



Measuring Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile's Summer Reading Services and Programs

Overview of Survey Results and Community Implications [as of September 20, 2016]

Overview

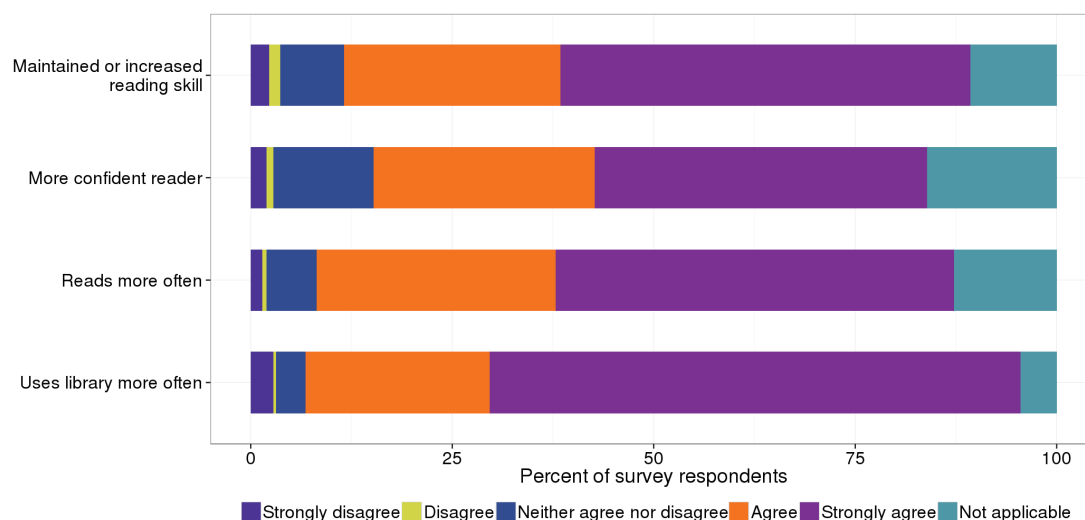
Reading programs are at the heart of library programming, and public libraries intend summer reading programs to be engaging and fun while providing structure that supports ongoing learning and protects against literacy backsliding for children out of school.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile Survey Work

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile staff distributed surveys to collect data and insights about how summer reading services and programs are supporting community education needs. Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile surveyed parents or caregivers of children participating in the summer reading program using the Project Outcome Summer Reading Services and Programs Immediate Survey, which measures the impact of services designed to provide continuous reading opportunities for children between school breaks to limit learning gaps. A total of 354 survey responses were collected.

Results

The results of the Summer Reading Survey are shown in the chart below.



Of the percentage of parents or caregivers surveyed that agreed or strongly agreed that their children benefited from the summer reading program:

- 78% reported their child maintained or increased their reading skills
- 69% reported their child is a more confident reader
- 79% reported their child reads more often
- 89% reported their child uses the library more often

Implications for Community Impact

Summer reading programs are an essential public library service that keeps children connected to reading and learning while school is out. Summer reading programs are particularly important for children transitioning from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" education levels. According to a three-year study by Dominican University's Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, students who participate in their local library's summer reading program significantly improve their reading skills.ⁱ

- Children who participate in summer reading programs end up ahead of those who don't. The Lexile Framework provides a way to match a reader with an appropriate text within their reading level. Research shows that there is a 52 Lexile point gain for children who participate in summer reading programs.ⁱⁱ Summer reading programs reduce summer learning loss. Instead of losing knowledge and skills during the summer months, kids who attend summer reading programs actually show gains.
- Summer reading programs improve more than reading skills. In the Dominican University study, teachers report that children who participate in summer reading programs return to school with a more positive attitude about reading and higher level of confidence in the classroom, read beyond what is required, and perceive reading as important.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Most people in the United States view public libraries as an integral part of the education system by providing resources to everyone, while also being advocates of digital and information literacy. A recent report produced by the Pew Research Institute found that those over the age of 15 feel that public libraries have an important role in fulfilling the educational needs of the community they serve. Specifically, 85% of the surveyed population feel that public libraries need to coordinate with schools in literacy programs and resources provided to children. In addition, 78% feel libraries adequately encourage literacy and an enthusiasm for reading.^{iv}

Project Outcome surveys were developed by PLA's Performance Measurement Task Force, which is comprised of a diverse group of public and state library leaders, consultants, data researchers and analysts. The Task Force revised and pilot-tested the Summer Reading Surveys in early 2016, carefully choosing the survey language to capture the immediate perceived benefits from library summer reading programs, such as changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or application.

The surveys were designed to support libraries' efforts to measure program outcomes and use the results to enhance strategic planning, manage resources more efficiently, and support advocacy messages. The results are intended to show the direction of change in the community, not rigorous statistical proof of change.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Profile Profile

Population of Legal Service Area: NULL
Annual Operating Expenditures: NULL
Number of Libraries: 40
FTE Staff:
Visits per Capita:
Annual Hours Open: NULL



⁵Susan Roman, Deborah T. Carran and Carole D. Fiore. "Public Library Summer Reading Programs Close the Reading Gap." (San Rafael.: *Dominican University Graduate School of Library & Information Science*, 2010). Accessed July 29, 2015.

http://gslis.dom.edu/sites/default/files/documents/IMLS_finalReport.pdf

⁶Lexile measures represent a student's level on a developmental scale of reading ability and can stand alone in their interpretation. Lexile measures do not depend on a norming sample like grade equivalency measures. Higher Lexile measures represent a higher level of reading ability. *Lexile.com*

⁷Roman, Carran, and Fiore. "Public Library Summer Reading Programs."

⁸John B. Horrigan, Lee Rainie, and Dana Page. "Libraries at the crossroads." *PewResearch Center* (2015). Accessed October 23, 2015.

http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/09/2015-09-15_libraries_FINAL.pdf

