

NEWS RELEASE

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Two North Idaho school libraries test program to stop the “summer slide”

COEUR D’ALENE, Idaho — Schools may be out for the summer, but libraries at two in North Idaho are staying open during the break thanks to an innovative pilot project the Idaho Commission for Libraries is undertaking.

The libraries at Fernan Elementary in Coeur d’Alene and Lakeside Elementary in Plummer are remaining open two days per week to help stop the “summer slide” that occurs when young minds sit idle for three months. ICfL is working with Boise State University literacy professor Dr. Roger Stewart to research whether opening school libraries over the summer can maintain or increase youth literacy skills.

The Fernan Elementary library is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through Aug. 7. The library at Lakeside Elementary is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. through Aug. 7 with the exception of June 26, July 1, and July 3. Lakeside’s library also will open Friday June 27.

Four other Idaho schools are participating, including Desert Sage Elementary in Meridian, Horizon Elementary in Jerome, Mountain View Elementary in Burley, and Wilson Elementary in Caldwell. All six schools serve populations where at least 60 percent of students come from low-income homes. ICfL also provided 9,369 free paperback books to 3,194 students at the six participating schools toward the end of the school year.

State Librarian Ann Joslin said the initial results have been positive. “The book distribution went well and kids seemed to love the selections,” she said. “The students at Lakeside Elementary were amazed they don’t have to bring the books back and can keep them until they’re old. Meanwhile, Desert Sage had more than 30 kids show up to check out books on its library’s first day of summer hours, and they’ve decided to remain open an extra half-hour to better meet demand.”

The project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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. Visit Libraries.Idaho.Gov to learn more about ICfL.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Its mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. IMLS grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. Visit www.imls.gov to learn more about the IMLS.

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