Survey of Middle Grades Reading Issues

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Jack W. Humphrey

September 2009

Middle Grades Reading Network

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There is abundant evidence that schools with strong reading programs have successful students. But building strong reading skills is a complex task, particularly by the time students reach the middle grades. Developing strong middle grades readers requires time, access, emphasis, skilled reading teachers, and a supportive administration.

Copies of ***Becoming a Community of Middle Grades Readers: A Blueprint for Indiana*** were provided to all Indiana middle grades schools in the spring of 2009. Developed by middle grades reading stakeholders including teachers, principals, superintendents, library media specialists, public librarians, community-based agency youth professionals, parents, business leaders, and members of the Indiana Department of Education, the ***Blueprint*** provided the goals, current status, and actions needed for the following areas: access to books, encouragement to value reading, time to read, skilled reading leaders, public library support, community agency support, family support, and reading role models.

The Blueprint guided the explanation of middle grades reading concerns in the spring 2009 issue of ***NetWords.*** The seven issues are reading classes through the eighth grade for all students, reading course descriptions, reading teachers as part of the regular staff, reading licenses for middle grades teachers, reading test results in state testing, middle grades reading materials, and strong school library book collections. Issues specifically related to middle grades schools were developed and became the basis for the survey.

Four copies of the ***Survey of Middle Grades Reading Issues*** were sent to all Indiana middle grades schools in May 2009. The counselor, library media specialist, principal, and a teacher from each school were asked to complete the survey and return it in an addressed and stamped envelope. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix.

Two types of data analysis were utilized in preparing the report. Quantitative results were based on the rating by counselors, library media specialists, principals, teachers, and others (curriculum coordinator, English department chair, instructional aide, library aide, media aide, and Title I aide). The 15 topics addressed were the following**:** 1) Classes for struggling readers, 2) Contacts with feeder schools about reading achievement, 3) Employment of licensed reading teachers, 4) Increasing high school graduation rates by attention to reading skills, 5) Library book acquisitions growing to keep collections current, 6) Library book circulation, 7) Professional development for reading teachers, 8) Reading classes available, 9) Reading promotion within the school, 10) Reading skill materials available to reading teachers, 11) School district reading leadership, 12) School reading environment, 13) School-wide reading programs, 14) Summer reading promotion, and 15) Use of public libraries by students. Comments provided qualitative results in all the above areas.

Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Table 1 illustrates that respondents were nearly equally divided about whether or not struggling readers have been identified and are receiving appropriate reading instruction. A total of 43.1 percent of all respondents disagreed, while 49.4 percent agreed that their struggling readers were receiving appropriate reading instruction. Most counselors and principals agreed that struggling readers have been identified and are receiving appropriate reading instruction, while most library media specialists and teachers disagreed. Most of the comments in Table 2 stated that reading classes are needed.

Table 1. Classes for Struggling Readers

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	2 (6.5%)	6 (19.4%)	1 (3.2%)	15 (48.4%)	7 (22.6%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	4 (7.8%)	19 (37.3%)	6 (11.8%)	16 (31.4%)	6 (11.8%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	1 (2.4%)	14 (34.1%)	3 (7.3%)	20 (48.8%)	3 (7.3%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	12 (8.6%)	55 (39.6%)	8 (5.8%)	46 (33.1%)	17 (12.2%)	1 (0.7%)	139
Others	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	20 (7.4%)	96 (35.7%)	19 (7.1%)	99 (36.8%)	34 (12.6%)	1 (0.3%)	269

Table 2. Comments Concerning Classes for Struggling Readers

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Classes for Struggling Readers		*Counselors*
	1	Struggling readers are placed in Read 180 class.
		Library Media Specialists
	3	Reading classes are needed.
	1	Not all struggling readers have been identified.
		Principals
	1	All struggling readers have been identified but not all are receiving the degree of services needed.
		Teachers
	7	Reading classes are needed.
	1	Classes are available for struggling readers in 7th and 8th grades.
	1	Reading 180 is used with struggling readers.
	Total 15	.

Table 3 shows that only 25.2 percent of respondents agreed that the staff of the school is aware of feeder school reading programs and works closely with feeder school staffs while 55 percent disagreed. The highest level of disagreement was by teachers. The comments listed in Table 4 focused on the lack of working closely with feeder schools.

Table 3. Contacts with Feeder Schools About Reading Achievement

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	1 (3.2%)	14 (45.2%)	4 (12.9%)	9 (29%)	3 (9.7%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	10 (19.6%)	15 (29.4%)	10 (19.6%)	13 (25.5%)	2 (3.9%)	1 (2.0%)	51
Principals	6 (14.6%)	13 (31.7%)	6 (14.6%)	15 (36.6%)	1 (2.4%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	31 (22.3%)	54 (38.8%)	30 (21.6%)	19 (13.7%)	4 (2.9%)	1 (0.7%)	139
Others	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	50 (18.6%)	98 (36.4%)	51 (18.9%)	57 (21.2%)	11 (4%)	2 (0.4%)	269

Table 4. Comments Concerning Contacts with Feeder Schools About Reading Achievement

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Contacts with feeder schools about reading achievement	2	Counselors The elementary program is strong, but reading is neglected in middle school.
	1 Total 3	Media Specialists We do not work closely with feeder schools.

Table 5 shows that the issues of hiring reading teachers and encouragement of teachers to obtain reading licenses yielded about equal responses. A total of 39.4 percent disagreed while 44.2 percent agreed. Most counselors, library media specialists, and principals agreed while most teachers disagreed. The comments listed in Table 6 were from teachers and concerned the lack of licensed reading teachers.

Table 5. Employment of Licensed Reading Teachers

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	1 (3.2%)	5 (16.1%)	8 (25.8%)	7 (22.6%)	10 (32.3%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	5 (9.8%)	16 (31.4%)	7 (13.7%)	20 (39.2%)	3 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	4 (9.8%)	12 (29.3%)	5 (12.2%)	12 (29.3%)	8 (19.5%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	14 (10.1%)	46 (33.1%)	22 (15.8%)	43 (30.9%)	14 (10.1%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	0 (0.0%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	24 (8.9%)	82 (30.5%)	44 (16.4%)	83 (30.8%)	36 (13.4%)	0 (0.0%)	269

Table 6. Comments Concerning Employment of Licensed Reading Teachers

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Employment of licensed reading teachers	2 Total 2	Teachers Only one licensed reading teacher is available in the school.

Table 7 shows that most respondents agreed that they are increasing high school graduation rates by providing attention to reading skills. A total of 66.2 percent agreed while only 17 percent disagreed. The comment in Table 8 calls for more attention to reading skills.

Table 7. Increasing High School Graduation Rates by Attention to Reading Skills

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.5%)	8 (25.8%)	14 (45.2%)	7 (22.6%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	2 (3.9%)	12 (23.5%)	9 (17.6%)	25 (49.0%)	3 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	1 (2.4%)	4 (9.8%)	5 (12.2%)	24 (58.5%)	6 (14.6%)	1 (2.4%)	41
Teachers	5 (3.6%)	18 (12.9%)	21 (15.1%)	78 (56.1%)	16 (11.5%)	1 (0.7%)	139
Others	0 (0.0%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (57.1%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	8 (2.9%)	38 (14.1%)	43 (15.9%)	145 (53.9%)	33 (12.3%)	2 (0.7%)	269

Table 8. Comments Concerning Increasing High School Graduation Rates by Attention to Reading Skills

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Increasing high school graduation rates by attention to reading skills	1 Total 1	<u>Library Media Specialists</u> More attention is needed to reading skills.

Table 9 shows that most respondents believe that their schools are purchasing enough new books each year for their school libraries. A total of 59.1 percent agreed while only 30.8 percent disagreed. Most counselors, principals, and teachers agreed. Most library media specialists disagreed. More comments were received in this area than in any other area. Table 10 lists 26 comments from counselors, library media specialists, principals, and teachers concerning inadequate funding.

Table 9. Library Book Acquisitions Growing to Keep Collection Current

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	1 (3.2%)	4 (12.9%)	5 (16.1%)	10 (32.3%)	11 (35.5%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	11 (21.6%)	19 (37.3%)	3 (5.9%)	13 (25.5%)	5 (9.8%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	4 (9.8%)	9 (22.0%)	1 (2.4%)	16 (39.0%)	11 (26.8%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	11 (7.9%)	22 (15.8%)	18 (12.9%)	51 (36.7%)	37 (26.6%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (57.1%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	28 (10.4%)	55 (20.4%)	27 (10.0%)	94 (34.9%)	65 (24.2%)	0 (0.0%)	269

Table 10. Comments Concerning Library Books Acquisitions Growing to Keep Collection Current

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Library book acquisitions growing to keep collection current		Counselors
	1	Funding is inadequate.
		Library Media Specialists
	12	Funding is inadequate.
	3	Funding is adequate.
	1	Books are needed for every level of reading. Some middle schoolers are reading at a second grade level.
		Principals
	2	Funding is inadequate.
	1	The media center's budget was increased.
		Teachers
	11	Funding is inadequate.
	1	Books are not always at the appropriate level.
	1	Funding is adequate.
	1	More copies of the Young Hoosier Book Award books are needed.
	1	The Accelerated Reading Program is emphasized, but the media center does not purchase needed books.
	1	The library is outdated and rarely purchases new books.
	1	We need high interest below grade level books.
	1	We need higher level reading books.
	1	We spend our own money for books.
	Total 39	

Most respondents said that independent reading is supported by a satisfactory circulation of school library books. Table 11 shows that a total of 82.2 percent agreed while only 11.9 percent disagreed. Comments shown in Table 12 concerned reasons why the circulation was high (such as our school program supports use of school library books) or low (such as the school library was eliminated).

Table 11. Library Book Circulation

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.5%)	3 (9.7%)	11 (35.5%)	15 (48.4%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	1 (2.0%)	5 (9.8%)	2 (3.9%)	22 (43.1%)	21 (41.2%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	2 (4.9%)	5 (12.2%)	3 (7.3%)	16 (39.0%)	15 (36.6%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	3 (2.2%)	12 (8.6%)	8 (5.8%)	66 (47.5%)	50 (36.0%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (57.1%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	7 (2.6%)	25 (9.3%)	16 (5.9%)	119 (44.2%)	102 (38.0%)	0 (0.0%)	269

Table 12. Comments Concerning Library Book Circulation

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Library book circulation		Media Specialists
	1	Circulation is high but could be higher.
	1	Many students read for pleasure.
	1	Our school library was eliminated.
	1	Our school program supports use of school library books.
	1	School-wide sustained silent reading increases library book circulation.
	1	Teachers are not sending students to school library.
	1	We are not purchasing enough new books.
		Teachers
	1	Accelerated Reading Program increases circulation.
	1	Independent reading is a requirement.
	1	Our school has a summer reading requirement with tests in the fall.
	1	School-wide sustained silent reading increases library book circulation.
	1	Students complain that new books are needed.
	Total 12	

Most respondents agreed that reading teachers have opportunities to work with other reading teachers, attend corporation professional development reading meetings, participate in college reading classes, and attend state and/or national reading meetings. Table 13 shows that 55.3 percent agreed while 24.8 percent disagreed. Most of the comments in Table 14 concerned the lack of professional development opportunities.

Table 13. Professional Development for Reading Teachers

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	0 (0.0%)	4 (12.9%)	10 (32.3%)	8 (25.8%)	9 (29.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	2 (3.9%)	8 (15.7%)	14 (27.5%)	19 (37.3%)	7 (13.7%)	1 (2.0%)	51
Principals	4 (9.8%)	7 (17.1%)	4 (9.8%)	19 (46.3%)	7 (17.1%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	12 (8.6%)	29 (20.9%)	22 (15.8%)	56 (40.3%)	20 (14.4%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	7
Totals	19 (7.0%)	48 (17.8%)	51 (18.9%)	105 (39.0%)	44 (16.3%)	2 (0.7%)	269

Table 14. Comments Concerning Professional Development for Reading Teachers

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Professional development for reading teachers		Media Specialists
	1	We need more professional development opportunities.
	1	Professional development for reading in the content areas was provided.
		Teachers
	1	Professional development is limited due to location.
	1	There are no funds for professional development.
	Total 4	

Table 15 shows that class schedules provide for reading and language arts classes. A total of 74.3 percent agreed while 22.7 percent disagreed. The comments listed in Table 16 target the

lack of a full service reading program. They reveal that reading classes are not provided in some cases or provided for some but not all students. Some comments listed the lack of reading teachers, while another mentioned that there was a reading specialist on the school staff.

Table 15. Reading Classes Available

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.7%)	1 (3.2%)	9 (29.0%)	18 (58.1%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	4 (7.8%)	7 (13.7%)	2 (3.9%)	26 (51.0%)	12 (23.5%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	3 (7.3%)	6 (14.6%)	1 (2.4%)	22 (53.7%)	9 (22.0%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	12 (8.6%)	23 (16.5%)	3 (2.2%)	58 (41.7%)	43 (30.9%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	0 (0.0%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	19 (7.1%)	42 (15.6%)	8 (3.0%)	116 (43.1%)	84 (31.2%)	0 (0.0%)	269

Table 16. Comments Concerning Reading Classes Available

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Reading classes available		_Media Specialists_
	3	Only sixth grade has reading classes.
	3	We have no reading teachers.
	2	Only seventh grade has reading classes.
	1	One teacher in school has a reading class
	1	Only sixth and seventh grades have reading classes.
		Others
	1	We have no reading teachers.
		Principals
	1	All students have a full year of language arts and ½ year of reading.
	1	All students in the school have a reading class.
	1	Reading classes provided on rotating basis.
	1	Sixth graders have a reading class, seventh graders one semester, eighth graders elective classes.
	1	We have no reading teachers.
		Teachers
	1	Many students come to building with severely deficient reading skills, but we have no reading program.
	1	Scholastic Read 180 system used for struggling readers.
	1	Vocabulary is weak in our reading program.
	1	We have a class for eighth grade struggling readers.
	1	We have a reading specialist.
	1	We use Read 180 for struggling readers.
	Total 22	

Table 17 shows that most respondents think that reading promotion similar to that in elementary schools is evident throughout their schools. A total of 58.4 percent agreed while 24.9 percent disagreed. Teachers were lower in agreement than counselors, library media specialists, and principals. Most of the comments listed in Table 18 were about the efforts of schools to promote reading.

Table 17. Reading Promotion within the School

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	1 (3.2%)	6 (19.4%)	4 (12.9%)	8 (25.8%)	12 (38.7%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	2 (3.9%)	3 (5.9%)	10 (19.6%)	26 (51.0%)	10 (19.6%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	1 (2.4%)	10 (24.4%)	4 (9.8%)	20 (48.8%)	5 (12.2%)	1 (2.4%)	41
Teachers	7 (5.0%)	34 (24.5%)	25 (18.0%)	60 (43.2%)	13 (9.4%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	0 (0.0%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	11 (4.1%)	56 (20.8%)	44 (16.4%)	115 (42.8%)	42 (15.6%)	1 (0.3%)	269

Table 18. Comments Concerning Reading Promotion within the School

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Reading promotion within the school	2	Counselors Our reading promotion surpasses our elementary schools'.
	1	Media Specialists Reading is our school-wide improvement goal.
	1	We made our own reading posters to promote reading.
	1	Others Teachers insist that student have two books at all times.
	1	Teachers School provides different reading opportunities on school-wide basis using short time periods.
	1	Teachers rather than the school promote reading.
	Total 7	

Table 19 shows that most respondents believe that teachers are aware of and have access to reading skill materials appropriate for the reading levels of all students. A total of 62.5 percent agree and 23.7 percent disagree. Teachers had a lower percent of agreement and a higher percent of disagreement than counselors, library media specialists, and principals. The comments listed in Table 20 were mainly from teachers and indicated that such materials were not available.

Table 19. Reading Skill Materials Available to Reading Teachers

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	0 (0.0%)	5 (16.1%)	4 (12.9%)	14 (45.2%)	8 (25.8%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	0 (0.0%)	11 (21.6%)	7 (13.7%)	26 (51.0%)	7 (13.7%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	0 (0.0%)	8 (19.5%)	7 (17.1%)	19 (46.3%)	7 (17.1%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	7 (5.0%)	31 (22.3%)	18 (12.9%)	67 (48.2%)	16 (11.5%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	8 (2.9%)	56 (20.8%)	37 (13.8%)	129 (48.0%)	39 (14.5%)	0 (0.0%)	269

Table 20. Comments Concerning Reading Skill Materials Available to Reading Teachers

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Reading skill materials available to reading teachers	1	Media Specialists Teachers have access to materials but don't recognize the need for differentiated materials.
	1	Teachers Funds are not available for reading skill materials.
	1	Materials are available only for low readers.
	Total 3	

Table 21 shows that 51.3 percent agree, while 26.4 percent disagree that middle grades reading is an important part of the corporation's reading program and that sufficient help and encouragement are provided to reading teachers. Teachers had a higher percent of disagreement than counselors, library media specialists, and principals. Table 22 listed concerns about lack of reading leadership from the school district.

Table 21.   School District Reading Leadership

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	0 (0.0%)	4 (12.9%)	9 (29.0%)	9 (29.0%)	9 (29.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	2 (3.9%)	11 (21.6%)	12 (23.5%)	18 (35.3%)	7 (13.7%)	1 (2.0%)	51
Principals	1 (2.4%)	8 (19.5%)	10 (24.4%)	15 (36.6%)	7 (17.1%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	10 (7.2%)	33 (23.7%)	27 (19.4%)	51 (36.7%)	18 (12.9%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	14 (5.2%)	57 (21.2%)	59 (21.9%)	96 (35.7%)	42 (15.6%)	1 (0.3%)	269

Table 22. Comments Concerning School District Reading Leadership

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
School district reading leadership	1	Media Specialists The district says reading is important, but not all buildings have effective programs.
	2	Teachers Little leadership is provided from administration.
	1	Elementary reading is the primary concern rather than middle school reading.
	Total 4	

Table 23. Most respondents agreed that their schools feature an environment in which reading is valued, promoted, and encouraged. A total of 83.6 percent agreed and only 7.8 percent disagreed. Most of the comments listed in Table 24 concerned the lack of time in reading classes and emphasis on reading.

Table 23. School Reading Environment

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.2%)	1 (3.2%)	10 (32.3%)	19 (61.3%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	0 (0.0%)	5 (9.8%)	5 (9.8%)	25 (49.0%)	16 (31.4%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	1 (2.4%)	3 (7.3%)	4 (9.8%)	16 (39.0%)	17 (41.5%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	1 (0.7%)	8 (5.8%)	13 (9.4%)	77 (55.4%)	40 (28.8%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	0 (0.0%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	2 (0.7%)	19 (7.1%)	23 (8.6%)	131 (48.7%)	94 (34.9%)	0 (0.0%)	269

Table 24. Comments Concerning School Reading Environment

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
School reading environment		Others
	1	Reading is not strongly promoted or valued by many teachers.
		Teachers
	1	Hard to promote reading when students in class only 9 weeks.
	1	Teachers rather than the school promote reading.
	1	The Young Hoosier Book Award books available for students.
	Total 4	

Table 25 shows that most respondents agree that their schools provide programs such as the Young Hoosier Book Award Program from the Indiana Library Federation, commercial programs such as Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts, or a reading incentive program developed by the school. A total of 79.9 percent agreed while 13.8 disagreed. The comments listed in Table 26 concern funding, help for struggling readers, and the need for reading teachers.

Table 25. School-Wide Reading Programs

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	1 (3.2%)	2 (6.5%)	4 (12.9%)	10 (32.3%)	14 (45.2%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	1 (2.0%)	2 (3.9%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (39.2%)	27 (52.9%)	1 (2.0%)	51
Principals	3 (7.3%)	6 (14.6%)	1 (2.4%)	18 (43.9%)	12 (29.3%)	1 (2.4%)	41
Teachers	9 (6.5%)	11 (7.9%)	10 (7.2%)	65 (46.8%)	44 (31.7%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (57.1%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	15 (5.6%)	22 (8.2%)	15 (5.6%)	117 (43.5%)	98 (36.4%)	2 (0.7%)	269

Table 26. Comments Concerning School-Wide Reading Programs

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
School-wide reading programs		Counselors
	1	More students at lower reading levels are coming into our school.
	1	Some teachers do not utilize the Accelerated Reader Program.
		Media Specialists
	1	Because of funding, we are dropping Accelerated Reader and purchasing fewer Young Hoosier Book Award books.
		Others
	1	We have good elementary programs but not at junior high.
		Teachers
	1	Accelerated reader has helped put a focus on reading independently.
	1	Our school is starting a summer reading program.
	1	Teachers create and implement their own reading curriculum as we have no reading teachers.
	1	There are no specific reading teachers for our students.
	1	We have many poor readers and no system in place to help them.
	1	We have many students needing reading attack skills.
	Total 10	

Table 27 shows that most respondents do not believe that their schools promote summer reading and keep track of the results. A total of 56.2 percent disagreed while 28.6 percent agreed. Teachers had the highest percent of disagreement with 60.4 percent disagreement and 25.9 percent agreement. The comments in Table 28 were from library media specialists and show a lack of summer reading promotion.

Table 27. Summer Reading Promotion

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	2 (6.5%)	13 (41.9%)	8 (25.8%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (12.9%)	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	9 (17.6%)	19 (37.3%)	6 (11.8%)	11 (21.6%)	6 (11.8%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	6 (14.6%)	14 (34.1%)	7 (17.1%)	10 (24.4%)	4 (9.8%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	26 (18.7%)	58 (41.7%)	19 (13.7%)	27 (19.4%)	9 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	139
Others	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	44 (16.4%)	107 (39.8%)	41 (15.2%)	53 (19.7%)	24 (8.9%)	0 (0.0%)	269

Table 28. Comments Concerning Summer Reading Promotion

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Summer reading promotion		Media Specialists
	1	Our school does nothing about summer reading.
	1	We promote summer reading but don't keep track of results.
	Total 2	

Table 29 shows a mixed reaction concerning the use of public libraries by students and whether or not they have library cards and use them during the school year and summer. A total of 27.5 percent agreed, 30.8 percent disagreed, and 41.3 percent were undecided. The comments in Table 30 show that many students do not have access to a public library, do not use a public

library because of lack of transportation or family support, and that use of the public library by students is not known by school personnel.

Table 29. Use of Public Library by Students

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NO ANSWER	Total
Counselors	1 (3.2%)	6 (19.4%)	16 (51.6%)	5 (16.1%)	3 (9.7%	0 (0.0%)	31
Library MS	2 (3.9%)	15 (29.4%)	16 (31.4%)	16 (31.4%)	2 (3.9%)	0 (0.0%)	51
Principals	3 (7.3%)	12 (29.3%)	16 (39.0%)	7 (17.1%)	3 (7.3%)	0 (0.0%)	41
Teachers	3 (2.2%)	39 (28.1%)	62 (44.6%)	29 (20.9%)	5 (3.6%)	1 (0.7%)	139
Others	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Totals	1 0 (3.7%)	73 (27.1%)	111 (41.3%)	60 (22.3%)	14 (5.2%)	1 (0.3%)	269

Table 30. Comments Concerning Use of Public Library by Students

Theme	Frequency	Sub Themes
Use of public library by students		Counselors
	1	Many students have library cards, but we don't know who does and does not have a card.
		Media Specialists
	5	Most of our students do not have access to a public library.
	3	Many students have library cards, but we don't know who does and does not have a card.
	1	Many students have transportation problems.
	1	Most students do not use the public library.
	1	Public and school libraries work together to promote each other's programs.
	1	We have a book mobile that regularly visits the school.
	1	We previously checked out books over the summer, but many were lost.
	1	We promote but are not sure if students use public library.
		Principals
	3	Our public library is excellent and used by most students.
		Teachers
	1	Most of our students do not have a public library
	1	Parents do not encourage their child to use the public library.
	1	We have a book mobile that regularly visits the school.
	Total 21	

Table 31 shows the percents of responses from counselors, library media specialists, principals, teachers, and others (curriculum coordinator, English department chair, instructional aide, library aide, media aide, and Title I aide). Counselors and principals had the highest percent of strongly agree responses and the lowest percent of strongly disagree responses. Teachers had the lowest percent of strongly agree responses, while others had the highest percent of strongly disagree responses.

Table 31. Percents of Responses by Position

	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer
Counselors	2.2%	16.6%	18.5%	30.8%	32.0%	0.0%
Library MS	7.2%	21.8%	14.2%	38.7%	17.5%	0.5%
Principals	6.5%	21.3%	12.5%	40.5%	18.7%	0.5%
Teachers	7.8%	22.7%	14.7%	38.0%	16.6%	1.2%
Others	10.5%	24.8%	10.5%	36.2%	17.1%	1.0%
Total	6.9%	21.7%	14.6%	37.6%	18.9%	0.3%

Table 32 shows that all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the top five reading issues were school reading environment, library book circulation, school-wide reading programs, reading classes available, and increasing high school graduation rates by attention to reading skills. The five reading issues that most respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with are summer reading promotion, contacts, with feeder schools about reading achievement, classes for struggling readers, employment of licensed reading teachers, and use of public libraries by students.

Table 32. Rank and Percent of Disagree and Strongly Disagree Responses and Agree and Strongly Agree Responses by All Respondents

	Disagree and Strongly Disagree Percent	Rank	Agree and Strongly Agree	Rank
Classes for struggling readers	49.4%	11	43.1%	3
Contacts with feeder schools about reading achievement	25.2%	13	55%	2
Employment of licensed reading teachers	44.2%	12	39.4%	4
Increasing high school graduation rates by attention to reading skills	66.2%	5	17%	12
Library book acquisitions growing to keep collection current	59.1%	7	30.8%	5
Library book circulation	82.2%	2	11.9%	14
Professional development for reading teachers	55.3%	9	24.8%	9
Reading classes available	74.2%	4	22.7%	11
Reading promotion within the school	58.4%	8	24.9%	8
Reading skill materials available to reading teachers	62.5%	6	23.4%	10
School district reading leadership	51.3%	10	26.4%	7
School reading environment	83.6%	1	7.8%	15
School-wide reading programs	79.9%	3	13.8%	13
Summer reading promotion	28.6%	14	56.2%	1
Use of public library by students	27.5%	15	30.8%	5

Study Limitations

The results of this study should be interpreted with caution. Counselors, principals, school library media specialists, teachers, and others voluntarily completed and returned the survey. It does not represent the views of every Indiana middle grades public school.

Conclusions

Most middle grades school counselors, library media specialists, principals, and teachers agree with the following:

- Schools feature an environment in which reading is valued promoted, and encouraged.
- Independent reading is supported by a satisfactory circulation of school library books.
- Schools provide programs such as the Young Hoosier Book Award Program from the Indian Library Federation, commercial programs such as Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts, or a reading incentive program developed by the school.
- Class schedules provide for reading and for language arts (English) classes.
- Schools are ensuring that students' reading skills are appropriate for high school work.
- Teachers are aware of reading skill materials appropriate for the reading levels of all students and have access to them.
- Reading promotion similar to that in elementary schools is evident throughout schools.
- Reading teachers have opportunities to work with other reading teachers, attend corporation professional development reading meetings, participate in college reading classes, and attend state and/or national reading meetings.
- Middle grades reading is an important part of corporations' reading programs, and sufficient help and encouragement are provided to reading teachers.

Most middle grades school counselors, principals, and teachers, but not school library media specialists, agree that:

- Schools purchase enough new books each year to keep collections current.

Most middle grades school counselors, library media specialists, principals, and teachers disagree or are undecided about the following:

- All struggling readers have been identified and are receiving appropriate reading instruction.
- The school has licensed reading teachers or is encouraging teachers to obtain reading licenses.
- The school staffs are aware of feeder school reading programs and work closely with feeder school staffs.
- The school promotes summer reading and keeps track of results.
- Most students have library cards and use them during the school year as well as in the summer.

Recommendations

Indiana middle grades schools should continue their efforts to build strong readers by featuring a good reading environment, promoting circulation of school library books, providing programs that focus on school-wide reading, providing reading classes, increasing reading skills, promoting reading commitment similar to elementary schools', providing reading professional development, and providing corporation leadership and support. The *Middle Grades Reading Assessment*, available from the Middle Grades Reading Network, will help schools assess their reading programs.

Six areas should receive special attention. These are: 1) Identify and provide appropriate instruction for struggling readers, 2) Add licensed reading teachers to the school staff, 3) Increase awareness of feeder school reading programs and work more closely with feeder school staffs, 4) Promote summer reading and keep track of results, 5) Work more closely with public libraries, and, 6) Help the staff understand the need to purchase enough new books each year for the school library.

- Schools should provide norm-referenced reading tests in addition to ISTEP tests to identify struggling readers. These can be administered school-wide or by reading teachers. Norm-referenced reading tests provide comprehension and vocabulary grade level results showing clearly those studens who need special help with reading skills and provide specific information about needed instruction. Also useful are report card marks and teacher recommendations. Classes for struggling readers should be taught by licensed reading teachers equipped with appropriate reading materials.
- Many Indiana colleges and universities have programs leading to reading licenses. Contact local colleges and universities to seek student teachers working on reading licenses. Help teachers become aware of graduate programs that lead to reading or reading specialist licenses. Add licensed reading teachers when filling vacancies.
- Provide opportunities for middle grades reading teachers and school library media specialists to interact with feeder school reading teachers and library media specialists. Visit feeder schools and invite their reading teachers to visit middle grade schools. Share information about reading test results, reading materials and methods, time devoted to reading activities, and school-wide reading incentive programs.
- Promote summer reading with Summer Reading Logs, lists of recommended books, posters, Web site information, letters to and meetings with parents, and provide fall recognition for students who read during the summer.
- Share information about the funding for school library books with the staff. Share information found in the *2008 Trend Analysis of Indiana K-8 Library Services Since the School Library Printed Materials Grant* provided to all schools or available at http://mgrn.evansville.edu/Library2008.pdf. Help them understand the need for purchasing two books per student per year to keep collections current and to understand the positive effect of new books on circulation. Share the need for students to practice their reading using current, appealing, high-interest, and useful books and other reading materials.

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Middle Grades Reading Network
University of Evansville
1800 Lincoln Avenue
Evansville, IN 47722

Survey of
Middle Grades Reading Issues

If you wish to be eligible for a drawing for one of five sets of the 2009-2010 Young Hoosier Book Award books, please provide the following information so that the books can be mailed to the winners of the drawing. No school or individual will be mentioned in the report of the survey results.

Name:
Address:

Please mark each item in the survey and return in the enclosed envelope.

Position

○ Counselor

○ Library Media Specialist

○ Principal

○ Reading Teacher

○ Teacher

○ Other _____

Classes for struggling readers

All struggling readers in our school have been identified and are receiving appropriate reading instruction.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Contacts with feeder schools about reading achievement

The staff of our school is aware of feeder school reading programs and works closely with feeder school staffs.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Employment of licensed reading teachers

We have hired licensed reading teachers or encouraged existing teachers to obtain reading licenses.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Increasing high school graduation rates by attention to reading skills

What is happening in our school is helping to ensure that students' reading skills are appropriate for high school work.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Library book acquisitions ensure that collection is current

We are purchasing enough new books each year for our school library.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Comments:

Library book circulation
Independent reading is supported by a satisfactory circulation of our school library books.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Professional development for reading teachers
Our reading teachers have opportunities to work with other reading teachers, attend corporation professional development reading meetings, participate in college reading classes, and attend state and/or national reading meetings.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Reading classes are available
Our class schedule provides for reading **and** for language arts (English) classes.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Reading promotion within the school
Reading promotion similar to that in elementary schools is evident throughout our school.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Reading skill materials available to reading teachers
Our teachers are aware of reading skill materials appropriate for the reading levels of all students and have access to them.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Comments:

School district reading leadership
Middle grades reading is an important part of our corporation's reading program and sufficient help and encouragement are provided to reading teachers.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

School reading environment
Our school features an environment where reading is valued, promoted, and encouraged.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

School wide reading programs
The school provides programs such as the Young Hoosier Book Award Program from the Indiana Library Federation, commercial programs such as Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts, or a reading incentive program developed by our school.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Summer reading promotion
Our school promotes summer reading and keeps track of the results.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Use of public library by students
Most of our students have library cards and use them during the school year and in the summer.
○Strongly Disagree
○Disagree
○Undecided
○Agree
○Strongly Agree

Comments: