PRESS RELEASE

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National Survey of School District Library Supervisors to Launch in October

COLLEGE PARK, Md., September 19, 2012 – The first national survey since 1970 to dig deep into the roles and responsibilities of school district library supervisors will launch on October 10. Effective school library programs depend on leadership, and a University of Maryland research team will survey the 300 individuals that supervise library and information services in the largest school districts in the country and the largest school district in each state. This national workforce study, known as The Lilead Project and funded by the Institute of Museum and Library services (IMLS), will collect baseline data about the demographics, education, responsibilities, influence, and challenges of library supervisors in PK-12 school districts.

“We believe that the district library supervisor has significant impact on the quality of services and programs for students in primary and secondary schools,” said Ann Carlson Weeks, Ph.D., the project’s lead researcher. “However, there is virtually no empirical data that support this belief.” Until baseline data are available, little research is possible to investigate more complex issues. We are currently reaching out to the districts in our survey population and asking for their participation in this important study.

The researchers also have created an online community called the Lilead Network, a space for district library supervisors to connect with and learn from other school library professionals. It is a destination to share best and promising practices and offer peer guidance on how to support school librarians and advocate for school library programs. The goal is to encourage communication and collaboration among professionals. All district library supervisors, whether or not they are part of the survey, are invited to join the community at http://www.lilead.org.

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About The Lilead Project: The Lilead Project is a three-year-study directed by a team of researchers from the Information Policy & Access Center (iPAC) at the University of Maryland’s College of Information Studies and is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). It aims to uncover and report on the roles, responsibilities, and impact of school district library supervisors. More information regarding The Lilead Project is available at http://bit.ly/lileadproject.

About iPAC: iPAC conducts research on the processes, practices, policies, and social issues that govern access to information in our increasingly digital information society. In particular, iPAC research focuses on policies and/or technologies that lead to equitable and inclusive information access, a digitally literate population, an informed and engaged public, or access to Internet-enabled resources and technologies. More information regarding iPAC is available at http://ipac.umd.edu.