

School Library Access Mini-Grant Project 2012-2013

Evaluation Report

**Analysis and Summary of Interim and Final Library Reports,
Parent/Caregiver Surveys, and IRI Scores**

Submitted by Roger A. Stewart, Ph.D.

January 2, 2014

Running Head: School Access Mini-Grant 2012-2013 Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

Grants of \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00 were given to 20 public elementary school libraries in Idaho at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. The purpose of the funds was to increase access to high-quality, age-appropriate fiction and nonfiction for children in preschool through 1st grade. Libraries agreed to use 40% of the funds to purchase age-appropriate nonfiction. They also agreed to allow preschool children, kindergarteners, and 1st graders in their buildings to check out and take home at least two books per week throughout the school year.

Libraries submitted interim and final reports and also disseminated and collected parent/caregiver surveys. In addition to this data, a comparison of Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) scores between schools receiving grants and a group of demographically similar schools was undertaken. Results from the reports and surveys show strong, positive outcomes from the project. Young children experienced dramatically increased access to age-appropriate books resulting in them, their teachers, and their parents/caregivers becoming excited about books and reading. The access and excitement led to substantial shifts in self-reported parent/caregiver behaviors in the home, including increased amounts of reading to their children along with more discussion of the books read. The IRI score data did not show statistically significant differences between the two groups of schools.

The School Library Access Mini-Grant Project is another example of an effective, relatively low-cost program expertly developed and administered by IC/L staff. The program has a high degree of efficacy in accomplishing its primary goal of increasing young school-age children's access to high-quality, age-appropriate books. It also appears to be equally efficacious at changing school personnel and parent behaviors in positive ways. The program, however, appears to be less effective at influencing IRI scores after one year of implementation.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Section 1: Interim and Final Library Reports: Results, Analyses, and Discussion	4
Section 1: Conclusions and Recommendations	23
Section 2: Parent/Caregiver Surveys: Results, Analyses, and Discussion	26
Section 2: Conclusions and Recommendations	30
Section 3: Comparison of Idaho Reading Indicator Scores (IRI) between Schools that Received School Library Access Grants and Similar Schools that Did Not	31
Section 3: Conclusions and Recommendations	37
Appendix A: Revised Interim and Final Library Report Circulation Question	39

Introduction

Grants of \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00 were given to 20 public elementary school libraries in Idaho at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. The purpose of the funds was to increase access to high-quality, age-appropriate fiction and nonfiction for children in preschool through 1st grade. Libraries agreed to use 40% of the funds to purchase age-appropriate nonfiction. They also agreed to allow preschool children, kindergarteners, and 1st graders in their buildings to check out and take home at least two books per week throughout the school year.

The report will have three primary sections. The first section will provide results from two reports submitted by participating libraries during the 2012-2013 school year. Libraries completed interim and final reports that were due on or before January 15, 2013 and April 19, 2013, respectively. The interim reports were analyzed and summarized in a previous document. Some of that information is included here for comparative purposes. But, for the most part, this report analyses and summarizes the information provided by libraries in the final reports. Each question on the final report is reproduced with a summary and discussion of the results. Twenty libraries are represented in the results. The second section provides results from parent and caregiver surveys that were collected at the end of the school year. Each question on the survey is reproduced with a summary and discussion of the results. Ten of the 20 participating schools returned a total of 643 surveys. The third section reports the results of an ex post facto study of Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) scores for the recipient schools and a group of demographically similar comparison schools. The hypothesis underpinning this study is that grant recipient schools will outperform a group of demographically similar schools at the end of the 2012-2013 grant implementation year. Similar in this context means similar in student ethnicity profile and student socio-economic status.

Section 1: Interim and Final Library Reports: Results, Analyses, and Discussion

Question 1. How many books per week were kindergarteners allowed to check out from your library to take home during the 2012-13 school year?

Table 1 shows the number of books per week that kindergarten children could check out and take home. On the interim reports libraries were asked how many books the children were allowed to check out and take home during the fall 2012 semester. On the final reports the language changed to “during the 2012-13 school year.”

Table 1: Number of books allowed to be checked out per week by number of libraries (n=20)

Time of Report	2 Bks./Wk.	3 Bks./Wk.	4 Bks./Wk.	5 Bks./Wk.	>5 Bks./Wk.
Interim	15	2	1	1	1
Final	13	2	2	2	1

On the interim reports, a few libraries reported gradually getting to the point of allowing two books per week over the course of the fall semester. Some did not allow the larger number until October or November. This is not a weakness in these libraries but simply is pointed out to illustrate that most likely changing these particular check out rules took time to implement.

Not much change occurred between the interim and final reports. Three libraries shifted to the right, meaning that they began to allow more books to be checked out between submitting their interim and final reports. Given that books for this age group of children are usually quite short and quick to read, it would be preferable to have more libraries making these shifts so that children take home sufficient books each week to have substantial reading experiences. Granted, two books might be enough each week if one or both of the books is well-liked by the child, resulting in the books being read numerous times before being returned to the library. But having such popular books go home every week of the school year is unlikely. A more sure way to increase the probability of extensive reading occurring at home is by taking home more books. The likelihood of having some favorites in the stack increases commensurately.

Question 2. How many books per week were first graders allowed to check out from your library to take home during the 2012-13 school year?

Table 2 shows the number of books per week that 1st graders could check out and take home. On the interim reports libraries were asked how many books the children were allowed to check out and take home during the fall 2012 semester. On the final report the language changed to “during the 2012-13 school year.”

Table 2: Number of books allowed to be checked out per week by number of libraries (n=20)

Time of Report	2 Bks./Wk.	3 Bks./Wk.	4 Bks./Wk.	5 Bks./Wk.	>5 Bks./Wk.
Interim	11	2	2	2	3
Final	11	2	3	1	3

Like above, some libraries reported on the interim reports working up over the first few months of the fall semester to allowing at least two books per week. Similar to above, little change occurred between interim and final reports. A matter of fact, one library reported allowing fewer books on the final report than they had on their interim report, but the difference was only a drop from five to four books per week. This may or may not have actually happened since librarians reported this data in a variety of ways. Some talked about the number of times the children could come to the library each week and how many books they were allowed to check out at each visit. It was difficult to tell at times just what the number of books per week actually was, so the one library dropping may be an artifact of how the information was reported and interpreted.

Question 3. How many books per week were children in the developmental preschool allowed to check out from your library to take home during the 2012-13 school year?

Table 3 shows the number of books per week that developmental preschool children could check out and take home. On the interim reports libraries were asked how many books the children were allowed to check out and take home during the fall 2012 semester. On the final reports the language changed to “during the 2012-13 school year.”

Table 3: Number of books allowed to be checked out per week by number of libraries

Time	1 Bks./Wk.	2 Bks./Wk.	3 Bks./Wk.	4 Bks./Wk.	5 Bks./Wk.	>5
-------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	--------------

of Report						Bks./Wk.
Interim (n=19)	1	13	2	2	1	0
Final (n=18)	0	13	2	1	1	1

On the interim report one school did not report because the preschool moved to Head Start shortly after the beginning of the school year. Another school said that the preschool moved in December but prior to that they had been allowed to check out two per week. Thus for the interim report 19 libraries reported preschool data and for the final report 18 libraries reported. Like above, some libraries reported working up over the first few months of the fall semester to allowing at least two books per week. There was one library that reported one book per week on their interim report but pledged to do better second semester. They honored their pledge and moved into the two book per week column on their final report. Like above, it would be ideal to see more schools increasing the number of books allowed between interim and final reports, but such was not the case to any great degree.

Question 4. Please describe any challenges or feedback you’ve received as a result of checking out books for children to take home this school year.

This question was also asked on the interim reports but in a slightly different form: “Please describe any challenges or feedback you’ve received as a result of checking out books for children to take home this semester.” The only difference between the question asked on the interim report and the one asked on the final report was the timeframe within which respondents were to frame their responses. For comparative purposes, the interim report results are presented first followed by results from the final reports.

Interim Report Results:

Some general themes that emerged from the interim reports follow:

4a. There was some initial concern from teachers but for the most part this lessened over time. A few teachers remain who are not fully onboard.

4b. Several schools used bags of various sorts to organize the books for the children. This helped in most instances.

4c. There was consistent concern about getting books back from preschoolers and kindergarteners on time, but for the most part this has not been a significant problem.

4d. A few librarians reported having trouble checking out the larger number of books to children when they only have 15-20 minutes in the library.

Final Report Results and Discussion:

On the final reports the themes found on the interim reports continued but with additional details. Table 4 shows the themes by category and the number of libraries making comments that revolved around the theme.

Table 4: Final Reports: Challenges and Feedback by Thematic Categories (n=20)

Themes by Category	Number of Libraries
<i>1. Damage, Loss, and Overdue Books</i>	
a. More damage or loss of books	4
b. Less damage or loss than expected	1
c. More overdue books	6
d. No problem with overdue books	1
<i>2. Feelings About Overall Program</i>	
a. Principal positive about program	1
b. Teachers positive about program	4
c. Teachers negative about program	1
d. Teachers initially negative but became positive	1
e. Parents positive about program	4
f. Parents negative about program	1
g. Parents refused to have children check-out or wanted one at a time	3
h. Students positive about program and/or books	2
<i>3. Feelings Specifically About Nonfiction</i>	
a. Teachers positive about nonfiction	1
b. Parents positive about nonfiction	1
<i>4. Other Comments</i>	
a. Preschool children did not understand or became upset about check-out rules and procedures	2
b. Books were organized by using bags or bins	2
c. More time required to check out/in books	2
<i>5. No challenges</i>	3

Damaged and lost books were mentioned by four libraries (i.e., 20%) and six libraries mentioned experiencing more overdue books (i.e., 30%). These are not high percentages but they are large enough to be noted. Recall that on the interim reports these were concerns but for the most part they were not as yet actual experiences that libraries had encountered. By the end of the school year, however, lost, damaged, and overdue books did become a challenge for a small but significant number of libraries. Since damaged, lost and overdue books appear to be a concern of librarians, addressing this issue in training is probably important. Specifically, first it is important for librarians to know that relatively small numbers of libraries noted increases in these areas. And second, it would be good to share best practices with new grantees in how to educate students, parents, and teachers and what policies and procedures need to be in place to minimize these problems.

On a slightly different note, one library reported that teachers felt guilty and had a hard time dealing with damaged, lost, and late books. It appears that they felt as if these problems

were their responsibility. There was no evidence in this library's report that the librarian or the principal had done something to cause this. Instead, it is most likely attributable to the way teachers feel about their jobs. They take their jobs seriously and feel that when children in their charge do something wrong it reflects on their classroom and their teaching. This underscores what was recommended immediately above. Namely, that the issues of damaged, lost, and overdue books need to be addressed in initial training for new grantees.

Since this question included both challenges and feedback, answers ranged quite widely. For the most part, librarians reported people's feelings about the program. These feelings were much more positive than negative, with negative feelings only occurring once each for teachers and parents. One specific type of comment under this category is quite interesting and thus will be singled out for discussion. Three libraries reported that parents either refused to have their children check out books or requested that only one be checked out to their child. Three libraries reporting this phenomenon is not a large number, 15%, but parents not wanting their child to check out books or limiting their child to one book is so counterintuitive that it underscores the need to educate parents about the program and why it is important for their child to fully participate. One of these three librarians provided a heartening anecdote about this phenomenon. She reported that the school year started out with parents refusing or limiting the number of books, but as the parents who were allowing their children to check out multiple books talked excitedly about it, the parents who had initially refused began to allow their children to check out more than one book. So the problem, at least in this one library, took care of itself.

Nonfiction was a focus area in this grant project so it will be discussed throughout this report. Two libraries mentioned that the nonfiction purchased through the grant had been positively received by teachers and parents.

The "Other Comments" section provides additional insights into how the grants were operationalized across libraries. Two libraries noted that preschool children had difficulty checking out books. One of them described this problem by saying that the children "melted down." It appeared that this was a problem throughout the year at this particular library. Following is what the final report said about this:

"Mrs. Black (pseudonym), the preschool teacher, found many challenges. Her students had meltdowns—crying, withdrawal, and/or on-the-floor behaviors over the issue of check out all year. Only one student between the morning and afternoon preschool classes was supported and understood enough to consistently bring back her book. The rest of the students had meltdowns when they couldn't check out because of non-returned books or even had a meltdown when one of their peers fell apart. It was difficult for teacher, librarian and the classroom aide and informed check out routines."

The other library talked about the children not understanding that they couldn't check out another book until they returned their previously checked out books. This particular library did not use such strong terms as "melt down" but they did say that "[i]t was a process" to acclimate the children to the rules. What these two libraries underscore is the need to make future grantees aware of these potential, but rather rare, stumbling blocks with preschool children. What might also be done is to ask other participating libraries what they did with their preschoolers and their teachers to avoid this problem.

Using bags or tubs to organize the books was mentioned by two or three libraries on both interim and final reports. It appears that most libraries did not use these systems. It might be

important to point out to future grantees that such systems are probably not necessary but that they can be effective. For example, one library stated that they felt their relatively minor problem with loss, damage, and late returns was probably due to the books bags that they had made. But such systems do come with costs. For example, one library that used book bags remarked how much time it took to develop them. So, future grantees should be made aware that bags or tubs are options but not ones that a lot of libraries adopted in the past.

The problem of not having enough time to check in and out all of the books when some children only have 15-20 minutes in the library each time they visit did not grow in importance between interim and final reports. Two or three libraries each time mentioned this as a challenge, so it does not appear to be a significant problem. A matter of fact, one library described this as an initial problem but once the children began to understand the library requirements and routine and became excited about the books they could check out, they became highly efficient to the point that by the end of the year there was not only plenty of time to process all of the books but there was also 5 minutes or so for the librarian to read them a quick story and talk about it. Anecdotes like this might be important to share at future trainings so librarians understand what can be expected of and accomplished with the children.

There were a few comments that were not included in Table 4 that deserve mention. The one library that described the preschoolers “melting down” also reported that the librarian was not in the library most of the time during the school year but instead was in classrooms tutoring children in reading. Thus, teachers did most checking out of books to their classes. The librarian reported that this created miscommunication and confusion between herself and the teachers. There is evidence from this particular final report that this arrangement probably caused miscommunication and confusion with the students also. In the future, the ICfL may want to be proactive about asking principals and librarians about the librarian’s duties and work schedules to make sure librarians will be in the libraries enough time to achieve the grant objectives.

One library believed it was their responsibility to track circulation of just the books they purchased with grant funds. They talked about how hard this was to do and described a book marking system and a check sheet system to track the books. What caused them to think that this was a requirement of the grant is not known, but it is unfortunate that they had this misunderstanding. They did not complain about it but simply reported it being a challenge.

Finally, there were three libraries who reported no challenges. These three might be contacted to see why they experienced no challenges since most libraries did report some. In future rounds of this grant program a goal might be to increase the number of libraries who report experiencing no challenges.

Question 5. What was the biggest success in your project?

This question was also asked on the interim reports but in a slightly different form: “What has been the biggest success in your project so far?” As can be seen, the only difference between the question asked on the interim report and the one asked on the final report was the timeframe within which respondents were to frame their responses. For comparative purposes, the interim report results will be presented first followed by results from the final reports.

Interim Report Results:

Some general themes that emerged from the interim reports follow:

5a. A very strong theme emerged of children and teachers being excited about the new books. Nonfiction was specifically mentioned as being highly popular by four schools.

5b. Children learning about the library and all the books it has to offer.

5c. Teachers and librarians have been pleasantly surprised at the lack of damage and lost books. They have also been pleasantly surprised that the children are returning books on time.

Final Report Results and Discussion:

Table 5 shows the themes by category and the number of libraries making comments that revolved around the theme.

Table 5: Final Reports: Successes by Thematic Categories (n=20)

Themes by Category	Number of Libraries
<i>1. Excitement About Books and Reading</i>	
a. Excitement/enthusiasm about books & reading (students & teachers)	10
b. Student/teacher excitement about nonfiction	5
c. Positive feedback from parents	1
d. Students or parents requesting more books than allowed	2
<i>2. Changes in Library Policies and Procedures</i>	
a. Increasing the number of books that can be checked out	1
b. Doing away with overdue fines	1
c. Getting preschool involved with the library	3
<i>3. Impacts on Libraries</i>	
a. Enlarging/Improving/Updating age-appropriate collection	4
b. Increased circulation	2
c. Increased Accelerated Reader testing	1
<i>4. Improved Access to Books</i>	
a. Getting more books into students' hands	2
b. Sharing books at home with parents and siblings	2
<i>5. Increased Student Knowledge of Libraries</i>	
a. Students understood purpose of library	1
b. Students developed preferences for books and authors	1

The theme of excitement about books and reading was the most prominent when librarians were asked about successes. This was a strong theme on the interim reports also. This is a very positive finding since the primary goal of the grants was to place more high-quality, age-appropriate books into children's hands and to motivate them to read more and to become more

excited about books and reading. Half of the libraries specifically mentioned this in their final reports and there is additional evidence of increased excitement throughout the final reports. It appears that the grants were highly successful at generating excitement and enthusiasm about books and reading. Similar to the interim reports, nonfiction continued to be mentioned as a success of the program.

From the remaining items in Table 5, it is apparent that the grants had wide-ranging success. Successes ranged from changes in policies and procedures to increased student knowledge of libraries. Although these other successes were not mentioned nearly as often as excitement about books and reading, when taken in aggregate they represent important and positive impacts on libraries. They also provide important evidence that simple things like enhancing specific components of a library collection and asking librarians to adjust check out rules can have powerful, positive effects on libraries, students, and teachers.

It is interesting to note that on the interim reports a theme emerged that librarians and teachers were pleasantly surprised at how little problem they were having with lost, damaged, and overdue books. These problems were not mentioned on the final reports under this question. Perhaps by the time the final reports were written, most libraries who had had these initial concerns realized they were mostly unfounded and thus didn't see as successes having students return books on time, not damage books, and not lose them. Instead, other positive aspects of the program became more important and were thus listed as successes. But as was discussed above, for some libraries these issues remained important and should be addressed in the future.

There were a few comments that were not listed in the table that need discussion. One library mentioned that their Hispanic students are reading more and reading better as a consequence of the grant. In the past Hispanic students read only one book per week. Now they are reading four. This particular library obviously went above and beyond the required two books per week minimum. This same library mentioned that reading in general in the targeted grades had improved. No evidence, however, was provided to support these assertions. In the future, a goal might be to get more libraries to focus on this important outcome. A question like the following might be explored: What are the impacts on measurable literacy achievement from all of the excitement and enthusiasm caused by the changed check out policies and the new books? The measures could include reading development, reading attitude, and amount of reading.

Finally, one library mentioned that even though their kindergarteners could always check out books from the library, the grant provided encouragement for the kindergarten teachers and their students to come to the library and check out books. What this shows is that, as one librarian said in a final report, the excitement created by the new books was "contagious." The school community started to talk more about books and this spread the word and fed the excitement. So, even if a library has what would be considered at this time quite liberal check out policies for young children, providing the library with a focused infusion of new, high-quality books, including nonfiction, can have positive effects.

Question 6. How many books did you purchase with grant funds?

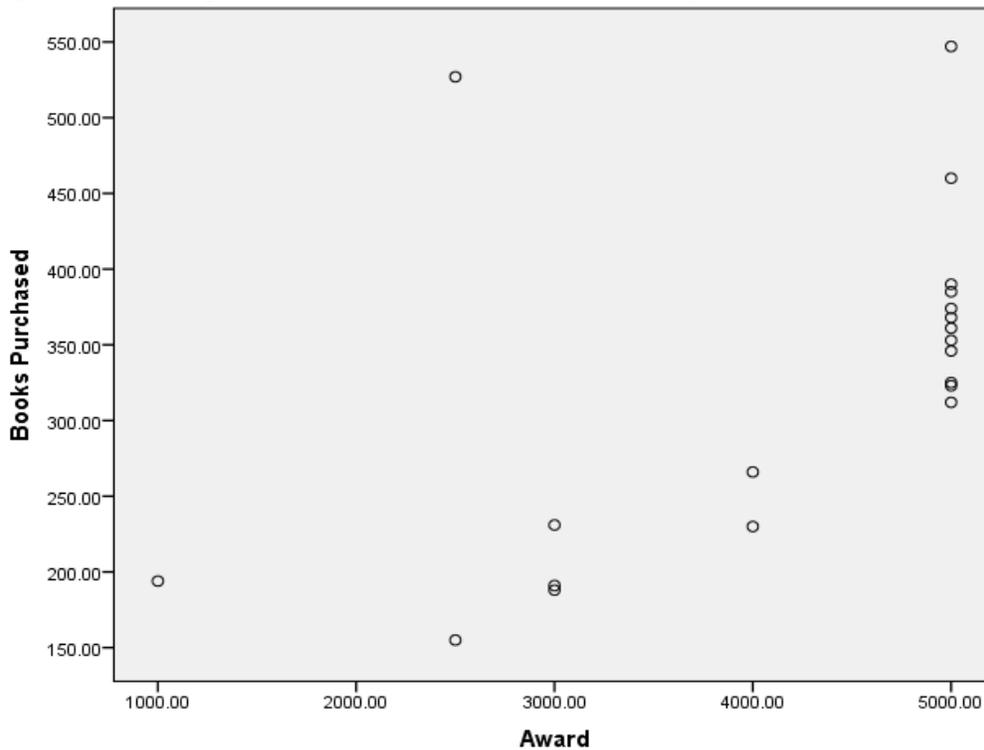
Grantees were asked how many books they purchased with grant funds. Table 6 provides the statistics from both interim and final reports.

Table 6: Number of Books Purchased with Grant Funds by Time of Report (n=20)

Time of Report	Average number purchased	Minimum number purchased	Maximum number purchased
Interim	231 (sd=128)	52	464
Final	326 (sd=109)	155	547

The large ranges and standard deviations found in Table 6 need to be contextualized within the size of the grant awarded to each library which varied from \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00. Figure 1 is a scatterplot of size of award in relationship to the number of books purchased.

Figure 1: Scatterplot of Number of Books Purchased by Grant Award



Each dot in the scatterplot represents one library. Some of the dots overlap each other because these libraries purchased the same number of books or very close to the same number. The number of libraries in each award amount follows: one library received \$1,000.00; two libraries received \$2,500.00; three libraries received \$3,000.00; two libraries received \$4,000.00; and 12 libraries received \$5,000.00.

Even when taking into consideration the variable amounts of awards the range of books purchased in each award category was quite large for most categories. The one library that received \$1,000.00 purchased 194 books. It is interesting to note that this library purchased more books with \$1,000.00 than did one of the two libraries that received \$2,500.00. That library purchased 155 books even though they received over twice the amount of money. The \$2,500.00 category presents its own interesting phenomenon. As mentioned above, one library purchased 155 books while the other reported purchasing 527. The library purchasing 155 books paid an average of about \$16.00 per book while the library purchasing 527 books averaged about \$4.75 per book. It is possible that this large range is the result of inaccurate reporting of the

number of books purchased but if no error is found then further examination of purchasing records might shed important light on why this large range occurred. The \$3,000.00 award category doesn't have as large a range—188 to 231. This represents a difference in average book price of \$2.97. Probably not enough of a difference to be of concern. The same holds true for the \$4,000.00 award category. One of the two libraries purchased 230 books while the other purchased 266 for a difference in average price of \$2.35. Most of the libraries received \$5,000.00 and the range in number of books purchased was from 312 to 547. This represents a range in average price of \$9.14 to \$16.02. This is another case where the range is large enough that further examination might be warranted.

A recommendation is to examine why some libraries purchased relatively few books while others purchased many more. For example, a reason could be as simple as some libraries purchased more soft cover books instead of hardcover books, hard covers being significantly more expensive. This did indeed occur and it undoubtedly accounts for a portion of the variance in numbers of books purchased, but it points up the competing pressures librarians face as they make their book purchase decisions. On the one hand, a primary purpose of the grant program is to increase access to books and a fundamentally important prerequisite for this to occur is to have many high-quality, attractive books available for children to check out. Thus purchasing greater numbers of soft cover books makes sense. But on the other hand, soft cover books aren't as durable as hardcover books, so over time libraries that purchase a preponderance of soft covers might experience greater replacement needs or faster shrinking of their collections if funds are not available for replacements. Because of these competing forces and the potential for relatively inexperienced and untrained librarians to do purchasing, the IC/L may want to spend additional time during training of future grantees providing guidance concerning the best ways to purchase books to meet the competing needs of the library collection and the immediate goals of the grant.

Question 7. What percentage of those books were age-appropriate nonfiction books?

Grantees were asked how many of the books they purchased with grant funds were age-appropriate nonfiction. The grant had stipulated that at least 40% of the books were to meet this criterion. Table 7 provides statistics for both interim and final reports.

Table 7: Percentage of Purchased Books that Were Nonfiction by Time of Report (n=20)

Time of Report	Average %	Minimum %	Maximum %
Interim	66 (sd=21)	40	100
Final	65 (sd=20)	40	100

All libraries met the criterion and 14 of them far exceeded it by purchasing 50% or more nonfiction. Eight libraries purchased 70% or more and there were three libraries that used 100% of their funds for nonfiction. This was a very successful component of these grants and thus should be continued in the future.

Question 8. Did you spend all of your grant funds?

On the final reports 19 of 20 libraries reported spending all of the money. One library did not answer this question on the final report.

Question 9. Please describe any challenges that occurred ordering titles and utilizing grant funds.

This question was also asked on the interim reports. For comparative purposes, the interim report results will be presented first followed by results from the final reports.

Interim Report Results:

Some general themes that emerged from the interim reports follow:

- 9a. Eleven of 20 respondents either left this question blank or reported none. This is a very positive finding.
- 9b. Five libraries reported having trouble finding books or selecting from the large number available.
- 9c. Four libraries reported having difficulty finding time to process the books once received. One library had to weed to make room on the shelves for the new books.

Final Report Results and Discussion:

Table 8 shows the themes by category and the number of libraries making comments that revolved around the theme.

Table 8: Final Reports: Challenges Ordering Titles and Utilizing Grant Funds by Thematic Categories (n=20)

Themes by Category	Number of Libraries
<i>1. No challenges</i>	7
<i>2. Challenges in Ordering Books</i>	
a. Out of print books, backorders, incomplete orders	3
b. Ordered books for older students in violation of grant rules	2
c. Inconsistent (between publishers) or inaccurate reading levels	2
d. Bulk ordering rule required purchasing books that were not wanted	1
<i>3. Challenges in Finding and Selecting Books</i>	
a. Lots of time finding books	2
b. Finding enough lower grade nonfiction	2
c. Trouble narrowing down titles in some subject areas	1
d. Matching books to school adopted reading program	1
<i>4. Other Comments</i>	
a. Grant required a lot of time	3

The number of libraries reporting no challenges dropped from 11 on the interim reports to seven on the final reports. This does not necessarily mean that more challenges were encountered as the school year progressed but it might. It could be that on the final reports respondents were just more thorough in their responses. In short, the exact cause for the drop can not be ascertained with the existing data.

The other two themes that emerged on the interim reports were found on the final reports in roughly the same numbers but with additional details. Out of print books, backorders, and incomplete orders were mentioned by three libraries. From reading the comments, it appears that these caused librarians to have to return to their order, figure out what they did not receive, calculate from this information how much money they had actually spent since their entire order was not filled, and then make a decision about what to do to keep purchasing books to spend all of the grant funds. They were not angry about having to do this, but instead listed it as a challenge because it caused them additional work when they were already pressed for time to complete their regular duties and also implement the grant.

Two librarians reported accidentally ordering books for older children in direct violation of the grant rules. Again, they did not complain about having done this or blame anyone for their mistake, but instead reported the information as a challenge since it took additional time and in one instance additional money to correct their mistake. Two libraries having this problem is only 10% of the participants, but having two make such a fundamental mistake is problematic. Perhaps in future materials announcing the grant and in future trainings of new grantees this key aspect could be emphasized numerous times so this potentially costly and time consuming mistake is avoided.

Two libraries reported experiencing difficulties with reading levels of purchased books. One library said that reading levels were inconsistent between publishers, meaning that, for example, ordering 1st grade level books from two different publishers resulted in very different difficulty levels of books being received. The other library reporting reading level difficulties said that the reading levels were too high once the books were in hand. With only two libraries reporting these problems this is not a serious challenge that the IC/L needs to be concerned about. But the problems do bring up an important area that might need some professional development if future grants are awarded. Reading levels derived solely from readability formulas, no matter what readability formula is applied to the text, are not as accurate as most people assume they are. Readability formulas provide a rough estimate of the level of the text and should only be used in that way. It is thus not surprising that the problems occurred. A matter of fact, it is surprising that more librarians didn't note this problem. If the IC/L provides professional development in the future for elementary school librarians, it is recommended that the strengths and weaknesses of readability formulas and other methods of leveling texts be a part of it.

One library mentioned bulk ordering rules forcing the purchase of unwanted books. This doesn't appear to be a significant problem. But why did only one library experience this problem or mention it? With proper training might this problem have been avoided or is this problem so common that the other librarians didn't even think about mentioning it? Resources are quite limited for Idaho public school libraries so perhaps a discussion of ordering procedures that maximize the use of resources would help.

Two libraries reported that finding books took a lot of time. This is a quite positive finding since requiring libraries to focus their purchases solely on the lower grades while also requiring a minimum of 40% of the books be age-appropriate nonfiction could have complicated

the book selection process and caused it to take considerable time. But such appears to not have been the case. Two libraries said that finding enough and enough quality lower-grade nonfiction was a challenge. Again, this is a positive finding since although the amount of nonfiction available for the lower grades has grown dramatically over the past 20 years, there is still a lot more fiction available than nonfiction. For future grantees it would be helpful if the ICfL found out from librarians who did not experience any difficulties how they found books and then shared this information. Doing this is especially important in Idaho where elementary school libraries are oftentimes staffed with relatively untrained and sometimes inexperienced paraprofessionals. Idaho does not require certificated staff in elementary school libraries. Thus, it is possible that some librarians responsible for spending the grant funds have limited knowledge and experience finding and purchasing books. Having so few librarians report these problems on the interim and final reports is heartening, but enough did so that training future grantees becomes important to assure that all librarians receiving the funds have the requisite skills to quickly and efficiently find and purchase specific types of books.

Only one librarian each reported trouble narrowing titles in subject areas or matching books to the school adopted reading program. These are interesting comments, however. The narrowing problem appears to have stemmed from the librarian needing to identify specific subject areas where the library collection was weak and then targeting book purchases at these areas. This is a logical and laudable process to follow but it would require additional time and energy since it would add additional layers of purchasing requirements. The problem of matching book purchases to the school adopted reading program is similar, in that it too would result in additional layers of purchasing requirements and thus more time and energy, but it is a very good idea. In the future the ICfL could find out from participating libraries what reading programs book purchases were matched to and make available these lists.

Under the "Other Comments" heading in Table 8, three libraries remarked that the grant, not just the book selection process, required a lot of time. By putting these three libraries with the two previously discussed who reported that finding books took a long time, an informal measure is derived of how pervasive time challenges were. Four individual libraries reported these challenges. The total is not five because one of the libraries reporting that books took a lot of time to find also commented that the grant in general took a lot of time. The four libraries represent 20% of the participants, enough that in future trainings the issue of how much time will be required and how best to manage the time requirements should be part of training. One reason given for these time pressures was that it was difficult for librarians to complete their regular duties and also do the grant.

Two items will be discussed that are not represented in Table 8. Two libraries mentioned the Common Core State Standards in their responses to this question. One library said that they had no challenges and that the books they ordered aligned to the Common Core Standards. The other library said that they had spent a lot of time finding books and one reason for this was that they looked for books that aligned to the Standards. Aligning book purchases to the Common Core is a wonderful idea. The ICfL might gather book lists from the participating libraries showing specific titles that were purchased because of alignment to the Common Core. These could be disseminated throughout the state but especially to future grantees.

And finally, one librarian mentioned that she was new to the position and consequently was quite challenged. Following is what she wrote concerning this:

“It was challenging as a first year librarian and first year grant recipient to figure out all the in’s and out’s of ordering (from whom?), purchasing (PO, vs. credit card, vs. reimbursement), and processing all the material by myself. I also had a snafu, in which I had not completely understood the K-2 portion of the grant and had purchased books at much higher levels. This problem was corrected using the Memorial Fund donations.”

In the future situations such as this should be avoided. Based on the feedback from all of the libraries, the grants can put pressure on librarians’ time and skills. So a first year librarian should not receive the grant unless that librarian has adequate prior experience in other library settings. Perhaps a contingency could be placed on awards that an experienced librarian must be in place in the school at the time of the award. Or if such a contingency is not possible nor desired, then adequate training should be provided to ensure that all librarians receiving grants have skills that are up to the challenges posed by the grants.

Question 10. Are you partnering with your local public library to promote summer reading programs? If yes, please describe your plans so far.

On the interim reports, libraries were asked if they had helped organize an Idaho Family Reading Week event. On the final reports libraries were asked if they were partnering with their local public library to promote summer reading programs. Only summer reading information on the final reports will be discussed here. The information about Idaho Family Reading Week events can be found in the summary of the interim reports.

Fifteen of the 20 libraries reported partnering with their local public library for summer reading. Only five reported not doing so. Libraries were also asked to provide overviews of the plans that have been made for the partnerships. Table 9 provides the themes that emerged from all of the descriptions.

Table 9: Plans for Promoting Summer Reading Programs by Theme (n=20)

Themes	Number of Libraries
a. Displays & Materials (posters, banners, flyers, reader boards, web sites)	5
b. Fall awards ceremonies at schools	4
c. Public libraries visit classes or assembly	4
d. Just in planning stages or no plans yet	4
e. School librarian (read appropriate books, talk it up, visit classrooms)	3
f. Information/registration tables set up at school functions	2
g. Bright Futures partnership	2
h. Classes visit public library for presentation	1
i. Acquire grants to offer books and incentives	1
j. School district will extend AR testing license for summer	1
k. Teachers will be guest readers at summer reading program	1
l. Loan appropriate books to public library for summer reading program	1
m. Share children’s names with classroom teachers to compare IRI scores	1

Displays and materials were the most common things being planned, but even these were mentioned by only five of the 15 libraries. Fall awards ceremonies at the public schools and

public librarians visiting the schools were mentioned four times. One library said that students were going to the public library for a presentation. And four libraries had not finalized plans. Three school librarians said that they will read books aligned to the theme for summer reading prior to the end of the school year, urge students to enroll in the summer reading program, and visit classrooms to promote the program. Two libraries said that they had provided information and/or summer reading program registration at parent teacher conferences or kindergarten registration. Two libraries mentioned that they had established Bright Futures partnerships. The remaining planning items were only mentioned by one library each but when taken together they represent an interesting range of plans. For example, one school district will extend their Accelerated Reader (AR) testing license through the summer and make available to the summer reading program a cart of laptop computers so the students can continue taking AR tests. It appears that AR is an important part of this school district's reading program and the public library is supporting them in these efforts. And finally, one library mentioned that they will share names of students who participate in summer reading with the students' classroom teachers so the school can compare IRI scores. No other details about this specific plan were provided but it is a forward-thinking and potentially sophisticated approach to exploring summer reading program effects at the local level.

Question 11. If possible, please list your circulation statistics by grade level (PreK, K, & 1)

Libraries were asked to provide circulation statistics by grade level. Not all were able to do this and some provided total books circulated by grade level but did not include the number of children at each grade level. When this occurred the Idaho State Department of Education database of school attendance statistics for 2012-2013 was consulted to acquire the number of students at each grade. In the future the final reports should ask librarians to provide the specific number of students represented in the circulation statistics by grade level because the statistics from the State Department of Education may not be entirely accurate. To ascertain this level of accuracy, the grade level student counts that were provided by the schools were compared to the State Department database. In most instances the numbers were within 1-3 students, but in other instances divergences were as much as 12%. Given how small some of the class sizes are in the participating schools, such divergences can have large impacts on statistics such as average number of books checked out per student. Thus the circulation statistics per student that are provided in this report are tentative. In order to acquire better data in the future, a revised question to be included on the final report is provided in Appendix A.

Further compromising the quality of circulation data, two schools reported statistics for combined grade levels. One school combined preschool and kindergarten together and also 1st and 2nd grade together. Another school combined kindergarten and 1st grade. In summary, because of small sample sizes and potentially inaccurate data, any conclusions about circulation need to be cautiously made. In the future as more libraries participate more data will be collected and the findings should thus become more reliable and valid.

Table 10 shows the number of students per grade level and the average number of books per child checked out over the span of the grant. Number of books per child was computed by taking the total number of books checked out at a grade level and dividing it by the number of children in that grade level.

Table 10: Number of Students and Average Books Checked Out per Student by Grade Level

Grade	Schools	Students				Books per Student			
		Total	Min	Max	sd	Mean	sd	Min	Max
Pre	10	165	7	30	7.9	33.6	43.6	9	156
K	9	720	17	131	35.7	39.8	41.1	12	147
1 st	11	842	11	120	37.8	44.9	43.5	10	173

An explanation of one line of statistics in Table 10 will help with interpretation of the table. Next to “Pre” in the “Grade” column is 10. This is the number of schools that provided detailed enough circulation data to perform computations for that school. Next to this number is 165. This is the total number of students at the preschool level in these 10 schools. Continuing to the right in this row, there was a minimum of seven preschool students at one school and a maximum of 30 preschool students at another school. The standard deviation for the number of preschool students in the schools was 7.9. Under the “Books per Student” heading similar statistics are provided. The 33.6 is the average number of books checked out to preschool children over the span of the reporting period. The standard deviation is quite high at 43.6 which reveals that there was a wide range in how many total books were checked out per student across the 10 schools in the sample. The minimum and maximum of that range are provided in the last two columns in the table. For preschool the minimum total number of books checked out per child was nine and the maximum was 156. This is an extremely large range and that is why the standard deviation is as large as it is. The other two grade levels have equally large standard deviations and ranges. This phenomenon is explored and discussed more below.

Some additional exploratory analyses were undertaken to better characterize the schools’ performance. Table 11 shows how many schools fall into various categories of average total books checked out per student per grade level.

Table 11: Frequencies of Average Total Check Out Rates per Student per Grade Level

Grade	Total Books per Student						
	5-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60
Pre (n=10)	1	3	4	1	0	0	1
K (n=9)	0	2	4	1	1	0	1
1 st (n=11)	0	1	2	5	2	0	1

For preschools there was one school that had an average of less than 10 books per student. For preschools and kindergartens most were in the 10-29 range, and for 1st grade the bulk of the averages moved up to 20-49. But when these numbers are put into the context of the grant requirements concerns emerge. Schools were asked to check out a minimum of two books per week to each child. If children had 30 weeks of the school year when they were taken to the library and allowed to check out books, this would mean that each child would check out 60 books over the course of the school year. Only one school achieved an average checkout rate per student that was this high, and this occurred for all of the grade levels at this school. In other words, the one school represented in each row of the >60 column is the same school. All other schools fell short of this goal and most fell considerably short. Perhaps the 30 week criterion is too stringent given that libraries had to find, select, purchase, receive, catalog, and shelve books during the fall semester. Perhaps 20 weeks would be a more reasonable cut point. This means that most schools should have checked out on average 40 or more books per student over the 20

week span. One school achieved this for preschoolers, two did for kindergarteners, and three did for 1st graders.

One school reported total circulation figures for the 2011-2012 school year and then totals for the 2012-2013 school year when check out policies had changed and books had been purchased. During the baseline year, 15,749 books were checked out by all of the students in the building. During the year of the mini-grant, over 20,000 books were checked out, a quite dramatic increase. Because check out statistics are such an important outcome of the mini-grant project, future grantees should be selected on their ability and willingness to provide accurate circulation and attendance statistics at the targeted grade levels. They should also be required to provide circulation statistics for the targeted grade levels prior to grant implementation, on the interim grant report, and then on the final grant report (See Appendix A for an example of a question to be asked on applications and reports). In this way, more accurate statistics can be derived and growth toward the goal of children checking out two books per week can be more carefully monitored. Additionally, anything the IC/L can do or the local public libraries can do to help the school libraries quickly acquire and get into circulation the new books would be beneficial. Also, it is important to make sure principals are aware of grant requirements so teachers' schedules can be adjusted so that all have time to go to the library with their students and for those few teachers who remain reluctant the principal can apply appropriate pressure for compliance.

Question 12. Describe any opportunities or unexpected benefits identified through the project.

This question was also asked on the interim reports. For comparative purposes, the interim report results will be presented first followed by the results from the final reports.

Interim Report Results:

General themes derived from the interim reports follow:

11a. Four libraries left this question blank or said that they had none to report.

11b. Schools reported being able to purchase much needed books that they would not have been able to purchase otherwise.

11c. Nonfiction has been very popular with the children. This has been an overlooked area in the past.

11d. Extending library services into preschool and kindergarten. The children are very excited about this and are doing well with checking out and returning books.

11e. More reading is occurring as a consequence of the new check out policies and the new books.

Final Report Results and Discussion:

Many benefits came from this project. Respondents listed and discussed numerous opportunities and benefits that were a direct result of receiving the grant funds. Table 12 shows the themes by category and the number of libraries making comments that revolved around the theme.

Table 12: Final Reports: Opportunities or Benefits by Thematic Categories (n=20)

Themes by Category	Number of Libraries
<i>1. Student Interest/Enthusiasm</i>	
a. For books, reading, and the library	2
b. Nonfiction excited students about reading	1
c. Preschool enjoyed going to library	1
<i>2. Impact on Amount of Reading</i>	
a. Students read more	4
b. Increased exposure to print (e.g., more nonfiction in children’s hands)	3
<i>3. Impacts on School Culture</i>	
a. Opportunities for librarian to work with/collaborate with teachers	2
b. Initial teacher reluctance but then pleasant surprise	2
c. Grant forced changes in librarian and teacher behaviors	2
d. Teachers appreciate nonfiction—helps them apply Common Core	1
e. Students learn a lot from nonfiction	1
f. Share books with other schools	1
g. Preschool became more a part of school and library culture	1
h. Young students could find books in library with little/no guidance	1
<i>4. Impacts on Collections</i>	
a. More books and services for primary level	2
b. Bolstered collection to align with Common Core State Standards	2
c. Expanded/updated nonfiction collection for preK-2	2
d. Update collection (general statement by respondent)	1
e. Older students read some of the new books	1
<i>5. Parents</i>	
a. Appreciated Spanish books	1

All libraries reported benefits or opportunities on their final reports. This is a positive shift from the interim reports where four libraries left the question blank or said that they had none to report. The other themes identified in the interim reports were also found in the final reports but with additional details. Table 12 represents a lengthy and detailed listing of all of the opportunities and benefits. Throughout there was a theme of increased enthusiasm for books and reading and a positive impact on school culture. Children were reading more and learning how

to responsibly use and enjoy a lending library that has exciting fiction and nonfiction books. Some teachers, especially preschool teachers, were initially reluctant to allow children to take books home but when they saw children enjoying books, heard that they were reading them with parents/caregivers and siblings at home, and returning them on time, their reluctance waned. The grants shifted school cultures towards increased access to books for young children which in turn helped establish a community of readers. Several librarians spoke about how they and the teachers believe this community will pay dividends in subsequent years since the children will have better knowledge of the library and books, will be more excited about books and reading, and will have read more in the primary grades. One librarian said that she had always wanted to allow young children in the school greater access to books but had never taken initiative to start it. The grant forced her to meet the challenge and become more creative and efficient with her use of time so that she could expand her program. Another librarian said that they would have never considered checking out books to preschoolers if it wasn't for the grant. And finally, the Common Core State Standards were mentioned again in responses to this question. Teachers are in the midst of transitioning from the current Idaho Content Standards to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Learning that the School Library Access Grants have been helpful in this challenging and difficult transition is a positive outcome for the project. In the future, the ability of these grants to help in addressing the Common Core State Standards might be used as important leverage with legislators and other potential funding sources.

Question 13. Additional comments:

On both interim and final reports an “Additional comments” prompt was the last item on the report form. On the interim reports, the comments were not extensive so interesting anecdotes are provided below instead of themes.

Interim Report Results:

- 12a. Six schools either left this blank or said that they had none to report.
- 12b. Six libraries said “thanks” or something similar.
- 12c. One library wonders if they will get more summer library participation from kindergarteners and preschoolers because of the increased exposure to the library and books.
- 12d. One library is having an open house in February called Books and Bars to showcase all of the new books.
- 12e. One librarian has started to attend teacher team meetings to share new books and ideas.

Final Report Results and Discussion:

On the final reports, all but three libraries provided comments. This is down from six on the interim reports. Because of the completely open-ended nature of this question responses were varied, but some themes still emerged. Table 13 provides a summary of the responses.

Table 13: Additional Comments (n=20)

Themes and Individual Comments	Number of Libraries
<i>1. Themes:</i>	
a. Expressed appreciation, great opportunity, thanks, etc.	11
b. Positive comment about nonfiction	3
c. Left question blank	3
d. School and students will benefit for years to come	2
<i>2. Comments Mentioned Once</i>	
a. Book suggestions helpful	1
b. Enjoyed webinars	1
c. Great idea, but in high poverty schools loss could be high	1
d. Students “found magic in those books.”	1
e. They are spreading the word to other schools	1
f. Important that students can take home more than one book each week	1
g. Books were continually checked out	1
h. Huge project but librarian did not have regrets	1

Eleven libraries expressed sincere thanks and appreciation for having been selected as a grant recipient. These were warm words of appreciation that revealed the great degree to which these funds were helpful to these schools. One librarian said that no funds would have been available for the library if it hadn't been for the grant. Three librarians specifically thanked the ICfL for the nonfiction. One said, “I also now better realize the importance of offering more nonfiction books in an effort to improve reading skills. I thought the more imaginative, the better! I see now that reading about the “real things” can improve core reading skills. Thank you for helping me learn that!” Two libraries mentioned the legacy value of the grant. Not only will the books remain available year-after-year but students and their teachers have become more excited about books and reading and this will also continue.

Section 1: Conclusions and Recommendations

This project was a success. The goal was to shift check out policies towards greater access for preschool, kindergarten, and 1st grade children and by doing this get more books into young children's hands. This was accomplished in virtually all participating schools where all of the targeted age groups are now allowed to check out a minimum of two books each week to take home and some libraries are allowing more than this. It is important to note, however, that the changes to check out policies were not conclusively corroborated by actual circulation statistics. In other words, libraries are allowing children to check out at least two books each week but preliminary and quite tentative circulation statistics revealed that not all children are doing so. In the future, the ICfL may want to address this discrepancy. First by making sure that it exists by collecting more accurate circulation data and then second by bringing the issue to the attention of future grantees. A second goal was to increase access to age-appropriate nonfiction for preschool, kindergarten, and 1st grade children. This goal was also achieved, but as mentioned

above some additional support for librarians may be needed to optimize achievement of this goal in the future.

Few challenges were encountered and most can be addressed with additional training of future participants. The challenges were highlighted above. Respondents deeply appreciated the funds and also the directives that came with the funds. They agreed with the need to provide greater access for the targeted populations and also the need for more nonfiction. Thus, their use of funds was in alignment with project goals. It was quite apparent throughout the reports that respondents were excited about the results they were seeing. Children became excited about checking out books and developed deeper understanding of how to use libraries and what libraries have to offer. The new books were some of the most popular in the libraries. Importantly, teachers shared in this excitement and grew in their understanding of the importance of increasing library access for young children.

Following are specific recommendations based on the results of the interim and final reports. It is important to note that there were no problems that were consistently experienced by a majority of librarians. Thus the recommendations are offered in the spirit of fine-tuning the program. They are organized by category, and in the case of the future training category additional subcategories are included:

Recommendations for Training of Future Grantees:

Check Out: Policies, Procedures, and Outcomes

- Issues surrounding damaged, lost, and overdue books need to be addressed in initial training for new grantees. Underscoring that this was a common concern but turned out to be an issue for only a few libraries is important, while also recognizing and respecting that these are legitimate concerns of librarians, teachers, and principals.
- There was some parent and teacher resistance to the revised check out policies. Most of this waned as the project progressed but a few never did change their positions. Thus, parent, student, teacher, and principal education about why it is important for young children to have access to large numbers and varieties of books should be a priority.
- A small number of libraries experienced challenges with their preschoolers understanding check out policies and becoming comfortable and accepting of not being able to check out new books until the previously checked out books were returned. Future grantees should be made aware of these potential, but rather rare, stumbling blocks. Sharing what libraries have done to avoid this problem would be an excellent way to address it.
- Several libraries mentioned time pressures occurring when so many children were checking out so many books during quite short library visits. What other libraries have done to avoid or alleviate this problem could be shared.

Collections: Finding, Selecting, Ordering, and Organizing

- One library mentioned bulk ordering rules forcing the purchase of unwanted books. This doesn't appear to be a significant problem. But resources are quite limited for Idaho public school libraries so perhaps a discussion of ordering procedures that maximize the use of resources would be in order.

- A few libraries experienced difficulties finding books and/or finding nonfiction. Asking librarians who did not experience these difficulties how they found books and then sharing this information with grantees would increase efficiencies within the project.
- Several libraries purchased books that were aligned to their existing reading programs or to the Common Core State Standards. The ICfL could find out from these libraries what books were purchased and develop lists that could be shared throughout the state.
- Using bags or tubs to organize books was mentioned by two or three libraries on both interim and final reports. Even though such systems were said to work, they are probably not necessary and add additional time and resource pressures to librarians' busy schedules.
- Two libraries made the mistake of purchasing books for older students. Taking into consideration the wide range of knowledge and experience of elementary school librarians in Idaho, all program materials and training should err on the side of too much redundancy by clearly stating multiple times the target audience for the funds.
- The range in number of books purchased with a given amount of funds was quite large. Additional data analysis to find out why these ranges occurred should be undertaken. Once the sources of variance are found, such as the number of soft cover books purchased versus hard covers, then recommendations should be formulated and included in training of future grantees.

Time Pressures Resulting from Grant Activities and Outcomes

- Some respondents spoke of the significant amount of time grant implementation required. Future training should provide details about the time commitments and how librarians have successfully managed these pressures.

Recommendations for Participant Selection, Award Stipulations, and Evaluation Policies and Procedures:

- One librarian had the majority of her time assigned outside the library tutoring children in classrooms. In the future, the ICfL may want to be proactive about asking principals and librarians about the librarian's duties and work schedules to make sure librarians will have adequate time in the library throughout the school year to accomplish the goals of the grant.
- Future grantees should be selected on their ability and willingness to provide accurate circulation and attendance statistics, including the year prior to grant implementation and then on both interim and final reports.
- First year librarians should not receive grants unless that librarian has adequate prior experience in other library settings. Perhaps a contingency could be placed on awards that an experienced librarian must be in place in the school at the time of the award. Or if such a contingency is not possible nor desired, then adequate training should be provided to ensure that all librarians receiving grants have skills that are up to the challenges posed by the grants.
- Requiring the purchase of at least 40% nonfiction was a very successful component of these grants and thus should be continued in the future. Appreciation for this requirement was a significant theme throughout the final reports.

Recommendations for Future Goals of the Grant Project:

- Increase the number of libraries who report experiencing no challenges.
- Increase the number of libraries exploring measurable effects on reading. The measures could include reading development, reading attitude, and amount of reading.

Other Recommendations:

- The ability of these grants to help in addressing the Common Core State Standards should be used as important leverage with legislators and other potential funding sources.
- If the IC/L provides professional development in the future for elementary school librarians, it is recommended that the strengths and weaknesses of readability formulas and other methods of leveling texts be a part of it.

Section 2: Parent/Caregiver Surveys: Results, Analyses, and Discussion

Parent/caregiver surveys were distributed at the end of the 2012-2013 school year by participating schools. Ten of the 20 schools returned a total of 643 surveys. Each question on the survey is reproduced below followed by analyses and discussion of results.

Question 1: Please circle the number of children you have in each of the following age groups who attended this elementary school this school year.

Respondents were asked how many of their children were at the targeted grade levels. This information allows the computation of rough estimates of response rates for the parent/caregiver survey. Table 14 provides the number of children represented in the surveys by grade level along with the total number of children in the participating schools at each grade level. Please recall that 10 of the 20 participating schools returned surveys.

Table 14: Number of Children by Grade Level Represented in Returned Surveys with Response Percentages (n=643 returned surveys from n=10 schools)

Grade	Total Surveyed Children	Total Children in Surveyed Schools	Total Children in All Schools	Response Percentages	
				Surveyed Schools	All Schools
PreK	72	144 (n=10)	272 (n=18)	50.0	26.5
K	371	801 (n=10)	1329 (n=20)	46.3	27.9
1 st	319	765 (n=10)	1308 (n=20)	41.7	24.4

The PreK row of data will be interpreted and then the entire table will be discussed. Seventy-two preK children were represented on the 643 returned surveys. There were 144 preK children in the 10 schools that returned surveys and a total of 272 preK children in the 18 participating schools that had preschool programs. These numbers result in a 50% response rate when taking into consideration only the schools that returned surveys and a 26.5% response rate when all of

the participating schools with preschool programs are considered. The rows for K and 1st grade are interpreted in the same way.

These various numbers are important because they provide a measure of how representative the survey results are for the group of schools returning surveys and the group of all participating schools. In the case of schools returning surveys, roughly 40-50% of all students are represented. But, when all participating schools are included, the response rates drop to roughly 25%. Thus, not a lot can be said about the non-participating schools for two reasons. First, and most importantly, these schools did not return surveys so they are not represented in the results, and, second, response rates are low enough that validity and reliability of any results are questionable. This is not the case for schools that returned surveys, however. Although 40-50% response rates are not stellar, they are large enough that it is probable, but still not certain, the results are representative of these schools. In the future, an important goal is to have all schools return surveys and all schools achieve at least a 60-70% response rate. An incentive system might be an excellent place to apply resources in order to achieve this goal.

One final comment about survey response rates. When the context in which the surveys were disseminated is taken into consideration getting half the schools to participate and then having those schools achieve response rates of 40-50% is a strongly positive outcome. Surveys were sent out at the end of the school year by librarians who only see the children for a short time or classroom teachers who may or may not have been completely engaged with the School Library Access project in their school. Thus, given these constraints and challenges, the ICJL and the participating schools should be proud of the results from this first round of administering parent/caregiver surveys and should set their sights on building on this solid foundation to do even better in the future.

Question 2: During this school year, how often did your children bring a book home from the school library?

This question was asked to ascertain how prevalent taking books home was for the children. Asking librarians to change their check out policies is one step towards getting more books into children’s hands but a critical second step is for the children to go to the library and check books out and take them home. This question explored that critical second step from the parent/caregiver perspective. Table 15 provides the results.

Table 15: Percentages and Frequencies of Check Out Rates by Grade Level

Grade	Weekly	Every Two Weeks	Once Each Month	Less Than Monthly	Never
PreK (n=61)	82.0 (50)*	6.6 (4)	8.2 (5)	1.6 (1)	1.6 (1)
K (n=352)	85.2 (300)	10.2 (36)	3.4 (12)	1.1 (4)	0 (0)
1st (n=306)	84.6 (259)	8.2 (25)	4.2 (13)	2.3 (7)	.70 (2)

* Number outside parentheses is percentage of responses. Number within parentheses is frequency of response.

Weekly check out percentages were over 80% for all grade levels. This is a wonderful finding. Additionally, it provides strong corroborating evidence for what librarians reported. Namely, that children were regularly checking out books each week. If these results hold for larger and more representative samples of schools and parents in the future, this particular outcome of the

project should be leveraged whenever possible since it clearly shows the power of changing check out policies while providing an infusion of new and exciting books.

Question 3: What was the typical number of books your children brought home from the school library each week?

This question was asked for two reasons. First, the information would either confirm or disconfirm what librarians reported about the number of books allowed to be checked out each week. Second, the information would show whether or not parents were aware of the number of books coming home or not. Table 16 provides the results.

Table 16: Percentages and Frequencies of Number of Books Taken Home Each Week by Grade Level

Grade	Number of Books Per Week				
	0	1	2	3	More than 3
PreK (n=61)	3.3 (2)*	27.9 (17)	36.1 (22)	21.3 (13)	11.5 (7)
K (n=353)	1.7 (6)	25.2 (89)	52.7 (186)	11.9 (42)	8.5 (30)
1st (n=305)	3.6 (11)	14.4 (44)	51.1 (156)	13.1 (40)	17.7 (54)

* Number outside parentheses is percentage of responses. Number within parentheses is frequency of response.

The number of parents reporting 0 books coming home each week was quite small. This is a positive finding and shows that all but a very small number of children were taking books home. The grant’s goals of getting books into young children’s hands and then into their homes were accomplished based on these results. There were, however, roughly a quarter of parents with children in preK or kindergarten who reported only one book coming home each week. There are potentially multiple interpretations of this data. For example, it is possible these parents did not notice the number of books coming home and put down one because that is what they thought would be allowed. Or parents did notice the number of books coming home and that number was typically one. Whatever the proper interpretation is they both reveal the need for better communication and implementation in future rounds of the grant. Parents need to be clearly informed of the program and how many books they should expect home each week. Once this is done, then all libraries need to immediately begin allowing children in the targeted grade levels to check out at least two books each week. Perhaps by focusing on this more, the percentages and frequencies in the one book per week column could be reduced. The other columns show solid numbers of parents who are aware that their child is typically bringing home two or more books per week. As was discussed previously in this report, in future years as more data accumulates from future grantees, it would be wonderful to see the percentages and frequencies in Table 16 shift to the right, meaning that increasingly large numbers of parents perceive that their children are typically bringing home each week three or more books.

Question 4: As a result of receiving books from the school library this year, I

Question 4 was a stem that was followed by a series of parent/caregiver behaviors that were hypothesized to change as a consequence of the grants. Table 17 provides the stem and behaviors as they appeared on the survey. Results are included in the table also.

Table 17: Percentages and Frequencies of Behavior Changes

4. <i>As a result of receiving books from the <u>school</u> library this year, I</i>	Yes	No	Already did this regularly before this school year.
a. spent more time reading with my child/children. (n=630)	70.8(446)*	1.1 (7)	28.1 (177)
b. spent more time talking with my child/children about the books I read to them. (n=623)	72.6 (452)	4.3 (27)	23.1 (144)
c. spent more time singing with my child/children. (n=592)	32.1 (190)	37.4 (221)	30.6 (181)
d. spent more time rhyming with my child/children (e.g., rhyming games, fingerplays that rhyme, nursery rhymes). (n=598)	49.0 (293)	25.8 (154)	25.3 (151)
e. am more likely to use the <u>public</u> library to check out books. (n=576)	54.9 (316)	20.8 (120)	24.3 (140)

* Number outside parentheses is percentage of responses. Number within parentheses is frequency of response.

Nearly 71% of respondents reported reading more to their children as a consequence of receiving books from the school library. Only seven respondents out of over 600 said that they had not read more. The remaining respondents checked the “Already did this regularly before this school year.” column. This response option was included because in previous ICfL program evaluations it was found that significant numbers of parents/caregivers reported high levels of the target behaviors prior to program participation. Thus no behavior changes would be expected for them from participation. Therefore, it is very important to underscore that for those parents/caregivers who had potential to change behaviors, virtually all of them did—a quite amazing finding. Similar results occurred for item 4b which asked about the amount of time spent talking with children about the books read to them. Close to 73% of over 600 respondents said yes and very few, only 4%, said no. This nearly universal behavior shift is also important since talking to children about the books read to them reinforces story structure, comprehension, retention, vocabulary, and the joy of reading.

These are stunning results that are only attenuated by the important underlying concern that these results may not be representative of all of the libraries and all of the parents/caregivers involved in the project. But if these results hold with more representative data in the future, then stunning is an apt characterization. Just by allowing young children access to books more reading and talking about books occurred in virtually all homes that were not already doing a lot of these things prior to the grant project.

Results for Item 4c are interesting. For readers of this report who have not read previous ICfL reports, asking this question about singing to children has been done many times before for program evaluations. Previous results have shown that fewer parents/caregivers sing to their children when compared to the number who read and talk about books to their children. Results from the School Library Access Mini-Grant schools follow this same pattern. Roughly a third of respondents fell into each response category. Having a third of respondents say that they sang more to their children as a consequence of receiving books from the school library is a fairly typical finding, but a strongly positive and heartening one at the same time. By just having books

come home substantially more singing occurred. Prior ICfL evaluations have shown that parents/caregivers can be influenced to sing more to their children but doing so is challenging. Thus, the ICfL may want to strategize about how to increase the percentage of parents/caregivers reporting singing when the only influence they have on librarians, teachers, and parents/caregivers is the purchase of books and the stipulation that children will have access to them.

Forty-nine percent of respondents said that they rhymed more with their children as a consequence of receiving books from the school library. Like singing discussed above, there is room to grow this percentage but having nearly 50% of respondents report increased amounts of rhyming is a very positive finding. And finally, 54.9% of respondents said that they were more likely to check out books from their public library. An important outcome of all ICfL supported projects is to increase and enhance patronage of local public libraries. Thus, the mini-grants were quite successful at accomplishing this. Future evaluations might want to explore the issue of library usage in greater depth because self-reported behaviors, such as checking books out from the public library, might not actually occur. Building into future program evaluation designs the capacity to measure actual behaviors versus self-reported ones would be a good but difficult challenge to undertake.

Section 2: Conclusions and Recommendations

Survey response rates were solid for the 10 schools that returned surveys. But the other 10 schools that received grants did not return surveys. Thus the representativeness of the data beyond the 10 schools that returned surveys is questionable. In the future, the ICfL may want to consider incentives to prompt more libraries to return surveys and to also achieve even higher response rates.

With rare exception, data from the parent/caregiver surveys corroborated similar data collected from the school librarians on their interim and final reports. For example, large percentages of parents reported their children bringing home two or more library books each week. However, counter to the information provided by the librarians, a small but significant percentage of parents/caregivers reported their children bringing home only one book per week. In the future, this is an area that may need additional focus to make sure all children are taking home two or more books each week and their parents/caregivers are aware of this.

Self-reported parent/caregiver behaviors dramatically changed as a consequence of their children bringing books home from the school library. These are some of the strongest results from this project and perhaps some of the most important. Such high percentages of parents/caregivers reporting reading more to their children, talking to their children more about the books read, singing more to their children, rhyming more, and being more likely to check books out from their public library are strong testaments to the power of the model underlying the mini-grants. Namely, that convincing public school libraries to change their check out policies for young children while enhancing the libraries' collections with a small infusion of money creates synergies both within the school building and in the children's homes that will most likely pay important educational and social dividends for years to come. Following are specific recommendations derived from the parent/caregiver survey results and analyses.

Recommendations:

- A recommendation is to consider this first wave of survey data from the project as pilot data and then work with the new grantees to increase response rates to see how more representative data compares with this first wave data.
- As was discussed previously in this report, in future years as more data accumulates from future grantees, it would be wonderful to see the percentages and frequencies in Table 16 shift to the right, meaning that increasingly large numbers of parents perceive that their children are typically bringing home each week three or more books.
- These results should be widely disseminated and used as leverage with funding agencies, potential supporters, and other stakeholders. The School Library Access Mini-Grants are another example of a relatively low cost, highly-effective program efficiently administered by ICfL staff.

Section 3: Comparison of Idaho Reading Indicator Scores (IRI) between Schools that Received School Library Access Grants and Similar Schools that Did Not 2012-2013 Implementation Year

Idaho requires an early literacy screener that is administered to all public school kindergarten through third grade students fall and spring semester of each academic year. The assessment is called the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI). It is individually administered and by statute can take no longer than 10 minutes per child. The content of the assessment changes depending on grade level and whether administration is in fall or spring. Although all scores for kindergarten through 3rd grade will be provided in this report, the focus of the analyses and discussion will be on kindergarten and 1st grade scores since those grades, along with preschool programs, were the primary focus of the School Library Access Grants. The IRI is not required for preschool programs in Idaho public schools so that group of students is not represented in this report.

Description of the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI)

The fall kindergarten assessment, called Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), requires the child to look at a randomly ordered list of lower and upper case letters. The child says as many of these letters as they can in one minute. The number correctly recognized is their score for the assessment. Eleven letters is the benchmark level for fall kindergarten. Benchmark means that the child has reading skills at or above grade level. The spring kindergarten assessment changes. Instead of LNF the child looks at a list of letters in random order and says the sounds of the letters. This scale is called Letter Sound Fluency (LSF) and benchmark in spring of kindergarten is 30 correct sounds made in one minute. For fall 1st grade LSF is again used with benchmark set at 31 sounds. For spring 1st grade the assessment shifts to a reading curriculum based measure (R-CBM). The child reads three passages, each for one minute. The median number of words read correctly is the score with benchmark set at 53 words read correctly per minute. For fall and spring of 2nd and 3rd grade, the IRI remains an R-CBM with different passages used at each grade level and benchmark set at increasingly higher levels of words read correctly per minute.

Student level IRI scores, no matter the grade level or time of administration, are reported in three categories: intensive, strategic, and benchmark.

Design of the Study

An ex post facto study was conducted comparing IRI scores of the schools that received School Library Access Grants during 2012-2013 to a group of demographically similar schools that did not receive grants. Scores were collected for kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade for the following schools years: 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013. For 3rd grade scores were only available for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 because the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) experienced a technical problem collecting IRI scores during fall 2010. Since 2012-2013 was the year the grants were implemented in the schools, it was hypothesized that at the spring 2013 administration of the IRI recipient school scores would diverge from comparison schools. Thus, the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 scores were treated as baseline data.

Of the 20 schools that received grants, IRI data was available for 19 of them. The school for which no data was available was so small that the SDE did not report scores because of student privacy concerns. Idaho does not report scores for student groups of less than 10. There are approximately 375 elementary schools in Idaho so a search was conducted to locate 19 schools that could be matched to recipient schools on two variables known to predict student literacy performance: (a) percent of student body on free or reduced price lunch (FRPL) and (b) percent of student body who are minorities. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the two resulting groups of schools.

Table 1: Demographic Variable Comparison of Access Grant and Comparison Schools

	Access Grant (n=19)	Comparison (n=19)
Mean Percent Free/Reduced Price Lunch	67.2 (15.1)	67.6 (16.9)
Minimum/Maximum Percent Free/Reduced Price Lunch	51.4-100	46.5-100
Percent Minority	29.2 (19.4)	31.5 (18.2)
Minimum/Maximum Percent Minority	1.2-70	4.8-71.1
Total Number of K-1 Students	2568	2855

As can be seen from Table 1 the final matches between recipient schools and comparison schools were quite similar. Exact matches were not possible because even with over 350 elementary schools in Idaho, perfect matches were not always possible. Overall the two groups are quite comparable. There is, however, a slight upward bias in the total number of K-1 students in the comparison group. This was deliberate and occurred because of choices made during matching. In smaller schools where class sizes can be quite small, there can be a high degree of variability in test scores from year-to-year because of sampling bias. Thus, when there was more than one school that could be matched to a recipient school on FRPL and minority status, the larger school was chosen to try to provide as stable a comparison group as possible. Of course, this does not help with potential instability in the recipient group.

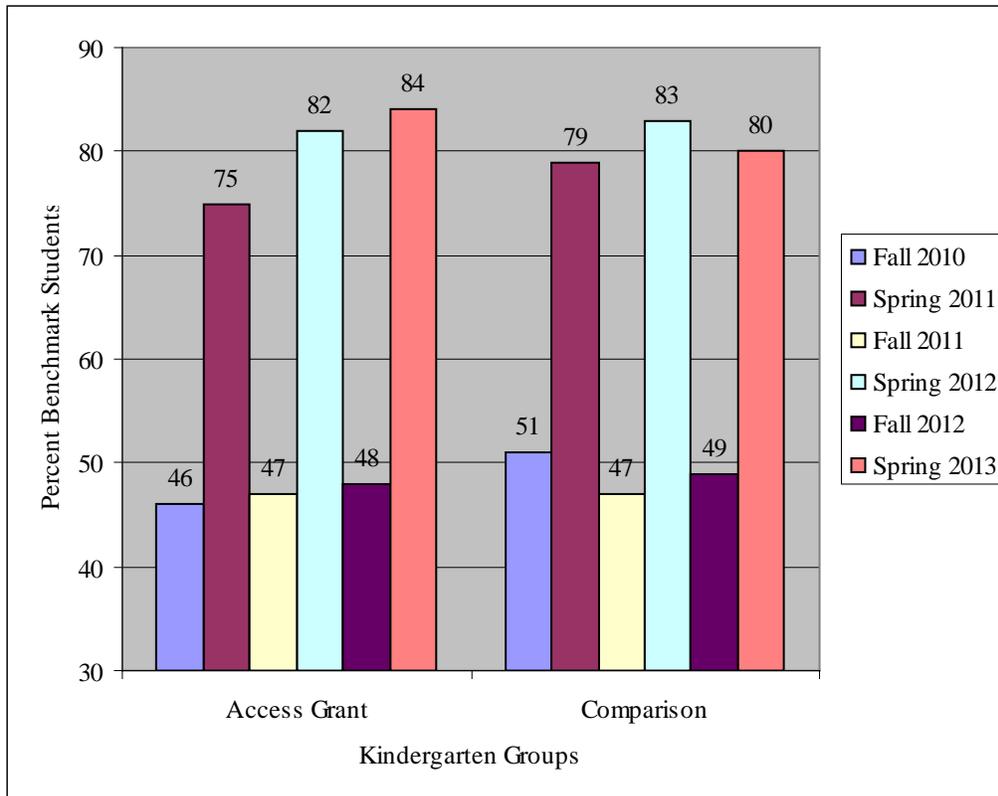
Repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to the IRI data with the between-subjects factor being group (i.e., recipient or comparison) and the within-subjects

variables being the fall and spring IRI data for each of the academic years. Repeated measures ANOVA was applied separately to each grade level with the unit of analysis being the school.

Results

Kindergarten scores will be reported first. Figure 1 shows the trends in scores across the three years for kindergarten. Before results are provided, a description of how to read the figure is in order. There are two sets of bars in the figure. One set is for the recipient schools and the other is for the comparison schools. Each set has six individual bars. The first bar on the left of each group is the fall 2010 IRI assessment and the bar to its immediate right is the spring 2011 assessment. The bars continue in this pattern for the remaining two years of data. The bars represent the average percentage of students in the group scoring benchmark on that particular IRI. The figure shows that each year, whether the school was in the recipient group or the comparison group, the average percentages of students scoring benchmark in the fall was in the high 40's and shifted up into the mid 70's to low 80's by year end. This is relatively typical performance for kindergartens throughout Idaho.

Figure 1: IRI Fall and Spring Kindergarten Scores Over Three Academic Years for School Library Access Grant (n=19) and Comparison Groups (n=19)

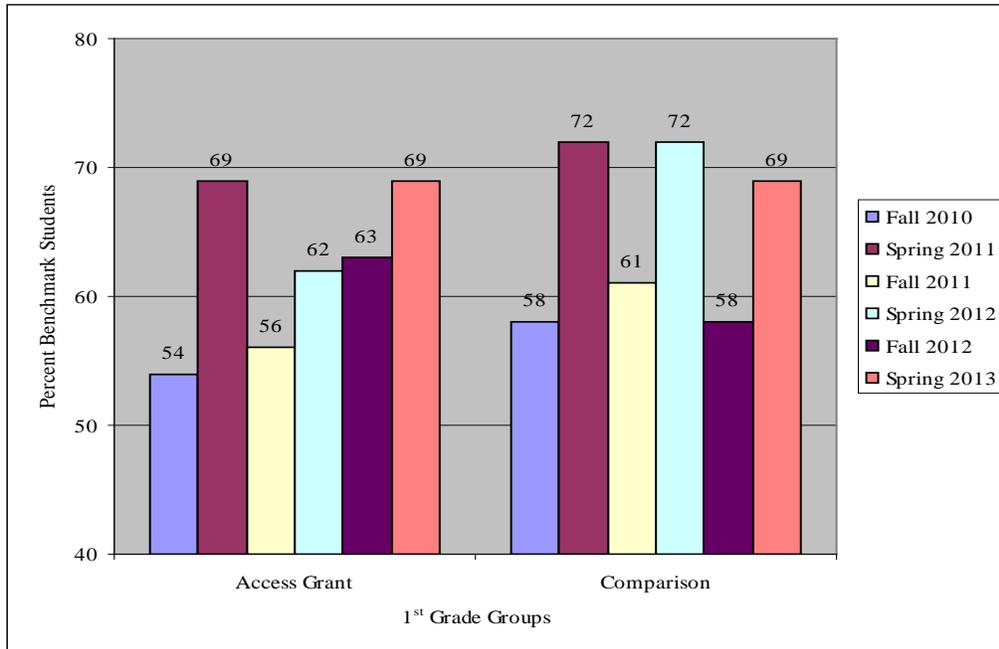


Both recipient and comparison schools made significant gains from fall to spring each year. This was supported by a statistically significant finding for the main effect of time of test ($F(1.86,$

66.92)=82.09, $p<.001$).¹ But this main effect does not address the hypothesis underpinning this study. To do that, the interaction between time of test and group must be explored. This is done by examining the divergence between recipient and comparison group scores over time. Specifically, what was hypothesized is that the Access Grant group would have its greatest score divergence from the comparison group during the 2012-2013 school year when the grants were implemented in the schools. Figure 1 shows that the hypothesized divergence did not occur. This was supported by the statistical analysis showing no significant interaction between time of test and group ($F(5, 180)=.42, p=.835$). This lack of divergence is shown in Figure 1 by the dark purple and light red lines, the last two bars on the right of each group. During fall 2012 kindergarteners in the Access Grant group and those in the comparison schools began the school year within one point of each other (i.e., 48 versus 49). The Access Grant schools achieved an average of 84 in spring 2013 and the comparison schools achieved an average of 80. Even though the Access Grant group out-scored the comparison group by 4 points, this difference does not represent a statistically significant divergence between the two groups, leading to the conclusion that the School Library Access grants had no effect on kindergarten scores during the first year of implementation. Since the spring averages favored the recipient group, it might be interesting and informative to examine 2013-2014 scores for these two groups of schools to see if the slightly higher scores hold for the recipient group. Of course, it will be important to first find out if the recipient schools continued to allow kindergarten check outs at the same level as during the implementation year.

The same analyses were applied to the 1st grade data. Figure 2 shows these results.

Figure 2: IRI Fall and Spring 1st Grade Scores Over Three Academic Years for School Library Access Grant (n=19) and Comparison Groups (n=19)



¹ Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated for the main effect of test time (Chi-square (14)=120.99, $p<.001$) so degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon=.372$).

The main effect of time of test revealed a statistically significant finding ($F(3.77, 135.85)=12.13$, $p<.001$), meaning that when collapsing across the two groups there were statistically significant changes across the administrations of the assessment.² This significant main effect, however, does not address the hypothesized divergence. To do that, the interaction effect between time of test and group has to be explored. This interaction was statistically significant ($F(5, 180)=2.26$, $p=.051$), meaning that the two groups performed differently over time with one of them scoring significantly higher than the other on one or more occasions. The statistically significant interaction effect only tells us that differences between the two groups exist over time but it does not reveal where the differences occurred. In other words, it does not reveal which group scored higher than the other and at what point in the assessment cycle this occurred. Additional analyses are required to arrive at this level of detail. These analyses revealed that the Access Grant group did not outperform the comparison group during the 2012-2013 academic year. Thus, similar to the findings at the kindergarten level, the hypothesized divergence of scores between the two groups during the 2012-2013 academic year was not supported, leading to the conclusion that School Library Access Grants had no effect on 1st grade IRI performance during the first year of implementation. It was recommended above that kindergarten scores be analyzed for the 2013-2014 school year to ascertain whether a trend of higher performance in recipient schools emerges. Although there is no similar favorable bias evident in the 1st grade scores, it might be helpful to explore this grade level also since doing so is relatively easy. The scores are publically available from a Idaho State Department of Education web site within a short time after each administration of the assessment.

Scores for 2nd and 3rd grades were also analyzed in the same way as those for kindergarten and 1st grade. Recall that for 3rd grade only two years of data was available (i.e., 2011-2012 and 2012-2013) because of a technical problem with data collection during fall 2010. Figures 3 and 4 on the following page provide the results in graphical form.

² Mauchly's test again indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated for the main effect of test time (Chi-square (14)=28.701, $p<.012$) so degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon=.755$).

Figure 3: IRI Fall and Spring 2nd Grade Scores Over Three Academic Years for School Library Access Grant (n=19) and Comparison Groups (n=19)

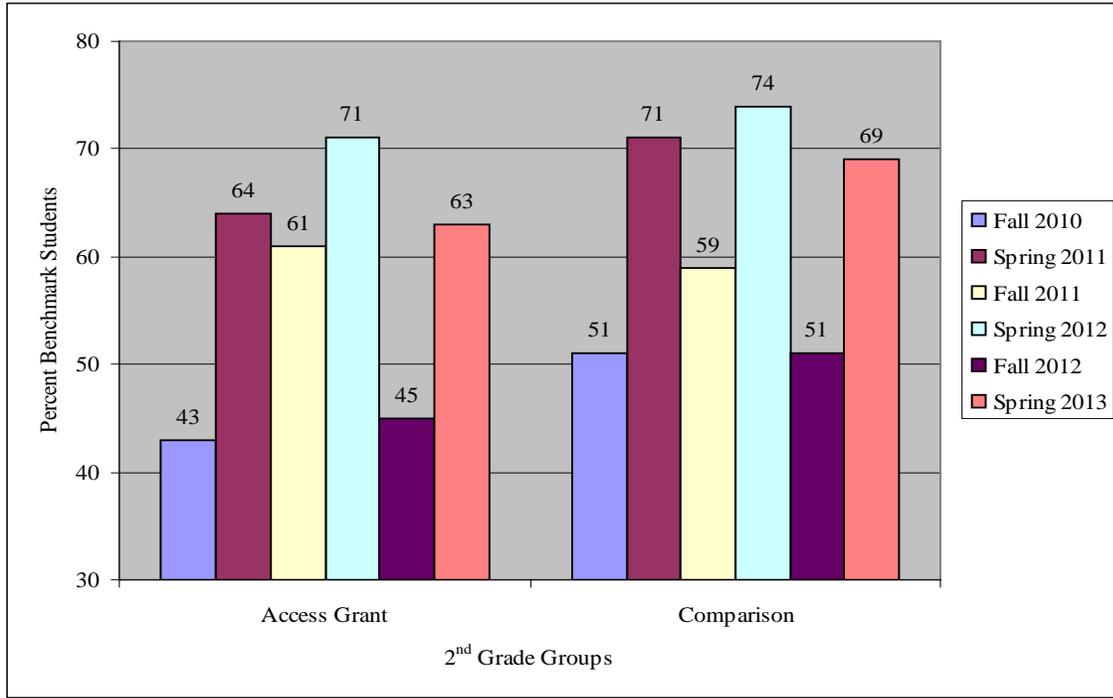
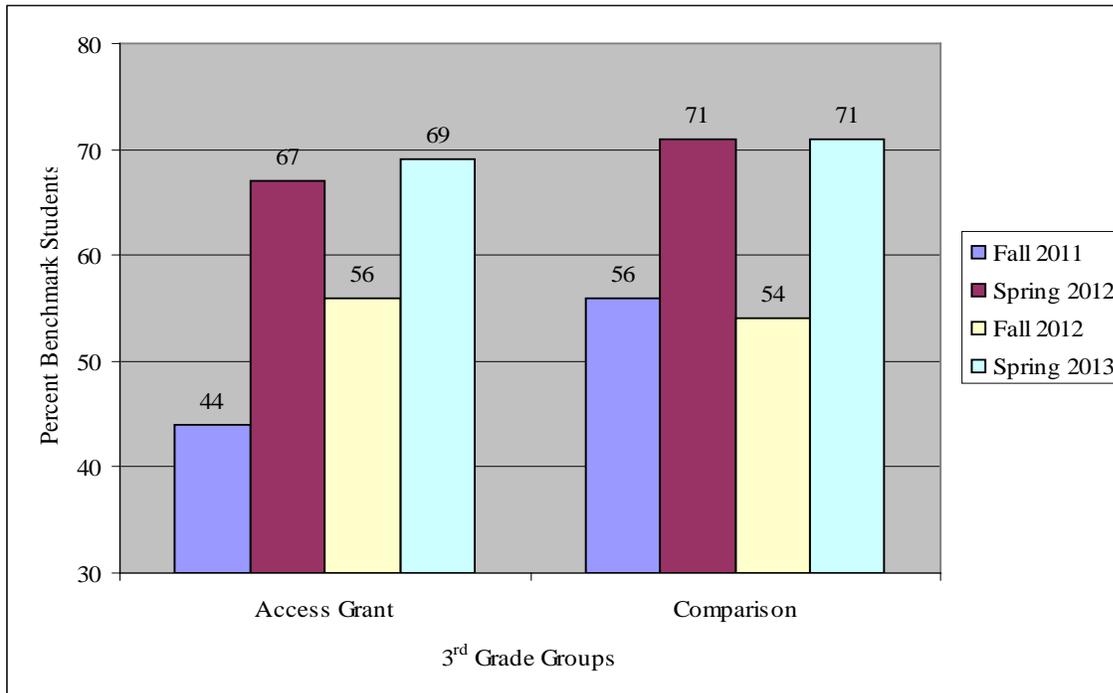


Figure 4: IRI Fall and Spring 3rd Grade Scores Over Two Academic Years for School Library Access Grant (n=19) and Comparison Groups (n=19)



Since 2nd and 3rd grades were not the primary focus of the School Library Access Grants limited detail and discussion of the results will be provided. As was mentioned in the body of the full report, librarians reported 2nd and 3rd graders enjoying the books purchased with grant funds and also that the enthusiasm for reading generated in kindergarten and 1st grade by the grants traveled up through the grades. Thus, it was plausible that the grants would impact 2nd and 3rd grade IRI scores. Such an impact, however did not occur. There was no statistically significant evidence of recipient and comparison schools diverging during the 2012-2013 school year.

Section 3: Conclusions and Recommendations

The hypothesis that during the 2012-2013 implementation year recipient schools would outperform comparison schools on the spring IRI assessment was not supported at any grade level. Thus, it can be concluded the School Library Access Grants do not have an effect on IRI scores during the first year of implementation. This does not, however, mean that the program is ineffective. It might simply mean that one year of implementation is not enough for effects to be measured on the IRI. It was noted in the main body of the report that purchasing books and getting them into circulation took time as did implementing the revised check out policies for preschool and kindergarten. Thus following these schools beyond the implementation year should be considered. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Longitudinal research is needed using similar analyses to those reported here but extending the database to include several years of baseline data and then several years of implementation to establish trends, if any occur.
- Similar to the recommendation for longitudinal research is a recommendation to increase sample sizes. Nineteen schools in each group is a relatively small sample especially when the assessment data manifests a degree of variability that is difficult to explain. Take for example the kindergarten level, during the 2011-2012 academic year one school lost 8 points from fall to spring while another school gained 74 points over the same time frame. The same holds true for the 1st grade where one school lost 21 points fall to spring of 2012-2013 while another school gained 38. This level of variability in the data makes it difficult for any treatment, unless it is extremely robust, to overcome. Larger sample sizes might help smooth the data.
- Variability in fidelity of implementation occurred across the grant sites with some schools embracing the check out requirements more than others, some teachers embracing the program more than others, and some libraries ordering, receiving and putting into circulation books faster than others. More careful monitoring of implementation fidelity is needed so that comparisons like those made in this study are valid, meaning that the schools included in the Access Grant group are those that fully implemented the grants. Those that don't as fully implement the grant could comprise a third group to reveal effects, if any, of partial implementation.
- The IRI is meant to be a quick screener and not a comprehensive assessment of early literacy development. In future evaluations of the School Library Access Grant program it is recommended that one or more additional assessments be included in addition to the IRI. Since most assessments appropriate for such purposes will be both costly and time

consuming, perhaps a sample of children could be drawn from recipient and comparison schools which would help with costs.

Appendix A
Revised Interim and Final Report Question about Circulation

Please complete the table below:

Grade	<i>Time of table completion in here*</i>		
	Circulation Statistics: Total Books Circulated to Grade Level	Starting & Ending Dates for Circulation Statistics	Number of Children in Grade Level
Preschool			
Kindergarten			
1st Grade			

* This table would be completed three times during a grant application and grant implementation cycle. On grant applications, librarians would be asked to complete this table for the current school year when the grant applications are submitted. Then once the awards are made, they would then complete the table on their interim reports and again on their final reports.