School libraries serving disadvantaged populations in the U.S.A.
Lessons learned from six years of grant funding

Yunfei Du
Assistant Professor
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas, U.S.A.

Barbara Stein Martin
Hazel Harvey Peace Professor
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas, U.S.A.

Marjie D. Lorica
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas, U.S.A.

School librarians in schools serving disadvantaged populations were surveyed to determine their perceptions of the most pressing needs in their libraries and their priorities for the application of funding, providing insight into the librarian's perspective on the most important needs in their schools.

School libraries serving disadvantaged populations, grants, evaluation

Background

The Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries (LBF)　is an independent, privately funded foundation with no government contributions or oversight.　A committee of ten professionals representing diverse geographic and ethnic populations across the U.S.A. was formed to establish the guidelines for the grant application, review all subsequent applications, and determine the final awards. The only stipulations made by the foundation's founder was that grant money be used only to acquire books-with a goal of encouraging reading and the love of books-and to focus on the neediest, poorest schools. The Committee also established a criterion that the awards go only to schools employing a librarian meeting the state's requirement for certification. Awards have been made yearly since 2003.

To reach as many students as possible, a limit of $5,000 was initially set for each grant. This was later raised to $6,000. The "neediest" schools were determined by means of the Federal government's "free and reduced lunch " (FRL) statistic, measuring the

percentage of students in each school who receive daily free lunch due to the student's family poverty level. This statistic, which is readily available online in a federal database, is frequently used to determine the relative poverty of a school's population. Initially grants were limited to schools in which at least 75% of the students in the school were FRL eligible. The first year of the grants program more than 6,000 applications were received for just over 100 awards. Beginning in the second year of the granting cycle, the FRL requirement was set at 90%, reducing the number of applications. An online survey was sent to librarians receiving a grant award to determine how the money was used, and how it affected the school libraries.

Literature Review

Evaluation is a process of determining the worth, merit, or value of something and it can be done at individual user level, library organizational level, or community service level (Matthews, 2007, p.17). Evaluation identifies and gathers data about specific services, programs, or activities, establishes set of criteria by which success can be assessed, and determines the quality of the service or activity and the degree to which the service or activity accomplishes stated goals and objectives (Van House et al., 1990 as cited by McClure, 1994).

Cronin (1982) developed an evaluation matrix including categories of user, management, and sponsor over cost, effectiveness, and benefits level. Nicholson (2004) likewise developed a framework for measurement and evaluation of library services that includes a measurement matrix, evaluation criteria, and evaluation viewpoints consisting of users, library personnel, and decision makers. The framework ensures that different perspectives are fully considered "before making decisions, changing policies, or issuing funding for library services".

Evaluation of a library system or its components is done for several reasons. According to McClure (1994), strategic planning and evaluation has the following purpose: it identifies priorities for allocating resources, justifies use of resources and provides basis for future funding request, informs decision makers/governing boards and clients of the "good job" done to generate their support, obtains information about users and non-users for program development, and identifies issues and concerns about the product or service as basis for developing strategies to address these concerns.

Kebede (1999) stated that in general, performance evaluation of library and information systems is done for justification and self-improvement purposes. In developing countries however, performance evaluation of library and information systems offers great potential of addressing major problems within the system (p.109). Resulting data could be used to justify worth/value and resources utilized, improve competitiveness for obtaining financial support, and enhance internal efficiency and services provided to library users.

Bawden (1990) and Wilson (n.d.) also shared the view that resulting data from performance evaluation could be used to assess how well the system meets its objectives or for justification of continuance of a service. Evaluation contributes in making informed decisions and in justifying services.

Meanwhile, Wilson (n.d.) identified several criteria for evaluating library products and services. These criteria included a) success, b) efficiency, c) effectiveness, d) benefits, and e) costs. Evaluating benefits is concerned with the value of a library (or library service) to the community as a whole or to an individual user. Wilson further stated that evaluating benefits is difficult especially when cost is added as in cost-benefit evaluation. He argued though that while "it is difficult to attach money values to benefits, this is not an excuse to avoid trying to evaluate benefits at all". Benefits do not always mean "money values" but philosophical, or ethical, or moral values. McClure (1994) also identified a) extensiveness, b) efficiency, c) effectiveness, and d) impact as basis for evaluating networked information services. Evaluating impact provides information on how a service makes a difference in an activity or situation.

Methods

A survey was sent to past recipients of LBF grants. The instrument was delivered through Survey Monkey online with each person notified through email with directions for accessing the survey. A statement of confidentiality and the estimated length of time to complete the survey were indicated in the preliminary page of the questionnaire. Both the study design and questionnaire were submitted to and approved by the University of North Texas-Institutional Review Board prior to the conduct of the survey.

The questionnaire consisted of 29 closed - and open - ended questions and a 5-point rating scale arranged into five parts. The first part featured questions about the respondents' name, title, educational background, involvement in the grant writing. The second and third portions of the instrument include short questions about the respondents' school and the school library staffing, respectively. The fourth part concerned questions about the LBF grant, the year and amount grant was received, the type of print materials purchased, the impact of the materials on school library collection, on school children, teachers, and school administration, and activities implemented by the school to promote the materials purchased from the grant. Questions also included the most pressing needs of school libraries that the LBF grant administrators need to address in the future as well as respondents' recommendations to improve the LBF grant approval and administration. The last part consisted of five questions on a rating scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

A total of 185 respondents completed the online survey. It should be noted that some respondents may have felt pressure to respond positively. Also, since answers were not required for each question, some respondents opted not to reply to some items. This

study is limited by the low response rate: millions of dollars was awarded to over a thousand schools.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. Individual responses for the open-end questions were sorted and coded to identify the frequency in which terms, phrases, or themes appeared. The most frequently mentioned terms, phrases, or themes were later organized into categories.

Results

Information about the respondents.

A total of 185 responded to the survey, 91% of whom are female (Table 1). A majority of the respondents described themselves as "library media specialists" (35%) or "school librarians" (30 %), with another 11% describing themselves as "Teacher-librarians." School counselors/ coordinators/ facilitators made up 8% of the respondents. School directors (5%), teachers (4%), principals (3%), paraprofessionals (3%), and volunteers (1%) also served as respondents (Table 2).

Table 1. Gender of Respondents

Gender	No.	%
Female	168	91
Male	17	9
Total	*185*	*100*

Table 2. Position Titles of Respondents

Title/Position	No.	%
School Library Media Specialist	65	35
School Librarian	55	30
Teacher- Librarian	8	11
Director	9	11
Teacher	8	4

Coordinator/Facilitator/Counselor/Supervisor	14	8
Principal	7	3
Paraprofessionals / Library Assistant / Media Technicians	7	3
Volunteers	2	1
Total	*185*	*100*

Of the 185 respondents, 154 (83%) were the persons responsible for the school library or school library media center in their capacity as school librarians, school library media specialists, teachers-librarians, paraprofessionals and volunteers, and 139 (75%) of the 185 respondents were certified school librarians and certified school library media specialists. Of the 154 respondents who were responsible for the school library/ school library media center, 139 (90%) were certified school librarians or certified library media specialists (Table 3). It is noteworthy that 92% of respondents were the primary writers of the LBF grant.

Table 3. Information whether the respondents are a) school library media specialists,
b) certified school library media specialists, and c) primary grant writer

Item	No.	% of Total Respondents
Respondents who are school librarian/school library media specialist/person-in-charge of the library	154	83
Respondents who are certified school librarians/certified school library media specialists	139	75
Respondents who are primary writer of the grant	167	92
Total No. of Respondents	*185*	*100*

Data on the educational background of respondents who were certified school librarians or certified school library media specialists show that 39% had MLS/MLIS

degrees, 32% had MA/MS/MLS with school library- or educational media certification, and 13% had BA/BS degrees with school library certification (Table 4).

Table 4. Highest educational level of certified school librarians/school library media specialists

Highest educational level	No.	%
BA/BS	2	1.4
BA/BS and school library certification	18	13
Ongoing MLS/MLIS	2	1.4
Ed Specialist with school library certification	4	3
MA/MAT/M Ed/MS	11	8
MFA	1	.8
MLS/MLIS	54	39
MA/MS/MLS with school library certification/educational media certification	45	32
Doctorate	2	1.4
Total	*139*	*100*

Information about the school

Respondents' schools represented 43 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.). High number of respondents came from the states of New York (20), Texas (20), Tennessee (15), Georgia (10), Louisiana (10), California (8), Pennsylvania (8), Florida (6), Illinois (6), North Carolina (5), and Oklahoma (5). The rest of the States had between 1-4 respondents.

Information about library personnel/staff

Of the 185 respondents, 109 (59%) said that other staff worked in the school library/ school library media center in addition to them, while 76 respondents (41%) said that no additional staff worked in their school library (Table 5). Clerical staff/library aides provided the most assistance to school libraries both in full-time and part-time capacity (Table 6). Professional staff who are not certified school librarians, certified school librarians, and teachers also worked in the school library on full- and part time basis. Adult and student volunteers contributed library assistance particularly on part-time capacity.

Table 5. Information about library staffing

Item	No.	%
Respondents who said that in addition to her/him other staff work in the school library	109	59
Respondents who said that there are no additional staff in the school library	76	41
Total No. of respondents	*185*	*100*

Table 6. Staff working in the school library in addition to the school librarian/library media specialist

Position	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Certified School Librarian	7	1	8
Professional staff not certified school librarian	11	4	15
School Teacher	3	10	13
Clerical staff/library aide	48	33	81
Adult volunteer	1	19	20
Student Volunteer	3	26	29
College Intern	-	1	1
Total	*73*	*94*	*167*

Multiple responses; n=109

Information about the LBF Grant

Year of award and amount received. The LBF grants were awarded beginning 2003. Of the 184 who answered the question, 108 (59%) received grants ranging from $4501-5000, and 40 respondents (23%) received grants from $5501-6000 (Table 7). Seventeen respondents (9%) reported receiving grants less than $3500, and 4 respondents received more than $6,000. It should be noted that of the 62 respondents who received their LBF grants in 2008, more than (56%) of them received grants ranging from $5501-6000.

Table 7. Year of award and amount received

Year	<3500	3500-4500	4501-5000	5001-5500	5501-6000	>6000	Total
2003	1	-	10	1	-	-	12
2004	3	-	5	-	-	-	8
2005	1	-	19	1	1	-	22
2006	2	1	29	1	1	-	34
2007	6	2	30	3	3	1	45
2008	4	3	15	3	35	3	63
Total	*17*	*6*	*108*	*9*	*40*	*4*	*84*

Interestingly, the number of respondents increased with the year; 2004 had the least number of respondents (7); and 2008 had the most (62).

Use of the grant money. Of the 162 respondents to the question whether the grant money was spent the way it was proposed, 158 (97.5%) answered in the affirmative, while 4 (2.5%) said that the money was not spent as proposed (Table 8). Reasons why money was not used as proposed included: library position was closed, full amount was not given, grant money was used for other purpose, and current librarian "is new and has no prior information on how the money was used."

Table 8. Information whether the LBF grant money was spent the way it was proposed

Item	No.	%
Respondents who answered grant money was spent as proposed	158	97.5
Respondents who answered grant money was not spent as proposed	4	2.5
Number of respondents who answered the question	*162*	

Type of print materials purchased from the grant. Findings show the greatest amount of grant money went to curriculum related non-fiction (80%) especially science and social sciences, fiction and leisure reading (72%), followed by multicultural books

(48%) targeted to special populations, most notably Latinos, African-Americans, immigrants, and poor readers (Table 9). The grant money was also used for reference materials (39%), magazines (16 %), and subscriptions (15%). Others (18%) used the money to purchase materials in non-print format such as audio books, books on CDs/tapes, or interactive e-books. It should be noted that initially the grant guidelines allowed for purchase of books only, but in later years this was changed to allow some alternative book forms.

Table 9. Type of materials purchased from the grant

Type of material	No.	%
Nonfiction/subject area books	127	80
Fiction	115	72
Multicultural books	77	48
Reference books	62	39
Magazines	26	16
Subscriptions	23	15
Others	28	18

Multiple responses, n=159 respondents

Materials purchased if respondents had option. The LBF grant was awarded to recipient schools to purchase books. If given the option or flexibility to purchase materials other than those indicated in the grant application, 46 respondents (34%) out of 135 who answered the question said that they would purchase other type of print materials (other than what they bought), while 38 (28%) respondents said that they would purchase exactly the same type of materials they requested (Table 10). Respondents listed a wide array of books that they would have purchased: reference materials, fiction, nonfiction and subject area books, graphic novel collection, award-winning books, paperbacks, high-interest low level books/easy reader books, multicultural/bilingual/English language learner books, among others.

Given the option, respondents said that they would have purchased non-print/audio-visual materials (17%), electronic/digital/online resources (8%), computer hardware/software and media equipment (4%), and others (8%). Non-print materials mentioned were audio books, subject-area DVDs, videos, and books on tape, play-aways, among others. For electronic resources, online databases and journals, electronic reference materials, e-books, reading quizzes online, etc were mentioned. For computer units and equipment, DVD players, e-book readers, MP3 players, and headphones were likewise

indicated.

Table 10. Materials respondents would have purchased from the grant if they had option

Type of material	No.	%
The same materials purchased	38	28
Other type of books/print materials	46	34
Non-print/audiovisual materials	23	17
Electronic/digital/online resources	11	8
Magazines and journals	7	5
Computer software/hardware and electronic equipment	6	4
Others	12	8

Multiple responses, n= 135

Others also mentioned furnishings for their library, use of the LBF funds for staff development, purchase of hands-on materials for science experiments, literacy kits, etc.

Activities implemented to promote the materials from the LBF grant. Recipient schools and school libraries implemented a variety of creative activities to disseminate information about the LBF grant and promote the materials purchased from the grant.

Major activities cited by respondents were presentation and announcements during faculty/staff/school board and PTA meetings (68%), preparing book list (66%), book talk (66%), and school paper/newsletter/bulletin board postings (65%).

To increase awareness of the new materials, respondents made announcements in school website (41%), included the materials in book clubs' reading list (23%), or made special display of the materials in the library or other prominent places in the school such as the hallway or cafeteria (10%). In addition, the new materials were also featured in local newspapers and TV networks (8%).

Some school libraries organized special events such as open houses, inaugural receptions, book celebrations, and author's visit (7%), or promotional events with students such as lottery, reading contests, or using book in special school projects (3%). Others created special book plates and stickers/labels with the LBF name and logo, shelved the books in a separate/special place, and showed the pictures of the books in a digital frame.

Table 11. Activities implemented by the school and the school library to promote materials purchased from the LBF grant

Activity	No.	%
Preparing Book List	104	66
Book Talk	104	66
School Paper/Newsletter/Bulletin Board Postings	103	65
Presentation and/or Announcement during Faculty, Staff, School Board, or PTA meetings	108	68
Announcement in School Website	65	41
Inclusion in Book Clubs Reading List	37	23
Display of materials purchased from LBF grant in the school library or other prominent places (hallways, etc)	16	10
Newspaper and/or TV features of the materials purchased from the LBF grant	13	8
Informal discussion/conversation with teachers and students/Reader's advisory	14	8
Holding of special events such as Open House, Inaugural Reception, Book celebrations, author's visit to the school	12	7
Book Plates and stickers/labels with LBF name and logo	10	6
Sending bibliography/notification list to teachers by email/Direct notification	6	4
Promotional events with students such as lottery, reading contests, using books in school projects	5	3
Accelerated Reader program	3	2
Special shelving of books	2	1
Showing pictures of the materials in digital picture frame	1	2

Multiple responses, n= 158 respondents

Librarians' perceptions of the general impact on schools receiving the award

Impact on school library collection. The materials purchased from the LBF grant created two major impacts on school library collection (Table 12). From the grant money, 83 (53%) out of 156 who responded to the question said that the materials enhanced their collection of fiction books, reference/research materials, nonfiction/subject area books, books for pleasure reading, African-American- and Native-American themed books, multicultural books, and books for English language learners, among others. Respondents (44%) were also categorical in saying that the books updated the copyright age of their books, particularly subject area books in support of the curriculum.

Respondents (10%) also cited that the LBF grant added new materials into their collection, in the form of new type of print material such as graphic novels, picture books, award winning titles, high interest-low level books and periodicals, or in another format such as audio books, books on tapes or books with CDs.

Respondents (5%) also mentioned that with the grant, they were able to start a new library or were able to rebuild their library after their collection was damaged. One respondent said that the grant enabled their institution to start a collection of books for incarcerated youth.

Table 12 . Impact of materials purchased from the LBF grant on school library collection

Response	No.	%
Enhanced school library collection	83	53
Updated school library collection	68	44
Added new materials(in the form of new type of material or new format) into the school library collection	15	10
Started new library/rebuilt school library collection	7	5

Multiple responses, n= 156 respondents

Impact on school children. Responses on the impact of the materials purchased from the grant on children were overwhelming (Table 13). The impact or benefits cited were: more children are checking out books (31%); children have more access to books and other resources like new or current titles, books for leisure reading, reading level and age appropriate books, bilingual and multicultural books, and resources in non-print format (26%). The grant also enabled the children to have more access to subject area books used in the curriculum, and reference materials that students used in their research, assignments and school projects (19%).

With the materials from the grant, the respondents cited that children were reading more books (16%). Some respondents noted in their answers that non-readers, reluctant readers, English language learners, and students from immigrant families are now reading more. One

respondent particularly noted that incarcerated children in their institution have discovered love for reading because of the library collection they started from the LBF grant.

The respondents also indicated that with the materials purchased from the LBF grant, more children have become excited about reading (15%), and have renewed their interests towards their library manifested by children's more frequent visit to the library (9%). They also noted that more children are reading as a leisure activity (9%).

It is noteworthy that some respondents expressed that the materials contributed to improved school performance of the children (4%). Respondents said that with the books, children are better prepared for state tests, are winning more awards, are studying at more depth, and have obtained higher scores on standard testing. Further, children are getting involved in book-related activities (4%) such as book clubs, reading class, are submitting book reviews, and are taking better care of their books.

Table 13. Impact of materials purchased from the LBF grant on the school children

Response	No.	%
More children are checking out more books	48	31
Children have more access to books and other resource materials in the school library	41	26
Children have more access to subject area books used in the curriculum	30	19
Children are reading more books	25	16
More children have become excited about reading	24	15
More children have renewed their interest toward the school library	14	9
More children are reading as a leisure activity	14	9
Children have improved their school performance	7	4
More students are participating in book-related activities	7	4
Children have developed increased self-esteem	7	4

Multiple responses, n= 156 respondents

Respondents also expressed their observations that by providing input to book selection, or in having books that reflect their culture, or in being able to check-out books more often, children's self-esteem increased (4%).

Impact on teachers. Respondents cited numerous advantages or benefits of the materials on school teachers (Table 14) foremost of which is the increased access by teachers of new and up-to-date books to support/supplement their curricular needs (32%). Respondents said that with the materials, teachers use these books to introduce, enhance, and supplement their lessons.

Respondents also cited that teachers used resources in the library in their lesson plans and in their teaching (11%). Teachers incorporated many of the new books in their content areas. Teachers also assigned students with classroom projects, research reports, book talks and others using these new materials (13%). Teachers designed research topics around these new library resources.

Another equally important impact as indicated by the respondents was increase in teacher-librarian interaction and collaboration which the respondents attribute primarily to the teachers' input to book selection (10%). Teachers were happy to provide suggestions on what books to order, and having received what they need, teachers, according to the respondents, now view the school library as their own. In addition, teachers after getting the materials they requested developed projects around these books. Likewise, the teachers solicited the librarians' cooperation in designing lessons and projects to make good use of the books.

Table 14. Impact of materials purchased from the LBF grant on the teachers

Response	No.	%
Teachers have access to new and up-to-date books that support/supplement their curricular needs	50	32
Teachers have incorporated resources in the library in their lesson plans and into their teaching	17	11
Teachers assign students classroom projects, research, reports, book talks, author studies, or independent reading tasks using the new materials	20	13
There is increased teacher-librarian interaction and collaboration because of teachers' inputs in book selection	16	10
Teachers are using the library more often	15	10
Teachers have more multicultural books to choose from	11	7
Teachers use the books to introduce change or innovation in	6	4

their classroom teaching or curriculum		
Teachers feel proud of their school library collection	4	2
Teachers have reduced trips to the public library since books are already available in the school library	2	1
Teachers and staff from other school have borrowed library books through Inner-Library Loan	1	.6
Books have improved classroom management since students have books to read after their classroom work	1	.6
No benefit	1	.6

Note: multiple responses, n= 155 respondents

With the new books, respondents said that teachers use the school library more often (10%). They check-out books for students' use, bring classes to the library to check-out books and for library instruction, and send children to the library to read, do research, and work on their curricular projects.

Respondents also mentioned the impact of the LBF grant on acquiring multicultural materials (7%). With the books, teachers gained varied multicultural resources to choose from, which they use for ESL, ELL, and bilingual students. Additionally, teachers got ideas from the books to introduce change or innovation in their classroom teaching or curriculum (4%). In one particular instance, a teacher set up a center where Hispanic children could listen to audio books/books on CDs which were purchased from the LBF grant.

Two teacher-respondents said that with their new collection, they reduced their trips to the public library since books were now available in their school library.

Impact on school administration. The effects of the grant on school administration are many and varied. Respondents cited that school administration was very pleased and grateful of the LBF grant (19%), had become more supportive of the school library/library media center since receiving the grant (10%), and felt proud of the grant received (10%). To show their pride of their school libraries, respondents said that school administrators announced the grant during meetings, "advertised" the school libraries to other districts, or held meetings in the library to show the large library collection.

Some respondents mentioned that school administrators provided more funds to the school library after receiving the grant to buy new materials and updated the collection (8%). In one instance, a respondent said that the principal provided funds to keep the library open after school hours. Respondents also noted that since receiving the grant, school administration had shown more respect and appreciation for the school library collection (8%). Respondents said school administration was impressed with the selection of books for instructional purposes, realized the value of high quality collection, and became aware of the connection between

current books in formats that are interesting to students, and increased reading. The grant also made the school administration realize the inadequate funding for the school library (3%).

Remarkably, the materials from the grant opened other opportunities for the school to implement new projects and initiatives (6%). Respondents cited that the grant served as a catalyst for continued curricular improvement and enabled flexible scheduling in the library. Activities were implemented such as a grant writing workshop for teachers and staff, or a Readers' Circle Program for students to foster love for reading. Noteworthy was the comment by one respondent that the grant helped the school obtain accreditation; the first time the school earned that ranking.

The effect of the grant on school administration was felt by some respondents on a personal level. Five respondents said that school administration acknowledged and recognized their efforts in getting the award. Some librarians received certificate of recognition during the Awards Assembly, or got a "huge hug" from the principal who announced the grant through the school intercom. One respondent said that her position as school librarian was retained in the face of teachers' lay-off because of the grant.

While the effect of the grant on school administration was over-all positive, eleven (8%) respondents said that the grant had little effect or no impact. Some said that they have not heard from the administration, or that the grant produced no effect except for the prestige. One respondent said that the position of school librarian was even eliminated.

Some respondents (6%) said that the grant took the pressure off from school administrators from providing funding for the library or allowing school money to be used for other priorities. Some respondents were candid in saying that the administrators appreciated the grant for the "monetary value of updating the library without costing the school district any money," others reported, "teachers and librarians would not ask school funds for library." Others said that the funds provided a relief in the budgetary line item that had no money available.

Table 15. Impact of materials purchased from the LBF grant on school administration

Response	No.	%
School administration is very pleased and grateful of the LBF grant	28	19
School administration is more supportive of the school library/media center since receiving the grant	15	10
School administration feel proud of the LBF grant received/promoted the library to other districts	13	10

School administration provided more funds to the school library (after receiving the grant money)	12	8
School administration has more respect and appreciation for the school library collection	10	7
LBF grant opened other opportunities for school to start/implement new projects/initiatives	9	6
School administrations acknowledged and recognized efforts of school librarians in getting the grant	5	3
School administration realized the value of the school library to the community	3	2
School administration/principal promoted/advertised the school library to other school district, faculty, and community	3	2
School administration realized the inadequate funding for the school library	3	2
School administration retained the school librarian position	1	1
The grant took the pressure off from the school administrators to provide funding for the school library	9	6
Little effect/no impact	11	8

Multiple responses, n= 146respondents

Pressing needs in U. S. school libraries for the LBF to address in the future

On the question regarding the most pressing needs of U.S. school libraries, 84 respondents (56%) out of the 150 who provided answers to the question still considered book collection development, enhancement and updating as the most pressing need. The respondents stated that it is very important to maintain adequate book collection, and to purchase new books to replace old or weeded materials. The most frequently mentioned types of books were nonfiction and biographies, multicultural materials (bilingual books), high-interest-low level books, fiction and books for leisure reading, among others (Table 16).

Advocacy of critical issues affecting school libraries was a priority need that respondents stated should be addressed by LBF. Respondents (13%) mentioned the following as major advocacy areas: importance of school libraries and school media programs; vital role of qualified school librarians/school library media specialists and legislating MLIS graduates in school libraries; increased funding for school libraries; job security for school librarians, school library media specialists, and library staff; advocacy for

literacy programs; and creating a core of volunteers from among retired school librarians to train others, or serve as volunteer school librarians.

Other library materials that respondents considered as "pressing needs" were: electronic/digital media resources; computer software/hardware and new teaching technology and equipment; and non-print/audiovisual materials.

Respondents also mentioned the need for LBF to support school libraries in low socio-economic areas or underserved populations and to provide bigger amount of grants. They also pointed out the need for funds to hire certified school librarians/library media specialists and staff, and funds to hire staff to keep library open after school.

Table 16. Most pressing needs in school libraries for the LBF to address in the future

Response	No.	%
Book collection development, enhancement, and updating	84	56
Advocacy by LBF on critical issues	19	13
Support for electronic/digital media resources	13	9
Support for computer software/ hardware and equipment	13	9
Support for school libraries in low socioeconomic area/underserved populations	10	7
Bigger LBF grants	9	6
Purchase of non-print/audio visual materials	7	5
Funding support for library staff	7	5
Others	12	8

Multiple responses, n= 150 respondents

Discussions and Conclusions

This study provides insight to how the LBF grant money was spent and the librarians' perceptions of the general impact on the schools receiving the awards. Since most of the schools were located in poverty areas, the results of the survey may be of interest to impoverished areas in other countries. Librarians reported significant increases in circulation and general use of the library. This may suggest that limited infusion of money into libraries could have a significant

impact if it is properly managed. Most schools in the study were required to have a State qualified school librarian and were restricted to spending the money only on books in a defined area of need.

These librarians reported overwhelming gains in the power of their libraries in the lives of their students. This may be simply the affect of a collection of up-to-date and well-selected books. But these early and limited results may also reflect an elevated attitude of the librarian who, armed with the latest books, went about their jobs even more enthusiastically. One librarian stated, "Before we received the new books purchased with the LBF grant, yearly circulation was 6,976 books. The year after we purchased new books using the LBF grant money, circulation increased to 10,332 books. Having shiny new books increased circulation, both by students and teachers. Having new books MATTERS."

References

Bawden, D. (1990) User-Oriented Evaluation of Information Systems and Services, Aldershot, England: Gower.

Cronin, B. (1982). Taking the measurement of service. ASLIB Proceedings, 34(6/7), 271- 294.

Kebede, G. (1999). Performance Evaluation in Library and Information Systems of Developing Countries: A Study of the Literature. Libri, 49, 106–119. Retrieved May 4, 2009 from http://www.librijournal.org/pdf/1999-2pp106-119.pdf

Matthews, J. (2007). The evaluation and measurement of library services. West, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

McClure, C. R. (1994, Spring). User-based data collection techniques and strategies for evaluating networked information services. Library Trends.42 (4), 591-607.

Nicholson, S. (2004). A conceptual framework for the holistic measurement and cumulative evaluation of library services. Journal of Documentation, 60 (2). Retrieved April 30, 2009 from http://dlist.sir.arizona.edu/724/01/holistic.pdf

Wilson, T. (n.d.). Evaluation strategies for library/information systems. Retrieved April 30, 2009 from http://informationr.net/tdw/publ/papers/evaluation85.html

Biographical note

Yunfei Du is Associate Professor in Library and Information Sciences at the University of North Texas since 2008 and his research topic is distributed education and cognitive styles. He works with the Laura Bush Foundation to maintain the database, application, and website - www.laurabushfoundation.org.

Barbara Stein Martin is the Hazel Harvey Peace Professor in Library and Information Sciences at the University of North Texas since 1984 and her research topic is cognitive styles and school librarianship. She is a member of the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries advisory board.

Marjie Lorica is a graduate student in Library and Information Sciences at the University of North Texas. She earned a doctorate degree from the Philippines.

Statement of Originality

This statement certifies that the paper above is based upon original research undertaken by the authors and that the paper was conceived and written by the authors alone and has not been published elsewhere. All information and ideas from others are referenced.