

SCHOOL LIBRARY STATISTICS

Library Monitoring Rubric - Section 2.2
Librarian Growth Rubric - Standard 7
School Library Guide - Section 6.6



Keeping statistical records may seem an unimportant job for a librarian. However, numbers collected justify professional decisions and support requests made of other people. Some statistics are required as part of the reporting system to the administration. A good way to make administrators aware of library needs and usage is to publish a monthly report of activities (all statistics) and submit it to the building administrator. Other statistics help in collection development, scheduling, budget requests, and for planning for a new or remodeled facilities, etc. This will give some suggestions as to the statistics needed to maintain and the simplest method of doing so.

One of the big advantages of an automated system is the capability of producing any number of statistical reports. Similar reports can be manually created from collected statistics using a spreadsheet or database program like Excel or Access.

COLLECTION STATISTICS

Most of the collection statistics can be generated during inventory, traditionally done at the end of the school year. In the fall, the administrator will need the figures on the total collection, number of volumes, and number of titles, as well as the number of periodicals, and other basic information for his accreditation report.

In addition to the total number of items in different formats that the Library owns, the number and type of items added and withdrawn each year need to be recorded. Year end statistics identify how budget monies were spent in support of curriculum and building needs. Statistics on discarded materials and software can help justify replacement.

The school district may want to keep records for the costs of library materials. It is often necessary to keep a running total or a record of replacement costs for insurance purposes. When using a card catalog, it is easiest to include the price of a new item in the automated system record, as the order is unpacked. When books are processed, the jobber may have already entered the price as a category in the MARC record. If not, cost records need to be kept. This is a good task to assign to a volunteer who is willing to do tedious and repetitive work.

LIBRARY SERVICE STATISTICS

These statistics can be acquired by a “sampling.” Select a typical week for the library, a week most like all other weeks in the year, but not prior to report cards, a holiday or during school wide testing. Make counts during that week, then multiply the numbers by the number of weeks the library is open during the year.

ANNUAL AMOUNT OF ATTENDANCE

In the library (keep track of everyone who comes in, by category.) Count both number of classes and number of students, including drop-ins, staff members, parents or other. A small click counter can be purchased. Assign an aide or volunteer to click off number of users, as they enter – especially in terms of larger groups or classes.

LIBRARY USE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

This includes books and magazines being left on tables. These are materials that have been used in the library, and not checked out. Ask patrons to leave materials removed from shelves, on a table, the counter, or on a shelving cart instead of putting them back. (If you have aides or volunteers to help you, this is generally a good idea, since patrons are often guilty of misshelving.) This provides a number count for uncirculated materials. Circulation figures reveal quantity and types of items used in the library.

ANNUAL NUMBER OF REFERENCE QUESTIONS ASKED

This represents the number of questions, which are answered by using library materials. (You may want to count keep track of the number of questions answered and how many were not. This may help identify which reference areas needing additional materials.) Also, if there are a number of online materials, or the Internet, it might be a good idea to distinguish the number of questions answered by using books, and how many by using electronic media.

CIRCULATION STATISTICS

Circulation is the number of items checked out of the library. Determine these statistics by sampling if the collection is not automated. However, circulation is such an important factor in accountability for the library program that samples should be taken once a month, or at least several times during a year. Then, average those counts to get a number, which can be multiplied to represent a year. *If automated, the computer will collect these statistics automatically as it tracks circulation. Reports can be created by the month or annually.*

To help decide on budget division for the next year, track circulation by large categories such as:

- Non-fiction
- Fiction
- Paperbacks
- Periodicals
- Audiocassettes and Videocassettes
- InterLibrary loans
- Other

The more detailed the statistics, the more useful they can be, for example, by classification number of the nonfiction. This information can be helpful to the media generalist in identifying which subject areas in the collection are getting the most use. For example, count circulation by the Dewey hundreds (100s, 200s, 300s, 400s, etc.). If the count shows that the 700s and 900s account for more circulation than other parts of the non-fiction collection, order more books in those subject areas.

RESOURCE SHARING STATISTICS

Resource sharing is the loaning and borrowing of library materials from one Library to users of another Library, that is interlibrary loan; or it can be reciprocal borrowing agreements. In a reciprocal borrowing agreement, the collection of the Library is open to the users of another Library. For example, those who are not students may borrow the materials in a university or school library. It can also be the asking or answering of questions from one library to another or another agency. It can also be the referral of a library user to another agency to obtain the needed information. Keeping track of the number of times the library must borrow to fill the needs of students and teachers is a powerful argument in budget discussions with administrators. Interlibrary loans are books or magazine articles borrowed from, or loaned to,

another library. Reference referral is the asking of an informational question of another library, office, or agency when the library does not have the resources to answer the patron's request. It works in reverse too, i.e., it can be the answering of a question from another library. It can also be the sending of someone to another library or another office. It could even be something as simple as referring the student to the public library to get information that was not available in the school library.

EXAMPLE MONTHLY LIBRARY USAGE REPORT

	Open Library	Classes	Check Outs	Technology Carts	Library Fines
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
TOTALS					

