



**BRITISH COLUMBIA  
TEACHER-LIBRARIANS'  
ASSOCIATION**

**BCTLA Working and Learning Conditions  
2020-2021**

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Membership BCTLA

## Survey Participation

The British Columbia Teacher-Librarians' Association (BCTLA) annual survey on working and learning conditions was available for completion in January and February 2021. We received 423 responses, a significant increase over the 251 responses received from our 2019–2020 survey.

This year's sample represents 30.5% of standard public schools. Of the survey respondents, 37% represented middle schools, 32% secondary schools, 30% elementary schools, and 16% multi-level schools. There are 60 school districts in B.C.; one school district is not defined by location but by language (District 93 French immersion). We had at least one response from 35 School Districts, 7 more school districts than in 2019–2020.

## Results and Comparison to 2019/20

### Staffing

From the survey responses, 85% of school libraries are managed full or part-time by Teacher-Librarians (TLs). Fifteen percent of the responses identified untrained teachers, administrators, and secretaries as responsible for managing libraries. The percentage of trained TLs managing libraries has decreased from the previous year by 14%.

Of the people who responded to the survey, the highest levels of training attained by TLs managing school libraries are:

- 9% with Master's in Teacher-Librarianship or Library and Informational Studies (MLIS)
- 48% with a Diploma in Teacher-Librarianship (30 credits)
- 11% with a Certificate in Teacher-Librarianship (15 credits)
- 7% with a Master's in Education or related field (e.g., Arts)
- 17% with some completed Teacher-Librarian Courses
- 8% with other training experience

Compared to last year, fewer respondents have Master's in Teacher-Librarianship or MLIS (6% decrease). While the number of respondents with Diplomas, Certificates, and related Master's Degree remained consistent from last year, fewer respondents indicated that they attained "some completed TL courses" (5% decrease) and "other training experience" (5% decrease).

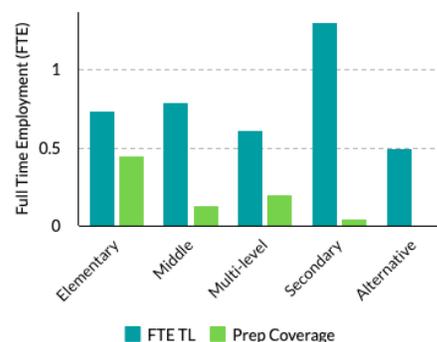
Overall, it appears that the number of TLs that are involved in professional development remain the same from the previous year. However, due to the lower number of respondents and acknowledging that Teacher-Librarians who are trained will be more likely to respond to the survey, these results only provide a snapshot of conditions.

Compared to the 68% of the previous 2019–2020 year, 78% of respondents indicated that there was no change made to the TL hours of employment in their school. Of the 20% of respondents who indicated change, 51% of TLs saw an increase in employment while 42% saw a decrease. Two percent of all respondents did not know if there had been a change.

Of the respondents who have more time, 31% also had an increase in student numbers, 13% had a decrease in student numbers, and 55% had no change in student population. For TL positions that decreased hours of employment, 51% had an increase in student numbers, 48% had a decrease in student numbers, and 1% had no change in student population. Compared to the last two years, there is an annual increase of TLs who have no change in time of employment.

For work time in the library (from a total of 423 responses), elementary school TLs have an average of 0.74 FTE, middle school TLs average 0.79 FTE, multi-level school TLs average 0.61 FTE, secondary school TLs average 1.03 FTE, and alternative program TLs average .50 FTE (see graph).

Average FTE and Prep Coverage by School Type 202-2021



Compared to last year’s survey, the average FTE increased for elementary, middle, and multi-level schools while secondary schools remained the same.

Compared to the last two years, the average prep coverage that is included in a Teacher-Librarian position has increased in elementary schools. Like last year, the Working and Learning Conditions survey data allows us to calculate student to librarian ratios by school type. In elementary schools, 69% of the TLs provide prep coverage in their Teacher-Librarian position (FTE). There has been an increase in the percentages of TLs providing prep coverage in the other school levels: middle schools (0% to 13%), multi-level schools (0% to 20%), and secondary schools (0% to 5%). For elementary TLs that do provide prep coverage, they average 0.45 FTE (i.e., 2.5 days a week).

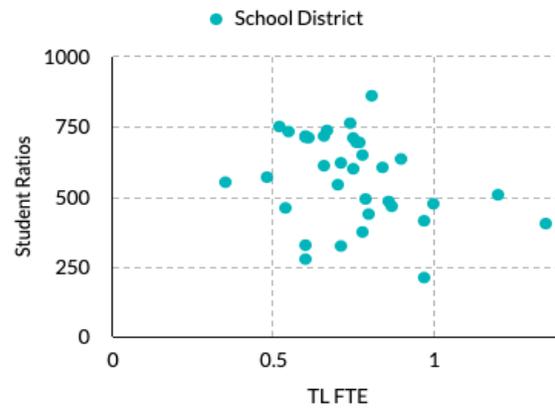
This year’s average for all school types is 660 students to 1 TL. For elementary schools the average is 472 students to 1 TL, middle schools have an average of 722 students to 1 TL, multi-level schools have an average of 600 students to 1 TL, and secondary schools have an average of 795 students to 1 TL.

Compared to the last year, elementary, middle and multi-level school Teacher-Librarians have slightly lower numbers of students than previous years and secondary Teacher-Librarians have significantly less students (see table below) with more than 86% of the secondary responses indicating that their libraries have a full-time TL or more.

The graph (right) uses data from Appendix 2 to show the TL to student ratio by school district. Each point is a mix of school types rather than by type of school.

# Students to TL Ratio by School Type				
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Elementary	432	621	544	472
Middle	515	797	761	722
Secondary	1009	1047	1066	795
Multi-level	410	804	644	600

Teacher-Librarian to Student Ratio by School District 2020-21



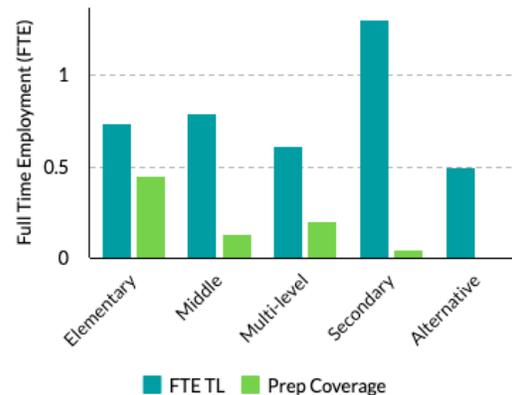
The responses to the survey found 17% of schools had library technicians (trained) and 30% had library clerks (untrained). Secondary schools have more library technicians (33%) than middle schools (13%), multi-level schools (30%), and elementary schools (12%). More secondary schools (40%) and middle schools (41%) have library clerks than elementary schools (27%) and multi-level schools (20%).

This year, 78% of library technicians and 74% of library clerks had no change in work hours (or not known). Of those that did see changes, most had decreased hours. Compared to last year's data, the responses show the number of schools with library technicians has remained the same while there is a small decrease of libraries with library clerks.

The reported levels of help (either technician and/or clerk) have increased for both middle schools (15% increase) and multi-level schools (37% increase) compared to the decrease in levels of help in secondary schools (9% decrease) this year. Levels of help remained relatively the same for elementary schools (1% increase).

A few secondary schools have both a technician and a clerk, though not necessarily full time for either. More than half of multi-level, middle, and secondary schools have a clerk or technician.

Average FTE and Prep Coverage by School Type 202-2021



## Budgets

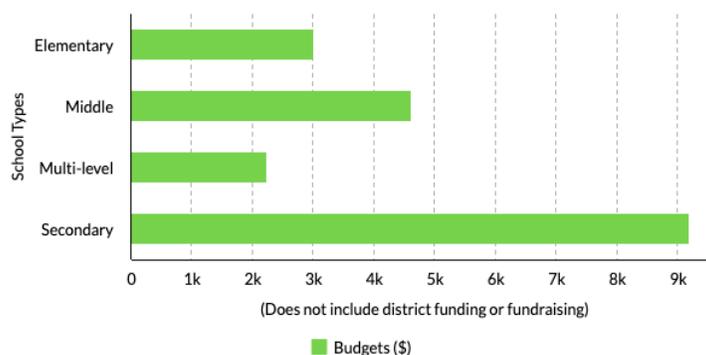
Elementary school respondents average 464 students, middle schools average 539 students, multi-level schools average 385 students, and secondary schools average 615 students. It is important to note that the following budget numbers are not directly based on school population size.

Average reported library budgets (those provided by the school and/or district to be spent on library resources) varied widely. According to the survey results, 56% of respondents specified that their school library budget was allocated to them from their school administration, the school district (26%), and a combination of both administration and district (19%).

For elementary schools who responded, the average library budget for the school year is \$3,010, for middle schools it is \$4,606, for multi-level schools \$2,240, for secondary schools \$9,187.

Of the 423 responses, 14 schools do not have an annual budget and have specified that they rely on donations and grants as their sole source of income. One TL received a one-time only budget of \$40,000 for starting a brand-new school library while another TL submits purchasing requests as needed rather than working with a set budget.

Average Library Learning Commons Budgets 2020-2021



Compared to last year's survey, the average budgets for all levels of schools except middle schools decreased: elementary schools 7 % decrease; multi-level schools 46% decrease; secondary schools 14% decrease. Unlike previous years, middle and multi-level schools no longer have similar budgets with multi-level school budgets reduced by close to half.

The lack of a minimum budget per student is a concern as it indicates that students in B.C. are not getting equal access to updated print and electronic resources. Some librarians are spending their time working on fundraising to close this gap. As noted by many respondents, other sources of funding are also used in the library including (not included in above totals):

- PAC funding
- Book fairs
- Grants
- Donations
- Lost/overdue fines
- Special library events
- International/ELL grants
- Federal French immersion grants

The primary library budgets provided by the school and/or district were spent on a variety of items with print resources accounting for an average of 74% of the respondents' budget expenditures (21% decrease from last year). Using the primary library budget, 25% of respondents purchased supplies, 17% purchased electronic resources, 11% purchased furniture, and 13% purchased equipment.

Using other school budget lines or district budgets, 24% of respondents purchased furniture, 21% purchased equipment, 21% purchased electronic resources, 16% purchased supplies, 11% purchased print resources, and 17% purchased other materials/resources.

Compared to last year, there has been a decrease in expenditure for all items and from all accounts. The furniture acquisition increase reported in 2019–2020 has dropped to similar rates as seen in previous years.

## **Technology**

This year's technology question inquired into the availability of technology for in-library use and for loan.

The following numbers indicate the percentage of libraries (from the total of responses) that provide on-site usage and loans of specific technology:

- Access to online databases, 92%
- Library information on school website, 85%
- Mobile devices (e-books, readers, tablets), 35%
- Document cameras, 33%
- LCD projectors, 30%
- Library information on Social Media, 26%
- Other technology, 75%

## **COVID-19 Adaptations**

March 2020 was the beginning of a province-wide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After spring break, B.C. schools began various forms of online and on-site learning models (on-site learning for students of essential workers and vulnerable students). This hybrid learning environment continued until the end of the school year in June 2020 and began again for the 2020–2021 school year.

Normally, this survey encapsulates TL working and learning conditions for the current school year. However, for the purpose of better representing the adaptations put in place for a unique global circumstance, the survey questions pertaining to COVID-19 adaptations are representative of the conditions during the time frame of March 2020 to February 2021.

The following numbers indicate the percentages of library learning commons programs (from the total of responses) that were affected by changes resulting from COVID-19 adaptations:

- Start-up of circulation for students, 59%
- Number of resources available to students, 53%
- Use of library learning commons space for curriculum instruction, 51%
- Start-up of library learning commons program, 43%
- Variety of resources available for students, 39%
- Use of STEM/ADST resources, 37%
- Creation of mobile carts for circulation, 21%

The following numbers indicate the percentages of TLs who took on various roles and activities during the online/on-site learning models from March 2020 to June 2020:

- Updating online resources for staff, 78%
- Expanding online resources for students, 70%
- Technology support, 70%
- Collection management (i.e., weeding, book repair, book processing, purchasing), 52%
- Resource circulation, 50%
- Creating online read-a-louds, 49%
- Online library learning commons instruction (i.e., library skills, using databases), 42%
- On-site instruction for students of essential workers, 35%
- Creating Virtual Learning Commons sites, 29%
- Other, 17%

Additional roles and activities that were listed under “Other” included:

- Running book clubs
- Tutoring
- Creating whole school literacy events
- Producing videos
- Running extra-curricular club activities

Five percent of respondents indicated that either they were not in TL roles or they were on leave and unsure of what their replacements did during the specified time frame. Two respondents were directed by administration to fully take over classrooms due to staff medical leaves.

## Comments

Many TLs reported FTE instability, understaffing, and increased workloads. One TL expressed that the annual reduction/increase in TL FTE hours has resulted in “a revolving door of TLs who are not invested in the library for the long haul.” There are concerns that districts have not hired enough trained TLs, leaving job share partners and co-TLs to take on additional administrative duties to cover for TLs on leave.

Some TLs mentioned small increases in collaboration time and one TL commented that “this year we are finally seeing some increased demand [for collaborative teaching] as staff understand

what we do.” Comments indicated that several TL local associations are working with district TL leaders to advocate for and educate district administration in the importance and need for collaboration time.

Many TLs remain frustrated with reduced or small library budgets. As one TL wrote, “[the] library has been underfunded for many years and as a result it has been difficult to offer current and relevant material in the non-fiction area.” Other TLs reported the lack of funding has prevented them from diversifying their collections, replacing damaged or lost books, and purchasing other materials such as audiobooks, ADST/STEM supplies, and robotics. A new TL received a reduced budget due to the previous TL’s overspending the year before.

As in other years, there were several comments about lack of clerks and technicians and several on insufficient clerk time especially in secondary schools. Cataloguing duties were reported as “overwhelming” and “only worked on after hours” by many TLs who do not have clerk or technician hours.

The majority of comments were related to the impact of COVID-19. Some examples include:

- Working at more than one school increased exposure and stress
- TLs dispatched to cohorts leaving libraries “empty and unsupported”
- Increased prep coverage as PE Specialists went back into classrooms
- Lack of custodial staff meant TL and clerk were left to sanitize library
- More time needed for book exchanges = reduction in collaboration time
- Libraries used as staff rooms during lunch and recess
- Cancellation of clubs, bookfests, reading challenges, and student volunteering
- Spending suspended in the spring and surpluses from spring not rolled over to September 2020
- Mobile libraries remain in place for the rest of 2021 with online “holds” and “delivery systems” providing students with reading materials

## Conclusion

This year the BCTLA annual survey had a response level of 30.5% of our schools. Similar to last year’s survey, 15% of people managing school libraries reported having no training, however there are more Teacher-Librarians engaged in further training.

Seventy-eight percent of TLs reported no change in FTE and FTEs ranged from .61 to 1.03 by school type. The Average Teacher-Librarian ratio this year has decreased to 1 TL to 660 students. Prep coverage was reported for all school times this year with significant increases for elementary and middle schools.

Forty-seven percent of all reporting schools have technicians and/or clerks. The levels of help (either technician and/or clerk) reported for middle and multi-level schools increased slightly this year while secondary schools saw a 9% decrease of help. Elementary schools’ level of help remained mostly the same.

With regard to **average** budgets, middle schools' budgets remained the same from last year. Elementary and secondary schools saw decreases with multi-level schools' average budget being reduced by close to half.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the work of TLs and their library learning commons programming and activities. The TLs of B.C. were extremely resourceful and creative as they continued to support student learning and staff instruction both online and on-site.

## [Appendix 1: Ministry of Education Data](#)

At the time of the compilation of this year's survey data, the Ministry of Education had not updated the Annual School Enrollment Data tables.

(Normally, they can be found at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/Home.do>)

Therefore, this year's survey is unable to provide information regarding Counts of Enrolling Schools in B.C. and Counts of Types of Public Standard Schools.

## [Appendix 2: Responding School Results](#)

The data in this table are the averages by responding school districts. The average FTE for a school district mixes all types of schools (elementary, middle, multi-level, and secondary schools) and cannot be used for comparison between school districts as it reflects what schools responded, unlike the data in the report where FTE is divided by school type.

School District (60 districts)	# of School Responses	Total # Public Standard Schools (based on 2019-20 ministry numbers)	Total Enrolment Responding Schools (from TL not SB)	Average FTE District TL (includes prep)	Average TL: Stud. Ratio	\$ per Student from School Budget (only)	Comments
5 Cranbrook Fernie	0	20	0	0	0	0	No responses
6 Rocky Mtn	1	14	196	0.60	327	\$7.65	1 Elem.
8 Kootenay Lake	8	21	1,546	0.35	552	\$5.76	
10 Nakusp – New Denver	0	6	0	0	0	0	
19 Revelstoke	0	4	0	0	0	0	
20 Kootenay - Columbia	9	10	3,907	0.61	711	\$7.37	

22 Vernon area	5	19	2,367	0.66	717	\$8.12	4 Elem. 1 Sec.
23 Central Okanagan	24	45	13,550	0.74	763	\$15.81	
27 Williams Lake area	0	21	0	0	0	0	
28 Quesnel	1	14	350	0.80	438	\$20.00	1 Elem.
33 Chilliwack	20	27	10,161	0.84	605	\$8.71	
34 Abbotsford	1	45	475	1.0	475	\$0.00	1 Elem. *No library budget
35 Langley	37	43	19,556	0.76	695	\$5.90	
36 Surrey	55	122	31,445	0.90	635	\$6.51	
37 Delta	9	31	3,652	0.87	466	\$4.23	
38 Richmond	17	48	6,858	0.66	611	\$14.89	
39 Vancouver	42	108	25,530	1.2	507	\$7.63	
40 New Westminister	2	12	760	0.7	543	\$3.29	1 Elem. 1 Middle
41 Burnaby	26	49	13,886	0.77	694	\$12.02	
42 Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows	19	29	10,115	0.75	710	\$7.83	
43 Coquitlam	29	69	20,232	0.81	861	\$5.34	
44 North Vancouver	5	32	2,006	0.97	414	\$5.91	5 Elem.
45 West Vancouver	12	17	6,082	0.78	649	\$7.53	
46 Sunshine Coast	1	12	230	0.71	324	\$21.74	1 Elem.
47 Powell River	0	7	0	0	0	0	
48 Sea to Sky	1	14	430	0.60	717	\$8.60	1 Elem.
49 Bella Coola	0	5	0	0	0	0	
50 Haida Gwaii	0	6	0	0	0	0	
51 Boundary	0	10	0	0	0	0	
52 Prince Rupert	0	8	0	0	0	0	
53 Osoyoos - Keremeos	0	8	0	0	0	0	
54 Bulkley Valley	2	7	806	0.55	733	\$15.96	1 Elem. 1 Sec.
57 Prince George	12	40	5,922	0.67	737	\$11.16	
58 Nicola – Similkamen	0	9	0	0	0	0	

59 Peace River South	2	18	1,090	1.35	404	\$13.76	1 Elem. 1 Sec.
60 Peace River North	0	21	0	0	0	0	
61 Greater Victoria	22	44	9,707	0.71	621	\$10.32	
62 Sooke	4	25	1,095	0.48	570	\$3.25	4 Elem.
63 Saanich	1	14	450	0.75	600	\$6.67	1 Sec.
64 Gulf Islands	0	10	0	0	0	0	
67 Okanagan Skaha	0	17	0	0	0	0	
68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith	5	35	1,945	0.79	492	\$10.95	4 Elem. 1 Sec.
69 Qualicum-Parksville	0	10	0	0	0	0	
70 Alberni	5	11	2,140	0.60	713	\$3.88	4 Elem. 1 Sec.
71 Comox Valley	0	20	0	0	0	0	
72 Campbell River	1	17	204	0.97	211	\$14.63	1 Elem.
73 Kamloops – Thompson	11	44	4,297	0.52	751	\$13.38	
74 Lytton – Lillooet	0	10	0	0	0	0	
75 Mission	3	16	875	0.78	374	\$8.57	3 Elem.
78 Hope-Boston Bar	0	8	0	0	0	0	
79 Cowichan Valley	3	23	1,247	0.86	483	\$5.21	2 Elem. 1 Sec.
81 Fort Nelson	0	5	0	0	0	0	
82 Terrace-Kitimat	0	17	0	0	0	0	
83 North Okanagan-Shuswap	23	23	5,712	0.54	460	\$8.84	
84 North Vancouver Is.	0	5	0	0	0	0	
85 Vancouver Island	0	9	0	0	0	0	
87 Dease Lake & Atlin	0	4	0	0	0	0	
91 Vanderhoof-Burns Lake	0	15	0	0	0	0	

92 New Aiyansh Greenville	0	4	0	0	0	0	
93 BC French Schools	5	42	830	0.60	277	\$9.94	4 Elem. 1 Multi.