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# School Library Advocacy: Perceptions of Building Influence

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**SCHOOL LIBRARY ADVOCACY: PERCEPTIONS OF BUILDING  
INFLUENCE**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

# **SCHOOL LIBRARY ADVOCACY: PERCEPTIONS OF BUILDING INFLUENCE**

Elizabeth A. Burns  
Old Dominion University, 2014  
Director: Dr. Gail K. Dickinson

Hartzell (1997) suggests that many in the school community do not know the value the school library program contributes to the educational landscape, and stakeholders cannot articulate the roles and responsibilities of the school librarian. Advocacy for a school library program is the deliberate and sustained effort to foster understanding of the program while influencing the attitudes of key stakeholders. It includes raising awareness, increasing knowledge and gaining influence for the position of the school librarian. The national professional organization for school librarians, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), maintains a multi-tiered definition of advocacy, with marketing and public relations existing under the definition of advocacy. This leads to varied understandings of advocacy among practicing school librarians and there is a lack of consistency in how school librarians interpret and engage in the practice of advocacy.

This study examines the advocacy beliefs of school librarians and the advocacy activities in which they engage in practice. It also explores the relationship between school librarians' espoused practices of advocacy and their activities-in-use within their program. Finally, this study explores the perceived success of advocacy strategies used in school library programs by both the school librarians and their co-teacher and

administrator stakeholders when engaging in advocacy for their program.

Using a mixed methods approach, a national sample of practicing school librarians working in 36 of the 100 largest school districts in the US were surveyed. A smaller criterion sample of survey respondents was interviewed, along with a co-teacher and administrator from each site, using phenomenological methods to examine the lived experiences of the participants in their school setting. Findings indicate the participants in this study had difficulty distinguishing the difference between the definition and activities of *advocacy*, *marketing*, and *public relations* as identified by AASL. Additionally, practicing school librarians had difficulty understanding advocacy in the context of the school library program. Among those school librarians who have a more mature understanding of advocacy, common strategies were used in their settings to change the perception of stakeholders. These strategies include revitalizing the position of the school librarian, emphasizing the teaching role of the school librarian, focusing on innovation, and ensuring relevance of the school library program so it meets the needs of today's learner. Demographic variables were analyzed and reported as predictors of advocacy success from the survey population. Additionally, participants reported perceived measures of formal and informal success in their settings.

*Keywords:* school libraries, advocacy, theories of practice, phenomenology

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This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother, Philomena. She taught me the importance of hard work and perseverance - It is because of her this degree is a reality.

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## NOMENCLATURE

AASL- American Association of School Librarians

AECT- Association for Educational Communications and Technology

ALA- American Library Association

CAEP- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

COLA- Committee on Library Advocacy (ALA)

ESEA- Elementary and Secondary Education Act

NCATE- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

NEA- National Education Agency

OPAC- Online Public Access Catalog

SL- School Libraries

SEA- State Education Agencies

SPSS- Statistical Package for the Social Science

TEAC- Teacher Education Accreditation Council



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Advocacy and the School Library.....	2
Purpose and Research Questions .....	5
Overview and Methodology .....	6
Theoretical Framework .....	8
Conceptual Framework.....	11
Delimitations and Assumptions.....	13
Potential Implications of the Proposed Study.....	14
Definition of Terms.....	15
Summary .....	15
 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	 17
Advocacy In Context .....	18
Advocacy and School Library Standards .....	18
Advocacy and School Library Funding .....	21
Definition of Advocacy by the Profession .....	25
Conceptual Framework .....	26
Building Influence for the Position of School Librarians .....	26
Advocacy in Librarian Education .....	32
Advocacy Planning and Resources .....	35
Evidence-Based Practice .....	37
Theoretical Framework .....	38
Espoused Theories of Action .....	39
Theories-in-Use .....	40
Advocacy in other Teaching Disciplines .....	41
Support of Library Supervisors .....	45
Summary .....	48
 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	 49
Mixed Methods Design.....	50
Rationale .....	50
QUANTITATIVE DESIGN.....	51
Questionnaire Survey.....	51
Pilot Study .....	54
Pilot Findings .....	55

Implications of Pilot Study and Future Directions .....	57
Study Sample .....	58
Data Collection .....	63
PHENOMENOLOGICAL QUALITATIVE DESIGN .....	64
Sample .....	65
Site #1 “Mako High School” .....	67
Site #2 “Thresher Elementary” .....	67
Site #3 “Blue Elementary” .....	68
Site #4 “Great White High School” .....	68
Site #5 “Bull Combined School” .....	69
Site#6 “Tiger Middle School” .....	69
Data Collection .....	70
Semi-Structured Personal Interviews .....	70
Analysis/ Coding .....	72
Strategies for Trustworthiness .....	73
Summary .....	75
4. FINDINGS .....	77
Descriptive Analysis .....	78
School Librarian Understanding of Advocacy .....	81
Activities of Advocacy .....	83
Alignment of Advocacy Understanding with Practice .....	85
Advocacy Activities in Context .....	89
Revitalize the Position of the School Librarian .....	91
Emphasize Teaching Role of School Librarian .....	93
Innovation of School Librarian .....	94
Relevance of the School Library Program to Today’s Learner .....	95
Perception of Advocacy Success .....	97
Success in Context .....	109
Informal Measures of Perceived Success .....	109
Formal Measures of Perceived Success .....	111
Summary .....	112
5. DISCUSSION .....	114
Overview of the study .....	114
Interpretation of the Findings .....	116
Beliefs or Understandings of Advocacy .....	116
Practitioner Activities of Advocacy .....	117
Espoused Beliefs vs. Advocacy-in-Use .....	118
Understanding in Context .....	120
Interpretation of Perceived Success of Advocacy .....	122
Success in Context .....	125
Limitations.....	127
Implications and Recommendations for Further Research .....	128
Conclusion .....	130

REFERENCES .....	134
APPENDICES	
A. Online Survey.....	150
B. Pilot Sample Librarian Email .....	156
C. Pilot Sample Librarian Email Reminder .....	157
D. Library Supervisor Email.....	158
E. 100 Largest School Districts .....	159
F. 80 School Districts with Supervisors .....	164
G. School Librarian Survey Participation Email .....	169
H. School Librarian Interview Participation Email .....	170
I. Co-Teacher/Administrator Participation Email .....	171
J. Informed Consent Document .....	172
K. School Librarian Interview Protocol .....	174
L. Co-Teacher Interview Protocol .....	176
M. Administrator Interview Protocol .....	177
VITA.....	178

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Results of Chronbach alpha Analysis for Pilot Data .....	53
2. Demographic Characteristics of Pilot Population.....	56
3. 36 School Districts Participating in Quantitative Study.....	59
4. Demographic Characteristics of Site Participants .....	66
5. Demographic Composition of Study Respondents .....	79
6. Respondent Alignment of Understanding to AASL Definitions .....	82
7. Content Analysis of Respondent Definitions .....	83
8. Respondent Responses of Advocacy Activity .....	84
9. Analysis of Respondent Advocacy Activities Aligned .....	87
to Marketing Statement	
10. Analysis of Respondent Advocacy Activities Aligned .....	88
to Statement of Public Relations	
11. Analysis of Respondent Advocacy Activities Aligned .....	89
to Advocacy Statement	
12. Perceived success of advocacy activities .....	98
13. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	100
Establishing an Advocacy Committee	
14. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	101
Committee or volunteer work in a library organization or other group	
15. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting.....	102
the reading or distribution of literature on library advocacy	
16. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	103
participation in library legislation day or another political event or demonstration	
17. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	104
Speaking at a School Board or PTA Event	

18.	Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	105
	Providing Comments to Decision Makers	
19.	Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	106
	Encouraging Others to Contact Decision Makers on Behalf of the School Library	
20.	Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	107
	Organizing a Meeting with Administration to Discuss the Library Program	
21.	Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	108
	Providing Professional Development to Staff on Advocacy	
22.	Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting .....	109
	Sponsoring Library Advocacy Events for Parent or Community Members	

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure	Page
1. An overview of advocacy theories in action framework. ....	10
2. A visual hierarchy of Hartzell's (2003) tenets of for building influence.....	12
3. A map of the United States displaying the geographic location of the study sample. ....	62
4. Project time line for survey distribution .....	63

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*“There is only one thing worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about”-*

Oscar Wilde

School library professionals act as invisible collaborators in the teaching profession (Hartzell, 1997). An integral component of a strong school library program, they provide learning opportunities and leadership that adds value to the school community (AASL, 2012). Best practice challenges 21<sup>st</sup> Century school librarians to integrate standards with classroom curriculum standards and then work with teachers to develop collaborative information literacy instruction (AASL, 2009; AASL, 2007b; Doll, 2005; Vanneman, 2011). At the same time, school librarians have traditional program administration duties, such as maintaining a collection relevant to the needs of the school community, establishing library policy, and organizing the resources of the library collection in a manner that promotes independent use and lifelong learning (AASL & AECT, 1988 & 1998; AASL, 2009; NEA & ALA, 1969).

School librarians lament that the school community does not know what they do or value their program. Hartzell (1997) contends that the school community rarely knows the true value that school librarians bring to the educational landscape and many educators are, in fact, unaware of the benefits the school library program has to offer. Most stakeholders cannot articulate the roles and responsibilities of the school librarian (p. 25). This lack of awareness may be the primary reason others in the school are not supporting the vital role the school library program plays in the education of students. To ensure that others in the school community are aware of the benefits of a strong school

library program, under the direction of a qualified school librarian, school librarians must be vocal advocates.

The number of school librarians has declined nationally in recent years (Keaton, 2012). In the past 5 years, there has been a downward trend of -4.27% in the staffing of school libraries by certified school librarians (ALA, 2013b). When faced with difficult budget cuts, those in power often see the position of school librarian an easier cut to make than other teaching or resource staff (ALA, 2013b). Because of this trend in position elimination, it is a critical time that school librarians know the benefits of advocating for their program. This will ensure the school library program is considered essential to student learning by all stakeholders. This will ensure that the school library program is rallied around and protected by and for the patrons who use their services (Kenney, 2008; Ewbank, 2012).

### **Advocacy in the School Library**

Advocacy is discussed as an essential best practice in the school library field. Both the American Library Association (ALA) and its school library division, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) have dedicated resources and toolkits for advocacy (AASL, 2006a; ALA & AASL, 2003; ALA, 2013a). These resources of the national professional organizations are available to assist school librarians as they implement their own building-level advocacy plans.

Both ALA and AASL have committees dedicated to advocacy resources and education. The Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA) for ALA maintains a repository of advocacy resources, *Advocacy University*, (ALA, 2013a) that contains a variety of materials for school and public libraries. The American Association of School



Libraries Advocacy Committee maintains two separate toolkits (AASL, 2008). The *Crisis Toolkit* contains materials and resources for those schools that are in danger of losing funding for their library staff or resources. The second is a *Promotion and Wellness Toolkit*, created to assist school librarians develop advocacy initiatives before there is a crisis so that stakeholder relationships can be fostered. Another beneficial function of the AASL Advocacy Committee is the planning of educational opportunities related to being involved in advocacy at all levels, as well as developing a comprehensive plan for ongoing advocacy activities. These resources provide basic training in advocacy to those new to the profession or those who may need a quick reference on the field's expectations of advocacy.

Each of these organizational supports are beneficial to the field however, there is a lack of consistency in understanding and practicing advocacy by school librarians. Though the term advocacy is widely used, rarely does it carry the same connotation across multiple audiences. In recent studies, (Burns, 2014; Ewbank, 2011) practitioners had different perceptions of advocacy. Ewbank (2011) documents the variety of understandings, definitions and practices of advocacy in the school library field. These diverse understandings of advocacy often align with marketing the school library to facilitate collaboration and program awareness. Frequently activities such as book fairs, family library events and creation of library websites are mentioned as advocacy activities (Burns, 2014; Ewbank, 2011). Few participants identified activities structured as relationship-building opportunities completed in addition to required duties expected for building a quality library program.

AASL maintains a tiered definition of *advocacy*. Definitions of *Public Relations*

(PR) and *marketing* co-exist under the definition of *advocacy*. AASL defines *advocacy* as the “on-going process of building partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program” (AASL, 2007b). Program advocacy goes beyond simple program promotion and requires deliberate, consistent relationship-building efforts. School librarians must build influence for their position and their program if they hope to build relationships with stakeholders that influence others to act in support of the library program (Hartzell, 2003a). However, advocacy is not an innate practice. Similar to most teaching beliefs, it is learned through a combination of prior knowledge, observation and training (Hartzell, 2007; Schulz, 2008).

Ensuring that school librarians are empowered to advocate for their programs prior to entering the profession is essential. ALA lists advocacy as a competency of basic knowledge all librarians should know and be able to apply (ALA, 2008). Preparation programs are tasked with introducing pre-service librarians to the concept of advocacy (AASL & NCATE, 2010). Colleges and universities accredited to license pre-service school librarians follow the established program standards of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). There are five NCATE standards for a School Library Media endorsement. Standard four, *Advocacy and Leadership*, addresses the advocacy standards school library candidates are required to meet in order to fulfill the licensing requirement. The NCATE definition of advocacy states, “Candidates identify stakeholders within and outside the school community who impact the school library program. Candidates develop a plan to advocate for school library and information programs, resources, and services” (AASL & NCATE, 2010).

Therefore, it is expected that school librarians have the knowledge and understanding of advocacy and can engage in the activities the professional field defines as advocacy for the school library program. However, there remains little research examining effective practitioner implementation of advocacy in the field. Haycock (2003a) and Oberg (2006) discuss the perceptions of other stakeholders when school librarians advocate for their programs. It is only Ewbank (2011) who examines the practices of school librarians themselves for an understanding of how school librarians conceptualize the actions of advocacy. While the school library field has the expectation advocacy is understood and implemented by school librarians, little research exists to determine practicing school librarian's cohesive understanding of advocacy.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

Although national professional library associations have developed advocacy resources and advocacy training is required prior to licensing of new school librarians, the findings of Burns (2014) and Ewbank (2011) showed there was a lack of consistency in how school librarians interpret and engage in the practice of advocacy. Further, multi-tiered definitions of advocacy available on the national professional organization website (AASL, 2007b) lead to varied understandings of advocacy among practicing school librarians. A comprehensive search of ERIC, Education Research, and Library Literature and Information databases revealed there has been no empirical research studying practices school librarians define as activities of advocacy, as well as no research linking the effectiveness of these advocacy efforts to school library programs. This study examined the advocacy beliefs of school librarians and the activities in which they engage in their practice. It also explored the relationship between school librarian's

espoused practices of advocacy and their actual activities of advocacy within their library program. Finally, this study also explored the perceived success of strategies used in school library programs by the school librarians, as well as their stakeholders, in engaging in advocacy for their program.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do practicing K-12 school librarians define advocacy?
2. What advocacy activities do practicing K-12 school librarians enact?
3. To what extent do practicing school librarians' understandings of advocacy align with their advocacy activities?
4. To what extent are K-12 school librarian's advocacy efforts perceived successful by themselves and by their co-teachers and administrators?

### **Overview of the Methodology**

The research questions were addressed using an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2012). This study combined a quantitative measure to identify those activities school librarians report they engage in on a regular basis with a phenomenological qualitative examination of school librarians' perceptions and beliefs on what behaviors are most effective to determine the perceived success of program advocacy.

To identify common advocacy practices of a large sample of practicing school librarians, a quantitative measure was distributed to a national population of school librarians employed in US public schools. This questionnaire instrument allowed for a broad understanding of the advocacy strategies in use in the field. A phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994) was used to explore the lived experiences of a smaller

sample of participants and describe the strategies they enact in practice as they engage in advocacy activities within their school setting.

To examine the first two questions, the researcher gathered data from survey responses and questionnaires. A modified measure based on the survey developed by Myers and Sweeney (2004) in the counseling field was used to collect data from a population of practicing school librarians in large districts with school library supervisors. The survey instruments were analyzed to solicit the understandings of advocacy at the school level, as well as the activities of advocacy reported by practitioners.

The 100 largest school districts in the nation, identified by the National Center for Education Statistics (Sable, Plotts, and Mitchell, 2010) were used in this study. From this population, the 80 districts with library supervisors were contacted. Library supervisors in each of these districts were asked to distribute the survey to all school librarians in their district. Each school librarian in the population then had the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the survey.

Though a delimiting factor, distribution through supervisors ensured there was no preference in sampling to those practitioners engaging through professional organization email listservs. Not distributing through a professional listserv was a decision employed to solicit participation from each school librarian in a district regardless of outside affiliation or level of advocacy engagement. This method of distribution also helped reduce the chance the invitation to participate would be rerouted by a spam filter since the email would be distributed through the district's internal system. All employed school librarians in each district were sent the invitation.

The third and fourth research questions were explored in a qualitative manner in addition to the quantitative survey responses. Building upon the responses gained through the survey instrument, the study employed phenomenological qualitative research methods to examine the lived experiences of the participants (Hays & Singh, 2012). Using a small criterion sample of six participants, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with school librarians whose responses indicated higher levels of advocacy engagement. This analysis provides for thick description (Geertz, 1973) of advocacy actions perceived as successful. For the purposes of this sample, the definition of success was specific to the individual and the unique circumstance of the advocacy engagement and environment. Perceived success was measured through self-report of the participant and recorded. Additionally, a co-teacher and an administrator for each participant were interviewed to discuss their perceptions of the school librarian's success.

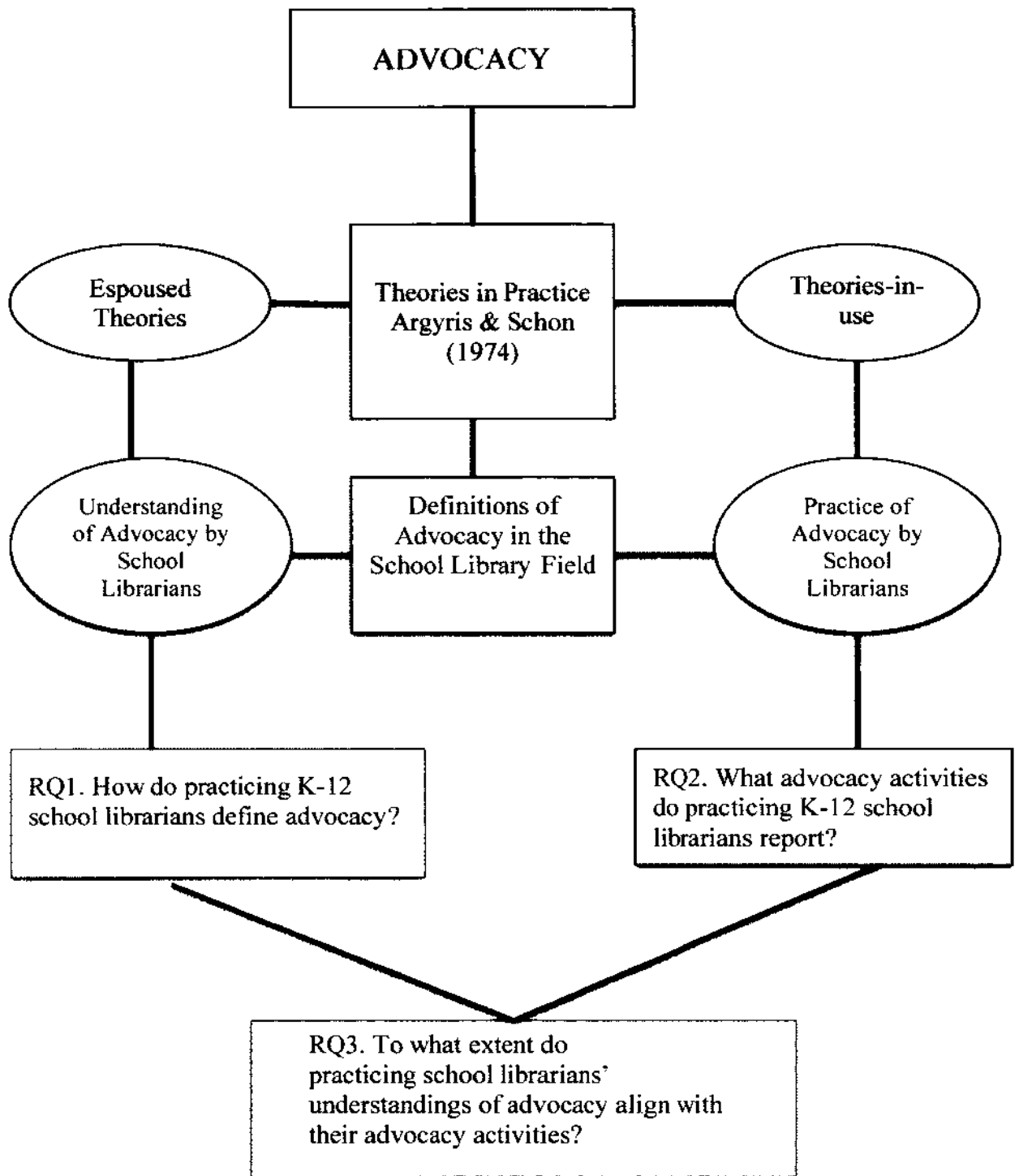
In total, eighteen participants representing six sites were interviewed to explore their experiences with school library advocacy. Advocacy behaviors and beliefs were noted and further explored through this qualitative data. The data were gathered and coded and themes were identified. This led to the exploration of subthemes as noted in chapter 4 on findings.

### **Theoretical Framework**

School libraries and school librarians are just one component of the larger educational system. They comprise one distinct function of the organizational composition of modern-day schools. The researcher investigated school library advocacy through the theoretical framework developed by Argyris and Schon (1974). Their

theories of action models were created in the context of social systems such as a school setting. As a theoretical perspective, the framework suggests that employees within an organization can conceive of an accepted course of action based on their education, personal beliefs, and organizational norms and these espoused actions would be verbalized as preferable. However, their theories-in-use, or the actions they actually take, may be different (Argyris & Schon, p. 7).

Ewbank (2011) found that most school librarians' espoused theory supported engagement in advocacy. While 81% of respondents in her study reported that advocacy was very important to the future of the school library profession, half of the respondents reported not engaging in advocacy activities. School librarians are able to identify and espouse advocacy practices, but many librarians' theories- in-use do not show their engagement due to perceived barriers such as lack of time, unavailability of resources, and lack of priority.



*Figure 1.* An overview of advocacy theories in action framework.

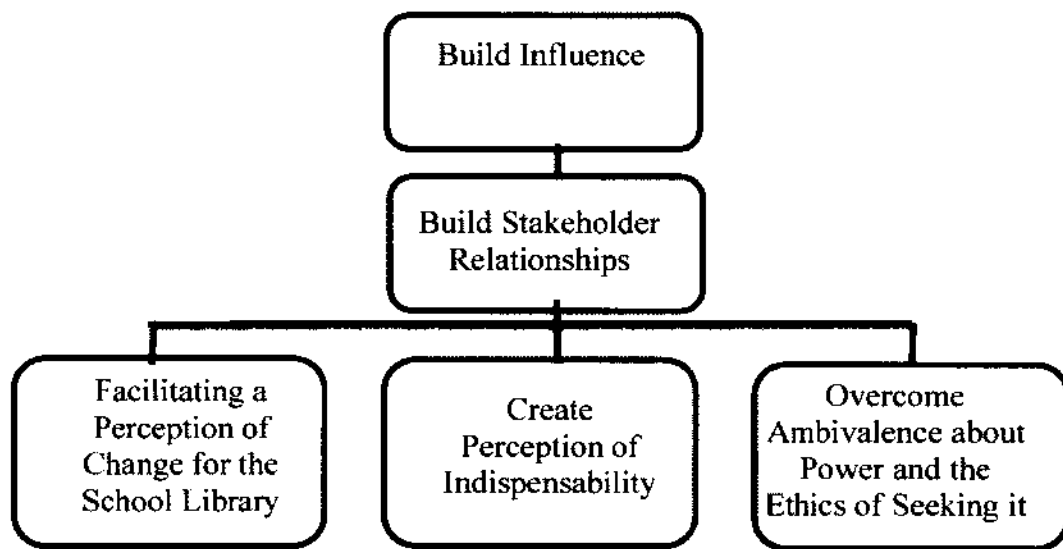


This study explored the difference between school librarian's espoused theories of school library advocacy and their theories-of-use when engaging in activities to advocate for their library program. Advocacy is an often discussed, yet rarely well defined as a practice in the school library world. When asked if they understand advocacy and its importance, most school librarians articulate assumptions about themselves, others, and the situation (Argyris & Schon, 1974), but have more difficulty applying advocacy to their own practice. As school library literature shows (Bush, 2007; Hand, 2008; Johns, 2007; Leverett, 2001; Logan, 2006), practicing school librarians will form a theory of how to advocate, primarily focusing on program promotion. However, studies indicate (Burns, 2014; Ewbank, 2011) school librarian theories-in-use show they advocate for their programs to a lesser degree, citing barriers such as time, fear and lack of resources as obstacles.

### **Conceptual Framework**

There is currently a dearth of empirical research examining school library advocacy actions in K-12 school libraries. Though thought leaders in the field have written extensively on the subject, most discussion in the field focuses on how to engage in program promotion (Bush, 2007; Hand, 2008; Johns, 2007; Kerr, 2011; Leverett, 2001; Levitov, 2007). In order to investigate the success of advocacy within the library program, it is necessary to explore those actions that place the school librarian in an influential role within the school community. This study attempted to explore the actions and strategies of advocacy in practice through the examination of a school librarian's understanding of advocacy.

To guide this study, it was first necessary to identify those actions that school librarians identified as actions of advocacy. Using Hartzell's framework of building influence (2003a), those actions that were described as activities beyond simple program promotion that create a position of power for school librarians were specifically examined to identify school librarians engaging in high levels of advocacy within a school library setting. The tactics developed by Hartzell as means to build influence with the various targets, or stakeholder groups, were used to initially identify those participants engaging in higher levels of advocacy.



*Figure 2.* A visual hierarchy of Hartzell's (2003a) tenets of for building influence.

Hartzell's (2003a) framework establishes the first stage of building influence as fostering the relationships required to gain library advocates. To gain influence necessary for support, Hartzell outlines the above three actions in which school librarians must engage to build influence for their position and thus create support among their

stakeholders. Haycock (2003a) reminds school librarians that teachers and principals often see them as support staff and it is critical for this perception to be changed. School librarians must be ready to show their acceptance of this role and shed negative stereotypes. If stakeholders within the school view the position of school librarian as indispensable, they will not support defunding the position or destaffing. They will ensure that the school library program is maintained as an essential program in their schools. To gain this type of support, school librarians must advocate for their position, which supports student achievement using evidence-based practices. Finally, school librarians must demonstrate they are capable and willing to become leaders within the school. Leverett (2001) contends that school librarians must be willing to become leaders not only within their own schools, but also within the field of education. This framework directly correlates to the AASL advocacy definition of school librarians building relationships with stakeholders so that together they can advocate for school library programs. It furthers that message by ensuring that school librarians are first demonstrating that they are seen as vital and instrumental to the school community and places school librarians in influential leadership roles where their message is more likely to be heard (Hartzell, 2003a).

### **Delimitations/Assumptions**

Currently, there is no state or national database to reach all school librarians. Dissemination of information is often dependent upon affiliation or membership in state and national organizations and those areas with district level library supervisors. Because of this, reaching a broad school librarian sample required delimitating factors. In order to obtain a sample that represents school librarians of varied socioeconomic, geographical,

and professional engagement levels this study drew from a purposive sample (Patton, 2002) of those school librarians who work within a large district managed by a library supervisor who maintains an electronic communication list by which all librarians in the district have equal access. These email distribution lists were used to distribute the quantitative survey measure to all librarians, providing equal chance for all librarians in the district to have the opportunity to respond regardless of type of school, location and professional membership affiliation. The use of large school districts with library supervisors introduced the assumption that there was some level of advocacy support of school libraries by virtue of a district level school library position.

Due to the identified demographic characteristics of the sample population, participants also represent those school librarians working in large, predominantly urban districts. There was the assumption that all participants were practicing school librarians. School library participants self-identified their certification status on the distributed survey questionnaire.

### **Potential Implications of the Proposed Study**

This study examined the advocacy beliefs of school librarians from 36 districts, representing 17 states. This study engaged practicing, state-certified school librarians in a conversation in which they describe their understanding of advocacy and the level to which they are advocating for their school library program. It also offers insight into what advocacy initiatives school librarians are implementing into their practice. Responses provide insight into the perspectives that school librarians and their co-teachers and administrators have regarding the effectiveness of advocacy actions being implemented in the field. This will add to the school library literature as the field

attempts to define expectations of advocacy for school librarians and explore effective advocacy strategies at all levels.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Advocacy:* A deliberate and sustained effort to foster understanding of the school library program while influencing the attitudes of key stakeholders. It includes raising awareness, increasing knowledge, and gaining influence.

*School Librarian:* A person with an endorsement or certification that includes extensive professional preparation in the field of school librarianship. Note: The terms school library media specialist, school librarian, teacher- librarian, and just librarian, are used interchangeably in the literature.

*School Library Program:* The integration of the services coordinated by the school librarian including, but not limited to, those within the school library. For the purpose of this study the definition includes the purposeful hiring of a highly qualified, state certified school librarian employed in the school library program.

*School Library Supervisors:* A district-level instructional leader who coordinates the development, operation, and evaluation of library services to promote student achievement and teacher effectiveness of school library programs within a school district.

### **Summary**

With few exceptions, there has been little to no empirical research in the field of school library advocacy. Because of this, it is difficult to document previous theory from the current body of research literature. Often, the researcher draws on the perspective of thought leaders and those working in the profession of the school library field to

understand the historical and current perspective of advocacy in the field. In the following literature review a more detailed discussion on the historical use of advocacy and its influence on the profession will be explored. Additionally, current methods of school library engagement will be described. Finally, information on the conceptual and theoretical perspectives will be presented.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study's purpose was to examine practicing school librarians' understandings of advocacy and the advocacy activities they implement into their practice. It also explored the relationship between school librarian's espoused practices of advocacy and the advocacy practices in which they engage in practice. The study also explores the perceived success of strategies used by school librarians engaging in advocacy for their program. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do practicing K-12 school librarians define advocacy?
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3. To what extent do practicing school librarians' understandings of advocacy align with their advocacy activities?
4. To what extent are K-12 school librarian's advocacy efforts perceived successful by themselves and by their co-teachers and administrators?

The following literature review explores the topics related to this purpose in an effort to provide context for the how the school library field views the practice of school library advocacy both historically and currently. It also contributes an understanding of how school library advocacy interacts with the school library program.

First, a historical overview of school libraries is provided to establish the setting for advocacy. Next, the history of the term *advocacy* is addressed to establish its meaning and context since beginning use by those in the school library field. The lack of empirical literature on the topic of school library advocacy requires an examination of the perspectives of thought leaders in the profession. The researcher will also review the

current advocacy engagement of school librarians as documented in professional journals. Relevant scholarship will establish the conceptual framework of the study. Drawing from the literature, the researcher will explore the perception and practice of advocacy by school librarians using the three tenets of Hartzell's (2003a) framework for building influence for the position of school librarians through advocating for a strong library program. Advocacy will then be examined in the context of how school librarians form their advocacy beliefs and are trained to advocate for their programs prior to licensure, as well as the continued levels of resources and support available to practicing school librarians. The researcher will explore *evidence-based practice* as an initiative in the school library field used to gather support for the school library program. The review of literature will include an exploration of the theoretical framework of the theories of action demonstrating a dissonance between the espoused theories of advocacy and those theories-in-use of practicing school librarians. This framework will build on the model established by Argyris and Schon (1974).

Advocacy will be explored in different educational contexts. Advocacy efforts in other educational subject areas will be examined. Finally, this literature review will investigate the position of school library supervisors and their impact on the school library program.

### **Advocacy In Context**

#### *Advocacy and School Library Standards*

School libraries have long occupied a place in public schools. The traditional school library space was a room designed to house resources. Between the years of 1960-1998 school library programs expanded their resources, in response to federal funding



reforms and implementation practices initiated by new national standards for school libraries (AASL 1960; NEA & ALA, 1969; AASL & AECT, 1988, 1998).

Lyndon Johnson's presidential administration first passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965. The goal of this legislation was to ensure that all elementary and secondary schools had school libraries of reasonable quality (Frase, 1975). Prior to the implementation of ESEA, up to 80% of students in public schools attended a school with no centralized school library (Frase, 1975, p.28). Title II of ESEA (1965) authorized \$100 million dollars in categorical funding for school libraries. Categorical programs are those that establish definitive national objectives and strictly limit the recipients in how the federal funds are used (Frase, 1975). Frase distinguishes that this is in contrast to block funding that allows recipients far greater discretion in how they allocate funds (p. 1).

Initially, ESEA funds were used exclusively to purchase books, but later audiovisual materials were added to collections. The title of *media center* was adopted in favor of *school library* as collections became more diverse and materials were acquired in multiple formats. In 1969, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Library Association (ALA) created the *Standards For School Media Programs* (NEA & ALA, 1969). This set of standards provided for a written statement addressing collection development policy and procedures. Additionally, the standards set a minimum expectation of staffing of a school library. One qualified media specialist (per 250 students) would be staffed in a school library to implement and oversee the school library program (NEA & ALA, 1969). Finally, this set of standards addressed the need to teach information literacy skills. The purpose of the standards was to provide students

and teachers with the resources and media services to which they are entitled (Sullivan, 1986).

The library standards were updated again with the publication of *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* in 1988. *Information Power* (1988), jointly published by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) was pivotal in establishing an influential role for school librarians within the school environment. These guidelines portray the school library as an environment of learning that supports the learning goals of teachers and faculty and creates an environment conducive to academic support and success. The revised *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (AASL & AECT, 1998) details several components that establish a successful school library program. Though not one of the specific roles outlined, this resource promotes the opportunity for school librarians to engage in leadership roles with the purpose of strengthening the school library program. Through the promotion of building partnerships for learning (AASL & AECT, 1998, p 47) collaboration, leadership and technology were emphasized as integral to building effective school library programs. By becoming a leader and interacting with others in leadership positions (school administrators, those on school improvement teams, curriculum leaders) the school librarian promotes the library program as a central resource for the learning community while connecting with stakeholders and gathering their support. This provides the opportunity for school librarians to express the importance of information literacy across the curriculum and to advocate for an increased role for the school library serving the

needs of all students in a diverse manner at a variety of levels within the district (AASL & AECT, 1998, p.125-126).

With a focus on standards based reforms in education, the role of school librarians incorporated more teaching duties. The library standards established and implemented through *Information Power* (1998) clearly identified the roles of school librarians to be that of teacher and instructional partner, along with manager of the library program (p. 5). They provided an opportunity for school librarians to articulate the responsibilities of their position as facilitators of student achievement to the school community in such a way as to build an influential place in the educational setting and raise awareness for their program.

#### *Advocacy and School Library Funding*

Though separate funding for school libraries was established with the legislation of ESEA, political support for categorical funding did not last. Congress began to merge funding for all school programs into block grants. When categorical funding fell out of favor in the mid-1980's, funding for school libraries was greatly diminished (Simon, 1993). ESEA was eventually replaced with No Child Left Behind in 2001, which did not provide federal money for school libraries (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2008). Though there have been attempts to reauthorize ESEA and Senator Paul Simon proposed the Elementary and Secondary School Library Media Act in 1993, no national legislative endeavors have met with success to ensure school libraries have federal support (Henderson, 1995; Long, 2000). The Ford administration proposed continuing to support school libraries as one component under the general support program for elementary and

secondary schools (Frase, 1975), but school libraries have not realized the federal funding support they had in the 1960s again.

In 2007 the 110<sup>th</sup> congress introduced the Strengthening Kids Interest in Learning and Libraries (SKILLS) Act. The intent of this legislative advocacy, which was supported by both parties of congress and endorsed by AASL, was to improve literacy through school library funding (Whelan, 2007). The act provided support for school library staffing and resources, “ensuring all schools have highly qualified librarians and the resources needed to keep up with the rapid changes in technology” (Whelan, 2007, p15). Though proposed, this legislation has never gotten the requisite support needed.

As categorical funding for school libraries ended and continued funding support was less certain, the school library field established an increased focus on the need to advocate for the library program. Both ALA and AASL established committees dedicated to the development and implementation of advocacy goals and resources (AASL & ALA 2003; AASL, 2006; COLA, 2009). These committees attempt to assist school librarians as they create advocacy plans. Though the field has recognized a need to engage in advocacy, there has been no systematic research agenda on the topic (Ewbank & Kwon, 2014).

Practitioners (Cutler, 1896; Douglas, 1959; Gaver, 1957; Thomas, 1976) within the field have included advocacy activities of building educated support for the school library into their practice. Mary Salome Cutler (1896), an early school library educator, acknowledged the need to build stakeholder relationships as a means to build influence for the library. She was an early proponent of seeking meaningful relationships with community members to encourage community support of the school library. The

implementation of *Standards for School Library Programs* in 1960, which reflected a significant change to the school librarian's role, prompted Mary Peacock Douglas (1959) to highlight library program requirements and ways the school community could support their implementation. These new standards had an emphasis on student services and the school librarian's responsibilities as an instructor and teacher. Mary Gaver's (1957) work called for the support of a school library in each school to support the requirements of these changes. Lucille Thomas (1976) developed a school library awareness initiative in the state of New York that brought together school librarians and multiple stakeholders. The intent of this initiative was to raise awareness of the potential of the school library among educators and community members. All participants had the ability to make recommendations for improving the quality of the school library program. Though promotional activities were occurring, they were not widespread and little progress was made encouraging other school librarians to participate.

In the early 1980's school librarians began to use the term "*advocacy*" (Manheimer, 1981; Birch, 1981) to define the actions of promoting and gathering influence for their library programs. The specific activities defined by this term varied greatly. Birch (1981) suggests advocacy must go beyond simple program promotion and awareness in attempt to advertise school library programs that include acts of public relations. This would include soliciting the involvement of parents in school library events and articulating library budgets at school board meetings (p. 4). Birch distinguishes that when advocating, the school librarian is acting in the role of library advocate, not teacher, whose primary loyalty is to the cause she is advocating for. She is therefore not trying to educate, but to influence her stakeholders. For this reason, she

noted the message that is crafted by the school library advocate was particularly important.

In an effort to unify the message at a national level, then president of ALA, Arthur Curley launched the advocacy initiative *Library Advocacy Now* in 1994. This campaign was designed to promote advocacy by establishing a network of library advocates willing to speak on behalf of libraries and library legislation (Curley, 1994). His initiative contained a plan to train others across the nation to be library advocates. This initiative brought advocacy to the attention of many in the field, and is still active as an email discussion list monitored by the American Library Association's Committee of Library Advocacy. While this campaign did produce a training guide for advocacy (Merola, 2008), the handbook remains only one of the resources available through the professional organization in their online repository.

In 1998, after the implementation of the powerful new set of library standards, *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, Ken Haycock & Pat Cavill (1999) attempted to rally the national organization to refocus their advocacy efforts and develop advocacy resources with a single, clear message. Their intent was that the field progress beyond the activities of simple promotion for the school library program and instead align more with activities that focus on building influence for the school librarian and emphasize leadership roles. Haycock further emphasized that advocacy efforts would need to involve a network of support that extends beyond the school in which the librarian works and go into the community (Haycock, 1994, pp. 31). Though this was fully articulated in his study on future directions for the national organization with Cavill

(1999), the field has yet to establish such an advocacy agenda (K. Haycock, personal communication, March 8, 2013).

### *Definition of Advocacy by the Profession*

The American Association of School Librarians currently maintains a fractured, multi-tiered definition of advocacy. AASL defines advocacy as “The on-going process of building partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program” (AASL, 2007b). Though it contains characteristics of general advocacy, some practitioners have aligned this definition with actions of political activism in their understanding and practice (Johns, 2007; Kirkland, 2012; Schuckett, 2004). This definition coexists in AASL publications with definitions for public relations and marketing. AASL defines public relations as “One-way communication of getting the message across -who we are, what we do, when and where, and for whom” (AASL, 2007b). This public relations definition aligns more closely with many practitioners in the field who are promoting their library program. It emphasizes what school librarians have to offer the school community (Hand, 2008; Hunter & Applegate, 2009). Marketing, defined as “a planned and sustained process to assess the customer's needs and then to select materials and services to meet those needs” is also consistently articulated as advocacy. Burns (2014) found that practicing school librarians often aligned their understandings of advocacy with this definition of marketing when describing providing a quality program as a key element of advocacy.

The original 2003 AASL @ your Library Special Committee was charged with creating the definitions and intended for them to exist along with training on advocacy. The intent of placing all three definitions together was to show the nuances in in language

between AASL's understanding and approach to advocacy opposed to the definition of advocacy by the parent organization of ALA (D. Levitov, personal communication, January 25, 2014). Levitov acknowledges that training was initially provided to AASL members on a broad scale through conferences with the launch of the AASL Advocacy Institute in 2007. This training would lead to a deeper, focused understanding of advocacy not as easily achieved through a self-directed exploration of resources.

While these three definitions have different intents, they form the basis of AASL's advocacy committee initiatives. This committee is currently tasked with creating a toolkit of resources to be used by school librarians who are in danger of program cuts or elimination (AASL, 2008a). It also maintains a toolkit of resources to help school librarians create and maintain positive stakeholder relationships and develop public relations messaging for their programs so that their program does not encounter hardship (AASL, 2008b). Other intended outcomes of this committee include the creation of a boot camp that provides advocacy training for new school librarians or any school librarians that seek initial help in creating an advocacy plan using resources that are readily available. Levitov maintains, "Unfortunately the toolkits and related resources are not well organized or easily used. They are a bit overwhelming." (D. Levitov, Personal communication, March 3, 2014).

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### *Building Influence for the Position of School Librarians*

Despite attention from state and national organizations, there remains little consistency in the field of what activities constitute advocacy. School librarians, therefore, have varied perceptions on advocacy in their practice. Ewbank (2011) found



that while most supported the need for advocacy, only half of respondents participated in advocacy activities. Most often practitioners identify advocacy as promotion of the school library program and awareness of resources (Kerr, 2011; Levitov, 2007). Promoting what goes on in the school library and making stakeholders aware of the programs and resources is usually not enough to help others outside the school, or even those outside the school library, understand how valuable and integral to student learning the school library can be (Hartzell, 2003b; Kerr, 2011). Many people not working in a school may not even understand the difference between school librarians and library technical staff (Amey, 1995; Dickinson, 2006). Levitov (2007) actively promoted the activities she used in her school library to encourage a robust program, until realizing that the promotions were short lived and did not have the sustained support that true advocacy requires to make a program feel essential to stakeholders. True advocacy is when those who are not the school librarian speak up on behalf of the program or position (AASL, 2008b).

Hartzell (2003a) contends that school librarians must build influence for their program and their position through creating relationships with stakeholders. These influential relationships then have the ability to provide educated support for the library program. The first tenet of Hartzell's framework is facilitating change for the position of school librarians. Advocacy is multifaceted and includes sharing with other's the unique role that a school librarian holds. People tend to rely on stereotypes and their own experience with school librarians when they do not have other information to draw on (Oberge, 2006; Johns, 2007). If stakeholders and policymakers are to support a program, they need to understand the program's function and how it impacts the academic success

of students (Haycock, 2003b). The lack of understanding of the school library program by others in the school building, especially school administrators, continues to be an obstacle school librarians face. Building positive relationships with teachers is a good first step in building influence and redefining the school library position, because teachers will then become advocates willing to speak on behalf of the importance of the library for the success of their students (Hartzell, 2003a; Johns, 2007).

Slusser (2011) notes the flaw in assuming school librarians do not have to worry about their job simply because they are doing their job and doing it well. School librarians must educate their stakeholders about the position. Anytime the school librarian speaks for his or her program, he advocates for the program (Williams, 2006). Leverett (2001) suggests that only those who know and understand the issues relevant to school libraries and their importance will be able to adequately represent them. School librarians themselves need to be part of the vocal group (Johns, 2007), but they must have a relevant message. This will, in turn, facilitate actions required for stakeholders to become advocates for the programs in a time of need. They must be able to articulate the benefits of a strong school library program and the services of a qualified school librarian (Braxton, 2003; Levitov, 2012; Martin, 2012). School librarians must be able to clearly articulate the strengths of their own program. Kirkland (2012) warns if the school librarian cannot demonstrate the program's worth, it is impossible to expect administrators, as well as decision and policy makers, to understand it putting the program at risk.

The second tenet of Hartzell's (2003a) framework requires that other stakeholders have the perception that school librarians are indispensable resources. After establishing

the role of school librarians as teachers and instructional partners in addition to program managers, school librarians must foster the relationships they build with school personal to demonstrate how their role facilitates student achievement.

One way to improve influence for the position of school librarian in the building is to increase contact with teachers and take advantage of opportunities to discuss ways the library can support classroom curricula (Hartzell, 2003a). This assists in the shift of the school librarians' role to that of teacher and instructional partner (Zmuda, 2006). Administration can support this by allowing time for the school librarian to attend grade and curriculum meetings and granting time for professional development with other school librarians and attending functions outside the school day such as PTA and parent functions (Church, 2008). Support for additional help in the library is also important so the library can remain open and accessible if the school librarian must be out of the physical space during the time the library is open.

An advocacy message must be articulated in a way that demonstrates need for the position and an effect on student achievement (Hunter & Applegate, 2009; Kachel, DelGuidice, & Luna, 2012; Kirkland, 2012). Ultimately, in the world of school libraries, the goal of advocacy is building support for facilitating student achievement (Braxton, 2003; Hartzell, 1997; Hunter & Applegate, 2009). Librarians must be able to articulate the value of the educational impact they have on students and do so in a manner that is meaningful to their stakeholders (Kirkland, 2012). Though much is said about the loss of school library positions and reduction in library space and support staff, the ultimate goal of advocacy is to provide exceptional school library programs that positively enhance student learning (Tilley, 2011).

Church (2008) describes the critical need for school librarians to advocate for their program. A key finding in her study was that school librarians must be trained to advocate for their instructional role in the school environment so that others, particularly administrators and collaborating teachers are aware of the valuable role school librarians play in supporting student achievement. While teachers and school administrators may acknowledge the role that school librarians play in the education of students (Haycock, 2003a) parents and students must also be aware of the unique contribution school librarians make to the educational experience of students. Lau (2002a) suggests that the best way to make school librarians more valued is for them to better articulate how they directly impact student learning.

Library advocacy proponents (Plunkett, 2010; Hunter & Applegate, 2009) stress that advocacy must be seen as advocating for students, not necessarily programs. Plunkett suggests using data on student achievement to substantiate this claim and suggests having at least two facts memorized and ready to recite to stakeholders whenever they have the opportunity to discuss the library program. Plunkett (2010) & Hand (2008) suggest that school librarians stress the importance of their services by showing they are indispensable.

Oberg (2006) and Hartzell (1997) each suggest a weakness in increasing awareness for the influence of school librarians and their programs is that school librarians are not widely represented in educational literature. They tend to publish articles for other school librarians, not for general teachers or administrators outside the library field. This perpetuates the reality that others do not understand what is going on

inside the library. School librarians must craft their message to reach the appropriate audience (Kerr, 2011; Kirkland, 2012).

Throughout the professional literature (Applegate, Schuster & Thompson, 2012; Hand, 2008; Haycock, 2003b; Kerr, 2011; Johns, 2007) it is further established that relationships must be built with local stakeholders, such as teachers and parent groups, so that these groups will in turn advocate for the library program and demonstrate the necessity of the program.

The final tenet of the framework is that school librarians must overcome their ambivalence about taking on positions of leadership. One aspect of the school library position is developing the disposition of educational leader- this should be evidenced not only as a leader within the confines of a school, but within the field of education. Administrators emphasize the need for instructional leaders who are able to provide in-service to teachers and take the lead position in collaborative sessions to plan and facilitate co-teaching opportunities (Hartzell, 2003a; Zmuda, 2006)). Lance (1999) found leadership relationships are easiest to establish if first demonstrated at a school level.

Hartzell (2003a) states school librarians must seek leadership opportunities; even if they are ambivalent about the elevation in power these opportunities will afford them. Everhart (2007) notes leadership is an innate aspect to the job because school librarians are one of the few professionals in the school responsible for each student. As such, they have a responsibility to advocate for greater learning opportunities for everyone in the building. This can be accomplished by working with students, as well as teaching peers, as school librarians work to develop lessons and supply resources that support classroom curriculum (Everhart, 2007, p. 55).

One way for school librarians to establish a position of influence is to lead professional development sessions at the school or district level. Other opportunities include positions on school leadership teams, school and district curriculum committees and technology projects (Hartzell, 2003a). Successful engagements at the school level will lead to further opportunities to demonstrate leadership and build an influential reputation (Branch & Oberg, 2001). When school librarians engage in influential behaviors, this evidence must be used to support the work of the school librarian and build a network of supporters (Kerr, 2011; Levitov, 2007).

#### *Advocacy in Librarian Education*

Kaaland (2012) discusses a need to “develop a culture of advocacy” if the school library profession is going to acquire the skills and resources required to maintain a dedicated advocacy agenda in which all school librarians can be successful. One facet of this culture is that advocacy is on-going (Barron, 2003; Hand, 2008; Hartzell, 2007; Levitov, 2007). This includes ensuring that new school library professionals are trained in advocacy during the certification process.

The standards of the profession state that school libraries will be staffed by qualified school librarians (AASL, 2006b, AASL, 2009). School librarians are typically certified teachers, meeting state defined licensing requirements established by the state Department of Education in which they work. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the current accrediting agency for most educator preparation programs. CAEP will become the new professional accreditation organization for teacher education programs in the United States and hopes to raise the quality of preparation through rigorous evidence based support for preparing competent

and qualified professional teachers (CAEP, 2014). Through a *de facto* consolidation process, NCATE and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) have become subsidiaries of CAEP, each maintaining recognition by the US Department of Education and Council for Higher Education Accreditation for the purpose of maintaining the accreditation of educator preparation programs until programs come up for review under CAEP. School librarians completing programs from NCATE, soon to be CAEP, accredited schools meet advanced preparation requirements.

There are five standards addressed in the NCATE guidelines: Teaching and Learning, Literacy and Reading, Information and Knowledge, Advocacy and Leadership, and Program Management and Administration (AASL & NCATE, 2010). When the school library standards began to place importance on the roles teacher and instructional partner, research began to focus on those contributions the school librarians brought to teaching and learning (Branch and Oberg, 2001). Though advocacy is also a standard in which pre-service school librarians must demonstrate competence to meet the requirements of an NCATE program, the school library field has yet to establish a research agenda examining the practices of school librarians in this area.

The education of teachers is a recursive process (Jarvis-Selinger, Pratt, & Collins, 2010; Pajares, 1992). Teachers move from the role of learner to instructor, forming their beliefs and philosophies along the way. A teacher's belief system guides their theory of professional practice. Building on Lave and Wenger's (1991) situational learning model, Tsangaridov & Sullivan (2003) suggest that individuals who are new to the school library field form their perceptions and understandings of school library advocacy on the activities and definitions already established in the field. Through this process their

beliefs on teaching and advocacy are contextualized and their values are created by what they see, as well as hold in prior knowledge.

In the case of school librarians, many work as the solo practitioner in their school setting, so the challenge can be significant to find examples of advocacy in practice. *In The Trouble with Ed Schools*, Labaree (2006) discusses the solitary work of a teacher. Nowhere in the school has this been more evident than the role of the school librarian. School librarians not only often work in a room by themselves, but they are then the only professionals in the building aware of the duties and responsibilities of their job. School librarians seeking a model of advocacy must purposely seek to find it.

Tsangaridov & Sullivan (2003) warn that because of this uniformity of practice an understanding of advocacy may be difficult. More often a novice school librarian is certified with only minimal training or an antiquated perception of advocacy ideas based on previous life perceptions, or more experienced newcomers challenge the views and behaviors of established members of the organization prematurely (Schultz, 2008). This further creates misunderstandings of the practice of advocacy in the field.

Without training or mentorship, school librarians often are left to explore resources found on their own. Levitov warns some attend ALA advocacy sessions that present advocacy with an intent different from the published AASL definition. Those sessions may not meet the needs of a school librarian or align with the AASL definition as it was intended. This leads to further misunderstandings in the field. (D. Levitov, personal communication, January 25, 2014).



### *Advocacy Planning and Resources*

Shannon (1996) finds that school librarians are not adequately prepared to be powerful advocates for their program. School librarians do not naturally know how to advocate for their program and must seek resources for assistance. However, Ewbank (2011) found 26% of respondents mentioned inadequate resources for advocacy as a barrier to advocacy. Resources within the school library field frequently focus on building a quality school program or advise school librarians on the benefits of promoting their activities to raise awareness for the role of the school librarian.

A systematic, developed plan for advocacy that can be implemented and carried out for a long period of time is most appropriate (Haycock, 1994). Due to the lack of a consistent definition in the school library field, it is difficult for professional organizations to develop definitive goals and strategies when developing advocacy resources. This, in turn makes it difficult for school librarians to establish an advocacy plan. Establishing an advocacy plan and assembling resources is essential as one of the first steps for successful advocacy (Hunter & Applegate, 2009; Johns, 2007).

The professional organizations of ALA and AASL each have toolkits and websites dedicated to assist school librarians in creating advocacy plans for their programs. The *Toolkit for School Library Media Programs* (2003) developed jointly by ALA and AASL provides some structure to implement a strong advocacy initiative. This resource offers guidance and suggestions for building support for a school library program with multiple stakeholders in a user-friendly format. Practitioners looking for usable templates and practical advice from those established in the field can use this toolkit as an initial resource for implementing advocacy in their own school setting,

though it is has not been updated in the last decade and the intent of the content remains diversified between marketing one's program and political outreach. Other advocacy resources are available through the website of both organizations, but practitioners must be proactive in seeking them for their personal use.

Recent initiatives by both ALA and AASL have attempted to reconcile the fractured structure of their resources. ALA introduced *Advocacy University* (ALA, 2013a), which serves as a repository of advocacy resources members can access for all types of libraries. These resources can be beneficial when establishing an advocacy plan or for use in a time of crisis. AASL has both resources and tools devoted to advocacy (AASL, 2006a). AASL divides advocacy resources according to user purpose. The *Crisis Toolkit* (AASL, 2008a) has resources and tools for use at to be access at a time of duress. The *Promotion of Health and Wellness Toolkit* (AASL, 2008b) assists school librarians in establishing relationships to promote program growth while fostering stakeholder relationships. Though divided by user purpose, both can be found on the organization website.

While these resources exist through the national organizations, some practicing school librarians report they are not aware of them (Burns, 2014). The print format of many resources may discourage some who already feel they are short on time (Ewbank, 2011). Instead they may be seeking more authentic, practical advocacy resources; success stories and practical advice from those with successful advocacy messages is desired (Burns, 2014).

### *Evidence-Based Practice*

Evidence-based practice in education is a concept developed from the medical field. The concept comes from the problem-solving clinical practice of using evidence to identify, appraise, and care for individual patients (Sackett et al, 1996). This included combining individual experiences with best available evidence from research. It has expanded to many other disciplines since then, to include education.

Within the educational field, leaders rely on a research-based framework for decision-making, followed implementation of services for the school community. These services are based on clearly stated standards and objectives that demonstrate the impact of outcomes and services (Todd, 2003). At the school level, Loertscher and Todd (2003) identify benefits to evidence-based practice relative to advocacy.

Using the principles of evidence-based practice allows school librarians to make a visible contribution to learning. Carl Harvey (2010) encouraged finding the best way for school librarians to document what was happening in the library then using the most appropriate tool to get the word out to reach the widest audience. Communications of compiled and documented evidence of student learning outputs with all stakeholders can be shared on a regular, continuous basis (Hunter & Applegate, 2010). These continuous shared reports make a school librarian's contribution to student learning visible to all stakeholders.

The school librarian's teaching role is emphasized when using evidence-based practice. The school librarian demonstrates a commitment to learning outcomes and displays library goals and library actions that have a clear student learning focus. Hunter and Applegate (2009) suggest sharing specific skills (aligned with state and national

learning standards) that school librarians teach and are not taught elsewhere in the curriculum, as well as highlighting collaborative lessons and numbers of classes taught.

Evidence-based practice demonstrates that funds invested in the school library were worth it since there is a data-based measure of student achievement. It also provides evidence that continued funding is necessary. Langhorne (2005) encourages school librarians to articulate evidence of student learning with budget requests delineating resources that further support curriculum objectives and teacher goals in regular reports to administrators. This emphasizes the position of the school librarian as instructional partner, as well as clearly conveys the educational role the library program has in facilitating student success.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Action theory establishes a framework to explain the relationship between a person's values and beliefs and the actions enacted based on those beliefs. Espoused theories of action are those that individuals claim to follow, while theories-in-use are those theories that can be inferred from an individual's actions (Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985, p.82).

Argyris and Schon (1974) used a case study methodology in educational settings to test the effectiveness of theories-in-use. Their findings indicate that most theories-in-use run counter to educator's espoused theories (Argyris & Schon, 1974, p. 66). The theories-in-use models of Argyris and Schon are characterizations of how theory applies to human interactions.

To create structure for examining the advocacy activities of practicing school librarians, Argyris and Schon's (1974) theory framework was used in this study.

Espoused theories comprise the values, beliefs and definitions of advocacy produced by the school library field which school librarians claim drive their actions. Theories-in-use are those advocacy activities that can be inferred from the actions of school librarians (Argyris & Schon, 1974). In this study, theories-in-use relate to the activities and actions of advocacy which are explicitly reported through the survey responses of the participating school librarians. Further they are the beliefs then enacted by practitioners as self-reported and described in personal interviews, as well as the interviews with their administrators and teaching colleagues.

#### *Espoused Theories of Action*

Espoused theories were examined by investigating the understandings and beliefs of advocacy engagement in a school setting. Thought leaders (Hand, 2008; Hartzell, 1997; Harvey, 2010; Johns, 2007; Kerr, 2011; Levitov, 2007) espouse the practice of advocacy in library literature. Drawing on these stated beliefs in professional journals, practicing school librarians are able to align their personal philosophies and beliefs to create an advocacy position.

Espoused theories of action could be seen in the area of stakeholder support as well. Popular stakeholder opinions suggest a strong belief the school library plays a positive role in the overall value of the school (Lau, 2002b; Haycock, 2003b). Lau's (2002a) study of school administrators found 80% felt the school library plays a positive role in the overall value of a school. However, this finding may simply reflect the most acceptable answer. When asked to back up their statements, only 41 % of the administrators surveyed said the school library had a positive effect on student achievement. This finding suggest that there is belief that administrators would rather do

without the library in favor of using the resources on other things viewed more directly beneficial (Lau, 2002a).

Haycock (2003b) reported similar findings. While teachers and administrators expressed that school librarians were critical to student success, they needed to be reminded of the unique value school librarians contribute to student learning. Additionally, community stakeholders, like parents, were unaware of school librarians educational role and instead viewed them as support staff (Haycock, 2003b). School communities espouse that the library programs are important, but in practice their knowledge of the program suggests that they may not be true advocates able to speak in support of the program.

### *Theories-in-Use*

Theories-in-use of participants were identified by analyzing responses to open response items on the survey questionnaires. These were augmented by semi-structured interviews conducted with practicing school librarians as well as their school administrators and a teaching colleague.

Pajares (1992) notes that those beliefs pre-service teachers hold are the best predictors of the theories-in-use they will enact as they enter practice. Therefore, the actions of a school librarian are directly affected by their beliefs. These beliefs are influenced by their perceptions and judgments (p. 307). Ewbank (2011) found that 42% of participants either didn't advocate or found advocacy unsuccessful and 62% cited a lack of time as an obstacle for advocacy. School librarians participating in advocacy may believe that their actions are not valuable and/or will not be successful enough to warrant their time.

Graber (1996) suggests that teachers traditionally reject new approaches in favor of traditions they personally valued or previous teaching. Because of this, it is important to establish a strong advocacy agenda early in the training of pre-service school librarians. This will ensure that advocacy becomes not only an espoused theory, but also a valued belief that translates into a theory-in-use for practicing school librarians (Graber, 1996).

### **Advocacy in other Teaching Disciplines**

Advocacy is a concern in other teaching areas within the educational system. The counseling profession has a more mature advocacy agenda than school libraries. Eriksen (1999) suggests advocacy activities contributed to establishing school counselors as respected professionals in the school environment. Because it could not be assumed that the interest of school counselors would be protected in laws, policy and practice of schools if school counselors did not take actions to advocate for themselves and their profession, school counselors implemented positive advocacy initiatives. These advocacy efforts allow school counselors to practice without the constraints and multiple duty assignments that are different from what they are trained to do (Field, 2004).

According to Field (2004) there is sparse literature identifying and measuring essential advocacy behaviors for school counselors. There is even less available to distinguish how advocacy for those behaviors is developed. Similar to the school library field, resources for school counselors are available but advocacy lacks definitional clarity, as well as an understanding of how advocacy behaviors are learned.

Similar to school libraries, school counseling literature demonstrates a need to advocate for the profession, rather than the position or the program in times of crisis

(Field, 2004). Eriksen's (1999) study suggests a need for a clear sense of professional identity when advocating for the counseling profession. Establishing relationships with stakeholders and those with whom the advocacy message is intended is beneficial in the implementation of creating awareness for the program. Building a strong stakeholder support system is critical in establishing advocacy initiatives (Eriksen, 1999; Field, 2004). The language that is developed in an advocacy message must be clear, so that it meets the target's needs. Finally, school counseling literature (Field, 2004; Eriksen, 1999) suggests a strong need for demonstrated leadership in advocacy among school counselors.

The school counseling profession has found that clear articulation of the profession, as well as duties of the position help to establish an advocacy agenda. Lack of a clear definition of the position leads to obstacles of advocacy (Field, 2004; Eriksen, 2009). Obstacles to advocacy in the counseling profession can be similar to those in the school library. Obstacles can be a lack of communication among stakeholders and a perceived lack of value in the program (Eriksen, 2009).

Other curricular areas that have developed a position on advocacy are music and physical education. The need for advocacy in these areas stems from a perceived lack of value for courses not emphasized through standards-based education initiatives (Block, 2010; Mark, 2005; Stanec, 2008). Under the mandates of NCLB, PE and arts education are considered nonessential (Center on Educational Policy, 2007). However, studies (Grissom, 2005; Nelson & Gordon- Larsen, 2006; Trost, 2009) show a positive correlation between physically active students and their scores on reading and math achievement tests. (Trost, 2009) suggests that students are more focused and alert for



learning after engaging in physical activity during the school day. Physical activity also leads to an increase in on-task behavior. Among some of the benefits cited by proponents of music education are benefits in academics, as well as success in life. Students involved in music education have demonstrated increased math scores, increased attendance in school, and lower occurrence of substance abuse (Petress, 2005). These effects on student achievement have prompted educators in the fields of music and PE to initiate advocacy campaigns for their programs.

The school library field can gain a broader understanding of successful advocacy strategies in a school setting by examining the advocacy initiatives and motives of these two curricular areas. Those advocating for music programs initiated their agenda by preparing facts about the value of the music program in schools for administrators (Block, 2010; Mark, 2005). Mark (2005) states the goal of music education advocates was to ensure that policy makers understand why music education is important to students, communities, the nation, and civilization (p. 95). Advocates, therefore, must persuade stakeholders of the value and importance of music education. Trost & van der mars (2009) suggests that physical education advocates argue to policy makers a balanced rationale that includes the impediments an unhealthy lifestyle will have on economic productivity if workers are not healthy and fit enough to work. Stanec (2008) suggests that physical education is more valuable than physical activity alone. The argument is not whether or not PE is essential; it is the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. PE helps promote a healthy lifestyle and helps counter the national epidemic of childhood obesity. PE educator advocates articulate this position through documented evidence (Stanec, 2008), similar to evidence-based practice in the school library program. Further,

similar to advocacy in the school library, access is an essential understanding for those advocating for physical education. Barriers exist for many students who do not have opportunities for physical activity outside of the school day.

Advocacy in these curricular areas has begun, but continues to be a challenge. Though advocacy is an ever present need in music education, Elpus (2007) contends that many music educators feel unprepared to engage in advocacy. Music educators often seem unable to prepare a compelling advocacy argument when faced with cutbacks or elimination. Similar to the school library field, the music profession does not currently possess the training and tools necessary to advocate effectively. Effective resources are not prevalently available through the national organization. Resources from professional organizations, such as pre-made PowerPoint's, may not be the most effective resources for establishing an advocacy toolkit and enacting an advocacy plan (Elpus, 2007). Instead the field needs to highlight the importance of choosing allies and creating a unified message.

In an effort to improve advocacy in the field, continued research is needed to support why advocacy is needed for programs such as the arts and PE. There is a need to design and implement advocacy training seminars in the field. These should contain an emphasis on how to build alliances and key partnerships in local communities. Having data available to report to administrators and other stakeholders with decision-making power is important to provide evidence of the positive impact of music programs. Elpus (2007) acknowledges the problem may be less with refining the message, than with the fact the music educators themselves are doing the advocating. The profession has not built advocacy to the point others are speaking on behalf of the program. Music teachers

must keep stakeholders, such as parents, in the loop. This will help establish a support system (Elpus, 2007). Music educators must also be involved in establishing resources that will be beneficial in enacting advocacy.

Final concerns lie with those programs being immediately affected by funding and staffing cuts. Block (2010) contends that those in music education need to hang on to their programs, even if some cuts are made to the program during times of financial hardship, so that when economic times improve the program is still available and can be rebuilt. Though music educators must remain proactive throughout the advocacy process, the emphasis needs to be on the program rather than the teacher. This can be difficult when cuts are being made and jobs are less secure.

Through examining advocacy in other curricular areas, school librarians observe strategies that have been implemented in educational settings. These examples help school librarians identify next steps in the advocacy process, such as the realizing the importance of a stakeholder presence in advocacy. Advocacy within other education fields provides a context for advocacy in the school building and among educators. School librarians can draw upon these examples as they build support for their position.

### **Support of Library Supervisors**

School districts operating with active, involved library supervisors have additional support for school library programs above the school level. School library supervisors provide a cohesive vision for the district and serve as an additional advocate for the school libraries. Library supervisors in larger districts can be part of a team working in the district superintendent's office. Bundy's (1970) report analyzing the characteristics of school library supervisors found this group to be somewhat different

from other administrators. School library supervisors are predominantly women. Even in 1970, 80% of the participants surveyed were women. Additionally, most had previous teaching experience and were affiliated with professional organizations (p. 6). These characteristics serve to highlight the demographic differences between school library supervisors and those in other district supervisory roles.

The American Association of School Librarians includes employing a qualified school library supervisor as a component of the published position statement of a successful school library (AASL, 2012b). AASL classifies the responsibilities of a library supervisor to be “those of a leader, teacher, administrator, and communicator”. As such, a supervisor’s involvement with school librarians impacts the program significantly as they function as curriculum consultants, evaluators and administrators—each having different levels of investment and understanding in the importance that the school librarian and school libraries play in the overall importance of impacting student learning.

A library supervisor’s primary responsibility is the direction of the school library programs for a school system. In this capacity supervisors serve as leaders of curriculum innovation and instructional technology relevant to the school library field. Supervisors should be transformational leaders (Coatney, 2010). They may have a significant vision for the school librarians under their supervision and will guide them through professional development. AASL (2012b) suggests that it is the role of the library supervisor to provide a framework for implementing and developing a vision for the district school library program based on the research from the school library field and guidelines established from state and national professional organizations.

The library supervisor serves as instructional leader, modeling best practices for those school librarians in the district. As facilitator of the library program, the school library supervisor collaborates on curriculum, and helps to implement a cohesive program. Beyond providing professional development, the supervisor ensures that student success is the primary focus of the school library program (AASL, 2012b).

The library supervisor of a district is also the program administrator of the district's school library program. The individual in this position evaluates the district program, establishes action plans based on research for best practice, and serves as administrator of the budget. Additionally, the district supervisor is in a position to manage personnel and plan and facilitate professional development for district school librarians (AASL, 2012b; Bundy, 1970). Supervisors participate in the selection of new librarians. They are also involved in the evaluation process of school librarians (Bundy, 1970). Even when this is minimized, this creates a hierarchical structure between school librarians and district supervisors. Supervisors describe their role as recruiting, training, and re-training staff on new library concepts (Bundy, 1970). Program development and service improvement were also mentioned. This establishes their position outside the school library and within the bureaucracy of the district offices.

Supervisors in Bundy's (1970) study also had a large role as liaison between school librarian and school system administrators. They were involved in budgeting and materials collection. In this way they served as advocate for the school library program with other stakeholder groups.

As library supervisor, it is important to be able to effectively articulate the mission and needs of the school library program. It is also important to effectively

articulate a school library's importance. The supervisor, in their unique position, may at times be the only person having the opportunity to speak on behalf of school librarians and the school library. Most school library supervisors report to the assistant superintendent for instruction. Some may report directly to the superintendent. The school library supervisor acts as liaison between all stakeholder groups in the school community and must serve as advocate (AASL, 2012b). It should be noted, however, that school library supervisors are in an advisory role with little authority (Bundy, p 62). There is an understanding, however, that individual librarians are responsible to the principals, with no direct line of authority from the supervisor or coordinator of libraries to the librarian (p 62).

### **Summary**

The lack of empirical research in the area of school library advocacy leaves practicing school librarians without direct guidance or a clear definition of their expectations. This literature review has established a historical context for advocacy in the school library field as well as other areas in education. The study was framed using the theoretical lens of Argyris and Schon's theories of action, implying that most practitioner's and stakeholders espouse one set of beliefs about school library advocacy but hold a different theory-in-use in practice in their school library program. Relying on thought leaders in the field has helped to establish ways practicing school librarians perceive advocacy, as well as enact advocacy in practice. This has been demonstrated using the three tenets described in the conceptual framework of Gary Hartzell, *Building Influence for the School Librarian*, and supported by the need for evidence-based practice.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

As stated in the previous chapters, the intent of this study was to explore practicing school librarian understandings of advocacy and the advocacy activities they implement into their practice. It also explored the relationship between school librarians' espoused practices of advocacy and the advocacy practices in which they engage within their library program. The study also explores the perceived success of strategies used by school librarians engaging in advocacy for their program.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do practicing K-12 school librarians define advocacy?
2. What advocacy activities do practicing K-12 school librarians report?
3. To what extent do practicing school librarians' understandings of advocacy align with their advocacy activities?
4. To what extent are K-12 school librarians' advocacy efforts perceived successful by themselves and by their co-teachers and administrators?

This chapter provides discussion of the research methodology. It begins with a discussion and rationale for the mixed methods design of the study. An overview of the measure used to survey practicing school librarians is described. This is followed by the procedures for data collection and analysis of this measure. Next, the qualitative component of data collection is described. Procedures for sample selection, data collection, and analysis of qualitative data are addressed, including strategies to ensure trustworthiness.

## **Mixed Methods Design**

### *Rationale*

When conducting research in social science, the research method is often determined by the particular questions the researcher seeks to answer (Creswell, 2012). To gain insight into the overall practice of school librarians and then, in turn, attempt to gather additional information about the lived experiences of a smaller sample of practicing school librarians engaging in advocacy within their practice, a mixed method design was selected to investigate the proposed questions. The explanatory sequential mixed model design was appropriate for this study as the researcher first intended to collect quantitative data to provide a broad description of the research problem and then conduct more specific qualitative analysis to refine the understanding of the participants (Creswell, 2012, p. 542).

To aid in selection of methodology, the researcher conducted an extensive literature review to examine current research and ideas of thought leaders in the school library field. Additionally, the researcher identified current advocacy resources available to practicing school librarians through the professional library organizations, American Library Association (ALA) and American Association of School Librarians (AASL). This allowed the researcher to determine thoughts in the field and consider appropriate research methods.

Creswell (2012) defines research as a process of understanding a topic, adding knowledge, and seeking ways to improve practice. Creswell (2012) contends that to gain a broad understanding of the topic using preset questions developed based on the current understanding and practice in the profession, a quantitative measure should be used (p



13). However, Hays and Singh (2012) suggest to gain an understanding in context, a qualitative approach is best applied (p. 4). For these reasons, it was determined that a mixed method approach would be used for this research study. The researcher elected to distribute a survey to obtain quantitative data because of the desire to reach a widespread population in an efficient manner (Dillman et al.2009; Schutt, 2006). Then, from the responses on the survey, a smaller sample of participants was selected via criterion sampling to participate in the qualitative aspect of the study.

### **QUANTITATIVE DESIGN**

Surveys are a process by which numerical data is gathered and then statistically analyzed to identify trends (Creswell, 2012, p 376). Surveys are frequently used to gather exploratory information. Consequently, they are a time efficient method for collecting data from large populations to begin to develop an understanding of the topic being explored (Schutt, 2006). There are multiple benefits to using a survey to collect data. When distributed electronically, there is potential for a large distribution area. Surveys can assist with identifying individual attitudes and beliefs of participants. Additionally, the anonymous nature of a survey allows participants to be more forthcoming in their responses (Dillman et al., 2009).

#### **Questionnaire Survey**

For this study a questionnaire-style survey was employed. The survey instrument used was an adaptation of an instrument created to measure advocacy engagement in the counseling field. This survey was developed by Myers and Sweeney (2004) and was modified for the school library field in 2011 by Ann Ewbank.

An instrument's validity is the degree to which it measures what it is intended to measure (Creswell, 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Meyers and Sweeney developed the instrument based on an analysis of professional literature in the counseling field. The survey was modified for the school library field in 2011 when used for analyzing the practices of school librarians (Ewbank, 2011). During Ewbank's study, the survey was used with a pilot sample prior to use with the study population. Therefore, this instrument was field tested for validity in two settings (Ewbank, 2004; Myers & Sweeney, 2004).

For this study, the researcher modified the survey (See Appendix A) to include additional opportunity for open response and to elicit participant responses of understanding of the AASL definitions of advocacy based on previous research in the area of school library advocacy (Burns, 2014). Because of these modifications, additional measures of ascertaining construct validity were applied. Crocker & Algina's (2008) model to construct and test a valid measure in the social sciences was followed. This model had previously been effectively applied to the development of a self-advocacy questionnaire in the counseling field and therefore was an appropriate approach for this study.

The initial steps of the model included defining the purpose of the measure and item construction. The purpose of the instrument for this study was to determine the participant's knowledge of advocacy. It further hoped to explore the strategies employed by the participants as they engage in advocacy within their practice. To this end questionnaire items identified behaviors that represent the purpose. The study used a modified version of an established survey questionnaire (Myers & Sweeney, 1994;

Ewbank, 2011). Advocacy behaviors were also contextualized by the theoretical framework of the theories-of-action used to enact advocacy by school librarians (Argyris & Schon, 1974) and the conceptual framework of advocacy in the school library field (Hartzell, 2003a). Response selection was either selected response or open response. Demographic questions on the survey instrument were selected response questions. Those questions that solicited information about individual advocacy practices contained more open response choices to better allow for the unique experiences of the school librarians to be captured. The survey was then pilot tested with one school district for content validity, as well as distribution method.

The final steps of Crocker and Algina's (2008) model were then implemented. Instrument reliability is the degree to which an instrument produces the same results each time (Creswell, 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Because the survey instrument was only slightly modified from its original form and has been successfully implemented in other studies (Myers & Sweeney, 2004, Ewbank, 2011), as well as a pilot study for this research, there is internal consistency reliability of the test. Additionally, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (Cronbach, 1951) (See Table 1) was calculated to determine the reliability coefficient of each construct. None of the pilot participants reported unclear language or a necessity to reword any questions. Therefore, the survey was not modified from the pilot version.

Table 1  
*Results of Cronbach alpha Analysis for Pilot Data*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.713	.606	66

## **Pilot Study**

In order to establish validity of the survey measure, as well as to gather initial support for the method of distribution and provide rationale of the proposed study, a pilot study was completed. A criterion sample was selected. Participants in the pilot sample were school librarians employed in one district of the 100 largest school districts, were overseen by a district school library supervisor, and lived close to a city with a large population, in a coastal state - as was a predominant factor of the larger study population. Additionally, pilot participants represent a sample of convenience since the district is located in close proximity to the researcher's university and contact with the district supervisor was easily facilitated. Therefore this sample provided a representative pilot population.

Identical distribution protocol was used when piloting the measure, distributing the survey link through the district school library supervisor and soliciting voluntary responses from all practicing school librarians in the district. The district school library supervisor was contacted for participation as the pilot district for the study. She forwarded the request to her district Director of Curriculum & Instruction and District Director of Research, who then authorized participation. Per the research protocol, the researcher sent an email to the district school library supervisor to be forwarded to each school librarian employed in the district on day one of the study. Participants were informed of the rationale and purpose of the study in the introductory email (See Appendix B). They were also informed that they were acting as a pilot population and should not only complete the survey as participants, but that they would have an opportunity to address question construction at the conclusion of the survey. The email

included a link to the survey. A reminder email (See Appendix C) was sent to the district library supervisor one week later and forwarded to the email distribution list of school librarians to encourage participation of those who had not yet responded.

### *Pilot Findings*

Pilot survey results were analyzed using frequency of selections and content analysis, as well as descriptive statistics. Of the 89 school librarians employed in the county, 46 responded to the survey for a total response rate of nearly 52%. The participants had a mean 20 years experience in education (range = 3-33) and a mean 13 years school library experience (range = 0-33). Of the 42 participants who responded to the question, 34 held a master's degree while 8 had a bachelor's degree; all held valid state certification (See Table 2).

School library advocacy was a familiar topic to the participants. The pilot population felt strongly that advocacy was very important (91.43%) or moderately important (5.71%). This was likely due to the fact that the majority (61.9%) reported involvement in a situation where school library positions or funding were threatened, reduced, or eliminated in the last three years. Those who provided further clarification explained that library assistant positions had been reduced or eliminated, library hours were shortened and budgets for library resource purchases were cut. School librarians in the pilot sample had a diverse understanding of advocacy. This was indicated in their varied definitions of advocacy. The survey asked participants to articulate their own definition of advocacy and then to align their understanding with one of AASL's tiered statements on advocacy, PR and marketing. While 64% aligned their understanding of advocacy with AASL's published definition of advocacy, "the ongoing process of

building partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program” (2007), one third (33.33%) of the participants aligned their understanding with AASL’s definition of marketing. However, analysis of the forty-two respondent’s personal definitions of advocacy revealed only one participant used the word **partnership** in their personal definition of advocacy. The word **support** was used only 7 times and one of those uses carried a negative connotation, “We are not **supported**.” Likewise, **on-going** was only stated once. Advocacy as a **process** was mentioned by only two respondents. Therefore, though the majority of participants may have aligned their understanding to the appropriate definition of advocacy, when asked earlier in the survey to define advocacy, they did not speak to the principles of advocacy stated in the AASL definition.

Table 2  
*Demographic Characteristics of Pilot Population*

Demographic Variable	<i>n</i>	Total (%)
<b>Library Employment</b>		
Elementary Librarian	19	41.30
Middle School Librarian	17	36.96
High School Librarian	10	21.74
<b>Years of Education Experience</b>		
3-5	1	2.17
6-10	7	15.22
11-15	10	21.74
16-20	5	10.87
21-30	16	34.78
30+	7	15.22
<b>Years of Library Experience</b>		
0-2	4	9.52
3-5	6	14.29
6-10	10	23.81
11-15	5	11.90
16-20	9	21.43
21-30	6	14.29
30+	2	4.76
<b>Highest Degree</b>		
Bachelor’s Degree	8	19.05
Master’s Degree	34	80.95

Only one participant aligned her understanding with AASL's definition of Public Relations, "One-way communication of getting the message across: who we are, what we do, when and where and for whom" (2007b), though 5 participants specifically used **communication** as a term to describe advocacy. Further, additional definitions similarly align to the PR definition though they do not specifically use the word communication. Nine participant responses developed around a needs-based assessment similar to the AASL definition of marketing, "a planned and sustained process to assess a customer's needs and then select materials and services to meet those needs: know the customer's needs, who are they? What do they need? When and where can we best deliver it? What are you willing to pay? (\$)" (2007b). These definitions focused on determining specific patron need and aligning library services. One additional definition simply addressed funding.

Additionally, the pilot population's espoused understandings of advocacy often did not align with their advocacy activities. The pilot sample perceived the greatest advocacy need (82.9%) to be publicizing the services school libraries and librarians provide. Often activities of advocacy got lumped into a nondescript category of "promoting library activities". Though activities of advocacy are designed to build partnerships and gain educated support for the library program, even those participants who aligned their beliefs of advocacy with these ideals and rate advocacy as highly important do not engage in most of these activities.

#### *Implications of Pilot Study and Future Directions*

The findings from this pilot study affirmed the need for greater exploration of the topic of advocacy. Preliminary findings from this pilot study demonstrate advocacy is

not readily defined and understood by practitioners. There is disparity between what practicing school librarians understand advocacy to be and how they engage in activities to advocate for their program. This is in part due to lack of a cohesive definition put forth by our profession organization around which advocacy strategies can be built.

Expanding this research to school librarians working in various geographic areas will help identify a more nationally holistic view of advocacy for the field. Additionally, qualitatively exploring the unique experiences of those school librarians perceiving success in understanding and engaging in advocacy for their school library program will help identify strategies to build upon. This will help establish a clearer understanding of advocacy and reposition practitioners to align their practice.

### **Study Sample**

In order to reach a large, national group of school librarians, the researcher selected a purposive sample population. A survey was distributed to individuals employed as school librarians working in the top 100 largest districts (See Appendix E). The researcher used information from the Department of Education's statistical analysis to identify the largest school districts in the US (Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010). From this population, districts were identified for participation based on availability of library supervisors. The researcher used information available on public websites to identify district-level school library supervisors or contacted school systems by phone or email when necessary to obtain the name and contact information of the individual employed in this role. 80 districts were identified as employing a district-level supervisor. Demographic information for these communities is included in Appendix F.



Supervisors in these 80 districts were contacted with a request for participation in the study (See Appendix F). Thirty-two supervisors never responded to the request despite multiple attempts at contact. Ten supervisors responded that they would not be able to support the request of participation, citing their school districts are not supporting outside research at this time. Three supervisors did not forward the emails directly, but directed the researcher to a comprehensive email database of district school librarians. Six districts requested their own internal research review be completed. The researcher completed five of these requests. The one not completed would not have a review board meeting until after data collection was scheduled to end. One district served as the pilot population. Therefore, a total of 36 district supervisors emailed the link to the survey to their school librarian email roster (See Table 3).

Table 3  
*36 School Districts Participating in Quantitative Study*

	School District	State	Number of Students	Number of Schools	# of Reported School Librarians
1	New York City Public Schools	NY	981,690	1,496	303
2	Dade	FL	345,525	496	284
3	Houston Independent School District	TX	200,225	296	101
4	Hillsborough	FL	192,007	285	145
5	Orange	FL	172,257	236	102
6	Dallas Independent School District	TX	157,352	232	238
7	San Diego Unified	CA	132,256	218	13
8	Cobb County	GA	106,747	118	127
9	Cypress Fairbanks Independent School	TX	100,685	78	83

	School District	State	Number of Students	Number of Schools	# of Reported School Librarians
	District				
10	Jefferson County	KY	98,774	174	151
11	Detroit City School District	MI	97,577	197	4
12	Albuquerque Public Schools	NM	95,934	174	143
11	Long Beach Unified	CA	87,509	92	32
14	Austin Independent School District	TX	83,483	120	117
15	Baltimore City Public Schools	MD	82,266	194	108
16	Denver County 1	CO	74,189	143	
17	Prince Wm County Public Schools	VA	73,917	83	79
18	Fort Bend Independent School District	TX	68,708	68	73
19	Davis District	UT	66,614	100	86
20	North East Independent School District	TX	63,452	73	66
21	Volusia	FL	63,018	96	66
22	Alpine District	UT	62,281	71	74
23	Aldine Independent School District	TX	61,526	72	72
	<b>Chesterfield County Public Schools</b>	<b>VA</b>	<b>59,080</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>PILOT</b>
24	Douglas County School District No Re 1	CO	58,723	79	80
25	Garland Independent School District	TX	57,510	74	82
26	Santa Ana Unified	CA	57,439	60	7
27	Boston	MA	55,923	137	27
28	Forsyth County Schools	NC	52,906	78	72

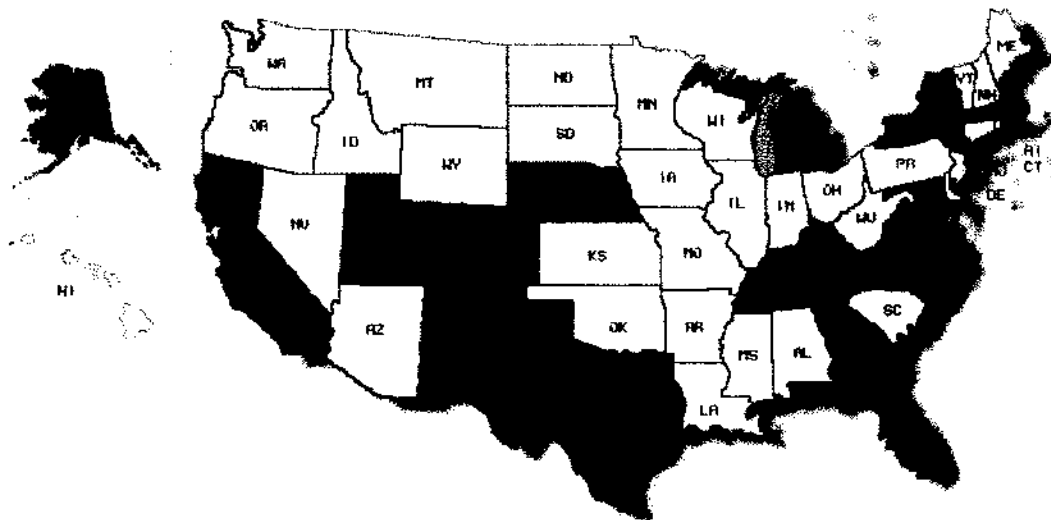
	School District	State	Number of Students	Number of Schools	# of Reported School Librarians
29	Osceola	FL	51,941	60	47
30	Lewisville Independent School District	TX	50,216	64	65
31	Henrico County Public Schools	VA	48,991	69	83
32	Anchorage School District	AK	48,837	97	82
33	Brownsville Independent School District	TX	48,587	55	59
34	Omaha Public Schools	NE	48,014	98	87
35	Conroe Independent School District	TX	47,996	51	46
36	Shelby County School District	TN	47,448	51	71

The link to the survey, available on *SurveyMonkey.com* was distributed to each school librarian in the district through his or her school library supervisor. The population for the study included 815 school librarians in the 36 districts. Practicing school librarians at the elementary, middle and high school level completed the survey. Only school librarians at the school level were included since the goal of the study was to explore the advocacy engagement of school librarians.

The 100 largest school districts comprise less than 1% of all public school districts, but enrolled 22% of the students attending public schools in the United States (Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010). This represents a diverse mix of students. These districts served 35% of the public school students identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, or two or more races (Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010). These school districts had a disproportionately high number of free and reduced-priced lunch eligibility students, with 56% of students eligible compared to the national

average of 45% (Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010). While this sample population may represent some underfunded, large urban areas, suburban populations are also represented.

The districts participating in the study ranged in size. The largest district, NY City Public Schools, served close to one million students while the smallest in the study, Shelby County School District in Memphis, had a population that averaged closer to 50,000 at the time data were collected (Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010). Several states were represented by more than one district on the list. While respondents to the survey were geographically spread throughout the US (See figure 3), there were several instances where multiple districts from the same state were represented. A total of 17 states were represented in the study.



*Figure 3.* A map of the United States displaying the geographic location of the study sample.

### *Data Collection*

The online survey was developed for the study with a link available via *SurveyMonkey.com*. Though there may be bias to those with Internet access (Creswell, 2012), it is assumed that school librarians would have at least minimal access to computers or a device (such as a smartphone or tablet) with internet access in their work environment. The survey instrument allowed for both selected response and open-ended response. Additionally, there were several questions seeking demographic data for the participants such as school setting and years in the profession. Selected response items were formatted to require participants to select responses on a scale. The open-ended response format allowed participants to create responses that best describe their individual experiences (Neuman, 2000).

The link to the survey was distributed to the library supervisors with a letter requesting distribution to all school librarians in their district (See Appendix G). Surveys were posted on Day One. A reminder post was sent one week later. Surveys were closed after 17 days.

<b>Week One (Day 1)</b>	<b>Week Two (Day 7)</b>	<b>Week Three (Day 17)</b>
Link for survey available to School Librarians	Reminder email sent	Last day for participation

*Figure 4.* Project time line for survey distribution.

The unit of analysis for the quantitative portion of this study is the response of individual school librarians on each question addressing advocacy on the survey

instrument. Survey responses were entered into statistical software, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and descriptive analysis (mean, mode, and standard deviation) was run on the data. The data were analyzed for frequency of selection in selected-response questions. Additionally, parametric correlational statistics were run on those questions in which respondents self-rated themselves as successful in advocacy and scored high in advocacy engagement. Demographic variables were correlated to perceived success in advocacy activities using Multiple Regression correlation. Respondent demographics were analyzed as predictors of advocacy, as well as success of advocacy efforts.

Finally, open-response items were categorized descriptively and coded for intent. This content analysis was conducted as a means to systematically identify and code relationships within the text (Schutt, 2006). These open-response questions provide rich information, especially on the topic of advocacy as the field has little agreement on predetermined answers and the researcher did not want to limit responses to a finite set (Dillman et al., 2009; Schutt, 2006). Though response to open-response questions is somewhat lower than selected-choice, Dillman et al. (2009) does suggest that participants using an online survey are more likely to respond to this type of question. As this is the mode of delivery of the survey in this study, the researcher chose to include these types of questions.

## **PHENOMENOLOGICAL QUALITATIVE DESIGN**

Through the phenomenology tradition, the researcher attempted to understand the essence of the participant's experiences with advocacy in the school setting.

Ontologically, there is no correct way to advocate for a school library program, or to

advocate for the school library profession, so each participant brought a unique perception of what it means to be a school library advocate. Additionally, as advocacy is directed toward other stakeholders, it was useful to understand other stakeholder perceptions of school library advocacy. The use of personal interviews in qualitative research establishes the participant voice (Hays & Singh, 2012)

### **Sample**

This study analyzed engagement in advocacy activities and successful strategies of advocacy. Purposeful criterion sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to select participants for the interviews in this study. Participants were identified for participation in the interview process based on their responses to the survey questions as discussed below.

The researcher reviewed the responses of the 80 survey participants who agreed to being interviewed and provided contact information. From this sample, a criterion-based pool of 28 participants was created based on their self-report that they engaged in a higher threshold of advocacy activity and they were successful in their advocacy efforts. The researcher used the following criteria to identify these participants:

- Practitioners aligned their belief with the AASL definition of advocacy
- Practitioners identified with 3 selected response advocacy activities
- Practitioners rate their efforts on activities of advocacy moderately or highly successful
- Practitioners self-identified activities of advocacy in which they engage
- Practitioners rate their stakeholders as advocates for their program

The 28 possible participants were contacted via email using information provided on their online survey to arrange for personal interviews, as well as to establish availability of a

co-teacher and administrator. A co-teacher and school administrator were to be interviewed after each participant to gain further understanding of the situational and environmental experiences of the participant. Eight confirmed trios immediately responded and the researcher randomly selected six. Therefore, interviews were conducted with 18 participants representing 6 sites. After identifying and establishing initial contact with the participants, informed consent documents were emailed to all participants and requests for interviews with the administrator and a co-teacher were emailed. All information was emailed with directions on how to proceed with participation in the study (See Appendices H, I, and J).

In an effort to maintain confidentiality but allow for a general description of each school site, the researcher has assigned each school librarian a pseudonym and each school has been given a fictional name. Individual sites are described here to provide demographic information based on participant responses. Minimal demographic information is provided for the two stakeholder participants, as the school librarian was the primary participant at each site.

Table 4  
*Demographic Characteristics of Site Participants*

Site	Participant	Years in School Library	School Level	Co- Participant #1	Co-Participant #2
1	Rose	23 years	High School 9-12	English Teacher	School Principal
2	Kelly	5 years	Elementary PK-5	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher	School Principal
3	Sharon	7 years	Elementary PK-5	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher	School Principal
4	Lori	4 years	High School	English Teacher	Assistant Principal
5	Joy	7 years	Combined PK-8	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Spanish Immersion Teacher	Teacher Leader
6	Linda	17 years	Middle School 6-8	English/Social Studies Teacher	School Principal



*Site #1 "Mako High School"* Rose has been the school librarian at Mako High School for 12 years. She was previously an English teacher and taught at the middle and high school level, as well as working as an adjunct professor teaching English. She has been a school librarian at both the middle and high school level. She has a Master's degree in Educational Media. Mako High School is a large suburban school in the southeast that educates over 3,000 students. There are 2 full-time school librarians and two full-time library clerks. In addition to the print collection, the school library has 45 computers and 3 computer labs are located off the library. A student cafe run with a grant co-authored with the business department operates out of the library. The school library has been the recipient of the state school library award. A 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher and the school principal were each interviewed for this study.

*Site #2 "Thresher Elementary"* Thresher Elementary school is a brand new school in the mid-Atlantic region. Kelly, the school librarian, has been an elementary school librarian for 5 years. She was a previous elementary and middle school classroom teacher, as well as an administrator. She has a Master's degree in Education in School Librarianship. Kelly had the opportunity to work as the planning librarian prior to the opening of the school and has been influential in designing and developing the school library program. The school refers to the library as the "Library Learning Commons" and has adopted the learning commons model. The library is integral in much of the curriculum and the vision of the school and in creating a "culture of learners." Because of this philosophy, the library space is very flexible and interactive. Kelly and her assistant operate her library on a fix/flex schedule; thoughtfully scaffolding her program to accommodate the learning needs of the students. The library includes resources to develop multiple

literacies and elements of “makerspace” functions giving it a playschool feel. The school principal and a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher at his first teaching assignment participated in an interview for the site.

*Site #3 “Blue Elementary”* Blue Elementary is an urban elementary school located in the south. Rose has been the school librarian at Blue Elementary for 7 years. Prior to this placement she taught 12 years in a middle school and 7 years as a high school teacher. Rose has a Master’s degree in Library Science, as well as her teaching certification. She is the only librarian in her school and she does not have an assistant. Her PreK-5<sup>th</sup> grade library operates on a fixed, biweekly schedule where she sees Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade week one, then 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade week two. The remainder of the time she collaborates with teachers on units and projects to support the curriculum. Additionally, Rose actively runs multiple reading incentive programs and promotions throughout the year. The school principal and a fifth grade teacher also participated in interviews at the site.

*Site #4 “Great White High School”* Lori has been the school librarian at Great White High School for 4 years. Great White is located in a large suburban district of a mid-Atlantic state. Lori had no previous classroom experience. She worked as a library assistant in the county for the 3 years prior to becoming a school librarian while completing a Master’s degree in Library Information Science and attaining the education credentials to be a school librarian. Lori is one of two school librarians staffed at the school in addition to one library assistant. She has spent her time at the school transforming the “struggling” library program she inherited. Her efforts focus on the library space, as well as the program. Lori’s efforts with collection development, facility

updates and collaboration with teachers have been her top priority. An English teacher and Assistant Principal participated in interviews as stakeholders to represent the school community.

*Site #5 "Bull Combined School"* Joy is the school librarian at a Combined PreK-8 school in an urban district in the Northeast. The school is a dual language immersion school, offering instruction to students in both English and Spanish. Joy has been the school librarian at Bull for 7 years. A previous academic librarian, Joy had an MLS then added the state school library endorsement after being hired provisionally in this position. Joy works a four-day workweek in a shared library space that is scheduled for renovation this school year. She currently has a flexible schedule, though her shared space requires her to justify her schedule on a yearly basis. Joy and the library program are viewed as innovators in technology use in the school, especially with the introduction of the new technology demands brought forth by the Common Core and the assessments that support these standards. A bilingual fourth grade teacher and Teacher Leader participated in an interview for the study.

*Site#6 "Tiger Middle School"* Linda is the school librarian at Tiger Middle School, located in a large suburban city in the southeast. Linda returned to the school library after taking some time off and earning a Master's degree in Education with a school library endorsement. She had previous classroom experience as a high school English teacher. She has been a school librarian for 17 years, starting at the high school level, then transitioning to the middle school when realizing that students were coming to high school lacking the required inquiry skills. She has been at Tiger for 11 years and has one full time assistant who is a retired school librarian certified in another state. Tiger Middle

School library has a large print collection, as well as a full computer lab. Linda, as well as her co-teacher and administrator, consider her primary job to be a teacher and primarily defines her program on this teaching role. She is known in her district as a mentor on collaboration and has authored a book chapter on collaboration in library literature. An English/Social Studies teacher and the school principal each were interviewed at this site.

## **Data Collection**

### *Semi-Structured Personal Interviews*

A single, semi-structured interview with each school library participant was used to gain further insight into the advocacy practice of school librarians self-identifying as engaging in high levels of advocacy. An interview protocol was developed and all interviews followed a semi-structured format (See Appendix K). The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the school librarians and were conducted using video teleconferencing technology (Skype, AdobeConnect). Interviews with school librarians were approximately 1 hour in length and were recorded.

Researchers (Good, 1966; Patton, 2002) have established the benefits to recording interview sessions. Recording helps to mitigate researcher bias (Good, 1966). Patton (2002) also contends that it allows the researcher to better focus on the interview, to ask better probing questions, and to be more visually responsive, instead of devoting his attention to note taking. Because of the long-standing support in the education field for interview recording, the researcher felt it was appropriate for use in this study as well.

Immediately following each interview, or as soon thereafter as possible, the primary researcher completed a summary sheet for each participant to further record any

thoughts or impressions from the interview. Each interview was transcribed verbatim from the recording. As further interviews occurred the researcher continued to document thoughts and record memos. Since qualitative research is recursive and data collection occurs simultaneously with data analysis (Hays & Singh, 2012, p 294) these memos became additional sources of data.

Following the interview with each school librarian, one additional interview was scheduled with a teacher and an administrator from each participant's school. These semi-structured interviews were scheduled after the interview with the school librarian at the convenience of the interviewee. An interview protocol was developed from the survey findings to guide these interviews (See appendix L, M). The interviews were conducted via telephone or using video teleconferencing technology (Skype, AdobeConnect) and were recorded. Stakeholder interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. Immediately following each interview, the researcher completed a summary sheet to further note any thoughts or impressions from the interview. Each interview was then transcribed verbatim from the recording.

Data profiles of each school librarian participant, therefore, consisted of the completed online survey, memoing completed by the researcher, a transcript of the recorded interview, and accompanying transcripts of a teaching colleague and administrator from the school setting in which the school librarian works.

Topics discussed during the interviews were related to the research questions for the study. School library participants discussed the following topics:

1. Advocacy for their school library program
2. Perceptions of success of advocacy efforts

### 3. Beneficial advocacy strategies

Stakeholders (co-teachers and administrators) discussed the following topics:

1. Perception of success of their school librarian's advocacy efforts
2. Beneficial advocacy strategies of their school librarian
3. Degree to which school library program is seen as essential to the school community

### **Analysis/Coding**

The primary researcher conducted, recorded, and transcribed each participant interview. Each interview was transcribed verbatim within one week of occurrence. At the onset of data analysis, the researcher began by bracketing her assumptions and views on advocacy. This was an important first step to mitigate researcher bias and allow the voices of the participants to guide the findings.

Horizontalization, as developed by Moustakas (1994) for phenomenological research analysis methodology, was used as a means to accurately represent the phenomenon for these participants to analyze the transcribed data. To begin the horizontalization analysis, transcribed interviews were coded. This involved analyzing the data for information from the participants for any experiences relating to the research questions. Each expression relevant to advocacy was coded on the transcript, using transcript lines as units of analysis. The process of horizontalization regarded each expression equally, with no one code, experience, or expression having more or less weight than any other.

Assigned expressions or codes were then analyzed for reduction or elimination. Expressions that were overlapping, repetitive, and vague in describing the experiences

were eliminated or presented in more exact terms. Horizons that remained were those possible to label and characterized as experiences of advocacy. These were then grouped into themes that emerged from the conversations.

An initial codebook was developed based on the horizontalization process. Codes were identified from the written transcripts and were clustered to identify units that describe the textures of the advocacy experiences of the participants. These textural descriptions were supported through direct quotations from the participant transcripts and were identified as thematic codes. The researcher also used memoing to document any reflections as data were collected and analyzed. A partial-ordered Meta matrix was constructed to display the data to visually represent the essence of the participant's experience as horizontalization was conducted and data were analyzed.

Textural descriptions were recorded and simultaneously reviewed until patterns were established. Finally, a structural description of the themes was presented to fully represent the engagement of advocacy experience for the group of participants as it relates to their practice. Once themes were identified, a narrative was created to represent the findings of the study. This narrative provides a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the meanings of the experiences of the participants, including the group as a whole. To fully capture the essence of these experiences, the researcher included quotations from the participants.

### **Strategies for Trustworthiness**

To establish trustworthiness, several strategies were employed throughout the study. Since the purpose of phenomenological studies is to examine the lived experiences of the participants, it was imperative for the researcher to bracket her beliefs

throughout the stages of data collection and analysis. The primary researcher for this study is a practicing school librarian with a master's degree in education and a teaching endorsement in school library media. She is also an emerging teacher educator of school librarians working toward a doctoral degree in education. The researcher has co-taught one master's level course for a local university with a prominent leader in the field of school librarianship. In this course, the topic of advocacy and development of an advocacy agenda is taught according to NCATE established guidelines. She also serves on two national level library advocacy committees, the duties of which are in part to identify resources for school librarians. The researcher believes that a strong school library program influences the success of students and has adopted an advocacy philosophy that closely aligns with beliefs and tenets of the American Association of School Librarians. Each of these beliefs could contribute to researcher bias, so measures of trustworthiness were established.

Confirmability and authenticity were established through a process of member checking. The semi-structured interview format allowed both the researcher and participant to clarify statements during the interview. All participants were provided a copy of their transcript and were able to make clarifications and elaborations. This ensured the participant voice was accurate and the lived experience of the participants was authentically represented in the study.

Participant voice was also present in the use of thick description. The researcher provided detailed description in data collection reports. This use of thick description throughout the findings and in all reports of the data established the criteria of transferability. Direct quotations were included in the findings whenever possible.



Additionally, a research team was used in the study. The research team was comprised of one doctoral student and one educational researcher. Both team members had experience and knowledge in conducting qualitative data analysis. Both had a background in K-12 education.

Team members served as peer debriefers throughout the study. In this role, the research team commented on the researcher interpretations of the data to help mitigate researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Team members participated in creation of the interview protocol. The research team also participated in data analysis.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) acknowledge a researcher can make assumptions or judgments about data based on subjective criteria when coding data. To minimize this risk and increase reliability and credibility of data analysis, two coders participated in consensus coding the data. Using 20% of the dataset, the research team members independently coded the data from the interview transcripts. These codes were then compared with the codes of the primary researcher to determine the inter-rater reliability. Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula for determining interrater reliability was used. This formula states that reliability is determined by calculating the number of agreements of raters divided by the total number of agreements plus disagreements. Miles and Huberman's established acceptable cutoff of .70 was used for this study. The researcher and research team found 90 % agreement in the coding of the data, making the analysis reliable.

### **Summary**

This chapter detailed the methodology used to conduct this study. A mixed methods design was used which combined a quantitative survey analyzed using

descriptive and correlational statistics and a qualitative analysis conducted in the phenomenology tradition. The following chapter will discuss the results of this data analysis and the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

This study attempted to identify practicing school librarians' beliefs and practices of advocacy. Using AASL's definition of advocacy (2007b) and Hartzell's (2003a) tenets of building influence for the school library to structure the discussion, the researcher examined how closely aligned the participants' espoused understandings of advocacy were with their activities in practice. This is based on Argyris and Schon's (1974) *Theories in Practice* model. Perceptions of successful advocacy were also examined. This chapter reviews the sources of data and presents the results of data analysis, organized by research question. A summary of the findings concludes the chapter.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do practicing K-12 school librarians define advocacy?
2. What advocacy activities do practicing K-12 school librarians report?
3. To what extent do practicing school librarians' understandings of advocacy align with their advocacy activities?
4. To what extent are K-12 school librarians' advocacy efforts perceived successful by themselves and by their co-teachers and administrators

The researcher used quantitative statistical and content analysis of the national questionnaire, as well as qualitative interviews, to explore the research questions. The survey contained questions in 8 categories: (1) demographic information of respondents, (2) advocacy knowledge and understanding, (3) activities of advocacy and participation in advocacy (4) advocacy resources, (5) perception of advocacy training, (6) perception

of obstacles to advocacy, (7) perception of success of advocacy, (8) perception of the importance of advocacy. All responses were analyzed and questions in the demographic category, advocacy knowledge and understanding, activities of advocacy, and the perception of importance of advocacy were explored in detail to address the first and second research questions. From written survey responses and analysis of the qualitative interview data, the researcher analyzed the third research question. Finally, the fourth research question was examined using quantitative data from survey questions in the category addressing the perception of success of advocacy, as well as data gathered through participant interviews. For the purposes of this analysis, the researcher will use the term *respondent* to identify those study participants who completed the survey and the term *participant* for those with whom an interview was conducted.

### **Descriptive Analysis**

A total of 815 respondents replied to the distributed survey. Based on the distribution numbers reported by the district library supervisors (N= 3374) this was a completion rate of approximately 24%. Though this response rate is somewhat lower than Dillman's (2009) suggested minimum for surveys delivered online, statistical bias is mitigated through adequate sample size and the demographics of the sample population closely matching the demographics of the US school librarian population. Upon closing the survey, an export report was created and all survey responses were entered into SPSS. Variable labels were modified from question number to a name reflective of the question. Additionally, the researcher identified those questions in which respondents could select multiple responses. For these questions (question #12, #15, #16, and #18) the researcher

created separate value labels and divided the responses into separate, dichotomous variables for analysis.

Frequency of selection was used to analyze the demographic composition of the respondents. Over half of the respondents were employed as elementary school librarians (50.43%,  $N=411$ ). Middle school and high school were almost equally represented. 19.8% were middle school librarians ( $N=161$ ), while 20.9 ( $N=170$ ) were high school librarians. 6.9% of respondents worked in a combined grade/age school ( $N=56$ ). 2.1% of the respondents were not employed as school-level librarians ( $N=17$ ). Based on optional clarifying written responses, these represent the responses of the district supervisors who completed the survey or teachers assigned library duties in the school. The survey was designed so that respondents who were not school librarians would exit the survey after this identifying question, therefore their data were not used for analysis.

Most respondents had between 10-30 years of experience in education (61.4%). Respondents often had spent time in other educational settings prior to their placement in the school library setting. 221 respondents had 6-10 years experience in the school library and 254 respondents had 11-20 years library experience. Of the 783 respondents who responded to the question, 93% ( $N=728$ ) held a credential or certification as defined by their state. Additionally, 82.8% ( $N=649$ ) held a graduate degree as their highest degree of completion. Table 5 shows the demographic characteristic of the sample.

Table 5  
*Demographic Composition of Study Respondents*

Demographic Variable	n	Total (%)
Library Employment		
Elementary Librarian	411	50.43
Middle School Librarian	161	19.75

High School Librarian	170	20.86
Combined School Librarian	56	6.87
Other Position	17	2.09
<b>Years of Education Experience</b>		
0-2	23	2.91
3-5	49	6.20
6-10	118	14.94
11-15	153	19.37
16-20	152	19.24
21-30	195	24.68
30+	100	12.66
<b>Years of Library Experience</b>		
0-2	102	12.98
3-5	124	15.78
6-10	221	28.12
11-15	164	20.87
16-20	90	11.45
21-30	61	7.76
30+	24	3.05
<b>Highest Degree</b>		
Less than 4 year degree	18	2.30
Bachelor's Degree	100	12.76
Master's Degree	649	82.78
Doctorate Degree	17	2.17
<b>Credentialed</b>		
Yes	728	92.98
No	53	6.77
<b>Involved in Library Defunding/Destaffing</b>		
Yes	489	62.77
No	271	34.79

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To provide context to the respondent's employment situation and investigate their similarity to the national trend, the survey asked respondents if they had been involved in a situation where school library positions or funding has been threatened, reduced or eliminated. Over half the respondents, or 63% (N=489) stated they had been in such a

situation in the last three years. Additionally, 218 respondents provided written comments describing a decrease in staffing of district supervisors, certified school librarians, school library assistants and library budgets used to support library programs.

### **School Librarian Understanding of Advocacy**

The first research question explored practicing school librarian's knowledge and understanding of school library advocacy, specifically as it is defined by AASL, the national professional association. Question # 8 on the distributed survey asked respondents to provide their personal definition of advocacy. This was followed by a question requesting respondents align their definition with one of the three statements provided in AASL's Advocacy literature- the AASL definition of advocacy, public relations, and marketing.

The researcher first analyzed the frequency of responses to Question #9, respondent alignment of understanding with the AASL definitions (See Table 6). Respondents most frequently (68.6%, N=459) aligned their understanding of advocacy for their school library program to the AASL definition of Advocacy "the on-going process of building partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program" (AASL, 2007b). 27% of respondents (N=181) aligned their understanding with the definition of marketing, "A planned and sustained process to assess a customer's need and then select materials and services to meet those needs: know the customer's needs, who they are? What do they need? When and where can we best deliver it? What are you willing to pay?(\$)" (AASL, 2007b). Therefore, though AASL has an established definition of advocacy, 1/3 of practicing school librarians do not immediately identify this definition.

Table 6  
*Respondent Alignment of Understanding to AASL Definitions*

Definition	n	Total (%)
Definition of Advocacy	459	68.61
Definition of Public Relations	29	4.33
Definition of Marketing	181	27.06

Next, a content analysis was conducted on open-response definitions provided in response to survey Question #8. While the greatest percentage of respondents aligned their understanding with the AASL definition of advocacy, the content analysis of respondent responses does not show an identical correlation of understanding. The researcher analyzed the responses of those respondents who stated they aligned their understanding with the AASL definition of advocacy (N=415). A search of the terms in the AASL definition found that only 4 respondents used the term *partnership* and an additional 7 respondents used the term *relationship*. Additionally, only 69 respondents used the term *support* (by a group) or *supporters*.

Other terms respondents used more closely align with the public relations definition, “One-way communication of getting the message across: who we are, what we do, when and where, and for whom” (AASL, 2007). 18 respondents used the term *communicate/communication*. *Promote/promotion* was used by 90 respondents who align their understanding with the AASL definition of advocacy. Furthermore, 79 respondents who stated they align their understanding to align with the definition of advocacy use the term *needs* commonly referenced when assessing and meeting a customer’s needs through marketing. Additional terms aligned with this definition include *assist* (N= 10) and *support* (of a program/group) (N= 22). Therefore, though



respondents stated they align their understanding with the AASL definition, when crafting an open response the content of their statements were more synonymous with those definitions of public relations and marketing (See table 7). Respondent's definitions of advocacy were contradictory to the language used by AASL. This demonstrated a misalignment in their understanding of advocacy.

Table 7  
*Content Analysis of Respondent Definitions*

Searched Term	Number of Occurrences	Total (%)
Terms aligning with AASL Advocacy Definition		
Partnership	4	.96
Relationship	7	1.69
Support/Supporters (by a group)	69	16.62
Terms aligning with AASL Public Relations Definition		
Communicate/Communication	18	4.34
Promote/Promotion	90	21.69
Terms aligning with AASL Marketing Definition		
Needs	79	19.04
Assist	10	2.41
Support (of a program/group)	22	5.30
Total respondent responses analyzed	415	100

### **Activities of Advocacy**

Next, to address the second research question, the researcher analyzed the reported advocacy activities of the participating school librarians. Using frequency of selection, respondent responses from Question #12 were analyzed to explore the advocacy activities they report engaging in within the last three years (See Table 8). Activities listed in Question #12 all aligned with the AASL definition of *advocacy*, in that they all represented an activity with the intent to build stakeholder relationships that could lead to future support. Of the 594 respondents, 391 (65.82%) reported organizing a

meeting with their administration to discuss the library program. 294 (49.49%) read or distributed literature on school library advocacy. 290, or nearly half of the respondents, (48.82%) reported elevating their advocacy efforts beyond school level to provide comments to decision makers through phone calls, faxes, email, or letters. Additionally, another 39.39% (N= 234) encouraged others to write or speak to decision makers about library issues. Some worked to build relationships with local stakeholders by speaking at a school board or PTA meeting (28.79%) or sponsoring an event for parents and/or community members (22.39%) to gain support for the library. These findings demonstrate that while respondents may have some awareness of the types of activities that constitute school library advocacy, they are not participating in them in great numbers. Additionally, even those who are participating are failing to reach out to multiple stakeholder groups within their immediate school community such as parent and school board groups and community members. A positive advocacy activity enacted by 39.39% of respondents (N=234) was the encouragement of others to write or speak to decision makers about library issues. This act of advocacy not only builds relationships among stakeholders but also encourages educated action of others to speak out on behalf of school library programs, which is a primary goal of advocacy.

Table 8  
*Respondent Responses of Advocacy Activity*

Advocacy Activity	n	Total (%)
Organized meeting with administrator to discuss library program	391	65.82
Read/distributed literature or information on school library advocacy	294	49.49
Provided comments to decision makers through phone calls, faxes, emails, or letters	290	48.82
Committee/volunteer work in a library association or other group	254	42.76

Encouraged others to write/speak to decision makers about library issues	234	39.39
Conducted professional development for staff on library advocacy	177	29.80
Spoke at a School Board/PTA meeting	171	28.79
Sponsored an advocacy event for parents and/or community members to gain support for the library	133	22.39
Attended library legislative days/participated in a demonstration/other organized event to influence decision makers	94	15.82
Established an advocacy committee for school library	45	7.58
Not been involved in advocacy activities in last 3 years	43	7.24

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### **Alignment of Advocacy Understanding with Practice**

The theoretical lens for the research analysis aligning advocacy understanding and advocacy practice is based on Argyris & Schon's (1974) *Theory in Practice*. This guided the third research question that explored the relationship between advocacy understanding and practice. To address this research question, the researcher analyzed data from the survey, as well as qualitative interviews conducted with practicing school librarians at six independent sites.

First, a content analysis was conducted for survey Question #10. Respondents were asked to describe the school library advocacy activities they associate with their understanding of advocacy based on the AASL statements of *advocacy*, *public relations* or *marketing*. Responses were first sorted based on respondents' stated alignment of their understanding of advocacy to one of the three statements put forth by AASL. Each response was then coded based on intent of the activity described and results were

categorized descriptively. The intent of each activity was analyzed for alignment with one of the three statements- *advocacy*, *marketing* or *public relations*.

A content analysis of the responses of the respondents aligning their understanding with marketing most often supported activities that aligned with the definition of marketing (75%, N= 161). Responses often referred to addressing the resource needs of patrons and teachers. A typical response demonstrating this type of activity was, "I work to understand the curriculum and the students in my school. From that I determine the needs for services, materials, and support that I can provide." (Anonymous survey respondent, 2014). Table 9 displays the extent to which respondent responses correlate to their stated alignment.

This content analysis demonstrated a high correlation between those school librarians who understood *advocacy* to align with the AASL definition of *marketing* and activities typically associated with marketing of a program. Respondents aligned their understanding with the definition of *marketing* and the advocacy activities they described as supporting these efforts were largely consistent with this understanding. A small number of respondents aligned their understanding with *marketing*, but then described activities of *advocacy* (9.32%) or *public relations* (4.35%). Some respondents listed activities that could not be categorized as aligning with any of the three AASL statements. These were categorized as *Other* (9.32%). This correlation demonstrated an alignment between the espoused understandings of advocacy and the theories in use of the respondents.

Table 9  
*Analysis of Respondent Advocacy Activities Aligned to Marketing Statement*

Type of Advocacy Activity	n	Total (%)
Marketing Activities	124	77.02
Public Relations Activities	7	4.35
Advocacy Activities	15	9.32
Other	15	9.32
Total	161	

Respondents who aligned their advocacy understanding with *public relations* identified activities consistent with the definition of *public relations* 73 % of the time (n=19). These responses frequently discussed types of program promotion or the creation or production of promotional materials for the school library program such as newsletters, brochures, and emails. Responses focused on promoting the library without the intent of creating an educated group of supporters, “I try to encourage teachers and students to use the library service more.” (Anonymous survey respondent, 2014). Table 10 displays the extent to which respondent responses correlate to their stated alignment.

This content analysis demonstrated a high correlation between those school librarians who understood *advocacy* to align with the AASL definition of *public relations* and activities typically associated with promoting a program. Respondents aligned their understanding with the definition of *public relations* and the advocacy activities they described as supporting these efforts were largely consistent with this understanding. A small number of respondents aligned their understanding with *public relations*, but then described activities of advocacy (15.79%). No respondents aligning their definition with *public relations* described activities of marketing. Some respondents listed activities that could not be categorized as aligning with any of the three AASL statements. These were

categorized as *Other* (15.38%). This correlation further demonstrated an alignment between the espoused understandings of advocacy and the theories in use of the respondents.

Table 10

*Analysis of Respondent Advocacy Activities Aligned to Statement of Public Relations*

Type of Advocacy Activity	n	Total (%)
Public Relations Activities	19	73.01
Advocacy Activities	3	15.79
Other	4	15.38
Total	26	

In analyzing this question, the majority of survey respondents aligned their understanding of school library advocacy to the AASL definition of *advocacy* (N=415). The content analysis found that most respondents also aligned their activities of advocacy with the stated AASL definition of *advocacy*. Analysis showed that 312 (75.18%) of the respondents who answered in this category mentioned forming a relationship with a least one other stakeholder group as an activity of advocacy (See table 11).

This content analysis demonstrated a high correlation between those school librarians who aligned with the AASL definition of *advocacy* and activities typically associated with advocating for a program. Respondents identified activities that referenced building partnerships and relationships with stakeholder groups as well as activities to build support for the school library program. A small number of

respondents aligned their understanding with *advocacy*, but then described activities of *public relations* (8.67%) or *marketing* (8.67). Some respondents listed activities that could not be categorized as aligning with any of the three AASL statements. These were categorized as *Other* (7.47%). This correlation further demonstrated an alignment between the espoused understandings of advocacy and the theories in use of the respondents.

It should be noted, however, that of those 312 responses in which respondent understanding and activities aligned, 93 responses spoke specifically to teacher collaboration and an additional 79 independently mentioned teacher or classroom support. Therefore, while the responses suggest building partnerships among stakeholders groups, these partnerships most frequently were fostered among teaching peers. While the respondent theories-in-use aligned with their espoused theories, they were limited in scope when enacted in practice.

Table 11  
*Analysis of Respondent Advocacy Activities Aligned to Advocacy Statement*

Type of Advocacy Activity	n	Total (%)
Advocacy Activities	312	75.18
Marketing Activities	36	8.67
Public Relations Activities	36	8.67
Other	31	7.47
Total	415	

### **Advocacy Activities in Context**

Additionally, a qualitative analysis of examined advocacy practices and the

engagement of six practicing school librarians working in a variety of school settings and levels was conducted. The school librarians participating in individual interviews were selected based on criteria identifying them as having a mature understanding of school library advocacy. Each aligned their understanding of advocacy with the AASL definition and identified a minimum of three advocacy activities in which they engage and rate successful. Additionally, they were able to provide additional advocacy activities in their practice. Finally, they identify their stakeholders as advocates for their programs. Their survey responses identified them as espousing a deep understanding of advocacy, as well as a high level of engagement in advocacy activities.

In an effort to determine the alignment of their espoused advocacy activities and their advocacy in use, the researcher interviewed the participating school librarians at each site about their advocacy activities. During the interviews they were asked about their understandings of advocacy and their advocacy practices. The experiences of each of these and the characteristics of their individual settings influenced their individual perception of advocacy. The lived experiences of the participants contributed to the identification of multiple textural themes, which exemplify how advocacy is viewed uniquely at each site. However, common structural themes were identified from the data. The findings of how their understandings of advocacy aligned with their activities of advocacy in practice are reported addressing four themes from the data: Revitalize the position of the school librarian, Emphasize the teaching role of the school librarian, Innovation of the school librarian, Relevance of the school library program to today's learner.



### *Revitalize the Position of the School Librarian*

Participants at each site felt a need to change the perception of the position of the school librarian among their stakeholders as one of their primary objectives in advocacy. This was easier for some than others. Kelly works in a new school designed around the new vision of a library learning commons. She was able to introduce “maker” elements and a flexible, adaptable concept of the school library from the day the school opened to both school and community stakeholders. While she admits she had an advantage starting with a new community of educators, the school itself is comprised of staff from “different schools and different backgrounds and so there’s a lot of training and thinking that needs to go into how they view the library learning commons and how they see that as part of the school culture.”

Sharon, conversely, works independently on a fixed schedule and maintains the need to be ever engaged in actively supporting students and demonstrating how the school library is an integral part of the school. To facilitate this perception she maintains an active, teaching library schedule, “I have to do library work too, but you know, I’m on the computer, I’m doing inventory, but if I’m, you know, doing anything other than teaching than it looks like I’m really not doing, you know, what I should be doing.”

Redefining the perception of the school library to stakeholders outside the school building was also essential to the participants. The school librarians engaged in activities that build partnerships with community members and decision makers in an effort to demonstrate how the school library program and the position of the school librarian have evolved in recent years. In addition to activities that simply promote the

school library such as newsletters, the participants engaged stakeholder groups in the activities of the library. Rose, Kelly, Lori, and Joy all offer extended hours and flexible access in their library with the intent of bringing in not only students, but other stakeholder groups as well.

Volunteering for leadership duties within the school and the district has also been an effective advocacy strategy for several of the participants. Both Kelly and Linda state that as the school librarian they have been assigned permanent seats on the school improvement leadership team at their schools. Not only do they feel this demonstrated to stakeholders within the school that the librarian is an important, central figure to the school team, it provided yet another platform for getting the library message out to multiple groups of stakeholders.

Leading professional development sessions within the county or at district or state events was another way these librarians have demonstrated their leadership abilities. Lori detailed how she recently volunteered to chair the advocacy committee for her district-wide librarian community. Linda shared her experiences leading professional development on new technologies and teacher/librarian collaboration for not only school librarians, but classroom teachers as well. By sharing knowledge with not only other school librarians, but other educators, opportunities to influence the perception of the school library were available and positive relationships were created with other stakeholders.

Additionally, these types of professional development have led to administrator support and the mentor role Linda has been invited to assume with other school librarians in her district. She describes of her administrator,

I have benefitted from a lot of very vocal support... She has gone into schools where she felt that the [school librarian] needed to come and talk with me, to kind of learn some things about how to be, um, more involved in designing lessons and that sort of thing. So I've had at least 4 people that she has sent me to and said, 'I'll free you up to go spend the day.' which is a real compliment.

### *Emphasize Teaching Role of School Librarian*

A second way each participant aligned her espoused understandings of advocacy with the activities in her practice was by emphasizing her role of teacher or instructional partner. *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* charged school librarians with five roles (AASL, 2009, p. 16). The roles of teacher and instructional partner explicitly support the academic goals of students through curriculum development, collaboration with other teachers, co-planning of lessons, and direct instruction of students.

Participants in the study described building stakeholder support by becoming indispensable partners in student learning. Joy routinely attended common planning meetings with teachers in her school to ensure she was informed of new developments with implementing the Common Core. Sharon described how her program supports the classroom curriculum,

We do a lot of team teaching. You know, when I start teaching, the teachers join in with me. It's based on something that they've already taught or they're getting ready to teach- or you know. So, it's related. It wasn't always like this.

Though all participants admitted that there would always be a teacher or a stakeholder that could not be reached or who would be unwilling to work with the school librarian, both Sharon and Lori felt word of mouth was the best way to solicit collaboration with other teachers.

Stakeholder support was facilitated by creating a perception of expertise among their teaching colleagues and outside stakeholders. One area that remained the domain of participating school librarians was research. Most school librarian participants described facilitating research instruction within their school community. However, Joy found that the new rigors and complexity of implementing the Common Core State Standards provided an opportunity to demonstrate her teaching role in a way that assisted teaching in an area in which she felt more capable than her teaching peers. She describes, “there’s a big writing unit that requires research. And I think the teachers were kinda spinning their wheels about that until I stepped in and I essentially took over that piece of that one unit.” While she acknowledged that it is just one part of one unit, it was enough to demonstrate a valuable teaching service she could provide to begin to change perceptions.

Linda’s entire program centers on her teaching. Even her administrator commented, “she probably teaches more than any school librarian I’ve ever worked with.” Linda’s vision for her library program is to enhance student learning and the curriculum.

#### *Innovation of School Librarian*

The participants in the study each recognized the need to demonstrate something unique or innovative in their program. Their understanding of the need to build stakeholder relationships and educated support was enacted by purposefully and intentionally seeking opportunities to demonstrate unique and innovative experiences or resources found in the school library program.

Joy explained that often the best way to create support of a program is by identifying an element that is not being offered anywhere else. When stakeholders perceive that something of value can only be met through the school library program, they are more likely to support the library. Joy was able to accomplish this as a leader in technology integration in her school. While the teaching focus in her school was on language, she forged ahead with technology and online resources. She explains, “Technology just wasn’t a focus. This year with the Common Core and PARC tests, ... stakeholders have placed more of an emphasis on it.” Through her efforts, she has acquired a set of iPads and Chrome books and made her program innovative through the perception of her stakeholders.

Participants point out that often innovation comes in the form of technology. Kelly realized that the perception of a school library as a physical space must change. Acknowledging a virtual space in addition to her library learning commons, she noted the future importance of this into the future,

We have our website that I’ve created that is very interactive in nature and houses many, many resources for our students and is constantly curated and changing. It is a space that is curated and created by me but we’re giving more voice to our students with that as well, even the elementary level. So, I think those are ways we can start thinking about ourselves not only as a physical space, but as a virtual space, so that we can make sure that we are giving every body access as often as we possibly can.

She extended her ideas of access to include social media and librarian “chat” features. These virtual spaces further reshaped the perceptions of her already innovative space.

#### *Relevance of the School Library Program to Today’s Learner*

A final theme that resonated throughout the participant interviews was the need for authentic learning experiences relevant to today’s learners. Participants understood

that their greatest opportunity to change the perception of school libraries for all stakeholder groups and to build an educated support group among those stakeholders was to ensure that school library users engage in experiences that are relevant to today's learners.

Participants discussed advocacy activities that not only promote library programs, but also included activities that show the relevance and authenticity of the program to the stakeholders they are attempting to reach. When Kelly invited parent and community members in for informational sessions, she engaged stakeholders in hands-on discovery learning activities that resemble the opportunities students participate in during the school day. She explained the ideal behind engaging in experiences that involved multiple literacies, similar to the experiences everyone encounters in real life. Kelly's administrator explained that these activities are designed to encourage 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills such as problem solving and critical thinking.

Other participants built this into the content of their program and lessons. Linda described building lessons that engage students in discovering real-world situations. By building lessons that aligned with curriculum and also had relevance to today's learner, Linda's students interacted with resources and deepened their content knowledge of complex concepts. Describing a unit researching developing nations she stated, "7<sup>th</sup> graders are just beginning to develop their social consciousness. It's very overwhelming." Her approach allowed them to explore these difficult concepts through a guided inquiry process. Finally, Sharon knew that to engage her urban population and have her teachers perceive her program as support and not additive to their curriculum, she needed to ensure that her students find her lessons relevant.

### **Perception of Advocacy Success**

The final research question examined the participant's perception of advocacy success. It also addressed the perceptions of success of other stakeholders. To address this question the researcher first examined participant responses to the survey. Next, a multiple linear regression correlation was run to determine statistical significance between the stated success of the advocacy activities and the demographic variables provided by the population. Finally, a qualitative analysis was conducted of the each of the interviews, to include the teacher and administrative stakeholder for each site, to explore the perceived advocacy success of the school librarian.

Question #13 on the survey asked respondents to rate their perceived success with activities that align with the AASL definition of advocacy which involves building partnerships in an effort to build an educated group of supporters for the school library who will in turn act as supporters themselves of the library program. Participants were asked to rate their perceived success for each advocacy activity in which they participate as either highly successful, moderately successful, not very successful, or to select they have not participated in the activity. As there was no way to provide a measurement to guide the respondent's choices, analysis included only the responses of respondents who had participated in the identified activities and responses were grouped dichotomously as either successful or not successful. This provided a basis for understanding which activities the respondents engaged in as activities in their strategies-in-use and which of those they perceived as successful in their practice (See table 12).

Table 12  
*Perceived success of advocacy activities*

Activity	Total Participating		Successful			Not successful	
	N	N	Total (%)	N	Total (%)		
Organize meeting w/ admin	432	372	86.11	60	13.89		
Read/distribute literature	371	289	77.90	82	22.10		
Provided comments to decision makers	319	246	77.12	73	22.88		
Committee/volunteer work	299	255	85.29	44	14.72		
Encourage others to write or speak	272	189	64.34	83	30.51		
Conducted PD for staff	228	186	81.58	42	18.42		
Spoke at School board/PTA	201	178	88.55	23	11.44		
Sponsored an advocacy event	185	146	78.92	39	21.08		
Attended a legislative demonstration	118	81	68.63	37	31.36		
Established an advocacy committee	109	73	66.97	36	33.03		

Overall, respondents who engaged in these activities perceived the greatest amount of success in speaking at a school board or PTA meeting (88.55%). Reaching out to parent and community stakeholders was perceived to be effective by most stakeholders who attempted to engage in this type of advocacy. Organizing a meeting with administration to discuss the library program was also effective. 86.11% of respondents



who reported participating in this activity ( $n= 432$ ) reported this to be successful. While all of the activities had a high perception of success, those that were perceived to be slightly less successful were attending a library legislative demonstration (68.63%), establishing an advisory committee (66.97%), and encouraging others to write or speak on behalf of the library program (64.34%). Though compared to overall survey responses, the number of respondents who participated in each of these activities was not high, those who did participate in the activities perceived them to be successful.

Next, a multiple linear regression was run on each of the advocacy activities to explain a correlation between the activity and the respondent's demographic characteristics to predict a statistical likelihood of perceived success should they engage in the activity. The results of this regression analysis indicated statistical significance between the activities and some of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This suggested there was a correlation between some demographic features and the predicted perceived success of advocacy activities. An analysis of each factor follows.

Analysis of the perceived success of establishing an advocacy committee for a school library did not have an overall statistical significance among respondents. There was no statistically significant difference in the perceived success of the activity of those who established an advocacy committee for their school library ( $R^2 = .011$ ,  $F(7, 482) = .738$ ;  $p < .05$ ). There were, however, three factors that predicted a statistically significant difference in the variance in the perceived success of the school librarians. Those factors were the education level of the school librarians ( $\beta = .119$ ,  $p = .05$ ), the holding of state credentials ( $\beta = .088$ ,  $p = .05$ ) and the librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy

to the future of the profession ( $\beta = .126, p = .05$ ). Each of these predictors impacted the perceived success of advocacy of a library committee.

Table 13  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Establishing an Advocacy Committee*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	3.152	.474	
Level of school	-.022	.040	-.025
Years of experience in education	-.007	.032	-.013
Years experience in school library	-.009	.033	-.016
Education level	.119	.085	.071
Credential or certification	-.088	.160	-.028
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.021	.075	.013
Importance of advocacy	.126	.107	.053

Note ( $R^2 = .011, p < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of committee or volunteer work in a school library organization or other professional group did not have an overall statistical significance among respondents. There was no statistically significant difference in the perceived success of committee or volunteer workers ( $R^2 = .031, F(7, 521) = 2.348; p < .05$ ). There were, however, five factors that showed a statistically significant difference in the variance in the perceived success of librarians. Those factors were years of experience in both education ( $\beta = .059, p = .05$ ) and the school library ( $\beta = .078, p = .05$ ), the education level of the school librarians ( $\beta = .082, p = .05$ ), the holding of state credentials ( $\beta = .085, p = .05$ ), and the librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession ( $\beta = .171, p = .05$ ).

Table 14  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Committee or volunteer work in a library organization or other group*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	3.593	.612	
Level of School	-.019	.052	-.016
Years of experience in education	-.059	.041	-.079
Years experience in school library	-.078	.042	-.102
1 Education level	-.082	.111	-.035
Credential or certification	-.085	.208	-.020
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.000	.097	.000
Importance of advocacy	.171	.143	.052

Note ( $R^2 = .031$ ,  $p < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of reading or distributing literature on school library advocacy did have statistical significance among respondents. There was a 5.3% ( $R^2 = .053$ ,  $F(7, 529) = 4.257$ ;  $p < .05$ ) statistically significant difference in the perceived success of reading and distributing literature on advocacy in the population. There were five factors that showed a statistically significant difference in variance in the perceived success of the school librarians. The first predictor was the level of school in which the librarian was employed ( $\beta = .077$ ,  $p = .05$ ). This was perceived less successful for elementary librarians ( $t = -2.38$ ). Other predicting factors include the education level of the school librarians ( $\beta = .287$ ,  $p = .05$ ), the holding of state credentials ( $\beta = .187$ ,  $p = .05$ ), involvement in destaffing or defunding in their library ( $\beta = .127$ ,  $p = .05$ ), and the

librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession ( $\beta = .425, p = .05$ ).

Table 15  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting the reading or distribution of literature on library advocacy*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	3.577	.533	
Level of school	-.077	.045	-.074
Years of experience in education	.001	.035	.001
1 Years experience in school library	-.030	.036	-.045
Education level	-.287	.097	-.137
Credential or certification	-.187	.183	-.048
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.127	.085	.065
Importance of advocacy	.425	.123	.147

Note ( $R^2 = .053, p < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of attending library legislative days or participating in a demonstration or other organized event to influence decision makers did have statistical significance among respondents. There was a 5.6% ( $R^2 = .056, F(7, 497) = 4.249; p < .05$ ) statistically significant difference in the perceived success of attending a political advocacy function. There were four factors that showed a statistically significant difference in variance in the perceived success of school librarians. Those factors were the years of experience in the school library ( $\beta = .066, p = .05$ ), the holding of state credentials ( $\beta = .210, p = .05$ ), the school librarian's involvement

in destaffing or defunding in their library ( $\beta = .287, p = .05$ ) and the librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession ( $\beta = .103, p = .05$ ).

Table 16  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting participation in library legislation day or another political event or demonstration*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	3.656	.449	
Level of school	-.007	.038	-.008
Years of experience in education	-.006	.030	-.011
1 Years experience in school library	-.066	.031	-.119
Education level	-.029	.081	-.017
Credential or certification	-.210	.153	-.067
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.287	.071	.180
Importance of advocacy	.103	.103	.044

Note ( $R^2 = .056, p < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of speaking to stakeholders at school board and PTA meetings did not have an overall statistical significance among respondents. There was no statistically significant difference in the perceived success of speaking to stakeholder groups ( $R^2 = .028, F(7, 503) = 2.103; p < .05$ ). There were, however, six factors that showed a statistically significant difference in the variance of the perceived success of school librarians. Those factors included the level of school in which the librarian was employed ( $\beta = .128, p = .05$ ). Elementary school librarians perceived speaking to stakeholders at school board and PTA meetings less successful ( $t = -2.72$ ). Years of experience in the school library ( $\beta = .069, p = .05$ ), education level of the school

librarians ( $\beta = .170, p = .05$ ), the holding of state credentials ( $\beta = .195, p = .05$ ), the school librarian's involvement in destaffing or defunding in their library ( $\beta = .077, p = .05$ ), and the librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession ( $\beta = .075, p = .05$ ) were each predictors of perceived success.

Table 17  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Speaking at a School Board or PTA Event*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	4.125		.617
Level of school	.128	.054	.107
Years of experience in education	-.035	.042	.047
Years experience in school library	-.069	.043	.091
Education level	-.170	.112	.073
Credential or certification	-.195	.210	.045
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.077	.099	.035
Importance of advocacy	-.075	.141	.023

Note ( $R^2 = .028, p < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of providing comments to decision makers did have statistical significance among respondents. There was a 6.8% ( $R^2 = .068, F(7, 514) = 5.355; p < .05$ ) statistically significant difference in the perceived success of providing comments to decision makers. There were five factors that showed a statistically significant difference in variance in the perceived success of the school librarians. Those factors included level of school in which the librarian was employed ( $\beta = .160, p = .05$ ). Elementary school teachers perceived greater success in this ( $t = 4.34$ ). Other factors include years of experience in the school library, ( $\beta = .061, p = .05$ ),

education level ( $\beta = .401, p = .05$ ), holding of a state credential ( $\beta = .374, p = .05$ ), and the librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession ( $\beta = .310, p = .05$ ).

Table 18  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Providing Comments to Decision Makers*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	4.798	.579	
Level of school	-.160	.048	-.145
Years of experience in education	.015	.039	.021
Years experience in school library	-.061	.039	-.085
<sup>1</sup> Education level	-.401	.107	-.175
Credential or certification	-.374	.198	-.089
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.020	.091	.010
Importance of advocacy	.310	.128	.104

Note ( $R^2 = .068, p < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of encouraging others to write or speak to decision makers about library issues did have statistical significance among respondents. There was a 6.1% ( $R^2 = .061, F(7, 509) = 4.713; p < .05$ ) statistically significant difference in the perceived success of encouraging others to write or speak to decision makers. Six factors showed a statistically significant difference in variance in the perceived success of librarians. Level of school in which the librarian was employed ( $\beta = .076, p = .05$ ), particularly among elementary school teachers ( $t = 2.3$ ), years of experience in the school library ( $\beta = .061, p = .05$ ), education level of the librarian ( $\beta = .196,$

$p=.05$ ), the holding of state credentials ( $\beta = .265, p=.05$ ), the school librarian's involvement in destaffing or defunding in their library ( $\beta=.290, p=.05$ ), and the librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession ( $\beta=.269, p=.05$ ) were all predictors of perceived success of encouraging others.

Table 19  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Encouraging Others to Contact Decision Makers on Behalf of the School Library*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	3.764	.548	
Level of school	-.076	.046	-.073
Years of experience in education	-.010	.037	-.014
Years experience in school library	-.061	.037	-.091
1 Education level	-.196	.099	-.094
Credential or certification	-.265	.185	-.069
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.290	.085	.150
Importance of advocacy	.269	.122	.095

Note ( $R^2 = .061, p < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of organizing a meeting with administration to discuss the library program did not have an overall statistical significance among respondents. There was no statistically significant difference in the perceived success of organizing a meeting with administration ( $R^2 = .006, F(7, 509) = 1.577; p < .05$ ). There were two factors, however, that showed a statistically significant difference in the variance in the perceived success of school librarians. Those factors were education level of the school librarians ( $\beta = .163, p = .05$ ) and librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession ( $\beta = .112, p = .05$ ).



Table 20  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Organizing a Meeting with  
 Administration to Discuss the Library Program*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	2.913	.610	
Level of school	.034	.051	.029
Years of experience in education	-.014	.040	-.020
Years experience in school library	.016	.041	.021
<sup>1</sup> Education level	-.163	.111	-.069
Credential or certification	-.049	.207	-.011
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.008	.095	.004
Importance of advocacy	-.112	.133	-.036

Note ( $R^2 = .006$ ,  $p < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of conducting professional development for staff on school library advocacy did not have an overall statistical significance among respondents. There was no statistically significant difference in the perceived success of conducting staff professional development ( $R^2 = .021$ ,  $F(7, 509) = 1.577$ ;  $p < .05$ ). There were, however, three factors that showed a statistically significant difference in the variance in the perceived success of librarians. Those factors were years of experience in the field of education ( $\beta = .072$ ,  $p = .05$ ), holding of state credential ( $\beta = .104$ ,  $p = .05$ ) and librarian's beliefs about the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession ( $\beta = .317$ ,  $p = .05$ ).

Table 21  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Providing Professional Development to Staff on Advocacy*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	3.180	.622	
Level of school	-.031	.053	-.026
Years of experience in education	-.072	.041	-.098
Years experience in school library	.012	.043	.016
1 Education level	-.042	.111	-.018
Credential or certification	.104	.210	.024
Involved in destaffing or defunding	-.044	.098	-.020
Importance of advocacy	.317	.140	.100

Note ( $R^2 = .021$ ,  $P < .05$ )

Analysis of the perceived success of sponsoring an advocacy event for parents and community members did not have an overall statistical significance among respondents. There was no statistically significant difference in the perceived success of sponsoring an advocacy event for community stakeholders ( $R^2 = .026$ ,  $F(7, 499) = 1.917$ ;  $p < .05$ ). There were, however, four factors that showed a statistically significant difference in the variance in the perceived success of school librarians. Factors included level of school in which the librarian was employed ( $\beta = .137$ ,  $p = .05$ ). Elementary school librarians perceived this factor less successfully ( $t = -3.27$ ). Other factors included years experience in education ( $\beta = .65$ ,  $p = .05$ ), education level ( $\beta = .170$ ,  $p = .05$ ), and holding of state credential ( $\beta = .327$ ,  $p = .05$ ).

Table 22  
*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Sponsoring Library Advocacy Events for Parent or Community Members*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	4.194	.609	
Level of school	.137	.052	.120
Years of experience in education	-.065	.041	-.091
Years experience in school library	.016	.042	.023
<sup>1</sup> Education level	-.170	.110	-.076
Credential or certification	-.327	.208	-.078
Involved in destaffing or defunding	.033	.096	.016
Importance of advocacy	-.008	.133	-.003

Note ( $R^2 = .026$ ,  $P < .05$ )

### **Success in Context**

Additionally, at each of the six sites, the school librarian, as well as an administrator and teaching peer, provided their perception of advocacy success. Findings from these experiences were presented through two common themes. Participants captured experiences in which advocacy success was evaluated through either informal or formal output measures.

#### *Informal Measures of Perceived Success*

The perception of success most prevalently held by all stakeholders was that most difficult to evaluate in a formalized manner. School librarians and interviewed stakeholders perceived success through intangible measurements of the experiences

students and teachers demonstrate from successful relationships with the school library program. Teacher and administrator stakeholders equated this perception of success to how students and teachers react and interact with the library program. The co-teacher at site #4 talked about “reading the excitement in her student’s eyes” when going to the school library. The administrator at site #2 described how when she informally asks students, “What is the best thing about our new school, what do you love about our new school?- They’ll say something in connection to the library.” showing excitement and enthusiasm for the programs and the opportunities it offers.

School librarians correlated success in advocacy to a new perception of importance for the school library. Joy explained one way she measures her success is that the school library has become a frequent visit on orientation tours for the school. This showcasing of her space demonstrated an elevated status for her program by building-level stakeholders. Kelly explained that she was invited to not only host a district principal’s meeting in her school library space, she was then invited to lead the meeting. This elevation in perception among stakeholders demonstrated success to these school librarians in that the school library and the school librarian were influential in building new relationships.

Study participants stated that the best measure of success for advocacy that has created strong relationships and support for the library programs came in the form of anecdotal evidence. The co-teacher at site #2 explained the overall impression of his students about the school library learning commons and the excitement the school librarian has managed to create for the space,

I was just thinking about, reflecting upon my students and their general demeanor when it comes to the library and just... How excited they get to go, and um, how

they are when they are there. They are totally engaged and really into being in the space and learning.

Additionally, the co-teacher for Site #5 struggled to come up with a definitive measure of success, though he knew it existed in his school from the excitement that his school librarian had renewed in the library program,

I know she has been successful because one of her goals this year was a higher percentage of circulation and she surpassed that goal. I know that because she sent an email saying thank you. So in that sense she has been successful in using the library as a center for, I don't know, loving literacy and reading. But I think you can see it in the school when there's just this love for reading and the kids are walking down the hallway holding onto their books like it's an accessory. So, that to me shows some success in what she is trying to accomplish.

#### *Formal Measures of Perceived Success*

Some participants relied on traditional library output measures to form their perception of success. The administrator of Site #1 felt advocacy was part of the school librarian's job description and could be evaluated by circulation numbers and scheduled use of the school library. In order to gain the perspectives of some of her stakeholders, the school librarian at this site did include a survey distributed to building-level stakeholders, such as students and teachers, to obtain their perspective on the success of advocacy efforts throughout the year.

Kelly's administrator intended to use formalized outputs, but evaluate them in a more informative manner. Instead of simply measuring the percentage of time the library learning commons was used and the amount of collaborative lessons that were planned, she and Kelly hoped to track the percentage of time these interactions are initiated by teachers other than the school librarian. It is intended that tracking these interactions will provide a deeper understanding of the success of the school library program's position

in in the school culture. This will occur with the informal measures they already feel provide plentiful data on the success of their school library program.

Other school systems have followed the new norm in education where accountability is tracked using standards. Site # 6 has made efforts to formalize the evaluative process. This site was located in a state currently updating the state evaluation tool for school librarians, which will reflect advocacy as an evaluation area. Both the school librarian and the school principal were aware that to address this new standard, a formalized measure of success would be necessary. This opened new dialogue between the school principal and the school librarian on new initiatives to implement, as well as a means to evaluate the success of these efforts. Their conversations have reflected a plan for next school year that will identify under-served stakeholder groups and create opportunities for programing and support for these groups.

### **Summary**

This chapter reported both the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study. Each research question was analyzed and explored. Practitioner beliefs and understandings were analyzed through descriptive quantitative analysis of the survey responses, as well as a content analysis of the respondent's open response answers showing that there is a lack of consistency in how practitioners define advocacy and the definition the school library field has established. School librarians identified advocacy activities they had participated in. Highest percentages identified with activities engaging stakeholders at the school or building level. The alignment of advocacy understanding with practice was explored with a content analysis, as well as through individual school librarian interviews. These analyses demonstrated a majority of respondents identify a

variety of activities they engage in within their practice that align with their understanding of advocacy. A multiple regression correlation exploring demographic variables and perceived success of selected advocacy activities showed a statistical significance between the 7 analyzed demographic factors and reading and distributing advocacy literature, attending a political event, providing comments to decision makers, and encouraging others to contact decision makers. This analysis assists in suggesting factors that influence perceptions of success when engaging in advocacy activities. Additionally, participant interviews at each of the sites with the school librarians, as well as a teaching peer and an administrator led to findings suggesting that success in practice is perceived through informal and formal output measures.

In the following chapter, these findings will be discussed as they relate to views in school library literature. Implications for practice in strategic planning for advocacy will be suggested based on these findings. Finally, recommendations of future research will be presented.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This final chapter contains a summary of the dissertation and presents a discussion of the findings introduced in chapter four. It begins with an overview, including the intent of the study, the problem the study addresses, a summary of the population, and the methodology. Each finding is discussed in relation to the four research questions. The findings are positioned within the perspective of the conceptual and theoretical framework identified for the study. Limitations of the study are included. The chapter concludes with final implications and suggestions for future research.

#### **Overview of the study**

This investigation is designed to explore how practicing school librarians define advocacy, engage in advocacy in their practice, align their understandings of advocacy with their practice, and perceive their success in advocacy. The rationale for this exploration is the noted lack of consistency in how school librarians interpret and engage in advocacy. Multi-leveled definitions within the literature of the national professional organization, AASL, and inconsistent alignment of definitions with other types of libraries add to inconsistency in the school library field.

The sample includes 815 practicing school librarians from 36 of the 80 largest school districts with identified district school library supervisors. Though the population of the study represents only school librarians from the 100 largest school districts in the US (Keaton, 2012), the demographic characteristics of the sample closely resemble the national demographics of practicing school librarians as a whole as presented by the National Center for Education Statistic's *Characteristics of Public Elementary and*



*Secondary School Library Media Centers in the United States: Results from the 2011-2012 Schools and Staffing Survey* (Bitterman, Gray, & Goldring, 2013). The NCES report finds 56% of school libraries to be elementary, 16% middle school, 20% high school, and 8% to be combined schools. These numbers are comparable to the respondent demographics of the population sample (see Table 5, page 79).

Nationally, 67% of public school libraries are reported as being staffed by a certified or state credentialed school librarian and 52% of school librarians report having a master's degree. These numbers are slightly below the demographic composition of the sample in this study. The sample population of this study reported 93% hold a state credential and 82% have a minimum of a master's degree. These slightly higher than national averages may be influenced by the school districts in the study having a school library supervisor. One criteria of selection for this study's population is the existence of a school library supervisor. Since the literature (AASL, 2012b; Bundy, 1970; Carter, 1971) suggests that one of the duties of a library supervisor is to ensure that there is a highly qualified school librarian in charge of the library program, a more qualified sample would be expected in the schools in the sample.

This research is conducted using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Quantitative measures are used to gain a broad sense of respondent understandings and beliefs of advocacy and the activities they align with those beliefs. This information is then explored more deeply through qualitative interviews. Analysis is done using parametric statistical measures, content analysis and qualitative analysis conducted in the phenomenology tradition providing a multifaceted examination of the research questions.

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

Hartzell (2003b) proposes that to effectively create educated support among stakeholders, school librarians must build influence for the school library program and the school librarian position. He describes three tenets necessary to build stakeholder relationships to foster this type of needed support. School librarians must focus their advocacy efforts on changing the perception of the school library position and creating a perception of indispensability for the school library program. These efforts are often achieved when school librarians overcome their own ambivalence about seeking a more prominent role in the school community. These tenets provide context for the discussion of the findings for this study.

### **Beliefs or Understandings of Advocacy**

The initial research question in the study seeks to identify what current knowledge practicing school librarians have of advocacy. Definitions of *advocacy*, *marketing*, and *public relations* put forth by the national school library association, AASL, are used to provide context for the discussion. These definitions were posted as part of the Advocacy Toolkit (AASL) for school librarians in 2007, created by the AASL Advocacy Committee and expand the work of the @ Your Library publication *The Toolkit for School Library Media Programs* (AASL, & ALA, 2003).

In this study, survey respondents are initially asked to provide open-response definitions of advocacy. Most respondents are able to construct a definition. When asked to align their understanding of advocacy with one of the three AASL definitions, 68.61% of respondents align their understanding with the AASL definition of *advocacy*.

However, a content analysis of the school librarian definitions does not mirror alignment of understanding.

When building influence for the school library it is necessary to gain influence within the school community. Participants did not demonstrate an understanding of this tenet or how it may be achieved through advocacy for their program through their responses. They initially align their beliefs with the needs-based marketing model, expressing this alignment by using terms commonly associated with this such as *needs*, *assist*, and *support* (of a group/program). By using terms that align their understanding with a marketing definition, school librarians in this study demonstrate the belief that they must persuade stakeholders that they can meet and support their needs. Marketing is one component of advocacy, as it helps provide a foundation on which to build relationships of support. However, these activities might better be classified as simple program promotion. School librarians in this study have difficulty distinguishing the meaning of advocacy as defined by AASL.

### **Practitioner Activities of Advocacy**

The second research question examines the advocacy activities of the respondents. Advocacy, from the school library perspective, is a step beyond program promotion (Kerr, 2011; Levitov, 2007) to the changing of perceptions of the school library with the intent to educate a stakeholder base and build program supporters (Schuckett, 2004). To explore this research question, activities congruent with the AASL definition of *advocacy* are identified and participants are asked to identify those in which they participate.

Participation rates fall below 50% for all but one selected response activity on the survey. The only activity with above 50% participation is “organized a meeting with administrator to discuss the library program.” This finding suggests that while this population of school librarians report they have been involved in situations of defunding and destaffing (62.77%) and while 68.61% align their understanding of advocacy with a definition that would support the activities on the survey, participants are not regularly engaging stakeholders other than their administrative staff. Furthermore, school librarians are engaging in activities that reach out to parents and members of the school community at surprisingly low rates. Only 22.39% have sponsored an advocacy event for parents or school community members, and 28.79% have spoken at a school board or PTA meeting; 29.39% have conducted professional development for staff on school library advocacy. Respondents are not regularly participating in or initiating activities that foster stakeholder relationships and provide opportunities to build supporters for the library program, even with members of their immediate school communities. They then do not have an educated base of supporters when times of crisis arise.

### **Espoused Beliefs vs. Advocacy-in-Use**

The complex *Theories in Practice* model (Argyris and Schon, 1974) suggesting that school librarians espouse one set of beliefs and may implement a different, slightly altered theory in practice has guided much of the conversation and analysis of this study. This research attempts to examine how closely a practicing school librarian’s understanding of advocacy, and therefore espoused belief, aligns with the librarian’s theory-in-use or practice of advocacy. Though 68.61 % of participants align their understanding of advocacy with AASL’s definition, “the on-going process of building

partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program” (AASL, 2007b), the only advocacy activity in use by at least 50% of respondents was organizing a meeting with an administrator. Each of the other activities designed to build stakeholder partnerships are used by a small number of the respondent population. This suggests that their theories-in-use do not align with their espoused understanding of advocacy.

Open response activities are examined intending to align respondent advocacy-in-use with espoused understanding of advocacy. Approximately three-quarters of respondents align their activities with their understanding regardless of the statement they most identify with advocacy (advocacy= 75%, marketing= 77%, PR= 73%). This demonstrates congruence between their espoused theory and their theory-in-use when given the opportunity to provide examples from practice.

However, their theories-in-use are not fully developed to include a thorough understanding of the definitions. The largest set of respondents aligns their understanding with the AASL definition of *advocacy*. The analysis shows that while they do align their espoused theory with a stated theory-in-use that also aligns with the AASL definition of advocacy, nearly one half does not identify any stakeholder partnerships beyond that of the school librarian and classroom teacher. Each of the reported relationships occurs between teaching peers. This suggests that respondents are not developing stakeholder relationships with a diverse group of community members who will become educated advocates willing to support the school library program.

## **Understanding in Context**

School librarians identified from their survey responses as engaging in high levels of advocacy are interviewed. They identify activities they incorporate in their theories-of-use that help build stakeholder relationships and gain educated support among those they work with. These activities align with school library literature that supports the tenets of Hartzell's (2003a) framework for building influence. Schools are constantly evolving and the school library must meet changing needs by offering an updated program. School librarians have the opportunity to capitalize on the new perspective of their position when they strategically engage in advocacy in a way that builds influence for their position and support among their stakeholders.

The participant's stories describe how these opportunities and advocacy efforts are instrumental in revitalizing the role of the school library program and changing perceptions of the school library for stakeholders. Facilitating new perceptions that include redesigning both the physical and virtual space of the school library has been influential in gaining stakeholder support. Additionally, school librarians working as leaders within both school library communities and the education community at large gain influence for the school library position.

The increased focus on the role of the school librarian as teacher provides a positive perception of the school library program when teaching is not seen as additive to the classroom curriculum and does not focus on "library skills". Changing the perception of instruction in the school library to information literacy in support of achieving curricular standards creates a perception of indispensability for the school library program and the expertise of the school librarian. For these six sites, no longer is

the school library a quiet place of skills taught in isolation, it is now a collaborative learning hub.

Through an examination of the innovative practices of the participants, advocacy practices are witnessed that build influence for the school library programs and the position of the school librarian by changing the perception of what the school library program is and how indispensable the skills of the school librarian can become. As *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (AASL, 2009) states, today's users have diverse needs and school libraries have a responsibility to maintain a flexible, fluid program ready to meet them. Kelly who manages the library learning commons has built a culture of learners in her school who require the support of the *AASL Standards for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners* (AASL, 2007a), incorporating them as part of her school's vision and introducing the concept of the learning commons to community stakeholders.

Introducing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, participants hope to engage stakeholders through authentic practices in the school library and deconstruct artificial policies so they can mirror what may be faced in "real-life". The school librarians use their knowledge and resources to plan lessons students find more engaging. Sharon, the solo urban librarian, finds these lessons help build rapport; not only with her students, but also with her teaching colleagues since student enthusiasm leads to co-planned projects in the future. Partnerships that are created with community members are designed purposefully to show students an immediate relationship between their lives and learning. Stakeholders outside the school are able to identify the value the learning opportunities provide to the

students. This creates an educated group of stakeholders more willing to support and advocate for the school library program as a valuable resource for student learning.

### **Interpretation of Perceived Success of Advocacy**

For the purposes of this study, success is not defined in a quantifiable measure, but rather left to each respondent and participant to situate along their own unique continuum of understanding. Respondents rate their advocacy activities on a scale and also have the opportunity to provide context for their response. Several respondents provide written responses to clarify their selections. Success for these respondents is described as added administrative support, increased teacher collaboration, increased parent use, and addition of staff for the library program.

Respondents are asked to rate those activities they have personally engaged in. Though the respondents are asked in Question #12 to identify the advocacy activities in which they participate and are presented with an identical list in Question #13 to rate perceived success with one option being- I have not participated in this advocacy effort, the number of responses does not match and responses are higher when rating success. Therefore, some respondents rated the success of more activities than they initially chose as activities in their practice. It may be assumed that some participants responded not from personal experience, but from perception of practice.

Those who do rate the activities show a greater perception of success for those activities that involve stakeholders directly involved with the school. This may be due to the fact that these stakeholders have a visible presence in the school and the effects of advocacy may be something that is immediately seen or demonstrated to the school librarian. While the effects of contacting a decision maker or attending a political event



may be as effective, the effects of the advocacy effort may not have an immediate, direct impact on the school librarian's building level program. Therefore, the school librarian may not perceive the activity to be as successful. Johns (2007) reminds us that it is essential that school librarians see advocacy as an issue greater than school level.

Analysis of perceived success of the select response advocacy activities shows each activity has some positive correlations with the identifying demographic characteristics. Though correlation does not imply causation, these findings suggest that school librarians with specific demographic characteristics are more inclined to perceive the activities successful. These predictors should be cultivated to ensure that school librarians feel empowered to build relationships with their stakeholder groups and gain educated supporters of their program.

The grade level of the school in which the librarian works statistically assists in identifying predictors of success for the activities of providing comments to various decision maker groups through calls or email, encouraging others to provide comments, sponsoring a parent or community event, reading or distributing advocacy literature, and speaking to a school board or PTA group. Elementary librarians in the study reported lower perceived levels of success with activities such as speaking with school board and PTA groups and sponsoring advocacy events. It may be that school librarians in elementary schools, who typically see higher levels of parent presence in the schools, may correlate parent presence at events as a measure of successful advocacy. However, the message of their advocacy campaign is most important. School librarians at the elementary level must focus their strategies on extending their advocacy efforts beyond program promotion (Hand, 2008; Slusser, 2011). They should seek opportunities to

express the instructional role of the school librarian and the support of the school library program in student learning as recommended by Kerr (2011).

Likewise, high school teachers who work in large schools that support larger staffs perceive the opportunity to distribute literature or solicit support of several members of the staff as less successful. As Schuckett (2004) suggests, school librarians have a unique connection to each member of a school faculty and, by extension, an opportunity to influence them. If the activities of gaining staff support such as distributing advocacy literature and encouraging others to contact decision makers to support the library have been perceived successful by some, other school librarians can direct their energy in this area as they look for possible strategies.

The study population had only a small percentage (7%) of respondents that did not hold a certification or credential as defined by their state. However, education level and the holding of a state credential is a predicting factor in the perception of success of nearly all of the advocacy activities. It is likely that school librarians who are well educated in their field and who hold valid credentials for their job would be more likely to have more developed advocacy plans. School librarians who hold an advanced degree in their field and/or hold a state credential may have a more mature or developed understanding of advocacy or may have been exposed to more resources. Because of this, these professionals may feel more confident in their advocacy message. This may also be a contributing reason the number of years the respondent has been employed in the school library is a predictor of perception of success in many of the activities of advocacy. It is a predicting factor in the librarian providing comments to decision makers through email or phone calls, as well as encouraging others to contact decision

makers about school library advocacy issues. The number of years a librarian has been in the field is also a predicting factor in the perception of success of school librarians volunteering or serving on committees of professional organizations, attending library legislative days and speaking at a school board or PTA event. This finding suggests the importance of the reaching out to those new to the profession to ensure they have opportunities to be involved at early stages in their career.

Finally, the belief in the importance of advocacy to the future of the profession is a predicting factor to the perception of success for all activities but sponsoring a parent or community event about library advocacy. This may contribute to a shared belief among all respondents that advocacy is a necessity for the future of the profession and what continues to drive all activities of advocacy, whether they are met with success or not. As one respondent stated, “If they don’t know what we do, they don’t know to ask for support.” (Anonymous survey respondent, 2014)

### **Success in Context**

The participants interviewed at the six sites are able to articulate multiple activities that build relationships with a variety of stakeholder groups in their communities in such a way that the perception of the school library is redefined. They are quick to point out the multiple informal measures they use to evaluate the success of their advocacy efforts. By defining success through these measures, the school librarians and the interviewed stakeholders demonstrate that the perception of the school library has shifted in their settings. Use of student and stakeholder perception, though intangible and not measureable, demonstrates to these participants a rejuvenated excitement in the program offered at their schools. Both Joy and Kelly have gained influence for their

position and program by the demonstrated support witnessed through the showcasing of their space due to this shift in perception. Hartzell (2003a) suggests school librarians must become leaders. Linda's administrative support and assignment to mentor others who may need guidance demonstrates success through non-quantifiable means. Their programs are supported in their school community. It feels like success to them.

Participants also use formal measures to measure their success. High circulation numbers, as well as the constant use of each of the participant's physical space leads the participants to conclude that stakeholders perceive the school library to be an essential, indispensable program. The recognized award that Rose's program received led to concrete funding and consistent staffing she perceives as a measurement of her success.

Each of the school librarians shies away from equating successful advocacy with student achievement. They speak about student learning in terms of supporting the teachers. Most of the co- participants, whether supporting informal or formal output measures allude to students performance in classes or on standardized tests in direct correlation to experiences in the school library. Only Rose feels compelled to explicitly address student achievement in direct relation to advocacy.

I really think that I need to say something about student achievement because if you do advocate for your library and you can point to the number of students who come into your library and that you're somehow effecting enough students to make a difference in test scores, and that is really hard to measure, but if you feel like your, um, students are gaining some kind of knowledge or skills because of the program and you put out- It's like a big circle. Because if your principal supports you with the staff and the money to make your library nice so kids want to come in, and if you run a program where kids want to come in and check out books and use your resources. The student achievement will go up. So, I think that you have to look not only at the concrete things, like the money for the new stuff and the staffing, but also you have to look at if what you're doing to promote your library and if your program is helping students achieve more.

## **Limitations**

Limitations are identified for both the quantitative and qualitative measures employed in this study. The sites used for the qualitative portion of the research are selected to represent a random sample. The participants at each site location are co-teachers and administrators selected by the school librarian participants themselves with no selection criteria provided. Most school librarians choose a co-teacher with whom they have successfully collaborated. Future research may interview a wider variety of stakeholders at the site to explore a greater perception of experiences with advocacy in practice.

One limitation of the quantitative study is found in the analysis of the survey responses of respondents identifying perceived success of activities of advocacy. While the respondents have the opportunity to rate success as either highly successful or moderately successful, there is no opportunity to operationalize their measures on the survey and responses rely solely on the respondents' individual, internal continuum of perceived success. Additionally, though respondents are asked to rate the level of success for their personal advocacy activities, the number of respondents rating their level of success is greater than the number of respondents originally reporting engagement in the activity. It is possible some participants rate perceived levels of success of each of the activities in general, not their own success. Future research may consider alternate means of collecting this data to ensure internal validity.

A final limitation is the influence of district library supervisors on the population sample. While distribution of the survey through school email distribution lists of library district supervisors helps obtain a large sample that has no outside affiliations beyond

their employment as school librarians, it also introduces a limitation to the study. First, school library supervisors are the initial point of contact for the study. Therefore their decision to participate is the determining factor for inclusion in the study. Additionally, a district library supervisor acts as an advocate for school library programs at a district level. As Carter (1971) reminds us, their position implies some level of district support for school libraries. School librarians in the study population may feel falsely secure in their position due to this district influence. Finally, as defined by the AASL position statement on appropriate staffing for school libraries (AASL, 2006c) one of the functions of a library supervisor's job is to ensure the quality of school library programs, including hiring qualified school librarians. The school library programs should be stronger, and therefore more visible and perceived as valuable to the school communities in which they are situated. Since this sample is comprised of all school librarians working under a district level library supervisor, the population may be more supported at the district level and reflect higher credentials. Additionally, the population may have more opportunities for professional development, which could include advocacy.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Further Research**

This study has been primarily exploratory in nature. The intent is to examine the beliefs and understanding currently held by practitioners in the field so that strategies and models of advocacy can be built on an educated foundation. While the findings identify practitioner's understanding of advocacy in relation to the current intent of the school library's professional organization, additional research should explore the organization's continued message and plan of advocacy, as well as strategies it hopes to build to carry out such a plan. The primary implication for school library research and the school

library literature is that this study contributes to the gap in existing school library research examining advocacy. As there is limited empirical research examining school library advocacy, this study will strengthen the field's knowledge on practitioner beliefs.

The findings of this study only addressed advocacy as it aligns with the definition set forth by AASL. That definition was formally adopted in 2007, though it was introduced with the 1998 *Information Power* program standards (Haycock and Cavill, 1999). There is an implication that the professional association will revisit these definitions to ensure there is a single clear message of what the field intends advocacy to be, and so that all school librarians have an unambiguous expectation of what their charge is in engaging in advocacy for their programs. This is particularly timely as the library field, under the new 2015 strategic plan (ALA, 2008), has elevated advocacy as an association goal.

An additional implication of the study is that the strategies shared by the school librarians and their administrative and co-teaching stakeholders represent success stories of advocacy the school library field is eager to hear. The advocacy initiatives implemented to build stakeholder support and foster relationships are done in such a way that the perception of the school library and the position of the school librarian were altered within each of the six school communities. The school librarians in the study revitalized the role of the school library in their school through innovative practices and emphasizing the teaching role of the school librarian. Additionally, they made the school library program relevant to today's learner. Hamilton (2011) discusses the nature of a participatory culture in school libraries, where the school community comes together to learn, and share and create information. This philosophy can be found in these six sites:

students are eagerly seeking out the school library and stakeholders view the library as an essential component to their school community. By exploring the dynamics of the individual library programs, other school librarians can generalize the strategies used to gain stakeholder support and alter the perception of the library in their unique setting. These stories provide a vision of the impact of advocacy on the profession. Future research should include the development of resources for dissemination and implementation of strategies of success and explore ways school librarians can implement them into their practice.

A final implication of this study is to help guide course work and training in advocacy within school librarian education programs. The findings from this study can be used in planning curriculum and coursework in advocacy to better train pre-service school librarians on how to advocate for a school library program. Findings suggest such courses would benefit from information regarding identification of program stakeholders, location of advocacy resources, and effective strategies that can be used to build influence for the school library program once candidates have been hired. Additionally, findings suggest that credentialed school librarians are a predictor in the perceived success of advocacy. Additional research should examine the extent to which advocacy is included in pre-service education coursework to ensure that school librarians are adequately trained and feel empowered to advocate at early stages in their school library career.

## **Conclusion**

With a national decline in staffing and funding for school libraries there is an immediate need for school librarians to know how to build relationships of support



among their stakeholders. The first step in this process is educating each stakeholder group of the value that school libraries add to the school culture. This can be achieved by changing the perception of the role the school library plays in the academic support and enhancement of students. School librarians who are able to identify and engage in activities and strategies that align with the purpose of advocacy to foster stakeholder relationships and gain their support build a perception of influence for the profession.

Unfortunately, school librarians do not yet have a clear understanding and definition of advocacy. Practicing school librarians are not participating in advocacy in a way that engages multiple stakeholder groups in the school community. When participating in advocacy in their programs, school librarians either fall short of advocacy and simply promote their library programs, or they engage only with stakeholder groups within their school building, neglecting to draw on the support of other groups in their school community.

Practicing school librarians struggle to align their espoused advocacy practice with their theory-in-use. Advocacy remains a priority of the school library field, but few practitioners regularly engage in a systematic plan to advocate for their program. Those who do advocate often focus on stakeholder relationships within their school building. To be most effective, a larger message must be spread. Those who have a developed understanding of advocacy must use their influence to build relationships with multiple stakeholder groups both inside and outside the school community. By demonstrating a strong advocacy theory-in-practice they can become leaders and mentors and help build influence for the school library program.

This study found that there is still work to be done to define the message of advocacy for the school library profession. School librarians struggle to identify our national organization's definition of the term. Even those who can identify it have difficulty understanding the complex task that is being assigned to them. School librarians need clearer guidelines on the activities and strategies they can enact that will align with the goals of advocacy as put forth by AASL, the national professional organization.

School librarians need to engage in activities that build educated supporters. One respondent notes, " Advocacy is having a good program that people want to use and supports students." but Slusser (2011) warns, it is not enough to simply do a good job or have a good program. Building upon the strong programs they create, school librarians must take opportunities to demonstrate their efforts to not only administration and the teachers they work with, but to their larger school community and outside decision makers. An ongoing, systemic effort should be in place to achieve this.

With a clearer understanding of activities that constitute advocacy to draw from, school librarians will have a better sense of what activities they can implement in their own practice to be successful advocates. Those beliefs that school librarians espouse will be in closer alignment with those in which they engage. This will ensure they are reaching multiple stakeholder groups to provide a perception of an essential library program, led by an influential school librarian. Additionally, using the model of those school librarians who do perceive success in their practice, targeted advocacy plans can be constructed to assist school librarians to become stronger advocates.

When examining the success of advocacy, it is important to consider not only traditional formal measures, but also the perceived informal measures associated with successful advocacy. Stakeholder perceptions of the impact school libraries make on the educational landscape can be influential in building continued support. Collecting anecdotal and supplemental evidence to demonstrate the perceptions of indispensability can be powerful indicators of success.

The primary intent of this study is to identify the current beliefs and understandings of advocacy and the activities that are perceived to be successful. Future research should focus on identifying a model of advocacy that can be implemented based on these findings to give practicing school librarians a single, clear course for advocacy engagement.

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**1. What best describes your library employment?**

Elementary School Librarian

Middle School Librarian

High School Librarian

Combined School Librarian

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How many years of experience do you have in education?**

0-2

3-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

21-30

30+

**3. How many years of experience do you have in the school library field?**

0-2

3-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

21-30

30+

**4. What is your highest degree?**

Associate's

Bachelor's

Master's

Doctorate

No degree

**5. Do you hold a credential or certification in school library media, as defined by your state?**

Yes

No

I don't know

**6. Are you a member of your state, local, and/or national library association? Mark all that apply.**

American Library Association (ALA)

American Association of School Librarians

Other ALA Division (ALSC, YALSA, etc.)

State library or school media association

Local library or school media association

I don't belong to a library association

**7. In the past three years, have you been involved in a situation where school library positions or funding has been threatened, reduced, or eliminated?**

Yes

No

I don't know

Optional-provide the context of your situation here.

**8. How would you define advocacy in a school library setting?**

**9. Read each of the following statements. Which of the three most closely aligns with your understanding of advocacy for your school library program?**

- On-going process of building partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program.
- One-way communication of getting the message across: who we are, what we do, when and where and for whom
- A planned and sustained process to assess a customer's needs and then to select materials and services to meet those needs: know the customer's needs, who are they? What do they need? When and where can we best deliver it? What are you willing to pay? (\$)

**10. Based on your previous response that school library advocacy aligns with**

The on-going process of building partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program.

**Describe the school library activities you associate with this statement.**

**OR**

**10. Based on your previous response that school library advocacy aligns with**

One-way communication of getting the message across: who we are, what we do, when and where and for whom

**Describe the school library activities you associate with this statement.**

**OR**

**10. Based on your previous response that school library advocacy aligns with**

A planned and sustained process to assess the customer's needs and then to select materials and services to meet those needs: know the customer's needs, who are they? what do they need?, when and where can we best deliver it?, what are you willing to pay? (\$)

**Describe the school library activities you associate with this statement.**

**11. How often do you engage in the activities you listed above?**

Everyday

Weekly

1-2 times per month

A few times a year

As needed

I haven't had the opportunity

**12. In the past three years, have you been involved in any of the following school library advocacy activities?**

Committee/volunteer work in library association or other groups

Read/distributed literature or information on school library advocacy

Attended library legislative days/Participated in a demonstration/ or other organized events to influence decision-makers

Spoke at a school board/PTA meeting

Provided comments to decision makers, through phone calls, faxes, emails, or letters

Encouraged others to write/speak to decision makers about library issues

Established an advocacy committee for your school library

Organized a meeting with administration to discuss the library program

Conducted professional development for staff on library advocacy

Sponsored an advocacy event for parents and/or community members to gain support for the library

I have not been involved in advocacy efforts in the past three years.

Other (please specify)

**13. (Only those selected from 12 will be available) Rate the success of your school library advocacy efforts in the past three years.**

Highly successful

Moderately successful

Not very successful

I haven't participated in advocacy efforts

Please provide any comments about your advocacy efforts (optional).

**14. Do other members of your school community advocate for your program?**

Yes

No

I don't know

Optional- comments

**15. What are the current advocacy needs for the school library profession? Check all that apply.**

Improve the public and professional image of school librarians

Publicize the services school libraries and librarians provide

Pursue legislative action on behalf of jobs for school librarians

Assure that school librarians have equal access to employment with other education professionals

Develop a common definition/identity for school librarians

Hire paid staff/consultants to advocate for school librarians

Develop relationships with school library stakeholder groups

Develop resources and training in advocacy for the school library profession

I don't know/am unsure

Other (please specify)

**16. What resources are currently available for your advocacy efforts? Check all that apply.**

Committees/volunteers

Coalitions with other educational groups

Government relations/lobbying staff

Paid library association staff

Funding

Consultants

Professional Associations

Advocacy Training

Advocacy Toolkits or Information Kits

Other- please specify

I am not involved in advocacy efforts

**17. I received adequate advocacy training to implement an advocacy plan for my library program.**

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Optional- Comment \_\_\_\_\_

**18. What are the current obstacles to school library advocacy? Check all that apply.**

Lack of advocacy training

Opposition by other organizations

Little interest in advocacy

Not a priority

Lack of leadership



Not having a toolkit/information packet

Not enough money

I'm not sure/don't know

Lack of awareness

Resistance by public decision-makers

Lack of collaboration

Inadequate resources

Lack of time

I don't know/am unsure

Other (please specify)

**19. How important is school library advocacy to the future of the profession?**

Very important

Moderately important

Not important

**This concludes the survey. Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this study.**

Are you willing to be contacted to further discuss your thoughts and opinions on school library advocacy?  
If you select yes, you will be prompted to provide contact information on the next screen. If you do not wish to provide your email address, select FINISH

Yes

FINISH

Thank you for your willingness to further discuss advocacy. I would like to conduct several interviews with practicing school librarians. We would conduct the interview using videoconferencing technology (i.e. Skype). I would also like to interview a co-teacher and an administrator from your school. If I may contact you for an interview, please enter your email address below. Thank you for your time.

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**Chesterfield School Librarians:**

**My name is Elizabeth Burns and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Old Dominion University. My dissertation research explores the understanding and practice of School Library Advocacy of practicing school librarians. It explores the relationship of what school librarians know about school library advocacy and the strategies they enact in their programs. It also examines the perceived success of the strategies used in their advocacy efforts. I plan to survey a large, national sample of school librarians to examine their perceptions and practices of advocacy.**

**I have developed a modified advocacy measure to employ in my study and would like to use Chesterfield County as my pilot population. Your responses will help to ensure a reliable and valid measure for my study. I hope you will complete this study to assist in providing a robust pilot sample. As a pilot participant, if you note any questions that are unclear, please note the question number as there will be an opportunity at the end to provide feedback of this type.**

**Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous and results will be reported in aggregate. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Clicking on the survey link below is your consent for your responses to be compiled with others.**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SchoolLibraryAdvocacy>**

**Any questions or concerns about this research can be directed to me (703) 589-8609 or the advising professor on this research, Dr. Gail Dickinson at Old Dominion University (757) 683-3283.**

**I genuinely thank you for your time!  
Sincerely,**

**Elizabeth A. Burns  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Teaching and Learning  
Darden College of Education  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA**

**Eburn018@odu.edu**

**Chesterfield School Librarians:**

**Thank you to those of you who have already completed my pilot survey on School Library Advocacy! If you have not yet had the opportunity, there are still a few days left to participate in the survey. I would like as many librarians as possible to provide input. Information about the study and access can be found below.**

**My name is Elizabeth Burns and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Old Dominion University. My dissertation research explores the understanding and practice of School Library Advocacy of practicing school librarians. It explores the relationship of what school librarians know about school library advocacy and the strategies they enact in their programs. It also examines the perceived success of the strategies used in their advocacy efforts. I plan to survey a large, national sample of school librarians to examine their perceptions and practices of advocacy.**

**I have developed a modified advocacy measure to employ in my study and would like to use Chesterfield County as my pilot population. Your responses will help to ensure a reliable and valid measure for my study. I hope you will complete this study to assist in providing a robust pilot sample. As a pilot participant, if you note any questions that are unclear, please note the question number as there will be an opportunity at the end to provide feedback of this type.**

**Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous and results will be reported in aggregate. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Clicking on the survey link below is your consent for your responses to be compiled with others.**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SchoolLibraryAdvocacy>

**Any questions or concerns about this research can be directed to me (703) 589-8609 or the advising professor on this research, Dr. Gail Dickinson at Old Dominion University (757) 683-3283.**

**I genuinely thank you for your time!  
Sincerely,**

**Elizabeth A. Burns  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Teaching and Learning  
Darden College of Education  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA**

**Eburn018@odu.e**

Dear Library Supervisor/ Coordinator:

My name is Elizabeth Burns and I am a doctoral candidate at Old Dominion University in the Curriculum and Instruction program. I am completing my dissertation analyzing School Librarians' advocacy practice. My study examines how school librarians define advocacy and the types of advocacy activities reported in their practice. The findings will explore effective advocacy practice for school librarians.

I would like to distribute a survey to a national sample of school librarians working in public schools. Unfortunately, there is not a national email database maintained of all school librarians. One way I have of reaching a large number of school librarians is through a school library supervisor or coordinator. My hope is that you will distribute the link and a short introduction to my survey to each of the school librarians in your district. I would ask simply that you send forward an email and a follow-up reminder upon my email prompt to you within a 14-day period. **Librarians will be informed that participation is voluntary and this study is in no way associated with their employment in the district. You will not have to craft any documents- simply forward my emails through your distribution list.** I have conducted this as a pilot with a school district similar to yours and received a completion rate of 52%. A timeline of my project is below:

Your response to this email stating willingness to distribute my email with survey through your email roster and number of school librarians employed in your district	Distribute initial email and survey link to librarian email roster in your district	Send reminder email to all librarians on your email roster in your district
This week	Next week	One week later

**If you are willing to forward these two emails, would you please reply to this email acknowledging willingness to participate, as well as the total number of librarians in your database so that I can record how many will receive the survey for record of sample size.**

I am conducting this survey under the supervision of Dr. Gail Dickinson at Old Dominion University. This study has been approved by the university's Human Subject Review Board (IRB approval letter attached). Please feel free to contact me if you should have any additional questions about the study. Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
 Elizabeth Burns  
 Doctoral Candidate  
 Curriculum and Instruction  
 Darden College of Education  
 Old Dominion University  
 Norfolk, VA 23529  
[Eburn018@odu.edu](mailto:Eburn018@odu.edu)

Gail Dickinson, Ph.D.  
 Dissertation Chair  
 Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research  
 Old Dominion University

## 100 Largest School District

	School District	State	Number of Students	Number of Schools	# of Reported School Librarian	Activity in study
1	New York City Public Schools	NY	981,690	1,496	303	Participant
2	Los Angeles Unified	CA	687,534	860		No Response
3	Puerto Rico Department of Education	PR	503,635	1,511		No Identified Supervisor
4	City of Chicago School District 299	IL	421,430	630		Declined
5	Dade	FL	345,525	496	284	Participant
6	Clark County School District	NV	312,761	350		No Identified Supervisor
7	Broward	FL	256,351	303		No Response
8	Houston Independent School District	TX	200,225	296	101	Participant
9	Hillsborough	FL	192,007	285	145	Participant
10	Hawaii Department of Education	HI	179,478	290		No Response
11	Orange	FL	172,257	236	102	Participant
12	Palm Beach	FL	170,757	247		No Response
13	Fairfax County Public Schools	VA	169,030	193		Declined
14	Philadelphia City School District	PA	159,867	274		No Response
15	Dallas Independent School District	TX	157,352	232	238	Participant
16	Gwinnett County	GA	157,219	115		No Identified Supervisor
17	Montgomery County Public Schools	MD	139,282	204		Declined
18	Wake County Schools	NC	138,443	156		No Response

19	Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools	NC	135,064	166		Declined
20	San Diego Unified	CA	132,256	218	13	Participant
21	Prince George's County Public Schools	MD	127,977	215		Declined
22	Duval	FL	122,606	175		No Identified Supervisor
23	Memphis City School District	TN	111,954	200		No Identified Supervisor
24	Cobb County	GA	106,747	118	127	Participant
25	Pinellas	FL	106,061	173		No Response
26	Baltimore County Public Schools	MD	103,180	172		Declined
27	Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District	TX	100,685	78	83	Participant
28	Dekalb County	GA	99,775	146		Declined
29	Jefferson County	KY	98,774	174	151	Participant
30	Detroit City School District	MI	97,577	197	4	Participant
31	Albuquerque Public Schools	NM	95,934	174	143	Participant
32	Polk	FL	94,657	156		No Response
33	Northside Independent School District	TX	89,000	101		No Response
34	Fulton County	GA	88,299	98		No Identified Supervisor
35	Long Beach Unified	CA	87,509	92	32	Participant
36	Jefferson County School District No R 1	CO	85,946	162		Declined
37	Milwaukee School District	WI	85,381	215		No Identified Supervisor
38	Austin Independent School District	TX	83,483	120	117	Participant
39	Baltimore City Public Schools	MD	82,266	194	108	Participant

40	Jordan District	UT	81,485	99		No Response
41	Lee	FL	79,434	117		No Response
42	Fort Worth Independent School District	TX	79,285	147		No Response
43	Fresno Unified	CA	76,621	106		No Identified Supervisor
44	Davidson County School District	TN	74,312	139		Declined
45	Denver County 1	CO	74,189	143		Participant
46	Prince Wm County Public Schools	VA	73,917	83	79	Participant
47	Anne Arundel County Public Schools	MD	73,653	124		No Response
48	Brevard	FL	73,098	121		No Identified Supervisor
49	Guilford County Schools	NC	72,951	119		No Response
50	Va Beach City Public Schools	VA	71,554	84		No Response
51	Greenville 01	SC	70,441	94		No Response
52	Mesa Unified District	AZ	70,346	90		No Response
53	Granite District	UT	70,166	115		No Response
54	Fort Bend Independent School District	TX	68,708	68	73	Participant
55	Pasco	FL	66,784	102		No Response
56	Davis District	UT	66,614	100	86	Participant
57	Washoe County School District	NV	65,421	104		No Response
58	Seminole	FL	64,927	73		No Response
59	North East Independent School District	TX	63,452	73	66	Participant
60	Arlington Independent School District	TX	63,045	76		No Response

61	Volusia	FL	63,018	96	66	Participant
62	Mobile County	AL	62,531	113		No Response
63	El Paso Independent School District	TX	62,322	93		No Identified Supervisor
64	Alpine District	UT	62,281	71	74	Participant
65	Elk Grove Unified	CA	62,172	66		No Identified Supervisor
66	Aldine Independent School District	TX	61,526	72	72	Participant
67	Chesterfield County Public Schools	VA	59,080	64	46/89	Pilot District
68	Douglas County School District No Re 1	CO	58,723	79	80	Participant
69	Garland Independent School District	TX	57,510	74	82	Participant
70	Santa Ana Unified	CA	57,439	60	7	Participant
71	Tucson Unified District	AZ	57,391	125		No Identified Supervisor
72	Loudoun County Public Schools	VA	56,894	73		No Response
73	Katy Independent School District	TX	56,862	55		No Response
74	Boston	MA	55,923	137	27	Participant
75	Knox County School District	TN	55,535	87		No Response
76	San Francisco Unified	CA	55,183	113		No Response
77	San Bernardino City Unified	CA	54,727	73		No Response
78	San Antonio Independent School District	TX	54,696	100		Declined
79	Cumberland County Schools	NC	54,288	87		No Identified Supervisor
80	Plano Independent School District	TX	54,203	75		No Response



81	Columbus City	OH	53,536	132		No Identified Supervisor
82	Forsyth County Schools	NC	52,906	78	72	Participant
83	Capistrano Unified	CA	52,681	61		No Identified Supervisor
84	Corona Norco Unified	CA	52,138	50		No Identified Supervisor
85	Osceola	FL	51,941	60	47	Participant
86	Pasadena Independent School District	TX	51,578	64		No Response
87	Cherry Creek 5	CO	51,199	57		No Identified Supervisor
88	Lewisville Independent School District	TX	50,216	64	65	Participant
89	Cleveland Municipal	OH	49,952	108		No Response
90	Howard County Public Schools	MD	49,905	73		No Response
91	Clayton County	GA	49,508	65		No Identified Supervisor
92	Atlanta Public Schools	GA	49,032	107		Declined
93	Henrico County Public Schools	VA	48,991	69	83	Participant
94	Anchorage School District	AK	48,837	97	82	Participant
95	Brownsville Independent School District	TX	48,587	55	59	Participant
96	Garden Grove Unified	CA	48,574	67		No Identified Supervisor
97	Sacramento City Unified	CA	48,155	90		No Identified Supervisor
98	Omaha Public Schools	NE	48,014	98	87	Participant
99	Conroe Independent School District	TX	47,996	51	46	Participant
100	Shelby County School District	TN	47,448	51	71	Participant

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*80 Districts with Identified School Library Supervisors*

	School District	State	Number of Students	Number of Schools	# of Reported School Librarian
1	New York City Public Schools	NY	981,690	1,496	303
2	Los Angeles Unified	CA	687,534	860	
4	City of Chicago School District 299	IL	421,430	630	
5	Dade	FL	345,525	496	284
7	Broward	FL	256,351	303	
8	Houston Independent School District	TX	200,225	296	101
9	Hillsborough	FL	192,007	285	145
10	Hawaii Department of Education	HI	179,478	290	
11	Orange	FL	172,257	236	102
12	Palm Beach	FL	170,757	247	
13	Fairfax County Public Schools	VA	169,030	193	
14	Philadelphia City School District	PA	159,867	274	
15	Dallas Independent School District	TX	157,352	232	238
17	Montgomery County Public Schools	MD	139,282	204	
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26	Baltimore County Public Schools	MD	103,180	172	
27	Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District	TX	100,685	78	83
28	Dekalb County	GA	99,775	146	
29	Jefferson County	KY	98,774	174	151
30	Detroit City School District	MI	97,577	197	4
31	Albuquerque Public Schools	NM	95,934	174	143
32	Polk	FL	94,657	156	
33	Northside Independent School District	TX	89,000	101	
35	Long Beach Unified	CA	87,509	92	32
36	Jefferson County School District No R 1	CO	85,946	162	
38	Austin Independent School District	TX	83,483	120	117
39	Baltimore City Public Schools	MD	82,266	194	108
40	Jordan District	UT	81,485	99	
41	Lee	FL	79,434	117	
42	Fort Worth Independent School District	TX	79,285	147	

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55	Pasco	FL	66,784	102	
56	Davis District	UT	66,614	100	86
57	Washoe County School District	NV	65,421	104	
58	Seminole	FL	64,927	73	
59	North East Independent School District	TX	63,452	73	66
60	Arlington Independent School District	TX	63,045	76	
61	Volusia	FL	63,018	96	66
62	Mobile County	AL	62,531	113	

	School District	State	Number of Students	Number of Schools	# of Reported School Librarian
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66	Aldine Independent School District	TX	61,526	72	72
67	Chesterfield County Public Schools	VA	59,080	64	46/89
68	Douglas County School District No Re 1	CO	58,723	79	80
69	Garland Independent School District	TX	57,510	74	82
70	Santa Ana Unified	CA	57,439	60	7
72	Loudoun County Public Schools	VA	56,894	73	
73	Katy Independent School District	TX	56,862	55	
74	Boston	MA	55,923	137	27
75	Knox County School District	TN	55,535	87	
76	San Francisco Unified	CA	55,183	113	
77	San Bernardino City Unified	CA	54,727	73	
78	San Antonio Independent School District	TX	54,696	100	
80	Plano Independent School District	TX	54,203	75	
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85	Osceola	FL	51,941	60	47
86	Pasadena Independent School District	TX	51,578	64	
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	School District	State	Number of Students	Number of Schools	# of Reported School Librarian
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94	Anchorage School District	AK	48,837	97	82
95	Brownsville Independent School District	TX	48,587	55	59
98	Omaha Public Schools	NE	48,014	98	87
99	Conroe Independent School District	TX	47,996	51	46
100	Shelby County School District	TN	47,448	51	71

Dear School Librarian:

My name is Elizabeth Burns and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Old Dominion University. My dissertation research explores school library advocacy. I am conducting a survey with a national sample of school librarians to examine their perceptions and practices of advocacy.

The purpose of this study is to examine the understanding and activities of advocacy of school librarians. It explores the relationship between school librarians' understanding of school library advocacy and the strategies they enact in their programs. It also examines the perceived success of the strategies used in their advocacy efforts.

A link to a short survey is below. I hope that you will participate. A robust sample will be beneficial in identifying the understandings and practices of the school library field, as well as identifying successful strategies upon which to build.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SLAdvocacy>

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous and results will be reported in aggregate. Completion of the survey is your consent for your responses to be compiled with others. Although the survey allows the opportunity for supplying your email address for follow-up interviews, this is optional and even if you choose to provide this information you will not be identified with your questionnaire responses. Use of data from this study will be limited to this research, authorized by Old Dominion University's Institutional Review Board. Results from this research may be presented in public presentations and published formats.

Any questions or concerns about this research can be directed to me (703) 589-8609 or the advising professor on this research, Dr. Gail Dickinson at Old Dominion University [gdickins@odu.edu](mailto:gdickins@odu.edu)

I appreciate your participation in this research. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. I genuinely thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Burns  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Teaching and Learning  
Darden College of Education  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA  
[Ebum018@odu.edu](mailto:Ebum018@odu.edu)

Dear School Librarian:

Thank you for your time in completing my survey on School Library Advocacy. I am beginning to analyze the results from that survey. Your responses indicate that you have had some success in the advocacy activities and practices you engage in within your school setting. You also indicated a willingness to participate in an individual interview.

I would like to schedule interviews with a small sample of school librarians in the upcoming weeks. I hope to include you in this group. My schedule is extremely flexible- I hope this will allow us to find a mutually convenient time. These interviews will be conducted online. I can be available from 7:00 AM-9:00 PM EST. I would like to begin the week of XXX

I also would like to schedule a shorter interview with a co-teacher and an administrator from your school. This will give me a valuable perspective of how the library program and efforts to advocate for it are perceived by stakeholders in your community.

If you could please respond with the following information it will allow me to create an interview schedule:

1. Name and email address of administrator I may contact to invite to participate in study.
2. Name and email address of co-teacher I may contact to invite to participate in study.
3. Preferred day/time that may work well for you for an interview. Please plan for one hour.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Elizabeth A. Burns  
Doctoral Candidate- Ph.D. in Education  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Darden College of Education  
Old Dominion University



Hello XXX-

My name is Elizabeth Burns and I am a doctoral student researching school library advocacy. I have gathered some initial data from your school librarian on her understandings and activities of advocacy in your school setting. I am also interested in exploring the perceptions of advocacy by stakeholders in the school community. She has given me your name as a co teacher who may provide an educator's perspective on the school library in your school. The interview will last approx. 30 minutes and will be conducted via video teleconference software.

My schedule is flexible and I can accommodate most days and times. Would there be a time this week that might work for us to meet? Kindly respond with a day and time that is convenient, so I can add you to my calendar.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!  
Elizabeth A. Burns  
Doctoral Candidate- Ph.D. in Education  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Darden College of Education  
Old Dominion University

**INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT****PROJECT TITLE:** School Library Advocacy: Perceptions of Building Influence**INTRODUCTION**

The purposes of this form is to give you information and to record the consent of those who say YES. The title of this study is *School Library Advocacy: Perceptions of Building Influence*. The research study will be conducted using videoconferencing technology.

**RESEARCHERS****Responsible Principal Investigator:**

Gail Dickinson, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and  
Research  
Darden College of Education  
Department Teaching and Learning  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA 23529

**Co-Investigator(s):**

Elizabeth A. Burns, M.S.Ed  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Darden College of Education  
Department of Teaching and Learning  
School Libraries  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA 23529

**DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY**

Few studies have been conducted examining the practice of school library advocacy. Practitioners differ in their perceptions of what constitutes advocacy and the place of advocacy in the management of a school library program. This study attempts to explore the practices of those who are successfully engaging in advocacy. It also solicits input from stakeholders within the school building for their perceptions on the effects of advocacy. Through these understandings, effective advocacy strategies can begin to be developed for the use of others in the school library field.

If you decide to participate, then you will join a study involving research of your experiences with school library advocacy. This research study will be conducted through individual interviews. If you say YES, then your participation will last for approximately 45 minutes.

**EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA**

If you are responding as the school librarian, you should be a working in a K-12 school environment and be responsible for a school library program. You should have personal knowledge of library advocacy.

If responding as the school administrator, you should be working in a K-12 environment and be responsible for the supervision of the school library program and the staff working with the library program.

If responding as a teaching colleague to the school librarian, you should be working in the same school building as the school librarian interviewed for this study. You should have personal knowledge of the school library program at your school, particularly ways in which advocacy for the school library and library position are practiced.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS**

**RISKS:** If you decide to participate in this study, then you may face a risk of feelings of discomfort related to disclosing personal information. The researcher tried to reduce these risks by the volunteer nature of the study as well as having the option to withdraw from the study at anytime. And, as with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

**BENEFITS:** The main benefit to you for participating in this study is for self-growth and reflection that can come from disclosing and processing your thoughts and feelings. Others may benefit from the continued research on school library advocacy. Participants will be provided a copy and summary of the final manuscript.

**COSTS AND PAYMENTS**

The researchers are unable to give you any payment for participating in this study. There is no cost for participating in the study.

**NEW INFORMATION**

If the researchers find new information during this study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will give it to you. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The researchers will take all reasonable measure to keep private information, such as recordings and interview transcripts confidential. Only the researchers listed above will have access to your data. The researcher will remove any identifiers of the data, destroy all tapes and store information in a locked filing cabinet prior to its processing. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but the researcher will not identify you. Of course, your records may be subpoenaed by court order or inspected by government bodies with oversight authority.

**WITHDRAWALPRIVILEGE**

It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later, and walk away or withdraw from the study -- at any time. Your decision will not affect your relationship with Old Dominion University, or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. The researchers reserve the right to withdraw your participation in this study, at any time if they observe potential problems with your continued participation.

**COMPENSATION FOR ILLNESS AND INJURY**

If you say YES, then your consent in this document does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Old Dominion University nor the researchers are able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation for such injury. In the event that you suffer injury as a result of participation in any research project, you may contact Dr. Gail Dickinson, the responsible principal investigator, at 757-683-3938, Dr. Theodore Remley the current IRB chair at 757-683-3326 at Old Dominion University, or the Old Dominion University Office of Research at 757-683-3460 who will be glad to review the matter with you.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT**

By signing this form, you are saying several things. You are saying that you have read this form or have had it read to you, that you are satisfied that you understand this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits. The researchers should have answered any questions you may have had about the research. If you have any questions later on, then the researchers should be able to answer them or you can contact Dr. Gail Dickinson directly at 757-683-3938.

If at any time you feel pressured to participate, or if you have any questions about your rights or this form, then you should call Dr. Theodore Remley, the current IRB chair, at 757-683-3326, or the Old Dominion University Office of Research, at 757-683-3460.

And importantly, by signing below, you are telling the researcher YES, that you agree to participate in this study. The researcher should give you a copy of this form for your records.

SUBJECT PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE DATE

INVESTGATOR PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE DATE

**INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT**

I certify that I have explained to this subject the nature and purpose of this research, including benefits, risks, costs, and any experimental procedures. I have described the rights and protections afforded to human subjects and have done nothing to pressure, coerce, or falsely entice this subject into participating. I am aware of my obligations under state and federal laws, and promise compliance. I have answered the subject's questions and have encouraged him/her to ask additional questions at any time during the course of this study. I have witnessed the above signature(s) on this consent form.

Intro: Thank you for participating in this interview today. I am trying to understand successful advocacy strategies in a typical school library setting. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your identity and responses will be confidential. The session will be recorded then transcribed. You will have an opportunity to read and add to the transcript after the interview. A report of the complete study will be made available to you as well.

Do you have any questions before we start?

1. You are a XX Librarian and you have had XX other education experience outside school library? You didn't start out in the classroom?
2. You have been a school librarian for XX years, how many schools have you worked in? (Prompt to find out prior teaching background, # of principals)
3. How are school librarians certified in state?
4. Could you describe how your program of library is scheduled?
5. How is your library staffed?  
(Prompt about volunteers and student helpers if not mentioned)
6. When I asked what your definition of advocacy was, you stated:
7. Who do you think the stakeholders for your library program are- (prompt- in your school, in the school community, outside the community?)
8. Describe your relationship with your stakeholders in you school? In the community? (Prompt for specific examples)
9. In what ways do other stakeholders advocate for your school library program?
10. You did not think you had seen a situation of library funding or staffing being cut in recent years---- do you think this is district wide, or indicative of your advocacy efforts?
11. Then- you describe your advocacy activities to be: Can you describe these activities? How do they fit into your program?
12. How are they viewed by other stakeholders?
13. In what ways do you feel advocacy has been successful for your school library program?
14. How do you define successful advocacy?

15. How do you measure it?
16. What would you attribute to this success?
17. In what ways do you feel advocacy has been successful for your school library program?
18. What strategies would you suggest to other school librarians needing to advocate for their program?
19. You  agree that you received adequate training in advocacy- what was particularly effective in your training?
20. You listed several obstacles to advocacy.

Intro: Thank you for participating in this interview today. I am trying to understand successful advocacy strategies in a typical school library setting. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your identity and responses will be confidential. The session will be recorded then transcribed. You will have an opportunity to read and add to the transcript after the interview. A report of the complete study will be made available to you as well.

Do you have any questions before we start?

1. How long have you worked with your school librarian?
2. Tell me about your relationship with the school library program as a teaching peer.
3. How would you describe the school library's role in your school?
4. XX defines her advocacy for the program as:  
What does this look like in your school?
5. Do you believe that the perception in your stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, others in the community) is that the school library is a valuable component to your school community?
6. In what ways would you attribute this perception to the success of Lisa's Advocacy?
7. What strategies can you identify that XX uses that effectively convey the message that your school library is valuable to your school community?
8. Is she successful? How would you or your school community go about measuring her success?
9. Your school system is beginning to incorporate advocacy to SL evaluations- what do you think would be a fair way to measure this?
10. In what way does taking on leadership positions within the school or district impact advocacy for the school library program?
11. Do you think others view the school library as an essential component to your school community? Have they become advocates?

Intro: Thank you for participating in this interview today. I am trying to understand successful advocacy strategies in a typical school library setting. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your identity and responses will be confidential. The session will be recorded then transcribed. You will have an opportunity to read and add to the transcript after the interview. A report of the complete study will be made available to you as well.

Do you have any questions before we start?

1. How long have you worked with XX, your school librarian?
2. How many school library programs have you had the opportunity to supervise as an administrator?
3. Tell me about your relationship with the school library program as an administrator.
4. How would you describe the school library's role in your school?
5. XX defines her advocacy for the program as

Do you believe that the perception in your stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, others in the community) is that the school library is a vital component to your school community?

6. In what ways would you attribute this perception to the success of XX Advocacy?
7. Some school systems are beginning to incorporate advocacy to evaluations- How do you as an administrator measure success in advocacy?
8. In what way are you making her accountable in this area?- or are you?
9. If advocacy involves progressing beyond simply valuing the school library to building a perception that the library program is essential, or something the school could not do without- what element are you looking for in a program that makes it essential?
10. In what way will the renovation of your library change the perception of the library program- in addition to the library space?
11. In what way does taking on leadership positions within the school or district impact advocacy for the school library program

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**EDUCATION:**

- 2011- 2014** Doctor of Philosophy, Education: Curriculum and Instruction. Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. **Research Focus: School Library Advocacy**
- 2007- 2009** Master of Science, Secondary Education: School Library Media. Old Dominion University
- 1992- 1996** Bachelor of Arts: English, Minor: Spanish. Old Dominion University

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

- LIBS 676- Library Media Services and the Curriculum** (with Dr. Gail Dickinson). Spring 2013. 3 credits. Old Dominion University
- LIBS 669- Practicum in School Libraries**, University Supervisor of Master's Degree level students in student teaching field experience. Summer 2014. Old Dominion University

**RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS:**

- Burns, E. (2014).** Practitioner Strategies for effective advocacy engagement in the USA. *Proceedings of IFLA WLIC, Lyon, France, 2014*, 16-22.
- Underwood, J. & **Burns, E.** (2014). The disconnect between college and reality. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80.
- Butler, B.M., **Burns, E.**, Hawthorne, K., Innes, A., Frierman, C., & Parrott, J. A. (2014). Reflections on educator and teacher educator development: Implications of pedagogy of teacher education seminar on practice. *Critical Issues in Teacher Education*, 21, 4-20.
- Burns, E.**, Kimmel, S., & Garrison, K. (2013). How common is common?: An analysis of the recommended test exemplars. *Teacher Librarian*, 41(1) 23-27.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

- Burns, E.** (August, 2014). *Practitioner strategies for effective advocacy engagement in the USA*. Paper to be presented at the annual meeting of the IFLA World Library and Information Congress. Lyons, France.
- Burns, E.** (January, 2014). *Practitioner perceptions of school library advocacy*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of Association for Library and Information Science Education. Philadelphia, PA.
- Dickinson, G. & **Burns E.** (November, 2013). *Tying advocacy and assessment together*. Invited presentation at the annual meeting of the Virginia Association of School Librarian's Administrator's Conference, Williamsburg, VA.
- Butler, B., **Burns, E.**, Frierman, C., Hawthorne, K., Innes, A. & Parrott, J. (April, 2013). *Becoming teacher educators: The impact of pedagogy of Teacher Education Seminar on teacher educator identities*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco, CA.