THE CHALLENGE OF PROVIDING SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICES ON A SHRINKING BUDGET

by

Renee S. Hand

An Abstract
of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Education Specialist in Human Services, Learning Resources
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development
University of Central Missouri

2015
ABSTRACT
by
Renee S. Hand

Providing quality school library services to students correlates directly with student success (American Association of School Librarians “Learning4Life”). The purpose of this thesis is to discuss how school librarians can continue to maintain a quality library collection even with cuts to the library budget. This study focuses on the ways school librarians continue to add resources to the library collection as well as advocate for the school library program. The study also focuses on how the school librarian keeps up with increasing responsibilities in times of budget cuts. The researcher surveyed school librarians in Missouri schools in 2015. Findings suggest that school librarians continue to add resources that add to the quality of the library, but they are incorporating into their practice a variety of strategies to accomplish this work. In addition, findings show that school librarians promote the library to get resources into the hands of all students.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Internet and digital resources are playing a bigger part in students’ lives than ever before. Many mistakenly assume that because of the Internet, school libraries and certified librarians are no longer essential for student success (American Library Association). However, as stated in the American Library Association Toolkit for advocacy, “The school library provides resources that are appropriate for students’ comprehension and maturity. These resources are selected to complement curriculum…and they are organized in a manner that makes them easily accessible for all users” (American Library Association). Studies over the past twenty years, show that students in schools with certified librarians score better on tests (Library Research Service). Other features of a successful school library include collaboration between the school librarians and teachers, and larger and newer collections (Library Research Service). However, library budgets are being cut to save districts money. School librarians are thinking outside the box to find ways to continue to add resources to the collection that are relevant to student needs (Lamb and Johnson “Program Administration”).

Advocating for the school library is essential in getting the community and school personnel to see the importance of a library with a certified school librarian at the helm. In times of budget cuts, library aides and librarians are cut from the staff (Lance and Hofschire 29). It is difficult to advocate for library programs when job responsibilities have increased and time is limited. However, this is the time to advocate and let parents, legislators, and school personnel know of the direct link between student success and the school library (33). Harvey discusses being proactive to avoid defending a position when positions are cut (Harvey 89). Keep school personnel and the community updated with details of successes in the library. Show superintendents and principals the positive results that take place in the library to create student success. This thesis explores how Missouri school librarians continue to provide services in spite of shrinking budgets. This thesis also explores ways school librarians can promote their resources and advocate for their programs, so students and teachers can be successful.
Statement of the Problem

Over the past 15 years library budgets in several states across the nation have been cut (Farmer and Schontz). The results include fewer certified school librarians and outdated library collections. In tough economic times, the school library budget is often targeted; and certified librarians replaced with aides, and in worst-case scenarios, libraries are only staffed part of the day. According to the “Learning4Life Plan” (American Association of School Librarians), the impact of budget cuts are seen in lower student test scores, unskilled students entering colleges or the workforce, and students who are unaware of digital citizenship. Farmer and Shontz reported in School Library Journal’s 2009 spending survey that the cost of books is increasing while budgets are remaining static or decreasing (39). In 2014, Barack (“2014 Spending Survey”) reported librarians are still facing budget cuts. According to the survey results, budgets have fallen about 0.5%.

A school library with the necessary staff and funding can lead to higher student achievement on standardized tests even in low socioeconomic schools (Everhart 16). School libraries are critical to student success. If those who make decisions about budgets see a school librarian only as a person who checks out and orders books, they may not hesitate to cut the school library budget. The lack of understanding the full scope of the duties of a librarian leads to the loss of jobs, which then results in students who do not have the 21st century skills that a school librarian teaches (16). School librarians can change the perception by advocating for students, school library budgets, and school library programs. School libraries need updated resources, and school librarians must be equipped to teach digital citizenship and other skills students need in the 21st century.

School librarians are increasingly finding more responsibilities placed on them as budgets are tightened, and they are given more responsibilities in the school (Luhtala 15). Librarians are finding ways to get everything done that needs to be done in the library, including shelving books, checking out books, and helping students, while still finding time to collaborate with teachers and teach students all the skills that they need for the 21st century.
Shannon discusses how the perceptions that some members of the school community have about the job of a school librarian are not accurate. School librarians can change the perspective of the school community by showing how valuable they are to teachers and students and by collaborating and planning with teachers to make meaningful lessons (17). Once the value of a certified school librarian is established, school administrators will see there is actually an increased need for school librarians. With the support of the school community, certified school librarians can provide quality library services, even on a limited budget.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to show how budget cuts have affected school libraries and the ability of school librarians to maintain a quality collection and quality services. The importance of a certified school librarian and a quality library collection go hand in hand with fostering student success (American Association of School Librarians). Certified school librarians know where and how to access the information that will most benefit their school community. Students need up-to-date resources to help them succeed in the 21st century. The review of literature explores how a school librarian can continue to maintain a quality collection and provide an atmosphere in which learning takes place. Lamb and Johnson (“Program Administration: Budget”) express the need for the school librarian to understand the library budget as well as the school district budget. Dickinson also suggests submitting proposals yearly to the administrators (“Budgeting as Easy as 1-2-3” 14). Johnson (“Budgeting”) gives several suggestions for dealing with a library budget. He stresses the need for careful planning and accountability. The literature suggests that school librarians can find ways to include quality resources in the collection as well as promote the library program in a way that others in the school community and beyond will see the need and benefits of certified school librarians. The literature also suggests that school librarians advocate for the school library program and show parents, administration, students, and other teachers the relevance of the library program for student success.

The research was conducted in the form of a survey, in order to determine school libraries that have endured budget cuts or static budgets and how school librarians have continued to maintain the library
collection and resources. The survey also addresses how school librarians advocate for the library program to promote student success.

**Research Questions**

School librarians have seen the impact of budget cuts for the past 15 years (American Association of School Librarians). According to the literature, the cutting of budgets in school libraries has had a negative impact on student success on standardized tests. Promoting the library program helps show the value of the resources to students and teachers. This thesis focused attention on school libraries and budget cuts through the following questions:

1. How can school librarians continue to maintain a quality collection in spite of budget cuts?
2. What free resources are available to supplement the library collection?
3. What can school librarians do to promote the library program and show their value to the students, teachers, and the rest of the school community?
4. How can librarians continue to provide quality service when they are given more responsibilities?

**Limitations of the Study**

The research in this study has limitations. This research is limited to school districts in the state of Missouri. It is based on a convenience sample of school librarians who participated in the survey. Time constraints could be another possible limitation; the survey was open for only three weeks. It was distributed only to Missouri Association of School Librarians (MASL) members. Low response rates were a threat to the validity of the study. Only thirty school librarians took the survey. Although all school types such as rural, suburban, and urban schools with enrollments ranging from under 350 to over 1,000 were represented. 30 schools were sampled, so the sampling is small. A threat to validity could also include instrumentation. If the person taking the survey needed clarification about a question being asked, it may have been difficult to answer the question.
Definition of Terms

Definitions of terms are included to clarify meaning in relation to this study of how school librarians are adapting to shrinking budgets.

Advocate: One who supports a cause or a person.

Budget: An allocation of money for a specific purpose.

Certified school librarian: An individual who has a degree in education as well as a certificate in library science, and has a broad range of knowledge in library media services and the development of a school library program.

Collection: Items housed in a school library, such as books, Ebooks, databases, periodicals, ereaders, magazines, and newspapers.

Collection development: The process of selecting items to be purchased to enhance the collection of the school library to ensure student success.

Consortium: A group of libraries that work together for the betterment of all schools and for a less expensive alternative than buying items, such as databases, on their own.

Digital citizenship: The quality of habits, actions, and consumption patterns that impact the ecology of digital content and communities (Heick).

Donation: Money, books, or other items given to a school library.

Fundraiser: An event held to collect money for a school or school library, such as a book fair or an “Adopt a Classroom” event.

MOREnet: A service provided by the state of Missouri to K-12 school districts that provides online resources through consortium service fees at a reduced cost (“MOREnet”).

Resources: All the items in a school library, i.e., computers, databases, books, and periodicals.

Volunteer: A person who donates time to help in a school library without pay.
Weeding: Removing books and other resources such as periodicals from the library that are outdated or no longer used or needed.

**Research Design**

Research for the literature review was conducted through the James C. Kirkpatrick Library at the University of Central Missouri. The following databases were used for the literature review: *Library Literature and Information Science Full Text, Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete,* and *MasterFile Premier.* Key search terms included, but were not limited to, “Budgets and School Libraries,” “Budget Cuts,” “Importance of School Libraries,” “School Library Budget Cuts,” “Advocating for the School Library,” and “Volunteers and School Libraries.” After the database search, Internet sources were searched. Key terms used were “School Libraries,” “Budget and the School Library,” and the “Importance of School Libraries” and “Research and School Libraries.” Also, the bibliographies of several articles were used to find additional resources.

For the research study, a survey was sent to the MASL forum as well as emailed to a random group of school librarians across the state of Missouri who represented a variety of district types and sizes. District types represented include urban, suburban, and rural. School sizes represented include under 350, 351-600, 601-1000, and over 1,000. Questions were asked regarding maintaining and adding to the school library collection, budgeting practices of the librarian, promoting the school library, and providing quality service to library patrons. See chapter 3 for a detailed description of the study method.

**Conclusion**

This thesis focuses on school library budgets and the impact budget cuts have on school libraries and students. It presents ways that the library collection can be maintained and of good quality, even with budget cuts. Earlier studies of how school libraries have been impacted by budget cuts and how school libraries are dealing with the cuts will be described in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will present the methods used in this thesis to conduct research on how librarians in the state of Missouri continue to deal with cuts to library funds and
maintain their collections. Chapter 4 will present survey results; how librarians are advocating for their programs, how librarians are continuing to add to their library collection, and how free resources are used to supplement the collection. Chapter 5 will present the answers to the research questions presented in this chapter based on the review of literature and the findings presented in chapter 4.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Research suggests that a well-staffed library program with a certified school librarian consistently has a positive relationship to student achievement (American Association of School Librarians). A school library program with the necessary staff and funding can facilitate higher student achievement even in low socioeconomic school districts (Everhart 16). The danger is that a district can save thousands of dollars by replacing certified school librarians with paraprofessionals. In the long run, this is detrimental to student success. Martin asserts, “Most disturbing is the lack of universal understanding by teachers, administrators, and parents of what good school library media programs can contribute to student learning” (56). However, research conducted by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) (“Learning4Life”) shows a direct link between school libraries staffed with certified librarians and higher reading scores. School libraries provide a space for all students to have equal access to the resources the school provides as well as resources that can be accessed online. Housed in the library are print and computer resources that enable children to engage meaningfully with a wide variety of information. In an ideal situation, librarians with trained staff support the use of information resources, integrating them in classrooms for use throughout the curriculum (Scholastic “School Libraries Count”).

As shown in the statewide school library impact studies by Scholastic, school libraries reinforce the curriculum and prepare students for their future as digital citizens. Skills to be taught to students include information literacy skills such as inquiry, research, evaluating sources, creating, and sharing information (Scholastic). School libraries that employ a qualified librarian who teaches these skills have higher reading test scores (“Standards for 21st Century Learners”).

Everhart demonstrates how strong funding, well maintained collections, access to technology and digital resources, and collaboration with teachers result in improved student achievement (14). Kachel and Lance refer to a study by the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association and the Education Law Center, which found that
students perform better on standardized tests, particularly in reading and writing, when they have up-to-date resources in the school library. The study results further revealed how a school librarian who is involved in the learning and teaching process is crucial to student success. Students who have the benefit of being educated in a school with a certified librarian are more likely to score well in the advanced category on standardized tests (Kachel and Lance 28). A school library program with the necessary staff and funding can facilitate higher student achievement (Rosales).

However, in tough times school library budgets are slashed and certified library media specialists are often replaced with aides; and in worst case scenarios, libraries are only staffed part of the day or not at all (Ballard 15). Luhtala points out that even though some positions may remain secure, school librarians are increasingly given more responsibilities and duties (15). Dickinson (“LMC”) published a survey that asked, “What extra duties do you have in your school as part of your regular assigned task?” Over fifty percent have hall, bus, breakfast, or other assigned duties (Luhtala 19). In addition to extra duties, some librarians are responsible for teaching in multiple buildings (15). Luhtala asserts that even amid these changes, school librarians can aspire for excellence and save jobs by fostering positive attitudes and setting realistic goals, as well as maintaining focus (18).

The school librarian has a pivotal role in schools. Once the role of the school librarian is realized by the school community, librarians can continue to help students learn 21st century skills and use a wide variety of information resources efficiently and effectively (Everhart 16). School librarians can make a difference even when budgets are cut.

This review of literature addresses four areas that explain how school libraries adjust in times of limited funding. The first section explores how to approach budgeting in times of limited funding. The second section presents ways collection development can be adjusted for the district’s situation. The third section describes how staffing shortages are addressed by delegating responsibilities. The fourth section demonstrates how advocating for the library program is more important when budgets are being frozen or cut.
Creating a School Library Budget with Limited Funding

The impact of budget cuts has been felt in thousands of schools across the county. Often one of the first things to be cut is the library budget. In spite of budget cuts, school librarians are doing what they can for their patrons. Lamb and Johnson (“Program Administration: Budget”) suggest the place to begin is to understand the budget of the library as well as the school. Learning the budget process at the school includes identifying the different funding accounts that provide money for the school library. In his handouts for “Budgeting for Mean, Lean Times,” Johnson suggests finding out what percentage of funding comes from each source. These sources include the state aid formula, federal funds, local revenue, private dollars, and fund raisers. Johnson also recommends that the school librarian knows who controls the budget, such as the principal, the superintendent, or the school board (Johnson “Budgeting” 8). In addition to learning the process of funding, Lamb and Johnson (“Program Administration: Budget”) maintain the need for the school librarian to establish priorities and continue to plan ahead for future needs.

Dickinson (“Budgeting 1-2-3”) recommends that budgeting be done every year to create evidence for the need of funds for library resources. She recommends that librarians continue to submit budget proposals even when the chances of their being funded are small. By presenting a budget, it is possible to explain the consequences of cutting the budget. Dickinson suggests showing administrators and school board members how the items needed in the budget support the curriculum and goals of the school district (14). She suggests when planning the budget, keeping in mind the increase in the cost of materials. She suggests librarians create a wish list of desired resources and another list of resources critical to the support of the curriculum. Johnson (“Budgeting”) explains, “A good budget requires planning, prioritizing, and accountability. When good planning occurs, things happen, better programming is the result - even without an increase in funds.”

Through the budget the librarian aligns expenditures to goals, keeps a detailed outline of all expenditures for the year, and shows how those expenditures meet the goals (Harper and Baldini; Lamb and Johnson “Program Administration”). This ensures that the administration is aware of how library funds are
spent and how more funds could be used to benefit students. Aligning library goals and purchases with the state curriculum standards for each academic area at the school and listing expenditures to show where the curriculum is enhanced through purchases are other ways to keep the administration aware of the library budget. Dickinson (“Budgeting 1-2-3”) breaks down budgeting into three areas: find out who is in charge of the funds for the library and ask for the money, talk to people in the community and school to get support for the library program, and show why the funds are needed to improve the library. The last thing Dickinson mentions is that it may take several years to get an increase in the budget, but she recommends librarians to keep trying anyway (17).

Librarians are innovative and are always looking for new ways to extend their budgets in order to get resources for their patrons. They consider all possible sources for funding, not just the school district (Johnson “Budgeting”). One way the librarian can add to the budget is by having fundraisers or seeking donations. A book fair, such as a Scholastic Book Fair, is one fundraising idea to get more books in the school library. When a school hosts a book fair, the school receives a percentage of all fair sales, which can be spent on books or other resources for the school library. Another way to get more books in the library is through Books are Fun, which is a company that donates books to the school library if a certain number of their books or items are sold during fundraisers. Some librarians will supplement their collections with free books from vendors in exchange for previewing materials (Barack “SLJ’s 2014 Spending Survey”).

Lamb and Johnson (“Program Administration”) provide a number of ways a school librarian can get money for the library. Some suggestions they provide are “Adopt a Classroom,” which is an organization created to help teachers get items for their classroom. Individuals donate money to the registered teachers of their choice. The teachers then use those funds to shop online and have the supplies delivered to their school. Donors receive a report detailing exactly what the teacher purchased with their donation. Lamb and Johnson also provide links to several grants that are available to school libraries. One grant they mention is the Innovative Reading Grant (American Association of School Librarians) sponsored by the Capstone.
Johnson (“Budgeting”) recommends that the librarian keep a list of any monies or resources received from donations, fundraisers, and grants. The process also entails providing both the funder, and school district administrators with details about how those monies have been spent or those resources used. Seeking extra monies from grants and other sources helps librarians provide quality programs and collections for the library.

Farmer and Shontz developed a spending survey for school librarians. One of the questions asked on the survey dealt with how librarians continue to provide resources despite budget cuts. One of the respondents expressed that librarians are continually having to “think outside the box” to find ways to fund new resources (44). Two trends were noted in the survey. Technology is used to choose resources effectively, and free Web 2.0 tools are used to contribute to authentic student learning (43).

**Collection Development on a Budget**

In times of limited budgets, the need to develop a plan of collection development is more important than ever. Lack of up-to-date materials is a barrier to the success of school library programs. Library collections can continue to be of high quality by changing purchasing habits. In hard times, the librarian takes stock of the collection, looking, for example, at the amount of money spent per student for books. Farmer and Shontz reported the allotment for books in a typical library budget has decreased. In 2009, the average amount of money spent per student was $20.15. In 2012, the average amount spent per student was $11.00 (39). In 2014, the average amount spent per student was $10.64 (Barack “2014 Spending Survey”). The average cost of books continues to rise, while the average expenditure per pupil continues to decrease.

Ideally, librarians provide students with access to books by whatever means possible. Using circulation statistics and student requests, it is possible to find out what students are reading or wanting to read. Corbo suggests sending a survey to teachers at the end of the year asking what they need to enhance or supplement their curriculum and using the results as a guide for purchasing new materials for the library. When budgets are constrained, librarians buy what is requested before other purchases are made. McClung suggested giving up the library’s collection development policy. McClung keeps a form at the circulation desk in her library so
students and teachers can request books, and those are the books she is likely to purchase (34). Lamb and Johnson (“Program Administration”) recommend basing most of the budget on what is being used. Use circulation statistics and other data to find out this information and shift money to areas where it is more likely to be used.

When choosing books for the library, many librarians are opting to buy less expensive paperback books instead of hard copies in order to get more titles in the hands of students (Farmer and Shontz 39). School librarians are buying more nonfiction titles as well as informational texts that support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (DelGuidice and Luna 20). Young recommends purchasing books, including ebooks, that are tied to the curriculum. Teachers can use the CCSS to guide in the teaching of informational texts. Making teachers and students aware of the books that support the curriculum enhances the use of these titles (48).

McClung suggests dealing with overdue and lost books on an as-needed basis, replacing only books that are often checked out. In these ways the needs for funding can be made more visible in the library because the shelves will not be as full (34).

Librarians accept that weeding needs to take place even though fewer items are being added to the library collection. This means fewer outdated materials are housed in the library (Farmer and Schontz 43). The library can appear to have a large collection when books are not weeded regularly, but this will be misleading if the part that gets used is quite small. Weeding unused materials will reduce the size of the collection and make the need for funds visible because there are fewer books on the shelves. Weeding can also serve as a guideline for purchasing items to keep the collection current, improve access, and increase the chance of students finding books they might otherwise miss on crowded shelves. As Collier states regarding weeding, it keeps the collection “relevant” (51).

Slimmer budgets also mean librarians are being more selective about the databases they subscribe to. Librarians, teachers, and students get to know the databases better when there are fewer of them. Also, with fewer databases the librarian is able to ensure everyone learns how to use them (Farmer and Shontz 40). When
setting up payment for databases and other digital resources, Johnson (“Managing the Intangible” 49) recommends that librarians make sure that the subscriptions coincide with the school year to avoid paying for the service when it will not be used. Johnson recommends that librarians select digital resources that meet the needs of the students at their school (47). He also suggests setting up a trial for databases being considered. Letting teachers try out different databases lets the librarian know if the database fits the needs of the students (48). MOREnet offers databases to K-12 schools in Missouri at a reduced cost as a way for school to provide students with access to more databases that schools may not otherwise be able to afford.

By providing ways for students to access materials through other school libraries and public libraries, librarians add to the collection of the school library without purchasing materials. Farmer and Shontz suggest working with public librarians to find materials for student needs and interests. The public library’s service is geared to all ages. Public libraries may subscribe to other databases of periodicals and other media and e-book subscription services than the school library (40). Joint subscriptions with other libraries or consortia like MOREnet, which is offered by the State of Missouri, help the school library obtain databases at a lower cost. MOREnet not only offers databases but also offers professional development and technology training for teachers.

Instead of buying individual video titles, librarians can subscribe to National Geographic for science videos and obtain other videos through databases subscriptions. Some schools also subscribe to online encyclopedias such as World Book and Grolier. However, databases such as Fact Monster and Searchasaurus also provide access to encyclopedias. Students can use these online resources so there is no need to buy a new set of encyclopedias to be housed in the library (Johnson “Budgeting”). The librarian can also supplement purchased resources with free Internet resources by adding links to the Internet resources on the library web page (Johnson “Ten Ways to Promote” 98). The Association for Library Services for Children’s “Site of the Week” feature on Great Websites for Kids has quality web sites that can be utilized by students and teachers. The site provides links for teachers that actively aid in helping them meet the curricular needs of the CCSS. The
Library of Congress offers free access to primary source documents (Lamb and Johnson “Social Studies” 65). Promoting useful sites is a way to make students and teachers aware of the information available to them. Johnson (“Ten Ways to Promote”) gives several ideas for promoting sites, such as providing links from the library catalog, working with teachers at the beginning of their units, giving a tutorial of the resource to the students, and making a poster or bookmarks with the URLs to various resources (98). Finding and promoting quality resources can take time, but the time spent will be well worth it in the end.

Many school libraries are open before and after school. This provides the additional benefit of giving students additional opportunities to use the library’s resources. When collections are up-to-date, more students will use the resources provided. Sign-in sheets can be used to document library usage during these extended hours to justify additional funds for keeping the library open after school hours (Allen and Bradley 49).

Delegating Responsibilities

With positions being cut in many schools, librarians are finding more responsibilities placed on them. Enlisting the help of others in the library is a way to compensate for this and is beneficial to the library as well. According to McGown, volunteers are assets to a school library. They free the librarian to help individual students or to collaborate with teachers (10). According to Barack in “Are There Any Volunteers?” volunteers need to be trained in all aspects of library service. Many schools have students who are trained to help in the library. McClung (34) gives several ideas for jobs students can do in the library. They can shelve books, check out books, and process new books by adding barcodes and library stamping. Edwards (56) suggests ways to even get younger students helping in the library by having them separate materials by call numbers to make shelving by older students go faster. Students can also keep track of books that are requested, read book reviews to help decide what titles would be good for the library, write stories about the library for school newsletters, and keep up with new titles in a series that need to be ordered (McClung 34). Students can also be in charge of book displays, help younger students with research, and conduct reading programs (Lagesten 45). Student helpers can also help by creating bulletin boards to promote reading (McClung 34). Not only are students
benefitting the library, they are also learning valuable lessons for the future. Barack ("Volunteers") mentions some of the benefits students reap from their work in the library. They learn real job skills and take ownership and pride in the work they do in the library (44). Some schools even offer credit for helping in the library.

Some librarians use a program called "Adopt a Shelf" which is where students are assigned a shelf in the library and their name is placed on the shelf. That particular student is in charge of keeping that shelf tidy and shelving any books that belong there (Edwards 56). Not only can students help with organizing and shelving books, they can help in other ways. Students lead book talks and pull books for staff members (Lagesten 46). Volunteers can be a great asset to the school library; however, they cannot replace a certified librarian who trains and directs the volunteers.

To prepare student helpers, Barack ("Volunteers") recommends creating library guidelines so students know ahead of time what is expected of them (42). Students who want to work in the library can fill out a job application (Franklin and Stephens 44). They recommend using an assessment to see which students have the skills needed to work in the library. Franklin and Stephens suggest providing students with training in the different roles they will be taking on in the library (44). Students will benefit from their experiences as library workers by learning skills they will use in the future, such as responsibility and showing respect for patrons.

Parents can also be a help in the library. Librarians can recruit parents through parent organizations or a Facebook page, Twitter, or library website with information and a form to fill out to volunteer (Harvey 89). Parent advocates are a school librarian’s biggest allies when they are aware of all a librarian does for their children (Kaalan 27). Parent volunteers are trained just as students to assist in the library (Bogel 28). Parents clean and shelve books, and help students. Barack also suggests training parents to use the computers, teaching them library procedures and how to use the cataloging system (42). Even though more responsibility is falling onto the librarian, remaining optimistic and flexible has a positive impact on programs (Corbo). Delegating some responsibilities that do not require expertise frees the librarian to do more teaching and collaborating with teachers.
Advocating for the School Library

One of the reasons school librarians are often cut from the staff is because of the perceptions others in the school community have about the role a librarian plays in the school (Shannon 17). Many principals view the librarian mainly as the person who gets materials for the library and helps with reference assistance. For school librarians to have the most beneficial impact on students, the librarian’s role needs to be seen as one of collaborating, planning, and developing curriculum with teachers (Shannon 18).

As Barbara Stripling explains, the school librarian creates an atmosphere where technology is integrated in such a way as to place emphasis on career and college readiness (6). Lance and Hofshire explain how the school library creates a community for learning to take place other than in a traditional classroom. Students are exposed to different resources and free to explore their topics of research (33). The library is a safe place for students to go to receive assistance in an environment that leads to lifelong learning (Stripling 6). In “The True Value of the Work We Do,” Tilley quotes Joyce Valenza: “Part of being a 21st century librarian is fighting for the rights of students to have and use the tools they need” (46). Schrock notes the importance of keeping teachers at the forefront of the happenings in the library. She suggests sending teachers a short email each week that focuses on a new book or web site that they may like (Schrock 36). Lamb and Johnson mention all of the collaboration that occurs in a school library. Collaboration takes place in a library between students, teachers, and the librarian. Collaborating with others in the district helps with budgeting and puts the program in perspective in times of budget cuts.

Promoting the library has a positive effect even when budgets are tight. Edwards recommends that the librarian make sure everyone knows what great things are happening in the library. She recommends that librarians celebrate success by raising the visibility of the library. Publicizing can be done at little or no cost (57). The American Library Association (ALA) offers help advocating for the school library by offering a Parent Advocate Toolkit on their website. This toolkit has research that supports school libraries, promoting student success as well as goals for a successful school library program. This increases awareness and create
advocates for the library (Ballard 16). Librarians also get the word out about the library to parents by creating links on the library webpage for parents, including resources they can use to help their children with schoolwork (Schrock 36). Parent advocates make a big difference to a school library program. Barack, in the article “Massachusetts Parents Fight for School Librarians and Win,” writes about how, in just two years, parents got other community members, teachers, and school board members involved in promoting the school library; and because of their efforts, Massachusetts districts hired more school librarians for the 2014-2015 school year.

Edwards offers several ideas for increasing awareness: be willing to share stories about students, projects, activities, and library-related events; accept invitations or volunteer to speak at parent meetings, school functions, civic organizations, and other community functions; tell library stories to anyone who will listen; prepare a 30-second speech that conveys the importance and value of school libraries, because these stories are wonderful public relations opportunities that result in creating library advocates (57). Johnson (“When Your Job is on the Line”) suggests starting a library advisory board. This group of people, including teachers, administrators, and parents would meet on a regular basis to discuss budgets and goals of the school library (46). Other suggestions include creating bulletin boards for all special events such as Banned Book Week or Children’s Book Week, preparing events for a School Library Month, having monthly open libraries for the community, getting teachers involved by organizing a school-wide event such as the Read Across America Day, and rewarding students for participating in school reading programs at assemblies.

Other suggestions include publicizing the library through the school library webpage, the main school webpage, teacher Webpages, and if the community has a webpage, posting there as well (Johnson “Ten Ways to Promote” 98). Sending the local newspaper information of upcoming library events is another way to keep people informed. Librarians not only advocate within the school and the community, they can also advocate to their local congressmen and congresswomen (Ray 29) Ray suggests preparing for opportunities when meeting with board members, lawmakers, and other decision makers (30). Ways to prepare include writing a summary of what is happening in the library, some challenges that are occurring, and one or two success stories involving
children in the school library. Ray also recommends listening to others because it allows one to learn (30). Speaking to others in terms they understand and showing how much success is occurring with students who have access to a library program with a certified librarian are also ways to gain advocates for the library (31).

Harvey suggests a strategy called TACTICAL (Target Action Communication Time Involvement Change Attitude Leadership) for advocacy. He states the importance of being a leader in the school and serving on different committees, such as curriculum development or professional development. However, he says, “Don’t stop at the local level; a component of that strategy is involvement in professional organizations” (89). Getting involved in professional library associations such as American Library Association (ALA), AASL, and state level library associations such as MASL are ways to learn about important issues in the field of school librarianship. Also, getting involved with other education associations such as the state teachers’ association and speaking out for the importance of school libraries and school librarians lets others know about school library issues. Keeping the administration, teachers, and community informed about what is happening in the library is a vital key to success. As Edwards states, “When school library advocates rally, the results are powerful” (58).

**Conclusion**

It is challenging to provide school library services in the face of shrinking resources, but it can be done. Thinking outside the box and sharing resources with public libraries when possible are two ways to keep school libraries relevant and at the center of student achievement. This requires making effective use of limited resources. School librarians make a difference even when budgets are cut by finding alternative monies and resources, creating a well-planned budget, training students to help in the library, raising library visibility, and educating all school personnel on the duties of a librarian. At the forefront of proving the relevance of the school librarian is making sure all school community members know what the job entails and how a well-run school library impacts student achievement.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ways school librarians continue to make a difference even when school library budgets are cut. It examines the responses of school librarians across Missouri regarding the issue of reduced or frozen library budgets. The survey’s first purpose is to identify the demographic groups of the schools in which the librarians work. The second purpose is to examine the budget of the school librarian and what resources are used to build the collection. The third purpose explores fundraising and other ways the school librarian gets funds for the library. The fourth purpose is to examine the ways the school librarian advocate for and promote the library resources and programs.

Survey questions address the quality of the school library collection and other digital resources in the midst of budget cuts. Other questions address the ways a librarian continues to enhance the collection through donations and fundraisers.

Research Method

The researcher surveyed school librarians across Missouri. The survey used in the study addressed three purposes. School librarians were asked if they have experienced budget cuts in their district and how they continue to add to the library collection, how they delegate jobs in the library, and how they advocate for the school library. Narrative responses and short answer responses were labeled and sorted into categories. The results from surveys were analyzed to determine how respondents deal with cuts to a school library budget.

Population

The study was based on the perceptions of school librarians. Survey participants were invited via the MASL member forum. The researcher also sent email to 55 school librarians who were found in the MASL membership roster representing a diverse sample of school types and sizes to ensure a wide range of respondents. This email instructed participants to not take the survey twice and to ignore the request if they filled out the survey through the MASL forum. Thirty school librarians completed the survey. Respondents
answered question related to library budget, providing resources, promoting resources, and delegating responsibilities. Many questions allowed for short answer responses, so more detailed information could be given as to how each librarian provides resources for his or her school library.

**Instrumentation**

Google Forms were used as the survey platform. The survey instrument (see appendix A) was divided into four sections. Section one consisted of demographic questions. Section two addressed budget issues, such as decreases and the effects of budget on the collection. Section three addressed fundraising and donation practices in the district. Section four addressed the promotion of library resources and programs.

**Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed by examining the survey responses for correctness, such as were all fields filled out with the appropriate information, and completeness. The survey contains several questions that respondents are required to answer. Other responses are optional. An analysis of all surveys with the required questions answered was performed comparing the data using the demographic section of the survey. Frequency tables and descriptive statistics were displayed with respect to each section of the survey. Narrative information was analyzed for themes and answers that are typical of the majority of respondents.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the different ways school librarians promote their school library resources and provide quality resources for their patrons. The focus of this study was to gather data on the ways school librarians continue to add resources to the library collection as well as advocate for the school library program in times of budget cuts. In addition, the study focused on how the school librarian keeps up with increasing responsibilities in times of budget cuts. The study involved a survey consisting of 29 questions. The survey was completed using Google forms that enabled the researcher to collect responses via an online survey. A total of 30 surveys were completed and submitted by Missouri school librarians. These librarians serve a range of student populations and types of districts. Figure 1 shows the range of student populations served. Figure 2 breaks down the number of students receiving free/reduced lunch according to type and population of the school.

Figure 1. Student population served
Budget Cuts

The impact of budget cuts has been felt in thousands of schools across the country (Lamb and Johnson “Program Administration: Budget”). Missouri schools have felt an impact as well. In this study, survey results were analyzed to discern resources librarians use as well as ways they promote their library resources. A summary of the analysis is presented in the chapter. One area of concern was districts eliminating or downsizing the number of librarians in a district to save money. Of the school librarians surveyed, 97% have experiences cuts to library staff, library funds, or both. The question asked on the survey was, “Has your district lost one or more librarians due to budget cuts in the past 5 years?” Of the surveys returned (N=30), 54.8% experienced budget cuts in library personnel.

Another question on the survey was, “Given your budget, have you been able to maintain stable access to reference and nonfiction resources?” All librarians responded with 53.3% (N=16) indicating that they have been able to maintain stable access. All 30 responders reported on their budget over the past 5 years. Book
prices continue to increase while the average cost spent per pupil remains stable or decreases. Spending per pupil has remained stable in 53.3% of districts (N=16) and has decreased in 43.3% of districts (N=13). The average amount spent per pupil in the 30 schools ranged from $4 to $100. Figure 3 shows the range of monies spent per pupil for library materials. Of the school librarians who experienced budget cuts, only 40.0% (N=12) were able to purchase all the items for their collection that were most important or helpful for their students.

When faced with budget cuts, librarians are changing their purchasing habits across all the library needs. When asked, “As your budget and the needs of your users have changed in the past few years, how have you modified your spending practices” librarians had a variety of answers. Responses included buying fewer fiction titles, buying fewer magazines, and subscribing to more databases and buying fewer nonfiction titles. Figure 4 depicts the different ways school librarians modify their library spending practices.
Slimmer budgets also mean librarians are being more selective in their database subscriptions. School librarians are also choosing databases that best fit the needs of their students. Some choose to embrace the databases provided with a MOREnet membership which is a portion of the cost of subscribing into these databases individually. Of the 30 school librarians surveyed 50.0% (N=15) have purchased more digital items such as ebooks and databases. Only 21 (70.0%) librarians responded to the question, “List some of the digital items you have purchased (e.g. ebooks, databases). Table 1 depicts subscription databases used by school librarians as well as the number of school librarians who have purchased ebooks and other items. Ebooks are the most common digital items purchased by school librarians. MOREnet and online encyclopedias are also popular choices. Out of the 21 respondents, 19 (63.33%) purchase ebooks in some form.

Table 1

Databases and Ebooks Purchased by School Librarians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Responses</th>
<th>N=30</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morefair titles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More fiction titles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More nonfiction titles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More magazine subscriptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More databases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase more ebooks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>利用 MOREnet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy more personal journals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy books with a free eBook copy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut teacher periodicals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order more contemporary titles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer hardcover</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More nonfiction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Encyclopedia (World Book, Grolier)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrainPop</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOREnet</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Grams</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery Education/United Streaming</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumble Books</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified databases</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookflix</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebooks</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited Simultaneous Access Ebooks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Source Ebooks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounted Ebooks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Print Book with Copy of Ebook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Providing Resources**

Librarians stretch their library budgets in many different ways to provide resources for their patrons. The results indicate that librarians can continue to maintain a quality collection even in times of decreased budget. Of the 30 school librarians surveyed, 29 responded to the question, “List some ways you manage to stretch your library budget (e.g. buying paperbacks, purchasing ebooks, collaborating with public librarians).” Librarians are still buying books for the library, but are opting to buy less expensive paperbacks instead of hard cover books to get more books in the hands of their students. Some choose to embrace free ebooks (such as open source) or ebooks that come with a copy of a physical book and trials of databases to increase resources while others rely on their MOREnet membership to provide databases. Librarians also provide ways for students to access
materials through interlibrary loan as well as through collaborating with public libraries. Other ways school librarians provide more materials for their patrons is through fundraising, grant writing, or seeking donations. Table 2 shows different ways librarians provide more resources for their patrons.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways librarians provide materials for their patrons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buy simultaneous unlimited access Ebooks and magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy Follett bound books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy extra copies of books in paperback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut magazine subscriptions in half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut database subscriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy 1 hard cover and the rest of the copies in paperback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy little used nonfiction in paperback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the public library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase books with book fair funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process own books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use vendors that provide free shipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy from local book store with a 30% discount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy used books on Amazon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the public library “Teacher Assist” program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the university’s “teacher’s choice” program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free ebooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free online resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limiting nonfiction to curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner district library loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnes and Nobel educator discount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect box tops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect Campbell Soup labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrift stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling candy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “Books First” program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy Kindle books on sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not buy ebooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase preview boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Bound to Stay Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy paperbacks and add protective coating so they last longer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Librarians often hold fundraisers to enhance the library collection. On those surveyed 25 (83.3%) out of 30 school librarians do some sort of fundraising. Of the 25, 22 hold book fairs while others have different
fundraising activities. Several librarians have more than one fundraising activity. Table 3 shows different fundraising activities librarians hold to raise money to help maintain a quality collection.

Table 3
Fundraising activities used to help maintain a quality collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of responses</th>
<th>N=30</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book fair</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations (Grandparent’s Day – grandparent’s donate book to library in grandchild’s name)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling items e.g. candy, pencils, mixed bags designs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read-a-Thon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxtops for Education/Campbell’s Labels for Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raffle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providing access to free Internet resources is one way school librarians can supplement the library collection and add to the quality and quantity of library resources available to their students. Most of the librarians surveyed, 80.0% (N =24), provide access to free Internet information resources for their library patrons. There were many different types of resources listed. Resources that those surveyed provide for their patrons are provided in table 4.

Table 4
Free resources provided on school library Web page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Responses</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABCya</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abcya.com/">http://www.abcya.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers</td>
<td><a href="http://www.answers.com/">http://www.answers.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartleby Reference</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bartleby.com/reference/">http://www.bartleby.com/reference/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books Should be Free</td>
<td><a href="http://www.loyalbooks.com/">http://www.loyalbooks.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation Machine</td>
<td><a href="http://www.citationmachine.net/">http://www.citationmachine.net/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delegating Responsibilities

School librarians have a heavy workload. Not only are librarians responsible for the library, they are often given extra responsibilities outside of the library. Librarians continue to provide quality service by using volunteers in the library. Nineteen of the 30 school librarians surveyed use student volunteers. Student volunteers perform several jobs in the library to free up the librarian to collaborate with teachers and help individual students, as well as complete other tasks. Students are used to shelve books, clean, and design book displays or bulletin boards. However, only 10 of the 30 school librarians reported using adult volunteers. Figure 5 breaks down tasks assigned to volunteers in the library.
Extra Responsibilities

Librarians often have additional duties assigned to them besides serving as school librarian. Of the 30 respondents, 96.6% (N=29) of the librarians surveyed have been assigned extra duties. Of the librarians who have been assigned extra duties, 63.3% (N=19) have seen an increase in duties over the past 5 years. Extra duties are numerous and different. The most common responsibilities are shown in figure 6.
Getting support for the school library program can go hand in hand with keeping a stable budget or receiving an increase in budget. Among survey respondents, 36.6% (N=11) of school librarians report receiving strong support for their school library while 10.0% (N=3) report receiving minimal support for the school library program. School librarians realize that advocating for the school library is one way to get others on board and continue to fund the library. Announcements, parent emails, and letters to area newspapers are some ways librarians advocate for their programs. Other ways librarians continue to inform others about what students are learning in the library using social media such as Twitter, blogs, YouTube and Facebook.

Promoting library resources is essential to advocating for the school library. Twenty-nine of the 30 respondents promote their library programs, and 25 promoted their digital resources. Those not promoting digital resources indicate that their school library does not have any digital resources. Library promotion occurs in many ways in different libraries. Promotion occurs through book contests, posters and displays, and bookfairs. Several librarians found the best way to promote library resources was to speak to students and teachers directly and show them the resources that are available. Other ways libraries and resources are promoted are shown in figure 7.
Summary

The data from this study indicate that school librarians promote and advocate for their program while continuing to provide quality resources to their patrons by finding free materials and Web sites to enhance their school library collection, in addition to modifying their spending practices. This study provides answers to the ways school librarians continue to provide quality resources for their patrons in time of static budgets or budget cuts.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to show that school librarians can continue to provide library services on a shrinking budget. Chapter 5 will answer the research questions presented in chapter 1 based on the literature review in chapter 2 and the findings presented in chapter 4. The following research questions will be answered:

1. How can school librarians continue to maintain a quality collection in spite of budget cuts?
2. What free resources are available to supplement the library collection?
3. What can school librarians do to promote the library program and show their value to the students, teachers, and the rest of the school community?
4. How can librarians continue to provide quality service when they are given more responsibilities?

The participants were members of the MASL from several different schools around the state. The librarians represented various school sizes and types of schools. A survey was sent to a MASL forum as well as emailed to a selected group of school librarians across the state of Missouri who represented a variety of district types and sizes. Districts types included urban, suburban, and rural. District sizes ranged from under 350 students to over 1000 students. Questions were asked regarding the demographics of the school, maintaining and adding to the school library collection, budgeting practices of the librarian, promoting the school library, and providing quality service to library patrons.

Summary of the Study

The researcher began this thesis by creating a survey to send to the MASL member forum and sending a direct email to 55 school librarians representing a diverse sample of school districts. Thirty school librarians completed the survey. Respondents answered question related to library budget, providing resources,
promoting resources, and delegating responsibilities. Many questions allowed for short answer responses, so more detailed information could be given as to how each librarian provides resources for their school library.

**Maintaining a Quality Collection in Times of Budget Cuts**

Understanding the budget and establishing priorities, as well as submitting budget proposals yearly are practices recommended by Dickinson (Budgeting 1-2-3). Showing administrators and school board members resources needed to support the curriculum and goals of the school district makes them aware of how the library supports student success. Careful planning and prioritizing the budget results in a better library program, even with a decrease in funds (Johnson “Budgeting”).

School librarians can continue to maintain a quality collection in times of budget cuts. According to the school librarians surveyed, 97% have experienced budget cuts to staff, library funds, or both. Of those surveyed, 54.8% have experienced cuts in library personnel. Even though most librarians have experienced budget cuts, 53% have been able to maintain stable access to library materials for their patrons. Ideally, librarians provide students with access to resources through whatever means possible (McClung 34).

Librarians are changing purchasing habits to maintain the school library. The most common way librarians are changing their spending practices is buying fewer nonfiction print titles and opting for databases, including free resources to compensate for fewer physical nonfiction titles. Responses also included buying fewer magazine subscriptions, only ordering what students or teachers request, or only items to enhance the curriculum. Librarians are being more selective when choosing databases. Johnson (“Managing the Intangible”) recommends selecting resources that will most meet the needs of the students at their school (47). The most common resources purchased by Missouri school librarians were ebooks, the most common databases used were those available through MOREnet, and the most common databases purchased by school librarians include online encyclopedias such as *World Book* and *Grolier*. *BrainPop*, an education site that provides animated curricular materials, was also a popular library purchase. By changing spending practices and focusing on what
teachers need for the curriculum, school librarians are purchasing the most relevant materials for the needs of their students while maintaining the quality of the collection.

**Providing Resources**

School librarians are provide free resources to supplement the library collection and help keep it relevant to their students. According to the results from this thesis, librarians stretch their budget in many different ways to provide resources for their patrons. Common ways librarians stretch the budget include using the public library to supplement the school library collection, processing their own library materials, using vendors that provide free shipping, limiting nonfiction spending to focus on curriculum, buying at stores that provide a discount for schools and educators, and writing grants for library materials. Lamb and Johnson (“Program Administration”) provide links to several grants that are available to school libraries that can help librarians provide quality collections and programs for the library.

Librarians also hold fundraisers and seek donations to enhance the library collection. Of the 30 librarians surveyed, 25 do some sort of fundraising. The most common fundraiser is hosting a book fair and purchasing books with book fair funds. Other fundraisers include, selling items such as pencils or candy, raffles, collecting Boxtops for Education or Campbell soup labels, and seeking donations from grandparents in the form of a book to donate to the school library in the grandchild’s name. Johnson (“Budgeting”) recommends keeping a list of all resources received from fundraisers, grants, and donations and providing district administrators with a copy. This gives details about how monies have been spent and resources used.

Providing free resources is another way librarians add to the library collection. Most of the librarians surveyed (80%) provide access to free information resources for the library patrons. Some of the resources that were mentioned are *ABCya, Khan Academy, Easybib, Purdue Writing Lab (OWL)*, and public libraries. Several respondents listed getting free ebooks with print books and open source ebooks, such as those available from *Project Gutenberg*. 
Promoting the Library Program and Resources

For school librarians to have the most impact on students, their role needs to be seen as collaborating, planning, and developing curriculum with teachers (Shannon 18). Promoting the school library has a positive effect, especially when budget are tight. Edwards recommends that the librarian make sure that students, teachers, parents, and the rest of the community know what is happening in the library (57). School librarians place a high priority on getting resources into the hand of their students.

Twenty-nine of the thirty librarians promote the library programs and materials. Library promotion occurs in many different ways. The main ways school librarians promote the library are through posters and displays. Some send newsletters and brochures home. Others choose to promote the library through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or through a school or library Web site. Promoting the library is also done with through interaction with students and teachers on a daily basis in the school. Several librarians provide special reading programs with incentives to get more students reading. The school library is also promoted to teachers through positive working relationships and staff appreciation. As well as, learning lunches for staff members. Based on the survey responses, school librarians realize the importance of promoting the school library. A Parent Advocate Toolkit is offered by the American Library Association on their website. The toolkit contains additional ideas for promoting student success as well as goals for a successful library program.

Delegating Responsibilities

School librarians continue to provide quality service by utilizing volunteers when they are given more responsibilities. School librarians are often given duties in addition to running the library. Of the respondents surveyed, 96% have extra duties. Duties assigned vary from school to school. The most common responsibility is supervision. Supervision duties include cafeteria duty, study hall, and recess duty. Librarians have a heavy workload, especially with added responsibilities. To help maintain a quality of service, many use volunteers in the library. Student volunteers are used to sort and shelve books, make book displays and bulletin boards, and clean among many other duties. Fewer librarians use adult volunteers. Adult volunteers read to children or
check out materials. Volunteers allow the school librarian to spend more time collaborating with teachers and helping individual students to help provide quality service and materials to their patrons (McGown 10). Volunteers can be a great asset to the library, but cannot replace a certified librarian.

Conclusions

The results of this study have shown that school librarians across the state of Missouri are experiencing budget cuts. The results indicate that school librarians are continuing to find ways to do more with less in order to maintain a quality library program. Librarians are changing their spending practices to buy books and databases that will be used by students and teachers. In addition to purchasing materials, librarians are searching for and finding free resources to add to the collection that will benefit patrons. Librarians look for monies and resources outside of the school district to add materials for students and teachers. Applying for grants and seeking donations are two ways librarians are getting resources. School librarians also use public library resources.

Librarians are utilizing student and adult volunteers to shelve and organize books as well as create and maintain displays. Volunteers also are used to clean the library and process books. This allows time for the librarian to collaborate with teachers and work on maintaining the quality of the library.

In addition to maintaining a quality library program, librarians are aware of the need to promote library resources to get them into the hands of all students. Librarians are promoting the school library in different ways. Many are using social media to promote programs and resources. Others are promoting heavily within the school building by hosting reading contests and book fairs for students, as well as, staff appreciation and learning lunches.

School librarians can continue to provide quality library services on a shrinking budget. This can be done by making free resources available on the school or library Website, promoting the school library, and utilizing volunteers.
WORKS CITED


APPENDIX A
SCHOOL LIBRARY BUDGET SURVEY

I am Renee Hand, a researcher and graduate student in the Library Science and Information Services Program at the University of Central Missouri, I would like to know about how you handle budget cuts. Results will be used to highlight the ways a librarian can continue to provide a quality library program even with budget cuts. You can contact the researcher at (660) 621-2117. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the university's Human Subjects Protection Program by email at humansubjects@ucmo.edu or by phone at (660) 543-4621. Page 3 has the form submit button. By taking this survey, you give us consent to use your information in my research. Results of the survey will be made available in the thesis, which will be included in the database of theses maintained by the UCM University Library.

* Required

Section 1 – Demographics

1. Are you a school librarian? *
   - Yes
   - No

2. What is the population of your school? *
   - Under 350
   - 351-600
   - 601-1000
   - 1001 or more

3. School type*
   - Rural
   - Suburban
   - Urban
   - Private
   - Other

4. The percent of free and reduced students in my school. *

5. What grade level does your library (libraries) serve?
Section 2 - Budget

6. Has your district lost one or more librarians due to budget cuts in the past 5 years? *
   o Yes
   o No

7. Given your budget, have you been able to maintain stable access to Reference and nonfiction resources?
   o Yes
   o No

8. Have you purchased more digital items such as ebooks and databases within the past 5 years?
   o Yes
   o No

9. List some of the digital items you have purchased (e.g. Ebooks, databases).

10. If you have experienced budget cuts, are you able to purchase all the items for your collection that you
    feel are the most important/helpful for your students? *
    o Yes
    o No

11. As your budget and the needs of your users have changed in the last few years, how have you modified
    your budgeting practices*(e.g. allotting more funds for digital resources, etc.)?

12. List some ways you manage to stretch your library budget (e.g. buying paperbacks instead of hardcover
    books, purchasing ebooks, collaborating with public librarians).

13. What is the average amount of money spent per pupil for library resources in your school? *

14. Has the amount of money spent per pupil for library resources increased, decreased, or remained stable
    over the past 5 years?*
    o Increased
    o Decreased
    o Remained stable
15. Do you provide access through your library (catalog or website) to free resources?
   - Yes
   - No

If yes, list some of those resources (e.g. Books Should be Free, Bitstrips, ABCya, Easybib, Hooda Math, Khan Academy).

Section 3 – Fundraising/Delegating

16. Have you ever spent your own money on books for your school library?
   - Yes
   - No

17. Do you participate in fundraising activities for your library?
   - Yes
   - No

18. List the fundraising activities you have for your school library.

19. Do you use student volunteers in your library?
   - Yes
   - No

20. If you use student volunteers, what are some duties they perform (e.g. shelving books, book displays)?

21. Do you use adult volunteers in your library?
   - Yes
   - No

22. If you use adult volunteers, what are some duties they perform (e.g. reading to children, checking out books, shelving books)?

Section 4 – Perceptions of the school librarian/Promoting the library program

23. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing minimal support and 5 representing strong support, rate your administrator’s support for the school librarian.
   - 1 Minimal Support
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5 Strong Support
24. How do you promote your library program (e.g. posters, bookmarks, Facebook page)?

25. How do you promote your digital resources (e.g. library Web page, newsletter)?

26. Have you been assigned additional duties besides serving as the school librarian?
   o Yes
   o No

27. If so, have those duties increased over the past 5 years?
   o Yes
   o No

28. If you have been given extra duties, list those duties (e.g. supervision, RtI, keyboarding).
APPENDIX B
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY
(To be sent to the MASL forum and email to librarians in selected school districts.)

I am writing to request your participation in a brief survey. I am working on my Education Specialist Degree in Human Services/Learning Resources. I am currently working on my thesis which is titled “The Challenge of Providing School Library Resources of a Shrinking Budget.” Your responses to this survey will help me determine the ways school librarians are continuing to provide resources for their students, how school librarians advocate for their programs, and how much budget cuts have affected school library programs in Missouri. If you have already taken this survey, please ignore this invitation.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please click the link below to go to the survey Website (or copy and paste the link into your Internet browser).

Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses to any reports of these data. The UCM Institutional Review Board has approved this survey. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the university's Human Subjects Protection Program by email at humansubjects@ucmo.edu or by phone at (660) 543-4621. The results of this survey will be published in my thesis. Should you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at rsh63250@ucmo.edu or 660-621-2117.

Here is survey link
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1N-QXO0GlCOTmAnWAFPIGJzE3SM7ZMXywFzGd63t67M/viewform?usp=send_form

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Renee Hand
APPENDIX C
HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

2/19/2015

Renee Hand

Dear Renee Hand:

Your research project, 'The Challenge of Providing School Library Programs on a Shrinking Budget', was approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee on 2/3/2015.

Please note that you are required to notify the committee in writing of any changes in your research project and that you may not implement changes without prior approval of the committee. You must also notify the committee in writing of any change in the nature or the status of the risks of participating in this research project.

Should any adverse events occur in the course of your research (such as harm to a research participant), you must notify the committee in writing immediately. In the case of any adverse event, you are required to stop the research immediately unless stopping the research would cause more harm to the participants than continuing with it.

At the conclusion of your project, you will need to submit a completed Project Status Form to this office. You must also submit the Project Status Form if you wish to continue your research project beyond its initial expiration date.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Janice Putnam, Ph.D., RN
Research Compliance Officer
putnam@ucmo.edu