

## **A summary of library cuts as reported by MEMO members from December 11 through December 21,**

**2006.** Compiled and slightly edited by Doug Johnson, MEMO Legislative Chair <dougj@doug-johnson.com>

December 21, 2006

This request from the Minnesota Library Association's legislative chair went out on our state school library and technology listserv on December 11, 2006:

We've received a request for information from Rep. Mary Murphy. She is the incoming chair of the umbrella committee over all of the education funding divisions (early childhood, K-12, and higher ed) in the House. She indicated that she thinks libraries have suffered some neglect over the past few years and she wants to address that this coming session. She asked us to compile information about the impact of the lack of funding. Please also include any cuts or closures that you may be aware of in your school districts' media centers

As of December 21, 2006 I have received information about cuts in about 30 school districts (out of 339 total in Minnesota).

### **Responses:**

White Bear Lake Elementary school libraries have been experiencing cuts with the declining enrollment. 2006-2007 school year. Cuts involved reduction of licensed staff hours. One school's librarian time dropped from full time to .8, one school went from a .9 to .4, and the last school went from .6 to .5. Other schools in the area shifted funds to maintain the programs at full time. A separate line item was cut about two years ago which provided funds for district media items which were shared by all elementary schools. With the failure of a levy to pass, the district is facing major reduction of funds. The fate of the media centers has yet to be determined.

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My library media position in the Proctor Schools was eliminated due to budget cuts. There was always a librarian in all the elementary schools (past 50 years) but due to budget cuts the position was eliminated and presently the position does not exist. Our elementary students do not have a librarian to help with the purchasing of books, teaching of library media skills etc.

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District 309 has three media centers – one in each building (elementary, middle school and high school). During the school year ending 2002, our media centers were each staffed by one full-time licensed media specialist and one full-time media assistant. We have lost staff over the past four years; currently we have two full-time media specialists (one serving the K-8 building who provides prep at the elementary level and one at the high school) and one assistant (half-time in the elementary media center and half-time in the middle school media center).

In addition to the staff cuts, our budgets for supplies, books and periodicals have been reduced as follows:

- High School – 2006-7 - \$5,000 for all media supplies, periodicals and books down from \$13, 600 in 2005-2006
- Middle School – 2005-6 - \$10,000 for all media supplies, periodicals and books down from \$13,000 in 2004-5
- Elementary School – 2006-7 - \$3,700 for all media supplies, periodicals and books down from \$12,500 in 2004-5

The budgets for each building are built by the business manager, but the funds are approved for spending by the building principals. In most of the last 4 years, funds from the media center budgets at the high school and elementary school have been reallocated mid-year for other building expenses.

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It is my intent to convey to you the dire straits in the Saint Paul Public School district (ISD #625) concerning cuts to the Library Media programs in schools.

As far as budgets go, many of the Elementary schools have gone without a budget for several years. Most of the high schools have stayed the same at \$10,000 for everything including periodicals, mending tape, toner cartridges, books, databases not paid for by the district or state, etc. Thus, elementary schools are unable to replenish the materials needed for information gathering or even pure enjoyment of reading! They cannot even afford tape to repair old materials. Donations from the basement of homes just don't do it!

Our students will be competing in colleges and the work force with students from other areas that have the luxury, it seems, of funding for certified staff and budgets to obtain information. Equality is not part of the equation!

2005-2006 total number of SPPS schools 67, schools served by certified Media Specialist (many of which serve more than one school) 36 and 2 half time people

2006-2007 total number of SPPS schools 66, only 22 have full-time library media specialists, 14 have part-time library media specialists and 30 have either parent volunteers, education assistants, teaching assistants or no one staffing the library media centers

For the 2003-04 school year all the elementary audiovisual directors were cut. These positions are part of the media specialists extended contracts.

For the 2004-05 school year all the media assistants had their hours reduced (8 hr/day cut to 6.5 hr/day, part-time had almost 1 hr/day cut) and their extra day beyond the school year was cut. All general fund library budgets cut 5%, plus some were completely eliminated. 50% of book budget was cut.

For the 2005-06 school year all the media specialists extended contract days were reduced from 5 days to 3 days. Also all general fund budgets for the elementary media centers were cut.

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In the Warroad Public School District there are three buildings with libraries - the elementary school, the middle school, and the high school. At one time - there were three media specialists in the district, one in each of the buildings. Currently, there are none. The district first cut the middle school position for the 2004-2005 school year, and the following school year, the other two positions were cut, so that during the 2005-2006 school year there were no media specialists working in the district. Since then, three paraprofessionals have staffed the libraries, with no licensed media specialist overseeing them. Due to this reduction in staff, the hours that the libraries are open to students have also been reduced.

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I am currently the Media Specialist in Virginia, MN. In the past few years we have been affected by the following library cuts, to name a few:

**Staffing:**

\*We used to have 3 full time media people. Currently I am the only one serving K-12 (approx. 1800 students). Elementary teachers bring their own classes to the library. We carry on as best we can.

\*We have a 13 hour/week Library Aide in the 7-12 Resource Center, a 13 hour/week Library Aide in the K-3 Library, but the 13 hour/week Library Aide in the 4-6 Library was cut several years ago.

**Automation:**

\*Unfortunately we are not automated and we were not able to be part of the E2T2, ALS Automation Grant last year because school districts can only participate in one E2T2 grant. The library budget cannot afford the start-up costs and the annual renewal costs. We remain quite old fashioned, but again do the best we can helping students and teachers.

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I resigned my position as middle/high school (6-12) media specialist this past spring (2006) to take a job in the Rochester school district. The district did not advertise for a media specialist and instead added the position to the elementary media specialist's load. She now serves K-12 between 3 buildings. So the district went from 2 full-time media specialists to one. A part-time paraprofessional position was added to the ms/hs media center, resulting in full-time para coverage in that media center. One full-time para serves two elementary schools. In none of the schools is there time for the media specialist to conduct instruction.

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Robbinsdale is cutting 4.5 million dollars from next year's budget. When school funding falls behind, all programs suffer and library media and technology program is no exception. We have managed, with cuts for technology funding for elementary schools, to maintain our professional staffing at each school. We were able to make a strong case for importance of library media staff in improving reading achievement and teaching information literacy. Hours for educational assistants will be cut. In elementary and middle schools, educational assistants manage the circulation and re-shelving of more than 20,000 books per year.

District support for materials budgets in schools have been slashed. School budgets that are allocated to library media collections have been static or falling for years, so these district funds were an important source supporting the purchase of library books and media.

Funding for online databases and professional training have also been cut. Many of our schools have less than \$6.00 per student to buy library materials. With the average book price increasing and use and loss increasing, our book collections are not being maintained, much less improved.

If there is no increase in funding for schools and if our planned referendum for next fall fails, the district will cut 4.5 million next year, and the year after that. Class sizes will continue to increase and all teaching and learning resources, activities, and programs will be decimated.

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International Falls School District: Library / Media Center room space was cut in half. A wall was installed and the room was reduced to make a computer classroom next door. In 2000, the high school library aide position was cut. Shortly after that, the full time

licensed media person for the high school was cut to 1/2 time. Study hall was assigned to the library at the high school, along with ISS students!

In 2005-6, the full time elementary media person was cut to 1/2 time and given 1/2 time at the secondary level. A full time media aide was added at the secondary level in place of the licensed cut and additional hours were added for an elementary aide to cover the library so the licensed media person can be the district wide licensed media person. Study hall students are still assigned to the high school library but ISS has been assigned to a classroom. The licensed media person now supervises three aides (2 full time, and 1/2 time) at two elementary schools and the high school. None of the aides are licensed and are now teaching lessons with the students, taking on teacher duties - discipline, etc in the libraries.

The elementary budget has remained the same for books. The dollar amount is below the average recommended per student according to the report in *School Library Journal*. The district did purchase new furniture and capital items for each of the three libraries in the district, which was desperately needed. The secondary book budget is below the national average and a supply budget was cut this year (2006).

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When I first was hired the Fall of 1999 the Lake of the Woods Media Center was staffed by 3 full-time employees: one full-time Media Specialist, one Elementary Paraprofessional and myself, a High School Paraprofessional. We used to keep the Media Center open after school until 5:00 p.m. for students to do research and use the computers. The cuts and changes we have seen since then are as follows: Media Specialist is now also the Activities Director and just this year started teaching 2 classes of 7th grade Geography (he is only in the Media Center about 2 -2 1/2 hours a day. The Elementary Paraprofessional has been cut to 3 days a week and 2 nights after school for students to work. To save the school district money I am was hired as a full-time bus driver, so I am only in the Media Center for 6 hours a day vs 8 hours. The Lake of the Woods Media Center staff has gone from an average of 21.75 combined hours per day to a less than 13 hours. With further cuts needed district wide it is any one's guess what cuts will be made in the Media Center budget or staff next year." It is typical of what is happening in the NCLC multitype region.

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We have been able to maintain staff and budget over the last three years. But there has been no increase in funding even though the student population has remained stable. This has made it impossible for us to purchase additional databases for magazines, newspapers, etc.

At Owatonna Junior High the story is different. They did not replace their licensed media professional when she left the district three years ago. The best they have managed it a part time teacher who (supposedly) is seeking media licensure. There are no prospects for change.

The elementaries are down to one full time person for five (5) buildings. She also is approaching retirement and I fear for the future.

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Kasson-Mantorville only has one full time librarian in a district of 2000 students, 3 schools, prep time for the elementary classes, (which number 29 classes in a week). The high school full time position was cut 3 years ago.

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Upon the retirement of the 0.6 elementary media specialist (teaching and library management), the duties were assigned to me, thus closing the high school library after 10:30 a.m. every day. I travel 2 miles to the elementary school. There are no district-paid library aides, only a special education student paid through Job Service for 2 hours a day at the elementary. We are a district with 3 buildings (one is a juvenile lockup), about 600 students and I am the only 1.0 FTE district media specialist/technology coordinator. I have received no written budget, but use fundraisers (Book Fair) and grants this year. The district does order basic necessities I request.

2006-2007 - loss of 0.6 high school media specialist/technology coordinator

Mt. Iron-Buhl ISD #712

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The Norman County West Libraries, high school and elementary, have been making cuts for quite some time. I lost my library job to my aide two years ago when I was reassigned as full time English. She did get a library degree also and this year she is teaching part time in social studies. The library has been a dumping ground for study halls for quite some time so the librarian can do double duty. The problem is it becomes the student lounge also. I have one hour in the library this year and was to have a second, but have a study hall also so I chose to have the study hall in my room. The other teacher is in the library during the afternoon. She used to split her time between the elementary and high school, but now the elementary has someone else in it that has no library training other than what we have taught her. We have cut materials for the last five or six years. Because the referendum passed here last year we don't have to cut anything this year, at least that's what we have been told by the administration. This is probably more than you want or

need to know, but it is a relief to have someone want to know what is going on with libraries. Now, if I mentioned that the basketball team needed new uniforms I would have no problem.

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I have been at two school districts where the complete Media Program have been cut and replaced by Para's or with teachers who do not have a degree in this area. I went back to school 6 years ago to get my Media Specialist license for the Ulen-Hitterdal School District, and worked on a waiver in this area, the year I finished my schooling, they cut the program. They replace me with a teacher who works in the media center 1.5 hrs and a para who works the rest of the day. I then drove over 65 miles, one way, to Fosston MN for 3 years. This past year they cut the program there also and are running both the elementary and high school media centers by para's. I have noticed that there are getting to be less and less jobs out there in this area because schools are finding that it is an easy program to cut, because a Media Specialist is not a mandatory position to have on the school payroll.

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ISD # 191 Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District cut all the elementary media specialists 3 years ago. The elementary media centers are now staffed by paraprofessionals who work as few as 4 hours a day. One media specialist oversees 10 media centers. At the secondary level some of the professional media specialists do not have clerical support staff.

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I received no money for books in the Mahnomon elementary library this year. No new award winners... no money for books! No Maud Hart Lovelace books, which directly effects my curriculum as I usually booktalk them to my 6th graders, have them do video book reports, use those reports to introduce the books to the lower grade levels and then have everyone who read some of those books vote for the annual award. Not this year.

Ironically, we are a Reading first! school. HA!

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At Forest Elementary in Robbinsdale, half of the media center was turned into a third grade classroom this year because of high student enrollment(200 students over projected enrollment)!

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Bagley--Used to have two media specialists for the two schools. One retired and the other one was left to do it all for K-12. They had budget cuts and restrictions on staff development opportunities for media.

Bemidji--The Bemidji Middle School media specialist position was eliminated when the previous media specialist retired. They have one para to serve about 1200 students. Some elementary school library book budgets have been reduced. Lincoln and Central Elementary schools used to have summer library programs but funding ran out so the libraries sit unused for three months every summer.

The Bemidji Public Library has had a few years of troubles, more than I could describe, that made front-page of the newspaper many times.

Warroad--Cut all of its media specialists (3 schools) and libraries are staffed by paras. This was true in the 2005-06 year. I don't know if they have changed that situation.

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I have been employed by Maple River Schools for the past 7 years. During that time we have reduced licensed staff by 1 FTE, paraprofessional staff by 3 FTE. Our budget amounts have remained frozen for that entire time.

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I am the Media Specialist at Chippewa Middle School in the Mounds View school district 621. When the media specialist retired at the end of 04-05 the position was cut to .5. There are 1,100 students at our school and we circulate \$19,000 books every year so this was a very bad decision.

I continually advocate for my position and have made some progress, the position is now a .67. Also, two other positions in the district are split between two school running two media centers and also tech support for the two schools.

Finally, we have experienced cuts in the library budget each year. Our annual budget is \$7,500 down from \$10,000 3 years ago.

**A report from an earlier request for data:  
Local Libraries Face Reductions In Service**

The library community faced few direct cuts in the massive state budget reductions in 2003. Our thanks should be extended to legislators for understanding the importance of funding for regional public libraries, multi-type library systems, telecommunications, and public library accessibility grants.

Unfortunately, the majority of funding for local public libraries, school media centers and academic libraries comes from local resources. The budget reductions for Local Government Aid (LGA) and HACA (state aids and grants for counties), as well as funds for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, had direct impact on libraries services.

Libraries work together. A reduction in service in one library often results in less service for citizens using another one. In tough financial times, library usage soars. This document demonstrates the harsh reality facing almost every library in the state.

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**Anoka County:** The library's budget was reduced by 3.58% in 2004.

**Austin:** The school district, serving more than 4000 students in six buildings, has been forced to reduce its staffing from six people to three in the last two years.

**Belle Plain:** Reduced hours from 35 to 31 hours per week. Scott County reductions also impact the local library.

**Blackduck:** The school media center will be closed 1 – 2 hours per day while the staff member is reassigned to be a classroom English teacher.

**Cambridge:** The East Central Regional Library reduced its materials budget by \$50,000 (in spite of the fact that they have the fewest number of books per capita of any of the Minnesota regional libraries). Each county in the system reduced its tax contribution by 1% in both 2003 and 2004 by request of the administration.

**Chanhausen:** The Elementary school media center had to reduce its budget by 5 percent resulting in the paraprofessional staffing to be cut. A \$2 per student fee was added to cover basic operating expenses.

**Coon Rapids:** The Northdale branch of the Anoka County Library was CLOSED.

**Dakota County:** A total reduction of 6.76% (\$713,000) takes place in 2004. Cuts include reducing staff by 6.35 FTE, materials budget cut by \$88,000; Thursday evening hours were eliminated in five branch libraries; other operating expenses reduced by almost \$75,000.

**Fairmont:** Even with a consolidation of grades in the Fairmont Junior/Senior High School (more students to serve in the building), the materials budget was reduced by 25% in 2003-2004.

**Hayfield:** The school media center cut its one full-time professional employee. It is now staffed with a library assistant for seven hours per day.

**Hennepin County:** The Library's approved 2004 budget is 3% less (\$1,124,435) than in 2003. Most of the decrease was absorbed through reduction in 6.3 staff FTE. The Brookdale Library will reopen in 2004 with an expanded building and a commensurate expansion of service. Because of the overall reduction in FTE and the need to cover the staffing needs at the Brookdale Library, library hours at six community libraries were reduced and staff throughout the system were reassigned. The Library held positions open during 2003 to help curb reductions via attrition. In addition, the collection budget remained stable during the two years, but with current inflation in the cost of library materials, the Library's buying power is reduced.

**Jordon:** Reduced hours from 35 to 31 hours per week. Scott County reductions also impact the local library.

**Kittson:** In the Kittson Central School District, the Elementary School Media Generalist was eliminated during the last half of the 2002-2003 school year. The position has currently been replaced by a full-time library aide with no previous experience in libraries.

**Minneapolis:** During the current school year, the 1680 students and staff at the Patrick Henry High School were left being served by only one media specialist and one computer technician. (In 1998, the school had 2 media specialists, 2 computer technicians, and 1 media clerk.)

**New Market:** Reduced hours from 25 to 21 per week. Scott County reductions also impact the local library.

**New Prague:** Reduced hours from 57 to 48 hours per week. Scott County reductions also impact the local library.

**North Saint Paul:** The public library, a branch of the Ramsey County Library system, was CLOSED.

**Orono:** The media generalist position at the Orono High School was reduced to half-time for the 2003-2004 school year.

**Osseo:** A local school media specialist reports that her school reduced its staff in half (from 2 full-time employees to one).

**Owatonna:** The public library laid off 2.0 FTE employees and reduced hours by eliminating Sunday service. The materials budget for 2003 was reduced by 25 percent.

**Prior Lake:** Reduced hours from 57 to 48 hours per week. Scott County reductions also impact the local library.

**Ramsey County:** The public library system's budget was reduced by \$323,500 in 2003 and again in 2004... resulting in a budget that is 8.9% lower than 2002. This caused a reduction of 5.6 FTE by attrition; closure of the library in North Saint Paul; and reduction of the book budget by \$500,000 (bringing the funding amount back to 1997 levels.)

**Saint Paul:** The new 2004 budget forced the public library system to have a net reduction of 6.3 FTE (1 layoff, 6.5 positions cut through attrition and an increase of 1.2 FTE for half-year staffing at the new Dayton's Bluff Library).

**Saint Paul:** The Minnesota Department of Transportation Library has reduced its staff by 1.75 FTE. Other reductions in state agency libraries are noted on the front map of this document.

**Saint Paul:** The media specialist position at the Randolph Heights School was eliminated leaving the staffing at the library to teaching assistant and a 2-1/2 hour per week volunteer parent.

**Savage:** Reduced hours from 64 to 55 hours per week. This community serves as a reference center for the Scott County Library System and is also impacted by other reductions in the county library's budget.

**Scott County:** The county library's budget was cut by \$274,000 (total budget equals \$1,765,000) in 2003. Reductions included cutting the book budget by 50% (from \$360,000 to \$180,000) plus delaying the purchase of a delivery van.

**Shakopee:** Reduced hours from 57 to 48 hours per week. Scott County reductions also impact the local library.

**Thief River Falls:** The Northwest Regional Library eliminated bookmobile service in 2003, laying off two employees. Another employee in the regional headquarters was laid off... resulting in only four employees now running the system. In the Thief River Falls Public Library, one staff member resigned and will not be replaced.