

Collection Summary and Recommendations:

Skyview Middle School Library

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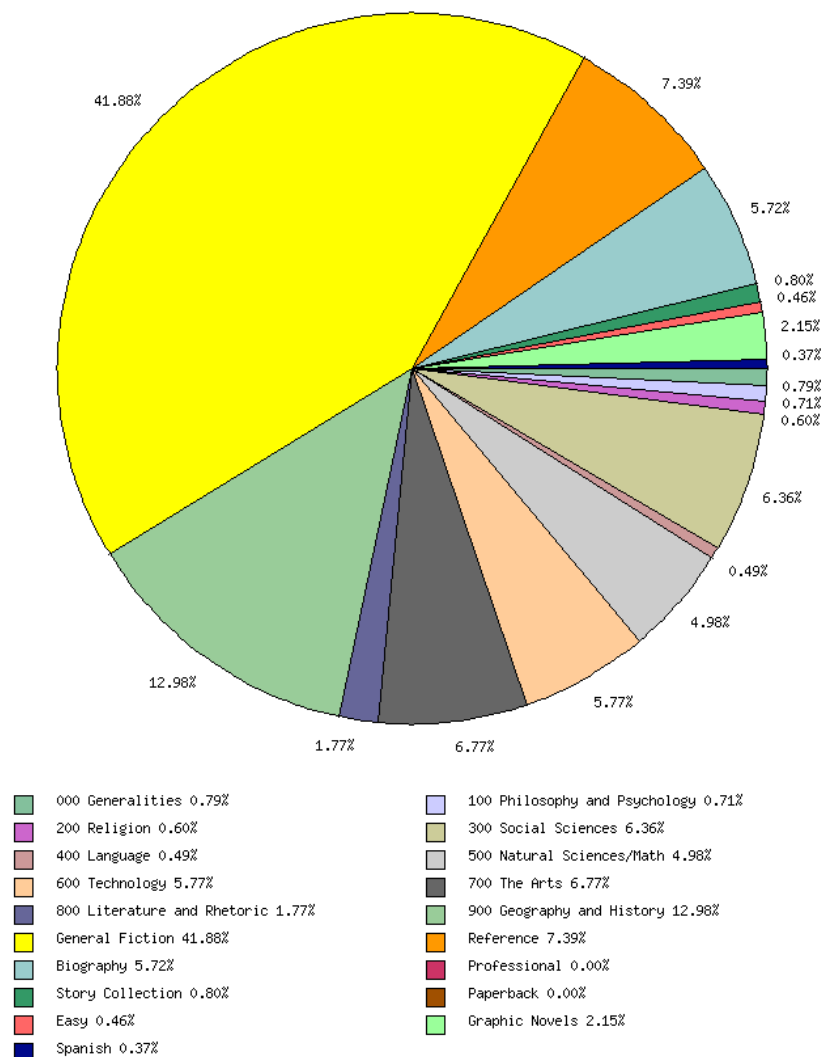
Follett Titlewise Analysis Report

Brian Lewis, Senior Librarian

## Summary

Skyview Middle School Library has a total of 10,506 holdings and serves a population of 1,150 students. Our non-fiction portion includes 4,173 entries, comprising of 41.22% of the total collection, with an average age of non-fiction being published from the year 2000. The general fiction contains 4,240 holdings, comprising 41.88% of the total, with the average age also being from the year 2000. Additional categories make up the remaining 16.9% and include reference, biographies, short stories, picture books, graphic novels, and Spanish materials. See figure A for above data in the form of percentages.

**Figure A: Skyview Library Collection Size by Categories and Percentage**



### **Non Fiction Collection Analysis (by 10s)**

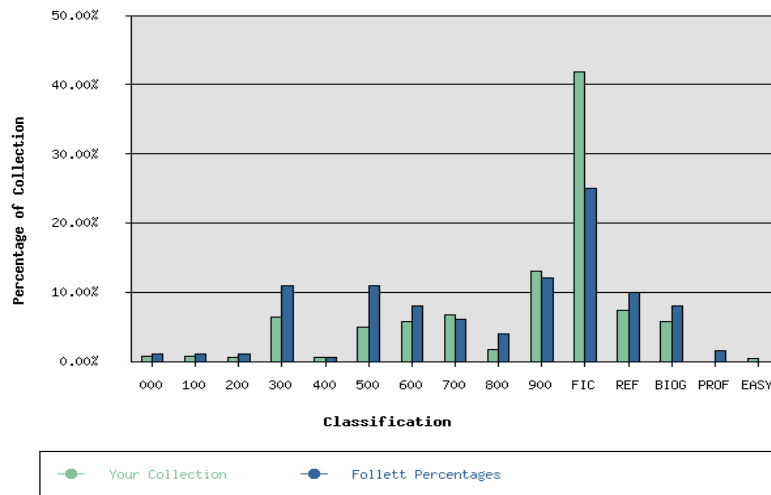
This report breaks down the non-fiction section into average age, number of items, and percent of Skyview's total collection. Our largest holdings reaching above 100 items are in economics, customs and folklore, animals, medicine, engineering, home economics, drawing, recreational and performing arts, American literature, and most history subjects. Additionally, there are 748 items found in the reference and over 579 in biographical works to cap off the larger non-fiction holdings. We have a number of areas represented by "0" holdings: museology, metaphysics, and languages to name a few.

### **Balanced Dewey Comparisons**

I find the data from the balanced Dewey comparisons interesting because Titlewave breaks down each hundred division and lists the percentage it comprises in our collection, then it compares it to the Follett recommendation for each category. So say, for example, that the 600s that make up technology has 584 items, which is 5.77% of Skyview's total holdings. And the Follett Balance Dewey for this is recommended at 8.00%. Titlewave then highlights in red that there is a -2.23% deficit in our collection for a "balanced" library. This is helpful at a glance if you want to see where your greatest deficits are, but many more factors have to be taken into consideration here. First, looking at geography and history, one can know that there are many more categories and subcategories in this 900 section. It simply takes up more shelf real estate than other categories such as generalities. Saying it is 'overpopulated' at .98% is misleading, considering there are just so many more books stacked into this category. Another aspect to look at is the needs of the student and teacher population. If your eighth grade science team requires a major research and build project on robotics each year, then a huge section on that subject in your technology section might be warranted. Otherwise, what you have would suffice for the

number of check outs available. Each school has to look at what's needed and adjust their collections accordingly. See figure B for the balanced Dewey comparisons for Skyview Middle School.

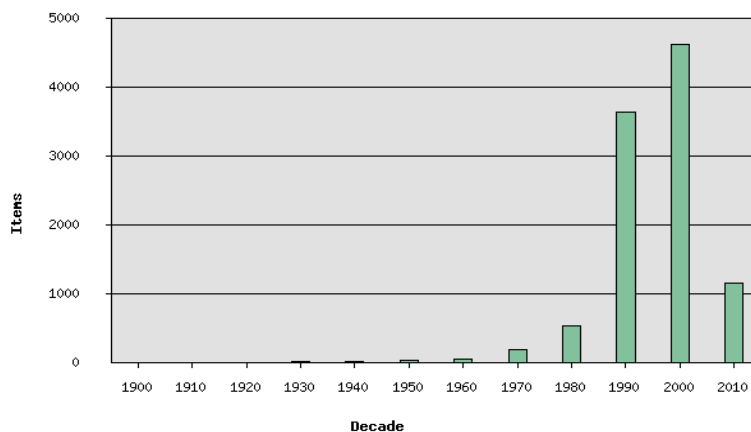
**Figure B: Balanced Dewey Comparisons**



### Collection by Year

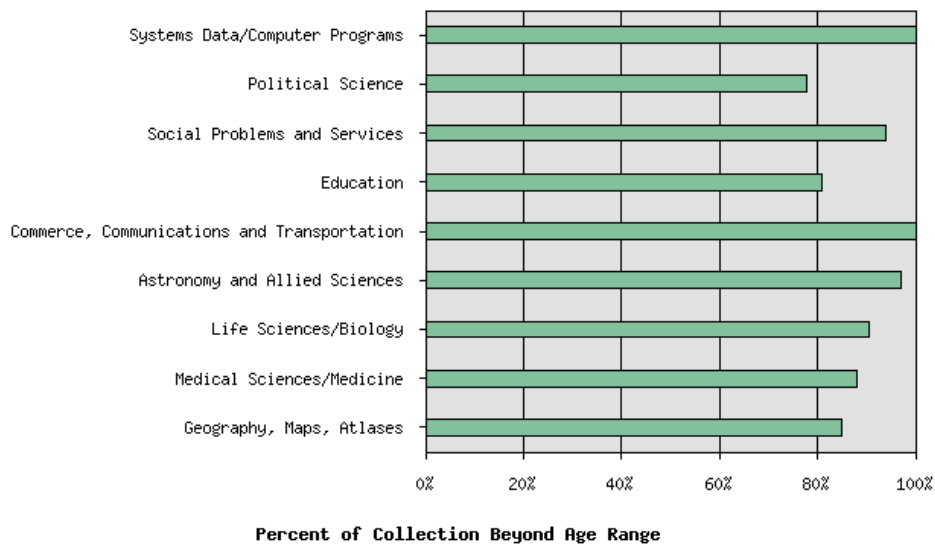
The analysis goes on to list and graph the number of holdings published from 1900 to the current year in decade blocks. We have nothing published before 1930, and 1148 titles published from 2010 forward. The highest number of titles was published between 2000 and 2010. What's really stupendous in this report is the little paper notation next to each line in each section of the document that, if pushed, will list *every single title* by call number published to fit the statistics of the defined category, which is pretty handy.

**Figure C: Collection by Year**



Contained within this category is where some of the most important and helpful data is. Listing by Dewey categories, the report designates an acceptable age (in years) that certain collections should fall within. Categories like medical science, technology, geography can all change in as little as one year and the materials should be up-to-date for accurate research and information. A country that was formerly a part of the African continent may no longer exist or a technology no longer in use. The flip side of this information is the material may be historical in nature and, in fact, accurate to the time it portrays. This is where some investigative scanning may need to take place to what is historical or truly outdated. For example, according to our collection analysis of copyrights, 60 items in categories 910-919: geography, maps and atlases, are 51 years out-of-date. Again, the paper icon next to the line is a handy tool to list all the offending publications. Embarrassingly, some items in our library still acknowledge the existence of the USSR. See figure D for Skyview's categories and the percentages from which they extend beyond the acceptable 3-5 year age range.

**Figure D: Age Sensitivity**



### **Aged Titles**

The aged titles tab follows with a comprehensive list by all categories of titles that are copyrighted more than 15 years. This is especially helpful in finding specific topics that had a large amount of older books contained within it. I was interested to know how many technology books were growing outdated since that was going to be my updating focus for inventory at the end of this year. This data indicates that 258 titles in the 600-699 range are beyond the 15 year mark. That is high, but the category of greater concern is geography and history, which has 664 titles with copyrights older than 15 years! That's something to look at.

### **Reading Programs**

The last tab (contained in the online report and not the pdf) was a nice summary of grade and lexile levels for each book, but it's not one I would use often. This information is readily available within Destiny, although I only occasionally see the lexile levels listed there. This report would be something I would pull up if a teacher asked me to assemble a group of materials for a special project according to AR interest, ATOS reading, Lexile, and other leveled offerings. For example, this week a Language Arts teacher asked me to pull specific fiction books in three separate genres with lexile levels from 500-700 for her students. With this report I can see we have over 800 titles that fall into this grouping and can look there for specific authors alphabetically as she requested.

### **Conclusion**

According to the balanced Dewey comparisons, our fiction section is the strongest. And with running an additional check-out report on destiny from the last year, I find that although the library is split down the middle between non-fiction and fiction, non-fiction is far less utilized than the fiction holdings, with 357 circulating titles versus 1,688.

The most blaring problem derived from this report is the age of our non-fiction department. With an average age deriving from the year 2000, information is inaccurate and no longer relevant to current times, especially in the geography and history department (12.98% of holdings). In addition to revitalizing the non-fiction department, I like the idea of data mining for useful applications like using the top ten readers in the patron's report for recognition and incentive programs. And because of budget cuts in recent years, libraries have had major decreases in purchasing power, inhibiting their ability to replace old, outdated materials with new. I read a great article in *Multimedia & Interent@Schools* about a library in Baltimore that uses the collections analysis to receive grants to fund the updating of their reference section (Curtis, 2000). I'm not sure how to do this for Skyview, but I intend to research this further.

In thinking about the selection and weeding policy for libraries, I turned to ALA for help because, quite honestly, our library doesn't seem to have one. This helpful quote headed up the webpage and set the standard for cleaning out library collections:

"Next to emptying the outdoor bookdrop on cold and snowy days, weeding is the most undesirable job in the library. It is also one of the most important. Collections that go unweeded tend to be cluttered, unattractive, and unreliable informational resources."

- Will Manley, "The Manley Arts," *Booklist*, March 1, 1996, p. 1108.

The annotated bibliography I found there had an enormous amount of information and support to help implement the weeding process (ALA, 2015). Our library seems to hold onto everything. Besides a plethora of recordable VHS tapes, there's quite a historical cache of old technology littering the workroom, much of which I don't even recognize. And before I judge my lead librarian for his sentimentality, I must admit to my own biases. I have a distinct hierarchy that easily tosses out old tech first. Next, I am somewhat willing to let go of outdated non-fiction. And finally, I find it painful to throw away a fiction title. There it is. *Sigh*. So an

improvement I would like to make to our library is to have some kind of unemotional (if possible) selection policy in place that utilizes this collection analysis to its fullest potential.

Overall I found the Titlewise analysis very helpful and practical in building and maintaining a healthy library collection. With constant weeding and attention, our garden of information can thrive and grow to optimum levels, meeting the needs of our middle school community it serves.



## References

ALA - (2015, December 1). Weeding Library Collections: A Selected Annotated Bibliography for Library Collection Evaluation. Retrieved August 31, 2015.

Curtis, D. (2000, November 1). Library Renaissance in Baltimore County: An Open-and-Shut Case for Library Funding. Retrieved August 30, 2015.