

Trends Analysis: Education & Learning



OVERVIEW

Education is a key social determinant of health.¹ From the early years to adulthood, education is a foundation of healthy personal development. The importance of literacy is well documented, including how literacy matters not only for personal health, educational attainment, and financial security, but for the well-being of a community and health of the economy.² Education increases overall literacy and understanding of how one can promote one's own health and well-being, and provides the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate and contribute to society.

OVERVIEW CONTINUED

The Columbia Basin-Boundary region is fortunate to have formal education opportunities such as public [schools](#)³ and [colleges](#)⁴, as well as an array of non-formal education and learning opportunities through regional and community-based organizations, including 22 [public libraries](#)⁵ and 39 [Strong Start](#) locations⁶.

According to [2015/16 reporting](#)^{7,8} from the seven school districts in our region, the Columbia Basin-Boundary region has 82 public schools, serving 19,858 students. There are 1,345 educators (teachers and administrators), with about 71% of these being female and 29% male. About 2/3 work full-time and 1/3 work part-time. The average age of educators in our region is 45 years, which has been decreasing slightly over the last five years.

Our four colleges, including Selkirk College, College of the Rockies, College of New Caledonia, and Okanagan College have 18 campuses across the region. These institutions provide opportunities to gain various certificates, diplomas, and degrees, as well as adult upgrading and continuing education opportunities.

The non-profit organizations that serve our region with education and learning opportunities are numerous, and to date, there is no known inventory of these regional and community-based agencies. From early years programming to environmental education, non-profits play an important role in helping residents with life-long learning. For example, the [Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy](#) has 16 Community Literacy Coordinators who work with local planning committees to provide literacy programs and services for people of all ages in communities across the region.⁹

The RDI is limited by the data sets available, and currently reports only on quantitative indicators. Some of the indicators that begin to paint a picture of education and learning in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region, and are contained within this report include:

- Early Development Instrument;
- Public School Student Enrollment;
- Public School Class Size & Composition;
- High School Completion;
- College Enrollment;
- Educational Attainment;
- Workforce Education; and
- Public Libraries.



These indicators are presented in detail below, including a description of each measure, importance of each measure and where available, associated current data and trends.

As many of these indicators report at the school district level, it is important to note that these districts are diverse, some covering several communities, which adds to the complexity and variation within and between districts. For example, Arrow Lakes stands alone as a small school district with only about 450 students, whereas Nelson, Creston, and Kaslo were amalgamated in the 1990s, creating the geographically diverse school district of Kootenay Lake; which also serves the southern part of the Slocan Valley, Meadow Creek, Salmo, and Yahk, with multiple schools with variations in their data. The Rocky Mountain school district is large, serving students from Kimberley to Golden and north, and east to Field (which is not within the Columbia-Basin Boundary). Caution should be taken in comparing these school districts because of these differences. While the BC Ministry of Education does report at the [public school level](#)¹⁰, data is missing or suppressed because of the small numbers. Thus reporting at the school district level was deemed the most appropriate level for RDI's analysis. Some data for [independent schools](#)¹¹ is also available.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) questionnaire is administered by kindergarten teachers, and measures five core areas of early child development that are known to be good predictors of adult health, education, and social outcomes: (1) physical health and well-being, (2) language and cognitive development, (3) social competence, (4) emotional maturity, and (5) communication skills and general knowledge. The EDI assesses the developmental readiness of a group of children with an aim to identify any vulnerabilities. To be vulnerable means that a child is at increased risk of encountering difficulties in the school years and beyond, when some aspect of their development is delayed at kindergarten entry.¹² Vulnerability is most often reported by the proportion of children who are vulnerable on one or more scales of the EDI, including physical, social, language, emotional, and communication scales.

In BC, the research team at the University of British Columbia has established the [Human Early Learning Partnership](#) (HELP)¹³ to help track and report EDI data. Data is collected in groups called 'Waves,' where each wave is comprised of data collected from several consecutive school years. In order for data analysts to accurately measure statistically significant changes over time, school districts with smaller numbers of kindergarten students participate annually, while medium and larger school districts participate less frequently. Examining EDI scores over time allows us to assess trends in the percentage of kindergarten children who are vulnerable.

The early years are crucial in influencing a range of health and social outcomes throughout one's life. Research shows that many challenges in adult society – mental health problems, obesity, heart disease, criminality, competence in literacy and numeracy, have their roots in early childhood. Understanding who the most vulnerable young children are and where they live allows us to allocate our resources and adjust policies to most effectively support all children in their early years.

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS & CURRENT CONDITIONS?

Based on the most recent EDI data (Wave 6), there are currently two school districts in the region, Boundary at 33% and Kootenay Lake at 35%, that have a higher percentage of vulnerable children on one or more scales than the provincial average of 32%. The remaining school districts have a lower percentage children vulnerable than the provincial average: Revelstoke (9%), Arrow Lakes (17%), Kootenay Columbia (22%), Rocky Mountain (29%), and Southeast Kootenay (30%). Generally, over the last five waves of EDI data, the majority of school districts in our region show lower than provincial average vulnerability rates.

Figure 1 shows the percent vulnerable on one or more scales for Wave 2 to Wave 6. Revelstoke consistently shows the lowest percent vulnerable in our region for all five waves. Provincially, the highest school district level vulnerability rate in 2016 (Wave 6) is 53%, while the lowest is the Revelstoke school district with 9%, and the second lowest is Arrow Lakes at 17% (tied with the Nisga'a School District).¹⁴

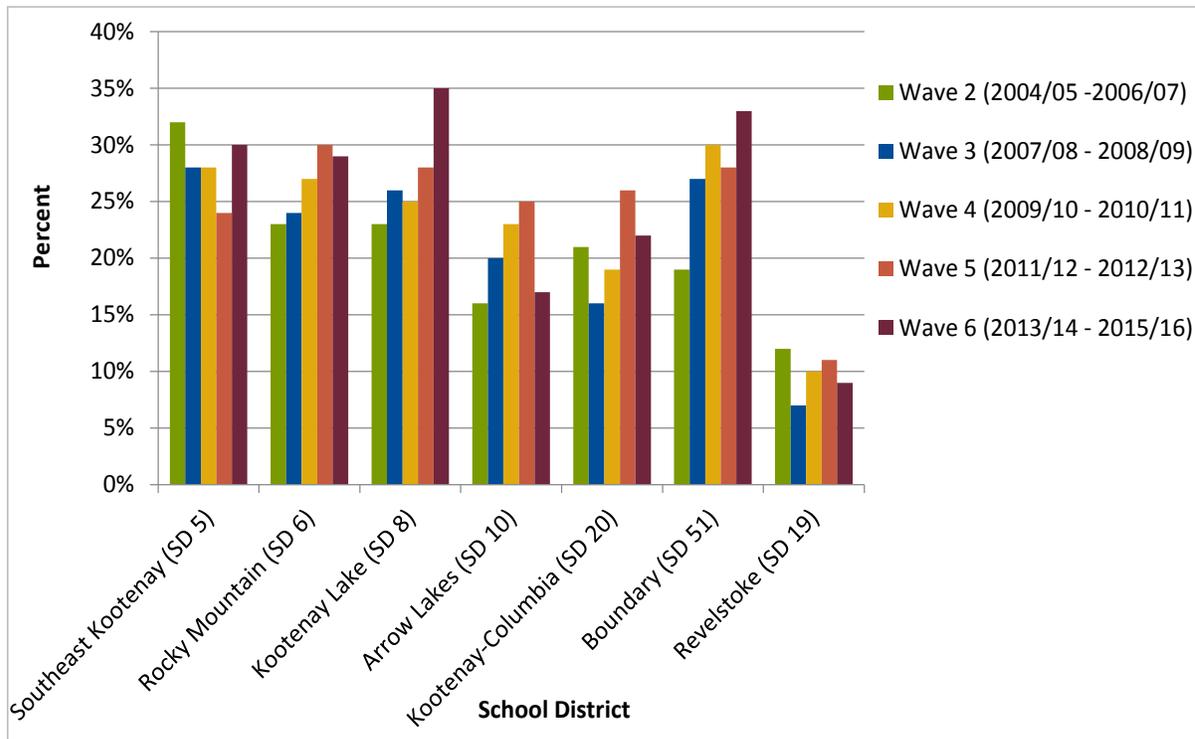


Figure 1: Percent of children vulnerable in one or more domain, 2004/05 to 2015/16¹⁵

As shown, between 2004 and 2005 (Wave 2) and 2015 and 2016 (Wave 6) school years, the number of kindergarten children who were vulnerable on at least one aspect of their development decreased in two of the seven school districts in the region; Revelstoke from 12% to 9% (25% decrease) and Southeast Kootenay from 32% to 30% (6.3% decrease). These two school districts countered the provincial upward trend in vulnerability, which is a 7.7% increase from Wave 2 to Wave 6. All other districts in our region show an increase in vulnerability over time. Some show small increases, namely Kootenay Columbia with a 4.8% increase and Arrow Lakes with a 6.3% increase. Others show much larger increases, including Rocky Mountain with a 26.1% increase, Kootenay Lake with a 52.2% increase, and Boundary with a 73.7% increase in vulnerability from Wave 2 to Wave 6.

Visit the RDI's Digital Basin to view a region wide map of [EDI scores](#)¹⁶ over time. Data for each specific scale (physical, social, language, emotional, and communication) is available at the school district and neighbourhood level through [HELP's EDI interactive map](#).¹⁷

PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This indicator measures the number of all adults and school-age persons who are enrolled in public schools who are working towards graduation. Data for this indicator were acquired from the [provincial reports](#)⁸ and [school district reports](#)⁷ of the BC Ministry of Education. While homeschooled children are required by law to be registered with a public, francophone, distributed learning, or independent school, the BC Ministry does not provide statistics on these students. Statistics for some [Independent Schools](#)¹¹ are available.

Observing trends in the numbers of students enrolled in BC public schools provides important information about changing demography and movement of people in and out of the region. It is valuable information for schools and school districts to incorporate into longer term planning. Trends allow for forecasting and can assist in adapting over time. Student enrollment can impact school districts' resourcing and budgets, which can have ripple effects in the community. Enrollment can also influence the quality of students' learning experiences.

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS & CURRENT CONDITIONS?

Over the last five years, there has been a downward trend in student enrollment in all but one of the seven school districts in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region. **Table 1** shows the number of students enrolled per school year and the percentage change over the last five school years. Southeast Kootenay shows the only positive change with an increase of 1.2% in student enrollment. The highest negative change is in the Arrow Lakes School District with a decrease of 12.5%.

A downward trend in student enrollment is consistent with provincial trends, where the majority of school districts across the province have been experiencing a downward trend in student enrollment. The percentage change for all public schools in BC over the last five school years is negative 2.9%. There are only 10 school districts in the province showing an increase in enrollment; seven of which show increases of less than 5%, with Conseil Scolaire Francophone showing the largest increase in enrollment of 20.3% from 2011/12 to 2015/16, and with Peace River North and Sooke seeing an increase of 9.1% and 6.2% respectively.

School District	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Percent change 2011 -2016
Southeast Kootenay (SD 5)	5,331	5,259	5,260	5,276	5,396	1.2%
Kootenay Lake (SD 8)	5,217	5,458	5,245	5,157	4,981	-4.5%
Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20)	3,968	3,870	3,739	3,661	3,657	-7.8%
Rocky Mountain (SD 6)	3,178	3,086	3,082	3,102	3,150	-0.9%
Revelstoke (SD 19)	1,036	1,022	959	950	952	-8.1%
Arrow Lakes (SD 10)	519	504	475	460	454	-12.5%
Boundary (SD 51)	1,405	1,317	1,285	1,271	1,268	-9.8%
All Public Schools	569,736	564,531	558,983	552,787	553,378	-2.9%

Table 1: Student enrollment by district and percent change from 2011/12 to 2015/16 school years⁷

ENROLLMENT BY STUDENT TYPE

School District reports break down the number of students enrolled into various categories including number of students enrolled as Aboriginal, English Language Learner, French Immersion, and Non-Residents. **Table 2** shows the average percent of students in these four selected categories based on all students for the 2011/12 to 2015/16 school years.

School District	Average % Aboriginal	Average % English Language learner	Average % French Immersion	Average % Non-Residents
Southeast Kootenay (SD 5)	16.5	0.6	8.4	1.3
Kootenay Lake (SD 8)	19.0	0.7	5.2	1.4
Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20)	12.6	0.6	5.4	0.1
Rocky Mountain (SD 6)	20.6	1.6	5.0	2.8
Revelstoke (SD 19)	14.0	1.4	N/A	1.0
Arrow Lakes (SD 10)	16.2	N/A	N/A	1.3
Boundary (SD 51)	28.0	N/A	N/A	0.2

Table 2: Average percent of student type by district, 2011/12 to 2015/16 school years⁷

All seven districts show over 12% of students are Aboriginal, with 28% in the Boundary. An Aboriginal student is a student who has self-identified as being of Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, status and non-status, Metis and Inuit). Five of the seven districts report having English Language Learners, but no districts with more than 1.6% enrolled. English Language Learners are students “whose English language proficiency is assessed as being sufficiently different from standard English that they are identified as requiring specialized services to develop intellectually, to develop as a citizen and to achieve the expected learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum”¹⁸. Southeast Kootenay has the highest percent of French Immersion students on average at 8.4%. Three districts – Revelstoke, Arrow Lakes, and Boundary, do not have French Immersion (a separate program where instruction is offered in the French language), although all districts have students enrolled in Core French and French Programs. All districts have a small percentage of non-resident students, with Rocky Mountain having the highest at 2.8%.

Visit the RDI’s Digital Basin to view a region wide map and detailed tables of [student enrollment](#)¹⁹. [Public School Reports](#)¹⁰ are another resource which provide data for individual schools.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASS SIZE & COMPOSITION

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The BC Ministry of Education [school district reports](#)⁷ provide an overview on class size and composition which includes average class size, number of classes with numbers of students entitled to an Individual Education Plan (IEP), and number of classes with assigned Education Assistants (EA). Class size and composition contribute to the quality of students’ learning experience and educators’ ability to meet the learning needs of students. Smaller class sizes generally mean better learning conditions and higher student achievement, especially for younger children and disadvantaged students.²⁰ As a class becomes larger and more diverse, the ability to address the individual needs of students becomes more difficult.²¹ With greater support, the diverse range of students can be better reached, resulting in improved learning outcomes.

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS & CURRENT CONDITIONS?

As shown in **Table 3**, average class sizes in our region are smaller than the provincial average, except for five instances (underlined in **Table 3**) which are all very close to the provincial average. The Arrow Lakes school district shows the smallest class sizes across all grades, while Revelstoke also shows a relatively lower average class size for grade 8 through 12. Compared to last year's statistics, class sizes have generally stayed the same, with some minor increases and decreases across all districts.

School District	Average Kindergarten Class Size	Average Grades 1-3 Class Size	Average Grades 4-7 Class Size	Average Grades 8-12 Class Size
Southeast Kootenay (SD 5)	17.8	21.8	24.5	20.5
Kootenay Lake (SD 8)	<u>19.9</u>	21.6	<u>26.1</u>	20.4
Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20)	<u>19.9</u>	20.7	<u>26.2</u>	<u>23.6</u>
Rocky Mountain (SD 6)	19.0	21.0	24.3	23.2
Revelstoke (SD 19)	17.5	21.2	23.9	17.1
Arrow Lakes (SD 10)	16.5	14.9	18.2	14.9
Boundary (SD 51)	18.0	19.8	21.9	19.7
All public schools	19.7	21.8	26.0	23.4

Table 3: Average class sizes by district as of October 31, 2015⁷

Maximum class sizes in British Columbia are 22 students for kindergarten, 24 students for grade 1 to 3 and no more than 30 students for grades 4 to 12.²² As of October 31, 2015, three of the seven districts reported having more than 30 students in classes for the 2015/16 school year, including: Kootenay Lake with 27 classes, Southeast Kootenay with 11 classes, and Rocky Mountain with four classes with more than 30 students. School districts do not report the grades of these classes. For grades 4 to 12, class sizes may exceed 30 students as long as the teacher consents (for grade 4 to 7) or is consulted (for grade 8 to 12), and the teacher and the superintendent and principal's opinions are that more students are appropriate.²²

With respect to composition, for kindergarten through grade 12, the number of students entitled to an Individual Education Plan (IEP) must not exceed three students per class, unless the principal has consulted with the teacher and the superintendent and principal's opinions are that more students are appropriate.²² Students with IEPs are those with a designated category of special needs. The number of classes reported by district with four or more students entitled to an IEP was reviewed and is shown in **Table 4**.

Class composition (2015/16)				
School District	Kindergarten to Grade 3	Grades 4-12	Total number of classes in District	Number of classes with assigned EAs
Southeast Kootenay (SD 5)	9	387	1,191	470
Kootenay Lake (SD 8)	1	98	810	253
Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20)	2	65	333	111
Rocky Mountain (SD 6)	0	68	307	112
Revelstoke (SD 19)	0	46	143	57
Arrow Lakes (SD 10)	0	24	140	51
Boundary (SD 51)	1	22	132	60

Table 4: Number of classes with four or more students entitled to an IEP and number of classes with EAs, 2015/16 school year⁷

Four of the seven districts in our region reported classes in kindergarten to grade 3 having four or more students with IEPs. All districts reported classes in grade 4 to 12 with four or more students with IEPs, with some districts showing high numbers of classes with this scenario. In Southeast Kootenay, 33.3% of all classes have four or more students with IEPs. Kootenay-Columbia shows 20.1% of all classes with four or more students with IEPs, and 10 grade 4 to 12 classes with seven or more. In Revelstoke, 32.2% of classes have four or more students with IEPs, with nine grade 4-12 classes with seven or more. Rocky Mountain reports 22.1% of classes have four or more students with IEPs, and Kootenay-Lake, Arrow Lakes, and Boundary show 12.2%, 17.1%, and 16.7% respectively.

When looking at the support for student classes, **Table 4** also shows the number of classes with assigned Educational Assistants (EA); additional support for the classroom teacher and students with IEPs. The provincial average of classes having an assigned EA is 29.5%.²³ In our region, all districts have above this average, with 31.2% of classes with an assigned EA in Kootenay Lake to 45.5% in Boundary.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This indicator measures the proportion of students who graduate, with a BC Certificate of Graduation or BC Adult Graduation Diploma, within six years from the first time they enrol in grade 8 (adjusted for migration in and out of BC). Six-year completion rates reported by the BC Ministry of Education at the [school district](#)⁷ and [provincial level](#)⁸ are included here, which combine public and independent schools. Six-year completion rates are reported for all students, as well as for male, female, Aboriginal, English Language Learning, and Special Needs students. [Public School Reports](#)¹⁰ are also available which provides data for individual schools.

High school completion rates indicate how successful our families, schools, and communities are in supporting youth in achieving high school graduation. High school graduation is now the minimum education level for most employment options, and therefore an important foundation for positive work place conditions and future employment success and well-being.²⁴

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS & CURRENT CONDITIONS?

The average high school completion rate from 2010/11 to 2015/16 school years is above the provincial average for three of the seven districts in our region. As shown in **Table 5**, Revelstoke consistently shows higher completion rates than the provincial level, along with Boundary and Arrow Lakes for all but the 2012/13 school year. These three districts show completion rates of 90% and higher – for two of the school years for Revelstoke and Boundary and four of the years for Arrow Lakes. Kootenay Lake and Southeast Kootenay show completion rates lower than the provincial average for all five school years. Kootenay-Columbia shows lower than provincial average completion rates, other than for the 2012/13 school year.

School District	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Average 2010/11 to 2014/15
Southeast Kootenay (SD 5)	75.0	76.9	79.4	77.7	77.4	77.3
Kootenay Lake (SD 8)	76.0	78.5	75.0	76.6	77.6	76.7
Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20)	80.1	77.4	83.9	80.5	81.9	80.8
Rocky Mountain (SD 6)	81.3	78.8	76.5	79.2	76.3	78.4
Revelstoke (SD 19)	87.4	88.4	90.1	86.1	90.5	88.5
Arrow Lakes (SD 10)	93.7	92.2	82.6	90.3	96.8	91.1
Boundary (SD 51)	94.2	93.7	82.1	85.2	84.4	87.9
All Public Schools	81.0	81.8	83.6	84.2	83.9	82.9

Table 5: High school completion rates and average from 2010/11 to 2015/16 school years by school district^{7,8}

COMPLETION BY STUDENT TYPE

Table 6 shows the average percent completion rate of students whether female, male, Aboriginal, or Special Needs over five school years (2010/11 to 2015/16). Completion rates are consistently higher for females than males. Arrow Lakes shows the highest average completion rate for females at 97.9% over the last five school years, while Kootenay Lake shows the lowest average at 78.4%. Revelstoke shows the highest average completion rate for males at 88.0%, while Southeast Kootenay Lake shows the lowest average for males at 74.5%. Revelstoke, Arrow Lakes, and Boundary all show higher than provincial average completion rates for female and male students.

School District	Average % completion for females	Average % completion for males	Average % completion for Aboriginal students	Average % completion for Special Needs students
Southeast Kootenay (SD 5)	80.2	74.5	67.4	62.3
Kootenay Lake (SD 8)	78.4	75.1	68.0	56.2
Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20)	82.7	79.1	64.0	55.6
Rocky Mountain (SD 6)	79.0	77.9	73.3	60.6
Revelstoke (SD 19)	88.8	88.0	74.1	75.1
Arrow Lakes (SD 10)	97.9	83.2	60.9*	75.8**
Boundary (SD 51)	88.7	87.5	83.6	69.8
All Public Schools	85.5	81.4	60.8	61.9

Table 6: Average high school completion rates by student type, by district, 2010/11 to 2015/16 school years⁷

* based on data only from 2013/14 school year / ** based on data from 2010/11 and 2014/15 school years

Average high school completion rates for Aboriginal students are generally lower, although Boundary shows the highest average completion rate at 83.6%. All regional districts in our region show higher completion rates for Aboriginal students than the provincial average.

Special needs students completion rates are the lowest in the Kootenay-Columbia (55.6%) and highest in the Arrow Lakes at 75.8% (although this is based only on two years). Southeast Kootenay, Revelstoke, Arrow Lakes, and Boundary show higher than provincial average completion rates for special needs students.

Data for English Language Learners (ELL) was only available for: (1) Southeast Kootenay for the 2014/15 school year with a cohort of 13 students and a completion rate of 95%; (2) Kootenay Lake, which shows an average of 41.6% completion over the five schools years; and (3) Rocky Mountain, with a 75.8% completion rate on average for ELL students from the 2010/11 to 2013/14 school years. The provincial average completion rate for ELL students for all public schools in BC is 85.9%.

Visit the RDI's Digital Basin for a region wide map of [high school completion](#) rates.²⁵

The BC Ministry of Education also provides data on grade to grade transitions – the percentage of students who enter a grade for the first time from a lower grade and make a transition to a higher grade anywhere in the BC school system in the following school year. These are reported at the [school district](#)⁷ and [public school](#)¹⁰ level.

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This indicator is a headcount of domestic and international students for post-secondary institutions across the province. Data for this indicator were acquired from the [Ministry of Advanced Education](#).²⁶

Post-secondary student enrollment is valuable information for institutional planning and forecasting, and has impact on resourcing and budgets. Enrollment provides information related to a region’s potential upcoming workforce. It can also influence the quality of students’ learning experiences. Domestic and international student headcounts provide insight into trends in student attraction and potential new resident and worker recruitment.

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS & CURRENT CONDITIONS?

There are four colleges in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region, including Selkirk College, College of the Rockies, College of New Caledonia, and Okanagan College, with 18 [campuses](#)⁴. All Selkirk College and College of the Rockies campuses fall within the Columbia Basin-Boundary region. College of New Caledonia has a Valemount campus and Okanagan College has a Revelstoke campus, however enrollment numbers are reported for the entire college; specific campuses were not isolated.

As shown in **Table 7**, Selkirk College has seen an increase in enrollment of domestic students over the last five years of 9.5%, while international student enrollment has greatly increased by almost 95%. College of the Rockies has also seen a substantial increase in international students with a 102.6% increase over the last five years. Domestic student headcount has decreased by almost 21% however.

Institution	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Percent change 2010/11 to 2014/15
Selkirk College						
Domestic Students	10,470	10,765	9,925	11,225	11,460	9.5%
International Students	290	250	260	365	565	94.8%
College of the Rockies						
Domestic Students	12,335	12,620	10,580	10,325	9,765	-20.8%
International Students	190	195	215	385	385	102.6%
College of New Caledonia						
Domestic Students	10,045	9,600	8,555	9,135	8,035	-20.0%
International Students	285	340	385	395	455	59.6%
Okanagan College						
Domestic Students	19,560	19,475	18,695	18,360	18,225	-6.8%
International Students	990	925	715	855	950	-1.0%
All BC public post-secondary institutions						
Domestic Students	410,480	410,270	397,330	393,980	381,185	-7.1%
International Students	31,185	33,330	35,845	39,595	45,130	44.7%

Table 7: Domestic and international student headcount for colleges within the Columbia Basin-Boundary, 2010/11 to 2014/15 school years and percent change over time

While College of New Caledonia and Okanagan College headcounts shown above include all students on all campuses, it is interesting to note that both have seen a decrease in domestic students, while College of New Caledonia has seen an increase in international students – almost 60% over the last five years. When looking at all post-secondary schools combined, there is a trend of an increase in international students at 44.7%, and a 7.1% decrease in domestic student headcounts.¹

¹This total headcount uses the unique total number of students, meaning that students who may be attending more than one post-secondary institution at a time are only counted once.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This indicator measures the number of people over the age of 15 with post-secondary educationⁱⁱ. Data for this indicator are from the 2011 [National Household Survey](#)²⁷. Responses to the survey record the number of people with: (1) no certificate, diploma or degree; (2) high school diploma or equivalent; (3) apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma; (4) college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma; (5) university certificate or diploma below bachelor level; (6) university bachelor's degree; and (7) university certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level. **National Household Survey response rates vary and thus data for this indicator was only reliably available for 30 of the 57 census sub-divisions in our region, accounting for only 63.7% of the region's population.**

Research shows that lower education levels lead to lower levels of general health, resulting in higher incidences of hospitalization and mortality from a number of conditions and diseases.²⁸ Level of education is highly correlated with other social determinants of health such as level of income, working conditions, and employment security. Education helps people move up the socioeconomic ladder and provides them with better access to other societal and economic resources.²⁴ Better-educated citizens also have increased ability to adapt and benefit from new training opportunities if their employment situation suddenly changes. With higher education, people generally achieve greater ability and more resources to attain a healthy and secure life.²⁹

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS & CURRENT CONDITIONS?

Overall, 54.2% of residents aged 15 and older in our region have some post-secondary education.ⁱⁱ This is slightly lower than the BC average of 55.7%, but nearly the same as the Canadian average of 54.3%. As shown in **Figure 2**, in our region, 5.1% have a university certificate, diploma, or degree above a bachelor's degree level, and 9.9% have a university bachelor's degree. These are both lower than for BC and Canada,

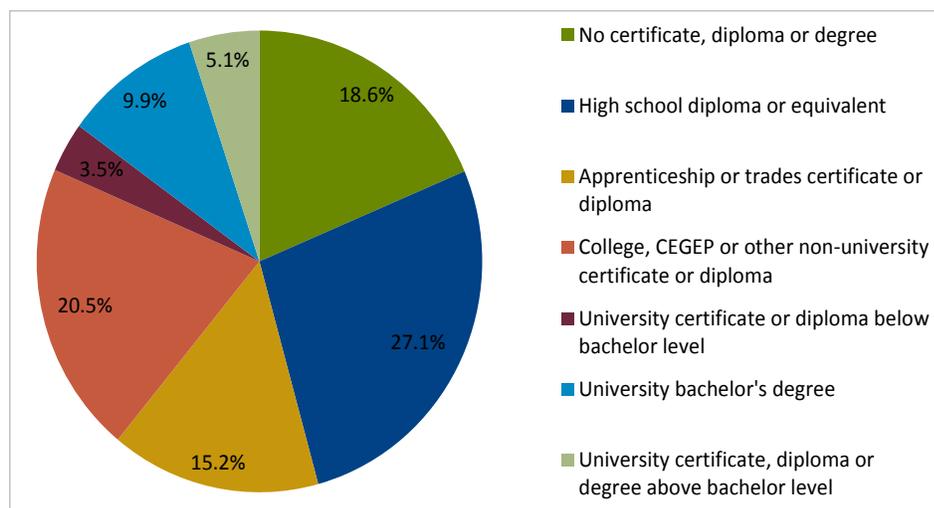


Figure 2: Percent of Columbia Basin-Boundary residents over the age of 15 by level of educational attainment²⁷

where in BC 8.1% have a university certificate, diploma, or degree above a bachelor's degree level, and 14.0% have a university bachelor's degree. For Canada, it is 7.5% and 13.3% respectively. Data for our region indicates that 15.2% have an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma, and 20.5% have a college,

CEGEP, or other non-university certificate or diploma. The percentage with no certificate, diploma, or degree is 18.6%, higher than BC (16.7%), but lower than for Canada (20.1%). The percentage with a high school diploma or equivalent for our region (27.1%) is similar to BC (27.7%) but higher than for Canada (25.6%).

ⁱⁱIncludes those with: apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma; college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma; university certificate or diploma below bachelor level; university bachelor's degree; and university certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level.

While overall, 54.2% of residents aged 15 and older in our region have some post-secondary educationⁱⁱⁱ, there is wide variety across communities, as shown in **Figure 3**. Some of the highest percentages are found in Rossland (71.1%), Kaslo (67.4%), Warfield (66.1%), Central Kootenay F (65.2%), and East Kootenay F (60.6%). Communities with the lowest percentages of people with some post-secondary education include Nakusp (37.9%), Central Kootenay B (40.1%), Kootenay Boundary A (45.2%), Grand Forks (47.9%), Valemount (47.9%), and Trail (48.2%).

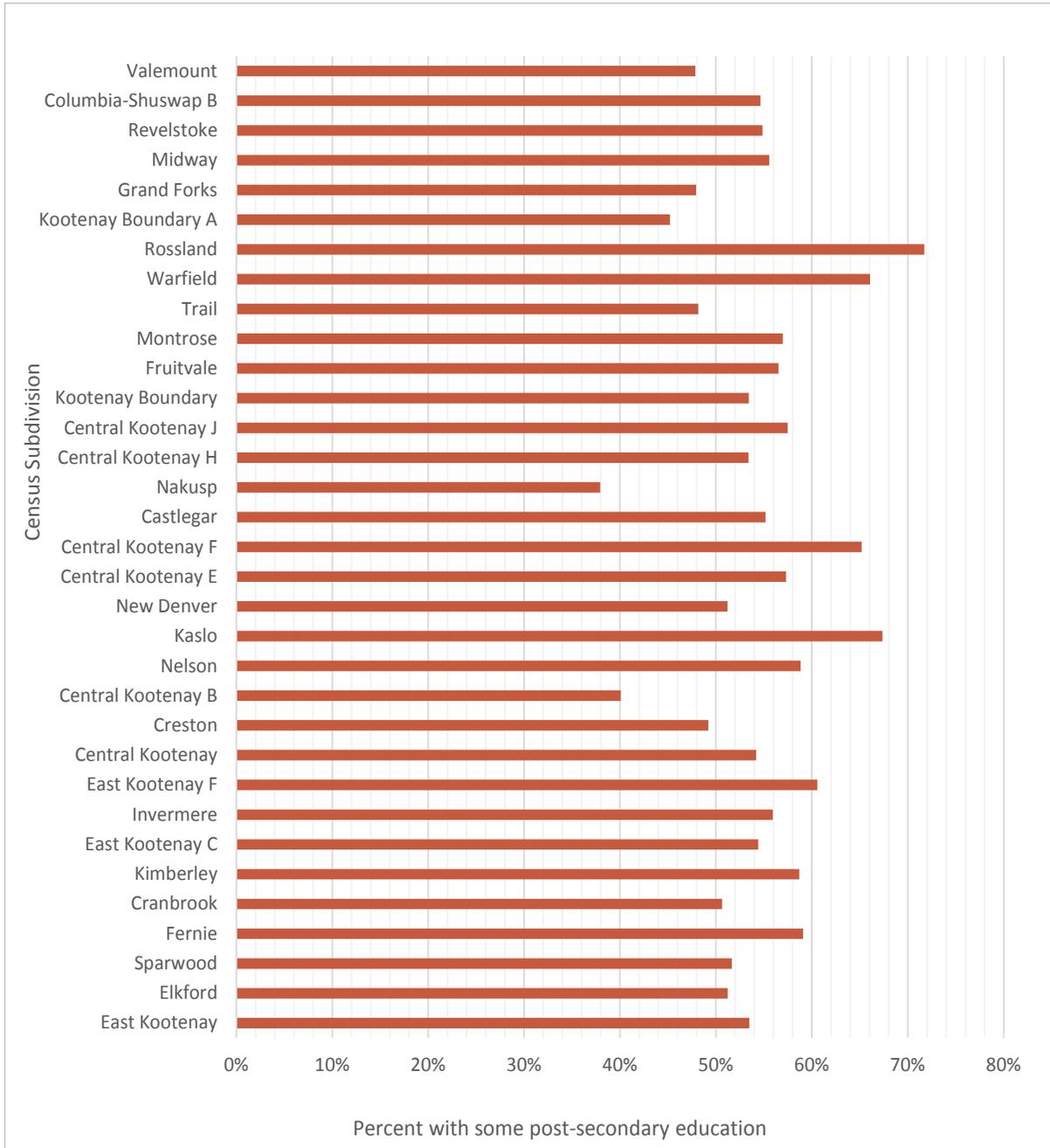


Figure 3: Percent of population with some post-secondary education

ⁱⁱⁱIncludes those with: apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma; college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma; university certificate or diploma below bachelor level; university bachelor's degree; and university certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level.

Several communities have higher percentages of people with no certificate, diploma or degree compared to the region, BC, and Canada, including Nakusp (31.4%), Central Kootenay B (30.1%), Valemount (27.6%), Kootenay Boundary A (25.0%), and New Denver (25.0%).

On the other hand, some communities have higher percentages for education above a bachelor's degree level compared to the regional, BC, and Canadian averages, including Rossland with 8.4%, Fernie with 10.4%, Central Kootenay F with 11.6%, and New Denver with 11.9%. In addition, Fernie (14.1%), Kimberley (12.4%), Invermere (11.4%), Nelson (14.2%), Kaslo (15.6%), East Kootenay F (16.3%), Central Kootenay E (11.6%), Central Kootenay F (20.6%), Central Kootenay H (14.6%), Warfield (10.2%), and Rossland (18.6%) all show figures that are higher than the regional average (9.9%) for the percentage of the population with a university bachelor's degree; many are also higher compared to the BC average (14.0%) and Canada (13.3%).

Visit the RDI's Digital Basin to view a map and detailed tables of [educational attainment](#).³⁰

WORKFORCE EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVELS

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This indicator tracks the percentage of the labour force age 25 to 64 with a post-secondary education (i.e., a certificate, diploma or higher) by Development Region. Data for this indicator were sourced from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS).³¹

Education is a critical element of a region's workforce, and is important to economic growth, alongside other factors, like skills and productivity.³² The level of education achieved is one indicator of a skilled workforce. However, it is also important to note that while educational attainment is one indicator, the quality of education, particularly related to early education (e.g., pre-school and elementary school) is widely recognized as the most effective point of intervention, yielding more benefit than cost.^{33,34} Early childhood education as well as population level educational attainment is discussed in further detail in the Education & Learning Trends Analysis.

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS & CURRENT CONDITIONS?

Analysis of the 2015 LFS data show that nationally 69.8% of the labour force has a post-secondary certificate, diploma, degree, or higher. This is slightly lower in BC (68.4%). The Kootenay Development Region has a higher percentage (69.3%) than the province (see **Figure 4**). While **Figure 4** shows variability between years, the trends for all Development Regions are upward.

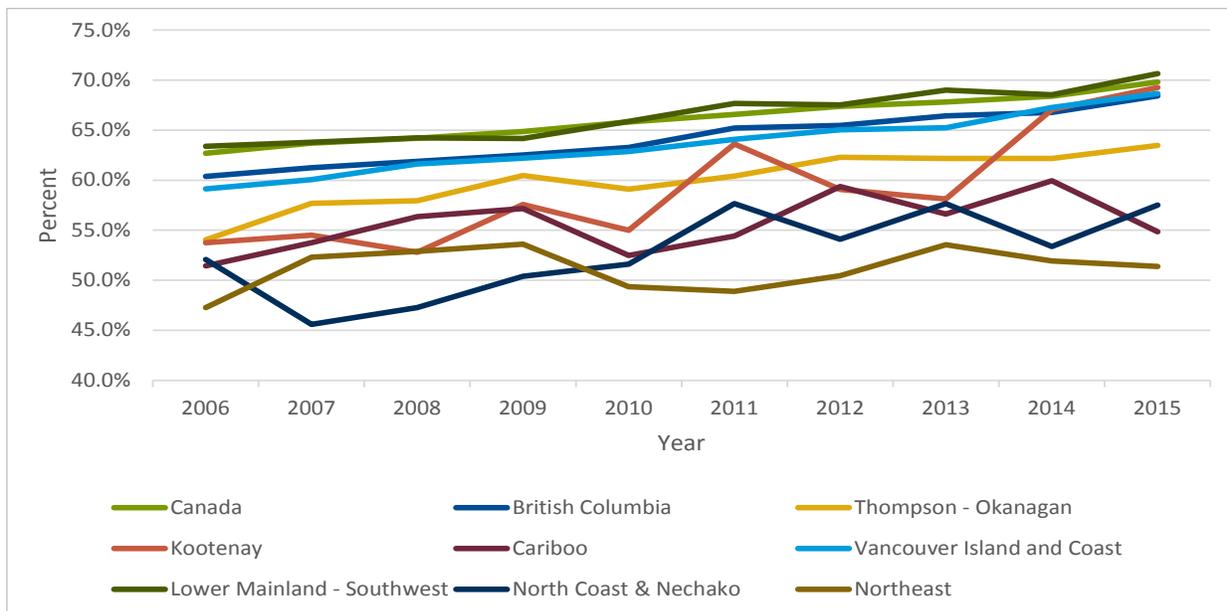


Figure 4: Percent of labour force (age 25-64) with a post-secondary certificate, diploma, degree, or higher (2006 to 2015)³¹

If only university degrees (bachelor or higher) are considered, the differences are more pronounced. The percentage of the Canadian labour force with a university degree is 31.6%, slightly lower than in BC (33%).³¹ However, both the national and provincial numbers are at higher than the 16.1% of the labour force has university degrees found in the Kootenay Development Region.³¹

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The BC Ministry of Education, through its Libraries Branch, publishes annual [Public Library Statistics](#)³⁵, available from 2002 to 2015. There are numerous indicators that provide insight into the state of public libraries, such as circulation, attendance, human resources, and financial resources. RDI sought advice from experts on which particular indicators to report on as a way to begin to paint a picture of the health and capacity of libraries across our region. Other indicators are available through the library statistics.

There are [22 libraries](#)⁵ in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region, most falling within the Kootenay Library Federation. As the Golden and Revelstoke libraries are part of the Okanagan Regional Library, which reports to the province as a regional library system, the Libraries Branch statistics were supplemented with data provided directly from staff at the Okanagan Regional Library.³⁶ Data for the last five years (2011 to 2015), was available and is reported for the indicators described below. In some years, data was missing for some libraries, in which case those years are either not reported on or estimates were used, and these are noted.

Libraries are integral partners in maintaining healthy and vibrant communities.³⁷ Libraries are often a gathering place for residents, where a diversity of programs and services are offered – from toy collections for children, to computer stations or meeting spaces for teens, and seniors’ reading groups.^{38,39} Libraries include both physical and virtual learning environments, and offer literacy development across a range of disciplines. Library statistics are useful for providing an indication of the health and capacity of these facilities in serving the needs and interests of the community.

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS & CURRENT CONDITIONS?

CIRCULATION

There are a number of statistics available to review circulation within libraries. A primary indicator is active cardholders as a percent of population served, along with circulation per capita, and circulation per active cardholder as common and suggested measures.^{40,41}

Figure 5 shows the average active cardholders as a percent of the population served for all 22 libraries in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region. While there is some variation, the annual average has remained between 40% to 44% over the last five years. For 2015, the highest percent of active cardholders relative

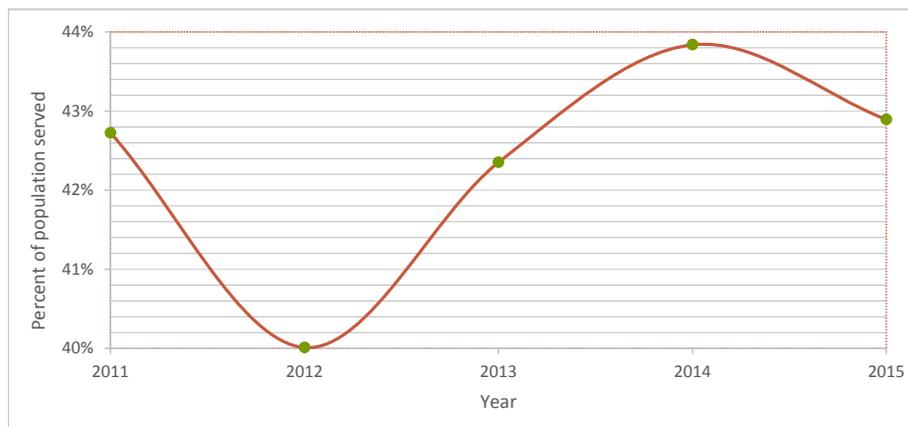


Figure 5: Average active cardholders percent of population served for libraries within the Columbia Basin-Boundary, 2011 to 2015

to the population served were found in Midway and Nelson, both at 62%, and Trail & District at 60%. The Midway and Nelson libraries consistently show the highest percentages of active cardholders from 2011 to 2015, with 74% in Midway for 2012 – the highest in the region.

Lower percentages of active cardholders relative to the population served for 2015 include the libraries of Radium Hot Springs (22%), Beaver Valley (23%), and Sparwood (26%).

Circulation per capita is the total circulation of all materials divided by the service population, and is used as a performance measure.⁴² As shown in **Figure 6**, circulation varies across the libraries, with some of the highest rates of circulation per capita in Midway, Nakusp, and Valemount. The lowest circulation per capita rates occur in the East Kootenay communities of Radium Hot Springs, Elkford, and Sparwood. Some libraries, such as Golden, Valemount, Radium Hot Springs, and Beaver Valley have seen declines in circulation per capita from 2011 to 2015, while others, such as Salmo, Rossland, Kaslo & District, Fernie, and Trail & District have seen increases.

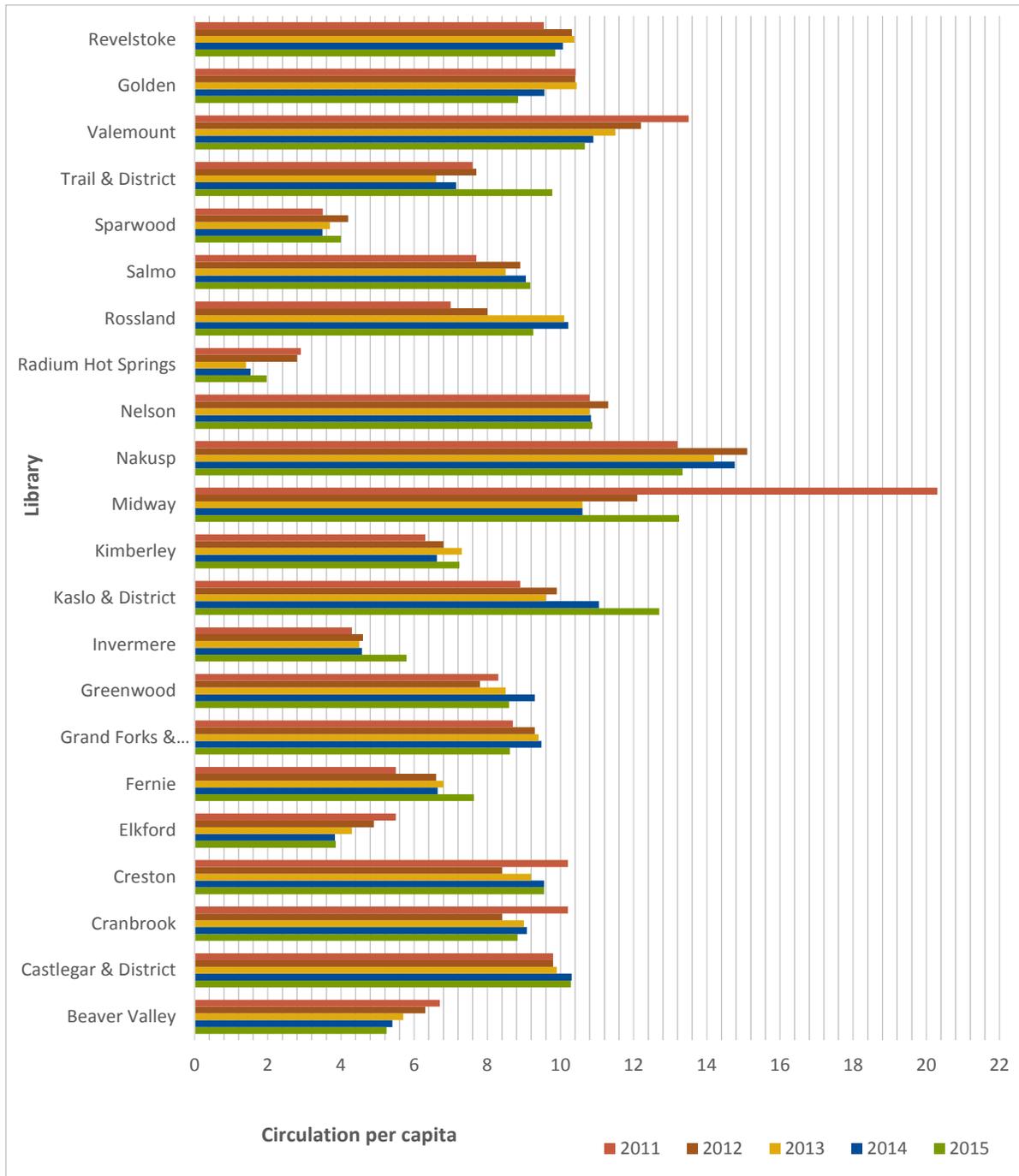


Figure 6: Circulation per capita for libraries within the Columbia Basin-Boundary, 2011 to 2015

In 2015, the provincial average circulation per capita for all public libraries was 9.4. The average for our region was lower at 8.6, but several libraries have above provincial average circulation per capita, including Castlegar & District (10.3), Creston (9.6), Kaslo & District (12.7), Midway (13.2), Nakusp (13.3), Nelson (10.9), Trail & District (9.8), Valemount (10.7), and Revelstoke (9.9).

Circulation per active cardholder is another measure, which is the number of circulations per active cardholder for a given year.⁴² Some of the highest rates of circulation are found in the Beaver Valley, Creston, and Midway libraries, as shown in **Figure 7**. Some of the lowest rates are found in Radium Hot Springs, Fernie, and Elkford. The last five years shows variability in the number of circulations per active cardholder for most libraries, with Valemount and Beaver Valley showing a decline, and libraries such as Salmo, Invermere, and Kaslo & District showing an increase.

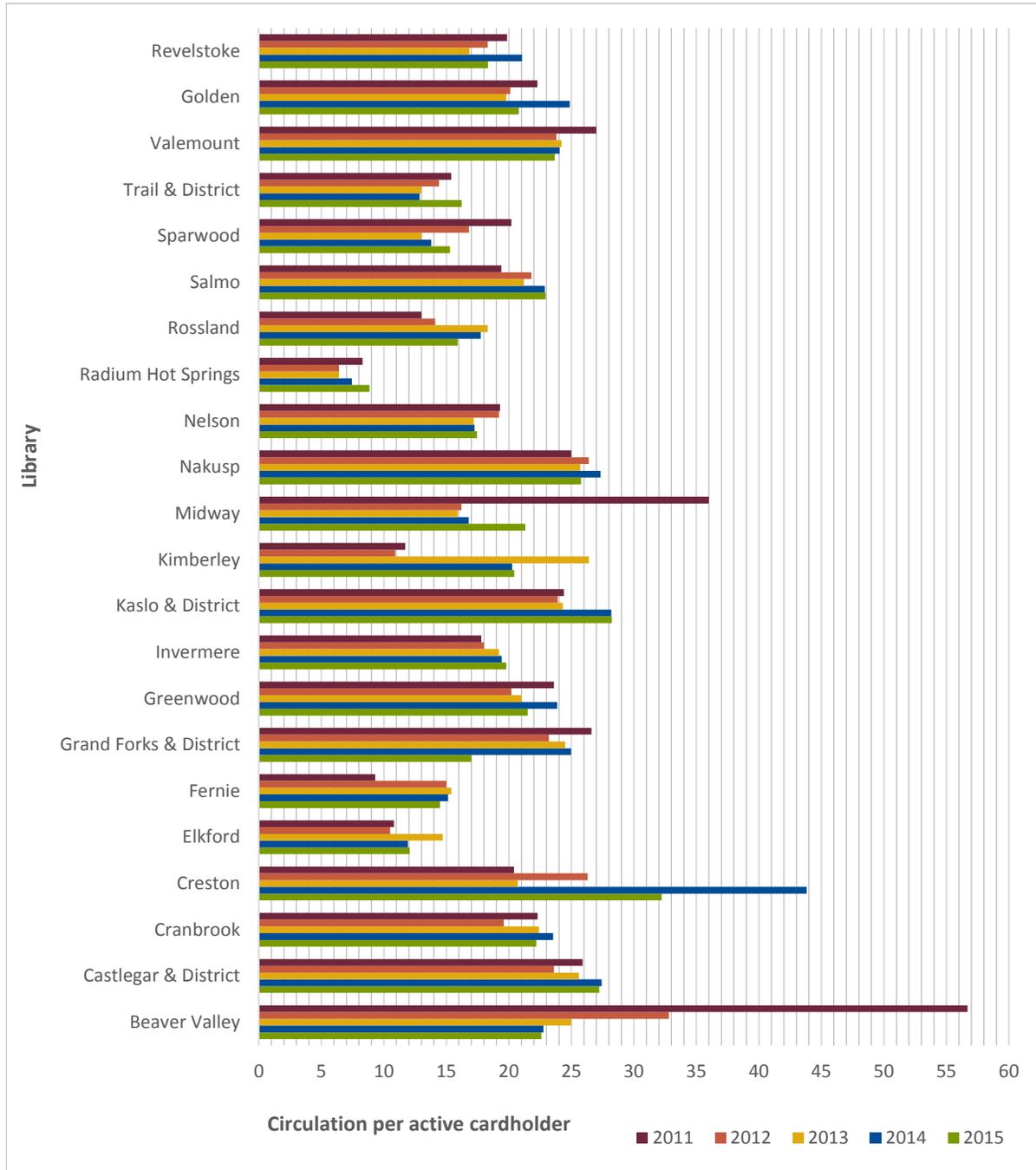


Figure 7: Circulation per active cardholder for libraries within the Columbia Basin-Boundary, 2011 to 2015

In 2015, the provincial average circulation per active cardholder for all public libraries was 21.5. The average for our region was just slightly lower at 20.2. Again, several libraries have above provincial average circulation, including Beaver Valley (22.6), Castlegar & District (27.2), Cranbrook (22.2), Creston (32.2), Kaslo & District (28.2), Nakusp (25.8), Salmo (22.9), and Valemount (23.7).

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is another common and suggested measure, and provides an indication of the participation and engagement of residents in library services and programming.^{40,41} In 2015, there were 1.26 million visits (in-person^{iv} and virtual^v) to the libraries in the Columbia Basin-Boundary. This is an increase from 1.21 million in 2013. The average across all libraries in our region was 57,103 visits in 2015. The highest number of visits in 2015 occurred at the Nelson Library with 174,263 visits and the Cranbrook Library with 163,291 visits. The lowest number of visits in 2015 was in Radium Hot Springs with 4,566 visits.

Figure 8 shows the regional trend for in-person visits from 2011 to 2015.^{vi} As shown, the trend is a slight rise in in-person visits across the region. The libraries of Nelson, Cranbrook, and Castlegar & District consistently show the highest numbers of in-person visits from 2011 to 2015.

The total visits per capita has also increased, from 158 in 2013 to 207 in 2015 for the region, with the highest total visits per capita in 2015 at the Salmo library (37.1) and the lowest total visits per capita at the Elkford library (2.2).

Total program attendance is another indicator, and includes the total adult, young adult, and children program attendance per year. Total program attendance in the region has increased by 40% over the last five years, from 43,817 in 2011 to 73,680 in 2015.

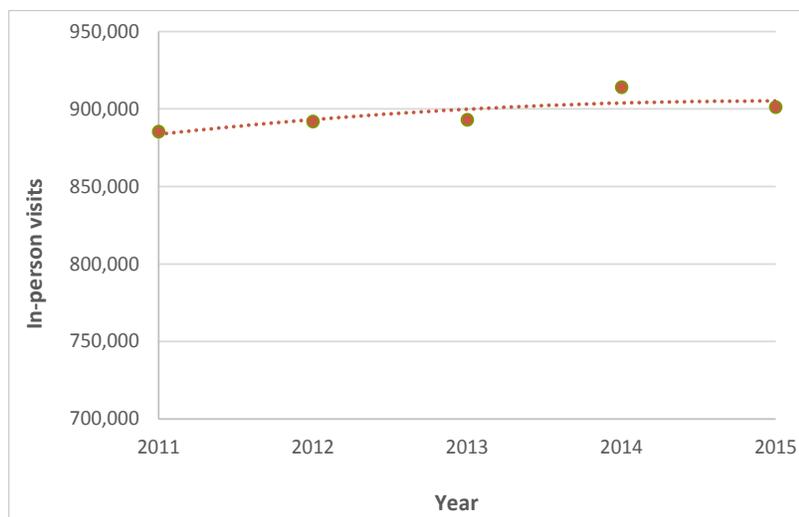


Figure 8: Trend for total in-person visits for all libraries within the Columbia Basin-Boundary, 2011 to 2015

^{iv}**In-person visits** refers to the number of persons entering, for any reason, during the year. Persons are counted each time they enter the service point. Staff are excluded.⁴²

^v**Virtual visits** refers to the total number of visits to a library's website and catalogue. A website visit is defined as a series of page requests from the same computer with a time of no more than 30 minutes between each page request. A visit ends after a 30-minute time delay. If someone leaves a site, then returns within 30 minutes, this will count as one visit.⁴²

^{vi}Note that data was missing for Elkford in 2015, Radium Hot Springs in 2014, Nakusp, Golden, and Revelstoke in 2012, and Creston, Elkford, Golden, and Revelstoke for 2011. Estimates from other years were used to fill these gaps.

The increase in children’s and young adult program attendance has risen almost 56% over the last five years. This regional trend is shown in **Figure 9**. Once again, the largest communities of Nelson, Cranbrook, and Castlegar show the highest attendance numbers, as well as Fernie and Trail. Fernie had the highest attendance across the Columbia Basin-Boundary for 2014 and 2015. In 2015, 56,445 people attended children’s and young adults’ programs in libraries across the region; up from 36,246 in 2011.

Several libraries show large increases in children and young adult program attendance from 2011 to 2015, including Elkford (96% increase), Invermere (100%), Trail & District (106%), Golden (127%), Revelstoke (158%), and Salmo with a 285% increase in attendance for children and young adult programs. A few communities show a decrease over the last five years, including Beaver Valley (-5%), Cranbrook (-13%), Nelson (-21%), and Sparwood (-36%). There are several factors that can contribute to changes in program attendance, from new or different programs being offered within or outside the library, available human and financial resources, and changes in the demographics of communities.

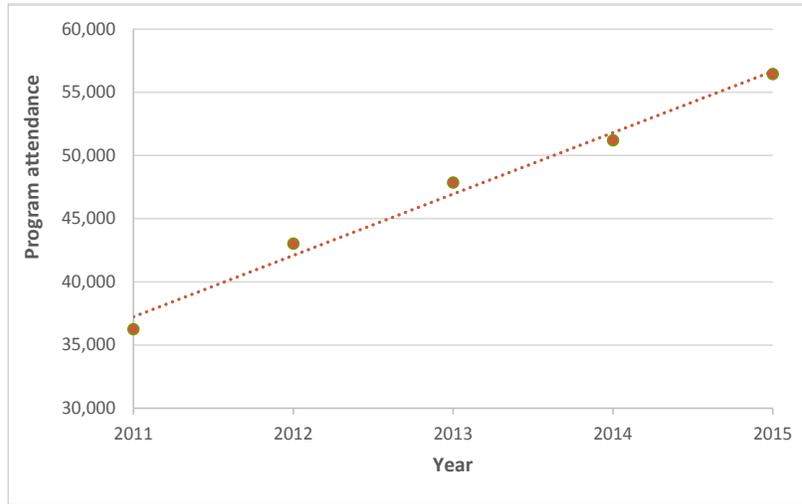


Figure 9: Trend for children and young adult program attendance for all libraries within the Columbia Basin-Boundary, 2011 to 2015

HUMAN RESOURCES

Statistics related to human resources are measures that can be reviewed to provide an indication of organizational capacity. The number of employees and the volunteer hours worked were selected as two indicators to provide some insight into the capacity of our region’s libraries. Directly related to capacity is the average hours open per week, which is also reported.

EMPLOYEES

In 2015, there were 76.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees serving the Columbia Basin-Boundary’s libraries. This number has remained relatively stable over the last five years, with an increase of 1.7 FTE from 2011 to 2015. All 22 libraries report having employees over the last five years. In 2015, the libraries with the highest number of employees include Cranbrook (11 FTE), Nelson (9.4 FTE), and Castlegar & District (6.7). The smallest number of employees is 0.6 FTE, which is found in Greenwood and Radium Hot Springs. The average number of employees for the region is 3.5 FTE for 2015, and has been either 3.5 or 3.4 for the last five years.

A related performance measure is the number of total employee FTEs divided by 1/1000th of the service population. When looking at this measure for 2015, Midway at 1.46 and Valemount at 1.14 show the highest numbers, far above the average of 0.6 for the region.

VOLUNTEERS

Almost all libraries reported volunteer hours for 2015, except Valemount and Golden, which indicated zero volunteer hours over the last five years. Revelstoke also reported minimal volunteer hours, with the highest being 27 volunteer hours for 2011. As noted, both Revelstoke and Golden data was provided directly to RDI by Okanagan Regional Library staff, and with these libraries being part of a regional library system, the board is comprised of elected officials, therefore not typically volunteers. RDI staff followed up with staff at Valemount, and the Chief Librarian confirmed that they do not have volunteers, except on occasion for some summer programming.⁴³

Trail & District reported zero volunteer hours for 2011 to 2013, then no data for 2014, and 250 hours for 2015. RDI staff followed up with this library and learned that while in general there are no volunteers for programming, board members volunteer at meetings and provide some home delivery service to seniors. There is also a 'Friends of the Library' where volunteers contribute their time. These hours had not been included until 2015. The Trail & District Library Director also noted that 2014 data should be estimated at 1,000 hours as there was volunteer work associated with lobbying for a referendum for a new building, which was passed.⁴⁴ The data for Radium Hot Springs showed 3,500 hours each year from 2011 to 2013, then zero for 2014, then 7,642 for 2015. RDI staff also followed up with staff at this library to learn that more accurate estimates of volunteer hours are 900 hours per year, including volunteers and additional volunteer time spent by staff.⁴⁵

The follow up conversations with individual libraries highlight how staff and/or volunteers who complete the data entry may be taking different approaches, and that with volunteer hours in particular, these numbers may be under or over reported. Some libraries may have tracking systems, while others provide estimations. Some may have included the time contributed by board members, while some may not.

Taking these numbers with caution, **Figure 10** shows the total volunteer hours worked within the region as a whole over the last five years. This data indicates a decrease over time of volunteer hours contributed.

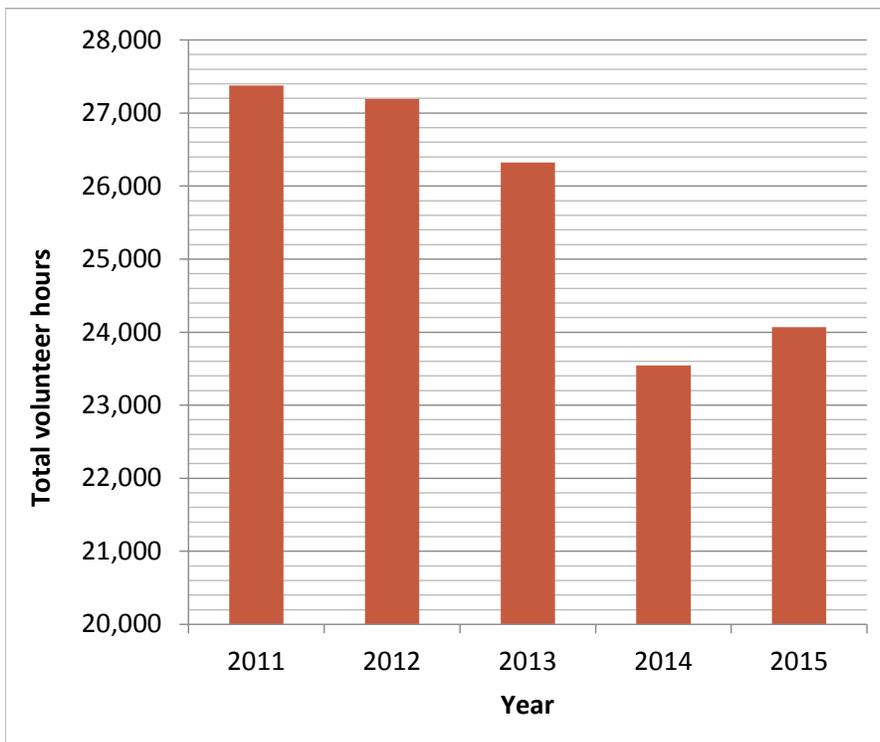


Figure 10: Total volunteer hours worked for Columbia Basin-Boundary libraries, 2011 to 2015

When looking at the average volunteer hours over the past five years by library, the highest average is Castlegar & District with an average of 6,363 volunteer hours per year. Midway is the next highest at 3,135 volunteer hours on average. Midway, however, has seen a considerable decrease in volunteer hours over the last five years, from 4,592 hours in 2011 to 900 hours in 2015. Creston, Fernie, and Grand Forks & District also have high averages at between 2,000 to 2,500 volunteer hours per year. Kaslo & District

and Salmo indicate over 1,000 volunteer hours per year on average. About half of the libraries show an overall increase in volunteer hours from 2011 to 2015 while the other half show a decrease. The number of volunteer hours worked can depend on several factors, from the availability and interest of volunteers within the community, to certain years having larger projects or campaigns that may show large fluctuation. As noted, volunteer hours also depend on what is included, or not, in each library's reporting, and the challenge in accurately tracking these hours.

AVERAGE HOURS OPEN PER WEEK

On average, libraries in our region are open 38 hours per week for 2015. This average has remained roughly the same over the last five years. **Figure 11** shows the average hours open per week for 2015 for all libraries in the Columbia Basin-Boundary. Several libraries, however, have seen a decrease in average hours open per week between 2011 and 2015, with Rossland showing the largest decrease in hours at -20%, followed by Midway at -16%. Grand Forks & District (-6%), Greenwood (-8.5%), and Radium Hot Springs (-8.2%) also show decreases in average hours open per week. Cranbrook shows the highest increase in average hours open per week at 17.7%, followed by Trail & District with a 14.7% increase. Nakusp (10%), Kaslo & District (8.3%), and Creston (7.8%) have also seen increases in average hours open per week from 2011 to 2015.

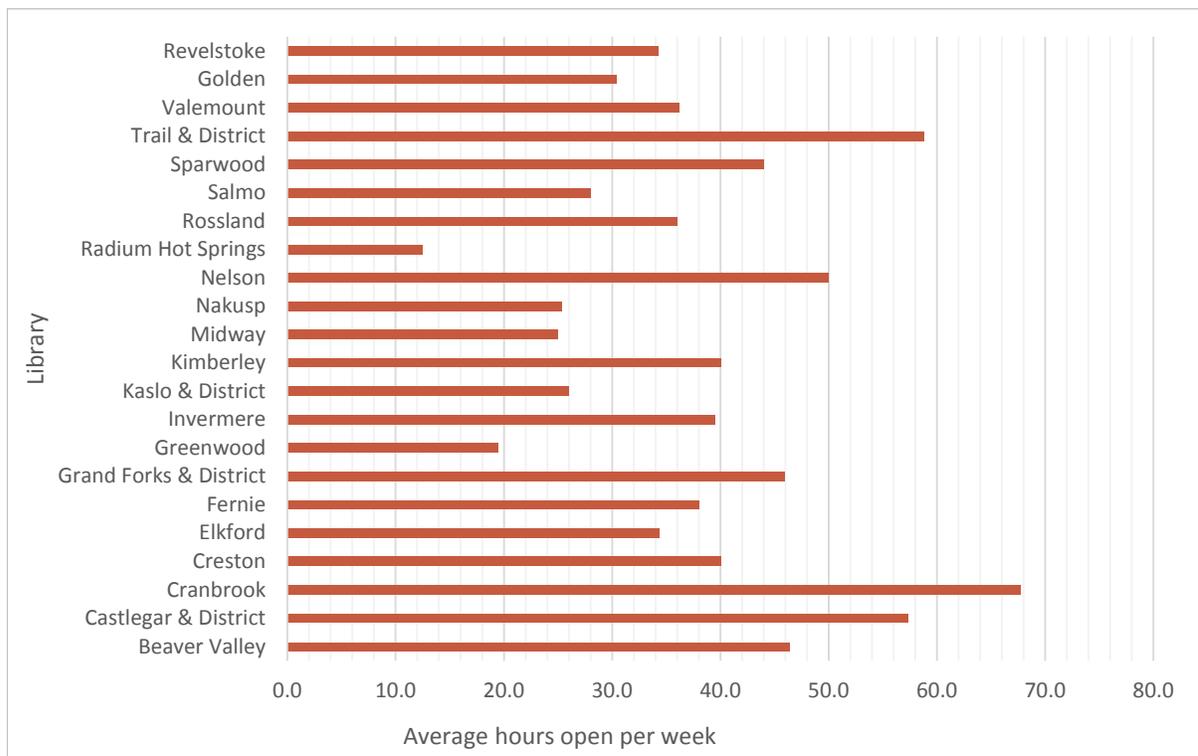


Figure 11: Average hours open per week for libraries in the Columbia Basin-Boundary, 2015

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Financial resources are an important indicator of capacity, and can have considerable influence on the above described indicators. In 2015, the provincial government provided a total of \$830,520 to libraries in our region, up 2.6% from \$809,207 in 2011. While the provincial government does provide funding through library grants each year, libraries are primarily funded by local governments.⁴⁶



Total local government support in our region has increased by about 8.4% over the last five years, now at \$5.1 million in 2015. The median local government amount for 2015 is \$186,661 with a range from \$10,800 (Greenwood) to \$703,155 (Cranbrook). **Figure 12** shows the support per capita for the region using the median value of all 22 libraries. As shown, the per capita support has increased over the last five years, from \$30 in 2011 to \$35 in 2015.

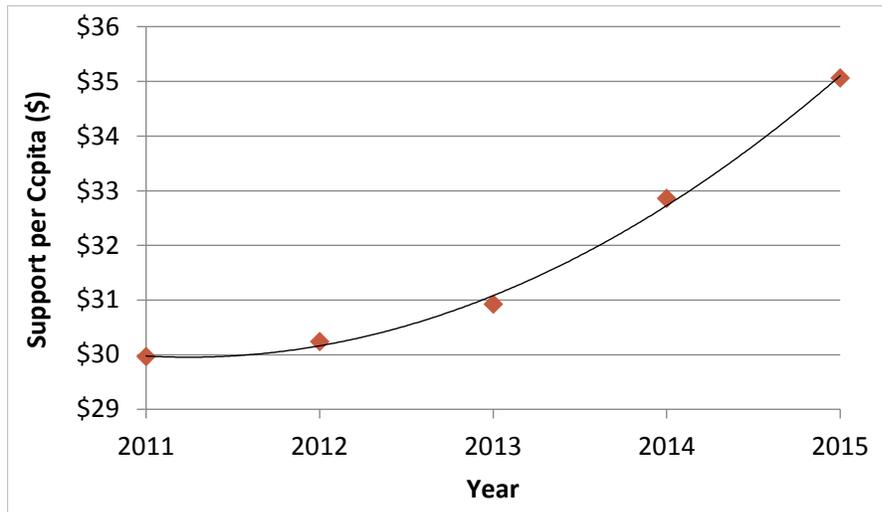


Figure 12: Local government support per capita for all libraries in Columbia Basin-Boundary region

Figure 13 shows the per capita support by the local government for each of the libraries in the Columbia Basin-Boundary for 2011 to 2015.^{vii} The per capita support is consistently the highest for Valemount, while Greenwood shows the lowest per capita support over time. As noted, local government support has generally increased for most communities, with show minor decreases and fluctuations over the years.

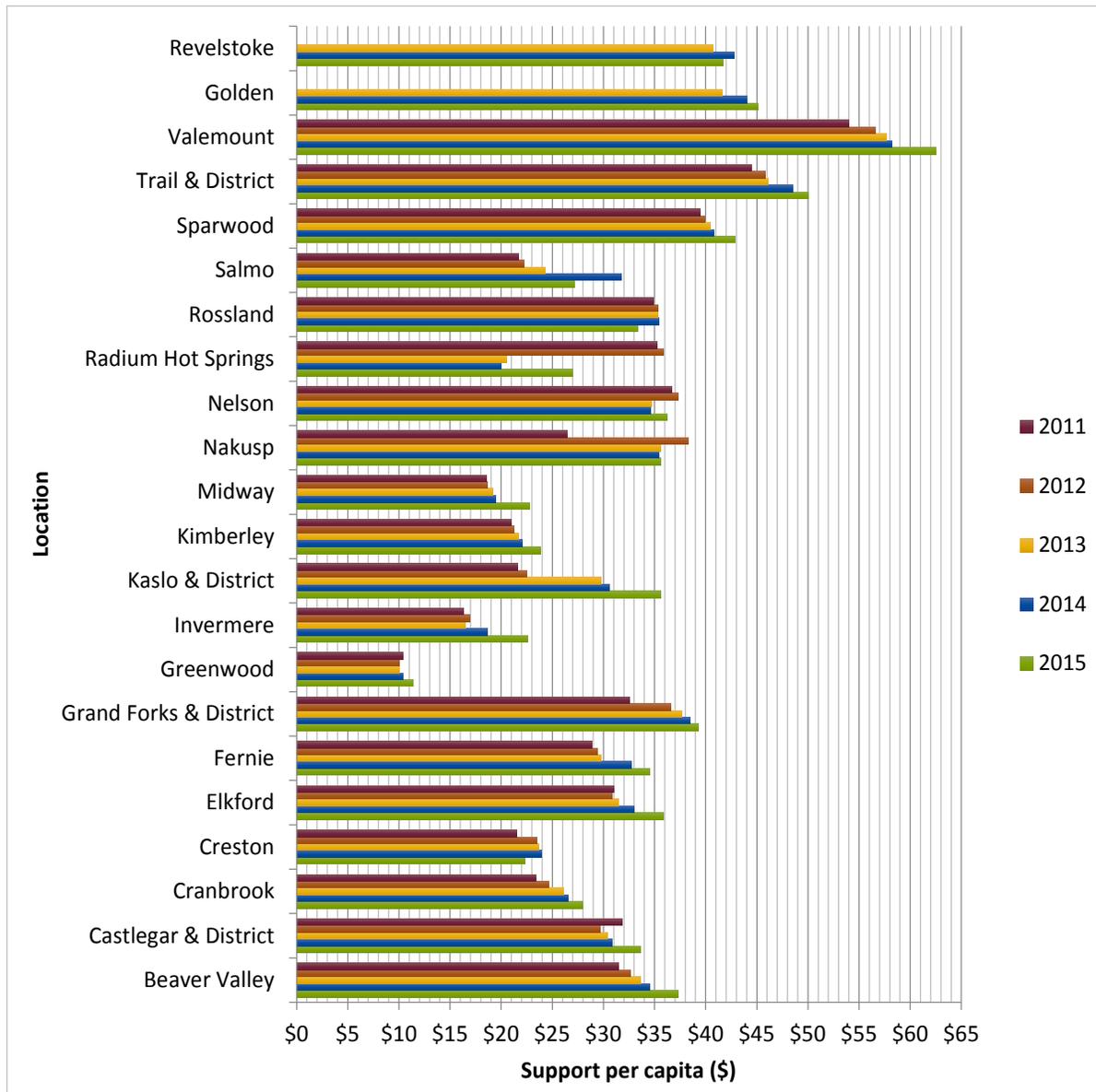


Figure 13: Local government support per capita by library, 2011 to 2015

In addition to provincial and local government support, libraries have other revenue sources, including federal, provincial, and other project grants, library generated revenue, donations and fundraising, and other miscellaneous revenue. In 2015, the libraries in our region reported a total other revenue of \$916,803.^{viii} The average of total other revenue per library over the years is between \$39,000 and \$46,000. One of the highest values was in 2012 in Nakusp, which reported total other revenue of \$168,745. 2011 also shows an above normal other revenue compared to the other years. RDI staff followed up with staff at the Nakusp Library who indicated that they received an estate donation which spanned those two years.⁴⁷ Nelson shows

^{vii}Note that data for Golden and Revelstoke was not available for 2011 and 2012.

^{viii}Data for Golden and Revelstoke was not available.

a consistently high total other revenue, always over \$100,000 per year. Cranbrook also reports some of the highest total other revenues from \$87,000 to \$104,000. Invermere and Kaslo & District saw higher than normal values in 2015 compared to the previous four years, indicating that they too may have received large donations or project grant funding.

SUMMARY

Many of the education and learning indicators suggests a positive situation for our region. Most school districts in our region show a lower than provincial average percentage of vulnerable children, with some districts having the lowest EDI scores in the province. We also see above average high school completion rates for several districts, with some showing exceptionally high rates. Our class sizes are generally smaller, allowing for a richer student experience. While student enrolment in our public schools has been on the decline, this is the trend across the province, and not unique to our region.

Key to the success of public libraries, total local government support in our region has increased over the last five years, and some libraries have been fortunate to receive considerable donations or project grants. Visits to libraries has increased over the last five years, and to a large extent in several communities with respect to attendance of children and young adult programs. As dynamic community-based facilities, libraries will continue to respond to community needs and interests, envisioning and evolving their role.^{37,48}

The educational attainment levels in our region is varied, with just over half of residents having some post-secondary education, and almost one in five having no certificate, diploma, or degree. While some communities do have higher levels of education achieved, others do not. With four different colleges serving the region, there are opportunities for residents to further their formal education and training.

The quantitative measures in this report do not provide a full understanding of education and learning in our region, but rather provide a starting point for investigation. There is substantially more information and insight that could be provided, particularly with further qualitative research to help understand changes over time and differences among our unique communities.

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External Review:

Pat Dooley, Co-Chair for Rural Education Advisory Committee and retired Superintendent

Joanne Richards, retired Director, Kootenay Library Federation

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The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, at Selkirk College, is a regional research centre with a mandate to support informed decision-making by Columbia Basin-Boundary communities through the provision of information, applied research and related outreach and extension support. Visit www.cbrdi.ca for more information.