



NCLIS

U.S. National Commission on
Libraries and Information Science

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President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As we search for ways to improve the academic achievement of our nation's children, we must understand the fundamental contributions school libraries make to student learning outcomes. Extensive research has demonstrated that students in schools with well-equipped library media centers staffed by professional library media specialists perform better on assessments of reading comprehension and basic research skills.

School libraries contribute to learning in two areas. First, when school librarians collaborate with classroom teachers to enrich the curriculum content, they help to create more authentic learning experiences. School librarians are the instructional backbone behind teaching 21st century learning skills (the ability to be discerning users of information and technology), as well as helping students' critical thinking skills. These information skills go beyond learning to read; they foster *reading to learn*.

Second, school library collections inform, educate, entertain and enrich students at all levels. They provide additional sources appropriate for a broad range of interests and reading levels. When children are able to read stories and explore information that is meaningful and appealing to them, they not only learn faster but their literacy skills grow rapidly; they *learn how to learn*.

Virtually all of this country's well-performing schools include libraries that serve as their intellectual hubs. When children are exposed regularly to books and electronic resources that provoke wonder and inquiry, when they are taught how to be avid 21st century learners and information explorers, meaningful transformations take place. Nevertheless, funding for library staff and materials is being cut drastically in districts in many states, and children are being left behind. Our youngest and most vulnerable constituents are not being given the necessary tools to succeed in tomorrow's information society and compete in the changing global economy.

“School Libraries Work!” summarizes these arguments in a brief, readable publication you may find of value. The publisher provided copies to NCLIS at no cost. The full extent of the Commission's involvement in this publication is the cost incurred for disseminating the free copies to individuals and organizations of our choosing for the purpose of furthering the Commission's mission. The contents of the publication do not necessarily represent NCLIS policy, and no official endorsement by NCLIS of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned in this publication or on Web sites referred to in the Publication is intended or should be inferred.

Please contact us if you would like further information or to learn more about school libraries in your own district.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Beth Fitzsimmons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "C" and "F".

C. Beth Fitzsimmons, Ph.D.
Chairman

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The U.S. National Commission is an independent government agencies created in 1970 to advise the President and Congress on the library and information needs of our nation's citizens.