When finished with this form, please email your completed document to Meg Allison (mallison@u32.org) or Karen McCalla (kmccalla@millriverschools.org)

**Working Group on the Status of Vermont Libraries
Testimony on Collections in School Libraries**

Library Name: Ruth B. Winton Memorial Library

School Name: Colchester High School

Town or towns served: Colchester (some students also from the sending towns of Georgia and the Champlain Islands)

Person submitting this testimony and your job title: Frances Binder, School Librarian

Would you be willing to offer in-person testimony and answer questions during the public hearing on January 14, 2022? If you answer yes, we'll be in touch with more details. If you'd rather not testify in person, we will submit your testimony in written form for the Working Group members to read, and your written testimony will also be included as a part of the public record.   YES _____X*_____   NO_____

Collection size (number of volumes):   A little over 8,200 titles in house with access to some 4,000 digital titles through the Vermont Schools Shared Digital Collection.

Number of students at your school: Just over 700

Please share any other statistics about your collection that might be helpful to the working group. Some examples could include the percentage of fiction versus nonfiction in your collection, the numbers of items you circulate per month or per school year, or anything else that helps us get insight into your collection and its use in your school.

Our collection consists of about 40% fiction titles, 33% nonfiction, and the remainder of the collection is comprised of our professional collection,videos, audio, biographies/memoirs, story collections, graphic novels, and a few other small special collections. We do a brisk business in interlibrary loans as well through Vermont's CLOVER system. The average age of our fiction is about 10 years, and the average age for our nonfiction collection is about 18 years.

What are the strengths of your current collection?

Some strengths of our current collection are:

- Recent large-scale/wide-lens and ongoing EDIS audit of our fiction collection which has greatly improved the diversity of authors and stories represented in this collection
- Ongoing efforts to improve and expand our digital offerings (Swank K-12 movie streaming, additional databases purchased outside of the VOL collections, digital audio devices, e-books purchased)
- Adequate staffing in our library allows for regular and routine selection and deselection processes as well as regular EDIS auditing
- Adequate budget allows for adequate book ordering capabilities

What are the weaknesses of your current collection?

- The collection is pretty dated, particularly the non-fiction collection - a large deselection process was completed in the last school year and we are now working to update the collection a bit at a time
- The non-fiction collection is also in need of an EDIS audit - this is in progress as well

Do you participate in resource sharing and interlibrary loan, either through Clover, between libraries in your school district, with your local public libraries, or through other resource sharing programs? Tell us about how resource sharing works for you and your students.

We are active in CLOVER (Vermont's ILL system) both as borrowers and lenders. We find that the ILL system works quite well for us (barring pandemic-related delays these past couple of years). Our one big wish with the ILL system would be that schools could participate in the courier service. Currently we are only able to lend and borrow through the postal service which means that some libraries won't lend to us (if they only lend through the courier service). It also means that in order to borrow books from our local library, I or my library assistant must make trips on our own time to pick books up and return them. While we do this willingly (anything to get books in our students' hands) this does represent a real cost in terms of personnel time and resources.

Do you offer any special collections at your library? These could be a specific collection designed to support targeted learning programs at your school, a Vermont or local history collection, or other groupings designed to serve specific needs. Please tell us about these collections and the populations they serve.

We have a collection of playaways as well as a small collection of mp3 players which I use to upload specific titles from Libro.fm. These collections primarily serve students who may have various reading and/or learning challenges and need to access texts in a different way. I work to create a collection of audiobooks which offers a mix of popular titles as well as titles which are

often assigned in classes. I have also collaborated with our Humanities department to ensure that books they use for group reads are available in a variety of formats for their students.

Do you offer ebooks and audiobooks in your collection? If so, how do you provide access to them? Through the Shared Schools Collection (Overdrive), Vermont Online Library, through another vendor, through direct access from your catalog, through physical devices such as Kindles or Playaways, or some other method? Are you happy with the balance of ebooks, audiobooks and print books in your collection?

In addition to the audiobooks mentioned above, we also offer access to many digital audiobooks and e-books through the Vermont Schools Shared Digital Collection on OverDrive/Sora). Our students tend to prefer print materials when possible so though I offer these when our print copies of popular titles are out for instance, students will often request an ILL before going to the e-version. These digital collections are primarily used by students when they are assigned to them, and some students used these collections during remote and hybrid learning. We offer access to e-, audio, and enhanced e-readers through TumbleBooks as well. These titles do see some use through our special education department.

Do you catalog and circulate things besides books in your library? Some examples could include games and puzzles, maps and globes, learning tools or other physical items.

We used to circulate some digital cameras, microphones, and A/V equipment, but these items are now all housed and circulated by our IT department. We do have some board and card games which students borrow as well as art/craft supplies, but these are not formally circulated. We also loan headphones, but again these are not cataloged or formally circulated.

What else would you like the working group to know about your school library collection? How has your collection changed over time? What changes do you hope to make in the future? What are the biggest challenges you anticipate, and how do you plan to solve them?

We continue to assess our collections for diversity, inclusivity, and representation. We strive to provide students with the fullest range of stories and voices possible. I've only been in this position since the 2019-20 year…so I have yet to experience what we might once have considered a "normal" school year here, therefore it's a bit hard for me to say what has changed in our collection over time, but I can say that our biggest goal (and also probably one of our biggest challenges - in a good way) is to work to be consistently aware and responsive to the changing technologies and resources available to our students, and to continue to seek out student input and teacher input to discover how we can use our resources and expertise to best

serve our students. I think one of the other big challenges for school libraries, always, is figuring out how to strike the right balance between educational support, research support, and just plain nurturing a love of reading for fun. Our multiple roles as school librarians (the ALA names these as: instructional partner, teacher, leader, information specialist, and program administrator) require large amounts of ingenuity and flexibility from all of us. Additionally, we must be tireless advocates for our programs as we work to shift the perception of libraries as "extra" to libraries as ESSENTIAL parts of our students' growth and learning experiences. In my experience this continues to be one of the biggest ongoing challenges that school librarians and library programs face. Meeting these challenges, for me at least, means engaging in conversations with other school librarians, idea and resource sharing widely with colleagues across the state and farther afield, reading and learning independently, working to build and deepen relationships with colleagues in my school and district, and seeking out ever more opportunities for professional development and growth.