The State of Elementary School Libraries

This infographic is based on data from People for Education’s Annual Ontario School Survey, the 22nd annual survey of elementary schools in Ontario. The data are based on 1,042 responses from elementary schools in 70 of Ontario’s 72 publicly funded school boards, representing 26% of the province’s publicly funded schools.

In Northern Ontario – many elementary school libraries are now closed. Elementary schools with school libraries are typically staffed part-time, with teacher-librarians or library technicians splitting their time between multiple schools.

In Central Ontario, cuts to secondary school staffing have resulted in cuts to school library staffing. Prior to cuts, Halton District School Board allocated a full-time teacher-librarian at all schools with 650 students or more. This has now been cut in half – to 0.5 teacher-librarian for schools of 750 students or more.

In Eastern Ontario, school boards have seen significant cuts in the past year. To cut $11.7 million from its budget, the Upper Canada District School Board was forced to eliminate 160 positions, including 22 library staff.

Southwestern Ontario is a study in contrasts. From the Greater Essex County District School Board – where one teacher-librarian is available for every 763 students (per the funding formula provided by the Ministry of Education), to the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board, where school libraries were closed in 2012.

Average Full-Time Equivalent of Teacher-Librarians Per School (among all schools in the region)

- Northern: 0.09
- GTA: 0.48
- Central: 0.52
- Eastern: 0.09
- Southwestern: 0.18

2019 Statistics Courtesy of People for Education.