



NCLIS

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News Release

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For Immediate Release

NCLIS Support for State Certified School Librarians

Washington, DC USA July 02, 2007 --- Beth Fitzsimmons, Chairman of the U. S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) has announced that the Commission discussed the reauthorization of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. During the Commission meeting, held June 4-5, 2007 in Washington, D.C., the Commission addressed the clear link between school library media programs and student achievement.

“As we search for ways to improve the academic achievement of our nation’s children, we must understand the fundamental contribution school libraries make to student learning outcomes,” Dr. Fitzsimmons said.

“Based on analysis from the first year funding for the *Improving Literacy through School Library Programs* of NCLB, the program has been remarkably successful,” she said. “95% of local education agencies have reported increases in their reading scores and according to the Department of Education’s November 2005 evaluations, found it has also been successful in improving the quality of school libraries.”

“From our perspective,” she continued, “a critical part of the comprehensive and renewed strategy to ensure that students learn to read and are effective users of information and ideas, is the requirement that every school have a school library and that school libraries be staffed by highly qualified, state certified school library media specialists.”

“We have informed the President and Congress of the Commission’s Resolution advising them to provide adequate resources in the *No Child Left Behind Act* reauthorization supporting this need.”

Chairman Fitzsimmons said the Commission was heartened by the bi-partisan legislation introduced in the House and Senate on June 27, 2007. “The *SKILLS Act* (Strengthening Kid’s Interest in Learning & Libraries), sponsored by Senators Jack Reed and Thad

Cochran and Representatives Raul Grijalva and Vernon Ehlers, was an essential step in ensuring that students across this country have the resources and support they need.”

The *SKILLS Act* reauthorizes and strengthens the *Improving Literacy through School Library Programs* of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

In addressing these critical library resources, Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that Representative Grijalva’s remarks introducing the legislation clearly articulated the need. He stated, “school libraries often serve as a second classroom” and “our children are losing out on qualified professionals trained to collaborate with teachers and engage students meaningfully with information that matters to them both in the classroom and the real world.”

At the NCLIS meeting in June, the following resolution was approved by the Commission:

Need for State Certified School Library Media Specialists

Whereas, in 2001, with strong bipartisan support, the nation embarked on an ambitious school reform plan entitled the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), requiring states to set high standards for all students and holds schools accountable for the results; and

Whereas, NCLB requires that there be a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom resulting in significant changes in how teachers are hired and retained as well as how professional development is provided; and

Whereas, Section 1119 of NCLB outlines the minimum qualifications needed by teachers and paraprofessionals who work in any facet of classroom instruction and requires that states develop plans to achieve the goal that all teachers of core academic subjects be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year; and

Whereas, the more than 62,000 state certified school library media specialists in public schools and 3,909 state certified school library media specialists in private schools in the United States fill multiple roles in K-12 schools – teacher, instructional partner, information specialist, and program administrator – ensuring that students and staff are effective users of information and ideas; and

Whereas, multiple studies have affirmed a clear link between school library media programs and student achievement when those libraries are staffed by an experienced school library media specialist; and

Whereas, The Improving Literacy Through School Library program of NCLB (Title I, Part B, Subpart 4, Sec. 1251) is designed to improve student literacy skills and academic achievement by providing schools with up-to-date library materials, including well-equipped, technologically advanced school library media centers, and to ensure that

school library media centers are staffed by state certified school library media specialists;
and

Whereas, based on analysis from the first year of funding for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program, 95 percent of local education agencies have reported increases in their reading scores and The Department of Education's November 2005 evaluation of the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program found it has been successful in improving the quality of school libraries; and

Whereas, to be a critical part of a comprehensive and renewed strategy to ensure that students learn to read every school library should be staffed by a highly qualified, state certified school library media specialist and every school should have a school library;
and

Whereas, 2007 reauthorization of the *No Child Left Behind Act* is currently being considered by Congress:
Now, be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), respectfully advises the Congress that:

- schools be provided with adequate resources to provide up-to-date print and non-print materials in all school library/media centers
- school library media specialists be added to the "highly qualified" classification, and
- every school library be staffed by a highly qualified, state certified school library media specialist.

ABOUT NCLIS

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is a permanent, independent agency of the Federal government charged by Public Law 91-345 to advise the President and Congress on national and international library and information policies, to appraise and assess the adequacies and deficiencies of library and information resources and services, and to develop overall plans for meeting national library and information needs.