

What Every Parent Should Know About School Libraries and Reading Achievement

The case for readers in the age of information is clear. Studies show that:

*"nearly everyone in the United States can read and write. They just don't read and write well enough. Although basic literacy has been on the increase for the last century, the demands for literacy have been rising faster. Many people clearly don't read and write well enough to handle the complex literacy demands of modern society. The problem is thus not how to bring students to the second- or third-grade reading level; the problem is how to bring them beyond this."*¹

The many state studies about school libraries provide evidence that school librarians help students do better in their school assignments. The first study to explore this was the Ohio study, which showed that 99.44% of the 13,050 student sample indicated that the school library and its services, including roles of school librarians, have helped them in some way with their learning.²

School libraries and reading achievement are clearly linked.

*The quality of school libraries is a significant measure of the caliber of middle, junior, and senior high schools. Major studies during the past five decades substantiate that reading achievement is increased by quality library collections and regular student use of the library.*³

In their recent study of schools in Alaska, Pennsylvania and Colorado, Lance and Loertscher found that scores were 10 to 20 percent higher in schools where libraries have strong library specialists who collaborate with teachers, teach information literacy, promote reading, and see to it that collections are current and ample.⁴

¹ Krashen, Stephen D. *The Power of Reading*. 2nd ed. Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

² Student Learning through Ohio School Libraries : The Ohio Research Study @

<http://www.oelma.org/StudentLearning/default.asp>

³ Holland, Earlene L. & Humphrey, Jack W. "Study of Reading in Indiana Middle, Junior, and Senior High Schools," Middle Grades Reading Network, March 2004.

⁴ Lance, Keith and David V. Loertscher. *Powering Achievement: School Library Media Programs Make a Difference*. 2nd ed. Salt Lake City: Hi Willow, 2002..