

BCTF Research Report

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Teacher-Librarians in British Columbia, 1997–98 to 2006–07

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Teacher-librarians in British Columbia are certified teachers typically with further education beyond a bachelor degree in teacher-librarianship. The role of the teacher-librarian has been described as involving two main areas. One is to provide instruction for all grade levels in research skills and reading, and to enhance information and technological literacy. The second area is the development, maintenance and, management of a well-stocked school library. This includes selecting appropriate reading material in a variety of media (books, CD-ROM, interactive computer technology, for example), as well as ensuring the school library materials are current and complement curricula.

According to The United Nations (UNESCO, 2000), “the school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today’s society, which is increasingly information- and knowledge-based. The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens.” Further, a strong relationship between the presence of a teacher-librarian in an accessible, well-stocked school library, and student success has been well documented (see Haycock, 2003 for example).

Despite the demonstrated importance of teacher-librarians and libraries, library services was one of the areas hardest hit by funding cutbacks and teacher lay-offs resulting from removal of staffing formulas from teacher collective agreements, implemented by the provincial government in 2002.

Since that time, funding for K-12 public education has been partially restored and teacher-librarian staffing levels have begun slowly to improve. Table 1 shows the changes in library services (program area 1.07) staffing levels since 1997. For example, in 1997 there were 778 teacher-librarians and 20 administrators assigned to the library services program area.

Between 2001 and 2003, teacher-librarian staffing levels were cut by over 23%. It was not until the government removed a funding freeze and began to put money back into public education in 2005 that staffing levels began to recover. 2004–05 was the last year of a five-year decline in staffing levels and the 2005–06 school year saw an increase of 7% in teacher-librarian staffing. However, by 2006–07 there were still 175 fewer (19%) full-time-equivalent teacher-librarians compared to 2001.

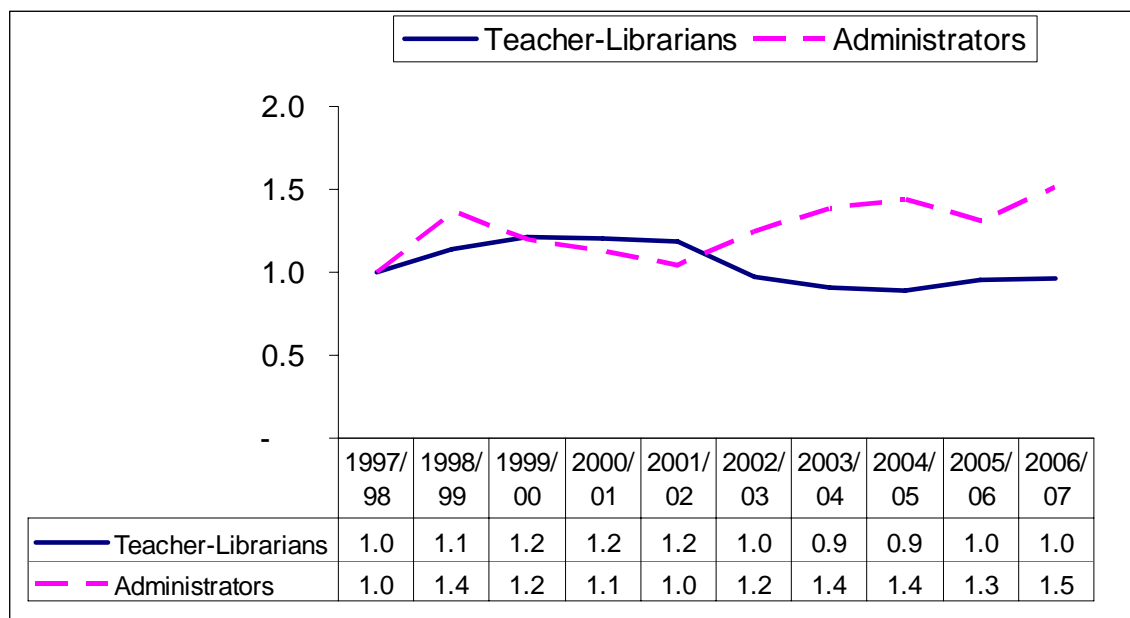
Table 1: Library Services staffing, 1997–98 to 2006–07

Year	Teachers	Administrators	Educational Assistants	Other Professionals	Clerical
1997–98	778.4	19.8	157.5	6.3	332.1
1998–99	886.3	27.1	150.9	5.2	371.3
1999–2000	946.6	23.8	140.0	3.9	351.9
2000–01	939.0	22.2	127.3	4.0	336.2
2001–02	921.8	20.6	111.1	4.9	318.2
2002–03	759.4	24.6	125.5	4.4	292.3
2003–04	704.6	27.4	119.5	2.9	267.2
2004–05	692.6	28.5	111.2	2.2	272.3
2005–06	741.3	25.9	123.5	2.9	303.4
2006–07	746.6	29.9	137.9	5.2	292.5

Table 1 also shows that the number of administrators assigned to the library area has increased steadily over the 10-year period shown. Since 1997-98, FTE administrators working in the library services area have increased by over 50%.

Chart 1 shows that, in the last few years in particular, the relative number of administrators in this area has increased and the number of teachers has decreased.

Chart 1: Change in teacher-librarians compared to administrators, 1997–98 to 2006–07



Form 1530 staffing data definitions:

Teachers include all staff who hold a valid certificate of qualification or a Letter of Permission and who are employed by a Board to provide an educational program to students, except for Principals, Vice-Principals, Directors of Instruction, Superintendents, or Assistant Superintendents.

Principals and Vice Principals include all staff who hold a valid certificate of qualifications or a Letter of Permission and who are employed by a Board under an Administrative Officer contract, such as Principals, Vice-Principals, and Directors of Instruction.

Educational Assistants include teacher assistants and child care workers.

Support Staff includes non-excluded clerical, secretaries and clerks, and other staff such as accountants, maintenance staff, custodians, and bus drivers.

Other Professionals include Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Secretary-Treasurers, Assistant Secretary-Treasurers, Trustees, and any other board employee who is excluded from a union agreement.

References:

- UNESCO/IFLA, "The School Library Manifesto: The School Library in Teaching and Learning for All", February 2000,
http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/school_manifesto.html.
- Haycock, K. (June 2003). *The crisis in Canada's school libraries: The case for reform and reinvestment*. Association of Canadian Publishers.