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

NEWS RELEASE

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More Idaho Elementary Schools Receive Funds to Help Serve Youngest Students

BOISE, ID –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. "It's critical that Idaho's school and public libraries offer strong collections of quality, age-appropriate books as part of the effort to have Idaho's young children reading proficiently and at grade level."

In the past two years, the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) awarded Read to Me Mini-grants to 43 schools to help them increase access to books, improve collections, and change check-out policies to better meet the needs of emerging readers. The evaluation of the first year Read to Me Mini-grants, completed by Boise State University literacy professor Dr. Roger Stewart, showed strong positive results. "Young children had dramatically increased access to books resulting in them, their teachers, and their parents/caregivers becoming excited about books and reading. The access and excitement led to substantial shifts in self-reported parent/caregiver behaviors in the home," Dr. Stewart wrote. In interim reports from the second year, school libraries report that teacher use of library resources has soared, students are "obsessed" with nonfiction, and Kindergarten and first grade boys are "so engaged that they visit the library rather than play outdoors before school."

This year, the Idaho Legislature approved a one-time increase of \$100,000 for school library Mini-grants. ICfL received 80 applications requesting a total of \$314,000 and was able to award \$200,000 in grant funds—ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000—to 49 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:

- Bear Lake County District #33: Paris Elementary \$5,000
- Blaine County District #61: Hailey Elementary \$5,000
- Boise District #1: Garfield Elementary \$5,000 and Lowell Elementary \$2,000
- Bonneville Joint District #93: Valley Elementary, Idaho Falls \$3,000 and Cloverdale Elementary, Idaho Falls \$5,000
- Caldwell District #132: Van Buren Elementary \$5,000 and Lincoln Elementary \$3,000
- Cassia District #151: Mountain View Elementary, Burley \$5,000
- Coeur d'Alene District #271: Borah Elementary, Coeur d'Alene \$5,000; Fernan Elementary, Coeur d'Alene \$5,000; and Winton Elementary, Hayden \$5,000
- Filer District #413: Filer Elementary \$5,000

- Firth District #59: A.W. Johnson Elementary \$2,000
- Fremont County Joint District #215: Parker-Egin Elementary, St. Anthony \$5,000
- Glens Ferry District #192: Glens Ferry Elementary \$5,000
- Hagerman School District #233: Hagerman Elementary \$5,000
- Hansen School District #415: Hansen Elementary \$5,000
- Homedale Joint District #370: Homedale Elementary \$5,000
- Idaho Falls District #91: Ethel Boyes Elementary \$5,000
- Jefferson County Joint District #251: Jefferson Elementary, Rigby \$5,000
- Jerome Joint District #261: Horizon Elementary \$5,000
- Kamiah Joint District #304: Kamiah Elementary \$5,000
- Kuna Joint District #3: Ross Elementary \$5,000
- Lake Pend Oreille District #84: Washington Elementary, Sandpoint \$3,000
- Lapwai District #341: Lapwai Elementary \$5,000
- Lewiston District #340: Whitman Elementary \$5,000 and Orchards Elementary \$5,000
- Marsh Valley District #21: Lava Elementary, Lava Hot Springs \$3,000 and Mountain View Elementary, McCammon \$3,000
- McCall-Donnelly District #421: Donnelly Elementary \$2,000 and Barbara R. Morgan Elementary, McCall \$2,000
- Meadows Valley District #11: Meadows Valley Elementary, New Meadows \$2,000
- Meridian Joint District #2: Prospect Elementary, Meridian \$1,000
- Middleton District #134: Middleton Heights Elementary \$4,000
- Midvale District #433: Midvale Elementary \$1,000
- Mountain View District #244: Clearwater Valley Elementary, Kooskia \$2,000
- Nampa District #131: Park Ridge Elementary \$5,000 and Endeavor Elementary \$5,000
- Notus District #135: Notus Elementary \$1,000
- Post Falls District #273: Mullan Trail Elementary, Post Falls \$2,000
- Potlatch District #285: Potlatch Elementary \$5,000
- Salmon District #291: Pioneer Elementary [Salmon Pioneer Primary School] \$4,000
- Salmon River Joint District #243: Riggins Elementary, Riggins \$5,000
- Soda Springs Joint District #150: Howard E. Thirkill Elementary \$5,000
- Sugar-Salem District #322: Central Elementary, Sugar City \$5,000
- Twin Falls District #411: Harrison Elementary \$5,000
- Valley District #262: Valley Elementary, Hazelton \$5,000
- Wendell District #232: Wendell Elementary \$5,000

See more about ICfL's Read to Me School Library Elementary School Access Mini-Grants program at <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/>.