

**VI. General (state funds), Miscellaneous Revenue, and Library Services Improvement Fund
B. Program – Bucks for Books Summary Report 2024-2025 – Information item**

In this year’s final Bucks for Books reports, as with years past, librarians mentioned they appreciate the streamlined structure of this program. The flexibility to use the funds on the books most wanted by their students was mentioned by nearly everyone. Sarah Anderson from Rulon Ellis Elementary in the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District particularly appreciated the visit from the Idaho Lottery and sent kudos to David Workman, Lottery Commission Public Information Specialist. “Having a kindergarten class in the library during the Idaho Lottery check presentation was a highlight — especially since it happened to be the class of one of our more hesitant teachers. David brought great energy and made the event exciting for the students, helping them feel proud and connected to the grant.” The presentation ceremony really kicks off the award year in style!

The total amount of books purchased in the 2023-24 award year (5,387) was significantly higher than the 2024-25 total (3,623). This year’s awardees were able to purchase about 2/3 of the titles they purchased last year because of a number of factors resulting in more expensive books.

With \$50,000 from the Idaho Lottery Commission, the ICfL awarded funds to 17 elementary school libraries during the 2024-25 school year. The libraries purchased a combined total of 3,623 books. Awardees reported that students read more during the school year because the library was able to provide the titles they wanted to read.

Here are highlights from the 2024-25 Bucks for Books reports submitted to the ICfL:

- Average change in circulation: Change in circulation varies from school to school depending on the size of student population, already established circulation policies, and myriad other factors. Nearly all awardees reported an increase in circulation, and a few reported a nearly 100% increase in the number of books checked out. The three schools that reported less circulation cited reasons like a gap in staffing in the library during the school year and a decrease in enrollment. Overall, awardees reported 44,845 more check-outs in the 2024-25 school year compared to the 2023-24 school year.

Many librarians mentioned how an influx of new books made meeting reading goals more fun and interesting for students. Jessica Fitzgerald from Falls Valley Elementary in Bonneville School District put it this way:

“Last year our students read a total of 158 million words. This year, in early April, we are already at 142 million and students are excited to blow last year’s total out of the water! Having new books in the fiction section has definitely been a major help to achieve this goal. It’s been so fun to watch students get excited about finishing a larger book and come to the library ready to read another one!”

Each year there are a few stories that pull at the heartstrings. Libby Hansen at McMillan Elementary in West Ada School District shared this story about “Will.”:

“Will (one of our 5th graders) hadn't checked out a book for months. I was constantly trying to engage him with different genres but had yet to find something interesting. Will is the oldest of five kids and a lot of his time at home is spent caring for his siblings. There aren't a lot of things that are just "Will's." When I showed him the Zelda manga set, he asked me what the limit of books were. When I responded three, he was crestfallen. I allowed him to check out six books, with the expectation that he would return them. I hadn't seen him so excited to check out books all year. It was huge!”

Some narrative excerpts:

“One special moment came when a fourth-grade class initiated buddy reading with a younger grade — something that grew organically and was later joined by the fifth-grade classes, who paired up with kindergarteners. Watching older students model reading enthusiasm and younger ones light up with attention has been a heartwarming and unexpected success. The shared love of books has truly helped revitalize the reading culture in our school.” -Sarah Anderson at Rulon Ellis in Pocatello

“Along with an increase in check-outs, I've noticed that many students are beginning to challenge themselves by selecting more complex texts. It's clear they're growing as readers, and I frequently see students returning to the library more often to exchange books (sometimes just a few days after their last visit). This increased traffic and student enthusiasm suggest a stronger commitment to reading, supported by both the influx of engaging new titles and a school-wide culture that encourages independent reading.” - Ashley Matthews at J.R. Simplot Elementary in American Falls