

# Library and Information Services in Small High Schools: New Schools Require New Models

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The Information School of the University of Washington

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**Project Director:** Michael B. Eisenberg, Dean and Professor

**Telephone:** (206) 616-1152

**E-mail:** mbe@u.washington.edu

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this project is to 1) determine how the library and information needs of students and teachers in small high schools differ from those in a comprehensive high school environment, 2) identify the unique role that teacher-librarians play in the teaching and learning environment of small high schools, and 3) investigate the most effective ways to align the library program in terms of governance, space, and services in order to meet the teaching and learning needs of small schools. During the period from October 2005 to April 2006, the primary activities completed included three distinct data collection activities, iteration and enhancement of the project's codebook, two community of practice gatherings with participating teacher-librarians and the submission and acceptance of two manuscripts to conferences being held during the summer of 2006. The latter activity signals a shift which adds the dissemination of findings to the project's top priorities. Significant outputs at this stage of the research include the near completion of a codebook for qualitative data analysis, producing a public website to describe the project and provide contact information to external audiences, and the development of two models to provide a framework for further data analysis. Future planned outputs include submitting a manuscript to *School Library Media Research* (SLMR) and a proposal to speak at the annual conference of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) in 2007. Beyond dissemination of research findings, a desirable outcome of this project is for the participating teacher-librarians to develop a strong community of practice. The community of practice will promote collegial interaction and the sharing of best practices developed during the project as the teacher-librarians continue to position the library and information services program as a highly visible, critical component of the teaching and learning environment after the project is over.

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## A. Project Purpose

Dividing large high schools into smaller schools is an important educational reform with major implications for library programs. Small schools provide an improved learning environment that results in increased academic achievement, lower dropout rates, and improved parent, teacher and student satisfaction with schooling. The small schools approach has the support of the United States Congress, the Department of Education, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Changing the size and nature of high schools also requires a change in the library program of those schools. **If the teaching and learning environment is changing, then school library services must also adapt to the meet the needs of that new environment.**

The teaching and learning approaches championed by advocates of small high schools include:

- Teachers personalizing instruction to facilitate student inquiry and to meet the needs of individual students,
- Flexible curriculum focused on independent research,
- Standards-based learning with intensive, integrated instruction to help students meet standards, and
- Student demonstration of learning through projects, exhibitions and performance-based assessments.

Teaching and learning in a small high school requires that the library and librarian provide a rich infrastructure of information skills instruction and services, reading and literacy advocacy, information and technology services, and resources management.

Little attention has been given to the needs of small schools in terms of library and information services, systems, and resources, the role of teacher-librarians, or how to deploy library and information infrastructure effectively. This proposed project will determine:

1. How do the information and library needs of students and teachers in small schools differ from those in a comprehensive school environment?
2. What is the unique role that teacher-librarians play in small schools in terms of providing information, reading advocacy, and teaching information literacy, and how do these roles contribute to a successful conversion to small schools.
3. What are the most effective ways to align the library program (functions, governance, staffing, budget, systems, physical space, collections, and direct impact on teaching and learning) to meet the teaching and learning needs of small schools.

The purpose of this project is to determine the library and information needs of students and faculty in small high schools. This project will create, implement, document, evaluate and disseminate models of best practices and exemplary library and information programs in multiplexes of smaller high schools. The underlying assumption is that effective library and information services are essential for the successful education of adolescent students in small high schools.

## **B. Project Activities: October 2005 – April 2006**

During the first half of the second year of the project, the project team continued to conduct numerous site visits at the six participating high schools. In addition to teacher-librarians and administrators, the team initiated interviews with classroom teachers during this period. The interview and observation data collected during these visits consists of audio recordings, field notes, and memos. The codebook development has also progressed as new interview schedules have been utilized. The conversion process model introduced in the October 2005 interim report has continued to evolve and expand as data from the site visits is discussed and reflected upon during community of practice gatherings with the teacher-librarians. Initial findings from the project will be disseminated at three conferences during the spring and summer of 2006, and papers will appear in the conference proceedings.

### *Data collection*

From October 2005 to April 2006, the team developed and employed three distinct data collection procedures. The first procedure consisted of a series of observations and interviews designed to capture collaborative curriculum planning between teacher-librarians and classroom teachers. Two additional interview schedules were developed and conducted with the participating teacher-librarians. One schedule focused on the TLs' perception of changes in library support and services that had occurred since their school initiated a small school conversion. The last interview schedule was designed to serve as a "springboard" to stimulate discussion at the Spring 2006 community of practice gathering.

### **Collaborative Activity Interviews and Observations: [see appendix: instrument A, B, and E]**

The research team observed the school library activity in 2005 to gain a baseline assessment of the library services and program features, as well as general trends in library use and information seeking of faculty/student users. To expand on this data, the team designed a collaborative interview protocol, focusing on the instructional style and mediation of the TL working with a teacher and class of students on a given library-based assignment. One member of the research team would observe a class lesson taught in the library (see Instrument E in the Appendix), then interview the teacher and

TL individually about the lesson using unique but related interview schedules (see Instruments A, B in Appendix). The follow-up interviews occurred within 1-2 days of the lesson. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Emerging Trends:

- Tls engage in a wide variety of mediating activities with students, ranging from scavenger hunts to multi-week units. Most often, the observed lessons were short, 15-45 minutes in length. The focus of most of these lessons was student productivity rather than skill development or addressing enduring understanding of material.
- There are numerous constraints to intermediation present in the school, including schedules, governance patterns, and widely varying cultural expectations of the library itself.
- The construction of meaning from information appears to be a secondary concern to information seeking and use.

**Teacher Librarian School within School Change Interviews: [see appendix: instrument C]**

The teacher-librarian at each participating multiplex school was interviewed by a member of the research team during January and February 2006. These interviews had two goals: 1) to triangulate the data gathered during the previous year regarding program goals, roles, activities, performance, and support structures; and 2) to gather the teacher-librarian's perspective on the school conversion process itself, and how the process is affecting library services, personnel, governance, and policy. Interviews lasted between 50 and 90 minutes, and were based on an approved protocol included with this report (see Instrument C in the appendix). Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Emerging Trends:

- Through the interviews, which included questions similar to those asked of administrators in June 2005, the teacher-librarians triangulated the school conversion process, which became an integral part of our Conversion Process Model (see below).
- The teacher-librarians highlighted how the movement to small schools has influenced the need for different information services and resources. Key areas of concern include the equitable allocation of materials, diversified curriculum, professional development, scheduling, and governance.
- Teacher-librarians identified some of the shortcomings of small school governance that relate directly to the teaching and learning aspects of education, including the lack of intra-departmental communication and the stresses placed on teaching personnel by the expectations of inter-departmental collaboration.

## **Community of Practice Catalyzing Interviews: [see appendix: instrument D]**

During the first year of the project (April/May 2005), each TL was interviewed in-depth regarding her perceptions of library practices, policies, and engagement in the teaching & learning mission of the school. As a follow-up to these initial interviews, all 6 participating TLs were interviewed in April 2006, using an approved schedule based on this original interview (see Instrument D in Appendix). The focus of this interview was to elaborate and identify any changes in collections, services, and policy since the initial interview. Each TL was also asked to update her “support circle.” This document allows TLs to identify and reflect on the types of support they receive from and provide to the school community. This support circle was the foundation of an exercise which occurred as part of the second Community of Practice gathering (elaborated below).

### **Emerging Trends:**

- TLs identified changes in their own practice over the course of the last year, some of which may be attributed to the process of conversion to small schools (e.g. having to support teachers with changing curricular needs).
- TLs identified ways in which their changing practices are also influenced by the goals of the Small High School Libraries project and attributed to the professional development opportunities provided by the research team (e.g. “thinking strategically” and coordinating activities with different stakeholders in the school community).

### **Community of Practice Gatherings:**

The goal of developing a Community of Practice for professional development and dissemination purposes, combined with the success of the first recruiting event (April 22, 2005) prompted the research team to hold two gatherings of our 6 TL informants, one on February 7, 2006 and one on April 25, 2006 at the University of Washington iSchool. These day-long gatherings were used to facilitate dissemination of best practices, member-checking of data collection activities, and sharing among the participants of both successful and in-progress academic units, policies and issues. TLs were provided with sustenance, a mileage reimbursement, and release day from their school districts for attendance purposes. Both gatherings followed a similar format. During the morning session, presentations and discussion of small school issues are drawn from emerging trends in the data collection activities. During the afternoon session, TLs are asked to bring a policy, practice, or academic unit from their school to share with the others. The TLs are encouraged to share their own best practices, as well as provide feedback and reaction, honing these practices and identifying ways they can apply to other school library contexts.

### **Emerging Trends:**

- The TLs report that these gatherings are informative, engaging, and inspirational. They enjoy coming and are eager to share their experiences with the researchers and each other.

- Aside from providing a touchstone for the data collected in the school context, these gatherings are building trust in the research team and promoting ongoing collaborative activity.
- The development of best practices is well facilitated by opportunities for professionals to listen, discuss, and reflect with their peers. These gatherings are permitting group problem solving for librarians who are largely isolated in their school contexts.

### *Model Building*

The Conversion Process model serves both as a diagnostic, analytical tool and a prescriptive tool for identifying best practices. Based on observations and interviews over the past six months, the team has expanded the model to include a higher level of granularity in defining each stage of the conversion. The purpose is to elaborate on the opportunities the TL has through the library services program to provide critical leadership in the school community at each stage of the conversion. Historically, the library program has not been deeply involved as part of the leadership team during the early stages of conversion. This results in marginalization of library services, and also reduces the pace and quality of the conversion. This expanded model can be used to more effectively identify and define which best practices are appropriate for a given stage of conversion that enables the TL to be fully engaged with students, teachers, and administrators.

The expanded model was shared with informants at the Community of Practice gatherings for the purpose of “member-checking,” where informants provided feedback on the perceived accuracy of our observations. Our informants received the model well and expressed the belief that it resonated strongly with their personal experiences (and several expressed the wish that they had this tool many years ago when the conversion process began).

Over the coming year, the team will focus on populating the matrix with both observed practices and prescribed practices identified through discussion with informants or developed in response to challenges or obstacles to the creation of a strong teaching and learning environment. Such practices will include interventions and strategies that are within the control of the TL and intended to expand the visibility of the TL throughout the organization. The evolution of the model will continue throughout the final year of the project with iterative feedback from the informant group.

## The Expanded Conversion Process Model

<b>Conversion Phases</b>	<b>Teacher-Librarian Roles</b>		
	Teacher/ Information Literacy	Reading Advocate	CIO/ Resources & Structure
<b>Research</b>			
Investigate “Schools within School” concept			
Investigate pedagogical practice			
Gather baseline data & evidence			
Engage community: Staff, Parents, Students			
Grant proposals			
<b>Design &amp; Negotiation</b>			
Decide on size structure: size and space			
Decide on governance structure: vertical/horizontal			
Decide on curriculum, instruction, and resources			
<b>Implementation</b>			
Pedagogy trial period: Early Adopters, Trailblazers			
Develop professional community ( e.g. Critical Friend’s Groups)			
Monitor and renegotiate design			
<b>Building Sustainability</b>			
Evaluation			
Reorganization			
Professional Development			

The four critical stages of the conversion process are:

Stage 1: Research – Administration and faculty need information about the conversion process in terms of models, current practice, and pedagogy in the small schools environment. Primary effort is placed on data gathering and assessing feasibility and efficacy of current practice.

Stage 2: Design and Negotiation – Once the decision to begin the conversion has been made, administration and faculty plan a desirable and feasible structure for the new school environment. This process involves negotiation about issues of governance, workload, and placement of students and staff.

Stage 3: Implementation – As the new plan is implemented, the school goes through a series of “trials” as the administration and faculty determine what’s working and what needs to be modified.

Stage 4: Sustainability – Following the initial implementation, administrators and faculty move from experimentation to repetition of what practice has proven successful in terms of creating a strong teaching and learning environment.

The three fundamental functions of the library services program are:

Teacher / Information Literacy Instruction – Integrate instruction on information literacy into curriculum by working with classroom teachers and identifying information sources to use with innovative pedagogy such as team teaching, problem-based learning, and block scheduling.

Reading Advocate – Serving as a resource for reading material, advising students on what to read, and taking a lead role in promoting reading among students *as well as faculty and administration*.

CIO / Resources and Structure – In addition to the traditional responsibilities of collection management of print and digital sources, this function also includes managing access to professional literature for both staff and administration during the conversion process, participating in decision-making about the use and implementation of information technology within with the school, and preserving information about the conversion process itself in order to establish a collective memory for the organization.

### *May 2005 – October 2005 (previously reported)*

During the second half of the first year of the project, priorities for the project team shifted from recruitment and planning to data collection. The team conducted a large number of site visits (30) that enabled us to perform multiple observations and interviews at each high school. The data collected consists of field notes, memos, and interview responses. During this initial phase of data collection, the team began to construct a codebook to categorize and compare observations across sites.

#### **Data collection**

From May 2005 to October 2005, the team conducted a total of 18 site observations. Each of the participating school libraries was observed three times. The site visits were scheduled at different times in the school day (between 9:00am and 3:00pm) and were three hours in duration in order to capture the full range of activities that occurs in each library. During the observation a member of the research team documented the physical attributes of the library and the behaviors of the teacher-librarian, the students, and the classroom teachers. The observation notes describe:

- The physical layout of the library (e.g. room dimensions, table and computer placement, signage, and displays).
- The behaviors of the teacher-librarian (e.g. helping, directing, managing, and instructing).
- The number of classes and students using the library
- The type of work the students are doing, student use of library resources and their interactions with the teacher-librarian and classroom teachers.
- The classroom teachers' use of library resources and their interactions with both students and the teacher-librarian.

Strong areas of concern have begun to emerge from preliminary analysis of the observation data. These areas fall into three distinct categories:

- **Teacher-librarian roles** – Participants appear to fill an array of roles within their schools: gatekeeper to information resources, technician, reading advisor, curriculum consultant, monitor of student behavior, student confidant, and Internet guide. However, not all of these roles position the teacher-librarian well for having maximum effect on student learning and achievement in the small learning community environment.

- **Student assignments** – The assignments that students bring to the library set the stage for their research experience. The data suggests that communication of expectations and assignment goals between the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher is often lacking. The goal of small learning communities to nurture the development of independent researchers needs to be supported by assignments that enable the teacher-librarian to provide focused instruction and resource provision.
- **Layout of the library** – Participating school libraries exhibit a variety of physical layouts. The positioning of computers, tables, bookshelves, and teaching areas directly influence the behaviors of the various actors in the library facility. Bookshelves or displays that obstruct sight lines and computer monitors that are hidden from adult view are just two examples of spatial layouts that invite non-scholastic activities such as sleeping or instant messaging. Such behaviors may diminish the image of the library in the minds of students and teachers as a learning environment.

Site observations provided basic description about typical activities and interactions occurring in the school library. Observations of the behavior of students, teachers, and the teacher-librarian provided some insights about the nature of instruction taking place in the school, student usage of library resources, teachers' expectations about how the library contributes to student learning and the level of engagement the teacher-librarian has with both students and teachers. To obtain more detailed information about stakeholder perceptions, attitudes and feelings, the research team also conducted 12 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with teacher-librarians and school principals between May 1 and July 1, 2005. The early placement of these interviews helped contextualize subsequent observations of activities and interactions taking place in the library.

#### **Teacher-librarian interviews:**

All six of the teacher-librarians recruited during the initial project phase were interviewed by a member of the research team between May 1 and June 15, 2005. The goal of these conversations was multifold: 1) to acquire additional background and baseline data on the teacher-librarians and library programs; 2) to understand the perceived roles of the teacher-librarian within the school community; 3) to identify support structures for the library program, real or perceived, within the school community; and 4) to elicit the librarian's activities and goals related to student achievement and program development. These interviews were conducted at the school sites one to two weeks following the first site observation. Interviews lasted between one and two hours, and were based on an approved protocol included with this report (see Instrument A in the appendix).

## **Principal interviews:**

The principal of each participating multiplex school was interviewed by two members of the research team between June 15 and July 1, 2005. These interviews had two goals: 1) to triangulate the data gathered from the teacher-librarian interviews regarding program goals, roles, activities, performance, and support structures; and 2) to gather the administrator's thoughts on the school conversion process itself, and how the process is affecting library services, personnel, governance, and policy. These interviews were conducted at the school sites after the initial library observation and teacher-librarian interviews described above. Interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes, and were based on an approved protocol included with this report (see Instrument B in the appendix).

To further develop trust with our informants, this initial set of interviews was not audio recorded. Two interviewers took separate notes which were then compared and collated. Coding and analysis of this data is ongoing. Follow-up interviews will be held annually to provide a sense of how the small school conversion process is affecting the library program and teacher-librarians.

## **Emerging Themes:**

Although the data analysis process is ongoing, certain themes have emerged in our conversations with these key stakeholders in the small school conversion process. We have identified a number of commonalities and contradictions within each of these informant populations, as well as tensions that exist between and among stakeholder groups.

- Within the teacher-librarian group there are significant differences in how they characterize their roles and responsibilities. The diversity of activities within the group permits us to work with a rich array of practice translations, which in turn will strengthen the models that we derive from our analysis of the school library programs. This also suggests that our best practices will require the development of contextually-specific interventions to affect practice.
- Affective concerns, contextual tensions, and teacher-librarian self-efficacy appeared closely linked with role selection, program goals, and the overall tenor of the library program. The construction of the teacher-librarian's identity within the context of the transforming school will be an area of in-depth analysis.
- Principals are often unaware of library policies and practices, despite having ready opinions regarding the effectiveness of those practices and their place within the school community. Principal perceptions of support and collaboration within the school community were, in some contexts, at odds with the teacher-librarians' perceptions of the same. Communication and governance practices within the school community directly influenced many of these perceptions and/or misperceptions.

- Certain contradictions exist within the transforming schools between key stakeholders, including teacher-librarians, school leadership, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) funding the transformation process. These inconsistencies derive from goals, procedures, and perceptions of the process itself that do not perfectly align. Governance for the individual schools or academies, and professional development were major points of departure. Both of these areas, particularly the former, directly influence the school library program.

The research team will continue to follow these emerging themes in the coming months with additional data collection that will add a third and fourth set of stakeholders to this equation: classroom teachers and students.

### **Model Building**

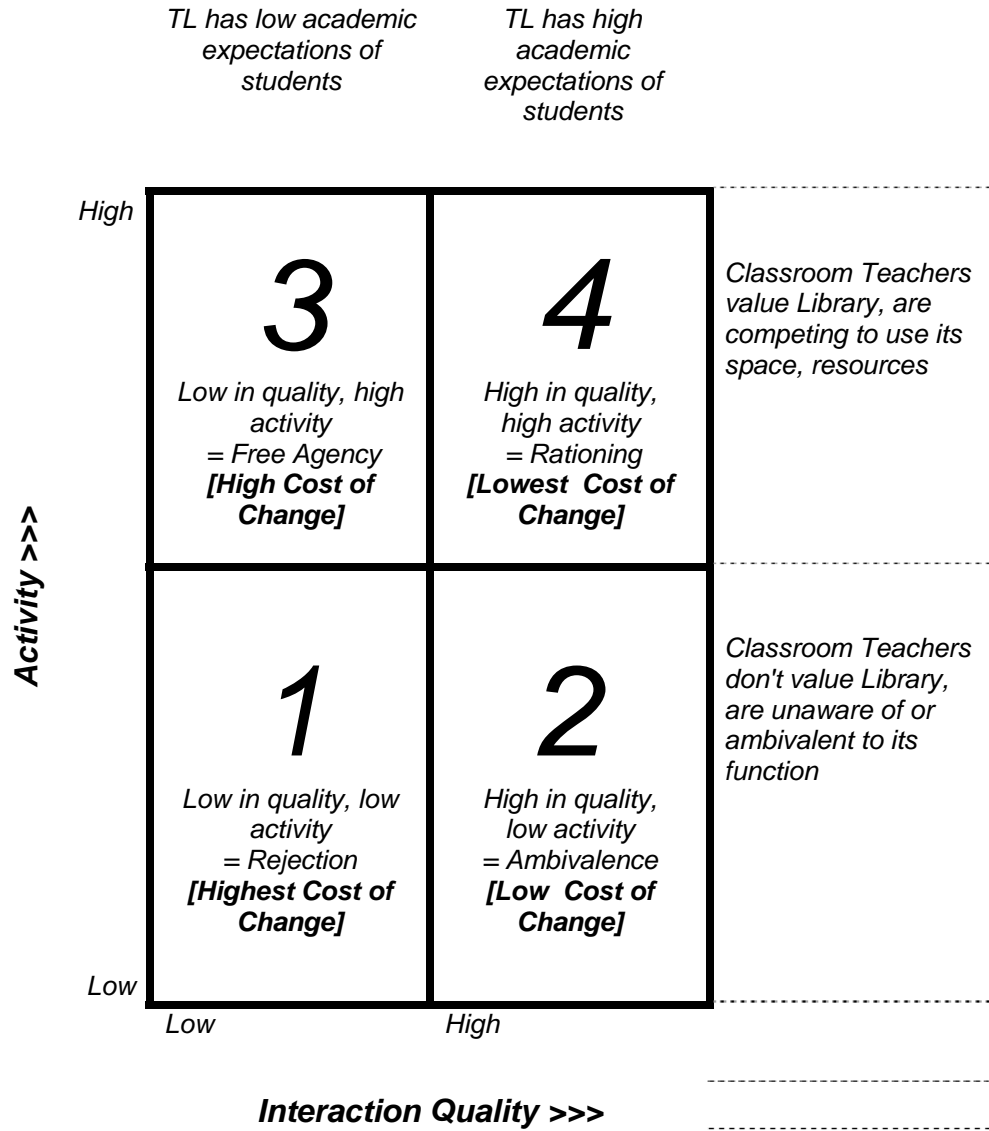
Based on the initial data obtained, the research team has begun to identify conceptual models of the ways in which the library and information needs of small high schools differ from those of traditional, comprehensive high schools. The Conversion Process Model is elaborated above. The second model is designed to assess the difficulty, or “cost,” that is required for the library program to transition into a vital contributor in a small schools learning environment (see Table 2 on the following page). The model plots the quality of interactions between the teacher-librarian against the volume of interactions. The model suggests that a vibrant, visible school library program requires both high volume and high quality, and that raising the quality of interactions (driven by the teacher-librarian’s engagement with the curriculum and collaborative relationships with classroom teachers) is more difficult than increasing the volume (driven by size of staff, facilities, and policies on use and access).

Terms:

Quality of Interaction: Assessments of the impact of library services on student learning, articulated in terms of instruction, collaboration, programs, and facilities.

Volume of Activity: Assessments of how “busy” the library is during/before/after the school day, including class visits and drop-in use.

**Table 2: Cost of Change Model - Quality of Interaction vs. Volume**



**Descriptions:**

Square 1: Interactions between students and the teacher-librarian are of low quality, and there is limited library activity. The teacher-librarian is not serving students or teachers well and does not have a clearly articulated program that reaches students. Negative behavior and limits on access to facility make the library an unwelcoming place for school and personal information needs. The culture of the learning environment at the school may limit library use. The library is not making an impact on teaching and learning.

Square 2: Interactions between students and the teacher-librarian are of high quality, but the volume is limited. The teacher-librarian is skilled, but the library is somewhat isolated from the school population, perhaps as a consequence of the shortage of human resources needed to expand the reach of the program. The library is making minimal impact on teaching and learning, or helping only a select segment of the school population, rather than a broad segment. Program may suffer from a lack of articulation or recognition in the school. Operations may be closely akin to a public library.

Square 3: Interactions between students and the teacher-librarian are of low quality, but there is abundant activity. Overpopulation, understaffing, and/or a lack of control transforms the library into a venue for socialization rather than a venue for scholastic activity. The library may be used as a “release valve” by teachers, or a place where students can escape or “cut class.” It may be hard to tell what impact, if any, the library is having on teaching and learning. The school library may have significant non-academic value.

Square 4: Interactions between students and the teacher-librarian are of high quality, and the library is regularly in use. Due to traffic volume, librarian may resort to rationing space and materials to accommodate the greatest number of staff and students. The expectation for library use is academic, not personal, and the curriculum of each small learning community will drive the collection development policy. The librarian will have a well articulated program that extends beyond the library facility.

### ***October 2004 – April 2005 (previously reported)***

The primary project activities during the first six months of this grant involved the creation of a project team, the recruitment of subjects and development of instruments and protocols for data collection.

#### **Recruitment**

One research team member, Bryce Nelson, took the lead in making contacts and investigating the potential level of interest among high schools converting to small schools in the Puget Sound region. His extensive experience and familiarity with schools and staff around the area contributed to the success of the recruitment effort. Recruitment activities took place between October 2004 and January 2005 until six high schools had been recruited to participate in the study. While the proposal indicated five high schools would participate, six high schools were solicited in case of possible attrition occurring during the three year period of the project.

The final pool of high schools reflects a variety of socioeconomic levels. Three urban schools, two suburban schools, and one rural school are represented in the sample. Table 3 presents a summary of descriptive statistics for each school.

**Table 3: Descriptive Characteristics of Participating High Schools**

School	Type	# of Students	# of Learning Communities	# Years in Conversion <sup>a</sup>	Library Staff (FTE)
A	Urban	1100	2 <sup>b</sup>	3	1
B	Urban	1050	1 <sup>b</sup>	2	1
C	Urban	750	3	2	3
D	Suburban	1,600	5	2	2
E	Suburban	1,900	6	2	2
F	Rural	1,700	7	2	3

<sup>a</sup> This column indicates how much time has elapsed since the comprehensive school converted to a small school, multiplex environment.

<sup>b</sup> Conversion process is ongoing, with more learning communities or academies to be added.

### **Instruments and Protocols**

Data collection for this project involves extensive review of the literature, gathering documentation created at each of the participating sites, observations at each site, and meeting with subjects from a large number of informant groups. A substantial effort was dedicated to creating interview schedules, survey questionnaires, observation protocols, creating an observation schedule, creating a file for entering data for statistical analysis, and developing a codebook for content analysis of interview and focus group data. Each instrument and protocol is subject to internal review to ensure compliance with regulations governing the protection of study participants. The Human Subjects Division at the University of Washington provided substantial feedback on how to administer a complex project of this nature that includes a large number of different observations (including observations in the workplace) and the participation of adolescents as research subjects. Under their guidance, we received approval to begin data collection in March 2005. Table 4 outlines the type of informant groups, the types of observations planned, frequency, and the projected number of subjects in each observation.

**Table 4: Informant Groups and Frequency of Observations**

<b>Informant Group</b>	<b>Data Type</b>	<b>Data Format</b>	<b>Method of collection</b>	<b># Persons per site</b>	<b>Collection Frequency (per year)</b>	<b>What we hope to learn</b>
<b>Principal</b>	Verbal/narrative	Field notes, audio recording	Interview	1-2	1X (Sp)	Opinions of library program value, use and impact on teaching and learning
<b>Classroom Teacher</b>	Verbal/narrative	Field notes, audio recording	Interview	20	2X (Aut, Sp)	Value and perceptions of library services and resources
	Statistical/Narrative	Survey	Internet (Catalyst tools)	60	1X	Value and perceptions of library services and resources
	Verbal/narrative	Field notes, audio recording	Focus group	60	1X	Perception of library in context of school community
<b>Students</b>	Verbal/narrative	Field notes	Observations in situ	30-60	4X (2 Aut, 2 Sp)	Library use, resource selection, information behavior
	Verbal/narrative	Field notes, audio recording	Focus group	20	1X	Value and perceptions of library services and resources
	Statistical/Narrative	Survey	Internet (Catalyst tools)	200	1X	Value and perceptions of library services and resources
<b>Teacher-Librarian</b>	Verbal/narrative	Field notes	Observations in situ	1	4X (2 Aut, 2 Sp)	Library use in teaching context, student interaction
	Verbal/narrative	Field Notes and Audio Recording	Community of Practice	1	3X (1Aut, 1Win, 1Sp)	Peer sharing, member-checking, and professional development
	Verbal/narrative	Field notes, audio recording	Interview in situ	1	3X (Aut, Win, Sp)	Perceptions of library services, usage, staff & students, strategic vision

## **Data Collection**

On April 22, 2005, the six teacher-librarians from the participating high schools met with the research team to formally launch the data collection phase of the project during a day-long seminar meeting. This first event had multiple purposes:

- To introduce the teacher-librarians to the concept of participatory action research and the types of activities that would be taking place over the next three years, and also to introduce the entire research team to the teacher-librarians
- To conduct a focus group discussion regarding the role of library services in small high schools and the conversion process, enabling the research team to learn about the varied experiences of each participant and determine potential bias or environmental factors that might influence each informant's perspective.
- To present and discuss the online tools that would be provided to facilitate communication between participants and the research team: a project listserv, a project website specifically dedicated to meeting the needs of the teacher-librarians, and an online survey that would be used periodically to gather responses and opinions.
- To demonstrate the use of the Personal Response System (PRS), a remote handheld unit system for conducting surveys that will enable gathering data from students anonymously.

The focus group discussion yielded a rich dataset of responses, opinions, and personal history of each site that formed a platform for the site observations, teacher-librarian interviews, and principal interviews scheduled for May and June 2005.

## Schedule of Completion

The project is currently on schedule. Items shaded in gray have been completed.

**Table 5: Schedule of Completion**

October 1, 2004, to September 30, 2007	2004	2005				2006				2007			
	Aut	Win	Spr	Sum	Aut	Win	Spr	Sum	Aut	Win	Spr	Sum	
<b>Year 1</b>													
Recruit subjects													
Develop instruments and protocols													
Human subjects review and approval													
Initial focus group with Teacher-Librarians													
Interim narrative													
Site observations													
Teacher-Librarian and Principal interviews													
Coding focus group and interview data													
Initial model development													
Interim narrative and financial report													
<b>Year 2</b>													
Collaborative Interviews / Change Interviews													
Community of Practice gathering													
Interim narrative													
2 <sup>nd</sup> Community of Practice gathering													
Coding and Data analysis													
Model testing; identify best practices													
Interim narrative and financial report													
<b>Year 3</b>													
Final focus groups & interviews - Teachers													
Final Student surveys													
Final site observations													

Interim narrative													
Third focus group with Teacher-Librarians													
Coding and Data analysis													
Final model & summary of best practices													
Final narrative and financial report													

## C. Project Outputs

At the mid-point of this 3-year project, scholarly and practitioner focused outputs are being disseminated. These include:

- Conference Presentations - The research team will be presenting initial findings from the project at two conferences during the summer of 2006, the Information Seeking in Context (ISIC) conference in Sydney, Australia, and the International Association of School Librarians (IASL) conference in Lisbon, Portugal. Both papers will be published in the conference proceedings. Eric Meyers will also be presenting at Connections 2006, a seminar for doctoral students in information science. Potential venues in the United States for presenting future project findings include the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), and invitational symposia sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Project website for the public – This site serves as the public face of the project and provides a platform for sharing findings with a general audience of practitioners, researchers, and funding agencies. As the project proceeds, the site continues to disseminate project news, and research products (e.g. a dynamic version of the Conversion Process Model).  
URL: <http://smallschools.ischool.washington.edu>
- Codebook – We are continuing to develop a taxonomy for analyzing the impact of library and information programs on the teaching and learning environment of the school. This codebook is complete with scope notes for categorizing interview responses and observational data. While specifically tailored to small schools, the codebook is applicable to other structural environments. By the end of this project, the codebook will be tested with over 100 transcripts.

Future outputs that we anticipate as result of this project include additional scholarly manuscripts for publication in the professional and scholarly literature, inclusion in conference proceedings, and further web development to widely disseminate research findings and recommend best practices.

## D. Outcomes-Based Evaluation

In February 2005, two members of the research team, Matthew Saxton and Eric Meyers, attended the IMLS-sponsored workshop on outcomes-based evaluation. During this workshop, they began to construct a logic model for evaluating the success of the project. As a research project, the primary outcome of this project will be to discover and disseminate new knowledge. However, the research team hopes that this project will also change the knowledge and behavior of project participants. The following two specific outcomes are desirable for the project to succeed.

**1. Teacher-librarians adopt best practices** – if the project is successful, the Teacher-librarian participants will begin to implement some number of identified best practices that will position the library and information services program as a critical component of the teaching and learning environment. In addition, best practices may also be adopted at other small high schools since findings will be disseminated online and the six participants may serve as advocates for the project to other colleagues.

**2. Teacher-Librarians form a community of practice** – if the project is successful, the Teacher-Librarian participants will actively communicate with one another and share information about the achievements and obstacles at each others' schools. Sustaining this form of collegial interaction is a useful venue for sharing ideas, professional collaboration, and continuing professional development.

**3. Library and information services discourse** – if the project is successful, library and information services will be integrated into the discourse of the small schools community. Specifically, we hope to target the school administrator and funding agency audiences.

## E. Other Results

No other results are reported during this first year of the project.

## F. Additional Comments / Anecdotal Information

No additional comments are necessary at this time.

## Appendix

The following interview schedules and observation protocol are indicative examples of the data collection instruments the research team has utilized over the past six months. These instruments serve to illustrate the nature of the responses and observations the research team will continue to gather.

### **Instrument A: Collaborative Interview - Classroom Teachers**

**Procedure:** This interview is designed to be used after observation of a classroom visit to the library. Prior to observing the class visit, provide teacher and librarian with recruitment and consent materials. Arrange interview times to occur no more than 2 days after the library visit, if possible.

**Script:** Hello [teacher]. I'm [name] from the Small School Libraries study with the University of Washington. I would like to talk to you about the classroom visit to the library that I observed on [date]. Do you remember this visit? Before we start, I want to remind you that if there are any questions you don't want to answer, just say so. You can stop or ask that the interview end at any time. If you think a question is too personal, just say you don't want to answer. I'm not looking for anything but your honest opinion. Let's look at the consent form. If you have any questions about it, I can answer them now. [obtain written consent]

When I write my report based on this interview, your answers will be completely anonymous. I may use some of your words, but your name and the name of the school will be kept confidential.

I would like to audiotape our conversation, so I can be sure that I get your exact words. If you do not want me to audiotape our conversation, then I would like to write notes about what you say.

Do you have any questions before we start?

#### **Questions:**

1. I'd like to begin by asking you to summarize the visit to the library and the activity the class performed.
2. How did you prepare for this activity with the librarian?
3. What aspects of the activity/visit worked well?
4. What aspects of the activity/visit did not work well?
5. How does this activity support student learning?

6. How will you follow-up with this activity? What are the next steps?
7. Was this visit typical of the class' activities in the library? If not, how was it different?
8. How often do you take the class to the library?
9. How often do you send individual students to the library?
10. Aside from class visits like this one, in what other ways do you work with the librarian and/or library resources?

**Wrap-Up:**

11. Is there anything else that I didn't ask that you would like to tell me?
- 

**Interview B: Collaborative Interview – Teacher-Librarians**

**Procedure:** This interview is designed to be used after observation of a classroom visit to the library. Prior to observing the class visit, provide teacher and librarian with recruitment and consent materials. Arrange interview times to occur no more than 2 days after the library visit, if possible.

**Script:** Hello [librarian]. I'm [name] from the Small School Libraries study with the University of Washington. I would like to talk to you about the classroom visit to the library that I observed on [date]. Do you remember this visit? Before we start, I want to remind you that if there are any questions you don't want to answer, just say so. You can stop or ask that the interview end at any time. If you think a question is too personal, just say you don't want to answer. I'm not looking for anything but your honest opinion. Let's look at the consent form. If you have any questions about it, I can answer them now. [obtain written consent]

When I write my report based on this interview, your answers will be completely anonymous. I may use some of your words, but your name and the name of the school will be kept confidential.

I would like to audiotape our conversation, so I can be sure that I get your exact words. If you do not want me to audiotape our conversation, then I would like to write notes about what you say.

Do you have any questions before we start?

**Questions:**

1. I'd like to begin by asking you to summarize the visit to the library and the activity the class performed.
2. How did you prepare for this activity with the teacher?
3. What aspects of the activity/visit worked well?
4. What aspects of the activity/visit did not work well?
5. How did this library activity support student learning?
6. How will you follow-up this activity? What are the next steps?
7. Was this visit typical of the class' activities in the library? If not, how was it different?
8. How often does this teacher bring his/her class to the library?
9. How often does this teacher send individual students to the library?
10. Aside from class visits like this one, in what other ways do you work with this teacher?

**Wrap-Up:**

11. Is there anything else that I didn't ask that you would like to tell me?
- 

**Instrument C: Change Interview – Teacher-Librarians**

**Procedure:** Arrive at school at least 15 minutes prior to scheduled observation. Business-casual attire. Check-in at main office. Greet TL on entry, prepare materials as necessary. Obtain consent. When you are leaving, thank TL, check-out in main office.

**Script:** Hello [teacher-librarian]. I'm [name] from the Small School Libraries study with the University of Washington. Before we start, I want to remind you that if there are any questions you don't want to answer, just say so. You can stop or ask that the interview end at any time. If you think a question is too personal, just say you don't want to answer. I'm not looking for anything but your honest opinion. Let's look at the consent form. If you have any questions about it, I can answer them now. [obtain written consent]

When I write my report based on this interview, your answers will be completely anonymous. I may use some of your words, but your name and the name of the school will be kept confidential.

I would like to audiotape our conversation, so I can be sure that I get your exact words. If you do not want me to audiotape our conversation, then I would like to write notes about what you say.

Do you have any questions before we start?

**Questions:**

Please share with us the history of how your school came to be a group of small schools. Can you provide us with any documents on this history?

1. Do teachers teach, and do students learn, in ways different from before implementing the small schools? Do you have evidence which you can share with us?
2. What is the impact of small schools on the curriculum, and on the need for resources to support the curriculum? Can you give us examples of specific resources that the library provides to support the curriculum?
3. What is the role of the library and librarian in your school? Are those roles changing with small schools?
4. In what ways are students taught information skills? What is your role in teaching information skills to students and teachers?
5. How are decisions made about funding, staffing and using the library and librarian?
6. Do the various small schools have different needs for library time and resources? Do any conflicts arise between the schools?
7. What might the future look like for your high school library program in the context of small high schools?

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**Instrument D: Year 2 Interview – Teacher-Librarians**

**Procedure:** Arrive at school at least 15 minutes prior to scheduled observation. Business-casual attire. Check-in at main office before going to the library. Greet TL on entry, prepare recorder, other materials as necessary. Obtain consent. When you are leaving, thank TL, check-out in main office.

**Script:** Hello [teacher-librarian]. I'm [name] from the Small School Libraries study with the University of Washington. Before we start, I want to remind you that if there are any questions you don't want to answer, just say so. You can stop or ask that the interview end at any time. If you think a question is too personal, just say you don't want to

answer. I'm not looking for anything but your honest opinion. Let's look at the consent form. If you have any questions about it, I can answer them now. [obtain written consent]

When I write my report based on this interview, your answers will be completely anonymous. I may use some of your words, but your name and the name of the school will be kept confidential.

I would like to audiotape our conversation, so I can be sure that I get your exact words. If you do not want me to audiotape our conversation, then I would like to write notes about what you say.

Do you have any questions before we start?

**Questions:**

**T-L Job Description, Perception**

1. Last year you described your work as TL at \_\_\_\_\_ HS as:  
How would you describe your work this year?
2. Have you seen changes in your library this year in terms of 1) collection; 2) services; 3) policies? What caused this change?

**Social Network, Relationships**

- 4) This is your support circle from last year (cleaned-up copy of last year's document). Take a few moments to look it over. Would you change it in any way? Why?

**Building level support (if not indicated above):**

- 5) Have there been any changes in the type/level of support that the administration provides to the library?
- 6) Have you changed how you communicate with the Administration about library services?
- 7) Have you changed how you communicate with your faculty about library services?

**District level support (if not indicated above):**

- 8) Have there been any changes in the type/level of support the district provides for the library?
- 9) Last year you described your interaction with other TLs in the district as: (frequency and content) Has anything changed in the way you work with the TLs in your district? Why?

**Library and student achievement:**

11) How do you feel the library helps students meet their academic goals?

**Community Involvement:**

12) Has anything changed in the relationship between you and the public library?

**Priorities/Critical assessment:**

13) Have your goals for the library changed in the last year?

**Wrap-Up:**

14) Is there anything else that I didn't ask that you would like to tell me?

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**Instrument E: Protocol for Site Observation**

**How to use this guide:** The following points are to be used as a framework for field notes when observing small school libraries. Observation 1 will be at least 2 hours in length and may cover all aspects of this guide. Subsequent observations may focus on only one aspect (TL, or student behavior).

**Identification:** Teacher-Librarian=TL, Library technician=TC, Classroom teacher=T, Other adult=A, Student=S or S1, S2, etc. No students or adults are to be identified by name, only by code.

**Procedure:** Follow observation scheduling procedures as listed in the participant information sheet sent to all potential informants. Arrive at school at least 15 minutes prior to scheduled observation. Business-casual attire. Check-in at main office before going to the library. Greet TL on entry, take up position in an unobtrusive place. Indicate when you are leaving, thank TL, check-out in main office.

**Oral Consent Script:** Hello [teacher-librarian]. I'm [name] from the Small School Libraries study with the University of Washington. I'll be observing the library today for the next few hours. I will do my best to stay out of the way. I would like to write some notes while I am here, is that ok? [obtain oral consent]. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with my presence, you may ask me to leave. I appreciate your cooperation.

**Library observations:**

- Entry, signage, door position (open/closed)
- Decorative signs
- Student work displays
- Book displays (include subjects or titles)

**Documents to obtain:** library floor plan/map (hand draw if not available) – Obs 1 only.

**TL observations:**

- Helping behaviors (e.g. assisting w/ assignment)
- Directing behaviors (e.g. showing where a book is shelved)
- Managing behaviors (e.g. asking for student passes)
- Instructional behaviors (e.g. teaching use of catalog)
- Position of TL in library (e.g. in stacks, behind desk)
- Other activities (provide descriptions)

**Student observations:**

- # drop-in students
- # classes or groups (purpose, if can be ascertained)
- Student behaviors with resources (e.g. book or internet use)
- Student interpersonal (e.g. collaborative work, assisting, socializing)
- Interaction with TL (describe)

**Teacher/Adult observations:**

- With class or individual, purpose (if can be ascertained)
- Interaction with TL (describe)