

Dear ,

As a representative of the Alaska Association of School Librarians, I am writing to ask you to support funding Sec. 3 Chapter 55 SLA 2008, a Law establishing a grant program to support public school libraries. Officially titled “*Public School Library Collection Development Grant.*”

Part of the AkASL’s mission is to support school libraries and librarians, because we recognize the role school libraries play in the success of Alaska’s K-12 students. But school libraries are unable to properly fulfill this role if they are not stocked with adequate resources for educating all students.

Did you know?

- Public School Library budgets vary widely among and within school districts in Alaska?
- Some school libraries have NO budget and rely on PTSA and book fairs to provide resources for their students?
- The average cost of all library books in 2008 was \$21.10. Non-fiction averaged \$27.04 and fiction books averaged \$17.63?
- Online databases can cost as much as \$3,000 per year depending on school size?
- Some schools in our state have out of date resources?

Why fund the School Library Collection Development Grant?

- Research shows that students in schools with large book collections have higher reading scores.
- Expenditures for updating school library collections have been linked to student achievement.
- Some schools cannot fund popular Alaska reading programs such as Battle of the Books.
- The grant supplements school budgets; ***it doesn’t replace them*** and will help provide **equity in resources to ALL Alaskan students.**

Too often Alaskan students must seek out the local public library or other outside resources to complete school assignments. In rural areas where students do not have easy access to other libraries, students are much more dependent on their school libraries to provide them with up-to date reference and research materials.

Funding the *Public School Library Collection Development Grant* would provide financial assistance to qualified school libraries seeking to correct deficiencies in their collections. Support would take the form of grants covering books, magazines, reference materials and electronic databases. Funding this law will help provide more equity in resources for all Alaskan students.

The Alaska Association of School Librarians believes that the best place for students to access curriculum-appropriate materials supporting school coursework is in their own school libraries. Please fund **AS 14.56.360-375** to improve school library collections.

Sincerely,