Strengths and Opportunities: School Librarians Serving Students with Special Needs in Central New York State

Renee F. Hill, Assistant Professor, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University

Abstract

The programs and services offered at school libraries will be accessed by K–12 students with a range of physical and cognitive abilities. School librarians must be equipped to address the information-seeking needs of all patrons, including those with special needs. An electronic survey was conducted to collect data from school librarians working in central New York State school districts; the purpose of the survey was to identify the strengths this group of school library professionals brought to the task of providing services to students with special needs.

This paper shares the answers to five research questions and presents opportunities for improvement. Study results indicate that the respondents showed strength in several of the examined areas. Results also reveal practices that school librarians might implement to increase and improve library services for students with special needs.

Introduction

The once-popular depiction of school librarians as stern, student-shushing, book-shelving, paraprofessionals has been replaced with a more appropriate understanding of school librarians' role in the school community. School librarians are certified information specialists who are also trained educators with the ability to reach every student in the school environment (Franklin 2011). At one time, school librarians operated separately from classroom teachers and were generally called upon only to relieve classroom teachers of instructional duties during break time (Franklin 2011). The expectation today is that school librarians will seek opportunities for instructional delivery by collaborating with general and special educators to meet all students' needs (Dow 2010; Franklin 2011; Zmuda and Harada 2008).

Study Purpose and Research Questions

During the 2007–2008 school year (the most recent year for which statistics are available), approximately 6.6 million students in America's public schools had some type of disability (IES

2009a). Because of the large number of students with special needs,[1] school librarians must have an understanding of their unique education and information needs and be prepared to meet these needs through the library program (Allen and Hughes-Hassell 2010). This study was conducted to collect data from school library practitioners in school districts in central New York State[2]. The inquiry is a pilot test that replicates a Master's thesis study conducted by Kendra Allen (2008) and was intended to gather data that will guide the design of a broader national study. Study results highlight the participants' current strengths and show areas where reported challenges present opportunities for success regarding school librarians' interactions with students with special needs. Analyzed data can serve as a useful first step in discussing how school librarians might position themselves to meet the needs of all 21st-century learners, regardless of their cognitive or physical abilities.

Five questions were explored via the study:

> 1. How do school librarians rate their knowledge level of best practices for serving students with special needs?
> 2. What resources do school librarians use to become informed about best practices for serving students with special needs?
> 3. How do school librarians rate their knowledge level of the students with special needs enrolled at their schools?
> 4. What types of services and accommodations do school librarians offer to students with special needs?
> 5. What level of collaboration do school librarians have with special education teachers?

Literature Review

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was implemented to ensure that students with special needs would have opportunities to receive free, appropriate educations equivalent to those of their peers without physical disabilities, health impairments, or cognitive challenges (U.S. Dept. of Ed. n.d.). IDEA's tenets do not apply only to the traditional classroom; they must also be present in all areas of the school environment, including the school library. Numerous studies have concluded that students who attend schools with certified school librarians have higher achievement levels (as measured through standardized tests) than their counterparts who do not. (Examples include Lance 2002; Small, Snyder, and Parker 2009.)

Concern about K–12 school library services for students with special needs is not a new topic. An edited book published almost three decades ago (Macon 1982) included contributions from seven researchers about subjects as varied as "characteristics of the handicapped" and "selecting materials for the mainstreamed library." While much of the terminology in the book is outdated, the core purpose remains relevant: School libraries and librarians must play an active role in educating students with special needs.

Recent literature related to the school librarian's role in special education presents sound practical perspectives. Allen, for example, examined "the relationship between school library media programs and special education programs [in North Carolina] in the context of meeting

---

[1] The term "students with special needs" refers to Pre-K–12 students who are eligible for special education services as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act <http://idea.ed.gov>.
[2] The state of New York has the third-largest population of K–12 students with disabilities enrolled in public schools in the U.S. (IES 2009b).

the unique needs of students with disabilities" (Allen 2008). Alana M. Zambone and Jami L. Jones (2010) provided an outline of the various types of learning challenges that might be present in a school environment. Colleen Brind'Amour's (2010) survey of school librarians and special educators in Western New York State exposed gaps in perception about the level and quality of library experiences for students with special needs. In 2011 I shared perspectives from pre-service school librarians; these perspectives could be useful for shaping LIS curriculum in the area of preparing future practitioners for serving individuals with disabilities in K–12 environments (Franklin 2011).

The United States is not the only country where the relationship between school librarianship and special education has been examined. For example, in 1999 Janet Murray considered the effectiveness of training made available to Australian school librarians to prepare them to serve students with special needs. Vida Jouzatis (2004) contemplated best practices in Canadian school libraries for serving students with specific learning disabilities. Abdullah Abrizah and Ruslina Ahmad (2010) examined barriers to service provision to "special education needs" students enrolled in schools in Malaysia.

Many opportunities for additional research around the topic of library services for students with special needs exist, as is illustrated in the results of the third phase of a study conducted by a team of researchers who examined school librarians' impact on public school students throughout the state of New York. The researchers found that respondents reported lower knowledge levels about serving students with special needs than any other topic about which school librarians were asked (Small, Shanahan, and Stasak 2010). The study results were important for measuring the New York librarians' perception of their ability to serve students with disabilities. New research efforts and subsequent reports must facilitate dialogue about the various methods school librarians use to effectively teach students with special needs how to seek, manage, and use information. This study contributes to such literature.

Methods

Participant Recruitment
Study participants were recruited from the area served by one of New York's largest Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)[3], which provides services to the school districts in three counties in the central New York region. The school librarians in the one school district in the region that does not receive BOCES services were also contacted. Each school librarian in the BOCES and individual school district (a total of 157 individuals) was sent an e-mail explaining the study's purpose; the message included a link to the electronic survey questionnaire.

Survey Instrument
The electronic questionnaire consisted of twenty items that allowed respondents to reflect upon their experiences related to providing library services to students with special needs. The survey instrument contained fifteen multiple-choice items, three open-ended items, and two Likert-type scale items. While the survey was not timed, it is estimated that participants were able to finish

---

[3] New York's BOCES support schools by providing a broad range of "shared educational programs and services to school districts within the state" (BOCES of New York State, 2011).

the questionnaire within ten to twelve minutes. To protect participants' confidentiality, no identifying information (such as IP address, personal contact information, or school district name) was collected. Demographic information collected pertained to such characteristics as respondents' work environment and years of service.

Study Limitations

A call for participation was issued during the last three weeks of the school year. The researcher believes this resulted in a low response rate. The responses represent a convenience sample of a very small section of school librarians in the specified school districts. Because of the low response rate, the results cannot be considered representative of the entire target population, nor can they be generalized to make predictions about other populations (such as other New York State school districts).

Findings

Demographic Data

Fifty school librarians accessed the electronic questionnaire; forty-three submitted responses that contained complete information (27 percent of the total possible participants). Eighteen respondents provided library service at elementary schools, seven at middle schools, twelve at high schools, and six respondents worked in other types of school settings. These settings include K–8 schools, schools serving students in grades 7 through 9, and schools that serve students in grades 8 and 9. Two respondents "float" between two or more schools in their district.

Respondents represented a broad range of experience. Nine school librarians had been providing service for five years or less; ten respondents had been school librarians for six to eleven years; fourteen respondents had been delivering service for twelve to seventeen years, and ten had been school library administrators for eighteen years or more. None of the respondents had earned National Board Certification.

RQ 1: Knowledge Level of Best Practices for Serving Students with Special Needs

The first research question asked: How do school librarians rate their knowledge level of best practices for serving students with special needs? To answer this question, the school librarians used a scale to rank their level of knowledge about best practices for serving students with special needs (a score of 1 indicated no or very little knowledge, a score of 5 indicated high knowledge). The majority of respondents (n = 22 or approximately 51 percent) ranked themselves as having average knowledge (a score of 3) about how best to serve students with special needs. Eleven (approximately 25 percent) ranked themselves as 4, indicating that they had a moderate level of knowledge. Six respondents (almost 14 percent) indicated that they had a moderately low level of knowledge (a score of 2), and only four librarians (about 9 percent) reported having a high level of knowledge about the best ways in which to serve the unique needs of students enrolled in a special education program. No respondent indicated having no or a very low knowledge level. **Table 1** contains these responses.

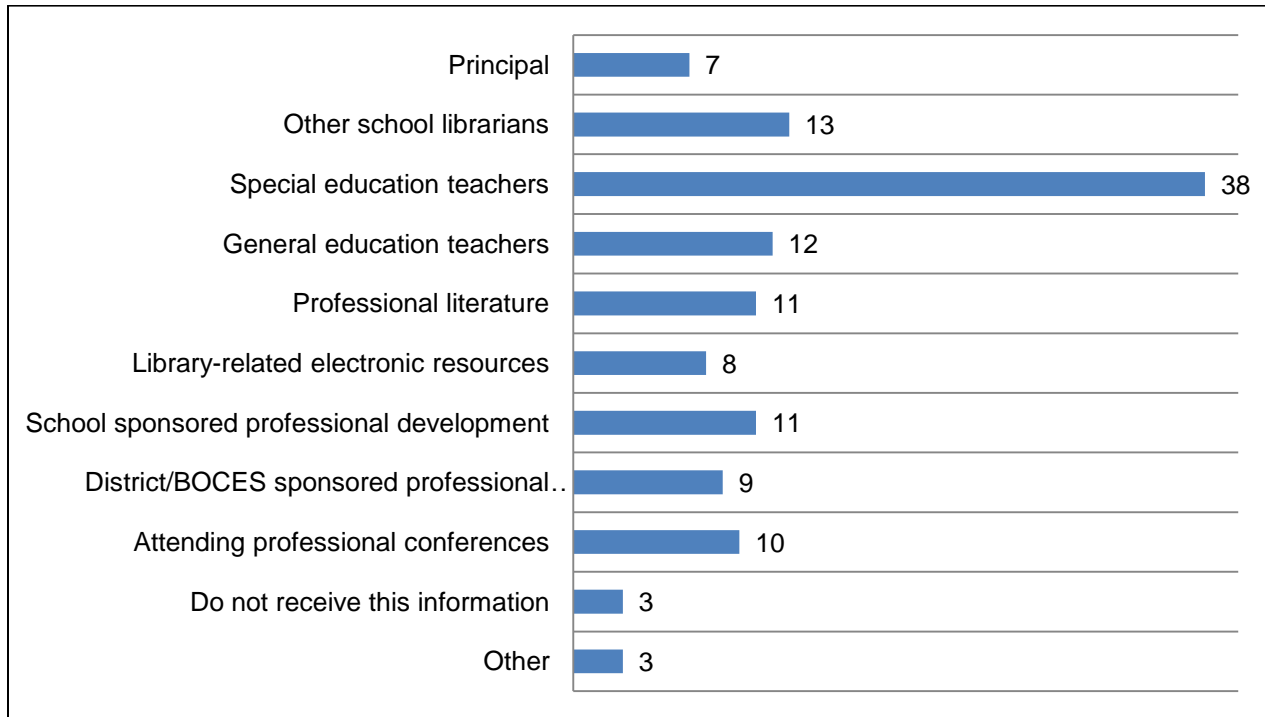**Table 1. Knowledge of Best Practices in Special Education**

Knowledge Level	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
1 (no/little knowledge)	0	0
2	6	13.9
3 (average knowledge)	22	51.2
4	11	25.6
5 (high knowledge)	4	9.3
TOTAL	43	100

RQ 2: Resources Used to Learn of Best Practices for Serving Students with Special Needs
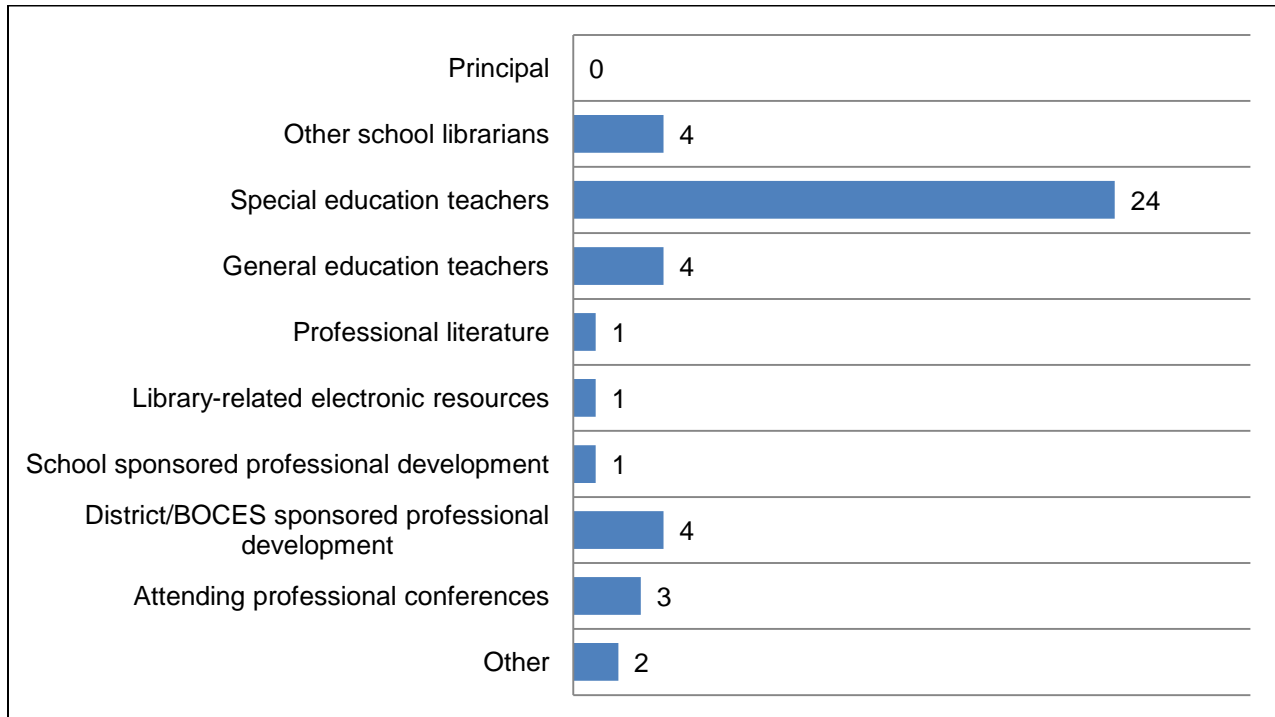
Research question two was posed as: What resources do school librarians use to become informed about best practices for serving students with special needs? One of the goals of this study was to learn more about print, electronic, and other resources that school librarians consult to become more knowledgeable about best practices. With respect to print and electronic resources, an open-ended question was included in the survey questionnaire that allowed school librarians to share the names of the publications and Web resources they regularly peruse. The respondents indicated being readers of a wide variety of professional literature. Respondents frequently listed *Booklist, School Library Journal, School Library Monthly* (formerly *School Library Media Activities Monthly*), and *Knowledge Quest* as publications read on a regular basis. Study participants also indicated visiting a number of library-related electronic resources including websites, blogs, and wikis. However, the range of these resources was so large that a concise itemization could not be produced.

Survey respondents were asked to make a distinction between how they *actually* receive information about best practices for serving students with special needs and how respondents would *prefer* to do so. One questionnaire item allowed respondents to select multiple options from a list of nine potential information sources to indicate all of the ways they receive information about best practices. A second item presented the same list of information sources but allowed for only one selection so that each respondent's preference could be recorded. The top five ways school librarians actually received information were from special education teachers (88 percent), other school librarians (30 percent), general education teachers (28 percent), professional literature (26 percent), and school-sponsored professional development (26 percent). The top five ways school librarians would prefer to receive best-practice information were similar. However, different from how they actually received best-practices information, the respondents reported that in addition to receiving information from special educators (59 percent), other school librarians (9 percent), or general educators (9 percent), they would also like to have information presented to them from professional development activities offered through their school district or BOCES (9 percent), or by attending professional conferences (7 percent). **Figures 1 and 2** present respondents' actual and preferred methods for becoming informed about special education best practices.

Figure 1. Sources of information about general best practices for serving students with special needs and numbers of respondents using each source.

Principal	7
Other school librarians	13
Special education teachers	38
General education teachers	12
Professional literature	11
Library-related electronic resources	8
School sponsored professional development	11
District/BOCES sponsored professional...	9
Attending professional conferences	10
Do not receive this information	3
Other	3

Figure 2. Preferred sources of information about general best practices for serving students with special needs and number of respondents preferring each source.

Principal	0
Other school librarians	4
Special education teachers	24
General education teachers	4
Professional literature	1
Library-related electronic resources	1
School sponsored professional development	1
District/BOCES sponsored professional development	4
Attending professional conferences	3
Other	2

RQ 3: Knowledge about Serving Students with Special Needs

Research question 3 was: How do school librarians rate their knowledge level of the students with special needs enrolled at their schools? Three questionnaire items addressed this question. First, study respondents ranked their perceived level of knowledge about the students with special needs that access their school library programs. The majority of the school librarians (n = 20 or just over 46 percent) believed that they had moderate knowledge (a score of 4) of the special education students in their school environment. Twelve respondents (almost 28 percent) perceived themselves as having average knowledge (a score of 3) about their special education students. Six librarians (13.9 percent) reported a moderately low knowledge level (a score of 2) and five (11.6 percent) believed they had a high level of knowledge concerning students with special education needs in their schools.

Similar to the method used to determine sources of information about best practices, two items asked respondents to consider seven options, and then indicate all of the ways they *actually* received information about students enrolled in special education programs in their schools. Respondents were then asked to indicate the one method they *most preferred*. The librarians reported receiving information via multiple means including special education teachers (79 percent), general education teachers (30 percent), individualized education plans (IEPs) (7 percent), and the principal and parents (both 5 percent). When required to choose a preferred method for receiving this type of information, the majority of study respondents (n = 36 or 84 percent) indicated that they preferred to receive information about the special needs students in their school from special education teachers. Only four respondents would prefer to receive information from their principals or from general education teachers, and three suggested attendance at meetings other than IEP meetings would be their preference. No respondents selected parent interaction or attendance at IEP meetings as preferred methods.

RQ 4: Services and Accommodations Offered

The fourth research question asked: What types of services and accommodations do school librarians offer to students with special needs? Survey respondents were able to select as many options as were applicable to indicate materials they purchase specific to educating students with special needs, modifications librarians make to the library, and modifications they make in instructional delivery. The school librarians surveyed for this study implemented a wide array of materials specific to meeting the needs of special learners in their respective school environments. Forty respondents (93 percent) indicated that they include books with high interest level and low reading level in their collection. Thirty-three librarians (77 percent) offer audio books as selections for students. Thirty librarians (70 percent) select materials that accurately portray children and youth with special needs. **Figure 3** contains a complete listing of responses to this item.

With regard to physical library space, 74 percent (n = 32) of the responding librarians indicated that their school libraries had wide aisles so that students with wheelchairs (and other ambulatory devices) could easily navigate the environment. Fifty-eight percent (n = 25) have libraries with computer stations built high enough to accommodate an individual using a wheelchair. Forty percent (n = 17) of the respondents make sure to place frequently used materials on shelves that are easily reached by students with physical disabilities.

Some school librarians responding to the survey assisted students with special needs by including their family members in library services. For example, thirteen librarians (30 percent) allow parents to check out materials from the school library. Seven respondents (16 percent)

have information in their collections about specific disabilities; the same number of librarians also includes resources that address parenting and child-development concerns.

Figure 3. Library materials included in the collection for the benefit of students with special needs and the number of respondents reporting inclusion of each type of resource.
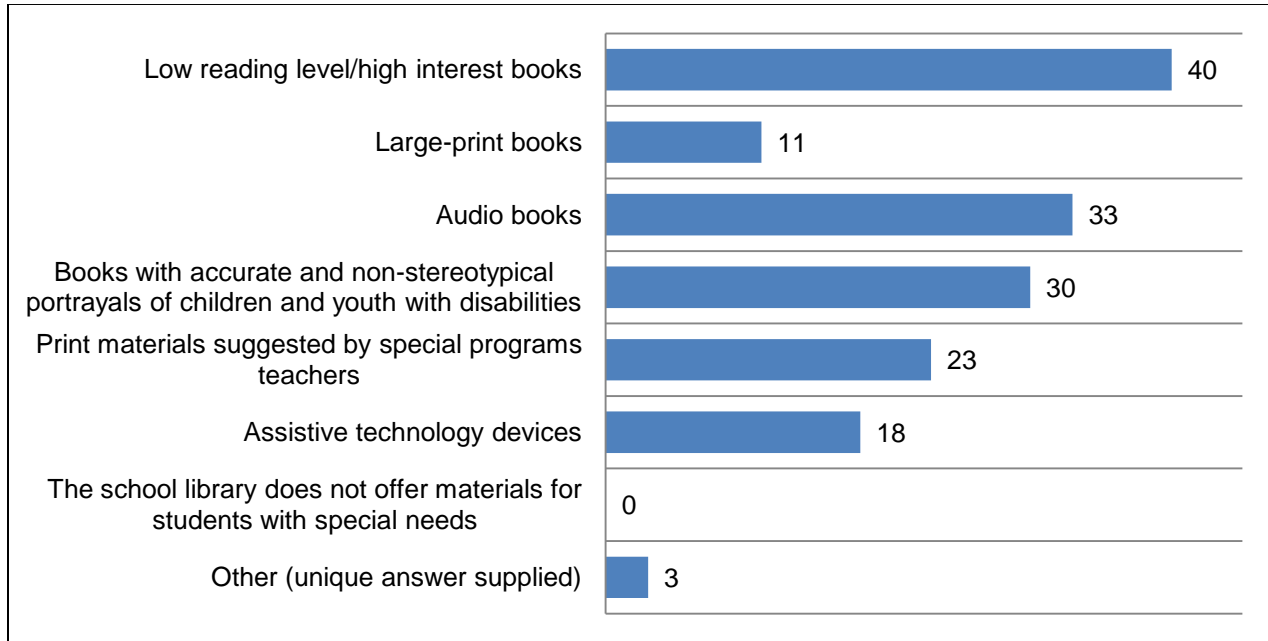
One item allowed respondents to select all of the accommodations and/or modifications they make in delivering instruction to students with special needs; respondents were also able to insert their own words to describe in-use instructional modifications that did not appear on the list in the survey instrument. The most frequently selected accommodation was repetition of instruction (n = 32 or 74 percent). Almost the same number of respondents (n = 31 or 72 percent) indicated that they adjust the pace of their instruction and use visual cues to assist students. Individualized instruction about how to use library facilities is provided to students with special needs by twenty-four librarians (56 percent). Twenty-three respondents (53 percent) pair students without disabilities with students who have special needs during library instruction activities. **Table 2** contains information about instructional delivery accommodations.

Table 2. Accommodations Made for Instructional Delivery (multiple selections possible).

Accommodation Type	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Repetition of instruction	32	74
Adjust pacing of instruction	31	72
Use visual cues or reminders	31	72
Guided or individualized instruction on how to use library	24	56

Pairing students with special needs with students who do not have special needs	23	53
Adjust group size	16	37
Use picture books with large, clear illustrations	13	30
Other (unique answer supplied)	6	14
Use big books	5	12
No accommodations made	1	2

RQ 5: Collaboration with Special Education Teachers

The final research question examined through this study was: What level of collaboration do school librarians have with special education teachers? Twenty-eight school librarians (65 percent) indicated having collaborated with special educators at some point during their careers. Collaborative activities almost exclusively occurred through instructional activities involving special education teachers; only two respondents had attended IEP meetings, and only one had helped to create IEP goals.

Discussion

The data described above help to illustrate the strengths of the survey participants. The following sections discuss what the collected data imply about opportunities for the respondents to expand and improve services for students with special needs.

Knowledge Levels

No respondents indicated having no or very little knowledge of general best practices for educating students with special needs or the students enrolled in special education in their respective schools; very few indicated having a moderately low level of knowledge in these areas. High knowledge level in both areas is a goal to strive for because understanding general issues related to special education and having specific knowledge about patron needs allows school librarians to design and/or modify programs and services to make the library welcoming and useful for all who enter.

Use of Resources

One way that educators can stay abreast of current and emerging issues related to students in general—and those with special needs specifically—is to read literature written by researchers and practitioners. Respondents listed a wide variety of print and electronic resources that informs their professional activities. These resources ranged from research-inclusive journals (e.g. *Knowledge Quest*) to highly practitioner-focused magazines (*School Library Journal*). None of the respondents indicated reading publications that were specific to special education. As was communicated by more than one respondent, a school librarian's schedule leaves little time available to read professional literature. However, in addition to the experience gained by actually working with students with special needs, school librarians can be exposed to important

issues about this population by reading articles and web-based documents that inform them about library and special education practices.

Almost all of the school librarians who participated in this study receive information about best practices and students enrolled in special education at their schools from sources such as general educators, special educators, professional development activities offered in their respective schools and districts, and attendance at professional conferences. However, a surprising finding was that only two respondents *actually* receive information about students with special needs at their schools from the children's parents and none *preferred* to get information from parents. Parents are not necessarily frequent users of school library materials, but they can be integral members of a school library program (LaBoon, Salerno, and Meraz 2010; Pipkin 2009). Parents of students with special needs are particularly useful resources because they can share valuable first-hand insight regarding solutions to accessibility challenges (Copeland 2011). School librarians can benefit from the knowledge parents have to offer by inviting them to contribute as library volunteers.

Library Services and Accommodations

The school librarians surveyed showed particular strength in the range of instructional accommodations they were able to implement. In fact, only one respondent did not adjust instructional practices to address any special educational needs. All of the school librarians who participated in the survey reported that they include in their collections materials that address specific needs and interests of students with disabilities (including, in addition to the listed options, Braille books). This finding is particularly relevant because to fully serve library patrons, all students' needs must be taken into consideration (Copeland 2011). These data indicate that the librarians in the sample are aware of the importance of providing materials for students of varying abilities.

Most of the respondents work in school libraries that adjust the library space to accommodate the needs of patrons with physical limitations. Apart from the options available for selection, three respondents also reported that the computers in their libraries offered touch screens and modified keyboards. However, ten respondents work in school libraries with no existing modifications for students with special needs. It is possible that these librarians work in schools where no students need modified environments to fully access the library and its materials. However, it is important for school librarians to be vigilant about moving toward incorporating universal design principles to enable access to the largest range of patrons (Blue and Pace 2011).

Based upon survey responses, one area with potential for advancement is in library services offered to the families of students with special needs. While thirteen school librarians indicated that they allowed parents to check out library materials, and fourteen have resources in their collections that address parenting and child-development issues as well as information about specific disabilities, most study participants (n = 25 or 58 percent) do not offer services designed to provide information to families of students with disabilities. Including family members in school library programs and services is not a state or federal mandate. However, creating an environment that is welcoming to and inclusive of parents and other family members who care for students with special needs helps school librarians to foster a sense of concern and mutual respect between the school librarian and members of the students' family.

Collaboration with Special Educators

Twenty-eight respondents have worked collaboratively with special educators; twenty-six shared examples of these collaborative efforts, which included such activities as preparing unit plans and consulting with special education teachers so that needed materials would be available to their students. Because special education teachers have been extensively trained to design instruction for students with special needs, it is imperative that school librarians seek their expert input when planning library programs and services (Farmer 2009; Franklin 2011). So while it is positive to note that a number of the school librarians surveyed have been involved in collaboration with special educators, an opportunity for improvement in this area is readily apparent because the collaboration percentage is not close to 100. School librarians must seek opportunities to align themselves with the educators who work daily with students with special needs. To assess and improve school librarians' own instructional design methods, as well as accommodations needed in the school library space, librarians can draw upon knowledge and experience of special education teachers.

Another opportunity for collaboration comes in the form of IEP construction. Only two school librarians indicated having attended IEP meetings, and only one contributed to goals and objectives included in this important plan that guides a student's education. Because of school librarians' myriad responsibilities, it may not be probable or even possible for them to be present at IEP meetings. However, school librarians—in consultation with special education teachers and administrators—should have the opportunity to contribute information-literacy goals to IEPs so that students with special needs will be able to participate to the fullest extent possible in the programs and services the school library has to offer (Farmer 2009).

Additional Opportunities

While this study focuses on the strengths possessed by a specific population of existing school librarians, as well as on areas where opportunities for growth might be considered, the responsibility for leveraging these opportunities does not rest solely with K–12 school librarians. Data collected in the study suggest several potential areas of opportunities for other individuals with some level of involvement with school libraries and school librarianship.

More than one survey respondent indicated that exposure to concepts related to serving students with special needs would have been a useful component of LIS Master's program studies. This perspective affirms Franklin's 2011 article about the importance of preparing pre-service school librarians to serve students with special needs. Students enrolled in a school library certification program who served as study participants believed that school library programs should include a full course or, at the very least, readings and assignments to specifically address methods for serving students with special needs in the school library. Data presented in the former study and in the current investigation indicate that an opportunity exists for the colleges and universities responsible for preparing school librarians to implement changes in curriculum to include education about the role that librarians will play in educating special learners in the K–12 environment.

A majority of the survey respondents both currently receive and prefer to receive information about best practices to use with students with special needs from special education personnel. Fewer school librarians reported receiving or preferring to receive this information through their schools or school districts. This circumstance presents an opportunity for building-level

administrators and school districts to offer professional-development seminars led by special educators (from within or outside the school or district) that expose school librarians to best practices for strengthening their provision of service to students with special needs.

Conclusion

School librarians are innovative information specialists who are capable of serving all students, regardless of abilities or special needs. Data analyzed for this study were collected from a selection of individuals so small that the results cannot be generalized across populations. Additional research is needed to collect data from a statistically representative sample of school librarians. However, the results of this study can be used to infer potentially useful methods for assisting school librarians in ensuring that—in the words of one respondent—"students with special needs have equal access to materials and instruction."

Works Cited

Abrizah, A., and R. Ahmad. 2010. "Systemic Barriers: The Challenges in the Provision of Inclusive School Libraries in Malaysia." *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science* 15 (2): 19–40. <**www.myjurnal.my/filebank/published_article/2799/no.2.pdf**> (accessed July 25, 2012).

Allen, K. L. 2008. "The School Library Media Program and Special Education Programs." Master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <**http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/s_papers/id/1117**> (accessed July 28, 2012).

Allen, K. L., and S. Hughes-Hassell. 2010. "Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities." *School Library Monthly* 27 (1): 52–54.

Blue, E. V., and D. Pace. 2011. "UD and UDL: Paving the Way toward Inclusion and Independence in the School Library." *Knowledge Quest* 39 (3): 48–55.

BOCES of New York State. 2011. "What is a BOCES?" <**www.boces.org**> (accessed July 25, 2012).

Brind'Amour, C. 2010. "Special Education Students and the School Media Center." *Current Studies in Librarianship* 30 (1/2): 49–67.

Copeland, C. A. 2011. "School Librarians of the 21st-Century: Using Resources and Assistive Technologies to Support Students' Differences and Abilities." *Knowledge Quest* 39 (3): 64–69.

Dow, M. 2010. "Making Schools Better: School Librarians' Roles in Aggressive Reforms— What is Our Official Position?" *Knowledge Quest* 38 (5): 78–82.

Farmer, L. S. J. 2009. "School Library Media Specialist Collaboration with Special Education Personnel in Support of Student Learning." *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* 4 (2): 37–55.

Franklin, R. E. 2011. "Before the Bell Rings: The Importance of Preparing Pre-Service School Librarians to Serve Students with Special Needs." *Knowledge Quest* 39 (3): 58–63.

Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. 2009a. "Fast Facts: Students with Disabilities." *Digest of Education Statistics*. <**http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64**> (accessed July 22, 2012).

———. 2009b. " Table 52: Number and Percentage of Children Served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, by Age Group and State or Jurisdiction: Selected Years, 1990–91 through 2007–08." *Digest of Education Statistics*. <**http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_052.asp**> (accessed July 22, 2012).

Jouzatis, V. 2004. "Serving the Needs of our Students with LD in the School Library." *School Libraries in Canada* 23 (3): 32–66. <**www.cla.ca/casl/slic/SLICVol23issue3.pdf**> (accessed July 25, 2012).

LaBoon, J., C. Salerno, and G. Meraz. 2010. "Innovations in School Librarian and Parent Relations." *Texas Library Journal* 86 (2): 48. <**www.txla.org/sites/tla/files/pdf/TLJ86_2.pdf**> (accessed July 28, 2012).

Lance, K.C. (2002). Impact of school library media programs on academic achievement. *Teacher Librarian*, 29(3), 29-34.

Macon, M., ed. 1982. *School Library Media Services to the Handicapped*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Murray, J. 1999. "Enhancing the Skills of School Library Staff to Cater for Individual Student Needs." Paper presented at the 65th IFLA Council and General Conference, August 20–28, Bangkok, Thailand. <**http://archive.ifla.org/IV/ifla65/papers/047-132e.htm**> (accessed July 25, 2012).

Pipkin, A. M. 2009. "Working with Parents to Achieve National Board Certification." *Library Media Connection* 27 (5): 24–25.

Small, R. V., J. Snyder, and K. Parker. 2009. "The Impact of New York's School Libraries on Student Achievement and Motivation: Phase I." *School Library Media Research* 12. <**www.ala.org/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume12/small_phase 2>** (accessed July 28, 2012).

Small, R. V., K. A. Shanahan, and M. Stasak. 2010. "The Impact of New York's School Libraries on Student Achievement and Motivation: Phase III." *School Library Media Research* 13. <**www.ala.org/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume13/small_phase 3**> (accessed July 28, 2012).

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. n.d. "History: Twenty-Five Years of Progress Educating Children with Disabilities through IDEA." <**http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea/history.pdf**> (accessed July 25, 2012).

Zambone, Alana M., and Jami L. Jones. 2010. "Special Ed 101 for School Librarians." *School Library Monthly* 26 (6): 19–22.

Zmuda, A., and V. H. Harada. 2008. "Librarians as Learning Specialists: Moving from the Margins to the Mainstream of School Leadership." *Teacher Librarian* 36 (1): 15–20.

Cite This Article

Hill, Renee F., 2012. "Strengths and Opportunities: School Librarians Serving Students with Special Needs in Central New York State," American Association of School Librarians. <**http://www.ala.org/aasl/slr/volume15/hill**>

School Library Research (ISSN: *2165-1019*) *is an official journal of the American Association of School Librarians*. It is the successor to *School Library Media Quarterly Online and School Library Media Research. The purpose of School Library Research is to promote and publish high quality original research concerning the management, implementation, and evaluation of school library media programs. The journal will also emphasize research on instructional theory, teaching methods, and critical issues relevant to school library media. Visit the* **SLR website** *for more information.*

The mission of the American Association of School Librarians is to advocate excellence, facilitate change, and develop leaders in the school library field. Visit the **AASL website** *for more information.*