Improving Literacy Through School Libraries Grantees Announced

The U.S. Department of Education announced the 2007 grantees for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program. In total, only 78 grants were awarded in only 28 states. To view the list of grant awards, please visit the Department of Education web site.

The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education and is the first program specifically aimed at upgrading school libraries since the original school library resources program was established in 1965. The Department of Education’s November 2005 evaluation of the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program found that it has been successful in improving the quality of school libraries.

Numerous studies show there is a clear link between the quality of library media programs in schools staffed by an experienced school library media specialist and student academic achievement.

The Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program is a competitive one-year grant for school districts in which at least 20 percent of the students are from families with incomes below the poverty line. When the funding levels are less than $100 million in a fiscal year, the Secretary awards competitive grants to eligible school districts. When funds are equal to or more than $100 million, the program will be distributed as formula grants to state departments of education.

Despite an authorization level of $250 million, the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program received only $19.485 million in fiscal year (FY) 2007. Eight states -- Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Nevada, New Hampshire, Vermont, Utah and Wyoming -- have never received funding under this program. Congress is currently considering funding levels for FY 2008. The House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education FY 2008 Appropriations bill provides $19.486 million for the program and the Senate Appropriations Committee recommended $23 million for the program.

Contact your Member of Congress and tell them to provide additional funding for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program.
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