

A Library They Deserve

The Baltimore Elementary and Middle School Library Project

Steven B. Sheldon, Marcia H. Davis, and Faith Connolly



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A Library They Deserve

The Baltimore Elementary and Middle School Library Project

Abstract

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation has partnered with Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC) to complete a series of reports examining the implementation and impact of the Baltimore Elementary and Middle School Library Project (Library Project). This report on the first year of the project examines the experiences of the principals, librarians, teachers, and students at the three schools that received new libraries. Also, teachers' and students' perceptions of their school library were compared across the Library Project and comparison schools. Findings of the report include: (1) all three schools with a new library viewed them as inviting, attractive, and well-resourced spaces; (2) a knowledgeable, skilled, and motivated library staff is essential to maximizing the potential of these new libraries; (3) librarians and teachers need additional professional development to best integrate the library technology into instruction; and (4) the community partnerships initiated through this project are adding significant resources to the education of students in these schools. The implications for the school district and future efforts are discussed.

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A Library They Deserve

Year 1 Report on the Baltimore Elementary and Middle School Library Project

Steven B. Sheldon, Marcia H. Davis, and Faith Connolly

Project Background

Libraries are an essential space within every school, and few if any would suggest that students do not need to have access to a well-resourced library at their school. What students are learning and doing in school libraries today is not the same as what was happening one or two decades ago. Libraries without sufficient numbers and types of computers; numbers and types of books; and without well-designed spaces may not be able to adequately support student learning, critical thinking, or enjoyment of reading. Unfortunately, in far too many schools, school libraries have not been updated and cannot foster the kind of learning we are hoping to see in students today.

Summary of Research on Libraries

Research on school libraries has found that libraries are often underused yet valuable resources that can have a positive impact on student achievement. In particular, prior research studies have shown that access to books during the school day leads to higher test scores and academic achievement, even offsetting the negative impacts of poverty (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Von Secker, 2000; Lindsay, 2010). However, about 25% of schools in America do not have a school librarian (Gretes, 2013) and the number of school librarians decreased between the years 2007-2011 (ALA, 2013). Unfortunately, students attending schools located in areas with high concentrations of poverty have less access to books and other library resources compared to students attending more affluent schools (Pribesh, Gavigan, & Dickinson, 2011).

Supplying these schools' libraries with books is only the first step in giving such students greater access to books and improving achievement. There are other factors that will make a library more or less effective in impacting student achievement. Below are findings from a literature review prepared for The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation by Frances Gretes (2013) of more than 60 school library impact studies and more than 100 other documents from other sources such as the National Center for Literacy Education and state library associations. Findings such as those shown below which have influenced the various elements associated with the Library Project.

Effective libraries

- The library should be envisioned as a classroom as well as a welcoming place of learning with spaces for individual and group uses. The facility should be flexible and customizable to support multiple activities.
- School libraries are “powerful agents of learning, central to engaging students in the transformation of information into deep knowledge and understanding, and providing them with life skills...” (Gordon & Ross, 2012)
- School libraries can serve a wider purpose by reaching out to families and the community.

Role of the Librarian

- Librarians play an essential role in teaching 21st century skills, supporting implementation of Common Core State Standards, integrating technology and digital tools into instruction, and developing student literacy.
- Increased and better collaboration of school librarians with teachers, principals, committees, and public libraries improved outcomes (Shannon, 2012).
- School librarians perform an integral role in promoting the effective use of educational technologies in their schools.

Student performance

- School libraries have the ability to bridge the gap between privileged and at-risk students by providing equal access and resources for learning (Pribesh, Gavigan, & Dickinson, 2011).
- Longer hours of operation and flexible scheduling (including summer openings) help students perform better (Lindsay, 2010).
- Studies show that the larger the staff, the higher the student achievement (Lance, Curry, & Kachel, 2013). Statistics vary regarding full/part-time certified librarian and support staff.

One of the main ways libraries can impact reading achievement is by increasing students' motivation to read. Although learning how to read effectively is important, there are many students who disengage from the reading process and resist classroom reading activities due to a lack of motivation to read. This lack of motivation can have detrimental effects on reading growth (Baker, Afflerbach, & Reinking, 1996; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie, & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie, McGough, Bennett, & Rice, 1996; Paris & Oka, 1986; Unrau & Schlackman, 2006). Research has indicated that reading motivation declines dramatically as students move from elementary to middle school (Gottfried, 1985). Some reasons behind this decline are based on the differences in reading practices between elementary and middle schools, including: 1) detachment of reading instruction from content, 2) formidable texts and textbook structures, 3) formal, non-personal response expectations, 4) diminished student choice, 5) isolation of students from teachers, and 6) minimal linkage of real-world interaction with reading (Guthrie and Davis, 2003).

Some ways libraries can increase a student's motivation to read for intrinsic reasons include:

1. Giving students a chance to collaborate around shared reading. Social discourse during learning can be intrinsically motivating. Students who participate in collaborative groups outperform students who participate in non-collaborative instruction on multiple reading comprehension measures (Klingner, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1998; McKinstery & Topping, 2003). Libraries with multiple copies of books and time for book clubs can support collaboration around reading.
2. Providing time for students to select books to read or check out. Students have a need to feel in control of their learning (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Empirical evidence has indicated

that autonomy support is related to increased levels of reading engagement (Schraw, Flowerday, & Reisetter, 1998). Librarians can support autonomy by giving students frequent opportunities to select books.

3. Making available a large selection of interesting texts. Not only do students read more when they are interested in a book (McLoyd, 1979), but that interest may lead to a “longer-term intrinsic motivation for general reading” (Guthrie, et al., 2006, p. 91). Librarians must assure that their libraries hold books that are of interest to their students, especially boys, who often have difficulty finding books that interest them (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999).
4. Supporting teachers in integrating reading into their subjects. Reading in each discipline is different and has its own challenges (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Librarians can help support the efforts of content area teachers by providing books in their subject areas and connecting the reading they are doing in the library with the content area knowledge they are learning in the classroom. This also makes the reading more meaningful to the students and supports the Common Core Standards.
5. Reinforcing strategy instruction taught in classrooms. As students learn and become proficient using before-, during-, and after-reading strategies, they become more confident in their reading (Schunk & Pajares, 2002; Schunk & Rice, 1992). Librarians can help by reminding students to use the reading strategies taught by teachers in the school.

The Baltimore Elementary and Middle School Library Project¹

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation (Weinberg Foundation) initiated the Baltimore Library Project as a multi-year, collaborative effort to design, build, equip, and staff new or renovated elementary/middle school libraries in partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) in high-poverty neighborhoods where many students face academic challenges. The Weinberg Foundation has committed \$10 million to the initiative and plans to renovate up to 24 libraries. Each library includes flexible book shelving, e-readers, computers and other technological instructional devices, an “Enoch Pratt Parent Place” for parents/guardians, informal reading areas, and separate areas for study and research, instruction, and group discussion. They have transformed five school libraries throughout Baltimore City to date and plan to open four more by September 2014. Current Library Project schools include:

Year 1 Cohort (Opened 2012-13 school year)

1. Moravia Park Elementary School
2. Southwest Baltimore Charter School
3. Thomas Johnson Elementary/Middle School

Year 2 Cohort (Opened 2013-14 school year)

4. Arlington Elementary/Middle School
5. The Historic Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School

¹ The Weinberg Foundation provided documents, access to their web site and personal communication to inform this section.

6. Henderson-Hopkins School

Year 3 Cohort (Scheduled to open 2014-15 school year)

7. Morrell Park Elementary/Middle School
8. Harford Heights Elementary School
9. Windsor Hills Elementary/Middle School

Funding Sources for Library Project Schools. Starting in 2001, Baltimore City Schools began applying for Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) funds to renovate their school libraries. The QZAB funds are federal dollars that are distributed to districts through State offices. To qualify for QZAB funds, the school must be located in either an Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community with 35% or more of its students eligible for the free or reduced price meal program. In Baltimore, funds have been utilized to renovate libraries and included physical space reconfiguration, environmental abatement, quality air control, lighting, and flooring upgrades.

While QZAB dollars allow improvement, when a project is completed funds are often limited for additional resources. As a result, the Library Project builds onto existing QZAB funds and provides additional funding for library resources, school-community partnerships, and staffing. The Weinberg Foundation supports up to 30% of the total project costs of each renovation project.

Additional Resources for Library Project Schools. To be eligible for a renovated library and the additional resources that come with the Baltimore Library Project, schools must commit to maintaining a full-time librarian. Through a separate contract with the Fund for Educational Excellence, the Foundation provides schools a part-time library assistant for up to four years and professional development funds to benefit the library staff.

The Weinberg Foundation provides laptops for a networking station, a Parent Place, and a circulation computer for the librarian. Thus far, the Foundation bought Nooks from Barnes and Noble at a discounted price along with a charging cart and \$3,500 worth of book and magazine titles for the Nooks, which were selected by the librarian. Additional technology includes listening stations, printers, book scanners, web conference and document cameras, and a Smart Board.

In year one, up to 4,000 books were placed in the library depending on existing collection and shelf space. The initial book collection occurred through a Community Book Drive with new books placed into the library and used books donated to Baltimore Reads for distribution to the classrooms. The Weinberg Foundation purchased books through Heart of America Foundation, in consultation with the school librarians and City Schools representatives. City Schools funded an additional \$10,000 worth of books. The total cost of books purchased by the Foundation averaged \$45,000 per school.

In addition to these resources, the Baltimore Library Project brought a range of potential partners into contact with schools to further support students and families. These partners include

corporate and individual underwriters, children's book publishers, product and technology manufacturers, media outlets, bookstores, public libraries, and design companies.

The Weinberg Foundation and its partners hope that a fun, safe and enlightening space such as the libraries in this project will contribute to children's love of books and will help them to develop critical reading and thinking skills. The goal is for these spaces to engage the entire family and community more directly in the schools through partnerships with extracurricular programs, including a wide array of community partners.

Methodology

This formative evaluation examines the first year of implementation of the Baltimore Library Project in three schools. This is the first in what will be a series of reports examining the implementation and, later, the impact of the library on reading and literacy in the schools. In this first year report the focus is on perceptions of the libraries by principals, librarians, teachers, students, and community partners. These perceptions inform our understanding of the potential impact or lack thereof on later behavior changes.

In later reports, we will examine the changes in behaviors and eventually literacy measures. Also, later reports will seek to understand the impact of the Library Project by comparing schools with a well-equipped, renovated, and well-staffed library to schools that had their library renovated using only QZAB funding. Prior to the Library Project, QZAB schools were not required to maintain a librarian position and often were not able to equip the spaces with new books or technology.

In this section we list the research questions to be addressed in this report, what data were collected and how, and any limitations to be considered in our findings.

Research Questions

Evaluation of the Baltimore Library Project was guided by the goal of understanding how school staff, students, and the community partners perceive the library and their experiences with the resources in that new space.

Specifically, the research questions addressed by our analysis include:

What changes did principals expect the new library to have on their school, and what changes were realized?

What changes did librarians expect the new library to have on their school, and what changes were realized?

What were teachers' and students' perceptions of the new library at their school?

How did teachers and students use the new library at their school?

To what extent was receiving a new library related to book usage at the school?

How did community partners perceive their work with the schools that received a new library?

Were there any unanticipated outcomes for Library Project schools and, if so, what were they?

Participants

This report is based on survey and interview data collected from five schools: the three schools that received a new library and two schools that agreed to participate and function as comparison sites. The comparison schools were chosen because of their similarity to the Library Project schools in terms of the neighborhood served and the percentage of students receiving free- or reduced-price meals. The original design of this study intended to include three comparison schools; however, a third site could not be recruited.

Data were collected from the three schools that participated in the first year of the Baltimore Library Project. All three schools are located in the City of Baltimore. School “A” is a charter school which served 428 students in school year 2012-2013 and is located on the west side of Baltimore adjacent to a park. In 2012, 84% of the students received free- or reduced-price meals. This school uses the Expeditionary Learning (EL) curriculum in Science and Social Studies. The building is two stories, with the library located at the end of a hallway on the second floor.

School “B” is located on the east side of Baltimore. When the school was chosen to receive a new library, it served elementary and middle school students in two separate buildings about 100 yards apart from one another. In 2011-12, during construction of the new library, City Schools converted the school to an elementary school serving 768 students. In 2012, 93% of students at the school received free- or reduced-price meals. The library is located in the building serving students in Head Start and pre-kindergarten through second grade. This school serves a large immigrant population.

School “C” is located in south Baltimore and served 500 students in kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2012-2013 school year. In 2012, 73% of the students received free- or reduced-price meals. The school is located near a park and is surrounded by residential row houses. The building is two stories, and the library is located in the middle of the school building on the second floor.

Two schools served as comparison sites for this evaluation. Comparison School One was located in south Baltimore and served approximately 500 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. In 2012, 80% of the students received free- or reduced-price meals. Comparison School Two served around 300 elementary grade students at the time of this evaluation. Almost the entire student body (over 95%) received free- or reduced-price meals. This school was located in west Baltimore.

Data and Analysis

Interviews. Principal and librarian interviews were conducted three times during the first year. Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes, and the semi-structured interview protocols are included in Appendix D.

Summer 2012 Interviews. The first set of interviews was conducted in summer 2012. Researchers interviewed school principals, administrators, and librarians from the first cohort of schools involved with the Baltimore Library Project to learn about how they envisioned using their new library, including how teachers, students, and the community used their library in the previous year, how they envisioned the role of the library changing, and what additional partnerships they had made for the coming year.

December 2012 Interviews. The goal of the second set of interviews was to learn how the new library was being utilized and perceived by students and teachers. In addition, BEREC researchers were particularly interested in understanding how part-time library clerks were being used and how well the community partnerships were developing. These two specific topics were of interest because they relate directly to how schools are using the new library space and resources with students.

Spring 2013 Interviews. The final set of interviews, held at the end of the school year, asked similar questions to those asked in December, but also included questions about lessons learned over the course of the whole school year.

Surveys. Student and teacher surveys were conducted in the spring in schools with a new library and in comparison schools. Copies of the surveys and response rates can be found in Appendix A.

Teacher Survey. A 16 item web-based survey was administered to teachers in five schools, asking them about their perceptions of the school library, as well as how the school library is used with students and by them to support classroom instruction. Teachers responded to statements about their perceptions of the school library by responding “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly Disagree.” Response options for questions about teachers’ use of the school library were: “Daily or Weekly,” “Monthly,” “Every Few Months,” or “Never.”

Student Survey. A 22 item survey was administered to 431 students in five schools, asking them about their perceptions of their enjoyment of reading and the school library, what they do in their school library, and their use of their community library. Students responded to statements about their perceptions of reading and their school library by responding “A lot like me,” “Like me,” or “Not like me.” Response options for questions about students’ use of the school library were: “Often,” “Sometimes,” or “Never.”

Book Inventory and Usage. In order to keep track of book inventories, lending, and returns, City Schools provided each school in the district with the Koha Library System (Koha). Koha is a free, open source integrated library system that allows libraries to use web-based services to organize and manage the circulation of their books. To help schools manage the system, the district contracted with an external company.

For this evaluation, City Schools provided BERC with Koha data for each school in the district via 3 Excel files:

- Counts of *student* checkouts by school library branch
- Counts of *teacher* checkouts by school library branch
- Counts of *total checkouts* by school library branch (with specific counts for books, reference materials, computer files, and mixed materials)

Limitations

Finding a third school willing to commit to being a comparison school proved difficult and, ultimately, impossible. This fact hampered our ability to have a sample of comparison students and teachers from a school aligned to each library school. As a result, we cannot ensure equality between any individual library and a particular comparison school. It is important to note that the figures and tables representing individual schools are for descriptive purposes only. We do feel confident, however, in our comparison of students and teachers in the full set of schools with a new library and the full set of comparison schools without a new library. We note differences that are statistically significant.

Also, for this evaluation of the Baltimore Library Project, standardized test scores or school proficiency rates were not collected or used. Future evaluation reports, however, will use this data and compare Library Project schools to schools that have already received QZAB funding prior to the establishment of this project.

Findings

In the following sections, we present findings to the research questions proposed in the methodology.

Principal Perceptions

Facility. Principals reported a lot of excitement about the expanded use of the new space. They reported, not only did *more students* read books; students read *more books*. One administrator explained that students who like to read are reading more because they have more books and complete book series, so they can read a collection of stories from beginning to end. At the same time, she continued, students who were not avid readers are now reading more materials like graphic novels; some students went from reading graphic novels to reading about how to write graphic novels.

The reported increases in student reading and literacy activities, in all three schools, were attributed in part to the additional books provided by The Weinberg Foundation, directly, and through the school-community partnerships facilitated by the Library Project (e.g., Barnes & Noble, Raising A Reader, Baltimore Readers, Heart of America Foundation).

Principals and administrators also commented that teachers are excited by the newly renovated library. At two of the three schools, interviewees stated that the teachers are using the library more often than they did before. They attribute this increase to

“It really is an oasis in our building. It has a completely different feeling and a calming effect.” -- Teacher

several characteristics of the new libraries, including: better access to more books, reliable wireless access to the internet, and comfortable working conditions (heat/air conditioning, floor plan/design). In some cases, teacher meetings and presence has become so commonplace that librarians have had to limit the number of meetings taking place so that they would not disturb the students using the library.

School Climate. Principals view the new library in their school as having a significant impact on the school climate. One principal reported that the library served as impetus for the school to raise funds to remodel lower elementary classrooms and the front office. A school administrator described it as the “librarification” of the school.

Other principals described the library as an important space that provides students and families a place to go for additional resources; and one principal stated that the library could be a “game-changer” for struggling students. This principal expressed the belief that the wealth of books, computer technology, and other media resources can make reading and writing more appealing for students who may be turned off to these subjects or whose skill levels are below grade level.

“It’s an amazing space that the kids like to go to and our kids deserve spaces like this.” --Teacher

Family Use. All three principals reported that the new libraries were rarely used by family or community members. Although each school could relate instances of parent or community

members drawing upon the resources in the library, these tended to be isolated instances. Family and community members typically see the new library at after-school events like family workshops and PTA/PTO meetings. One principal commented that educators at the school made a conscious effort to let parents know that “this is your building” and felt as though that messaging was a reason why they have immigrant and refugee parents using the library. The other principals did not see much use of the library by family members or the community.

After one year, principals and librarians tended to describe the new libraries more as a school resource for teachers and students, and less of a community resource available to families or the public. It is an element that each principal sees as an area for improvement in the coming year.

Partnerships. In order to help promote literacy achievement and growth, the Baltimore Library Project connected the three renovated schools to community organizations that work to improve children’s lives and education in Baltimore City. The Weinberg Foundation encouraged schools to meet with potential partners in order to implement new programs that might benefit students. In some cases, The Weinberg Foundation initiated the school-community partnership. For example, the Foundation approached Baltimore Reads to coordinate the book drives and book distribution to school libraries and teachers. When asked about the school-community partnerships at their school, principals listed several common partners with whom they are working. These partnerships were similar across the schools, and principals often described the partnerships as “developing” or in early stages, most likely due to the timeline of interviews. Table 1 provides a list of these partners and a brief description of the service(s) that principals described were provided to the Schools. One principal mentioned a partnership with the Maryland Food Bank, however, this relationship pre-existed the Baltimore Library Project.

Table 1
Principal Reported Year 1 School Community Partnerships

Community Partner	Support provided to school
Baltimore Reads	Assisted with the Book Drive and organized new, donated books for the libraries
Barnes and Noble	Provided Nooks and professional development to educators about how to use the Nooks
Parks and People	Worked with schools to plan and fund asphalt removal and/or new landscaping projects
Raising A Reader	Implemented their program to help train parents how to read to their young children (preschool and kindergarten), and to send books home with children
The Baltimore Sun	Provided school with free daily newspapers
Enoch Pratt Free Library	Supported the Parent Place and hosted literacy events
Art with a Heart	Worked with schools to create a mosaic sign for the front of the new school library

Librarian Perceptions

Partnerships. In the summer 2012 interviews, during the middle of construction, the librarians seemed excited about the possibility of new partnerships, although they were not aware exactly who the partners would be.

In interviews in December and June the librarians primarily mentioned partnerships with Barnes and Noble, the Baltimore Sun newspaper, and Raising a Reader, as described in Table 1. Two schools had great success with Raising a Reader and the librarians felt that it was a very valuable partnership. All three schools had newspapers delivered by the Baltimore Sun that were used in classrooms as well as read by visiting parents.

“We love the Raising a Reader partner that Weinberg helped to fund. Kids go home with books in their bags and parents get information about how to read with their kids.” -- Librarian

Enoch Pratt Parent Place. In the past, parental involvement in the libraries consisted mostly of parent volunteers who would re-shelve books and hold book fairs. The Baltimore Library Project created a new innovation that grew out of the partnership between The Weinberg Foundation and the Enoch Pratt Free Library. They conceptualized a “Parent Place”; a space where parents could learn about parenting skills, programs and classes for themselves - even GED courses - and develop a stronger link between families and schools. Librarians were excited about the new parent section in the library and interviewees felt that the library could be a place families would want to come, read a newspaper, and be proud of the school.

“We have parents come before and after school to get directions around downtown, find community activities, and use MapQuest to get to job interviews. One grandmother is studying to get her GED. One parent will walk with a younger sibling to the school to pick up her big sister every day and stop by the library to hang out. We have some books that are free to a good home - we give board books to toddlers visiting with their parents.” -- Librarian

While librarians could provide examples of families using the Parent Place, in general there was minimal use of this library-based resource. By November it seemed that families were not using the Parent Place to the extent originally envisioned. At one school, the librarian reported that none of the books on literacy and parenting were checked out. She estimated that about six parents visit and use the computers.

By the end of the year there was still very little use of the Parent Place except in one of the schools where the librarian made a strong effort to engage families generally. At that school, the librarian commented that they have quite a few parents coming before and after school. That librarian, however, was in charge of writing the parent newsletter and usually included a note about parents being welcome to use the school library.

Use of Technology. The Weinberg Foundation provided laptops, e-readers, printers, book scanners, web conference and document cameras, and “smart boards”. At the start of the first year the librarians were excited about the new technology available to them through this project. The librarians were especially excited about the Nook e-readers Weinberg purchased from Barnes and Noble. However, they wanted more professional development on how to use the technology.

In November, one librarian mentioned that the Barnes and Noble representative had trained students and faculty on how to use the Nook e-reader, yet, by her choice, only advanced students were using them. The librarian says she has a two-year strategy to get to the point where more students can check out Nooks.

The librarians mentioned that they would like additional training, especially for the teachers, on the different ways the Nooks can be used in the classrooms. One librarian had a small reading club using the Nooks.

One librarian mentioned an ongoing struggle to ensure students and teachers are treating technology with care. As a result, she was timid and moving carefully in distributing and sharing the equipment.

Instructional Delivery. For the most part, it seems, the librarians at Library Project schools agree it is important to collaborate with teachers to support classroom instruction. At one school many of the English Language Learner (ELL) teachers came to the library for materials and support. Also, the librarian sat in on teacher team meetings to plan new units. She also met with teachers one-on-one or over coffee to go over a new unit. Another librarian met with teachers very regularly, and said, “My role is to support teachers in the school.” One librarian, however, admitted that she has not met with teachers as often as she would like. She reported it is an issue of timing and that when teachers have free time, she is working with students.

“I believe my role with instructional delivery is half of my role as a librarian. It is my goal to increase collaboration and meetings with the staff.” -- Librarian

Library Clerk. The Weinberg Foundation provided funding for a part-time library clerk to “support the operation of the library through the processing and maintenance of learning resources using an automated library system and by providing general clerical and client support to the librarian.” The summer 2012 interviews indicated that librarians were excited to have the addition of the library clerk and envisioned the clerk helping with the processing of materials, checking books in and out, and covering the library when the librarian is meeting with teachers to co-plan lessons.

“We love the library. It is such a focal point for the school. It ties the school together... The library is the heart of the community.” -- Library Clerk

By December 2012 all three schools had hired a library clerk. Librarians reported that the clerks were very helpful in cataloguing books, helping students check books in and out, and helping the

librarian set up an organizational system to keep track of which students had checked out various books.

Schools used their clerks differently depending on need. At one school, the library clerk was a former teacher and at times co-teaches. She also helped with the 100 Book Challenge, a personalized reading program where students select books to take home and read and are held accountable for a specific amount of reading. At another school, the clerk helped create a database of books for lower elementary school students and helped organize it by topics teachers cover in those classrooms.

Professional Development. The Weinberg Foundation provided funds for librarians' professional development. Two of the three librarians attended the Maryland Association of School Librarian's conference in October, but reported obtaining little other professional development. The librarians stated that they feel they are needed in the library and that taking time off would be detrimental

“Kids started book clubs – Junie B. Jones, Magic Tree house, Goosebumps. They hold them during our lunch break. They came up with the idea after I mentioned that sometimes my girlfriends sit and read the same book or by same author and talk.” -- Librarian

to the students and their school. As a result all three of the librarians stated it is difficult to attend professional development since there is no one to cover the library in their absence. One librarian plans to attend a convention in the summer since she can go to 20 different workshops. Another librarian attends the monthly I-works program in Baltimore City.

Checkout system. Librarians have all cited that there are significant difficulties in using the district-wide Koha check-out system. Some of the problems included, but were not limited to, books not cataloged in the checkout system, books incorrectly numbered in the checkout system, and numbers associated with more than one book title. At two of the schools, the bar codes of new books overlapped with those of older books (i.e., leaving two different books connected to the same bar code). Eventually the librarian at one of these two schools realized that approximately 50% of the new books were coded incorrectly. Recoding the books has been an ongoing process. At both schools this caused trouble when, at the end of the year, they tried to collect missing books from the students. The check-out system at the third school was not functioning before the Library Project began and was not fixed until halfway through the school year. Instead of using Koha, that school library used an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of which books each student checked out. These problems are district-wide, but due to the focus on Library Project schools the concerns are being addressed in the next year.

Teacher Perceptions

Facility. As can be seen in Figure 1, teachers in schools with a new library, relative to those in comparison schools, reported the library at their school was more welcoming; that students enjoyed going to the library more; and that the library had a positive effect on classroom learning. All of these differences were *statistically significant*. Statistical analyses also found

that teachers in schools with a new library were more likely to perceive the school library as a valuable resource for student learning and as a place that makes the school more conducive to teaching and learning.

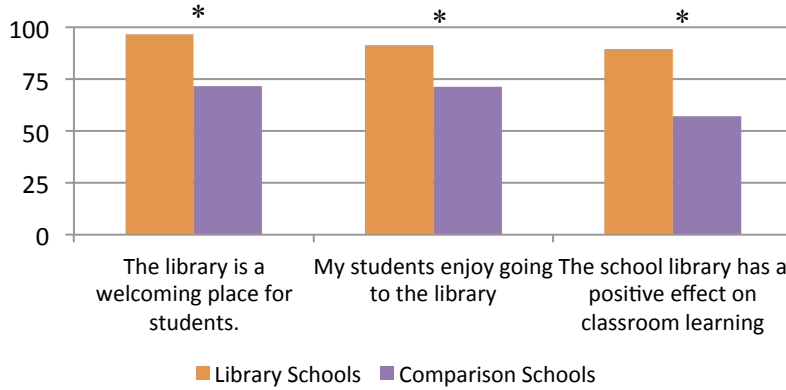


Figure 1. Teacher perception of the school library: Percent who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

* Statistically significant

From the surveys, teachers’ responses to an open ended question asking them to report their favorite thing about their school library suggested that those in a Library Project school felt more positive about the space. One teacher from a Baltimore Library Project school expressed what she liked most, “The materials that are available for staff and students, the colors of the library and how the library flows and [it] feels like a place you just want to be at.” However, as illustrated in Table 2, teachers at School 2 were less positive about the impact of the new library on students than those in Schools 1 and 3.

Table 2

Teacher Perception of the School Library: Percent who “Strongly Agree” or Agree” by School

	Comparison Schools (n=21)	School 1 (n=21)	School 2 (n=25)	School 3 (n=11)
The library is a welcoming place for students	71.5	100	80.0	100
My students enjoy going to the library	71.4	100	80.0	100
The school library has a positive effect on classroom learning	57.1	100	76.0	100
Our library makes the school more conducive to teaching and learning	61.9	100	84.0	100
The library at my school is a valuable resource for student learning	61.9	100	92.0	100

Teacher Use of the School Library. In general, schools with a new library used it in ways similar to comparison schools. One important exception, as shown in Figure 2, is that teachers in schools with new libraries reported that they took their students to the library to select books to read more frequently than did teachers in comparison schools (82.5% vs. 61.9%). Across the three library schools, 66.7% of teacher reported taking their students to check out books “Daily or Weekly,” compared to less than half (47.6%) of the teachers at the comparison schools.

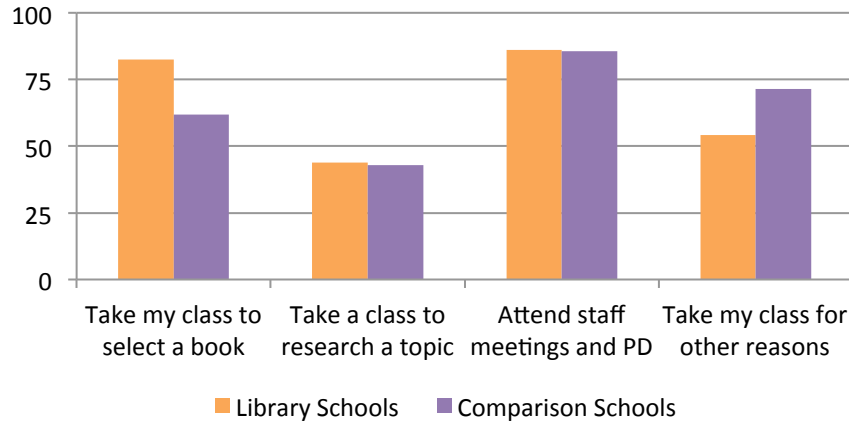


Figure 2. Teacher use of the library: Percent reporting “at Least Monthly”

It is unclear whether the fact that teachers at comparison schools reported taking their students to the library for reasons other than checking out books or researching topics is a positive or negative finding of this evaluation. On the one hand, students may be going to the school library for other kinds of enrichment activities or to learn how to use computers. On the other hand, comparison schools may be using the library space for non-academic purposes (i.e., detention or in-school suspensions). Understanding this dynamic better will be a goal going forward in the second year of evaluating the Baltimore Library Project.

Collaboration with the Librarian. An important element of The Weinberg Foundation’s investment in school libraries is the provision of funds to support a library clerk position that will

“The new library is a wonderful environment for the students. It is full of new and interesting books for the students to read. I am glad that it has up-to-date books like the Magic Tree House series which my students love to read.” -- Teacher

allow librarians the time and opportunity to work more closely with teachers. In general, teachers working in schools with new libraries reported more collaboration with the librarian than did teachers at comparison schools. Teachers at library schools, in contrast to those at comparison schools, were more likely to “agree” or “strongly agree” that the librarian at their school worked with teachers to support classroom activities (77.2% vs. 61.9%) and that the librarian at their

school provided resources to teachers for instruction (75.4% vs. 57.1%). These differences were statistically significant. Here again, however, teachers at School 2 reported far less collaboration with their school librarian (See Figure 3).

These findings are supported elsewhere by the survey results. The percent of teachers who reported meeting with the school librarian at least monthly to get additional resources for the classroom varied widely across the library schools. Over 90% of teachers at School 1 reported monthly meetings with their librarian, while 16% of teachers at School 2 reported having these kinds of monthly meetings. Across the comparison schools, about 38% of teachers reported meeting monthly with the school librarian.

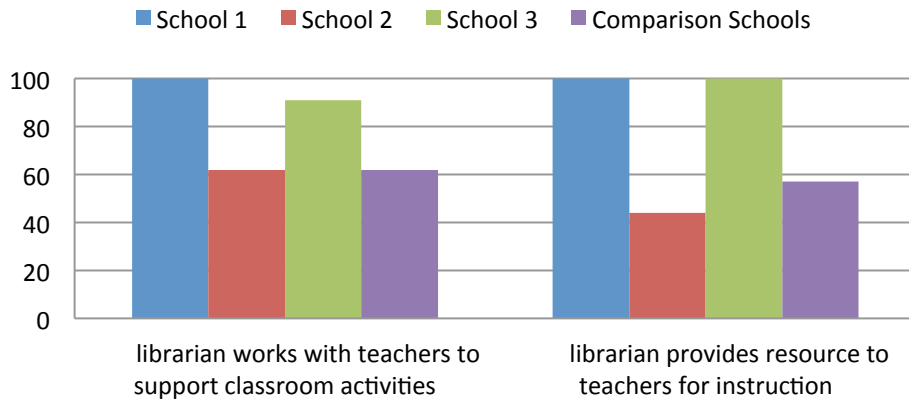


Figure 3. Collaboration with the librarian: Percent of teachers reporting “Strongly Agree” and “Agree,” by school

What Teachers Liked Most and Least About the School Library. In the comparison schools, teachers mentioned physical characteristics (lighting and space) and the availability of computers as things they liked. What they liked least, overwhelmingly, was the availability of books. Teachers commented about the need for more books, more current titles and book series for children to read, and the need for more age-appropriate resource books. In many cases, teachers felt as though their school library was not serving the middle school students especially well.

At the Library Schools, teachers stated that the new libraries were beautiful and inviting spaces for students, teachers, and parents. See teacher comments below.

“The library is beautiful and welcoming. It is a wonderful resource for everyone and the technology is great to have. Students have been playing chess after school and checking out books.”

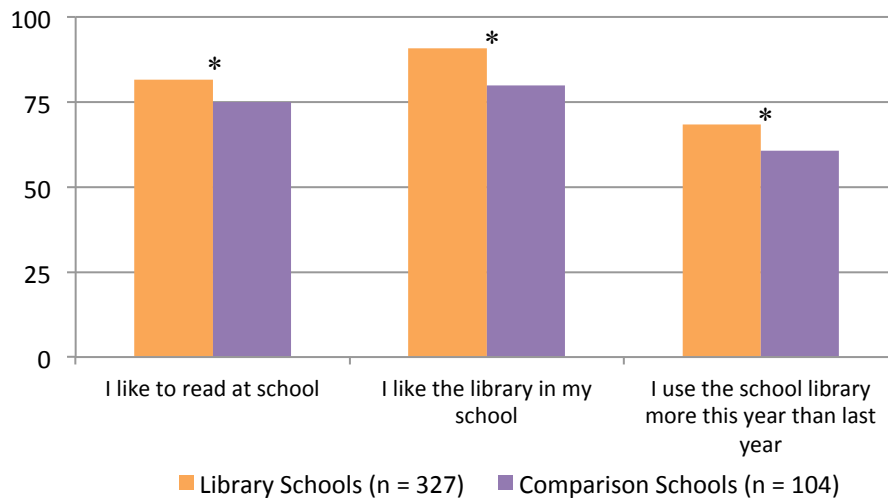
“It’s inviting and accessible to the students, and they are able to have access to more books that interest them. We also have more access to technology.”

“It really is an oasis in our building. It has a completely different feeling, and a calming effect.”

Student Perceptions

Facility. Students from the renovated library schools reported that they like to read more at school, liked their library, and used the library more than they had the previous year compared to the comparison schools (See Figure 4). These three differences were *statistically significant*. Item responses can be found in Appendix C.

Figure 4. Student attitude toward reading and the school library: Percent reporting “A lot like me” or “Like me”



* Statistically significant

Table 3 details student responses to the first eight items on the survey. Although students in schools with a new library liked and used their school library more than comparison schools, among the library schools, students at School 2 were less positive about their new library than students in Schools 1 and 3.

When asked to rate aspects of the library such as ease of finding books and the helpfulness of the librarian, students with a new library did find the librarian helpful for finding interesting books and felt that the libraries made it easy to find books. However, these numbers varied by school with School 2 having lower percentages for all three items compared to Schools 1 and 3.

Table 3
Student Reported Attitude Toward Reading, School Library, and School Librarian

	Comparison Schools (n=104)	School 1 (n=74)	School 2 (n=156)	School 3 (n=97)
<i>Percent Reporting “A lot like me” or “Like me”</i>				
I like to read at home	75.0	89.1	69.3	86.6
I like to read at school	75.0	86.5	75.0	88.7
I like the library in my school	79.9	94.6	86.5	94.9
I have a favorite book or books	91.3	87.8	88.5	92.8
I use the school library more this year than last year	60.6	81.1	64.7	64.9
<i>Percent Reporting “Often” or “Sometimes”</i>				
The school librarian helps me find interesting books	78.8	94.6	73.0	90.7
The school librarian helps me on research for class projects	68.3	73.0	52.5	66.0
It is easy for me to find books I like at the school library	79.8	91.9	79.5	85.5

Students’ Use of the School Library. Students were asked to report on how often they participated in different activities in the library.

Three of these activities were traditional library uses: a) selecting and borrowing books, b) learning about how to find and check out books, and c) going to the library before or after school to read or check out books.

Of these three items, learning about how to find and check out books was the only item with a statistically significant difference between the responses from students in the library schools and students in the comparison schools. As shown in Table 4, students in schools with new libraries reported that they spent more time learning about how to find and check out books, which may be due to the fact that they had to learn how to find books in their new library.

Another two items related to using the library to complete other schoolwork: a) looking up information for class projects and b) doing other schoolwork. Of these two items, doing other schoolwork was the only item with a statistically significant different response between library and comparison schools, with students in schools with new libraries reporting that they spent more time doing schoolwork for other classes as shown in Table 4. In

“The librarian should give us more free time so we can read more books and learn about things and for the librarian teach us more things for school work.” -- Student

general, students at School 1 were more likely to use their library for class projects and schoolwork.

Another two items related to using technology: a) using a computer and b) using an e-reader. Student responses yielded a statistically significant difference between new library schools and the comparison schools. Library school students reported greater use of e-readers, and the comparison school students reported greater use of computers. Among the library schools, students at School 1 were more likely to report using a computer but the least likely to report using an e-readers like a Nook. School 2, however, was the lowest in time reported on the computer. School 3 had the highest percentage of students reporting using the Nooks. It is possible that the comparison schools are using their library for alternative or additional purposes. For example, in the two comparison schools, when the librarian is not there the library space may serve as the computer lab.

“Students have been playing chess after school and checking out books.” -- Teacher

Table 4
Student Reported Activities: Percent Reporting “Often” or “Sometimes”

	Comparison Schools (n=104)	School 1 (n=74)	School 2 (n=156)	School 3 (n=97)
<i>Traditional Uses</i>				
Selecting books to borrow and read at home	73.1	82.4	67.9	83.6
Learning about how to find and check out books*	45.2	68.9	67.3	83.6
Before or after school (selecting books to borrow or reading for class)	56.7	66.2	46.8	42.3
<i>As a resource for other classes</i>				
Looking up information for my class projects	58.7	63.5	41.7	60.9
Doing schoolwork for my other classes*	17.3	70.3	30.1	34.0
<i>Technology</i>				
Using a computer*	82.7	82.4	37.2	60.8
Using an e-reader (like a Nook or Kindle) *	12.5	36.5	52.6	88.6

* Statistically significant difference between library and comparison schools.

Favorite Thing about the Library. Table 5 details the percentages of students at each school who selected one of the more common answers to the open-ended statement, “*My favorite thing about the library is.*” Common answers were those supplied by more than three students. In general, students in schools with a new library, relative to those in comparison schools, reported higher in each category since they were more likely to have 2 to 3 categories included in their answer. However, students at School 2 were less likely to mention their school librarian as their favorite aspect of the library. None of the students at School 1 listed Nooks as their favorite aspect of the library, which was similar to the comparison schools.

Some students reported their librarian as their favorite thing. They described their librarian as, “she is so nice to me we have book club. I like Magic Tree House.” Another student mentioned, “my favorite part about the library is when my librarian helps me pick out a book. I also like about my librarian is she takes as much time to help me pick out the right book for me.”

“The librarian is so nice. If we don’t know what kind of book we should get, the librarian will ask what topics we like and after we answer she lets us know where that type of book is.” -- Student

Table 5
Favorite Things about the Library: Percent of Students

	Comparison Schools (n=104)	School 1 (n=74)	School 2 (n=156)	School 3 (n=97)
Books	33%	37%	49%	22%
Check Out	16%	20%	13%	22%
Reading	17%	21%	10%	29%
Librarian	10%	16%	8%	11%
Quiet	3%	7%	1%	3%
Computers	9%	5%	20%	11%
E-readers	0%	0%	7%	15%
Space	1%	19%	9%	3%

“I like the walls with their fun colors and art, the cool technology, and fun furniture.” Student

Other students reported their favorite thing to be how nice the library looks. One student said, “the spacious areas and it’s very comfortable for just hanging out or read quietly.” Also, “I like how the library got remodeled. It is very bright and colorful.”

Improvements to the Library. Table 6 details the percentages of students at each school who selected one of the more common answers to the statement, “What Could Make the Library Better?”

“Something that could make the library better is to improve the variety and level of books.” -- Student

More students at schools with new libraries reported that “nothing could be improved” as well as wanting more computer time and more time or access to technology like e-readers, compared to those in comparison schools. Students in the comparison schools reported a greater need for new books. Students at School 2 were more likely to mention that they would like more time on the computers and a better librarian, compared to the other two schools and the comparison schools.

Table 6
Student Responses to the Statement, “What Could Make the Library Better?”

	Comparison Schools (n=104)	School 1 (n=74)	School 2 (n=156)	School 3 (n=97)
Nothing	5%	38%	23%	1%
More Books	38%	28%	22%	29%
Computer	8%	5%	17%	6%
Librarian	4%	1%	15%	0%
Quiet	5%	5%	0%	1%
E-readers	4%	5%	7%	3%

Students at all three schools mentioned that they would like more time on the computers and Nooks, “What could make this library better would be having time to get on the computers and also having time to spare to get on the Nooks.”

“If we actually got the chance to use the computers in here it would be so amazing.” -- Student

would like “more time to read books.” This same school also had the largest percent of students who reported that they didn’t have enough time on computers or e-readers. These responses highlight the important role librarians have in providing students access to the books and resources in the library.

The value and role of the librarian became clear in the analysis of student survey responses from School 2 where the librarian was not perceived as highly as the librarians in the other schools. At that particular school, quite a few students commented that they didn’t have enough time to read and check out books. One student specifically stated that she

Library Usage

Data provided on book usage were fraught with challenges and after discussions with the district and experts on the book system, further analyses were abandoned. Upon examination of the files, it became clear that use of the Koha system was inconsistent and/or incorrect throughout schools in the City Schools district. The numbers across the student and teacher checkout files *did not* sum to the same totals in the total material file. In most cases, the reported total materials are far higher than the number of student checkouts reported. This, in combination with the interview data from librarians describing the problems experienced with the Koha system, led us to

conclude that the data are neither valid nor reliable. We did not feel as though meaningful analyses could be conducted to examine book usage in the library and comparison schools. It also became apparent in this evaluation that the district and state are not collecting reliable data from schools about their library resources (e.g., books, magazine subscriptions, videos/DVDs, computers) or the use of those resources. Below are some findings from our own examination of the Koha system data:

- Although all City Schools have access to the Koha software, it is being utilized by fewer than half:
 - 87 school libraries had student checkout data in these files,
 - 74 school libraries had teacher checkout data,
 - 167 schools were included in the Total Materials data with some, but not complete, overlap in the specific schools included in all 3 files.

- We calculated the per student book checkout ratio based on MSDE-reported enrollment for these schools. The ratios ranged between 0.1 books per student to about 14 books per student.
 - The low ratios also call into question the validity of the Koha data from almost all of the school libraries.

These numbers correspond to the librarians' reports across all three schools about the lack of consistent usage of Koha due to problems with the software (School 1) and mistakes in the book labels within the database (Schools 2 & 3). In the second year of the Baltimore Library Project, at the request and with the support of The Weinberg Foundation, school libraries and librarians will use a new library inventory and checkout system (Destiny). This new on-line system may be expanded to the rest of the school district if it is seen as a valuable resource for these schools.

Partner Perceptions

School-community partnerships, while perceived to be valuable, were not necessarily high priorities for all of the schools. Rather, as one interviewee stated, partnerships that met existing needs and practices at the school became strong. Otherwise, partnerships were perceived to require additional work that school staff did not feel they had available.

“One of the great things about the Library Project is that their agenda is not closed so it doesn’t exclude people, great ideas, and creativity. They encourage us to be integrally involved, deepen our connections to the project and connect our mission to lend a hand. Through this partnership we are able to fulfill our mission but we don’t have to be experts in school libraries to do so. We can leverage the enthusiasm of the community and do our small part to contribute to the larger project. This turned out to be a true private-public partnership.” -- Library Project Partner

From the partner perspective, an engaged, enthusiastic school created a strong collaboration that benefitted both partners. Below is a description of the perceptions of those partners mentioned by principals and librarians.

Raising a Reader. Raising A Reader (RAR) is an early literacy and family engagement program for children ages 0-8 that helps families develop book-sharing routines with their child. The organization passes out books to families and hosts family literacy workshops at schools to teach parents how to read with their children. The organization approached The Weinberg Foundation to implement their program in Baltimore City schools, and upon receiving a grant was encouraged to approach the first three Library Project schools. Two schools agreed to work with RAR, and according to their Senior Director of Programs for the East Coast, the partnership has been a success. The two schools implementing the program have distributed books to families and hosted at least two family events where shared reading skills were shown and taught to family members. The organization is enthusiastic and excited about expanding the program to Library Project schools in Year 2.

Parks & People Foundation. The Parks & People Foundation is dedicated to supporting a wide range of recreational and educational opportunities; creating and sustaining beautiful and lively parks; and promoting a healthy natural environment for Baltimore. After being invited by The Weinberg Foundation to explore opportunities, Parks & People read about a similar library restoration in New York City that involved creating outdoor reading areas which aligns with Parks & People's mission dedicated to restoring the environmental health of communities. They were able to use some of the money they had received for a storm water management project from the State of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, with the goal to increase green space throughout the city of Baltimore, and to remove asphalt around the new library schools. Parks & People truly appreciates partnering with The Weinberg Foundation. Parks & People plans to continue their work with the new group of library schools.

Barnes and Noble. Barnes and Noble provided Nooks for the library schools along with training and continued support. At the start of the project Barnes and Noble provided two training sessions to the three Library Project schools. Depending on the school's needs, these sessions were conducted in both small and large groups. The first training session consisted of a

“Getting the devices to the school is easy, the challenge is the training and technical support.” -- Library Project Partner

demonstration of the Nook, including the basic features to make sure that the librarians and teachers were comfortable using the devices with the students. The follow-up training was more specialized, and some schools requested and received additional training beyond the two sessions.

Because of the varying need level of the schools, Barnes and Noble has provided additional trainings, recently with Baltimore City teachers including teachers from two of the three Year 1 library schools. Barnes and Noble stated, “I would encourage the schools out there to be more proactive in reaching out to us when they have questions.” In addition, they have learned through teachers that many would like to learn more about how to incorporate the Nooks into the classroom and the different applications available to enhance their curriculum. They stated, “We love making these community ties and being able to

help support Baltimore schools. It is so nice to be part of this wonderful library project. Children are reading and I love seeing kids get interested in literature.”

They are just starting the first round of training for the Year 2 schools.

Baltimore Sun. Working with The Weinberg Foundation on the Library project was a good fit for the Baltimore Sun since it aligned strongly with their mission of increasing literacy in Baltimore. The Baltimore Sun, being based within Baltimore City, is very connected to Baltimore and sensitive to helping build a better community. Their role in the project was to provide daily newspapers to the school for use by the students and teachers as well as other visitors to the school including parents and guardians. They had to coordinate with the three library schools to find the best time to deliver the papers and when not to deliver papers based on the school schedule.

“As much as people want to say we don’t need papers anymore, we do. You need a strong local news company covering what is happening in your community, acting as a watchdog, no matter if it is in print or online. Children need to know there is an entity in their community they can rely on providing this news and keeping an eye on what is happening in the local government.” -- Library Project Partner

Enoch Pratt Free Library. The Enoch Pratt Free Library is a significant partner with The Weinberg Foundation on this project. They assisted in the design of the Parent Place for each library and the effort to promote greater use of the library by families. While the parent place has not been used as much as was hoped, the Enoch Pratt Free Library believes that one reason why the Parent Place areas are under-utilized is because the schools and the Enoch Pratt Free Library have not invested enough time into thinking about how to use these spaces, nor have they devoted enough energy into bringing families to the library. The Enoch Pratt Free Library, however, has worked with one school to provide author events, where students can meet, talk with, and hear authors read their stories.

Baltimore Reads. The Weinberg Foundation asked Baltimore Reads to coordinate the book drives for the first year of the project which included the delivery of donation bins, book pick-ups and sorting for distribution to schools and teachers. The Weinberg Foundation hoped to engage the Baltimore community to collect the books to be used in the libraries. New and used books were collected at more than 100 locations throughout Baltimore and more than 13,000 books were collected during the first book drive. Baltimore Reads will continue to receive used books that are collected in future book drives, but day-to-day logistics of the book drive and distribution will be handled in Year 2 by another project partner, Heart of America Foundation.

In addition to books for schools, The Weinberg Foundation has been helping Baltimore Reads get books into the hands of Baltimore City students to take home. According to the Baltimore Reads Book Bank, there is, “an amazing relationship” with The Weinberg Foundation as a result of the Library Project. One of the directors also commented,

“The one thing I learned is that sometimes these kids feel cast aside. When someone sets the bar higher and expectations are raised the children then know that someone cares, they feel like there is something to be proud of. When you say to a child ‘it’s just a book’, it’s like saying ‘it’s just a hammer’ to a carpenter. You may have the ability but you don’t have the tools needed to succeed. What this project is doing is giving tools and resources that students need to succeed and setting the bar higher.” -- Library Project Partner

Baltimore Reads will continue the home library project in the future, working with some of the same schools from the Library Project. Many have noted the phrase, the “librarification” of the school, that is, making the rest of the school match the high expectations set by the stunning library. Baltimore Reads would like to carry that further into the home to make sure kids have resources there as well.

Art with a Heart. Art with a Heart coordinated and facilitated the creation of a 5’x 3’ original mosaic of the Library Project logo for each of the library school communities. Before starting the mosaic project, Art with a Heart met with administration and/or staff of each school to discuss the project, decide the location for installation and to determine what, if any, original designs would be included in the mosaic. The mosaic project allowed the school community and its broader stakeholders, to be personally involved in creating something for the school and contributing to its beautification. By the nature of the project and the skill of Art with a Heart, each mosaic workshop was a lesson in creativity, community building, team work and collaboration. Volunteers on each project included students, teachers, staff, administration and parents. The mosaics are beautiful and well received and the students really enjoyed making them; “The students delight in knowing that they participated in creating the mosaics and it allows them to own a small part of the bigger library project. The mosaics also act to further brand each of the schools as a school with the gift of a wonderful library” reported one person from the organization.

In summary, it is important to note that the schools commented that due to limited time and manpower to devote to the development of these relationships and programs, some partnerships did not flourish in the first year. They noted that for a partnership to take off and function well at a given school, the partner organization’s mission must meet a perceived need by the school staff or administration.

Unanticipated Outcomes

While some findings were anticipated at the start of the project a few surprising benefits and outcomes emerged from the project. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to activities inspired by the new space and attention placed in libraries. More specifically:

Potential Impact of Librarian. Having seen the impact of an exceptional librarian on classroom instruction and school learning, both The Weinberg Foundation and Baltimore City Schools are

re-emphasizing and dedicating greater attention to the role of the school librarian in schools. Librarians are important resources in schools and can be better leveraged to increase literacy, reading, and overall instruction if they are seen as important resources and provided the necessary supports and professional development.

Value of Catalogue System. The school district is piloting a new book catalogue system which should help schools and district staff to understand and measure book usage within their schools. The former program was difficult to use and was problematic for most schools.

Student-Initiated Book Clubs. One exciting outcome of this project was an increase in students' social interaction around reading and writing. For example, at one school, students started book clubs. This was possible because, with the new influx of books provided by the Library Project, they had multiple copies of books by the same author like the Goosebumps and Junie B. Jones series.

These clubs were started when the librarian at that school shared how she and her friends often read the same books so they can discuss them as they read or when they finish them. The students then created their own clubs and held them during the librarian's lunch break.

At that same school, some young boys partnered together as authors and illustrators to develop one of the more innovative literacy-based clubs. The illustrators were often English Language Learners who found writing more challenging but enjoyed providing illustrations for the partners' writings. They called their book club, "The Authors and Illustrator's Club." The librarian reported that these book clubs have encouraged her students to read more books.

Discussion and Recommendations

During the first year of the Library Project, schools seemed to be focused on getting the new library space and technology organized and used in familiar ways. At the conclusion of the first year of the Baltimore Library Project, we can demonstrate that investments in the physical library spaces can be important investments for schools, but may not be enough to fully realize the benefits of these renovations. Without developing the human resources (knowledge, skills, and motivation) to maximize the physical resources (e.g., books, e-readers, shelving, furnishings, and computers), students and teachers are just as likely to view the library as unwelcoming, unpleasant, and/or inaccessible. It may be that developing the human resources and changing school culture takes more time, and that this will occur more next year. Innovation and expansion of ideas may occur more in these three schools through the 2013-14 school year.

Facilities. Principals, librarians, teachers and students reported that the new libraries were beautiful and inviting, and recognized the benefits of having a library full of new and popular books, additional help from the part-time librarian assistant, and having new and better Wi-Fi access with Nooks that can be used to help students obtain information on the Internet. Students and teaching staff perceived the library to be a welcoming and valuable resource for learning. Across all three schools with a new library, the transformed library became a source of pride for the school community.

Usage. The school librarian's role influenced teachers' and students' perceptions and use of the school library. In two schools, the teachers not only saw the new library as a great new resource, but also reported strong collaboration with the school librarian. Ultimately, it seems, libraries had the greatest impact on instruction and student learning when librarians viewed their role as a resource for students, as well as a collaborator with teachers.

Library Clerks. Principals and librarians found that the provision of funds for library clerks to be an important component of the project. Librarians in particular, were very enthusiastic about having a part-time assistant to help them check out and re-shelve books. This assistance allowed the librarian flexibility to work more closely with teachers and students.

Professional Development. Principals and librarians did not report the provision of funds for professional development to be an integral component of the project. As described previously, The Weinberg Foundation made funds available, but could not require librarians to use the funds and procure professional development. In year one, librarians were aware of the money for continuing education and viewed it as a positive element to this intervention, but this did not always translate into new library practices or student outcomes. Librarians, however, may use the professional development funds in Year 2 of the project, as some stated in interviews that they were eager to take advantage of professional development opportunities, especially on the topic of collaborating with teachers and how to better use computer technology and the internet.

Need for More Books. Interestingly, around one-quarter of students in the schools with new libraries and 40% of students in the comparison schools wanted more books in their schools. This is in contrast to typical "unengaged" students portrayed in popular press. Our findings

indicate that urban students are interested in books and libraries. It is an exciting finding and one that City Schools and the Baltimore Library Project should continue to consider in its work.

There are, perhaps, two aspects of this project needing more attention: family engagement and school-community partnerships.

Family Engagement. Across all three schools, principals and librarians commented that some (but only a few) families were using the Enoch Pratt Parent Place in the new libraries. In interviews they noted that this was not an area of emphasis for the staff, and there was no clarity about how they might increase families' use of the library resources. This library-based resource for families was designed and supplied in consultation with the Enoch Pratt Free Library, however encouraging and helping families use the resources were left to the schools. In Year 1 of the Baltimore Library Project, this was not a priority for the schools or librarians.

Partnerships. The partnerships listed by principals and librarians tended to be similar across all three schools. These strong partnerships, as one interviewee stated, addressed school-identified needs and fit into the existing practices at the school. Otherwise, educators did not feel they had the time to devote to creating a strong partnership.

While The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation brought many partners to the table, not all partnerships were well established by the end of year one. In general, partnerships, while perceived to be valuable, were not a high priority among the schools. When a partner's mission did not align with the school's perceived need or priority, the resulting partnership was limited and in the early stages of development, despite encouragement by The Weinberg Foundation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings presented in this report from the survey and interview feedback we received in relation to the goals and aspirations of the Baltimore Library Project. These are areas where we feel the schools need further support or encouragement in their use of the new library. In some cases this support might come from The Weinberg Foundation, in some it might need to come from City Schools, and in some instances additional support may be needed from community partners.

- ***Clarify the librarians' role in schools.*** City Schools can expand the role of school librarians to improve students' literacy, research, and technology skills. Rather than consider the librarian a luxury, principals and district leaders need to recognize them as a key player working with teachers and students, especially as the new Common Core standards are implemented.
- ***Provide additional professional development opportunities for librarians.*** In order to realize the librarian's role described above, teachers and librarians need further professional development. In particular, librarians need additional training on the use of e-readers (e.g., Nooks) with students and with using computers and the Internet to support student research and learning. Professional development may also be needed to help librarians understand how to best work with teachers to support classroom learning.

Presently, The Weinberg Foundation cannot mandate professional development for any City Schools employees. The encouragement for librarians to use the professional development funding provided through this project, therefore, must come from the school district and principals.

- ***Increase student access to computers and e-readers.*** Around 80% of students in the schools with new libraries reported using e-readers “sometimes” or “never.” At one school, a little over 60% of students said that they “never” use computers. Librarians need to provide students more time to use the computers and e-readers. Interviews with the Year 1 librarians indicate that they are developing plans to roll out technology to a wider range of students and working with the Year 2 librarians to assist in this challenge.
- ***Increase family engagement opportunities.*** All of the Baltimore Library Project schools reported little family use of the Enoch Pratt Parent Place. Schools need to be more proactive, and invite families into the Parent Place. Both the schools and the Enoch Pratt Free Library reported that they have not worked actively to engage families. More communication with families about the new library and explicitly inviting families to use the library may be a place to start. School-community partnerships with organizations like Raising a Reader might also encourage more family members to use the school library. Such organizations can bring families to the school library by offering them books and training about shared reading strategies. Once families see the new library space and resources available to them, they may feel more comfortable coming back to the Parent Place on their own.
- ***Develop a new library cataloging system.*** Several schools in this project, and many across the district, struggled with the district-wide Koha system. Books were mislabeled or missing, or library personnel were not trained on how to use the system making data about library usage unreliable and invalid. In the midst of year one of the Library Project, The Weinberg Foundation has found and paid for a new on-line library catalog system that will be used in the new libraries being built. This should provide an accurate accounting of the number of books checked out by students. Further, these data can inform librarians on things like the popularity of books, class patterns in book usage, research project and book usage, examination of checkouts by month, etc., all of which can inform library policy, practice, and professional development for school staff.
- ***Ensure greater collaboration between school librarians and teachers.*** While the majority of teachers at two schools reported working with the librarian, only 40% of the teachers at the third school reported that their librarian provides resources to teachers for instruction. The district and principals need to be stronger advocates for greater collaboration between teachers and librarians. Further, librarians need to provide more time for students to look up information for their classes. Close to 60% of students at one school reported that they never look up information for class projects.
- ***Provide students more books.*** About a quarter of students in library schools and almost 40% of the comparison school students wanted more books in their libraries. These figures counter a pop culture narrative that all urban students are disengaged and

uninterested in learning and literacy activities. School librarians should continue to identify additional resources to get more books for students. Here, The Weinberg Foundation has begun to fill the need and desire of students. The foundation, along with other community partners and the school district, should continue to provide books and other reading materials to students and teachers. In many cases, the school library is the best and easiest way to get literacy materials in the hands of students. This will promote growth of literacy skills in young children. For older students, having a rich and diverse library will allow them to explore new ideas that spark their interest or it may help satisfy an already existing love of reading and learning. Without these resources in the library, many students will lose the opportunity to develop an enjoyment of learning and reading.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Instruments and Response Rates

Teacher Survey

Library Project Teacher Survey

To help us understand the impact state-of-the-art school libraries can have on students the Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC) is asking teachers to complete a short survey about their perceptions and use of the school library. Please answer the following questions. Your participation in this project is voluntary and all responses will be anonymous. While we hope that you will answer each question, you are not required to do so and your answers will not affect your job in any way. Thank you for your help and cooperation with this important project!

Section A: Perceptions of the School Library

We would like to know what you think of the library AT YOUR SCHOOL. Please indicate the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. (*Selection choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Unsure or Don't Know*)

The library is a welcoming place for students at this school.

My students enjoy going to the library.

Our library makes this school more conducive to teaching and learning.

Our librarian works with teachers to support classroom activities.

Our librarian provides resources to teachers for instruction.

Our library has resources for parents.

My students' parents use the school library.

The library at my school is a valuable resource for student learning.

My students ask to go to the library.

The school library has a positive effect on classroom learning.

Section B: Use of the School Library

Please indicate how often you do the following activities that involve the school library.
(Selection choices: *Daily/Weekly, Monthly, Every Few Months, Never*)

Take a class to the library so that they can select books to read.

Take a class to the library so that they can research a topic.

Take a class to the library for any other reason(s).

Attend teacher meetings or professional development in the library.

Meet with the librarian to help find resources related to your lessons.

Tell your students' parents about the resources available to them in the school library.

Section C: Additional Comments

What I like about the school library is:

What I do not like about the library is:

Has the library helped you do anything differently in your classroom this year? If so, what and how?

Section D: Professional Experience/Background

Counting the 2012-2013 school year, how many years have you taught at ANY SCHOOL, either full-time or part time?(Please do not include time spent as a student teacher.)

- 0-4 years
- 5-9 years
- 10-14 years
- 15 or more years

What is the PRIMARY subject of most of the classes you taught during the 2012-2013 school year?(Please choose ONE)

- Math
- English, Reading or Language Arts
- Social Studies or Social Sciences (including history)
- Science
- Other:

What grades do you teach this school year (2012-2013)(select all that apply)

- Pre-Kindergarteners
- Kindergarten to 2nd graders
- 3rd to 5th graders
- 6th to 8th graders

At which school are you a teacher?

Student Survey

Practice: Below are two statements. Please let us know how well the statements describe you.

I like winter.

- A lot like me
- Like me
- Not like me

I eat pizza.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Does This Describe You?

Below are five statements about you as a reader. Please let us know how well these statements describe you as a reader.

1. I like to read at home.

- A lot like me
- Like me
- Not like me

2. I like to read at school.

- A lot like me
- Like me
- Not like me

3. I like the library in my school.

- A lot like me
- Like me
- Not like me

4. I have a favorite book or books.

- A lot like me
- Like me
- Not like me

5. I use the school library more this year than last year.

- A lot like me
- Like me
- Not like me

The Library at Your School

Below are three statements about your school library. Please let us know how often these statements are true for your library.

1. The school librarian helps me find interesting books.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

2. The school librarian helps me on research for class projects.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

3. It is easy for me to find books I like at the school library.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

What you do at your School Library?

Below are eight activities students could do in their school libraries. Please let us know how often you do these activities in your school library.

1. I spend time at the school library selecting books to borrow and read at home.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

2. I spend time at the school library looking up information for my class projects.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

3. I spend time at the school library doing schoolwork for my other classes.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

4. I spend time at the school library learning about how to find and check out books.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

5. I spend time at the school library goofing around or just sitting quietly.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

6. I spend time at the school library using a computer.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

7. I spend time at the school library using an e-reader (like a Nook or Kindle).

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

8. I spend time before or after school in the school library (selecting books to borrow or reading for class).

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

About Your Community or Public Library (The Enoch Pratt Free Library)

These two items are about your community or public library, not the library at your school.

1. I have a library card.

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

2. I go to the library with my family.

- Yes
- No

About You

1. I am in Grade: Please select your grade

- 3 (third grade)
- 4 (fourth grade)
- 5 (fifth grade)
- 6 (sixth grade)
- 7 (seventh grade)

2. I am a:

- Boy
- Girl

Please Tell Us More

My favorite thing about the library is:

What could make the library better?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Below are the number of completed surveys and response rate. In school 3, only early childhood and lower elementary school teachers were surveyed because of the fact that the new library was built in a building where only younger students are taught. Upper elementary grades teachers at that school (grades 3-5), taught in a different building and their students used a different library. Among the teachers who returned the survey, over half (61.5%) taught in the elementary or early childhood grades. About one-quarter (25.6%) of the survey respondents taught middle school students and 5.1% taught both elementary and middle school students.

Teacher Surveys: Response Rates from the 5 Schools Surveyed in 2012-13

Year 1 Schools	Surveys	Response Rate
Library School 1	21 of 21	100%
Library School 2	25 of 25	100%
Library School 3	10 of 11	91%
Comparison School 1	11 of 20	55%
Comparison School 2	9 of 15	60%

The table below details the number of surveys returned along with the response rate of the students asked to participate. Among the students who returned the survey, 22.5% were in 2nd grade, 46.9% were in 3rd-5th grade, and 30.6% were in middle school (6th – 7th).

Student Surveys: Response Rates from the 5 Schools Surveyed in 2012-13

Year 1 Schools	Surveys	Response Rate
Library School 1	74 of 140	52%
Library School 2	156 of 224	70%
Library School 3	97 of 120	81%
Comparison School 1	27 of 46	60%
Comparison School 2	77 of 146	53%

Appendix B: Teacher Survey Responses

Response to “How much to you agree with the following statements?”

	Comparison Schools (n=21)				Library Schools (n=57)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>The library is a welcoming place for students.</i>	28.6	42.9	14.3	9.5	91.2	5.3	0.0	3.5
<i>My students enjoy going to the library</i>	19.0	52.4	14.3	14.3	78.9	12.3	3.5	3.5
<i>Our library makes this school more conducive to teaching and learning</i>	28.6	33.3	9.5	23.8	77.2	15.8	1.8	1.8
<i>The school library has a positive effect on classroom learning</i>	23.8	33.3	19.0	9.5	68.4	21.1	5.3	1.8
<i>The librarian works with teacher to support classroom activities</i>	28.6	33.3	4.8	23.8	56.1	21.1	15.8	5.3
<i>Our librarian provides resources to teachers for instruction</i>	23.8	33.3	9.5	23.8	57.9	17.5	14.0	7.0
Our library has resources for parents	14.3	19.0	28.0	19.0	66.7	19.3	0.0	1.8
My students’ parents use the school library	23.8	0.0	23.8	33.3	29.8	21.1	8.8	5.3
<i>The library at my school is a valuable resource for student learning</i>	23.8	38.1	19.0	14.3	80.7	15.8	1.8	1.8
<i>My students ask to go to the library</i>	19.0	38.1	23.8	19.0	66.7	15.8	15.8	1.8

Note. Items that are in ***bold*** are statistically significant.

**Teacher Surveys:
Responses to “How often do the following occur at your school?”**

	Comparison Schools (n=21)				Library Schools (n=57)			
	Daily/ Weekly	Monthly	Every Few Months	Never	Daily/ Weekly	Monthly	Every Few Months	Never
Meet with the librarian to help find resources related to lessons	28.6	9.5	28.6	33.3	36.8	17.5	22.8	22.8
Take a class to the library to select a book to read	47.6	14.3	14.3	23.8	66.7	15.8	1.8	15.8
Take a class to the library to research a topic	38.1	4.8	19.0	38.1	28.1	15.8	26.3	29.8
Take a class to the library to attend a meeting or PD	28.6	57.1	9.5	4.8	40.4	45.6	5.3	8.8
Take a class to the library for any other reason	52.4	19.0	4.8	23.8	36.8	17.5	22.8	22.8
Tell my students’ parents about the resources available to them in the school library	28.6	0.0	28.6	42.9	29.8	14.0	17.5	38.6

Note. Items that are in **bold** are statistically significant.

**Teacher Surveys:
Percent of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the Following Statements**

	Comparison Schools (n=21)	School 1 (n=25)	School 2 (n=21)	School 3 (n=11)
The library is a welcoming place for students	71.5	80.0	100	100
My students enjoy going to the library	71.4	80.0	100	100
The school library has a positive effect on classroom learning	57.1	76.0	100	100
Our library makes the school more conducive to teaching and learning	61.9	84.0	100	100
The librarian works with teachers to support classroom activities	61.9	52.0	100	90.9
Our librarian provides resources to teachers for instruction	57.1	44.0	100	100
Our library has resources for parents	33.3	68.0	100	100
My students’ parents use the school library	23.8	32.0	71.5	54.6
The library at my school is a valuable resource for student learning	61.9	92.0	100	100
My students ask to go to the library	57.1	64.0	100	91.0

**Teacher Surveys:
Percent of Teachers Who Reported Doing the Following Activities at Least Monthly**

	Comparison Schools (n=21)	School 1 (n=25)	School 2 (n=21)	School 3 (n=11)
Meet with the librarian to help find resource related to lessons	39.1	16.0	90.5	72.7
Take a class to library to select a book	61.9	76.0	90.5	81.9
Take a class to library to research a topic	42.9	40.0	52.4	36.4
Attend teacher meetings or PD	85.7	100	100	27.3
Take a class to library for other reasons	71.4	40.0	76.2	45.5
Tell my students' parents about resources in the school library.	28.6	24.0	66.7	45.5

Appendix C: Student Survey Responses

Response to “Please let us know how well these statements describe you as a reader”

	Comparison Schools (n=104)			Library Schools (n=327)		
	A lot like me	Like me	Not like me	A lot like me	Like me	Not like me
I like to read at home	25.0	50.0	23.1	34.3	44.6	20.8
<i>I like to read at school</i>	26.0	49.0	23.1	36.4	45.2	15.3
<i>I like the library in my school</i>	46.2	33.7	19.2	63.3	27.5	6.4
I have a favorite book or books	62.5	28.8	6.7	67.2	22.3	8.5
<i>I use the school library more this year than last year</i>	29.8	30.8	38.5	40.6	27.8	30.6

Note. Items that are in ***bold*** are statistically significant.

Student Surveys:

“Please let us know how well these statements describe you as a reader” Percent of Students Who Replied “A lot like me” or “Like me”

	Comparison Schools (n=104)	School 1 (n=74)	School 2 (n=156)	School 3 (n=97)
I like to read at home	75.0	89.1	69.3	86.6
I like to read at school	75.0	86.5	75.0	88.7
I like the library in my school	79.9	94.6	86.5	94.9
I have a favorite book or books	91.3	87.8	88.5	92.8
I use the school library more this year than last year	60.6	81.1	64.7	64.9

**Student Surveys:
Responses to “Please let us know how often these statements are true for your library”**

	Comparison Schools (n=104)			Library Schools (n=327)		
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never
The school librarian helps me find interesting books	44.2	34.6	20.2	43.7	39.4	14.0
The school librarian helps me on research for class projects	26.0	42.3	31.7	24.1	37.0	37.9
It is easy for me to find books I like at the school library	39.4	40.4	19.2	44.3	39.7	13.5

Note. No items were statistically significant.

**Student Surveys:
Percent of Students Who Replied “Often” or “Sometimes” to
“Please let us know how often these statements are true for your library”**

	Comparison Schools (n=104)	School 1 (n=74)	School 2 (n=156)	School 3 (n=97)
The school librarian helps me find interesting books	78.8	94.6	73.0	90.7
The school librarian helps me on research for class projects	68.3	73.0	52.5	66.0
It is easy for me to find books I like at the school library	79.8	91.9	79.5	85.5

**Student Surveys:
Responses to “Please let us know how often you do these activities in your school library”**

	Comparison Schools (n=104)			Library Schools (n=327)		
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never
Selecting books to borrow and read at home	30.8	42.3	24.0	34.6	41.3	23.3
Looking up information for my class projects	12.5	46.2	38.5	12.5	39.7	46.2
<i>Doing Schoolwork for my other classes</i>	3.8	13.5	78.8	12.0	28.4	56.5
<i>Learning about how to find and check out books</i>	9.6	35.6	51.0	27.2	45.3	24.5
<i>Goofing around or just sitting quietly</i>	5.8	20.2	72.1	16.8	37.3	43.1
<i>Using a computer</i>	17.3	65.4	14.4	16.5	37.9	42.8
<i>Using an e-reader (like a Nook or Kindle)</i>	5.8	6.7	85.6	18.7	41.0	38.6
Before or after school (selecting books to borrow or reading for class)	12.5	44.2	41.3	13.2	36.7	47.7

Note. Items that are in ***bold*** are statistically significant.

**Student Surveys:
Percent of Students Who Replied “Often” or “Sometimes” to
“Please let us know how often you do these activities in your school library”**

	Comparison Schools (n=104)	School 1 (n=74)	School 2 (n=156)	School 3 (n=97)
Selecting books to borrow and read at home	73.1	82.4	67.9	83.6
Looking up information for my class projects	58.7	63.5	41.7	60.9
Doing Schoolwork for my other classes	17.3	70.3	30.1	34.0
Learning about how to find and check out books	45.2	68.9	67.3	83.6
Goofing around or just sitting quietly	26.0	59.5	57.7	44.3
Using a computer	82.7	82.4	37.2	60.8
Using an e-reader (like a Nook or Kindle)	12.5	36.5	52.6	88.6
Before or after school (selecting books to borrow or reading for class)	56.7	66.2	46.8	42.3

**Student Surveys:
Percent of Students Who Replied “Often” or “Sometimes” to
“These two items are about your community or public library, not the library at your school”**

	Comparison Schools (n=104)	School 1 (n=74)	School 2 (n=156)	School 3 (n=97)	Library Schools (n=327)
I have a library card	45.2	55.4	62.8	57.7	59.6
I go to the library with my family	52.9	62.2	47.4	53.6	52.6

Appendix D: Interview Protocols

Principal Interview Protocol - Summer 2012

- 1) In what ways and how often does your schools currently use the library?
- 2) How do you work with or oversee the librarian's work at this school?
 - a. Specifically, how does the librarian help support the literacy development of students here?
- 3) What role does the librarian play in the instructional delivery within classrooms? How do literacy instruction match with the common core standards?
- 4) How do families and the community currently use the library?
- 5) Why did you apply for the Library Project Grant and how do you see the new library fitting in with the activities going on at your school?
- 6) How will the role of the library change/differ from previous library? How do you envision being used?
- 7) Who are your partners and what do you hope to do with them?
 - a. Who are the contact people, and how can I contact them?
 - b. What are your plans for the Baltimore Read books you will receive?

Librarian Interview Protocol - Summer 2012

- 1) How would you describe your role at this school, and how satisfied are you with it?
- 2) What role do you play in the instructional delivery within classrooms? What is the process for matching materials to students (interest/reading ability)? What about matching with Common Core Standards?
- 3) How do families and the community currently use the library? After school? Weekends?
- 4) Why did you apply for the Library Project Grant and how do you see the new library fitting in with the activities going on at your school?
 - a. What is your vision for the new library?
 - b. How will your role as the librarian change?
 - c. What will the library assistant/clerk allow you to accomplish?
 - d. How will the role of the library change for students, teachers and the community?
- 5) What professional development are you interested in getting from this project and why?
- 6) Who are your partners and what do you hope to do with them?
 - a. Who are the contact people, and how can I contact them?
 - b. What are your plans for the Baltimore Read books you will receive?
- 7) What data do you collect about the frequency and ways library resources are used by the school, families, and community? What is sent to the State?
- 8) How can we collect information in the coming year about space usage? Do you suggest other data we could gather (add to usual data-collection tool)?
 - a. Before and after school, and lunch
 - b. Weekends and for extra-curricular activities
 - c. Parent and community space
 - d. Other programming at the library

Principal Interview Protocol - December 2012/June 2013

- 1) What was the students' reaction to the new library?
How do they feel about it today?
- 2) What was the teachers' reaction to the new library?
How do they feel about it today?
- 3) With the new library providing a half time staff assistant and additional professional development for the librarian, how has the school used the library?
To what extent is this similar or different from last year? (teacher/staff meetings, after school functions, ...)
- 4) How has the new library affected the relationship between the librarian and the teachers?
Have teachers used the library more, or differently, than before?
Are your librarians in classrooms more?
To what extent do families and the community use the library?
- 5) Can you describe the school-community partnerships that have developed from this project?
Who are your partners and how are you working with them? What will be accomplished by the end of this school year? How many kids will it impact? How many families?
What has been the best part of working with your partners?
What has been the most challenging part of working with your partners?
- 6) What impact has the library had on you as the school leader, students, and the school community?
What is the best thing about the library so far?

Librarian Interview Protocol - December 2012/June 2013

- 1) What was the students' reaction to the new library?
How do they feel about it today?
- 2) What professional development did you receive?
What was covered in the professional development?
- 3) How have you been using the library assistant/clerk?
Is this person helpful?
- 4) Has your role in the instructional delivery within classroom changed?
Do you meet or plan with teachers? Are you in classrooms?
- 5) How do families and the community currently use the library?
How often is the Parent Place in use as a percent? When? School day or weekend?
- 6) Is the book check out system up to date and working?
- 7) Are more books being signed out?
- 8) Are more students checking out books this year?
- 9) Who are your partners and what are your plans with them?
- 10) Does school staff use the library for teacher meetings, after school functions, or has this changed?
- 11) At this point in time, what impact has the library had on students, school, and you as a librarian?
- 12) What is the best thing about the library so far?
- 13) What did you learn this year you would like to share with other librarians? (*only for the final interview*)