



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND



Improving Achievement Through School Libraries

July 2006

"One of the cornerstones of No Child Left Behind is teaching children to read. School libraries play a critical role by providing children with books and resources so that they can improve their reading skills and achieve at high levels."

– Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings

Reading is the key to achieving, and full grade-level proficiency in reading by 2014 is the goal of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. Achieving this goal calls for school libraries that are modern, technologically accessible and filled with up-to-date books and reading materials. "Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers," said First Lady Laura Bush, a former librarian. "Once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open."

NCLB's Improving Literacy Through School Libraries (LSL) grant program provides funds through NCLB to help schools improve their library media and address the reading challenges of their students. This year (FY 2006) the U.S. Department of Education awarded 78 LSL grants in 26 states and the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, ~~\$19~~18.9 million in all. This will bring the total number of grants awarded under President Bush to more than 420, for a total of \$82.7 million.

The LSL grants may be used to:

- Increase library holdings;
- Improve schools' technological resources and capabilities;
- Facilitate Internet links and other resource-sharing networks;
- Enhance the professional development of school library media specialists; and
- Expand hours of student access to library services.

LSL GRANTS ARE WORKING

Studies show that the grants are working. According to a report that surveyed 400 schools that received grant funding in 2003-04, grant recipients:

- Doubled their school library funding on average;
- Invested more than two-thirds of the funds (68%) on new print resources and materials;
- Invested in new computer hardware (11%) and additional staff (11%);
- Acquired approximately 500 more books on average than non-grant recipients; and
- Increased operational hours and student access to libraries.

Call 1(888) 814-6252 or visit www.nclb.gov for more information on No Child Left Behind.

LSL grants have also enabled schools to improve cooperation and coordination between library professionals, teachers and principals on curriculum issues, according to Teacher Librarian magazine (April 2006). This will enable more educators to address their students' diverse literacy and reading challenges.

To access the Department's report, "Improving Literacy Through School Libraries Evaluation Final Report," log onto www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/libraries/intro.html

HELPING UNDERPRIVILEGED STUDENTS

LSL grants are specifically targeted to help underprivileged children. Only school districts and eligible public charter schools in which at least 20 percent of students are from families with incomes below the poverty line are eligible to apply. Research shows that students from low-income families are less likely than their peers to:

- Read at grade-level proficiency;
- Be taught by a highly qualified and certified teacher; and
- Have access to technology in the home or in schools as an enhancement to learning.

TARGETING TECHNOLOGY

In the highly competitive Information Age, school libraries can provide access to the resources and services students need to succeed. This is particularly important when serving children who have limited access at home to computers and the Internet. School library media centers can contribute to improved student achievement by:

- Providing up-to-date instructional materials aligned with the curriculum and instructional practices;
- Collaborating with and supporting teachers, administrators, and parents; and
- Extending their hours of operation beyond the school day and in the summer months.

QUALIFYING FOR LSL GRANTS

Districts that applied to the U.S. Department of Education before April 11, 2006 may qualify for the next round of grants (FY 2007), worth approximately \$19 million.

- Grants may be awarded to districts in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and set-aside grants are available for the American Territories and schools served by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- Applications for LSL funding are reviewed by professional librarians, teachers, school administrators, and other individuals with experience in the social sciences.
- Grantees may form partnerships with local public libraries and universities, but grants will go exclusively to qualified public school districts.

OTHER LIBRARY AND READING SUPPORT

The President's FY 2007 budget proposal supports:

- **High School Reform Initiative (\$1.475 billion)**—This initiative would hold high schools accountable for providing a high-quality education to all students by employing the successful principles of *NCLB*. The Initiative would help educators develop targeted intervention programs to improve the performance of students at risk of failing to meet state academic standards.
- **Striving Readers program (\$100 million)**—First funded in 2005, Striving Readers would be expanded significantly to reach more secondary students struggling to meet grade level requirements in reading and in

danger of dropping out of school. Funds would enable schools to create activities and programs to improve the quality of literacy instruction across the entire curriculum;

- The Institute of Museum and Libraries (\$262.24 million—a \$15 million increase); and
- The Library Services and Technology Act (\$220.85—a \$10.2 million increase).