

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS
IN NEW YORK STATE**

A Doctoral Research Project

Presented to

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The Sage Colleges

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In Educational Leadership**

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS IN NEW YORK STATE

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The Sage Colleges, Esteves School of Education, 2017

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Readers of professional journals aimed at school librarians are led to believe that the role of a school librarian is that of a leader. Articles focus on change, innovation, collaboration, and empowerment of others while terms such as “instructional leader” and “technology leader” are scattered throughout. The literature emphasizes the role of school librarians as teacher leaders through their unique position within schools (Dotson & Jones, 2011; Johnston, 2013; Weisburg, 2016).

Leadership, with its multiple meanings, is somewhat ambiguous (Cosenza, 2015; Phillips, 2014). This study examined the leadership role of school librarians as well as the ways in which school librarians develop leadership capacity. Qualitative research methods were utilized and data was collected through interviews with 9 directors of school library systems and 9 school librarians from across New York State.

The findings from this study indicate that directors and librarians believe that school librarians are teacher leaders. Leadership capacity can be developed through a variety of opportunities, including professional development. This development is dependent on both internal and external factors that influence individuals. The beliefs and dispositions of school

librarians impacts leadership growth. External conditions, such as support from administrators, also have a correlation in developing capacity. Directors of school library systems are actively working to create the opportunities for librarians to become teacher leaders through professional development, information sharing, and advocacy.

Several recommendations are offered from this study. The most substantial recommendation is creating a systematic, statewide approach to ensuring that all school librarians have multiple opportunities to grow as teacher leaders. In addition, directors of school library systems are encouraged to begin recognizing librarians as teacher leaders so that librarians have the provocation needed to begin seeing themselves as leaders. Participants of this study made it clear that outside recognition had much to do with the way individuals saw themselves.

Keywords: Teacher Leadership, School Librarians, Professional Development

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background and Overview of the Study

Readers of professional journals aimed at school librarians are led to believe that the role of a school librarian is that of a leader. Articles focus on change, innovation, collaboration, and empowerment of others while terms such as “instructional leader” and “technology leader” are scattered throughout. Yet popular culture still holds the image of the traditional librarian as the norm. Ask anyone to describe a school librarian and it is likely that what will come to mind is an image of a woman with her hair in a “bun” well before “leader,” even now in 2017. So what role, if any, do school librarians have in providing leadership within their own organizations?

In 2014, the national organization for school librarians adopted a new mission statement: “The American Association of School Librarians [AASL] empowers leaders to transform teaching and learning” (American Association of School Librarians, 2014). The organizational goals clarify the mission:

AASL works to ensure that all members of the school library field collaborate to: provide leadership in the total education program, participate as active partners in the teaching/learning process, connect learners with ideas and information, and prepare students for life-long learning, informed decision-making, a love of reading, and the use of information technologies. (American Association of School Librarians, 2003)

School librarians are expected to be instructional leaders in their buildings as implied by the mission and goals of AASL.

Many factors position school librarians to be leaders within their buildings. Librarians have a unique perspective on the curriculum as they collaborate with teachers across all subject

areas and grade levels. Melissa Johnston (2015) claims that school librarians have “technology knowledge and skills, a pedagogical background, expansive curricular knowledge, and experience developing partnerships with teachers” (p. 47). She continues by saying “this distinctive combination of knowledge, skills, and expertise often places teacher librarians in positions of leadership” (Johnston, 2015, p. 47).

As they strive to deliver a strong library program that ensures student learning and success, school librarians are faced with many challenges. Evolving technology, updated standards, new resources, and increasing rigor for student learning all create a need for librarians to constantly update their knowledge and skill set. Recognizing that librarians are often isolated as the only professional with their unique training and expertise in their school, possibly even district, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has developed a support structure to assist librarians. School library systems offer continuing professional development, guidance, and resources to school librarians. Through professional development, school librarians are provided with opportunities to increase their knowledge, update their skill set, and become more confident in their abilities as leaders in their schools.

School library systems (SLS) were established under New York State Education Law and operate according to Commissioner’s Regulations (New York State Education Department, 2016g). State Aid funds are provided to support each system, which is overseen by a director. Each school library system is governed by a council and is required to hold at least four meetings per year with their communications coordinators, or liaisons, from each of the districts served by the system. This structure creates an opportunity for the director of the school library system, a certified librarian with an administrative degree, to provide school librarians with valuable learning opportunities. Each of the directors of the 41 school library systems is a member of the

School Library Systems' Association of New York State (SLSA). "The mission of the School Library Systems' Association of New York State is to strengthen, support and advocate for its members as they foster quality school library programs" (School Library Systems Association of New York State, 2016b). This organization strives to provide a statewide approach to delivering effective library services across New York including leadership in the areas of information literacy, digital literacy, collaboration and partnerships, professional development, and consortium purchasing (New York State Education Department, 2016g).

"Research shows that one of the chief characteristics of a high performing school is a quality Library Media Program" (New York State Education Department, 2010b). The New York State Education Department has developed a tool for school librarians to evaluate the library program within their school. The School Library Media Program Evaluation (SLMPE) rubric identifies twenty-five essential elements that contribute to a distinguished library program. These elements are broken into three critical categories including teaching for learning, building the learning environment, and empowering learning through leadership (New York State Education Department, 2010b). For a school library program to be rated as distinguished on the SLMPE rubric, school librarians must empower learning through leadership. Students, staff, and administrators benefit when the school librarian is capable of creating and sustaining a quality program that meets the needs of all, therefore school librarians must be skilled leaders.

Statement of the Problem

A changing profession demands that practitioners participate in ongoing professional development to grow and sustain skills. Multiple research studies have questioned whether pre-service programs adequately prepare students for their role as leaders within their schools (Dotson & Jones, 2011; Smith 2015). Because librarians must be leaders and pre-service

programs do not all consistently develop these skills, it is important for professionals within the field to offer the necessary training. New York State's model of school library systems ensures that all school librarians have a system available that can provide ongoing training.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which directors of school library systems of New York State develop the leadership capacity of school librarians. Through a qualitative, phenomenological study, K-12 school librarians and directors of school library systems were interviewed to gather data about the role that school library systems have in developing the leadership capacity of school librarians through professional development opportunities offered over a three-year period. Interviews were conducted with one school librarian and one director of a school library system, each with two or more years of experience, from each of the nine regions in New York State. Responses were analyzed through the lens of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* to identify if librarians had been provided with opportunities to expand their leadership skills.

For this study, leadership is defined through the seven domains of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* (Teacher Leader Model Standards, 2012). These standards provide a lens through which the researcher was able to identify the professional development opportunities offered by school library systems that lead to the development of leadership skills of school librarians.

Research shows that collective leadership has a stronger influence on student achievement than individual leadership. The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* seek to generate collective leadership by fostering professional discussion about best practices and advancing new roles for teachers to serve. (Teacher Leader Model Standards, 2012)

The vision of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* correlates with the work of school librarians as they seek to collaborate with teachers to offer a strong school library program as identified through the elements of the School Library Media Program Evaluation (SLMPE) rubric commonly used in New York State (New York State Education Department, 2010b).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

By answering the four research questions, this study aims to assist directors of school library systems across New York State as they develop professional learning opportunities for their member school librarians.

1. What is the leadership role of school librarians in New York State?
2. How do school librarians acquire the skills needed to be effective teacher leaders?
3. In what ways do directors of school library systems influence the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State?
4. Using the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* as a framework to define leadership, to what extent does professional development provided by school library systems align to the standards?

Significance of the Study

Results from this study will be shared with two stakeholder groups including the School Library Systems' Association of New York State and the New York Library Association's Section of School Librarians. The researcher intends to provide information about the professional learning activities identified as having assisted school librarians with their leadership development. The recommendations provided in chapter five are offered to assist directors of school library systems with planning future professional development that effectively builds leadership skills. Recommendations for further study are also offered.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms have been provided to eliminate misunderstanding between the researcher and the reader.

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) are educational organizations that provide “shared educational programs and services to school districts” in New York State. “BOCES partner with districts to provide a broad range of services that help meet the evolving educational needs of students” (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, 2014).

Leadership is defined as the set of skills needed to implement the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*. These skills, when used, transform a school “to meet the needs of 21st-century learners” (*Teacher Leader Model Standards*, 2012).

Provocation is “a crucial element in the knowledge-creation process” that provides stimulus for others to take action (Hjorth, 2011).

School librarian is the “official professional title adopted by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the American Library Association” to describe the certified teacher holding a Master of Library Science degree (American Library Association, 2010).

School Library System is the name of the State Aid funded program that provides services and support to school librarians in New York State. These systems are housed in Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) or Big 5 school districts (School Library Systems Association of New York State, 2016a).

School Library System Director is the title given to the administrator who leads the school library system (School Library Systems Association of New York State, 2016a).

The *School Library Media Program Evaluation (SLMPE) Rubric* is a tool provided by the New York State Education Department that assists school librarians and administrators by

identifying the elements essential to providing a distinguished school library program (New York State Education Department, 2010d).

Delimitation and Scope of the Study

This study develops an understanding of leadership skills growth in school librarians across New York State as influenced by directors of school library systems. The qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to discuss this topic in depth with respondents. Several delimitations were included to manage the scope of research. The sample size was limited to 18 participants: one school librarian and one director of a school library system from each of the nine regions of New York State. Respondents were required to have at least two years of experience in their profession to ensure a working knowledge of their role within their school or system as well as knowledge of professional development opportunities offered by the school library system. Professional development was limited to the most recent data available through the Division of Library Development at the New York State Education Department. This included information from annual reports for the school years ending in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

Limitation of the Study

Participants represented each of the nine school library system regions in New York State. While the researcher had hoped to have face-to-face interviews with each participant, technology proved to be the preferred method for conducting interviews. Initial participants were offered the opportunity to meet in person or through secured software and all but one chose to meet virtually. The convenient nature of this software led to all but two interviews being conducted through technology.

One interview with a school librarian, librarian 8, was not used in the final analysis that led to the reported findings. This particular interview did not adhere to the protocols outlined in

chapter three. The researcher chose to eliminate the transcript from analysis rather than try to align statements with the research questions addressed to eliminate any bias the researcher might impose when deciding where to place information.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the study, including its purpose and the research questions, as well as the definition of terms to assist in clear communication between the researcher and the reader. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature pertaining to the study. Common themes such as leadership, librarianship, and development are addressed. Chapter Three provides a detailed account of the methodologies used for this study. Chapter Four presents the findings for each of the four research questions. Chapter Five provides an analysis of the findings, conclusions from the research, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

A shift in expectations and complexity has occurred in education making it difficult for one person in a position of power and authority to effectively act as the sole instructional leader, supervisor, and building manager capable of meeting the demands of stakeholders including students, teachers, and parents. Research has shown that “collective leadership” positively impacts student achievement, having a stronger influence than individual leadership (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2010). Teachers are finding increased opportunities to assume formal and informal leadership roles within their schools (Cosenza, 2015). These roles can range from leading a department to serving on committees to providing professional development for colleagues.

At the same time that school leadership has transformed into a collective model, the role of the school librarian has also shifted. Changing professional standards provide evidence that the field of school librarianship has evolved (Elkins, 2014; Johnston, 2013; Phillips, 2014). School librarians, once seen as managers and collectors of information, now focus on instruction: teaching students to utilize information effectively (Moreillon, 2013). School librarians have also been called upon to be teacher leaders. In 2010 the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) published standards for the initial preparation of school librarians that outline five standards school librarians must meet in order to be considered effective (American Library Association, 2010). In addition to the standards commonly associated with school librarians, such as teaching for learning, literacy and reading, information and knowledge, and program management and

administration, school librarians are also expected to provide advocacy and leadership (American Library Association, 2010).

This leadership role is important when considering what it means for students. More than 25 studies, collectively known as the School Library Impact Studies, have demonstrated that “there is a direct correlation between student achievement and school library media programs when a certified library media specialist assumes leadership in the school” (American Association of School Librarians National Research Forum, 2014; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2012). The need for shared leadership coupled with new standards for school librarians demands that school librarians be equipped to effectively assume the role of teacher leader.

The purpose of this study was to examine the development of the leadership capacity of school librarians and the influence that directors of school library systems have on that process in New York State. This is accomplished through a review of the literature, interviews with directors of school library systems and school librarians, and an analysis of documents related to professional development offered through school library systems. The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* are used as the lens through which information was filtered in order to understand it better.

This literature review examines the leadership role of school librarians. First, teacher leadership is defined and the need for teacher leaders established, and the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* are introduced as a lens through which the research will be examined (*Teacher Leader Model Standards*, 2012). These standards articulate the observable actions of teacher leaders, making it possible to identify individuals assuming that role. Next, the work of teacher leaders is aligned to that of school librarians. Finally, possible providers of professional development and

opportunities that lead to the acquisition of teacher leadership skills for school librarians in New York State are explored. It is essential to this study to understand the ways in which school librarians gain the skills needed to become teacher leaders.

Leadership

Teacher leadership defined. To understand what leadership means for school librarians, it is necessary to define the term. This can be problematic as there are an overwhelming number of ways in which to define leadership, leaving the concept somewhat ambiguous (Cosenza, 2015; Phillips, 2014). A natural way to define the leadership role of educators, including school librarians, is to investigate teacher leadership. Danielson (2006) succinctly proposes that teacher leadership is the set of skills that a teacher exhibits beyond the classroom that influences the actions of other educators. Cosenza (2015) builds on that definition by stating that teachers are leaders when they act as continuous learners who use their skills to influence educational practices throughout the school, both formally and informally. For the purposes of this study, the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium offers the researcher's preferred definition. Teacher leadership is "the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement" (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2010, p.11).

School librarians have several sources from which to build a list of leadership characteristics that pertain specifically to their position. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards identifies three categories of leadership for school librarians: instructional, administrative, and professional (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2012). Everhart (2007) provides a clear articulation of leadership actions by school librarians as

providing staff development, modeling the ethical and effective use of technology, incorporating new technologies into lesson design, following copyright guidelines, staying informed of trends, and coordinating school wide events. While not specific to school librarians, but rather a natural outcome of the actions suggested by Everhart, Danielson (2006) suggests that mobilizing, energizing, and influencing others exemplifies teacher leadership.

Need for teacher leadership. The teaching profession does not offer a natural career ladder in the way that many other professions do (Danielson, 2006). Generally, first year teachers are expected to complete work similar to that of master teachers with years of experience. While the skill level changes, the role of a classroom teacher does not (Danielson, 2006). Teacher leadership allows those who wish to continue as educators an opportunity to grow through additional challenges and opportunities (Cosenza, 2015). These teacher leaders, working in both formal and informal roles, can help facilitate many of the initiatives taking place in schools.

A distributed approach to leadership allows administrators, faculty, and staff to work together to make lasting change towards improving student success. Experts in distributed leadership, Spillane, Diamond, and Jita (2003), offer two conditions that must be present for widespread change in schools: “going to scale” and “going to substance”: “‘Going to scale’ essentially involves improving the dissemination of recent reforms beyond the handful of schools and classrooms that usually ‘take’ to instructional innovation. ‘Going to substance’ involves ensuring that reforms are enacted in ways consistent with their ‘spirit’” (p. 534). These researchers posit that building leaders have an obligation to cultivate a culture that allows educators to embrace this distribution of power allowing for needed change. Distributed leadership requires that formal leaders “spread and mobilize the expertise necessary for

instructional improvement in their organization” (Spillane et al., 2003, p. 542). By going to scale, educators are empowered to become teacher leaders.

Spillane et al. (2003) also discuss the notion of leadership being dependent on situation. Situations embedded within the full context of the educational setting allow distributed leadership practices to take place (Spillane et al., 2003, p. 541). “School leadership, consequently, is not simply a function of what an individual leader knows and does. Rather, it is constituted in the dynamic interaction of multiple leaders (and followers) and their situation around particular leadership tasks” (Spillane et al., 2003, p. 541). The work of school librarians naturally lends itself to creating the situation and context allowing them to be teacher leaders within their schools. As evidenced through the essential elements of the School Library Media Program Evaluation (SLMPE) rubric, librarians foster opportunities for collaborative planning, use assessments for learning, provide equitable access to resources, and serve as instructional leaders in their schools (New York Education Department, 2010b).

Teacher leadership is accomplished through a shift in culture (Spillane et al., 2003; Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2010). Administrators that embrace distributed leadership encourage educators to participate in the decision-making process and to extend their work beyond individual classrooms to influence the school community as a whole (Cosenza, 2015; DiScala & Subramaniam, 2011; Johnston, 2015). A shift in school culture that maximizes the capacity of individuals and teams breaks down silos and encourages collaboration (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2010). “Teacher leadership goes beyond the scope of the teacher leading students in a classroom; teachers are empowered within a culture of learning, taking authority from pedagogical expertise, and focusing on improving instruction and student learning” (Johnston, 2015, p. 40). Distributed leadership theory supports that “multiple people

work together in such a way that they pool together their abilities and expertise to facilitate an outcome that is greater than the sum of their individual actions” (Johnston, 2015, p. 40).

A review of the literature indicates that educational leadership has evolved over time (Belisle, 2004; The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2005). Belisle (2004) proposes that organizational leadership models that are authoritative or bureaucratic are outdated. In fact, one meta-analysis of two decades of research suggests, “that traditional top-down management structures impede the development of teacher leaders and, consequently, school improvement” (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2005). While the need for district administrators and principals to act as leaders remains, opportunities exist for others, including teachers, to exhibit leadership skills as well.

Teacher Leader Model Standards

In 2008, a group of educators convened for the purpose of discussing the impact of teacher leadership as it relates to student achievement and school improvement (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2010). This group developed into the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium and examined research, interviewed previously identified teacher leaders, and studied existing leadership programs (Cosenza, 2015; *Teacher Leader Model Standards*, 2012). From initial meetings of the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium emerged the goal of enabling conversations about leadership competencies for teachers, which resulted in the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* (Cosenza, 2015). The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* “codify, promote, and support teacher leadership” as a way to transform schools to meet the needs of all students in the 21st century (“Model Standards Advance the Profession,” 2011, p. 16). These standards provide the knowledge base of teacher leadership and outline the key actions teachers take in each dimension (“Model Standards Advance the Profession,” 2011).

As teachers, school librarians can utilize the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* to guide their work. Cosenza (2015) offered that,

through formal positions, teachers may have administrative authority but the standards are intended to provide a set of guidelines that generate influence and response through being continuous learners, being approachable using group skills and influence to improve the educational practice of their peers, model effective practices, exercise their influence in formal and informal contexts, and support collaborative team structures within their schools. (p. 82)

These standards provide guidance to those wishing to become leaders through their actions rather than through positional or administrative authority (Cosenza, 2015). They provide “concrete answers to those once-debated questions about defining teacher leadership” (Kajitani, 2015, p. 122). The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* serve as the lens through which this research study was viewed, aligning the leadership development and practices of school librarians with the seven domains of the Standards. Johnston (2013) offered that the leadership practices of school librarians are similar to those of classroom teachers. All teachers, including school librarians, can utilize the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* as a guide to thinking about and embedding leadership practices into their work.

As educators strive to assume informal leadership roles, the domains of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* suggest building an inclusive culture, promoting research and inquiry by educators, collaborating with others, striving for continuous improvement of self and school, improving teaching and learning, utilizing data, collaborating with the community, and advocating for students (“Model Standards Advance the Profession,” 2011). Each of the seven domains is further broken down into functions that describe in detail how teachers exhibit

leadership skills (*Teacher Leader Model Standards*, 2012). However, to be deemed a teacher leader, an educator does not need to master all dimensions of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* (“Model Standards Advance the Profession,” 2011).

Literature specifically connecting the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* to the work of school librarians is not available. However, these standards align closely to the School Library Media Program Evaluation (SLMPE) rubric. The SLMPE rubric is a tool developed by the New York State Education Department to assist educational stakeholders in evaluating the effectiveness of a school’s library program (New York Education Department, 2010b). This self-evaluation tool utilizes 25 “essential elements” required for school library programs to be recognized as “distinguished” (New York Education Department, 2010b). These 25 elements, categorized into three sections, include teaching for learning, building a learning environment, and empowering learning through leadership (New York Education Department, 2010b). While the SLMPE rubric is a tool to evaluate the library program and not the librarian, the descriptions for each element assist the librarian in understanding the work that must be completed for the program to reach the highest level of functioning.

To demonstrate the validity of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* (TLMS) as a lens for this study, an alignment between the TLMSs and the SLMPE rubric was created (see Appendix C). The researcher and two colleagues, one a director of a school library system and the other a public school librarian in New York State, developed this alignment. The researcher chose not to complete this work independently to ensure that her own bias did not affect the alignment. The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* are relevant to the work of school librarians through their presence in the essential elements of a distinguished library program as identified by the New York State Education Department through the SLMPE rubric.

The Role of School Librarians as Teacher Leaders

The literature emphasizes the role of school librarians as teacher leaders through their unique position within schools (Dotson & Jones, 2011; Johnston, 2013; Weisburg, 2016). The American Association of School Librarians stresses this leadership role to ensure that students learn the necessary skills to be successful in the 21st century (Johnston, 2013). As instructional partners, school librarians have been called on to be teacher leaders (Weisburg, 2016). Dotson and Jones (2011) state that it is necessary for librarians to develop into “powerful leaders within their schools” (p. 78).

The path to teacher leadership is relatively new to the field of librarianship, first appearing in the professional standards for school librarians in 1988. Leadership was not truly embraced as a critical role for school librarians until 2009 with the publication of *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (American Association of School Librarians, 2016; see also, DiScala & Subramaniam, 2011; Elkins, 2014). These guidelines were designed to help school librarians meet the needs of all learners in a changing environment (American Association of School Librarians, 2016). With *Empowering Learners*, librarians stepped into the role of collaborator, instructor, and model for teaching and technology integration (DiScala & Subramaniam, 2011). Librarians demonstrated leadership through collaboration, evidence-based practice, promoting and providing professional development, and recruiting others to the profession (DiScala & Subramaniam, 2011).

School librarians, while responsible for student instruction, have a role that differs from that of classroom teachers. In addition to teaching, school librarians must also manage the library and collaborate with classroom teachers to embed information literacy skills into content area lessons. Phillips (2014) offers that leadership is work that leads to fulfilling the mission and

goals of the organization. Librarians act as leaders through the development of a library program whose vision meets that of the larger organization (Phillips, 2014).

Acquisition of Leadership Skills

At the national and state levels, there has been an increased focus on outcomes for student success (Spillane et al., 2003). This change in expectations for students also requires a shift in pedagogy (Spillane et al., 2003). One can infer that a transformation of teaching practices requires that teachers engage in quality professional development to cultivate new skills.

Over the course of a career, leadership skills emerge and are further developed and adjusted as needed to be effective. Beginning with pre-service coursework and practical experience and extending through the culmination of a career, school librarians have opportunities to develop their leadership capacity. A review of the literature shows some disagreement as to the ideal time to target this development. Phillips (2014) questions the point at which leadership training should take place: Is it most effective to begin leadership training as part of a Library and Information Studies program or through continuing professional development that occurs on the job?

Pre-service programs. The *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* was last updated by the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association (ALA) and adopted by ALA's Council in 2015. The accreditation process is an accountability system conducted through self and peer assessment to improve the quality of academic programs (American Library Association, 2015). "By identifying those programs meeting recognized standards, the Committee offers a means of quality control in the professional staffing of library and information services" (American Library Association, 2015).

The accreditation process assesses each program through evidence of student development. Trained practitioners and college faculty conduct the review applying measures for unbiased judgment. Before receiving accreditation, a master level program is holistically judged on its ability to meet the program's mission, goals, and objectives, which are aligned to the *Standards for Accreditation* (American Library Association, 2015).

The *Standards for Accreditation* (American Library Association, 2015) "identify the indispensable components of library and information studies programs while recognizing programs' rights and obligations regarding initiative, experimentation, innovation, and individual programmatic differences" (p. 3). When evidence is provided that a program meets each of the standards, inferences can be made that students completing the program are prepared to meet the demands of the profession. The five standards for accreditation include: (I) systematic planning, (II) curriculum, (III) faculty, (IV) students, and (V) administration, finances, and resources (American Library Association, 2015).

Standard II, with its focus on curriculum, ensures the introduction of theories, practices, and ideas that will influence students' future work as librarians.

The curriculum

II.2.1 Fosters development of library and information professionals who will assume a leadership role in providing services and collections appropriate for the communities that are served;

II.2.2 Emphasizes an evolving body of knowledge that reflects the findings of basic and applied research from relevant fields;

II.2.3 Integrates technology and the theories that underpin its design, application, and use;

II.2.4 Responds to the needs of a diverse and global society, including the needs of underserved groups;

II.2.5 Provides direction for future development of a rapidly changing field;

II.2.6 Promotes commitment to continuous professional development and lifelong learning, including the skills and competencies that are needed for the practitioner of the future. (American Library Association, 2015, p. 5)

In the context of this study, standard II specifically requires that school librarians begin their training as “leaders” in their pre-service program. Graduate students are to be prepared to meet the needs of the community they serve through responsive leadership (II.2.1 and II.2.4), understanding that the field is ever changing (II.2.5) and that professional development and learning is a lifelong process (II.2.6) (American Library Association, 2015).

From the accreditation process, initial preparation programs for school librarians appear to be an ideal place to begin the leadership development of school librarians. Dotson and Jones (2011) stated that “we have an opportunity to shape the change we seek by developing emergent school library leaders during their pre-service library education programs” (p. 78). Phillips (2014) offered that it is important to instill the need and belief for leadership at the pre-service level. The literature highlights individual programs that universities have developed to ensure that future librarians have opportunities to develop leadership skills at the start of their career (Ash-Argyle & Shoham, 2012; Dotson & Jones, 2011; Smith, 2015). The fact that these individual leadership programs exist indicates that leadership skills are not consistently implemented across all pre-service programs. Even if they were, a constantly evolving profession requires continuous professional development throughout a librarian’s career (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014). Pre-service programs, with their requirements to teach standards, skills, and

dispositions, simply cannot provide the full range of skills and knowledge that is needed over the course of a career (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014). Additional opportunities for professional growth beyond preparation programs for school librarians must exist.

Continuous professional development. A review of the literature also shows that many believe that leadership skills development is best accomplished once working in the field. Through their research study, Corcoran and McGuinness (2014) specifically state that librarians understand “that a static body of professional skills and knowledge is insufficient to meet the demands of the twenty-first century workplace” (p. 176). Continuous professional development addresses gaps that exist between a librarian’s knowledge and skill set and the realities of the position. Professional development also serves as a tool to maintain skills that are already present (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014).

Several professional development providers are accessible once one is working in the field. Following is an overview of the benefits and barriers to obtaining continuous professional learning from each provider including professional organizations, school districts, and school library systems.

Professional organizations. Professional organizations exist to serve the needs of members. They offer a wide range of services from publications, to networking opportunities, to professional development. Organizations serving school librarians have formed at the national, state, and local levels. Professional organizations for librarians have an obligation to provide professional development that leads to increased leadership capacity according to the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA), a section of the American Library Association (Phillips, 2014). At the state level, the Leadership and Management Section (LAMS) of the New York Library Association (NYLA) functions to provide support to librarians wishing

to be leaders in their community (New York Library Association, 2016a). A note on the LAMS website reminds librarians that they do not need to be in a position of authority to be leaders; leadership opportunities exist at all levels of an organization (New York Library Association, 2016a).

While professional organizations strive to offer quality professional development, membership is optional. Barriers, such as motivation or cost, can keep individuals from fully participating. One must look to other sources to ensure equity in the growth opportunities provided to school librarians.

School districts. In New York State, school districts must develop a plan to provide professional development to educators as per Regulations of the Commissioner of Education part 100.2(dd) (New York State Education Department, 2016f). In addition, the Board of Regents established Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) requirements in March 2016. Under CTLE, teachers holding a professional certificate must participate in 100 hours of professional learning every five years (New York State Education Department, 2016b). The New York State Education Department advises that the professional development be designed to improve student achievement through the development of pedagogical and leadership skills of participants (New York State Education Department, 2016a). This aligns to the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium's (2010) belief that effective professional development focuses on continuous improvements directed towards improving teachers' ability to positively impact student achievement.

While local school districts have an obligation to offer professional development, they may be selective in choosing participants for specific classes. Cosenza (2015) argues that school districts often create opportunities for the administrative teams to continue to develop their

leadership skills. However, teachers, including school librarians, may not be invited to participate in these trainings. The importance of teacher leadership outlined earlier in this chapter highlights the need to ensure teachers have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

School library systems of New York State. The Division of Library Development at the New York State Education Department (NYSED) recognizes that “effective school library programs improve student achievement” (New York State Education Department, 2016c). In 1984, New York State established school library systems through Education Law §282-284 (New York State Education Department, 2016c). These systems are defined as “an organization of school districts and nonpublic schools cooperating with a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to provide library coordination and/or services to member school library media centers under a school library system plan of service” (New York State Education Department, 2010a). The New York City Department of Education and four of the “Big 5” city school districts including Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers, operate their own system rather than belonging to a BOCES (School Library Systems Association of New York State, 2016a).

The Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (§90.18) provide further guidance as to the governance and functions of these systems with the purpose of ensuring service to all students, teachers, and administrators in public school districts and nonpublic schools (New York State Education Department, 2016c). School library systems facilitate resource sharing among member libraries, distribute access to New York Online Virtual Electronic Library (NOVELNY) databases provided from the New York State Library, and establish partnerships with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and other types of library systems throughout the state (New York State Education Department, 2016c). School library systems are required to

provide ongoing professional development for school librarians in all member public school districts and nonpublic schools (New York State Education Department, 2010b; New York State Education Department, 2016c).

Each School Library System has a director that is responsible for overseeing and implementing the Commissioner's regulations §90.18 (School Library Systems Association of New York State, 2016a). These regulations specify how each system is governed and staffed, and detail the functions of the system's coordinator (New York State Education Department, 2010a). Once every five years, the school library system must submit a plan of service for approval by the Commissioner of Education (New York State Education Department, 2010a). The system's council, or governing board, ensures that the plan of service is developed through collaborative methods that include member librarians and administrators, the director of the system, and the Council. Once approved by the School Library System Council at the BOCES or "Big 5" district, the plan is submitted to the Commissioner of Education.

Requirements for the plan of service, articulated by Commissioner's regulations §90.18, include that systems must provide professional development (New York State Education Department, 2010a). Ongoing "needs assessments and program development, including staff development needs, and the appropriate activities to meet those needs," ensure that school librarians have the opportunity to participate in continuous professional learning (New York State Education Department, 2010a). These learning opportunities are open to all school librarians in public school districts and nonpublic schools, not just a limited group.

The Division of Library Development articulates that school library systems assist students in succeeding by providing professional development for school librarians and other educators, supporting effective integration of technology for learning, assisting in the redesign of

curriculum that improves teaching and learning, and fostering opportunities for lifelong learning (New York State Education Department, 2016c). These activities align directly to the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*, ensuring that all school librarians serving in public school districts and nonpublic schools can engage in opportunities that help them become leaders in their school, district, and profession.

Summary

The ever-evolving role of school librarians requires continuous professional development in order for librarians to develop and maintain the skills needed to be effective (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014). Development of leadership skills begins in pre-service programs and continues throughout the course of a school librarian's career. Continuous professional development obtained through professional organizations and school districts may be selective in choosing who is allowed to participate. New York State, understanding the impact that school library programs have on student achievement, established school library systems (New York State Education Department, 2016c). Commissioner's regulations §90.18 ensures that all school librarians working in public and non-public schools have access to professional development (New York State Education Department, 2010a).

From a review of the literature, gaps in previously conducted research became apparent. While the need for school librarians to be teacher leaders was demonstrated, few studies examined the widespread, systematic approach to providing leadership development for school librarians. No studies were found that included an examination of the impact that school library systems or their directors have on school librarians in New York State.

The following study examines the development of the leadership capacity of school librarians and the influence that directors of school library systems have on that process in New

York State. Responses from interviews with directors of school library systems and school librarians are viewed through the lens of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*. This study seeks to identify if an alignment exists between professional development offered by school library systems and the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

Chapter Three describes the research methodologies of this study, including population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and validity and reliability. The methodologies used in this study were chosen to allow the researcher to gain a better understanding of how school librarians develop leadership capacity, specifically looking at the professional development opportunities provided through school library systems in New York State.

Standards for school librarians have transformed over time to reflect the changing profession and to recognize the skills needed to effectively meet the requirements of the position (Elkins, 2014, p. 2). In 1988, the word “leadership” was first introduced in the professional standards for school librarians as a disposition that school librarians must possess (Elkins, 2014, p. 23). Craver (1986) claims that it takes ten years for new standards to be adopted and implemented by a profession (p. 185). With standards calling for school librarians to be leaders and an understanding that it takes time to develop these skills, many questions are raised as to how best to cultivate these skills.

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which directors of school library systems of New York State develop the leadership capacity of school librarians. Through a qualitative, phenomenological study, K-12 school librarians and directors of school library systems were interviewed to gather data about the role that school library systems have in developing the leadership capacity of school librarians through professional development opportunities offered over a three-year period. Interviews were conducted with one school

librarian and one director of a school library system, each with two or more years of experience, from each of the nine regions in New York State. Responses were analyzed through the lens of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* to identify if librarians had been provided with opportunities to expand their leadership skills.

Research Questions

1. What is the leadership role of school librarians in New York State?
2. How do school librarians acquire the skills needed to be effective teacher leaders?
3. In what ways do directors of school library systems influence the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State?
4. Using the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* as a framework to define leadership, to what extent does professional development provided by School Library Systems align to the standards?

Research Design

Through qualitative, phenomenological methods, the researcher aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of leadership skills for school librarians as understood by school librarians and their directors. The many varied ways in which school librarians develop these skills were also investigated. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that qualitative methods allow researchers to explore how people interpret and assign meaning to their experiences (p. 15). A phenomenological research approach to this qualitative study was selected as it allowed the researcher to understand the “lived experiences of individuals” as they relate to leadership development (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). Through descriptions provided by participants, the researcher analyzed statements to extract the “essence of the experiences” (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). A constant comparative data analysis was also conducted (Creswell, 2014). This approach

was used to identify patterns as they emerged from the data by comparing one piece of data to another, looking for similarities and differences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This study was designed with the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher adapted questions during the interview to gather data for better understanding of respondents' experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interviews were conducted with current directors of school library systems and practicing public school librarians in New York State. This mode for collecting data was selected over other methods to allow the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the ways in which participants recognized leadership as it pertains to school librarians based on their experiences. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posit that interviews are ideal for allowing the researcher to understand a phenomenon through the collection and analysis of data, in this case leadership development of school librarians.

Two sets of structured, open-ended questions were developed, and directors of school library systems were asked one set while school librarians were asked the other. Through open-ended questions, the researcher collected "participant meanings", rather than defining meanings for them (Creswell, 2014, p. 18). While the interview questions for both groups were structured, additional probing questions were asked as needed throughout the interviews. Vogt, Gardner, and Haeffele (2012) explain that "even the most formal interviews benefit from flexibility" (p. 40). Clarity and understanding by the researcher were the primary goals for these additional questions.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

Two distinct populations exist in this study. The first is comprised of the directors of the 41 school library systems in New York State. Thirty-six of the systems are housed in Boards of

Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and offer support and services across multiple districts (New York State Education Department, 2016c). The New York City Department of Education and four of the “Big 5” school districts including Buffalo Public Schools, Rochester City School District, Syracuse City School District, and Yonkers Public Schools house their own individual School Library System.

The second population is comprised of school librarians that were employed in public schools in New York State at the time of the study. A 2016 census conducted by the New York Library Association shows that 3,022 public schools in New York State have school librarians (J. Johannesen, personal communication, September 22, 2016). This number reflected data that was collected from 4,316 of the 4,502 schools identified in New York State (New York Library Association, 2016b). According to the 2014–2015 Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) Personnel Master File (PMF), there were 2,289 school librarians employed in New York State (New York State Education Department, 2016e). The discrepancy in numbers between the census and the BEDS data may be attributed to several factors including school librarians who work in more than one school. School librarians from public schools in New York State were chosen to participate because of their eligibility to receive support and services from a school library system (New York State Education Department, 2010a).

The sample was selected to reflect the population of school librarians and allow for generalizations (Creswell, 2014). Directors of school library systems were interviewed to learn more about their perception of the leadership skills that school librarians must hold to be effective teacher leaders. Per regulations of the Commissioner of Education pertaining to school library systems, one of the main functions of directors of school library systems is the “planning of professional staff development and other continuing education activities” (New York State

Education Department, 2010a). In addition to professional development, the researcher looked for additional opportunities provided by directors of school library systems for school librarians to gain, strengthen, and demonstrate leadership skills. School librarians were interviewed to learn more about their understanding of leadership skills as they applied to the profession and what opportunities existed to gain those skills. This approach of interviewing members from two sample populations provided the researcher with the opportunity to analyze responses from two different perspectives in each system.

For this study, interviews were conducted with one director of a school library system with more than two years of experience from each of the nine regions across New York State. Stratified sampling divided all directors of school library systems by the region in which they serve. Vogt et. al. (2012) offer stratified sampling as a technique when a researcher desires “to compare groups that are not equally represented in a population” (p. 125). A map of the nine regions is available through the School Library Systems’ Association of New York State website (School Library Systems Association of New York State, 2016a). Once divided into strata, the researcher disqualified any directors with less than two years of experience. The researcher was also eliminated from the list of possible candidates to be interviewed from her region. The remaining directors from each region were assigned consecutive numbers. A website that generates random numbers from a given list, *random.org*, was used to select the director who would be invited to participate in the study. Just one selected director declined to be interviewed; and another director from that region was selected following the same simple random sampling procedure.

To identify school librarians to be interviewed, a stratified random sampling procedure was used followed by quota sampling. First, the school librarian was selected from the same

school library system as the director from each region. Second, the librarian had to be a current member of that system's council ensuring some knowledge of the professional development offered by the system without implying that the librarian participated in that professional development (New York State Education Department, 2016d). The researcher elected not to select participants from each system's communications coordinators group, commonly referred to as liaisons, since many communications coordinators' meetings are designed with the intent of providing professional development (New York State Education Department, 2016d). The researcher was interested in exploring all opportunities that school librarians seek for learning, rather than only the professional development that they are obligated to participate in through attendance at meetings. The researcher had planned to use quota sampling to ensure that both male and female as well as elementary and secondary librarians were represented. Vogt et. al. (2012) state that quota sampling provides the researcher with an opportunity to ensure representation from each of the selected categories. However, quota sampling was not necessary since male, female, elementary, and secondary librarians were already represented through the random sampling procedure. While overarching generalizations cannot be made about each quota group because of their small size, the researcher obtained data from a varied group of participants to ensure that final conclusions were not limited to a single group. Participants represented different perspectives through their identity as male or female as well as their experience at the elementary or secondary level. In the case where those selected had less than two years of experience or declined the invitation to be interviewed, another council member was selected from the remaining eligible candidates using simple random sampling procedures.

Instrumentation

Two different sets of interview questions were developed, one for school librarians and one for directors of school library systems. The questions were designed to be open-ended, which allowed for each participant to describe the role of school librarians as teacher leaders, professional development opportunities that existed to develop leadership skills, and ways in which teacher leadership is demonstrated by school librarians in each of the nine regions in New York State. Both sets of interview questions were designed to elicit responses that would allow for the research questions to be answered. Appendix D includes the full interview protocol for school librarians and Appendix E is the interview protocol for directors of school library systems. In addition, Appendices F and G list the demographic questions asked of school librarians and directors of school library systems.

A panel of colleagues from the library field who were familiar with this study reviewed the interview questions. All interview questions were then validated through a pilot with two directors of school library systems and two school librarians who were not eligible to be selected for the sample population. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain the necessity to pilot questions in ensuring that the questions are clear and elicit responses that contain valuable data. Several questions were reworded to ensure clarity and the question order was adjusted to encourage a natural flow to the conversation.

Data Collection

Data was collected through interviews with directors of school library systems and school librarians. Once the sample population was identified, an email communication was sent to all selected directors of school library systems requesting an interview (Appendix H). A brief description of the study and the qualifications of the researcher were provided as well as

information about the time commitment and expectations of each participant. The informed consent form was also attached to the initial email (see Appendix J). Upon receiving the signed informed consent form and confirmation that the director was willing to be interviewed, the interview was scheduled.

While interviews were being scheduled with school library system directors, the school librarian from each of their systems was identified. Each director was asked to forward an invitation to the selected librarian anticipating that it would offer credibility to the interview request (see Appendix I). Again, an informed consent form was attached to the email and, upon receiving approval, interviews were scheduled (see Appendix J). The Metro New York region required approval from the Principal of the school in which the school librarian works before the interview could take place (see Appendix M). This added step was taken in order to remain in compliance with the research structure that the New York City Department of Education's Institutional Review Board established for researchers.

An interview protocol was used to ensure that each sample group heard the same introduction and set of interview questions. Probing questions were introduced during each interview so that the researcher could clarify information. A sound recording was digitally captured for each interview as well. Those recordings were sent via a password-protected file to a paid transcriptionist through a secure method. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement ensuring that all information shared by the sample population would remain confidential (see Appendix K).

While anonymity was not possible since the researcher knew the identity of each participant, all information remained confidential. Each participant received a unique identification number that was used in place of names. Directors of school library systems are

listed as director 1–9 in the following chapter while school librarians are identified as librarian 1–9. The numbers are aligned so that the director and the librarian from the same system have the same number. All participants were sent a copy of the transcript from their interview and provided with an opportunity to verify accuracy of the content.

Transcripts, audio recordings, emails, and all other information collected as part of this research study were kept on the researcher's password protected computer with a backup copy located on a secured hard drive. Printed data was secured in a locked file in the researcher's home office when not in use.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were transcribed, they were uploaded into NVivo11 software to assist the researcher in data analysis. Data was coded using the keywords from the seven domains of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* (Teacher Leader Model Standards, 2012). Additional codes were developed as new themes emerged. As transcripts were reviewed, data was analyzed to identify emerging ideas and themes (Creswell, 2014, p. 195). Creswell's (2014) data analysis in qualitative research process was used (p. 197). First raw data was collected, transcribed, and organized (Creswell, 2014, p. 197). The researcher then read all data to gain a general sense of the information and reflect on its meaning, recording first impressions and thoughts (Creswell, 2014, p. 197). A deeper analysis followed. Each of the transcripts was read multiple times to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

Three types of codes were used to code the data in the transcripts. Predetermined codes using the seven domains of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* were developed (Teacher Leader Model Standards, 2012). As additional themes emerged, those were added to the

NVivo11 software. The final type of code represented findings that were unusual or unexpected. Creswell (2014) describes these codes as being “of conceptual interest to readers” (p. 199).

Upon completion of coding, the researcher identified themes that became the major findings of this qualitative study (Creswell, 2014). An in-depth narrative in Chapter Four reports these findings and their significance (Creswell, 2014). The final step in data analysis was an “interpretation of the qualitative research” in which the researcher shared the meaning that was derived from the data (Creswell, 2014).

Validity

To ensure the validity of this study, information was triangulated. Triangulation allows for data to be collected from multiple sources with multiple perspectives for comparison (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 245). Triangulation allowed the researcher to look for consistencies in data provided through interviews with directors of school library systems, interviews with school librarians, and reports from the New York State Education Department’s Division of Library Development (DLD), documenting professional development activities offered by school library systems in 2012, 2013, and 2014, the most recent data available at the time of the study.

Reliability

To ensure reliability, all participants were offered an opportunity to review the transcript from their interview before it was uploaded into NVivo11 for analysis. This method ensured that information was accurate and reflected the thoughts that each individual provided to interview questions. All corrections received were insignificant in nature, mainly consisting of grammatical corrections and elimination of repetitive phrases commonly used in verbal communication.

One interview conducted with a school librarian did not follow the same protocol as the other interviews. The participant answered just two of the interview questions and the remainder of the time was spent discussing past experiences. While the librarian provided information that was in alignment with each of the interview questions, the researcher chose to eliminate the transcript from analysis, as it was felt that researcher bias might lead to an inaccurate alignment and therefore an inaccurate analysis.

Researcher Bias

At the time that this study took place the researcher was a former school librarian and current school library system director who had worked in two regions in New York State. To eliminate bias when selecting participants, protocols were developed ensuring that participants were not selected based on what the researcher knew about individuals and their work related to this study. The established protocols eliminated all school librarians that receive services, support, and professional development from the researcher's school library system from participating in this study.

In addition to the protocols for selecting candidates to be interviewed, protocols were also established for the actual interview sessions (see Appendices C and D). These included how the researcher would begin the interview, what questions would be asked, and what would be the closing statement. The structured interview questions ensured consistency among all interviews. This eliminated the possibility of showing bias through selecting questions based on any pre-existing knowledge of the directors of school library systems or school librarians.

An overwhelming number of definitions exist for the word leadership (Phillips, 2014, p. 336). A definition was not provided to the sample population to eliminate any influence on how interview questions were answered. The researcher was more interested in learning how each

participant defined the term and how that impacted their work. The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* was selected to define the term for the researcher and was used to analyze the results (*Teacher Leader Model Standards*, 2012). These standards were chosen as a way to standardize the term leadership among all teaching staff in the school, looking beyond the job duties specific to a school librarian. Interview transcripts were coded using keywords from the seven domains of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* (*Teacher Leader Model Standards*, 2012).

Summary

Through this qualitative, phenomenological study, the researcher interviewed directors of school library systems and school librarians to learn more about leadership as it applies to the role of school librarians. Structured interviews took place with nine directors of school library systems and nine school librarians and included open-ended questions that allowed participants to describe the opportunities that exist to develop leadership capacity. The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* were used as the framework in which to understand leadership development and the professional development that has impacted school librarians across New York State.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis

Introduction

From the literature review, it is clear that school librarians must be leaders, but it is less clear when and where that leadership development should take place (Phillips, 2014). The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which directors of school library systems of New York State develop the leadership capacity of school librarians. Through a qualitative, phenomenological study, K-12 school librarians and directors of school library systems were interviewed to gather data about the role that school library systems have in developing the leadership capacity of school librarians through professional development opportunities offered over a three-year period. Interviews were conducted with one school librarian and one director of a school library system, each with two or more years of experience, from each of the nine regions in New York State. Responses were analyzed through the lens of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* to identify if librarians had been provided with opportunities to expand their leadership skills.

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Boards at The Sage Colleges and the New York City Department of Education, the research process outlined in Chapter Three was implemented. Through qualitative research methodologies, K-12 school librarians and directors of school library systems in New York State were interviewed to gather data about the role that school library systems have in developing the leadership capacity of school librarians.

Established protocols ensured that one director of a school library system and one librarian were selected to be interviewed from each of the nine regions in New York State, ensuring wide representation across the state. All participants were invited to participate in a one

on one interview with the researcher to discuss the leadership development of school librarians. While participants were told the title of this study, “Development of the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State,” the term leadership was intentionally left undefined. Each participant brought his or her own understanding of the term to the discussion.

Each of the 18 interviews were transcribed and entered into NVivo11 software after participants had an opportunity to review the information for accuracy (QSR International, 2015). Transcripts were then coded based on their alignment to key areas of interest to the study. Information emerged from the interview which answered each of the research questions. In this chapter, findings have been aligned to the four research questions:

1. What is the leadership role of school librarians in New York State?
2. How do school librarians acquire the skills needed to be effective teacher leaders?
3. In what ways do directors of school library systems influence the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State?
4. Using the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* as a framework to define leadership, to what extent does professional development provided by School Library Systems align to the standards?

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings aligned to each research question in a meaningful way. Select demographics of each participant provide context and aid in understanding the respondents. Each research question is presented with the process that the researcher used to draw conclusions from the interviews. The findings are then supported with data directly from the interviews. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the data as it relates to this study.

Findings

All 18 participants described ways in which school librarians, either themselves or those in their region, exhibit teacher leader qualities. The leadership role of school librarians was predominantly discussed in two ways. First, the librarian was discussed as connector, when the school librarian has a vantage point that allows for links between people and curriculum to be made in ways not possible without someone who transcends individual curricular areas. Second, the librarian was discussed as central to the school, when all things come back to the resources, skills, and space that the school librarian provides. The leadership actions exhibited by librarians correlated with the leadership role that each librarian identified, either as a connector or central figure in the school.

The conditions under which the school librarian works have a strong influence in facilitating or hindering the leadership role that is taken. These conditions include the attitudes of librarians as well as administrators and teachers, the structure of the school and district, the availability of time to develop relationships, and the pre-service training and ongoing professional development that occur. Directors of school library systems and school librarians outlined examples of instances where these conditions had a positive or negative impact on the leadership role.

It was found that teacher leadership developed in multiple ways. Respondents spoke specifically to factors that were internal, such as their own motivation, their desire to be continuous learners, and their need for professional involvement and engagement. These internal factors were highlighted throughout the interviews. For others, external supports were critical to leadership development including professional development provided by schools, districts, systems, or organizations leading to the attainment of skills that created opportunities for

leadership growth. External provocation was also evident as a way in which school librarians became active teacher leaders. Specifically, when others identified an individual school librarian as a leader, that librarian was then more likely to begin seeing himself or herself as a leader.

Participants

Nine directors of school library systems, one from each region, were selected at random to participate in this study. One school librarian serving as a council member was selected from each of the participating directors' systems. Table 1 provides descriptive data about each of the participants. Years of experience are broken into bands so as not to reveal the individual identity of any one participant. Years 0–1 were not selected since participants had to have at least 2 years of experience as a director or as a school librarian. Years 2–5 then rounded out the first five years and five-year bands followed.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

ID	Position	Gender	Years as librarian	Years as director	Teaching degree	Professional organizations	Date of interview
D1	Director	F	11–15	2–5	N	Y (5+)	12/08/16
D2	Director	M	6–10	6–10	Y	Y (5+)	12/23/16
D3	Director	F	11–15	2–5	N	Y (5+)	01/05/17
D4	Director	F	6–10	11–15	N	Y (5+)	12/20/16
D5	Director	F	2–5	2–5	N	Y (5+)	01/04/17
D6	Director	F	0–1	21+	Y	Y (3+)	01/10/17
D7	Director	F	6–10	2–5	Y	Y (2+)	01/19/17
D8	Director	F	6–10	2–5	Y	Y (5+)	01/23/17
D9	Director	M	6–10	6–10	Y	Y (5+)	01/17/17
L1	Secondary Librarian	F	16–20	n/a	N	Y (3)	02/07/17
L2	Secondary Librarian	F	11–15	n/a	N	Y (5+)	01/12/17
L3	Secondary Librarian	F	21+	n/a	Y	Y (5+)	01/18/17
L4	Secondary Librarian	F	6–10	n/a	N	Y (3)	01/10/17
L5	Secondary Librarian	M	2–5	n/a	Y	Y (2)	01/06/17
L6	Secondary Librarian	F	11–15	n/a	N	N	01/27/17
L7	Secondary Librarian	F	6–10	n/a	N	N	01/30/17
L8	Elementary Librarian	M	21+	n/a	N	N	02/03/17
L9	Elementary Librarian	F	6–10	n/a	N	Y (2+)	03/10/17

One director was interviewed from each region of New York State. These regions included Capital District, Central, Long Island, Metropolitan, North Country, Rochester, South Central, Southeastern, and Western New York. Regions are not provided in the chart above to protect the confidentiality of each participant.

Of the school library system directors, seven were female and two were male. Years of experience as a school library system director spanned a wide range. More than half of the

directors had between 2–5 years of experience while one had more than 21 years of experience. All but one director, whose tenure predated current regulations regarding leading a school library system, had served as a school librarian (from 5–14 years) before taking an administrative position. Five directors also held teaching certification.

Seven school librarians who participated in this study were female while two were male. Their years of experience as school librarians ranged from 5 to over 21 years. At the time of the interviews, 7 librarians worked in secondary schools while 2 worked in elementary schools. Two of the school librarian participants also held teaching certification.

According to the literature review, one of the suggested providers of professional development is professional organizations. For that reason, all participants were asked if they had current memberships to library related professional organizations, specifically the five most predominant organizations for school librarians: the American Library Association (ALA), the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the New York Library Association (NYLA), NYLA's Section of School Librarians (SSL), and the local affiliate of SSL. All but two of the directors belonged to all five organizations. In contrast, just two of the school librarians belonged to all five organizations, and several librarians did not have any current affiliation with their professional organizations.

Of the 18 interviews that took place, two were held in person while the rest were conducted through Zoom, a subscription based web software. Secure login credentials were provided for those who interviewed through technology. This software allowed the researcher and the interviewee to see and hear one another throughout the interview. Participants did have the option to use a telephone if preferred or if necessary due to limitations in available technology, but none utilized this option.

Two sets of interview questions were developed, one for directors (see Appendix E) and one for school librarians (see Appendix D). These sets of questions were similar and designed to elicit responses that could be compared, while also allowing for the differences in the two types of positions.

Research Question 1

What is the leadership role of school librarians in New York State?

The term “leadership” is somewhat ambiguous with many possible meanings. Some may think of leadership as positional authority while others think of leadership as the belief system that influences actions. To gain a better understanding of what the term meant to those working in the field, a definition was not provided. Instead, several interview questions were asked that led the directors of school library systems and school librarians to provide their own meaning of leadership. All 18 participants described leadership actions of school librarians that aligned to the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*. Some defined the leadership role of school librarians in concrete terms, such as advocating for students and the profession, while others used more ambiguous terms, referring to the librarian as connector or bridge.

To better understand leadership as it pertains to school librarians, it is necessary to examine how participants defined the concept of their role. Role was broken into two main functions: informational or instructional. Those librarians who saw their role as informational described their value through providing access to information. In addition, they provided resources, tools, and materials that allowed students, staff, and administrators to be successful. For some, they viewed it as important that they circulated laptops or provided open access to a Makerspace. Management of the library and its resources was viewed as essential.

Those who saw their role as instructional discussed the need for collaboration with teachers. In addition, examples of librarians providing professional development or being a model for instructional practices were shared. These librarians discussed the many committees on which they served in hopes of creating enhanced educational opportunities for students.

The most predominantly identified leadership role was that of the instructional leader. Of the 18 participants, 10 specifically referred to this role. Instructional leadership is demonstrated through knowledge of the curriculum, understanding of pedagogy, focus on student developmental needs, and collaboration with teachers to ensure that library, information, and critical thinking skills are blended into content area instruction. Director 9 clearly articulated actions of an instructional leader:

The instructional leader takes an active role in knowing what the curriculum is, they take an active role in communicating that they know it, and then also identify solutions for problems in which [sic] they identify at the school. That requires them to look at the data, to be able to analyze it, and then to provide suggestions.

Director 2 reinforced the concept of instructional leaders: “They are the ones that know instruction, the ones that know the curriculum....The librarian should be teaching skills not content. They should be using the classroom’s content to teach their skills.”

Several of the librarians interviewed described actions they engaged in as they pertained to their instructional leadership role. The actions fell across a wide continuum, from supporting others to being fully integrated in the curriculum writing and planning process.

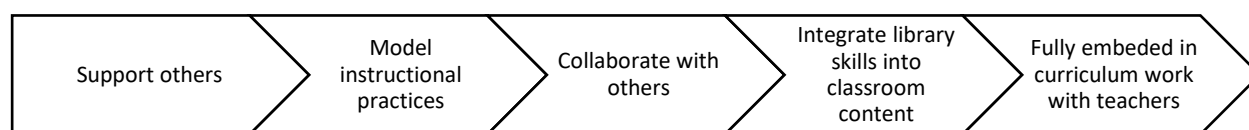


Figure 1. Continuum of support.

Figure 1, Continuum of support, is illustrated by the comments offered during the interviews. Librarian 1 shared, “My role is to support the students and staff and administration with any needs they have academically and professionally.” Librarian 7 moved further across that continuum, “I also consider myself an instructional leader in the school; modeling strong instructional practices and being an available and willing collaborator with the different content areas.” Librarian 9 captured the role of instructional leader who works to assist other educators in growing in their knowledge and skills:

We are leaders in the instructional community within our buildings because we are conducting professional development about new and interesting resources that teachers can take up and use in their classrooms or instructional methods that will help teachers accomplish their goals for their students.

Instructional leaders, while attuned to the curriculum and the work of their peers, understand the developmental needs of students. Librarian 9 began working in her school two years ago and found that the library had been neglected for years with no certified school librarian. She shared information about how she focused her efforts as an instructional leader:

I have really pushed to do a lot with making kids want to come in [the library]. That is where I have focused the majority of my efforts so far because that is what this school has needed. In other schools that I have been in, I have focused a lot more on the

instructional aspects because desirable library space was already there. Since this is a multi-faceted job, you have to build up from the bottom. My leadership role lies a lot on getting kids to want to come here.

Reflecting on the needs of this individual school, her program, and the students, she intentionally made the decision to build a program scaffolding up from the most basic needs to eventually include more complex learning objectives.

With an instructional leadership role being the predominant role articulated by school librarians and directors of school library systems, several interviews included discussions about the beliefs of teaching certification for school librarians. There were mixed feelings, some thought it provided an advantage, allowing the school librarian to better understand pedagogy, classroom management, and the work of a classroom teacher. Librarian 5 expressed, “I really think that [my teaching certification] helps me because I can see things from the position of a teacher as well.” Librarian 5 continued,

The role of the librarian is being blended in, which is a good thing. You should be able to teach classes or incorporate your knowledge into collaborative lessons with other teachers and knowing where they are coming from regarding prepping for units and prepping for lessons and understanding how to look at individualized lesson plans or things of that nature. [Certification as a teacher is] a huge asset to how I can approach that.

Similarly, librarian 3 demonstrated that she valued the impact that her teaching degree has had on her work as a librarian:

[My] first strength is being a classroom teacher....In school media, you are a teacher first.

That was important to managing classes and developing lessons and understanding the stress of being in the classroom and time and everything. For me, it helped tremendously.

Others provided examples that indicated that the success of a school librarian as a teacher leader had more to do with the belief system of the individual librarian, not a teaching certificate. School librarians in New York State work under the same contract as classroom teachers. They take education classes as part of their pre-service program and must complete an internship under the supervision of a certified school librarian. Despite those qualifications, mindset can inhibit the work of school librarians. Director 7 succinctly stated, "I do not really think they see themselves as teachers. Because they do not feel like they are content specialists, that equals I am not a teacher." To illustrate that point, librarian 2 shared,

I am not a very comfortable teacher. I was not a teacher before [becoming a school librarian]. I do not do it often enough to feel a real comfort level with it....just thinking about having to put together a lesson is a little stressful for me. I do not do it all the time. And I know a lot of librarians do, and I often feel guilty that I am not doing that part of my job well, or enough. I think I do it OK.

Whether holding teaching certification or not, school librarians must be instructional leaders.

Director 2 shared that,

It makes a difference between those that have an education background and those that do not.... There are some excellent examples out there of people that do not have an education background and they have been phenomenal at what they do. That is not the norm.

When discussing the instructional leadership role of school librarians, two images became very clear. First, the librarian was seen as a connector. The image of an umbrella is an appropriate visual representation of this that shows the overarching layer that encompasses all that falls below. The role of the librarian is to take everything underneath that umbrella and find the connections that are only apparent once the total picture has been seen from above. This may include building bridges between teachers in different curricular areas or connecting the dots so that students can see the interconnectedness of the skills they are learning. This view of the leadership role is heavily dependent on the librarian building relationships over time, making connections with and between colleagues, and creating collaborative opportunities.

Several participants provided descriptions of their role as a connector. Each highlights a few key characteristics including having a broader view of the educational environment, spanning across content areas, and working with the entire educational community allowing for connections to be made. Director 5 noted that,

The great leadership opportunity for librarians is in the fact that they transcend all content areas. They are a bridge between different teachers, and they have a different perspective than classroom teachers. I feel like librarians are the closest you can get to a building level administrator without being a building level administrator because they see all kids, they work with all teachers, they are involved in so many different committees. I see that as a really nice position for librarians to be in, in the best situations, where they are able to be a part of all those building level initiatives and committees.

Librarian 2 shared a similar view:

We are in a unique situation of not having classrooms to have to focus on. And that is actually a good thing because it allows us to be that umbrella....I can see the whole

picture, or at least a collaborative piece that might fit, that a teacher who is in their own little bubble may not be reaching out and looking at. I can see what is going on in the social studies classroom and in a tech classroom or in an English classroom.

Librarian 6 also shared thoughts on a school librarian's role as connector:

I think of myself as the glue that holds people together. I seem to have a foot in each camp, which is the unique part of being a librarian. That is part of the reason, especially as we move into a more collaborative teaching environment, that I can be the person that connects other people together.... We are cross curricular. I see all of the students. I talk to them often and I get to talk to them in a different capacity than a lot of classroom teachers do. A lot of times I am the connection, sometimes just teacher to teacher, student to student and that it is kind of covert leadership.

Librarian 7 added that she “view[s] school librarians as being the heart of the school. We have a great opportunity to be instructional leaders in the school...by being a connector.”

When directors of school library systems and librarians discuss this idea of the school librarian as a connector, they are describing the relationships that they foster and are a part of, the attitudes of others about the library program or cross-curricular connections, and the need for collaborative efforts. These librarians focused on the student outcomes that are impacted when a collaborative approach to education is initiated within their buildings.

The second image that was referred to throughout the interviews was that of the librarian as the instructional leader at the heart or center of the school. Information, resources, and help all flow out from the center to individuals and classrooms throughout the school. The librarians who identified leadership in this way, focused more on actions. Providing resources, technology, and

information was their focus. The interpersonal relationships, while necessary, were not the impetus for the work. Librarian 5 shared,

It is my duty to provide a service to the students and the entire faculty regardless of what department they are in. When I take a step back, I see [the library] serving as the brain center or the headquarters of resources really. Anything that any department needs, anything that any student needs, academic based, it is my job to try and acquire it for them. First and foremost is making sure that there is the ability for students and staff to access any information that they may need.

Director 6 shared this belief:

I feel that [librarians] should be the center of the school. They should be working with all of the teachers, not only in the library but going into the classrooms and bringing to them the new stuff that is actually coming along. We [the school library system staff] try and keep them ahead of the game and have been told that they often know more than their fellow teachers, sometimes even administrators, because of the information provided through our workshops. So I really do believe that the librarians should be bringing a lot of information in because they do work with...or should work with every teacher...and be involved with their administration and the different curriculum groups.

Directors of school library systems and librarians see instructional leadership as a critical aspect of the role of a school librarian. Whether serving as a connector or as a central figure in the school, librarians work to collaborate with others to provide the relationships between curricula or the resources needed to implement those curricula. An instructional leader works beyond his or her individual space to impact learning throughout the school.

Conditions that impact the leadership role of school librarians. Both groups interviewed, directors of school library systems and school librarians, identified many conditions that enabled or prevented school librarians from engaging in a teacher leader role within their building, district, or profession. These conditions included understanding the role of school librarians, the number of job duties assigned to the school librarian, the number of qualified candidates to fill positions, the leadership training received in Master of Library Science programs, and the characteristics of librarians themselves.

Understanding the role of a school librarian. The role of a school librarian has been evolving as described in detail in Chapter Two. This change may contribute to the lack of understanding teachers and administrators have about the role of school librarians. Four directors of school library systems and five school librarians identified this misunderstanding as a barrier. Participants spoke of this phenomenon in two ways. Some simply recognized this barrier and discussed it in terms of others not understanding that change has been ongoing; it is hard to break from the stereotypical view of a school librarian. Others, in addition to recognizing the obstacle, further described how they were actively seeking to change others' understanding of the role of the school librarian through advocacy efforts. Director 4 shared,

There is mixed support for libraries and mixed attitudes about librarians and what role they play....Librarians are their own worst enemy, but I also think that a lot of times the district leadership does not recognize that [librarians]... can be leaders and do not provide the opportunities for them to lead in the building.

Director 3 recognized that this lack of understanding from administrators had implications beyond the school librarian:

It is a lack of knowledge on the part of administrators as to how valuable their school librarians could be if given the opportunity and the impact they could have on the quality of educational practice in their buildings....it is just a lack of knowledge....Ultimately students suffer when that happens. They are not getting the best benefit of what they could be getting out of their school library. Again, I bring it back to the administrator in that building really having an understanding of what an exciting, active school library learning environment would look like and pushing their librarians to make it that way. It is almost more important to reach the administrators than it is to reach the librarians in that way.

Librarian 1 described seeing small amounts of increased understanding over time:

Probably the biggest obstacle that I see is that after all these years of working here, I do not feel that a lot of the teachers or the administrators understand exactly what my job is and what my role is and what I can do. I would say it has definitely improved over the years....they think I just check books out and run study halls.

When asked if others in the school understand her role, Librarian 5 responded,

Yes and no. I am relatively technology savvy, so to some degree they understand what I am capable of, but oftentimes they take my skill set for granted. It is hard to break the stigma of the librarian. It is slowly changing; teachers in the general education community are starting to see the value of librarians. That being said, I still have had people say things to me like, “do you think libraries will exist in twenty or thirty or forty years?”

At another point in the interview, Librarian 5 also commented,

The biggest [barrier] is hoping the staff understands the role of a modern library media specialist. A lot of us grew up in an era using card catalogs and just simply using the library to locate a book, and that's that. And there is so much more than that. I am a teacher. I am a librarian. I am also a computer technician at times. I have to be an information specialist. I have to know where to find stuff other than books. And your general knowledge base of being a library media specialist is across the board. Anything and everything ever created, or thought of, or discovered in human history, is in a library. Whether it is in a database or whether it is in books. And I guess proving to them that you are more than just a record keeper is probably the most difficult aspect of it.

Others recognized just how busy educators and administrators are and understood that they had too many competing factors for their time and attention to fully understand the role of a school librarian. Director 9 articulated,

There is not a [district] wide expectation to build leadership at all levels other than maybe principals or assistant principals. In the [district], there just does not seem to be that same ownership and I do not think it is because they do not want it to happen, I just believe that there are so many other issues at hand that it just does not happen. When you have failing schools, when you have struggling schools, when you have new administrators, you are really putting a lot of effort into just maintaining the broader beast. And for that reason things get lost in the shuffle.

Respondents thought that administrative perceptions about the role of the librarian are likely based on the individual librarians that the administrators have worked with either as a student, teacher, or administrator. Director 7 specified, "I can define [leadership as] whatever I want, but a lot of it is going to be dependent upon what the building principal desires." When

Director 7 was asked specifically about her belief about building principals' desire for librarians to take a leadership role, she replied, "That depends widely on their own experience with librarians. If they have had a great one as a teacher or as a leader, then they want a great one. If they have not, then they do not really want one...at all." Her response indicated that there is a long-lasting consequence when school librarians do not meet the expectations of their administrator.

In addition to recognizing that perceptions of teachers and administrators may be inhibiting school librarians from becoming teacher leaders, some have chosen to actively engage in building support and promoting understanding for their role as librarians. Several participants, including Librarian 3, specifically discussed ways in which they helped advocate for librarians through their work:

In librarianship, it would be getting the attention of the administration and being a stakeholder at the table. So I find that we really have to be an advocate for ourselves. And as librarians we tend to not be boastful and we are so busy preparing that we are not really focusing on presenting.

Interestingly, several respondents identified leadership as only being recognized when librarians presented themselves as authoritative figures. Director 4 shared,

Unless a librarian is very outspoken and assertive and joins committees and makes themselves [sic] a leader, they are not recognized....Principals and superintendents and assistant superintendents feel that they are the leaders.

Librarian 6 discussed why some might not willingly accept change:

Sometimes when it is uncomfortable, you are on the right track. Because people are very invested in that whole status quo thing. People are invested in keeping you in your box,

because when you go out of your box it threatens them. What they do not realize is that it should not.

Required job duties. The many job duties assigned to a school librarian were also identified as a condition that may inhibit leadership. Without sufficient staffing or time, librarians are completing tasks that do not develop teacher leadership. Director 2, when talking about inadequate library support staff, candidly stated, “[Librarians] are doing more clerical tasks, which quite frankly is a waste of their time.” Full instructional and leadership potential cannot be reached when other tasks prevent higher level work from being completed.

When asked about school librarians participating at the broader system level rather than only in their individual school, Director 1 discussed the distractors that kept librarians from maximizing their leadership role:

Putting myself back into the shoes of the building librarian, when you are worried about study hall and lunch duty and your 3rd grade class coming in thirty minutes and the shelving has not been done in a week....I cannot say how much [leadership] will stick. I think at least there is an awareness.

Qualified school librarian candidates. The profession has undergone a transition in recent years. Several participants, notably directors, identified the turnover in staffing and the lack of certified school librarians to replace them as an obstacle. Director 2 outlined what a shortage of school librarians looked like:

In my region, as is true across the State, we have had a lot of turnover. Since I have been the system director here, probably half of my librarians have changed over; which is huge. I have four long-term subs in my region and another one is about to start, two

uncertified first year librarians and three people who are just out of library school and are not certified yet...out of fifty.

Director 9 addressed how his region was responding to a lack of certified school librarians:

One of the struggles, challenges that we have is identifying enough school librarians to hire. It is hard to meet a mandate if you cannot hire the people to fill the mandate. So, in order to do that, we know that we have to grow them. We have to identify strong classroom leaders: classroom teachers that are willing to become library teachers.

Directors of school library systems and librarians are working to overcome the obstacles of staffing libraries with certified school librarians. Director 9 shared that while his system has developed partnerships with universities and has recruited teachers to enter Master of Library Science (MLS) programs, his system does not offer tuition assistance. When promoting and encouraging teachers to consider going on to receive an MLS, Director 9 said, “We talk about that if you do not want to be a principal but you want more of a leadership role, being a librarian is a good way of doing it.”

Personality and character traits of librarians. The final condition that impacted the leadership role of school librarians was the individual personality or character traits of those drawn to librarianship. When discussing barriers that keep librarians from actively seeking a teacher leader role, Director 7 candidly offered, “One of the biggest barriers comes from the librarians themselves.” Seven different participants discussed this phenomenon in some way.

For the librarians interviewed, particular experiences were influential in shaping their leadership potential. Librarian 4 described one such event, “I have to admit, after being laid off, I am more gun-shy. I just am...I am less likely to think about rocking the boat or anything like

that. It changed me.” For other librarians, a belief about what constitutes leadership kept them from identifying their own ability to engage in leadership practices. Librarian 6 shared,

I am definitely an introvert. I would much rather be working behind the scenes and so it is not leadership...it is more leadership by example. It is certainly not me standing there and saying “hey, follow me”. That makes me very uncomfortable, it feels false to me.

Librarian 4 doubted her leadership potential, because of comparisons made to others in the field:

From meeting a lot of the librarian leaders at conferences, I am in awe of them. I mean they are leaders. I have met and seen the leaders in this field. I feel like they are probably more leadership-oriented than I am....I do not feel like I am in a league with them to tell you the truth....I do not consider myself a leader; I am supposed to think more like that, but it is hard. That is hard for me to think of myself as a leader.

Directors discussed leadership traits differently. Rather than thinking of the individual, they had more general comments to make about the field. For some, it was a missed opportunity to share leadership potential. Director 2 stated, “[Librarians] do not like to share out and talk about all of the great things that we have going on.” For others, it was a lack of leadership potential all together. Although the role of a school librarian has changed over time, some librarians have not. Director 3 offered,

It also has something to do with personality...There are people who just want to do what they consider the easy thing, “I have been doing it this way for twenty years and I am going to keep doing it this way and nobody is complaining.” Though actually people probably are complaining.

There were mixed feelings about whether school librarians are natural leaders; having an innate ability to serve as a teacher leader because of the skills they bring to the job as librarians.

Respondents were divided as to whether leadership can be taught, yet all provided examples of professional development that led to changes in professional practice. Some felt that the role of a school librarian lends itself well to being a leader in the school setting. Librarian 4 said, “Librarians are in some ways natural leaders....we are well positioned.” While the nature of the work was seen as creating opportunities for teacher leadership, it was also noted that librarians must seize that opportunity. Librarian 6 shared that, “leadership as a school librarian is a critical piece of having a great program. I do not think you can have [a great program] without being willing to take risks.” Director 4 also identified risk taking remarking that, “some of the newer crop coming in has a little more gumption than the older crop.” Director 7 shared her beliefs about developing leaders:

Well, frankly, what makes people leaders is how they think about things....[Some] think that leadership can be learned and it will come to you as you gain experience. I do not know that I agree. I know a lot of people with no experience who are just natural leaders. Some people can learn it. But the great leaders, I think that there is something innate about it.

Other librarians took the stance that leadership is not a role that is natural to school librarians at all. Librarian 3 shared, “librarians have to force themselves to be leaders. It is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and to think well, not me.”

Despite all participants providing examples of librarians taking leadership roles or exhibiting leadership skills, many spoke of the lack of leaders in the field. Director 4 pointed out that, “there are certain librarians that I do not think will ever be leaders.” Director 1 agreed:

I have to say that my librarians are not necessarily on the forefront of [demonstrating leadership skills]. We have a few that have pushed the boundaries and have really taken

on roles in their districts as leaders. But by and large we have not had a lot of leadership growth out of our own system.

When asked to describe the ways in which school librarians in the region demonstrate having leadership skills, Director 7 expressed, “There are some that go far above and some that do not even come close.”

Again, for this study, leadership was not defined. Librarian 6 seemed to understand the many varied definitions for leadership when stating,

Our definition of leadership is sometimes too narrow, a lot of people are leaders but not necessarily in the ways that somebody from the outside looking in would say, “that person is a leader.” I mean it sort of came as a big shock to me that people might consider me to be one.

Validating that statement, Director 9 made the point that, “the one thing that librarians do oftentimes is underestimate who they are and what they can do.”

The literature review emphasized the need for school librarians to take a leadership role in their buildings. This may be informal through the daily work that is completed, relationships that are built, or connections made between various curricular areas. It may also be more formal through participation on committees, leading a department, or through providing professional development to assist colleagues with improving their own practice.

The conditions in which one works are critical to enabling a librarian to serve as an effective teacher leader. If administrators and teachers do not recognize the leadership potential of the school librarian, a barrier exists which prevents the librarian from fully realizing their leadership potential. Similarly, if librarians are unable to see themselves as leaders, they do not step up to the role.

Research Question 2

How do school librarians acquire the skills needed to be effective teacher leaders?

The literature review emphasizes that leadership skill development can occur at varying times throughout a person's career. Some begin attaining skills through their pre-service program as they work to obtain a Master of Library Science degree, while others develop leadership practices through opportunities provided after beginning their professional career. Several interview questions were asked of participants to learn more about the acquisition of teacher leadership skills by school librarians in New York State.

Leadership training during pre-service program. Identified through the literature review and emphasized during interviews, was the lack of leadership development at the pre-service level. Master of Library Science programs have a long list of mandated requirements, but identifying and developing leadership potential is not one of those requirements. Director 7 highlighted the significance of not providing this training,

One thing that has always bothered me, [school librarians] come out of [Master of Library Science programs] not believing that librarians are leaders. They are kind of surprised by all the things the job role entails...I feel like they are not educated to be leaders.

Ongoing leadership development. Through the interviews with participants, it became clear that all felt that leadership is something that is developed over time. While several questioned how this development occurs, all spoke to individual experiences and opportunities that led to leadership development. One director spoke of leadership being innate; however, she also spoke to the work she does to further develop skills in the librarians that she works with.

Support. Since librarians are not necessarily entering the field with strong leadership skills, these skills must be developed. To develop leadership capacity, support was identified as a necessity. That support can be internal or external. Internal support refers to the dispositions or belief system that leads one to seek out leadership development opportunities. For some, great satisfaction comes from the work they do that aligns with teacher leadership. Examples provided included individual knowledge of one's influence on the culture of a building or the sharing of best practices with colleagues that leads to a positive change in others' instructional techniques. Librarians also spoke about their need to do their job well, moving from effective to outstanding professional practices. As seen earlier through an alignment of the SLMPE rubric and the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*, to have a distinguished library program, the actions of a school librarian align to teacher leadership.

In addition to the internal belief system, external supports were also identified as a pathway towards leadership development. These external influences include examples such as scholarships or grants to attend conferences and working with mentors or coaches. In addition to support, six participants highlighted external provocation. Provocation is the explicit actions or words from another person that lead an individual to take leadership action or recognize himself or herself as a leader. Director 1 recognized how important provocation was to her own development: "I was lucky enough to be asked to be part of that leader community when I was fairly new in my career....It was such a great learning experience."

The directors who recognized provocation as important in librarians understanding themselves to be leaders spoke to the actions they take in provoking others. Director 1 shared that many librarians acknowledge that they are effective in their role, yet do not consider themselves to be leaders. To help librarians understand that they are leaders and have something

to share with colleagues, Director 1 intentionally asked those librarians to share through presentations or communications. Director 1 highlighted this when stating,

[S]ometimes we get the idea that things are going well, but I really do not have anything to offer. When I hear that [a librarian is] doing something really cool, I really try to pull that out and say “hey, you need to tell more people about this,” whether it is writing about it for just our little newsletter, or trying to get them to present at our local conference.

In addition to creating opportunities for librarians to share their work, Director 1 encouraged her librarians to participate in opportunities that allowed for continued growth. Director 1 provided the following example:

I really pushed for librarians to apply to be teacher-leaders, whether it was as regional teacher-leaders or as district teacher-leaders. We actually had two librarians who were district teacher-leaders for literacy across the curriculum.

Director 3 also understood the importance of provocation. Outside recognition has much to do with the way individuals see themselves. Director 3 stated, “I always try to tell them ‘you are leaders.’ I feel like if I tell them maybe they will start thinking they are.” At another point in the interview Director 3 offered, “I do feel very strongly about school librarians as leaders and I try whenever I can, whenever I have the opportunity to speak to my librarians, to tell them that they are leaders.” Director 3’s actions were intentional based on the need for librarians to believe in themselves as leaders, as illustrated in the following statement:

They do not see themselves as leaders and so until I can convince them that they really are and that they can be and should be and...it is the whole...if you do not see yourself as a leader, that is the first step. You have to see that. The potential at least.

Interestingly, Librarian 3 understood provocation in the same way as her director, “It is almost like you have to see yourself in that role and in small ways start to lead people and become comfortable with it. Like everything, it takes practice and it takes time.”

Director 4, much like her counterparts from other regions, also acknowledged the need for individualized acknowledgement of leadership ability:

I do a lot of individual work with [librarians] because I find that that is more effective.

Sometimes they just need a push....When I have them in council meetings, in liaison meetings, when I speak to them individually I really try to say, “you can be a leader...you can take the lead on this. You need to be involved. You are your best advocate.”

Similarly, Director 8 shared,

If I see a speaking opportunity that they would be good at doing, I will encourage them to apply. If I see an opportunity and I feel that somebody has the strength or insight to share, I want to encourage them...to build up [their] self-confidence.

Professional development. In addition to the internal and external supports necessary to begin seeing oneself as a leader, tangible experiences were described as necessary in leadership development. Professional development was discussed in detail throughout interviews. School librarians described the need for professional development as being necessary to remain current in the practices, to learn new skills, and to provide information that can be brought back to their colleagues in their school or district.

The interviews showed that the professional development that had the greatest impact on librarians was unique to each professional. It became clear that generalizations could not be made as to one type of provider or one type of professional learning that led to the most

substantial leadership development for librarians. Each participant had their own background experiences that led to different paths of meaningful professional learning.

Participants shared their major sources for ongoing professional learning, and four types of opportunities resonated with the librarians interviewed:

1. Professional development classes offered by a district or a school were also a source for learning. This was seen as having more significance to librarians who taught in a Big 5 city school district that has its own school library system where the director is immersed in the culture, sits on the leadership team, and aligns the professional development to the goals of one district.
2. Learning at conferences, specifically those provided by professional organization, was highlighted as leading to leadership development. Several participants specifically listed their school library system as making that opportunity available to them through scholarships or grants that provided necessary funding.
3. Professional development offered by school library systems also created opportunities for school librarians to develop teacher leadership skills. This professional development was stated as being important because of its alignment to the specific needs of school librarians.
4. Most surprising, because it had not been identified through the literature review, was the importance of independent personal learning through professional reading.

Professional development opportunities were identified as being necessary. The researcher specifically asked each school librarian to identify the most influential experience. Table 2 displays the experience that was most influential to each librarian.

Table 2

Influential Professional Development

Provider	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7	L9
District or school	X		X					
Professional organization		X						
School library system				X	X	X	X	X
Independent						X		

Professional development, offered by an individual school or district, was recognized by two librarians as having the greatest impact. One librarian identified attendance at conferences held by large professional organizations as most influential. Events offered by school library systems were listed as most important by five librarians. Librarian 6 first identified professional reading done on her own time and then also added in school library system opportunities.

Both librarians that stated that district provided professional development was influential noted the change that it made to their professional practice. Librarian 1 explained,

In district, we do a lot [of professional development]. We are currently looking at a different teaching strategy. I would say that even though a lot of it does not apply to me, the basic concept really has changed the way I try to teach my classes.

Librarian 3 acknowledged that in addition to professional development, time was also a contributing factor:

In our district, they provide a lot of technology support. I would say that helps...and just carving out time, because time seems to be the problem. Often, it is just finding the time to learn....This year we embraced Microsoft Office 365. To have professional

development time set aside so that I can go and learn and then come back and spend some time using it, which has been a great professional development tool.

Librarian 2 spoke in detail throughout her interview about professional development and its various providers:

I would not feel satisfied with myself as a teacher unless I continued to be a learner. And so, I am always out there doing whatever...whether it is free or not...outside of school.... I went to AASL on my own dime last year. I went to ALA in San Francisco on my own dime a couple of years ago. I am happy to do that because I am improving me as a professional. I do an awful lot of that kind of stuff, but I do take a lot of the classes at BOCES. I participate in a lot of [workshops]. And I am involved with [my local affiliate].

When asked about the most impactful professional development, Librarian 2 stated, “Well, I love going to the big conferences, just because it is networking with like-minded people.” Developing relationships and having professional conversations were deemed essential.

One participant, Librarian 6, selected the independent professional development practice of reading as being most influential. Even though the reading was to inform her own professional practice, she found opportunities to share with colleagues, creating an impact beyond her individual school. Librarian 6 specified,

If I had to pick, ironically, it is the one that does not count toward PD hours. All the reading that I do on my own, and then all the information that I collected on learning commons, I shared out to a lot of other library media specialists in this area who wanted it. They asked and so I put it all in a Google Drive folder and then I shared it to several of the other high school librarians who had expressed an interest in knowing what it is that I was doing.

Librarian 6 went on to discuss the importance of this self-driven learning and the conversations with colleagues that followed. Interestingly, she quickly followed up this rich conversation of this independent professional development with the comment, “I like attending communication coordinators meetings. I have been the communication coordinator here for twelve years.” Therefore, she may not see independent professional development as a valid format.

Five of the eight participants listed professional development offered by the school library system as being important. In addition to Librarian 6’s mention of the communications coordinators meetings, Librarian 4 and Librarian 9 discussed workshops offered through their systems. Librarian 4 said, “Well, everything that I have taken with [name of SLS director] has been just...she is phenomenal. She has been very influential.” Librarian 4 then went on to say that she would be turnkey training what she had learned through her system.

Librarian 5 spoke of a regional conference sponsored by the school library system as being the most influential to her practice:

The session that I went to that really moved me the most was working with primary documents and utilizing your library media specialist to find access to primary documents, especially with history and English classes, whether it be Global or American History, but in covering things like the Civil War, or the civil rights movement, or the Cold War. Just the amount of primary source documents available that teachers do not utilize was mind blowing. And they provided examples of incorporating these things into lessons where students are focused on individual learning and having students analyze documents.

Similarly, Librarian 7 found great value in a conference hosted by the school library systems in her region:

The school library systems conference that we attend in the fall is really very powerful. It is a unique opportunity for everyone in the region to come together and you see people that you do not normally see and connect with people and you are able to have those conversations about what is working for you and sharing those success stories. And then also learning from professionals that are presenting too....This year was the first year that I presented on data and mastery. How do you show mastery of something? I could see it from a different perspective also. But I have learned a tremendous amount from going to that particular conference, from other people, from the presenters, and from the more informal conversations that just organically happen when you are around professionals.

The professional growth opportunities that create the leadership development of school librarians is very much dependent on the individual. Some found great value in professional development offered by a school or district while others relished personal activities such as reading. The largest group of respondents highlighted opportunities provided by the school library system, leading the researcher to analyze data in pursuit of findings aligned to research question 3.

Research Question 3

In what ways do Directors of School Library Systems influence the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State?

The purpose of this study is to examine the development of leadership capacity of school librarians and the influence that directors of school library systems have on that process in New York State. Participants indicated that directors of school library systems provide a larger context

in which school librarians operate. This broader context increases the opportunities for leadership development with the director of the school library system providing both the support and provocation needed to influence the beliefs and actions of school librarians.

The researcher asked directors of school library systems, “As a system director, do you have a vision for developing the leadership skills of your school librarians?” Seven of the nine directors answered “yes”, while Director 6 proclaimed “I do not have an official one” and Director 1 stated “not enough of one.” From the conversation that followed, it was clear that all nine directors were intentional in their actions to support school librarians in developing leadership skills.

Directors provided information about the different ways in which they helped school librarians develop leadership skills. The actions taken by directors of school library systems are broken into several categories including development through information sharing, individualized leadership development, instructional leadership development, professional development, and promoting the leadership role of school librarians. Most directors spoke in concrete terms while two directors spoke more to the mindset or belief system of the librarian.

Development through information sharing. Several directors considered information to be a very important part of leadership development. Director 5 summed up the importance, “I try to make sure that the information that flows to librarians keeps them on the cutting edge so that they can have those conversations where they are knowledgeable about things that are important in their building.” In addition to providing librarians with information, four directors pointed out the importance of librarians being encouraged to share out with others by writing their own newsletters or journal articles.

Individualized leadership development. Four of the directors described developing the leadership capacity of school librarians as an individualized activity. Directors saw themselves as assisting librarians in becoming leaders in the profession by encouraging librarians to take risks, build self-confidence, develop moral courage, and find resiliency. Each of these traits was encouraged first by recognizing the potential of the individual and then through the support of the director. Director 7 reflected on her beliefs that developing leadership capacity involves more than just teaching leadership skills, “I feel like some [librarians] have leadership skills but there is also a way of thinking as a leader....that is what makes people leaders; how they think about things.” Director 8 focused on the need for individuals to develop moral courage, which was defined through the interview as choosing to do the right thing when faced with a moral dilemma. Director 8 also spoke of the importance of helping librarians develop self-confidence as well as growing ideas through conversations with others. Director 8 said that her, “focus is on equipping and encouraging and strengthening those leadership capabilities so that each [librarian] can be that school building leader that they are supposed to be.” This type of leadership development is quite different from the tangible workshops, activities, and skills that others described. Relationships built over time are critical to creating the opportunities that can lead to a development of the traits listed above.

Instructional leadership development. Instructional leadership development was one of the key areas that directors identified for building leadership capacity for school librarians. This was done primarily through encouraging school librarians to share their own expertise in presentations to others. Directors believed that providing forums or venues for librarians to share out information was an important way in which they could encourage leadership development. Librarians were encouraged by directors to present at local meetings, regional conferences, and

statewide conferences. In addition, opportunities for librarians to gather for conversations to learn from one another were deemed important. Provocation led hesitant librarians to agree to submit presentation proposals. Director 1 stated, “I really try to pull [librarians] out to start doing presentations, to share what they are doing with others, to build their confidence in being leaders.” Additionally, Director 4 stated, “I encourage them to be more involved in their school, to go to state conferences, to lead workshops, to lead workshops within our BOCES.”

Professional development opportunities. The need for school librarians to actively engage in their own professional learning was highlighted by more than half of the directors. Many different variations of professional development were made available through school library systems from workshops to webinars to in-depth professional learning communities. Registration fees were paid for by the system so that librarians were able to attend state and national conferences. Several systems offered mentors to their school librarians in addition to the mentor provided by the school district.

One director specifically talked about the ways in which she promoted or advocated for the leadership role of school librarians. This was largely done through conversation with district and building administrators. Director 5 emphasized that she

[tries] really hard to promote librarians as building leaders whenever I can. I am fortunate in my role that I get to speak with administrators quite a bit. For example, I am our Assistant Principals’ group liaison. Anytime I meet with the administrators I am always talking about, “well librarians can do this”, or “this is the new initiative”, or “this is something that librarians have expertise in.”

The library profession is dynamic, creating the need for school librarians to acquire new skills to remain current in their practice. Participants in this study detailed a variety of professional

learning opportunities that have led to changes in their practice. Among them are professional development opportunities offered by schools or districts, through attendance at conferences, opportunities provided by school library systems, and professional reading as described under research question two. Each opportunity provided librarians with the occasion to learn additional skills as well as gain new information to share with the faculty, staff, and administrators in their buildings and districts.

Promoting the leadership role of school librarians. Directors of school library systems affect the leadership capacity of school librarians by advocating for them and their role as instructional leaders. Creating opportunities for school librarians to be seen as leaders and to step up as leaders was important to directors. Advocacy through communication with administrators was discussed by more than half of the directors who participated in this study. Director 1 explained that she “contribute[s] to a local e-blast, the newsletter that goes out to all of the administrators, so they get information that way.” Director 2 also discussed local efforts in building leaders:

I do a lot of advocacy at the district level....Where there is an administrator or a central office person that oversees libraries, I spend a lot of time talking to that person, cultivating relationships with them....Last year I sent a personalized letter to each and every building principal in my region. This outlined all the resources that are available through the school library system, thanking them, and listing by name their school librarian and all the work that they have done.

Similarly, Director 5 stated,

We also have a newsletter that goes out to all of our administrative groups, and I feature our librarians in it. If I hear about something good happening in one of our region’s

libraries, I will reach out to the librarian and ask them to send a write up and pictures to me. Then, I will feature the library in our “School Spotlight” and make sure that the librarian’s name and district is noted in the body of the email, so that our administrators are tuned in.

Director 7, in addition to communicating the important work of school librarians, also invited administrators to witness events taking place in each library:

I highlight everything that they do that is good. We use [internal communication software] in our district. If I am doing walkthroughs, I will take pictures and I will [share] them. We make sure that everyone is highlighted for the good work that they are doing. If [librarians] know they are doing something really cool, I will request that they send me a meeting invite and I will come unless I have a major conflict. They will send it to me and then I will forward it to the principal, so the principal will come too.

Just as school librarians need provocation to take a leadership role, administrators need provocation to see librarians in that role. Director 7 captured her work in this area:

I am fortunate because I have really great relationships with all of my building administrators, partially because I have been around for a while and I have worked with a lot of them. I was a librarian here so they believe me and trust me. I have done PD in all of their buildings....I make sure that any time I talk to the principal I tell them, “listen, you know what? Your librarian can do that. They can help you with that. Have you asked your librarian?” Everything that I have a hand in, which is not only libraries, I make sure that [librarians] play a major role....[Librarians] should always have a seat at any school level team, like the instructional leadership team or a planning team, at least a vertical

team if they cannot be part of the grade level team. That is one way that I do advocate, I negotiate passionately to have a librarian sitting on that school leadership team.

Director 9 also advocated for school librarians to participate in building level teams:

One of the things that I stress to principals when I meet with them, whether it is one on one or in groups, is the need for the librarian to be serving on the school leadership team in some capacity. In [our region] it is more formalized and there are things that they can do and cannot do, so for the librarians to always be on it is not allowable. However, it does not mean that they cannot attend a meeting. It does not mean that they cannot provide a report. There are other ways in which they can participate whether they are a member or not. And that is what we talk about, is that the librarian, the counselor, the nurse, the social worker; they touch all students. All of them should have some type of voice at the leadership level, or at least some input for what they know and what they have learned.

In educating others as to the leadership role of school librarians, Director 3 promoted the work of librarians:

A big part of the advocacy piece is getting the word out there. It needs to be on the BOCES website...not just my homepage, but the main website, and it needs to be in the local newspapers. It needs to be out there so people can see that this is what school librarians are doing.

Director 7 shared how opportunities were created for those entering the educational field to learn about the work of librarians:

We try to make sure that [student teachers] get experiences where they see the librarian is not just reading stories and having cute little activities. Librarians are interacting with principals, they are working instructionally with groups of teachers.

Quite a few systems create advocacy opportunities by recognizing the work of individual librarians and administrators. Not only does this promote the good work taking place, but also models examples of what others can be doing either in their library or to support their librarian. Director 3 noted that,

The council really wants to continue giving awards [to librarians and administrators]....Once the award is presented, [recipients] are given time to speak briefly. First, the person who nominated them introduces them. They speak about why they had contributed that person's name and they actually are the ones who talk a lot about how great they are as a librarian or an administrator.

When asked to describe the nomination process, Director 3 stated,

The council decides who will receive the awards. We have an application process that is very simple. What usually swings the balance...it is not required, but it usually plays a role in who is ultimately selected...is to include as many other letters of recommendation as possible, from other librarians, from administrators, from parents, from students. I say "reach out to as many different groups that interact with that librarian as possible. Ask someone to submit a letter of support for that person as librarian of the year or administrator of the year." We have certain things on our application that we are looking for... how they support students, how they support the curriculum.

School librarians do not work in isolation. Library standards are best taught when fully integrated into content area curricula. Director 5 showed how this created opportunities for advocating the role of a school librarian:

As far as professional development, I try hard, whenever there is a new initiative, like the science work that is coming down the pike, like the social studies work the past few years, to make sure that librarians are included in that work and that their administrators know that they are included, and that they are seen as leaders in that work. Another great way to advocate for school librarians as a profession and as a leadership profession, is any time you can get outside of the audience that is already heard it a million times, so I go to the Social Studies conference every year, because Social Studies work has been a big push in our region.

Efforts are taking place to advocate for school librarians on a larger scale beyond their school and district as indicated by Director 2:

I believe very strongly in advocacy efforts....We have elected officials come in and read a book or do an activity with the kids and then we have our advocacy meeting afterwards. In addition to that we also participate in the NYLA Advocacy Day as a region...it is a coordinated effort on our part. A student from one of our elementary schools designed a cover for a thank you note sent afterwards.

Director 9 had a very different approach of advocating for the needs of librarians which also highlights the work of librarians:

We have done some work at the state level. We know that some of our certification requirements are barriers to our success. Meaning the internship and field work if they are already assigned to the library or a teacher working in that function where they are a

classroom teacher, it is really difficult to get the hours needed with their librarians is kind of like a full-time intern. Especially at our elementary levels. We kind of struggle because we do not have many elementary certified librarians that have been in the profession for at least three years. So, it is a really challenging...it is a huge challenge.

Director 9 continued,

Ultimately what we would like to do is to see an alternative certification program for those who are already strong teachers, have had some experience, already have their first master's degree.

Recognizing that financial factors may inhibit librarians from participating in opportunities that expand their access to knowledge or leadership opportunities, many directors offer funds through grants. Director 2 stated,

We provide support for our librarians to attend professional development as well. This past year there was the AASL GAME conference in Rochester. I paid the registration fee for whoever wanted to attend. This year, the NYLA/SSL spring conference is in Buffalo. I am going to offer scholarships to send whoever wants to attend....If I pay for somebody to attend a conference or a workshop, my expectation is that they will then contribute something to the profession. Whether it is presenting a workshop in their school, in their district, at BOCES or through our local 3Rs. I have that expectation that really helps to build up their leadership skills.

Director 4 stated, "I encourage them to be more involved in their school, to go to state conferences, to lead workshops, to lead workshops within our BOCES." Director 5 offered, "We provide scholarships to attend conferences. We get people coming back year after year and more people are signing up, so I feel like it is making an impact." This director went on to say that

eleven scholarships were provided for school librarians to attend the statewide Section of School Librarians (SSL) conference in 2016. Director 8 discussed reasoning for providing scholarships to attend conferences:

I have been encouraging librarians to get registered for [the SSL conference]....In order to grow and be pushed and to really challenge yourself and to shake up your own library program with new energy and a breath of fresh air, it is really crucial to network and to get outside your little area to see what others are doing and to get ideas, because it just stimulates the mind.

Director 9 offered information about the scholarships provided by the School Library System:

We have offered the opportunity for librarians to apply for a scholarship grant allowing them to attend the New York Library Association's school librarian conference in the spring where we can start to grow people who can be more a part of their professional organization. The feedback from last year was that those individuals gained a lot of information from that. We asked them to come back and turnkey what they learned and several presented at a conference. That is one way in which we can encourage leadership.

Director 9 continued,

Any grants that we offer, we talk about what it is that the librarian does. It is a way for the librarians to market what they do. To advocate for lack of a better term, what they do on a regular basis. If we are offering a grant, we require the principal's signature and then that way they can see that their librarian has done this on their own. That they have taken the initiative so that the principal can identify that this person has reached beyond what a typical classroom teacher is doing. It is building some structures and being very

deliberate about some of the things that we do in requirement in order to get people to that level.

Librarian 9 spoke specifically to the school library system grant application process for funds to attend a conference and how the system has made the opportunity relatively easy for librarians to participate and then share what was learned.

Many directors discussed the ways in which they disseminated information that put their librarians in a position to become more knowledgeable, allowing librarians to be at the forefront of new initiatives. Director 2 took a systematic approach to sharing information on a weekly basis:

At the system level, we send out a weekly update listing all of the PD, all of the new resources available, news from Albany [New York State Education Department and the Division of Library Development], etc., etc., so that our librarians can be in the know for what is going on.

Director 5 indicated that knowledge allows librarians to position themselves well for the work that must take place in a school:

I try to make sure that the information that flows to the librarians keeps them on the cutting edge so that they can have those conversations where they sound knowledgeable and they are knowledgeable about things that are important in their building.

Thinking more broadly, Director 5 stated, “By the workshops we offer, by the information we provide, my vision is to create leaders through that information.”

Directors also spoke to the opportunities that they created for information to be shared when librarians came together for meetings. Director 1 shared that value, “We have a couple of hours each time we meet...it facilitates really great conversation.”

Librarian 7 demonstrated that she found great value in the opportunities provided by her system that brought all librarians together to discuss initiatives:

We are super lucky in that we have [department] meetings just about once a month. We meet eight times a year. The last library meeting that we had [the SLS Director] had asked me to present on data driven instruction. We are all trying to create those benchmark assessments for Pre-K through twelfth grade. So that is hopefully sort of pushing us into that data driven instruction...the mindset to give us the knowledge...so that we know what to teach and how to teach it. We are super lucky in that we get to meet with each other and learn from each other. I have learned so many things from the great people that we work with. It is a lot of sharing and helping each other just be better at our jobs.

Director 8 not only used meetings to share information, but also provided leadership opportunities for librarians to facilitate the meeting:

Our school librarians belong to our communications coordinator committee. This is comprised of about seventeen librarians and they meet four times a year. On that committee, there are subcommittees for awards dinner, collection development, and professional development and then there is a sunshine committee. Whenever this group meets I am a part of it as well to update with any news from the region or the state...just keeping the librarians informed and up to date with what is going on. Within that committee, I have handed over that responsibility of running that meeting to the chair of the group and have given them the power to decide what kind of professional development is important to them and what needs they have, and not only do I structure

the workshops and training around that but I make sure that...it is a way for me to also evaluate how I am being of service to them.

Several directors discussed the importance of assisting new librarians at the beginning of their career through mentor opportunities: pairing experienced librarians with newer librarians.

Director 7 also shared that there can be a need for these programs as librarians progress in their career:

I have a mentoring program. When I see a [librarian] who is struggling with...say small group instruction, I can be like, "we are going to arrange for you to go and visit so and so's classroom because they rock it and you can see how it is done when it is done well and they can give you some tips." The principal will give them release time to go and do that....Seeing it is so powerful.

Director 9 spoke to the individualization of the work being done for each librarian in the system:

Oftentimes we do that work more one on one, because each person is a little different. So [there are] a lot of individual site visits. Sometimes we identify a problem or they have identified a problem. We do two visits during the year and we work with them one on one based on their situation, based on their experience level, based on what they are comfortable with to push them along. For some, it may be as simple as, you need to start marketing what you do. You need to produce an annual report. This is your first step. We are going to take baby steps. Next year we are going to ask you to do this or that. It is not necessarily formalized in a document or a checklist of year one, year two, year three, because people come in at all the different levels.

Just as librarians thought of their role being either as a connector of people and ideas or as a distributor of information and resources, directors also had multiple ideas of how best to

support librarians in being leaders. Resources were clearly seen as necessary in helping the librarian become elevated to a leadership position. Director 1 stated,

This is more the media library side of my job, but we will buy licensing for everybody and I put it out to them instead of putting it directly to their administrators because I want them to be the one to go to their administrators and say, “hey, look what we have.” I want them to toot...I know it is important for me to do that too, but I want them to be the ones tooting their own horns and saying, “this is what we do for you.”

Director 2 shared the value of items that were purchased regionally. This often allows for equity as well as cost savings and innovative opportunities for districts. Director 2 noted,

We have also done a lot around purchasing regional databases....At the system level, we help support our librarians with Makerspaces. All of our Makerspace items are out in the districts. This has gotten a lot of use in our region....With the littleBits they had an instructional design challenge on how they can make life better for kids. The middle school class had to go through research topics using the library’s databases, build a design, and build a prototype using the littleBits. We have all of these great things that are out there being used which are all being provided through our office.

At the time of this study, Makerspaces, or hands-on creative spaces that encourage problem solving and experimentation through tinkering, were emerging as a valid learning model in school libraries. Director 2 felt it was important to provide librarians with the elements to engage students in this type of learning by loaning kits and accessories such as littleBits. In addition to providing opportunities for librarians to test new resources, Director 7 stated the motivation for this program at the system level: “providing opportunities for equity among all of your districts and then access beyond the four walls of the library.”

Director 5 shared the same beliefs as Director 2 about providing additional resources to librarians:

Any time I hear about a librarian who wants to do something new or is trying to get a program off the ground, whether it is a collaboration or a new initiative in their library or new programs, I will throw as many resources at it as I can. That might be in the form of sending items their way, as far as resources that we have. The newsletter is really helpful to supporting what librarians are doing, both because it communicates news about what is happening in their libraries to their administrators who might not otherwise hear about it, and because it inspires a little bit of competition with other districts...then that promotes some top-down support in their district to say, “I saw this new initiative. Is it something you would be interested in doing in your library?”

Director 9 shared how the system was supporting school librarians through funds to purchase resources needed for innovation: “We are providing some grants for Makerspaces.”

While mentorships, professional development, and resources are all necessary in helping to build leadership capacity in school librarians, provocation was the most important factor as stated in the interviews conducted as part of this research. Providing opportunities that allowed for school librarians to be told they were leaders, see themselves as leaders, and then demonstrate their leadership skills was the most important thing that a director of a school library system could offer.

Research Question 4

Using the Teacher Leader Model Standards as a framework to define leadership, to what extent does professional development provided by School Library Systems align to the standards?

Information provided in each of the eighteen interviews, suggests that professional development offered by school library systems correlates to the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*. Table 3 below provides a description of each of the domains of the standards (*Teacher Leader Model Standards*, 2012).

Table 3

Domains of the Teacher Leader Model Standards

Domain	Description
Domain I	Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning
Domain II	Accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning
Domain III	Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement
Domain IV	Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning
Domain V	Promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement
Domain VI	Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community
Domain VII	Advocating for student learning and the profession

Findings for the first three research questions came directly from interviews with participants. The nature of this fourth research question required a different approach. Since the researcher could not rely on directors of school library systems having knowledge of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* to speak to the work being done to meet them, information was gathered from the Annual Reports submitted by each school library system to the Division of Library Development at the New York State Education Department for the school years ending in 2012, 2013, and 2014. This data was the most recent available to the researcher when the study began and provided a consistent way for the researcher to analyze the professional development offered by systems.

Table 4 depicts each of the categories in which professional development provided by the school library system is reported on the Annual Report. This information is submitted yearly to the Division of Library Development at the New York State Education Department. The left-hand column lists each of the professional development categories on the report as aligned to the domains of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*.

Table 4

Alignment of Professional Development to TLMS

Annual Report Categories	Domain I	Domain II	Domain III	Domain IV	Domain V	Domain VI	Domain VII
Resource Sharing	X					X	
Technology				X			
Digitization						X	
Leadership	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Management and Supervision	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Planning and Evaluation	X	X		X	X		
Awareness & Advocacy		X					X
Council Training	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Special Client Group		X	X	X		X	
Children's Services		X	X	X		X	
Young Adult Services		X	X	X		X	
Adult Services		X	X	X		X	

The purpose for the above alignment is to show that all domains of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* are covered in the professional development being offered by school library systems in New York State across multiple categories. While an alignment to individual workshops, classes, and regional conferences would have provided a clearer picture of the extent to which each domain was included, the necessary information to create that alignment was not

available to the researcher. The professional development information provided to the researcher by each director of a school library system that participated in this study was not submitted in a consistent manner or with enough detail to allow for a meaningful or accurate correlation.

Table 5 provides a compilation of the professional development data provided for each of the school library systems in New York State. Directors provided this information to answer questions 5.40–5.66 on the annual report. The left-hand column labeled category is a complete listing of the twelve categories in which directors are asked to break down the continuing education and staff development that is provided by the system. These categories are used across all types of library systems, not just school library systems, accounting for topics that may seem out of alignment with the work of school librarians. This also accounts for some of the low numbers in categories as well.

Table 5

Continuing Education and Staff Development

	2012 SLS Continuing Education/Staff Development		2013 SLS Continuing Education/Staff Development		2014 SLS Continuing Education/Staff Development		3 Year Total	
Category	Workshops	Participants	Workshops	Participants	Workshops	Participants	Workshops	Participants
Resource Sharing	1372	6205	258	4035	264	3818	1894	14058
Technology	3028	13951	595	9180	488	8073	4111	31204
Digitization	7	48	20	231	11	104	38	383
Leadership	352	7450	193	4764	170	3815	715	16029
Management & Supervision	138	1930	69	1000	44	765	251	3695
Planning & Evaluation	198	4191	191	3210	88	2255	477	9656
Awareness & Advocacy	291	6657	212	6639	103	2102	606	15398
Council Training	53	937	44	646	47	657	144	2240
Special Client Group	142	1133	75	1130	51	1077	268	3340
Children's Services	257	5141	183	4593	135	3768	575	13502
Young Adult Services	274	5467	201	4400	135	3364	610	13231
Adult Services	11	147	10	141	17	250	38	538
Totals	6123	53257	2051	39969	1553	30048	9727	123274

When looking at the chart, a substantial decrease in the total number of workshops and participants from the 2012 report to the 2013 report can be seen. This change may be attributed to new guidelines on how to report workshops and participants. Workshops covering multiple topics are no longer reported under every topic addressed, just the category of most significance as determined by the director completing the report.

The highlighted line shows the continuing education opportunities that were categorized by respondents as leadership. Looking at a three-year average from the years 2012, 2013, and 2014, this category had the third most continuing education and staff development workshops.

This category also had the second highest number of participants in attendance. One can infer that the high number of workshops indicates that the directors of school library systems feel it is important to provide leadership development opportunities to their school librarians. The high number of participants indicates that school librarians valued opportunities to attend continuing education and staff development workshops intended to increase leadership knowledge, skills, and capacity.

Summary

This research study indicates that both directors of school library systems and school librarians believe that leadership capacity can be developed in school librarians. This development is dependent on both internal and external factors that influence individuals. The beliefs and dispositions of school librarians are a condition that can have either a positive or negative effect on leadership growth. External conditions, such as support from administrators, also have a correlation in developing this capacity. Directors of school library systems are actively working to create the opportunities for librarians to become teacher leaders through professional development, information sharing, and advocacy. Librarians need to be open to accepting those opportunities.

The following chapter will provide conclusions and recommendations based on the findings presented in this chapter. In addition, recommendations for future research will be suggested. While much has been learned through this study, there are many avenues to explore for continued understanding of how librarians develop leadership capacity.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Leadership is a term often used in the literature for school librarians. This term, with its multiple meanings, is somewhat ambiguous (Cosenza, 2015; Phillips, 2014). This study was designed to gain a deeper understanding about the ways in which school librarians develop their leadership capacity. When these are understood, opportunities for growth can be provided which ensure that school librarians are able to realize their full potential as teacher leaders.

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which directors of school library systems of New York State develop the leadership capacity of school librarians. Through a qualitative, phenomenological study, K-12 school librarians and directors of school library systems were interviewed to gather data about the role that school library systems have in developing the leadership capacity of school librarians through professional development opportunities offered over a three-year period. Interviews were conducted with one school librarian and one director of a school library system, each with two or more years of experience, from each of the nine regions in New York State. Responses were analyzed through the lens of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* to identify if librarians had been provided with opportunities to expand their leadership skills.

Using qualitative methods, the researcher interviewed eighteen practitioners from the school library field. All participants engaged in an interview that led the researcher to understand the “lived experiences of individuals” as they relate to leadership development (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). Through descriptions provided by participants, the researcher analyzed statements to

extract the “essence of the experiences” and draw conclusions from the data (Creswell, 2014, p. 14).

The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* provided a lens by which to analyze statements made throughout the interviews (*Teacher Leader Model Standards*, 2012). This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is the leadership role of school librarians in New York State?
2. How do school librarians acquire the skills needed to be effective teacher leaders?
3. In what ways do directors of school library systems influence the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State?
4. Using the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* as a framework to define leadership, to what extent does professional development provided by School Library Systems align to the standards?

This chapter includes findings aligned to each research question as well as conclusions from the data provided by participants. Recommendations for policy, practice, and further study are also offered.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

A number of findings emerged from the analysis of data gathered through interviews with directors of school library systems and school librarians. The first two research questions were critical to understanding the work of school librarians. First, it was necessary to determine what, if any, leadership role exists for school librarians. The literature review clearly indicated that this role exists, so it was then necessary to determine how school librarians gain the skills needed to be effective teacher leaders. New York State, with its unique structure of school library systems, ensures that all school librarians are connected to a system beyond the individual school in which

they work. The third research question was designed to find out if these systems impact the leadership capacity of school librarians. The final question determined if the professional development offered by school library systems aligns with the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*, the lens through which participant data was analyzed.

This study adds to the existing research about the role of school librarians as teacher leaders through their unique position within schools (Dotson & Jones, 2011; Johnston, 2013; Weisburg, 2016). Specifically, the study explores the acquisition of leadership skills and the various educational organizations that contribute to leadership growth. The findings from this study have implications for both directors of school library systems and school librarians themselves. Following is a summary and discussion of those findings and recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Research Question 1: What is the Leadership Role of School Librarians in New York State?

Finding 1: Directors of school library systems and school librarians believe that there is a leadership role for school librarians. All eighteen participants spoke directly to their own actions, either in developing leaders in the field or as teacher leaders themselves. This finding is consistent with the literature review which emphasized the role of school librarians as teacher leaders through their unique position within schools (Dotson & Jones, 2011; Johnston, 2013; Weisburg, 2016).

Directors of school library systems and school librarians expressed the leadership role of a school librarian in two ways, either as a connector or as a central figure in the school. As connectors, librarians create opportunities to build bridges between varying people and ideas, and the curriculum. The work of school librarians lends itself well to transcending a single

discipline or curricular area, creating strong connections between people and ideas that allow for integrated work to occur. As central figures, librarians provide others with the information, resources, skills, or even relationships needed to develop strong learning opportunities leading to student success.

While the two leadership roles described by participants are different, they both place the librarian in a teacher leader position. As discussed in the literature review, teacher leadership is “the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement” (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2010, p.11).

Finding 2: Instructional leadership is considered the most important teacher leadership role for school librarians to engage in. Of the 18 participants in this study, 10 specifically referred to this instructional leadership role. This is noteworthy as it aligns to one of the three categories of leadership for school librarians identified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards: instructional, administrative, and professional (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2012). Instructional leadership is demonstrated through knowledge of curriculum, understanding of pedagogy, focus on student developmental needs, and collaboration with teachers to ensure that library, information, and critical thinking skills are blended into content area instruction. A wide range of actions are exhibited by librarians who serve as instructional leaders, from providing support at the most basic level to being fully embedded in curriculum work with teachers at the most advanced level. Refer to Figure 1, Continuum of Support, on page 47, to see the full range of actions described by participants of this study.

Finding 3: Conditions that exist within a school impact the leadership role of school librarians. These conditions within schools include administrators and teachers understanding the teacher leadership role of school librarians, school librarians receiving and having pre-service training and qualifications to successfully accomplish assigned job duties, and the characteristics and traits of school librarians themselves. Spillane et al. (2003), suggest that building leaders have an obligation to promote a culture that allows educators to embrace a distribution of power.

Participants described in detail the challenges that exist when they are not given the opportunity to serve as teacher leaders. This is noteworthy when considering the benefits of a distributed leadership approach as highlighted in the literature. Administrators that embrace distributed leadership encourage educators to participate in the decision-making process and to extend their work beyond individual classrooms to influence the school community as a whole (Cosenza, 2015; DiScala & Subramaniam, 2011; Johnston, 2015). “Teacher leadership goes beyond the scope of the teacher leading students in a classroom; teachers are empowered within a culture of learning, taking authority from pedagogical expertise, and focusing on improving instruction and student learning” (Johnston, 2015, p. 40).

Conclusions for Research Question 1

A conclusion that may be made, based on the data received from participants, is that there is a leadership role for school librarians. To best utilize school librarians as teacher leaders, others in the school community must understand the role of school librarians. Through this understanding, conditions can be created to allow school librarians to maximize their ability to serve as teacher leaders.

Research Question 2: How do School Librarians Acquire the Skills needed to be Effective Teacher Leaders?

Finding 4: Leadership skills are developed over time with support. The literature review indicates that leadership skills emerge and are further developed and adjusted as needed to be effective over the course of a career. Beginning with pre-service coursework and practical experience, and extending through the culmination of a career, school librarians have opportunities to develop their leadership capacity. A constantly evolving profession requires continuous professional development throughout a librarian's career (Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014). Participants in this study agree with previous findings that leadership development is ongoing, requires support, and can take many different forms, from workshops provided by districts to individualized opportunities provided by directors of school library systems.

A review of the literature shows some disagreement as to the ideal time to target leadership development. Phillips (2014) questions the point at which leadership training should take place, whether it should be part of a Library and Information Studies program or part of continuing professional development that occurs on the job. Participants of this study felt that leadership development was ongoing, creating a need for training at various points throughout the librarian's career.

Finding 5: Professional development that has the most significant impact on individuals takes many forms and is offered from a variety of sources. From formal professional development offered in the traditional class or workshop format to independent professional development that school librarians seek on their own, professional development is seen as valuable by participants in this study. Participants identified the same providers of professional development that contribute to school librarian leadership development identified

through the literature review (American Library Association, 2015; Corcoran & McGuinness, 2014; New York State Education Department, 2010a). Continuous learning opportunities are provided primarily through schools, districts, and professional organizations.

While multiple providers of professional development satisfied the continuous learning needs of school librarians, five of the 8 participants identified opportunities provided by their school library system as having the most significant impact on their leadership development.

(Refer to Table 2, Influential Professional Development, on page 67.)

Conclusions for Research Question 2

A conclusion that may be made, based on the data provided by respondents, is that leadership capacity is developed over time with support and professional development offered by schools, districts, and professional organizations. In New York State, school librarians also have added opportunities and support from directors of school library systems.

Research Question 3: In what ways do Directors of School Library Systems Influence the Leadership Capacity of School Librarians in New York State?

Finding 6: Directors of school library systems provide both the support and provocation needed for school librarians to become teacher leaders. School library systems are required to provide ongoing professional development for school librarians in all member public school districts and nonpublic schools (New York State Education Department, 2010b; New York State Education Department, 2016c). The Division of Library Development articulates that school library systems assist students in succeeding by providing professional development for school librarians and other educators, supporting effective integration of technology for learning, assisting in the redesign of curriculum that improves teaching and learning, and fostering opportunities for lifelong learning (New York State Education

Department, 2016c). These activities align directly to the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*, ensuring that all school librarians serving in public school districts and nonpublic schools can engage in opportunities that help them become leaders in their school, district, and profession.

The statements made by both school librarians and directors of school library systems revealed that the most substantial way in which school library system directors impact the leadership capacity of school librarians is through provocation. Many librarians considered their work to be necessary, but did not understand that they were teacher leaders until someone explicitly recognized them as teacher leaders. Librarians began to see themselves as teacher leaders and more closely aligned their work to the practices outlined in the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* once their leadership role had been articulated. This is important to librarians feeling empowered to continue their own development in the area of leadership.

Directors of school library systems offer support for school librarians to develop leadership capacity in a variety of ways. Table 6 identifies the ways in which the directors of school library systems work to build leadership capacity in their school librarians. These broad categories were derived from the leadership actions described throughout the interviews with directors of school library systems.

Table 6

Leadership Development Through School Library Systems

Researcher Assigned Category	Participants							
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P9
Development through information sharing	X				X	X		X
Individualized leadership development	X	X		X				
Instructional leadership development	X	X						X
Professional development			X		X	X	X	X
Promote leadership role					X	X		

Conclusions for Research Question 3

A conclusion that may be made, based on the data provided by respondents, is that directors of school library systems create a variety of opportunities for school librarians to develop their leadership capacity. Recognizing school librarians as teacher leaders is necessary to helping those librarians see themselves as leaders.

Research Question 4: Using the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* as a Framework to Define Leadership, to what extent does Professional Development Provided by School Library Systems align to the Standards?

Finding 7: All domains of the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* are addressed through the professional development offered by directors of school library systems across New York State. Data reported about the number of continuing education and staff development workshops offered by directors of school library systems on annual reports submitted to the Division of Library Development at the New York State Education Department implies that leadership is valued by both directors and school librarians. Leadership is the category with the

third highest number of offerings and the second highest number of attendees. During the three year period of time analyzed, 715 workshops categorized as leadership by directors were offered by school library systems across New York State. Those workshops had more than 16,000 attendees over the three-year period examined. (See Table 4, Alignment of Professional Development to *Teacher Leader Model Standards*, on page 87 and Table 5, Continuing Education and Staff Development, on page 89.)

The high number of workshops and attendees are important as the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* “codify, promote, and support teacher leadership” as a way to transform schools to meet the needs of all students in the 21st century (“Model Standards Advance the Profession,” 2011, p. 16). These standards provide the knowledge base of teacher leadership and outline the key actions teachers take in each dimension (“Model Standards Advance the Profession,” 2011). The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* suggests building an inclusive culture, promoting research and inquiry by educators, collaborating with others, striving for continuous improvement of self and school, improving teaching and learning, utilizing data, collaborating with the community, and advocating for students (“Model Standards Advance the Profession,” 2011).

Conclusions for Research Question 4

A conclusion that may be made, based on the data received from annual reports submitted to the Division of Library Development by directors of school library systems, is that school librarians find value in the professional development offered by school library systems, reflecting the *Teacher Leader Model Standards*.

Recommendations for Policy

Recommendation 1: Define the Leadership Role of School Librarians

Librarianship as a field is quite broad. Considering just the school library sector, a wide range of responsibilities and expectations exists. Some librarians are strongest when sharing literature and inspiring a lifelong love of reading in students. Others are committed to creating opportunities to engage students in units that are developed around an inquiry model, allowing students to learn and think deeply about a topic of interest. Yet others provide a global view of the world through technology and connecting to other classrooms and resources around the world. While each is valuable, there is a misunderstanding on the part of many outside of the library profession as to what exactly school librarians do and how that correlates with student learning. The many varied ways in which librarians approach their responsibilities does not allow for a cohesive understanding about how school librarians can step into a teacher leadership role.

Without stifling any of the creativity that brings learning to life in each school library, it is recommended that the field, through the American Association of School Librarians, works to develop and promote a clear definition of the leadership role of school librarians. This will allow administrators, teachers, and other educational stakeholders to know how best to create the conditions that allow librarians to serve as leaders, connecting people, ideas, and curricula. Without a clearly defined role, leadership is occurring haphazardly. Once school librarians are recognized as teacher leaders, potential exists for librarians to better serve their educational community, impacting the work taking place beyond the physical space of the library. The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* were beneficial to this study and are offered as a possible guide in defining leadership for school librarians. These standards were intentionally chosen for

this study since they correlate with the work of all educators, not just school librarians, allowing for widespread understanding of terms and expectations.

Recommendation 2: Develop a Statewide, Systematic Approach to Provide Continuous Learning Opportunities that Develop Teacher Leader Skills to all School Librarians

This statewide approach will allow opportunities for all school librarians to learn the skills and actions needed to become teacher leaders. Directors of school library systems belong to the School Library Systems' Association of New York State (SLSA), a statewide organization including all regions. This organization strives to provide a statewide approach to delivering effective library services across New York, including leadership in the areas of information literacy, digital literacy, collaboration and partnerships, professional development, and consortium purchasing (New York State Education Department, 2016g). It would be a natural fit for SLSA to take the lead in organizing, developing, delivering, and assessing the statewide opportunities for leadership growth. While participants highlighted the work being done by individual systems and regions, a statewide approach would ensure equality for all school librarians.

Through collaboration, school library systems can work together to create a statewide effort to develop teacher leaders. Each system is currently developing their own professional development plan and creating opportunities for professional growth for the librarians they serve. Rather than duplicating these efforts, directors of school library systems can work together to create deeper, more meaningful opportunities for librarians to learn the skills needed to develop their teacher leadership capacity.

Recommendation 3: Educational Organizations should Continue to Offer a Wide Range of Learning Opportunities to Meet the Needs of all School Librarians as they Gain the Skills and Confidence to Develop into Teacher Leaders

Participants identified that meaningful professional learning is unique to each individual. For that reason, a variety of high quality opportunities must be provided to ensure that all librarians can participate in learning that best meets their needs. Schools, districts, professional organizations, and library systems each bring a different perspective to continuing education that adds value.

In addition, independent learning should be recognized and encouraged as part of the variety of learning opportunities for school librarians. Just one participant identified independent learning as the most meaningful professional development. However, informal learning is often not recognized towards meeting the Continuing Teacher and Leader Education requirements of the New York State Education Department. It is recommended that high quality informal learning be recognized, emphasized, and validated as a means to successful professional growth. Educators will then be empowered to seek out opportunities on their own that lead to participation and learning.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendation 1: Fully Embrace Teacher Leadership

Just as each librarian has his or her own beliefs, skills, and pedagogical expertise, the same is true of school administrators. The literature review indicated that there is not a universal understanding of teacher leadership or the benefits of shared leadership in schools. Directors of school library systems and school librarians confirmed this through statements made throughout interviews. Opportunities to discuss how teacher leaders benefit student learning are important.

Teacher leaders work beyond the individual classroom to impact the greater school community. If the benefits of teacher leadership are understood more widely, educators including school librarians, will be able to align their work and programs more effectively to meet the teacher leadership needs identified by the building administrator.

Just as there was no one time in which school librarians best learned teacher leadership skills, the same may be true of administrators learning, understanding, and embracing the value of teacher leaders. It is recommended that training begin in teacher preparation programs, continue through administrative programs, and extend beyond through learning offered by schools, districts, professional organizations, and other continuous professional development providers. Ongoing learning will allow administrators to continue to increase their capacity to create the conditions needed to empower educators to exhibit teacher leadership actions.

Recommendation 2: Provide Opportunities for Experiential Growth for School Librarians

It is recommended that school librarians be offered increased opportunities to participate in experiences that allow them to grow as leaders. Many participants spoke to the value of these experiences, including opportunities to present professional development workshops to colleagues. Again, a systematic approach will ensure that all school librarians have the opportunity and receive the provocation needed to participate. If given safe opportunities to provide professional development to others, librarians can grow and become more confident. It is believed that librarians will transfer these skills to other situations in other contexts, extending their reach as teacher leaders.

Since they are local, directors of school library systems have the opportunity to build trusting relationships with each of the librarians in their system. These relationships allow for the director to take intentional action in helping individuals grow in their leadership capacity.

Provocation to take the first step into teacher leadership and then continue growing allows the school librarian to move from impacting the students and educators in one building to increasing their scope of influence well beyond their region, state, or even nation.

Recommendation 3: Increased Focus on Building the Instructional Leadership Capacity of School Librarians by Directors of School Library Systems

Participants in this study identified instructional leadership as the most important leadership role of school librarians. Just three of the 9 directors of school library systems discussed actions that they took to help develop the instructional leadership skills of their school librarians. If instructional leadership is the most important leadership role of school librarians, additional opportunities to develop in this area are needed.

Recommendation 4: Intentional Provocation Practices must be Implemented by Directors of School Library Systems

Directorial provocation was identified as necessary to librarians beginning to understand their own leadership potential. It is recommended that directors of school library systems develop an approach to identify emergent leaders systematically and then intentionally speaking to each about their capacity. From there, directors must create opportunities for school librarians to exhibit leadership skills and feel success in the process. Several directors discussed providing opportunities for librarians to present to their peers on an area of expertise. This helped school librarians begin to see themselves as teacher leaders.

Recommendation 5: School Librarians Must Intentionally Exhibit Leadership Actions, Highlighting their Value as Teacher Leaders

Librarians must be more explicit in taking teacher leader roles. Practical actions can be taken by individual school librarians to show their leadership ability, including joining

committees and assisting with building and district initiatives. By helping administrators, teachers, and the educational community at large achieve their goals, librarians can leverage their expertise as teacher leaders and elevate their teacher leadership role within the organization.

Recommendation 6: The Field must Identify, Recruit, Train, and Retain Qualified School Library Candidates

Several participants spoke to the lack of qualified certified school librarians to fill the anticipated vacancies in New York State. This issue must be addressed by NYSED and institutions of higher education. One director spoke directly about the efforts being taken by systems to identify certified teachers who have the potential to be successful school library candidates because of the mindset and skill that they would bring to the position. That director also spoke of the need to eliminate barriers that prevent others from joining a Master of Library Science program, such as the cost of a master's degree on top of the one already earned, or the extended time needed to complete practical experiences at both the elementary and secondary levels under the supervision of a certified school librarian.

In addition to the lack of certified candidates to fill school library positions, several participants spoke to the gaps between the learning that takes place in a Master of Library Science program and the requirements needed to be successful after being hired. It is recommended that graduate programs align their coursework with the realities of the position. Engaging the educational community in accreditation, planning, and delivering the program may help to ensure this alignment of learning with work. Master's programs for school librarians would benefit from a stronger connection to a college's school of education program that is preparing future teachers for their profession. Pedagogy must be one of the main focuses of the program if school librarians are to become instructional leaders and teacher leaders.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendation 1: Utilize Quantitative Research Methods

This study utilized qualitative research methods, which allowed the researcher to discuss teacher leadership with practicing school librarians and directors of school library systems in depth. The interviews provided meaningful data. In the future, it would be beneficial to study this topic with a much larger sample while utilizing quantitative methods. Broader generalizations are possible when additional participants are included in a study. Quantitative methods would also allow for comparisons to be made between different sub-populations of the library community. It would be interesting to explore if there are differences in beliefs between elementary and secondary librarians. Although they have the same title their work is very different and the conditions for teacher leadership varies. It would also be interesting to explore the differences in beliefs influenced by other demographic information. Do librarians practicing for a longer amount of time think differently than their peers who are newly entering the field? Does gender have any impact on the leadership role of a school librarian? Several participants in this study discussed the difference in mindset between librarians with a teaching degree and those without. Is there truly a correlation and, if so, why? Several participants thought this might be attributed to the confidence level of the school librarian in understanding pedagogy. The researcher is interested in knowing what other factors may contribute to the success of school librarians taking on a leadership role. Much of the information needed to answer those questions would need to be obtained from a large sample population, which indicates that quantitative methods would provide a successful research approach.

Recommendation 2: Research the Value and Significance of Independent Professional Development

One participant indicated that the most beneficial professional development that led to her leadership development was independent professional development. This was not identified in the literature review or discussed by other participants. The researcher wonders if independent professional development is considered to be a valid form of professional development by members of the field. It is recommended that this form of professional development be researched in more depth. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and drawbacks of this type of learning? Are there ways to encourage more people to participate so that their learning meets their individual needs, be it time, location, interest, or motivation, not just the requirements set forth by the New York State Education Department?

Recommendation 3: Analyze Transcripts through other Lenses

The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* were used as a lens for this study. These standards allowed for interpretation and analysis of data using a set of defined terms. One reason for selecting these standards was to move away from a library specific model, showing that librarians are teachers and leaders. Many other lenses can be used to analyze the interview data collected. It would be interesting to filter the data through multiple lenses to reveal new aspects of leadership. One possible lens is the Future Ready Schools Framework, which calls on school librarians to be instructional leaders (Future Ready, n.d.). The School Library Media Program Evaluation rubric, which has leadership indicators for a distinguished library program, would be another interesting lens (New York State Education Department, 2010b).

Recommendation 4: Effectiveness of Professional Development Offered by School Library Systems in Changing Practice and Beliefs

Further research is needed to study if the professional development offered by school library systems is effective in helping school librarians grow in their teacher leadership capacity.

While the data collected shows that librarians are attending these workshops, attendance is not enough to indicate that these professional development opportunities have changed the practices of school librarians. A comparative study would be of interest in examining the practices of those who seek out professional development and those who participate only in sessions that they are obligated to attend through their school or district.

Recommendation 5: Understanding Principals' Perspectives of the Teacher Leader Role of School Librarians

Building principals have the opportunity to transform the culture and learning environment of their buildings through intentional hiring practices. One participant clearly articulated that administrators make decisions about the library program based on the past experiences that he or she has had with school librarians, both positive and negative. Further study is necessary to understand the role that principals have in understanding and developing the leadership capacity of school librarians. Information gathered from principals, when analyzed with data provided by directors of school library systems and school librarians, would provide for an interesting triangulation of data. A comparison of results from administrators, directors of school library systems, and school librarians would allow for a better understanding of the three different perspectives of the teacher leader role of school librarians.

Recommendation 6: Deeper Understanding about the Role that School Library Systems have in Big 5 City School Districts

Several unintentional observations surfaced through the analysis of data collected from the interviews that took place. Participants from the Big 5 City School districts appear to have a stronger, more connected working relationship than the relationships between directors of school library systems housed at BOCES and their member librarians. The opportunity for directors and

librarians working in Big 5 districts to work towards the same vision and goals offers a very different experience than that of a BOCES. The sample population was much too small to draw any conclusions, but additional research allowing for a deeper understanding of the influence that the Big 5 school library systems have on the development of leadership capacity would be worth pursuing.

Summary

This study was designed to gain a deeper understanding about the ways in which school librarians develop leadership capacity. Findings from the four research questions can be used to assist directors of school library systems to develop professional learning opportunities that lead to increased teacher leadership capacity for their member school librarians. This is critical considering that more than 25 studies, collectively known as the School Library Impact Studies, have demonstrated that “there is a direct correlation between student achievement and school library media programs when a certified library media specialist assumes leadership in the school” (American Association of School Librarians National Research Forum, 2014; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2012). The *Teacher Leader Model Standards* provides guidance to those wishing to become leaders through their actions rather than through positional or administrative authority (Cosenza, 2015). School librarians can utilize the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* to think about and embed leadership practices into their work, while directors of school library systems in New York State can use the standards to provide leadership growth and opportunities to school librarians. The work of school librarians translates easily into a teacher leadership role, allowing the school librarian to positively impact the entire educational

community. Opportunities for growth can be provided when leadership is understood, ensuring that school librarians are able to realize their full potential as teacher leaders.

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Appendix A

The Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board Approval



Sage College of Albany

140 New Scotland Avenue
Albany, NY 12210
www.sage.edu

November 28, 2016

Jennifer Cannell
Doctoral Student, The Sage Colleges

IRB PROPOSAL #528-2016-2017

Reviewer: Francesca Durand, Chair

Dear Researchers:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your expedited application and has approved your project entitled "Development of the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State"
Good luck with your research.

Please refer to your IRB Proposal number whenever corresponding with us whether by mail or in person.

When you have completed collecting your data you will need to submit to the IRB Committee a final report indicating any problems you may have encountered regarding the treatment of human subjects, if the project goes longer than one year.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Francesca Durand, PhD
Chair, IRB

FD/nan

Cc. Dr. Jerome Steele



Appendix B

New York City Department of Education Institutional Review Board Approval



Department of
Education

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Research and Policy Support
Group

52 Chambers Street
Room 310
New York, NY 10007

December 15, 2016

Mrs. Jennifer C Cannell
97 Mosher Road
Delmar, NY 12054

Dear Mrs. Cannell:

I am happy to inform you that the New York City Department of Education Institutional Review Board (NYCDOE IRB) has approved your research proposal, "Development of the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State." The NYCDOE IRB has assigned your study the file number of 1517. Please make certain that all correspondence regarding this project references this number. The IRB has determined that the study poses minimal risk to participants. The approval is for a period of one year.

Approval Date: December 15, 2016
Expiration Date: December 14, 2017

Responsibilities of Principal Investigators: Please find below a list of responsibilities of Principal Investigators who have DOE IRB approval to conduct research in New York City public schools.

- Approval by this office does not guarantee access to any particular school, individual or data. You are responsible for making appropriate contacts and getting the required permissions and consents before initiating the study.
- When requesting permission to conduct research, submit a letter to the school principal summarizing your research design and methodology along with this IRB Approval letter. Each principal agreeing to participate must sign the enclosed Approval to Conduct Research in Schools/Districts form. *A completed and signed form for every school included in your research must be emailed to IRB@schools.nyc.gov.* Principals may also ask you to show them the receipt issued by the NYC Department of Education at the time of your fingerprinting.
- You are responsible for ensuring that all researchers on your team conducting research in NYC public schools are fingerprinted by the NYC Department of Education. Please note: This rule applies to all research in schools conducted with students and/or staff. See the attached fingerprinting materials. For additional information [click here](#). Fingerprinting staff will ask you for your identification and social security number and for your DOE IRB approval letter. You must be fingerprinted during the school year in which the letter is issued. Researchers who join the study team after the inception of the research must also be fingerprinted. Please provide a list of their names and social security numbers to the NYC Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group for tracking their eligibility and security clearance. The cost of fingerprinting is \$135. *A copy of the fingerprinting receipt must be emailed to IRB@schools.nyc.gov.*
- You are responsible for ensuring that the research is conducted in accordance with your research proposal as approved by the DOE IRB and for the actions of all co-investigators and research staff involved with the research.

- You are responsible for informing all participants (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, and students) that their participation is strictly voluntary and that there are no consequences for non-participation or withdrawal at any time during the study.
- Researchers must: use the consent forms approved by the DOE IRB; provide all research subjects with copies of their signed forms; maintain signed forms in a secure place for a period of at least three years after study completion; and destroy the forms in accordance with the data disposal plan approved by the IRB.

Mandatory Reporting to the IRB: The principal investigator must report to the Research and Policy Support Group, within five business days, any serious problem, adverse effect, or outcome that occurs with frequency or degree of severity greater than that anticipated. In addition, the principal investigator must report any event or series of events that prompt the temporary or permanent suspension of a research project involving human subjects or any deviations from the approved protocol.

Amendments/Modifications: All amendments/modification of protocols involving human subjects must have prior IRB approval, except those involving the prevention of immediate harm to a subject, which must be reported within 24 hours to the NYC Department of Education IRB.

Continuation of your research: It is your responsibility to insure that an application for continuing review approval is submitted six weeks before the expiration date noted above. If you do not receive approval before the expiration date, all study activities must stop until you receive a new approval letter.

Research findings: We require a copy of the report of findings from the research. Interim reports may also be requested for multi-year studies. Your report should not include identification of the superintendency, district, any school, student, or staff member. Please send an electronic copy of the final report to: irb@schools.nyc.gov.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Mary Mattis at 212.374.3913.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Mattis, PhD
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Barbara Dworkowitz

Appendix C

Alignment of the School Library Media Program Evaluation Rubric with the Teacher Leader Model Standards

SLMPE Category	SLMPE Essential Element	Teacher Leader Model Standards Domain						
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Teaching for Learning	Instructional Design				X			X
	Collaborative Planning	X						
	Information Literacy				X			X
	Reading				X		X	X
	Assessment for Learning		X			X		
	Teaching for Diverse Learning Needs	X			X			X
	Inquiry Learning	X			X			X
	Intellectual Freedom							X
	Social Learning				X		X	
	Social Responsibility				X		X	
Building the Learning Environment	Staffing							X
	Professional Development			X				
	Resources and Materials				X			
	Resource Sharing				X			
	Equitable Access				X			
	Educational Technology			X	X			X
	Climate Conducive to Learning				X			X
	Budget				X		X	
	Facility							X
Empowering Learning Through Leadership	Instructional Leadership		X					X
	Administrative Support	X						
	Program Planning and Evaluation	X				X		
	Communication				X		X	X
	Reporting				X	X	X	X
	Program Advocacy							X

Appendix D

Study: Development of the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State Interview Protocol – School Librarians

Introduction:

Hello, I am Jen Cannell, a doctoral candidate at the Sage Colleges in Albany, NY. I am conducting a study to learn more about how school librarians develop leadership skills.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this study. With your permission, I am going to ask you a series of questions. All answers are confidential, and your identity will not be revealed. This interview should take no more than 60 minutes to complete.

Before we begin, I would like to go over a few things:

1. I would like to record the interview to make sure that I accurately capture the information that you provide. Please let me know if you would prefer not to be recorded.
2. If you do provide permission to be recorded, you may ask for the recorder to be stopped at any time.
3. Before we begin, I must have your consent in writing.

Interviewer: Jen Cannell

Unique Identifier Number: _____, School Librarian

Interview Questions:

1. How would you describe your role as a school librarian?
2. How do you define the leadership role of school librarians?
3. Describe the ways in which you consider yourself a leader in your school.
4. In what ways do you work with others to improve teaching and learning?
5. How do you extend learning outside of the four walls of the library?
6. In what ways, if any, can you tell that you have influenced the learning that takes place outside of the library?
7. Describe an instance where you made a school wide impact?
8. Do you collect evidence to show your impact on student learning? What? How often? Do you share that evidence with anyone?
9. What are your strengths as a librarian and how have those been developed over time?
10. How do you continue your own learning and development?
11. What professional development have you participated in that has been the most influential? Who offered that professional development (district, BOCES, SLS, professional organization)?
12. Have you implemented any changes in your practice from that professional development?

13. What obstacles, if any, do you face in assuming a leadership role in your building? In your profession?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

Closure:

Thank you for your participation. I appreciate your time and willingness to participate. I will send a transcript of this interview to you so that you may review for accuracy.

END

Appendix E

Study: Development of the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State Interview Protocol – Directors of School Library Systems

Introduction:

Hello, I am Jen Cannell, a doctoral candidate at the Sage Colleges in Albany, NY. I am conducting a study to learn more about how school librarians develop leadership skills.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this study. With your permission, I am going to ask you a series of questions. All answers are confidential, and your identity will not be revealed. This interview should take no more than 60 minutes to complete.

Before we begin, I would like to go over a few things:

1. I would like to record the interview to make sure that I accurately capture the information that you provide. Please let me know if you would prefer not to be recorded.
2. If you do provide permission to be recorded, you may ask for the recorder to be stopped at any time.
3. Before we begin, I must have your consent in writing.

Interviewer: Jen Cannell

Unique Identifier Number: _____, School Library System Director

Interview Questions:

1. How do you define the leadership role of school librarians?
2. Describe the ways in which school librarians in your region demonstrate having leadership skills.
3. As a system director, do you have a vision for developing the leadership skills of your school librarians? Please describe that vision.
4. What guides your decision making around the professional development that you offer to your school librarians?
5. How do you determine the effectiveness or impact of the professional development that you offer your librarians?
6. What challenges, if any, exist to helping school librarians engage in professional development that builds leadership capacity?
7. Can you describe how you support your school librarians in taking a leadership role?
8. Can you describe the actions you take to advocate for the leadership role of school librarians?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

Closure:

Thank you for your participation. I appreciate your time and willingness to participate. I will send a transcript of this interview to you so that you may review for accuracy.

END

Appendix F

**Study: Development of the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State
Demographics – School Librarians**

The following questions are being asked so that the researcher may better understand each participant. All questions are optional; you may choose to answer only the questions you want.

1. Unique identifier number assigned by the researcher? _____
2. Male or female? _____
3. Years of service as a school librarian? _____
4. Have you taught in the classroom? What subjects/grades if applicable?

5. Circle any professional library organizations that you belong to.
ALA AASL NYLA SSL Local Affiliate Other _____

Appendix G

**Study: Development of the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State
Demographics – Directors of School Library Systems**

The following questions are being asked so that the researcher may better understand each participant. All questions are optional; you may choose to answer only the questions you want.

1. Unique identifier number assigned by the researcher? _____
2. Male or female? _____
3. Years of service as a School Library System Director? _____
4. Years of service as a school librarian? _____
5. Have you taught in the classroom? What subjects/grades if applicable?

6. Circle any professional library organizations that you belong to.
ALA AASL NYLA SSL Local Affiliate Other _____
7. Please provide a list of professional development opportunities that your School Library System offered in the past three years. This may be sent to the researcher at cannej@sage.edu after the completion of the interview.

Appendix H

Communications – Directors of School Library Systems

Invitation to participate

Hi [Name of possible participant],

I am Jen Cannell, a doctoral candidate at The Sage Colleges in Albany, NY. I am conducting a research study for my dissertation entitled: Development of the Leadership Capacity of School Librarians in New York State. I would like to invite you to participate in this study so that I may gain a better understanding of the development of the leadership capacity of school librarians.

Each member will participate in an interview lasting no longer than one hour. In addition, a transcript of the interview will be sent for review and to confirm accuracy. All information will remain confidential.

I am also requesting that you provide a list of professional development that your system has offered to school librarians over the past three years. This information is to gauge the types of opportunities that are offered by your system.

Attached is an informed consent form that provides additional information. I look forward to further discussion with you about this opportunity. If you are willing to participate, please respond to this email with days and times that you are available to be interviewed.

Thank you,

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate

Invitation to schedule interview

Hi [Name],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. I am truly looking forward to discussing the development of leadership capacity of school librarians with you. The interview should take no longer than one hour.

Are you available for an interview on [date and time]? This interview will be [in person, through Zoom, over the phone]. [Logistical information such as address, Zoom link, or phone number will be asked for or provided, depending on which mode the interview will take place.]

Thank you,

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate

Interview reminder

Hi [Name],

Our interview is scheduled for tomorrow at [time]. I am looking forward to our conversation. Just to confirm, we will be meeting [provide address, Zoom link, phone number]. Thank you once again for agreeing to be a part of this study.

Thank you,

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate

Transcription

Hi [Name],

Attached is the transcription from the interview conducted on [date]. Please review to ensure that I have accurately captured the answers you provided to the interview questions. All corrections can be sent to me at cannej@sage.edu. If no response is received by [date 2 weeks out], I will assume that you found the transcription to be accurate.

I sincerely appreciate your time. Thank you!

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix I

Communications – School Librarians

Invitation to participate

Hi [Name of possible participant],

I am Jen Cannell, a doctoral candidate at The Sage Colleges in Albany, NY. I am conducting a research study for my dissertation entitled: Development of the Leadership Capacity of School Librarians in New York State. [Name of Director] has agreed to participate as a Director of a School Library System. I would also like to invite you to participate so that I may gain a better understanding of the development of the leadership capacity of school librarians.

Each member will participate in an interview lasting no longer than one hour. In addition, a transcript of the interview will be sent for review and to confirm accuracy. All information will remain confidential.

Attached is an informed consent form that provides additional information. I look forward to further discussion with you about this opportunity. If you are willing to participate, please respond to this email with days and times that you are available to be interviewed.

Thank you,

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate

Invitation to schedule interview

Hi [Name],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. I am truly looking forward to discussing the development of leadership capacity of school librarians with you. The interview should take no longer than one hour.

Are you available for an interview on [date and time]? This interview will be [in person, through Zoom, over the phone]. [Logistical information such as address, Zoom link, or phone number will be asked for or provided, depending on which mode the interview will take place.]

Thank you,

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate

Interview reminder

Hi [Name],

Our interview is scheduled for tomorrow at [time]. I am looking forward to our conversation. Just to confirm, we will be meeting [provide address, Zoom link, phone number]. Thank you once again for agreeing to be a part of this study.

Thank you,

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate

Transcription

Hi [Name],

Attached is the transcription from the interview conducted on [date]. Please review to ensure that I have accurately captured the answers you provided to the interview questions. All corrections can be sent to me at cannej@sage.edu. If no response is received by [date 2 weeks out], I will assume that you found the transcription to be accurate.

I sincerely appreciate your time. Thank you!

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix J

Informed Consent Form

To: [Name]

You are being asked to participate in a research project entitled: Development of the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State

This research is being conducted by: Jennifer Cannell, Doctoral Candidate at The Sage Colleges under the guidance of Dr. Jerome Steele, Dissertation Chair.

The intent of this study is to explore the ways in which public school librarians in New York State develop leadership capacity. This study, analysis, and reporting will take place between January 1, 2017 and December 1, 2017.

Participants will be selected for their role as a public school librarian or as a School Library System Director in New York State, having at least two years of experience. A set of open-ended interview questions will be asked. The duration of the interview will be no more than one hour.

Each participant will be assigned a unique identifier number to ensure that all information will remain confidential.

Participation in this study will contribute to the body of knowledge about professional development and the building of leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State.

This study is classified as having minimal risk to participants. The risk of harm or discomfort is no greater than that ordinarily encountered in daily life.

With permission, an audio recording will be made so that the researcher may accurately capture responses to interview questions. Audio recordings of the interview will be kept in a password protected file on the researcher's computer. A signed confidentiality agreement will be obtained from the professional transcriptionist hired to transcribe the audio recording before any files are shared. Each participant will receive a transcribed copy of their interview to review for accuracy. The audio recording and the transcribed interview will be used by the researcher for the purposes of this study only.

I give permission to the researcher to play the audio recording of me in the places described above. Put your initials here to indicate your permission. _____

Participation is voluntary, I understand that I may at any time during the course of this study revoke my consent and withdraw from the study without any penalty.

I have been given an opportunity to read and keep a copy of this Agreement and to ask questions concerning the study. Any such questions have been answered to my full and complete satisfaction.

I, _____, having full capacity to consent, do hereby volunteer to participate in this research study

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Research participant

This research has received the approval of The Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board and the New York City Department of Education Institutional Review Board, which function to insure the protection of the rights of human participants. If you, as a participant, have any complaints about this study, please contact:

Dr. Jerome Steele
The Sage Colleges
140 New Scotland Avenue
Albany, New York 12208
Steelj2@sage.edu

Appendix K

Confidentiality Agreement for Transcriptionist

I, [name of transcriptionist], agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and/or oral or written documentation received from Jennifer Cannell related to the research project entitled Development of the Leadership Capacity of School Librarians in New York State. The information in these tapes and/or documentation has been revealed by those who participated in this research project with the understanding that their information would remain strictly confidential. I understand I have the responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement.

Furthermore:

1. I will follow the established protocol for my role in the project.
2. I will not share any information in these tapes and/or documents with anyone except the researcher listed on this form.
3. I will hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual who may be revealed in these tapes and/or documents.
4. I will not disclose any information received for profit, gain or otherwise.
5. I will not make copies of the audiotapes and/or oral or written documentation, unless specifically requested to do so by Jennifer Cannell.
6. I will store audiotapes and/or oral or written documentation in a safe, secure location for as long as they are in my possession.
7. I will return all materials; including audiotapes and/or oral or written documentation; to Jennifer Cannell within the mutually agreed upon time frame.
8. I will return all electronic computer devices to the researchers at the end of the project. I will not save any data provided to me in any format, electronic or otherwise.

Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards and I pledge not to do so. I am also aware I am legally liable for any breach of confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or oral or written documentation to which I have access.

Printed name _____

Signature _____

Title and/or affiliation with the researcher _____

Date _____

Appendix L

Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions

RQ 1: What is the leadership role of school librarians in New York State?

Questions for School Librarians:

- How would you describe your role as a school librarian?
- How do you define the leadership role of school librarians?
- Describe the ways in which you consider yourself a leader in your school.
- In what ways do you work with others to improve teaching and learning?
- How do you extend learning outside of the four walls of the library?
- Describe an instance where you made a school wide impact?
- In what ways, if any, can you tell that you have influenced the learning that takes place outside of the library?
- Do you collect evidence to show your impact on student learning? What? How often? Do you share that evidence with anyone?
- What are your strengths as a librarian and how have those been developed over time?
- What obstacles, if any, do you face in assuming a leadership role in your building? In your profession?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

Questions for Directors:

- How do you define the leadership role of school librarians?
- Describe the ways in which school librarians in your region demonstrate having leadership skills.
- Can you describe how you support your school librarians in taking a leadership role?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

RQ 2: How do school librarians acquire the skills needed to be effective teacher leaders?

Questions for School Librarians:

- What are your strengths as a librarian and how have those been developed over time?
- How do you continue your own learning and development?
- What professional development have you participated in that has been the most influential? Who offered that professional development?
- Have you implemented any changes in your practice from that professional development?

- What obstacles, if any, do you face in assuming a leadership role in your building? In your profession?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

Questions for Directors:

- As a system director, do you have a vision for developing the leadership skills of your school librarians? Please describe that vision.
- What challenges, if any, exist to helping school librarians engage in professional development that builds leadership capacity?
- Can you describe how you support your school librarians in taking a leadership role?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

RQ 3: In what ways do Directors of School Library Systems influence the leadership capacity of school librarians in New York State?

Questions for School Librarians:

- What professional development have you participated in that has been the most influential? Who offered that professional development?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

Questions for Directors:

- Describe the ways in which school librarians in your region demonstrate having leadership skills.
- As a system director, do you have a vision for developing the leadership skills of your school librarians? Please describe that vision.
- What guides your decision making around the professional development that you offer to your school librarians?
- How do you determine the effectiveness or impact of the professional development that you offer your librarians?
- What challenges, if any, exist to helping school librarians engage in professional development that builds leadership capacity?
- Can you describe how you support your school librarians in taking a leadership role?
- Can you describe the actions you take to advocate for the leadership role of school librarians?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

RQ 4: Using the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* as a framework to define leadership, to what extent does professional development provided by School Library Systems align to the standards?

Questions for School Librarians:

- How would you describe your role as a school librarian?
- How do you define the leadership role of school librarians?
- Describe the ways in which you consider yourself a leader in your school.
- In what ways do you work with others to improve teaching and learning?
- How do you extend learning outside of the four walls of the library?
- Describe an instance where you made a school wide impact?
- In what ways, if any, can you tell that you have influenced the learning that takes place outside of the library?
- Do you collect evidence to show your impact on student learning? What? How often? Do you share that evidence with anyone?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

Questions for Directors:

- How do you define the leadership role of school librarians?
- Describe the ways in which school librarians in your region demonstrate having leadership skills.
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about librarians as leaders that I didn't ask about today?

Appendix M

Informational Letter for Principals

[Date]

Dear [Name of Principal],

My name is Jen Cannell and I am a doctoral candidate at The Sage Colleges in Albany, NY. I am conducting a research study for my dissertation entitled: Development of the Leadership Capacity of School Librarians in New York State. I would like to invite your school librarian to participate in this study so that I may gain a better understanding of the ways in which school librarians develop as leaders.

Your school librarian will be asked to participate in an interview which will last no longer than one hour. In addition, a transcript of the interview will be sent to your school librarian for review and to confirm accuracy. All information will remain confidential and your school will not be identified in the study.

May I please have permission to request an interview with your school librarian? I am available to provide additional information or to answer any questions that you may have. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Jerome Steele, at steelj2@sage.edu.

Thank you,

Jen Cannell, Doctoral Candidate
cannej@sage.edu