

## WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY?

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Over the past three years we have seen a drastic reduction in the resources available to school libraries across the province. Richmond high schools have only 50% of their library programs. In Comox, two teacher-librarians have responsibility for the programs in 18 schools. On Saltspring Island, school libraries are completely closed to students from Kindergarten to Grade 5.

Studies confirm high- quality school library programs have a positive effect on student achievement levels -- as much as 20% in some cases. Therefore the BC Coalition for School Libraries has been configured as a non-partisan group to oppose the further erosion of school library services in British Columbia. To start to address the damage that has been done to our education system, we are dedicated to the reinstatement of teacher-librarian staffing to at least the 1-to-700- students ratio of three years ago. If literacy truly is a priority in British Columbia, school libraries must be kept open and properly staffed with qualified teacher-librarians.

The BC Coalition for School Libraries fully endorses Premier Gordon Campbell's goal to make British Columbia the most literate society in North America by 2010 -- and in keeping with that resolve we urge all electoral candidates to prepare answers to the following questions:

1. Teacher-librarians serve as an essential link for learning between students, teachers and information resources, both traditional and electronic. As an electoral candidate, are you aware that staff hours for teacher-librarians in British Columbia have been reduced by approximately 25% in the past three years? And do you approve of this trend?
2. Are you aware there are gross inequities in library programs on a school-to-school basis in British Columbia? What does your political party intend to do to eliminate these inequities?
3. How will your political party realign the funding so that school libraries across the province can remain open throughout the school week with qualified teacher-librarians and have sufficient funds to replace outdated materials?

For more information, contact:



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