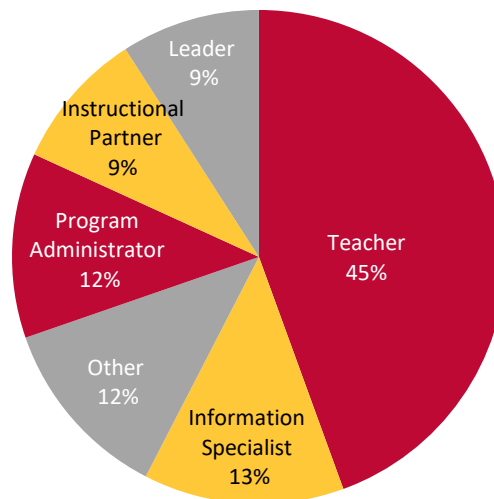


School Libraries in Maryland

Maryland School Libraries Media Specialists (SLMS) play a crucial role in empowering learners to think critically and solve problems by fostering creativity and innovation. As educators in their school environments, they teach information literacy skills daily, which are essential for driving student achievement and ensuring college and career success. In addition, SLMS creates a culture of reading within the school by maintaining a collection of high interest, current, and relevant literature and informational text. More than 21 studies have demonstrated that schools with media centers staffed by certified SLMS experience significantly improved student academic outcomes ([AASL, 2016](#)).

SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST ARE TEACHERS

Average percentage of time SLMS are in each teaching role

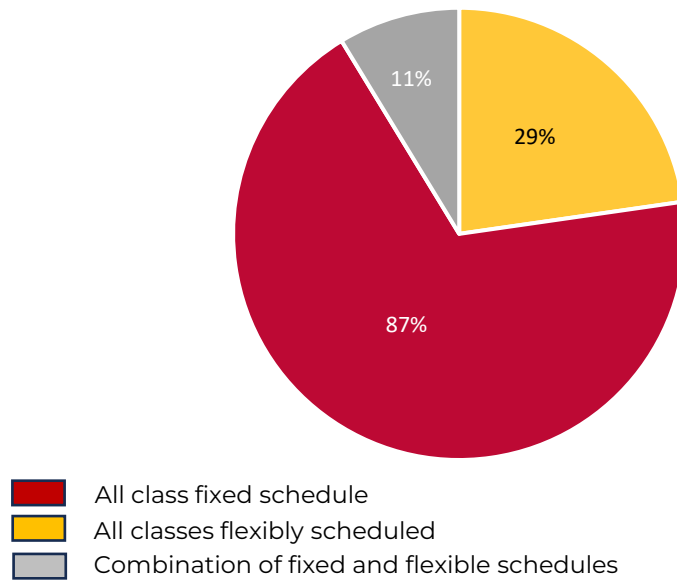


INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

An average of 2 hours per week spent meeting with teachers to plan instruction.

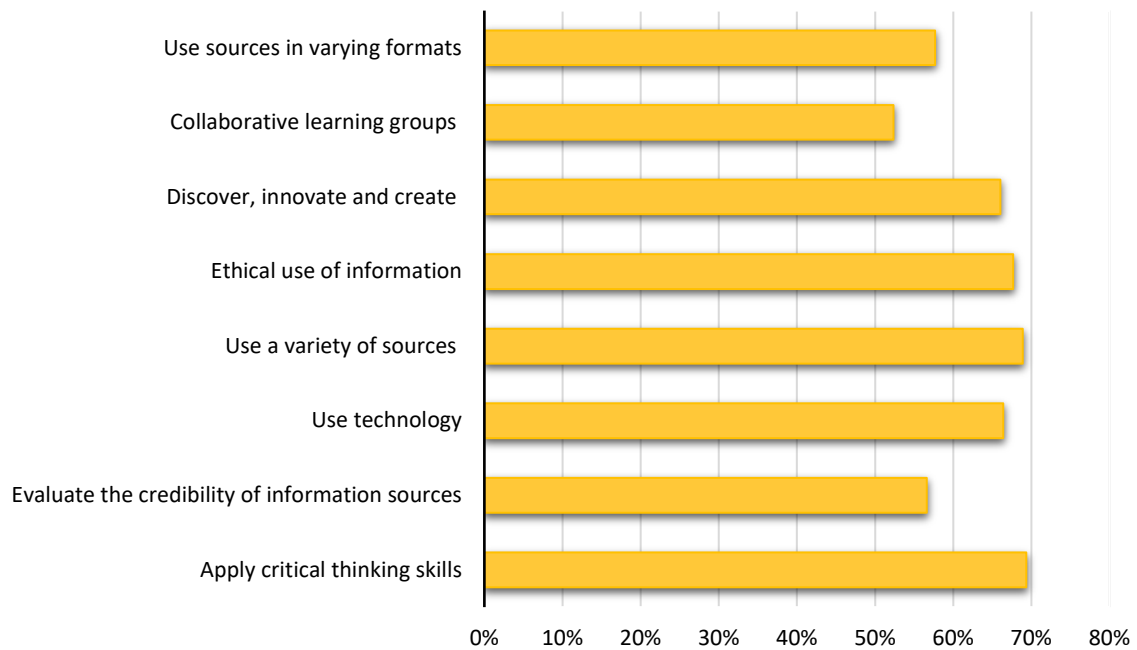
An average of 16 hours per week spent actively delivering direct instruction.

School Library Media Scheduling Models



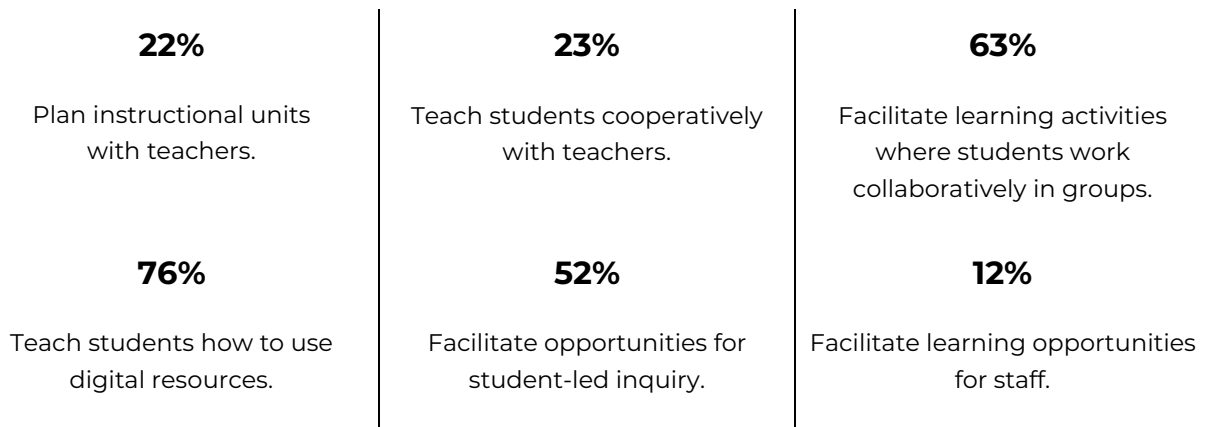
INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS

Average percentage of SLMS who frequently do the following:

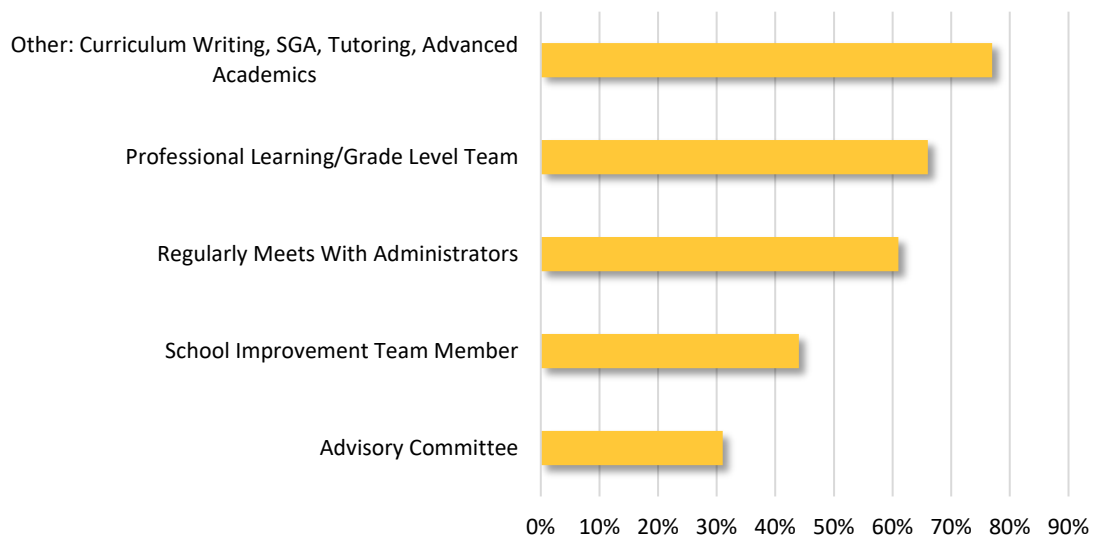


PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Average percentage of SLMS who frequently do the following:



Average percentage of SLMS in school leadership



The Maryland State Department of Education administers an annual survey to collect school library program information in compliance with COMAR 13A.05.04.01 Public Schools Library Media Programs. The data in this flyer is from the 2023-24 Maryland Public School Annual Library Media Center Report.

Data compiled from the 2023-24 Maryland State Department of Education Annual Media Center Report. Data represents 91% (1301) of all 1421 Maryland schools reported. Total student enrollment reported 987,385. There is a 10% School Library Media Specialist vacancy rate.

Annual School Library Media Survey Findings

Maryland School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) empower learners to think critically and solve problems with creativity and innovation. Through a comprehensive and integrated instructional program, students develop competencies in information and digital literacy, while also promoting a culture of reading.

School Library Media Centers (SLMC) offer a diverse array of print and digital resources and services to support these objectives. SLMS are pivotal leaders within their school communities. Each year, all Maryland public schools are required to complete the School Library Media Annual Survey, which provides detailed information about each school's library media program, collection, budget, and staffing. This document summarizes the data submitted by 1,301 Maryland public schools. Schools with special programs or vacant positions were not included in this report.

Schools reporting: 1301 (1421 schools total)

Student enrollment: 987,385

STAFFING (TOTALS)

- 1028 (79%) of SLMC have a MSDE certified Library Media Specialist.
- 961 (74%) of SLMC have a full-time Maryland Certified SLMS.
- 106 teachers are working toward MSDE Library Media Specialist certification.
- 43 SLMS have National Board Certification in School Library Media.
- 423 (33%) of SLMC have at least part-time, paid, technical, clerical or assistants.
- 130 (10%) of SLMC are vacant and are not accessible by students or staff.
- 258 (19%) of SLMC have uncertified staff in place of certified SLMS.

BUDGET

- 92% of SLMC received system-level funding.
- \$7,197 is the average SLMC **total budget** in the school year 2023-24.
- 6% (87 schools) of SLMC had **no funding source** listed.

PHYSICAL COLLECTION (TOTALS)

- 11,629,227 books are in physical collections statewide.
- 12 is the average number of books per student statewide.
- 117,120 is the number of video materials statewide.
- 38,950 is the number of audio materials statewide.

DIGITAL COLLECTION

- 52% of schools purchased eBooks and eAudio books in the school year 2023-24.
- 41% of schools purchased online databases in the school year 2023-24.

COLLECTION AGE

Statewide ranges and average publication date for each Dewey range:

Dewey Classification	Publication Range	Average Publication Date
000-099	1993-2023	2002
100-199	1981-2022	1998
200-299	1975-2023	1992
300-399	1985-2022	1998
400-499	1974-2023	1989
500-599	1986-2023	2001
600-699	1984-2023	2000
700-799	1986-2022	2014
800-899	1980-2023	1991
900-999	1984-2023	1997

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND VIRTUAL PRESENCE

Public Library Cooperation

- 82% of SLMC have a collaborative partnership with the public library to promote programming.
- 79% of SLMC have a collaborative process in place to simplify students' obtaining a library card.

Virtual Presence

- 71% of SLMC have a virtual presence.
- 39% of SLMC have a social media presence.
- 74% of SLMC have a link from the school website directing users to the SLMC website.

Technology Management

- 21 is the average number of internet accessible devices in the SLMC.
- 48% of the SLMC/staff are responsible for managing computer labs/mobile technology.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Schedule:

- 29% of classes are flexibly scheduled.
- 55% of classes are on a fixed schedule.
- 11% have a combination of fixed and flexibly scheduled classes.

Teaching Approaches

How often do you:	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
Plan instructional units with teachers	22%	58%	19%
Instruct students cooperatively with teachers	23%	41%	35%
Facilitate learning activities where students work collaboratively in groups	63%	30%	7%
Teach students how to use digital resources	76%	17%	6%
Facilitate opportunities for student-led inquiry	52%	38%	8%
Facilitate learning opportunities for school staff	12%	64%	22%

Information Literacy Skills

How often do you:	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
Apply critical thinking skills	69%	23%	6%
Evaluate the credibility of information sources, including the internet	57%	35%	7%
Use technology to organize and share information	67%	25%	7%
Use a variety of sources when gathering information about a topic	69%	24%	6%
Understand the ethical use of information, technology, and the media	68%	25%	6%
Discover, innovate, and create expression through reading and self-directed pursuits	66%	26%	6%
Engage in collaborative learning groups to broaden and deepen their understandings	52%	39%	7%
Use sources in varying formats that express a variety of perspectives and viewpoints	58%	34%	7%

ROLES OF THE SLMS (PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT IN EACH ROLE)

- Leader: 9%
- Instructional Partner: 9%
- Information Specialist: 13%
- Teacher: 45%
- Program Administrator: 12%
- Other: 12%

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- 13% of SLMC have an advisory committee.
- 61% of SLMS meet regularly with the principal and/or other building or district administrators outside of required staff/curriculum meetings.
- 44% of SLMS participate as a member of the School Improvement Team (SIT).
- 66% of SLMS participate as a member of a professional learning or grade level team.
- 77% of SLMS participate in other school committees.

- On average, SLMS spend 2 hours per week meeting with teachers to plan instruction/instructional units.
- On average, SLMS spend 16 hours per week actively delivering instruction, alone or in collaboration with a classroom teacher, to students in the library, in classrooms, in computer labs, and/or at other school locations.

ACCESS TO SLMC

Extended Hours

On average, the SLMC is open to students for 3 hours per week before and after school.

In an average week, what percentage of:	Below 25%	26%-50%	51%-75%	Over 75%
Students utilize the library media center for personal or instructional purposes.	12%	19%	15%	53%
Staff utilize the space for collaboration, meetings, and school events.	59%	23%	9%	7%
Staff utilize the library media center to locate and/or use resources for teaching and learning purposes.	54%	29%	10%	4%

Testing Closure

41% of SLMC are closed for testing.

- If closed, 78 is the average number of hours closed for testing purposes.
- If closed, 30% of SLMS are used as a test proctor or administrator.

INNOVATION IN THE SLMC

- 56% of SLMC have a space dedicated to creating and innovating.
 - 16% plan to create a space dedicated to creating and innovating.
- 18% of SLMS incorporate innovative activities or events into the SLMC program.
 - 65% plan to incorporate innovative activities or events into the SLMC program.

The Maryland State Department of Education administers an annual survey to collect school library program information in compliance with COMAR 13A.05.04.01 Public Schools Library Media Programs. The data in this flyer is from the 2023-24 Maryland Public School Annual Library Media Center Survey.

Data compiled from the 2023-24 Maryland State Department of Education Annual Media Center Report. 91% (1301) of all 1421 Maryland schools reported. Total student enrollment reported 987,385. There is a 10% School Library Media Specialist vacancy rate.

School Library Media Summary Report

Maryland School Libraries Media Specialists (SLMS) play a crucial role in empowering learners to think critically and solve problems by fostering creativity and innovation. As educators in their school environments, they teach information literacy skills daily, which are essential for driving student achievement and ensuring college and career success. In addition, SLMS create a culture of reading within the school by maintaining a collection of high interest, current, and relevant literature and informational text. More than 21 studies have demonstrated that schools with media centers staffed by certified SLMS experience significantly improved student academic outcomes ([AASL, 2016](#)).

In alignment with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, SLMS and their programs play a critical role in expanding PreK programs across the state by fostering pre-literacy skills essential for school readiness. SLMS, who are highly qualified educators with master's degrees in library science, serve as instructional partners, teaching effective use of statewide resources to promote student success. Their inquiry-based information literacy curriculum aligns with College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards. By building comprehensive physical and digital libraries, SLMS ensure equity, accessibility, and diverse representation for all students. Additionally, their engagement with parents, caregivers, and the broader community strengthens family involvement, which is crucial to the successful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

SURVEY INFORMATION

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) administers an annual survey to collect school library program information in compliance with [COMAR 13A.05.04.01](#) Public Schools Library Media Programs. The data in this report is from the 2023-24 Maryland Public School Annual Library Media Center Survey.

Maryland has 1,421 K-12 schools. For the 2023-24 academic year, 1,301 of these schools, encompassing a total student enrollment of 987,385, completed the Annual School Library Media Survey. Schools that did not participate in the survey include those with specialized programs and those with vacant school library media positions. There are currently 130 vacant school library media positions statewide, resulting in a 10% vacancy rate. Additionally, 19% of school library media centers are not staffed with certified library media specialists. This means that **29% of Maryland students are not accessing information or media literacy standards** due to SLMS staffing vacancies.

STAFFING AND BUDGET

School library media centers (SLMC) are required to be staffed by qualified, certified school library media specialists ([COMAR 13A.05.04.01](#)). Among the schools that reported, only 74% of SLMC were staffed by full time MSDE certified library media specialists, and 5% were staffed by part time certified library media specialists. To address these staffing shortages, 106 certified teachers are currently working toward library media certification. Maryland certified SLMS must hold a master's degree in school library media or an equivalent certification ([COMAR 13a.12.03.03](#)).

SLMC budgets vary by district. In 92% of school libraries, a per-pupil allocation formula is used, providing a fixed amount of funding based on student enrollment. Other districts provide a budget to each school, with the school administrator allocating the funds to the library. However, 6% of SLMC (87 schools) reported that they did not receive any funding.

For the 2023-24 school year, SLMC budgets ranged from \$0 to \$103,000. The highest budget, \$103,000, was allocated to a school establishing a new library collection. The average **total budget** for schools receiving per-pupil allocations was \$7,197.

ROLES OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

The American Association of School Libraries identifies five key roles for SLMS to ensure a robust library program and high student achievement. The distribution of time SLMS spend in each role is as follows:

- Leader: 9%
- Instructional Partner: 9%
- Information Specialist: 13%
- Teacher: 45%
- Program Administrator: 12%
- Other: 12%

Many SLMS serve as leaders within their schools by participating in the professional environment. Specifically, **44% of SLMS are members of the School Improvement Team (SIT)**, 61% meet with building and district administrators outside of regular school meetings, 66% are members of a professional learning or grade-level team, and **77% participate in other school committees, such as literacy and technology committees.**

As Information Specialists, SLMS frequently instruct students on various information literacy skills. On average, 64% of SLMS frequently focus on teaching the following skills:

- Apply critical thinking skills;
- Evaluate the credibility of information sources;
- Use technology to organize and share information;
- Use a variety of sources when gathering information about a topic;
- Understand the ethical use of Information, technology, and the media;
- Discover, innovate, and create expression through reading and self-directed pursuits;
- Engage in collaborative learning groups to broaden and deepen their understandings; and
- Use sources in varying formats that express a variety of perspectives and viewpoints.

SLMS spend most of their time teaching, with 44% dedicated to instructing students in information literacy, media literacy, and computer science skills. SLMS are certified teachers with master's degrees, and adhere to the Maryland School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries ([AASL, 2018](#)). Many Maryland districts have developed curriculum and scope and sequences for their programs aligned to these standards.

In their role as program administrators, SLMS curate and maintain a diverse, inclusive, and relevant collection of books and resources. This includes purchasing, processing, weeding (a process of removing books and other materials from the collection that are no longer needed or relevant), repairing and shelving books, managing a balanced budget, completing yearly inventories and reports, maintaining effective circulation procedures, and managing staff and volunteers.

In addition, SLMS are tasked with a range of responsibilities, including organizing library events such as book fairs and family literacy nights. They also **facilitate book clubs, teach coding and computational**

thinking, supervise Makerspace activities, serve as advisors for Student Government, instruct Advanced Academics and Gifted and Talented programs, and provide tutoring. Also, many SLMS are trained to work with small groups to **deliver literacy interventions** that are consistent with the principles of the Science of Reading.

COLLECTIONS

A well-curated and maintained library collection is essential for a strong library program and student success. Library collections support the interests, information needs, and instructional activities of students and staff. They must be inclusive, diverse, current, relevant, and provide multiple perspectives.

Physical and Digital Collections

Physical library collections include books, video materials such as DVDs, and audio materials such as Playaway devices (self-playing audio players with preloaded audiobooks) and compact discs. Statewide, school libraries house 11,629,227 physical books, averaging 12 books per student. Collection best practices and standards recommend 15-20 books per student to provide access to a diverse range of materials.

Currently, there are 117,120 video materials and 38,950 audio materials. Video materials are rapidly being replaced by streaming video services and digital databases.

Non-Fiction Collection Age

The Annual School Library Media Survey collects data on the age and range of the non-fiction collections. Statewide, the total average non-fiction collection publication date ranges from 1975 to 2015.

The most up-to-date non-fiction collection is found in the Dewey 700s, which covers materials on sports, performing arts, graphic arts, and music, with an average age of 2014. This section is frequently updated with popular and current graphic novels, books on sports teams and statistics, and music materials.

Best practices and standards for library collections dictate that non-fiction materials should not exceed ten years past their publication date, and science and technology materials should not exceed three years. Currently, the 500s (Sciences) and 600s (Technology) have average publication dates of 2001 and 2000, respectively. Efforts are required to update these collections to meet 2021 standards, which can be accomplished through weeding and curating strategies. Although many non-fiction topics are accessible through library digital databases, the practice of weeding and curating non-fiction books remains essential. It is crucial that the available books contain current information.

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND VIRTUAL PRESENCE

In today's digital society, school libraries are increasingly utilizing technology to connect with students, parents, and the broader community. Currently, 71% of school libraries maintain a virtual presence, and 39% have an active social media presence. A virtual presence includes 24/7 access to eBooks, databases, and resources, providing students with the flexibility to access materials for homework, projects, and personal reading from anywhere. Libraries with social media accounts can share information about events and highlight the achievements of students and staff.

Beyond virtual engagement, **82% of SLMCs have partnered with public libraries** to extend resource access and promote library programs. This collaboration benefits students by enhancing their access to both school and public library resources. Furthermore, **79% of SLMCs have streamlined processes to**

help students obtain library cards, with one district integrating their school library media catalog with public library catalogs, allowing students simultaneous access to both.

Technology management is another role for many SLMS. Currently, 48% of SLMS are responsible for managing computer labs and mobile technology. As a result of the increase in 1:1 device programs in many schools, the number of internet-accessible devices housed within the SLMC has decreased over the years as students are now using technology in the classroom and at home. The average number of internet-accessible devices in SLMC is now 21.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Schedule

Traditionally, elementary school library media programs operate on a fixed schedule, while secondary schools often employ a flexible schedule. A fixed schedule means that students visit the library at the same time each week, typically to facilitate teacher planning or collaboration. Currently, 55% of SLMC follow a fixed schedule.

Flexible schedules allow teachers to bring their classes to the library for collaborative teaching, research lessons, and small group instruction as needed. This approach provides more opportunities for students to use the library for clubs, projects, and independent work, including when taking dual enrollment courses. At present, 29% of SLMC use a flexible schedule. Additionally, 11% of SLMC employ a combination of fixed and flexible scheduling.

Teaching Approaches

SLMS employ various teaching strategies to enhance student success. These approaches often involve collaboration with content teachers and facilitating collaborative instructional groups.

- 23% of SLMS frequently plan instructional units and co-teach with content teachers.
- 63% regularly facilitate learning activities with students in collaborative groups.
- 76% frequently instruct students on the use of digital resources.
- 52% regularly create opportunities for student-led inquiry.
- 12% of SLMS frequently facilitate learning opportunities for school staff.

ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

SLMS aim to provide optimal access to the library for students and staff. On average, school libraries are open for an additional three hours per week before and after school. A significant portion of students, 53%, frequently use the SLMC for both personal and instructional purposes. In contrast, only 7% of staff frequently utilize the SLMC, and a mere 4% extensively use its resources for teaching and learning purposes.

However, 41% of SLMC are closed for an average of **78 hours (about 11 days) annually due to testing**, with 30% of SLMS serving as test proctors or administrators during these periods.

INNOVATION IN THE SLMC

Many SLMS are incorporating innovation spaces within their library media centers. These spaces include computer labs, Makerspaces, study areas, and gardens. Currently, **56% of Maryland SLMCs have an innovation space**, and 16% plan to implement one in the upcoming school year.

Additionally, 18% of SLMS currently integrate innovative activities or events into their programs, such as book fairs, maker fairs, STEM and STEAM activities. SLMS are up to date on current trends in SLM which include **social and emotional (SEL) learning, literacy initiatives such as the science of reading (SOR), computer science, coding, and computational thinking.** Looking ahead, 65% of SLMS plan to incorporate some of these innovative activities in the next school year.

CONCLUSIONS

The role of SLMS in Maryland are essential in fostering student success and academic achievement. SLMS are integral in teaching critical information literacy skills, promoting a culture of reading, and managing comprehensive and diverse collections. Despite facing challenges such as a 10% vacancy rate and inequitable funding across districts, SLMS continue to fill multiple roles—leaders, instructional partners, information specialists, teachers, and program administrators.

Fixed scheduling, prevalent in 55% of SLMCs, directly conflicts with school library media best practices. ([AASL, 2019](#)). Fixed scheduling limits the flexibility needed for collaborative teaching and innovative instructional approaches. Only 29% of SLMC operate on a flexible schedule that better supports varied student and teacher needs. Moreover, professional learning opportunities for SLMS, especially in areas like computer science, innovation, data, and assessment strategies are essential yet currently insufficient.

The average library closure of 11 days (about 2 weeks) per year for testing further hinders access and instructional opportunities, with 30% of SLMS being used as test proctors. Additionally, professional development for school-based staff led by SLMS is crucial for keeping pace with educational advancements and ensuring that library programs effectively support student learning.

Maryland's school libraries are increasingly integrating technology and innovative spaces, ensuring students have access to resources both physically and digitally. The survey highlights the commitment of SLMS to student achievement and staff development, collaboration, increased literacy, and the adaptation of new educational tools and practices, which are essential for preparing students for college and career success.

NEXT STEPS

MSDE is committed to enhancing and sustaining school library media programs to ensure student success. After reviewing the compiled data, in the 2024-25 academic year, the Digital Learning and School Library Media (DLSLM) branch will prioritize focusing on the SLMC staffing shortage and providing professional learning to support current SLMS. MSDE will also design professional learning programs to promote statewide understanding of the critical role of SLMS in supporting student achievement and literacy initiatives. These opportunities will include training on assessment data use within the school library media programs, fostering a reading culture, and collaborating with teachers to promote literacy.

The DSLM Branch will also collaborate with MSDE's Literacy Branch to support SLMS so they can continue to remain dedicated to fostering literacy skills by offering students a diverse range of reading materials, supporting vocabulary development, and enhancing comprehension skills. Guidance will also be provided to local school systems to ensure that they continue to foster equity of access by offering resources in various formats to meet all students' needs and serve as safe and welcoming spaces for all learners and stakeholders.