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*The Idaho Commission for Libraries assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their clientele.*

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Idaho Elementary Schools Receive Funds to Help Better Serve Their Youngest**

*47 school libraries will help their pre-k through 1<sup>st</sup> grade students become more proficient readers with mini-grants from Idaho Commission for Libraries to increase access to quality reading materials*

Boise, Idaho—Elementary school libraries play a vital role in ensuring that children develop strong literacy skills, starting in the earliest grades. Unfortunately, many Idaho elementary schools haven't had the resources to allow children in developmental preschool programs, kindergarten, and even first grade to check out books to take home. "Research shows that the best way to improve a child's reading skills is to provide convenient access to reading materials," said State Librarian Ann Joslin. "Providing access to hundreds of age-appropriate quality books through school libraries – the school's vocabulary vault – is one of the most cost-effective strategies to increase literacy skills."

In the past three years, the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) awarded Read to Me "School Library Access Mini-Grants" to 92 schools to help them increase access to books, improve collections, and change check-out policies to better meet the needs of emerging readers. Grant reports show that the kids, their parents, and the teachers are all delighted with the new nonfiction and fiction books. Librarians report that "teacher use of library resources has soared," "most of the books go back out before they can get put away," and "students love that they have so many choices and get to take books home."

This year, the Idaho Legislature approved a permanent increase of \$100,000 for school library access mini-grants, bringing the total in annual grant funds to \$200,000. ICfL was able to award grant funds—ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000—to 47 schools. Those with developmental preschool programs on school grounds and high levels of students from lower-income families were given highest priority. Grants were awarded to the following elementary schools:

- **Avery District #394:** Calder Elementary/Jr High School \$2000
- **Bear Lake County District #33:** AJ Winters Elementary, Montpelier \$5000 and Georgetown Elementary, Georgetown \$5000
- **Blackfoot District #55:** Groveland Elementary \$5000
- **Bonneville Joint District #93:** Ammon Elementary \$4000
- **Caldwell District #132:** Washington Elementary \$5000
- **Cascade District #422:** Cascade Elementary \$5000
- **Cassia District #151:** Albion Elementary \$1000 and Declo Elementary \$5000
- **Clark County School District #161:** Lindy Ross Elementary, Dubois \$5000
- **Coeur d'Alene District #271:** Bryan Elementary, Coeur d'Alene \$5000, Sorensen Magnet School for the Arts & Humanities, Coeur d'Alene \$5000; and Dalton Gardens Elementary \$2000

- **Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind #596:** Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind, Gooding \$4000
- **Idaho Falls District #91:** Dora Erickson Elementary \$5000, Hawthorne Elementary \$5000, and Longfellow Elementary \$5000
- **Jefferson County Joint District #251:** Roberts Elementary \$4000
- **Jerome Joint District #261:** Jefferson Elementary \$5000
- **Kimberly District #414:** Kimberly Elementary \$5000
- **Kuna Joint District #3:** Hubbard Elementary \$5000
- **Lake Pend Oreille District #84:** Northside Elementary, Sandpoint \$2000
- **Marsh Valley District #21:** Downey Elementary \$5000
- **Middleton District #134:** Mill Creek Elementary \$5000
- **Minidoka County Joint District #331:** Acequia Elementary, Rupert \$5000
- **Moscow District #281:** West Park Elementary \$4000
- **Mullan District #392:** John Mullan Elementary \$2000
- **Nampa District #131:** Centennial Elementary \$5000, Central Elementary \$5000, Greenhurst Elementary/NECLC \$5000, Lake Ridge Elementary \$3000, and Sherman Elementary \$5000
- **Nezperce District #302:** Nezperce Elementary \$5000
- **Orofino Joint District #171:** Timberline Schools, Weippe \$5000
- **St. Maries Joint District #41:** Upriver Elementary, Fernwood \$5000
- **Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School District #461:** Taylor's Crossing Public Charter, Idaho Falls \$5000
- **Teton County District #401:** Victor Elementary \$2000
- **Vallivue District #139:** Desert Springs Elementary, Nampa \$5000
- **West Ada School District #2:** Pepper Ridge Elementary, Boise \$2000, Spalding STEM Academy, Boise \$5000, and Ustick Elementary, Boise \$5000; Eagle Elementary School of the Arts, Eagle \$5000 and Seven Oaks Elementary, Eagle \$3000; Barbara Morgan STEM Academy, Meridian \$3000, Mary McPherson Elementary, Meridian \$5000, and Siena Elementary, Meridian \$5000; and Star Elementary, Star \$4000

For more information on the School Library Access Mini-Grants visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/school-access-mini-grants>.

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries helps libraries build the capacity to better serve their clientele by supporting statewide databases and online resources, continuing education, consulting, programming, early literacy skills, and building library community. To learn more about ICfL, visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/>.