and money—for district-level operations are stable, but decreases are more likely than increases.

Resources for building-level library programs and services are a different story. While it is most likely that the funding for building-level activities are stable, there is an almost equal likelihood that funding has decreased. The same is true for staffing at the building level; it is only slightly more likely that staffing is stable than that staffing has decreased. The pool of qualified candidates for library positions is about the same, but with an almost equal possibility that it has decreased.

Funding for technology is relatively stable. If it has changed, there is equal likelihood of an increase or a decrease in the funding level.

Resources to support the supervisor and library services and programs are the point at which the results from the Lilead Survey differ markedly from those of the Bundy and Wasserman survey. In the late 1960s supervisors identified increased financial resources as an important change affecting their responsibilities. In 2012 less than 10 percent of supervisors experienced an increase in resources.

The "typical" supervisor today must respond to increased emphasis on meeting class content standards and helping students become information literate, with policies that allow for more use of mobile devices in schools. Changes in information technology remain a matter requiring attention and adjustment for supervisors today as it was for supervisors in the Bundy and Wasserman study, although the concerns have moved from adopting library automation as it was in the late 1960s to today's role of Web 2.0 technologies in education. The Lilead Survey was conducted again in 2014, and future analysis will look at the fluctuation of changes and trends over the years when viewed from the supervisor's perspective.

Conclusion

In this paper we have reported a set of findings from the 2012 Lilead Survey. Specifically, we have presented data about the position and the office of the school district library supervisor within the school system, the demographics of supervisors serving in the largest school districts in the country, and recent changes that affect their positions. In summary, we have reported evidence that supervisors are highly educated, experienced professionals who are in mid-level management positions in school systems but who are facing challenges that require new knowledge, perceptions, and skills. They are responding to new demands emanating from changes in curricular emphasis on content standards and information literacy, and advances in information technology, while operating with staff and budget that are stable at best—and decreasing in many instances. One respondent described the situation clearly and concisely: "Budget cuts over the past few years have taken away all my staff except for my secretary, and I am expected to do more as more schools have cut their librarians."

Much more data from the Lilead Survey of 2012 give insight into the responsibilities of the supervisor, both immediate and long term, and supervisors' needs for professional development. We look forward to sharing these data with the profession in the near future.

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