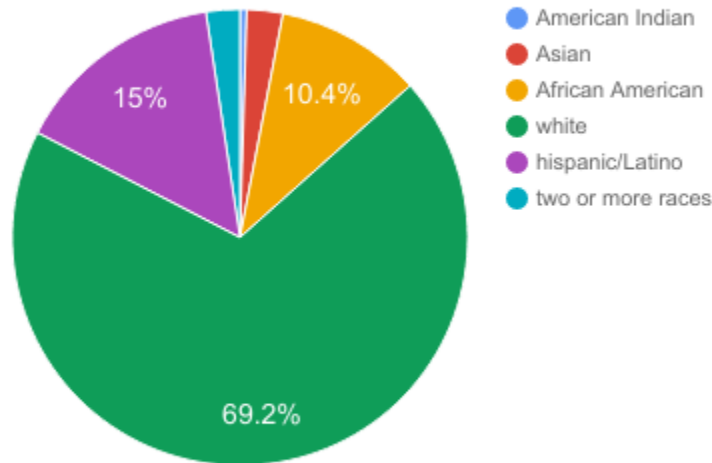


Demographic Analysis – Cornelius Elementary School

Cornelius Elementary School serves 641 students in grades K-5th, slightly below the state average of 686 students in elementary schools (School Report Card). Class sizes for grades K-3 are very much in line with state and district averages for those grades; however, 4th and 5th grade have slightly larger than average class sizes with 24 students in 4th grade compared to the 20 student state average and 27 students in 5th grade compared to the 21 student state average (School Report Card).

Demographically, the school is predominantly white, with 433 of the 626 students classified as Caucasian (Federal Ethnicity and Race Report). However, there is a significant population of nearly 100 Hispanic/Latino students and 65 African American students (Federal Ethnicity and Race Report). Furthermore, the School Improvement Plan from 2015-2016 states that they “have students represented from 15 countries and in addition to English, 16 other languages are spoken by our students.” The school library should aim to purchase more multicultural titles to create a collection of books that is as ethnically representative of the student body as possible; research shows that students are more likely to check out and read books that feature characters with whom they can most identify, in this case, African American and Hispanic characters (Krashen, 223). Furthermore, with a diverse collection, the school librarian could create rich multicultural curriculum activities, such as leading students in researching the culture and customs of an ethnic or religious group different than their own and presenting their findings using a web 2.0 tool to share with their classmates. Materials representative of the other ethnic groups, including Asian, American Indian, and multiracial, should also be purchased and incorporated into lesson plans.

Ethnic groups in the school

Because 15 percent of the student body is Hispanic/Latino (Federal Ethnicity and Race Report), the school librarian should try to collaborate or even co-teach with the school's ESL teacher to better assist those students whose native language is not English. School librarians could modify their lessons to accommodate language barriers. Additionally, the school librarian should set aside a significant portion of each budget to purchase book in Spanish, or at least bilingual materials. Perhaps it would even be beneficial for the librarian and ESL teacher to host a family literacy night, during which the librarian could showcase their bilingual or foreign language collection to parents whose first language is not English; this might encourage ESL students to check out materials to read at home with their parents if it's in their native language. In light of budget restraints, the school librarian might even consider forming some sort of

partnership with the public library, which might have a larger collection of bilingual or Spanish materials; fortunately for Cornelius Elementary, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public library system has a One Access program that allows all CMS students to check out 10 print books or audiobooks using their student ID card without having to apply for a physical public library card; the school librarian should be heavily promoting this partnership and encouraging the students to take advantage of their resources.

Demographically, the school is a mix bag of high and low income students. According to cafeteria reports obtained from Principal Jessica Holbrook, 28 percent of the students receive free and reduced lunch (reports were kept confidential so I cannot cite this source). According to the media specialist, there are very few middle class students that attend the school. The entire student body is very socioeconomically diverse, serving kids who come from multimillion dollar homes as well as low income students whose families can't afford air conditioning.

The mission of Cornelius Elementary School is “To inspire students to reach their potential as lifelong learners through a variety of learning experiences, where responsibility for teaching and learning is respectfully shared among students, parents, staff and community” (Cornelius Elementary website). The school’s vision statement is to “be a collaborative community of excellence that fosters creative, self-directed, lifelong learners and community contributors” (Cornelius Elementary website). The school library’s mission should also align with this mission and vision statement as being a place of active, lifelong learning. Encouraging small group work and incorporating hands-on technology research and exploratory learning time are great ways of fostering lifelong learning and creating active learners in the school library setting.

This expectation that the “responsibility for teaching and learning is respectfully shared among students, parents, staff and community” suggests several type of partnerships with the school library. First and foremost, this mission statement is perfect evidence that co-teaching or at least collaborative teaching should be happening in the school library, and that the school librarian should be advocating for flexible scheduling to allow for co-teaching. Additionally, the mission statement suggests the school librarian should also be an advocate for the school library, forming partnerships with the community and earning the respect of the PTO. Already, Cornelius Elementary’s school librarian has secured a \$100,000 Belk Foundation grant as well at a \$10,000 "Heroes" grant from Mooresville Lowes Corporate to redesign their library. The PTO runs the school’s yearly book sale out of the library and often times provides extra funds to enhance the collection. Already, the school librarian is working to form strong community and parent partnerships to enhance the library. Another possibility to get more parents involved is to host some kind of literacy night inviting parents and their kids to come to the library one evening to explore the library, checkout materials, learn how to download eBooks, and so forth. In other words, the school librarian needs to exert her role as a leader in the school community as much as possible to align herself with the school mission statement.

Cornelius Elementary’s schedule is most rigid; the librarian operates on an A through E day schedule teaching anywhere from five to seven 45-minute long classes. Each day she’ll teach a variety of different lessons to different grades. Two days she gets two long planning periods, one day she gets one planning period, and two days she doesn’t get a planning period at all. Because she has such a rigid schedule, she has no time to collaborate with teachers. This is rather unfortunate as she is forced to teach the kids what she thinks would be beneficial to them that ties into common core; however, she very seldom is able to tie it into what they’re learning in the

classrooms when the teachers won't tell her. In addition to teaching, she has morning duty in the library from 8:15 to 8:45 am and walker dismissal duty during the afternoon.

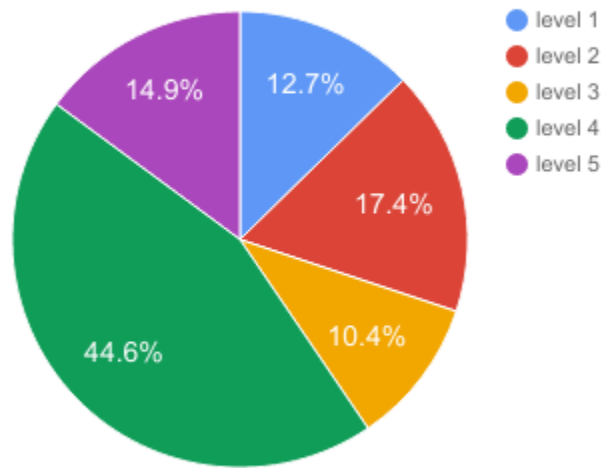
Academically, the school seems to have fairly average performance scores. In the 2015-2016 school year, the school received a grade of B/75 for school performance and 71.2 percent growth rate, meeting their growth status (School Report Card). However, the EOG scores and proficiency rates could use some work. The school has the highest EOG proficiency in science with a score of 89 and the lowest proficiency in reading with a score of 70; likewise, the EOG reading score overall was a 70/B compared to the slightly higher EOG math score of 77/B (School Report Card). It is not a surprise to me that the school is scoring higher in math and science as they offer school clubs that include an award winning robotics team, Mad Scientist, innovation lab and coding as well as quarterly electives to 3rd-5th grade, which include mindbenders, technology and coding. The school librarian is the one offering coding classes as both an elective and a club. (Other clubs and electives are offered, such as drama, art, chorus, PE, and more, yet none of these specifically address literacy skills). The school librarian does facilitate the morning news program where a few students are hand-selected by their teachers to read the librarian's scripted school announcements to the school. This is yet another area that builds student responsibility and leadership.

The EOG scores as depicted below tell a slightly different story. The majority of students score in level four for reading, science, and math; level 4 indicates a solid command of knowledge and skills that indicate college and career readiness and that they are performing at or above grade level (School Report Card). There does appear to be a higher percentage of children scoring in level 4 and 5 (ready for next grade or course and prepared for college) in math and science than there is in reading; this indicates that there are more students scoring at the lower

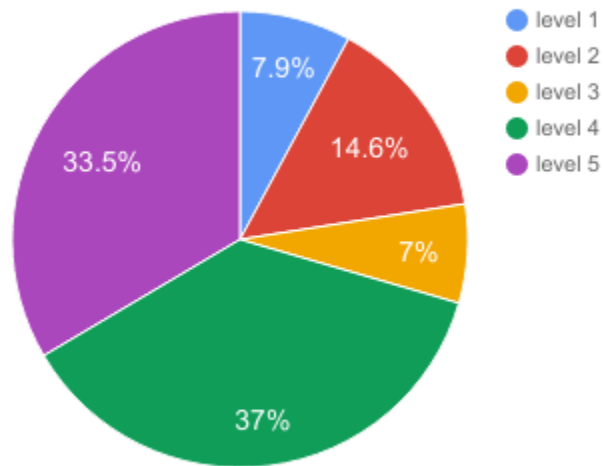
levels 1-3 in reading than there are students scoring in the lower levels for science and math (School Report Card). Maybe the library could play a role in tailoring lessons to the lower level readers. In fact, 30.1 percent of the students are scoring in level 1 or 2 in reading (which is identified by students who will need additional help next year to succeed in reading) (School Report Card). Partnering with the literacy facilitator would be very beneficial to help the librarian provide modified, remedial lessons for those students. The librarian could also focus on purchasing lower level readers for her collection to appeal to these students, such as popular easy readers, phonics readers or even graphic novels, which combine images with dialogue bubbles to make the text more palatable.

These scores are also based off the 2015-2016 School Report Card.

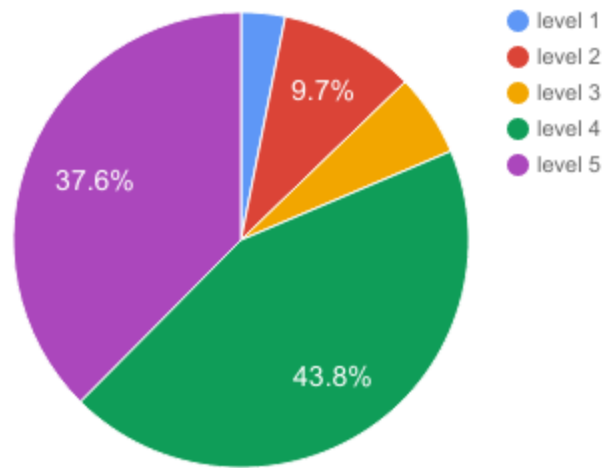
Student performance on Reading EOG



student performance on math EOG

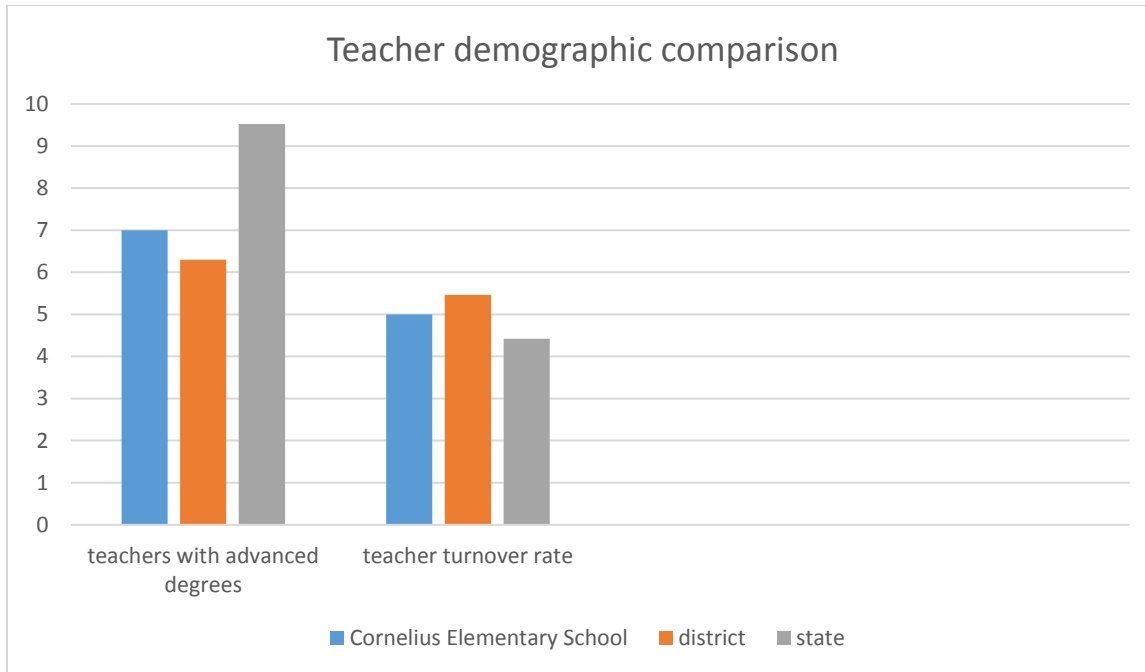


student performance on science EOG



While it's great that the school library is functioning as a 21st century destination with cutting edge technology and STEM centers, fostering literacy and a love of reading should still be a primary focus of the school librarian. She could do much to greatly bolster the school's academic weakness (low reading EOG scores) to get them more in line with the school's science and math scores, which are already strong. Perhaps the librarian could spearhead afterschool book clubs or Battle of the Books teams to make reading seem like a "cool" activity. Or at least, she could incorporate more time for checking out materials while students are in the library. She could turn reading into a fun activity by having students record one another giving book talks and posting them to a student book review blog or website. She could do a lot more co-teaching with English teachers to reinforce skills such as decoding text, building reading comprehension and improving research skills to build upon what they read.

All 35 classroom teachers are fully licensed, however only 20 percent have advanced degrees and only 7 are nationally board certified (School Report Card). The school librarian is one of the few staff members who holds an advanced degree, so she should be eager to utilize her expertise to offer a wide array of professional development workshops either formally or informally to all teachers who may not have similar knowledge. Professional development regarding technology, including overviews of new software, apps, and websites that would benefit students as well as seminars about new technologies, internet ethics and security for using new technologies (such as classroom sets of chrome books or iPads) would be very beneficial. It's also interesting to note that teacher turnover rate is relatively moderate (12.7 percent compared to the state 13.4 percent rate) (School Report Card); however those new teachers will need even more professional development help from the librarian when it comes to orienting them to the role the media center plays in the school. (The School Improvement Plan states the teacher turnover rate is more due to teachers leaving for personal reasons rather than job satisfaction, which is good for the school librarian who doesn't have to deal with as much negativity and teacher burnout as found at some school). New teachers are also a great for the school librarian to target when wanting to co-teach or collaborate on lessons because they're not as set in their ways as more experienced teachers.



There are no library assistants or parent volunteers at the library. Fortunately, the school librarian is very efficient at her work and uses down time before and after school to shelve, repair, and catalog books. While the budget doesn't allow for library assistants, the school has a very active PTO and I'm sure she could get more parents to help with these clerical tasks if she desired (she did express to me that she tried having parent volunteers in the past, but they tend to be too chatty and make too many errors to be trusted). While the PTO does not have a line item set aside for the media center, they are more than willing to set aside money for the school library (or any teacher) if the librarian requests it. In the 2014-2015 school year, the PTO raised \$97,861; the school librarian requested money to send herself and three teachers to a technology conference so they could learn ways to integrate technologies into library and classroom instruction. She's also purchased apps and robots to use in the library with PTO money. And the PTO also coordinates and runs the annual book sale from out of the school library (unfortunately, the school library does not receive any of the proceeds, which is certainly an area for improvement). But overall the librarian's relationship with the PTO is amicable and she seems

well supported and respected by her principal; because of this, if she was to request additional funds or assistance in the library, she would stand a good chance of getting it.

There is not a technology facilitator for the library, although each learning zone has a tech facilitator serving 20-30 schools to answer instructional technology questions. The county also has a maintenance server where you can submit a ticket to have broken technology repaired. The school librarian seems very tech-savvy and enjoys tinkering with new technology, so she's not as daunted by having to wear the hat of tech facilitator for the school. However, there is a computer lab directly across from the media center that is largely underutilized, so it would be ideal to have a tech facilitator to collaborate with the school librarian in offering more technology instruction. On the other hand, there is a classroom set of chrome books and iPads in the library to provide sufficient technology instruction; additionally, there are 216 iPads available throughout the school, all third, fourth and fifth graders have Google Chromebooks and there is a smart board, Apple TV or projector in each classroom (School Improvement Plan). Overall, I would say that all of this added technology in the classrooms and library doesn't make the tech facilitator as necessary for meeting student needs as first assessed.

The school operates on a fixed schedule, so media center time is considered a special. It would behoove the school librarian to coordinate lessons with the AIG (academically or intellectually gifted) teacher, the part time ESL teacher and the EC teacher as needed to modify library lesson plans for those students. Those special needs teachers could even come into the library to work with students as schedules permit.

There are a couple of schoolwide programs and distinctions unique to Cornelius Elementary School. One is the "Big 3" character education program. Each quarter, the school assembles to recognize and celebrate outstanding behavior by rewarding positive behavior for

each grade level. Each month, the school focuses on a different character trait, but the “Big 3” the program refers to includes: be respectful, be responsible, and be an active learner. The emphasis on this character education results in very low numbers of office referrals; since 2012-2013, suspensions have dropped from 39 students to 7. The school library could play a big role at enforcing these “Big 3” character traits. Active learning is something I previously discussed that can easily be modeled on a daily basis through the STEM centers in the library. Researching in groups or peer teaching is a good way to incorporate active learning, especially in response to reading a story. Being respectful and responsible is something the school librarian already models and encourages through the class dojo behavior system. Students are rewarded and deducted points to work toward incentives, such as earning the chance to change their dojo avatar or to be the first to check out new books.

The second program that’s unique to the school is the Digital Citizenship program which the school librarian spearheaded. The school is one of 10 in the CMS district to become certified for digital citizenship. For three months during media classes, students are taught how to stay safe online, how to keep personal information private, how to be kind online and when to tell an adult. While it is hopeful these digital safety and responsibility skills would encourage students to make good choices while online, many students have not seemed to grasp the concept. After numerous students were sent to the office for posting inappropriate login profiles on their school google chrome books, the school librarian was asked to disable the feature that allows students to set their own profile and to delete all Google store apps and web extensions. Perhaps the school librarian could work with the principal to identify specific students or classes that were in particular violation of abusing their electronic privileges and provide more one-on-one intensive digital citizenship refresher courses.

The School Improvement Plan for 2016-2017 was a bit disheartening when it comes to giving the school librarian a voice. The school leadership team created this document; this team includes the principal, assistant principal, team leads for K-5th grade, most of the specials teachers (including the media specialist) and four select parents, in addition to a chair person and secretary/recorder (Cornelius Elementary website). The first two goals of this plan were to provide a “duty-free lunch period to every teacher on a daily basis” and to provide “duty free instructional planning time for every teacher” (School Improvement Plan). Unfortunately, the school librarian is not considered a teacher and does not receive the same designated amounts of planning time as do the classroom teachers. This greatly impairs the school librarian from providing the same level of quality lessons as would a classroom teacher; yet ironically, the school librarian teaches all of the students in the school over the course of a week. Having a flexible schedule to allow the librarian sufficient planning time (especially to plan in collaboration with other teachers) would resolve this dilemma.

Another very alarming component of this leadership plan was the fourth goal to “Increase reading composite of students scoring IV and V on EOG reading test from 64.5 percent to 70 percent” (School Improvement Plan). The literacy facilitator was identified as the primary means through which this goal would be accomplished with no mention of the school librarian’s role in this. Once again, the school librarian could collaborate with the AIG teacher to modify lesson plans to provide more challenging activities for those high level readers to increase their reading level further. The librarian could purchase more middle school level reading materials to challenge these students (assuming the content is still age appropriate) or she could offer an afterschool book club to challenge these readers further; this would engage these high performing readers with the chance to interact with higher level texts.

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