



328 Frank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0X8

April 15, 2010

The Australian Parliament House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

Attention: Inquiry Secretary, Justin Baker

To Whom this May Concern,

The Canadian Association for School Libraries (CASL) is pleased to make a submission to the Federal Minister of Education's inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools.

There has been overwhelming research internationally, that has supported the importance of qualified teacher-librarians, in providing excellent school library programs to support student achievement (CASL Portal: http://www.clatoolbox.ca/slip/english/Research/Student_Achievement/)

Reading proficiency through an enjoyment of reading can be best fostered by a professional teacher-librarian. In Canada, the Ontario Library Association(2006) document, *School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario*, found that "studies have also shown that reading enjoyment is a significant factor in improving student performance not only in literacy, but in science and mathematics as well." The study focused on elementary students and concluded that the presence of a teacher-librarian was the single strongest predictor of reading enjoyment.

Literacy is at the heart of dynamic school library programs, and through effective collaboration between classroom teachers and a professional teacher-librarian, a school library becomes an exciting learning commons for avid readers and inquiring minds. Funding for university teacher-librarianship programs, is a wise investment on behalf of academic success for future global 21st century citizens.

The Canadian Association for School Libraries document, *Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Libraries in Canada*, provides a vision for school libraries for implementing student information literacy outcomes for elementary through secondary schools. Qualified teacher-librarians provide the instructional leadership necessary for collaborating with classroom teachers, to ensure that students develop effective information literacy strategies to meet the challenges of an increasingly global and technological society. *Achieving Information Literacy* has been recognized as an important document for assisting school boards and provincial education ministries in promoting exemplary national standards for school library collections, staffing, funding, technology and facilities to best support 21st century learners.

(American Library Association: *Standards for 21st Century Learners*
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/learningstandards/AASL_Learning_Standards_2007.pdf)

The previously mentioned Ontario Study document recommended that their provincial government “develop policy to ensure all Ontario students, regardless of the size of the schools they attend or their geographic location have access to well-stocked and professionally staffed libraries.”

As a result of this submission to your inquiry, it is strongly hoped that your committee will recommend that the Australian government:

- collect national data on school library staffing, funding and scheduling
- tie funding so that states can adequately staff and fund school library programs and services
- require that literacy programs and other national curricula should explicitly recognize the central role school libraries have in student achievement, literacy development, and preparation for post-secondary success
- develop national school library standards
- increase teacher librarian training positions in university programs

“The school library is essential to every long-term strategy for literacy, education, information provision and economic, social and cultural development. As the responsibility of local, regional and national authorities, it must be supported by specific legislation and policies. School Libraries must have adequate and sustained funding for trained staff, materials, technologies and facilities.”

*FLA/UNESCO School
Library Manifesto*

On behalf of the Canadian Association for School Libraries, I commend your committee’s inquiry as a valuable first step in improving school library funding and staffing in Australia for the 21st century.

Sincerely

Linda Shantz-Keresztes

President, Canadian Association for School Libraries (CASL)

13031 Bonaventure Dr. S.E.

Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2J 7E9