

Does your child have a good school library?

Studies have shown that school library programs have a significant effect on the learning achievement of students. It is important that parents take an interest in this important area of the school at a time when funding has been reduced for many school libraries in BC.

Rate your school library by finding answers to these questions. Talk to the teacher-librarian, the principal, the school board trustees if your school library doesn't meet these standards. Ask how the situation can be remedied.

1. **Is the school library staffed by a professional teacher-librarian with adequate time to work with students and teachers?** Canadian standards*, call for a full time teacher-librarian for 300-700 students.
2. **Do clerical staff shelve and check out books?** Clerks can free teacher-librarians to work with students.
3. **Is the school library open to students before school, at lunch and after school?** Many school libraries are closed during these hours due to low staffing levels.
4. **What is the annual budget for materials?** Canadian standards* recommend \$26-35 per elementary student, \$36-45 for each secondary student.
5. **Are the materials in the school library current and a good match for your child's assignments? Does your child use the library?**
6. **Ask your child if the teacher-librarian works with the class to assist students to learn.**
7. **Is the Internet part of your student's resources? Does the teacher-librarian help your student make the best use of the web?**

If the answers to these questions do not provide you with a level of confidence...

- Ask your principal, teachers, school board members and superintendent how you can help to improve the school library.
- Join your Parent's Advisory Group and get the school library issue on their agenda.
- Join the BC Coalition for School Libraries, a group of concerned citizens, businesses and community groups, working to improve school library programs in the province. <http://www.bccsl.ca>
- Find out more about the school library through these documents:

* *Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Library Programs in Canada*. Canadian School Library Association & Association for Teacher-Librarianship in Canada. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 2003. [Copies are available @ \$24.95 from CLA, 328 Frank Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 0X8 (613) 232-9625 (x 310) orders@cla.ca]

Haycock, Ken. *The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries: the Case for Reform and Re-investment*. Toronto: Association of Canadian Publishers and Canada Heritage, 2003 [available on the web at www.bccsl.ca/HaycockReport.pdf]

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