

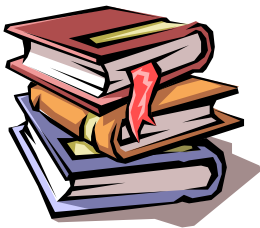
## **Categorical Education Program Reform (Assembly Bill 825, Chapter 871)**

AB 825 consolidates over 20 programs into six block grants that will take effect in fiscal year 2005-2006.

Our interest is in Article 7: School and Library Improvement Block Grant.

Most schools are already familiar with School Improvement Program (SIP) funding. AB 825 combines school improvement funding with library funding to create the existing School and Library Improvement Block Grant. The power to apportion the new block grant is assigned to school site councils.

School site priorities are determined by site councils, faculty, staff and administrators through a site decision-making process.



## **Resources:**

*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning.* Chicago: American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1998.

*Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries.* Sacramento: California School Library Association, 2004.

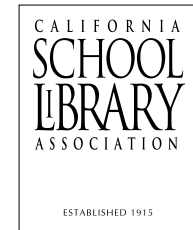
*School Libraries Work!* New York: Scholastic Library Publishing, 2004.

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*“Where school libraries are strong, their students, staff, and community become proficient readers who can skillfully access, evaluate, and use information. California deserves no less.”*

—Jo Ellen Priest Misakian, Chair  
California School Library Association  
Standards Task Force

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**California School Library Association**  
*School and Library Improvement Block Grant Task Force - February 2005*

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*Learning through  
Books, Media and Technology*

# **Q&A**

## **About School Library Funding 2005**

*“Show me a school with a good school library and I’ll show you a good school.”*

—Jack O’Connell, California State  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

### **There are so many needs, why should the library have special consideration?**

The school library provides resources that are available to every student in the school. Dollars spent in the library impact all programs in the school.

### **What are some suggestions for bottom-line amounts we should give our libraries?**

Consider the average cost of a single book, \$19.31 in 2004, and set a goal of one new book per student, or one for every two or three students, as appropriate.

### **What about spending money for computers?**

Start with books first. Research has found that putting well-selected reading materials into students' hands and encouraging them to read those materials, increases reading ability and test scores. The national average of books per student is 22. California's average in 2002-2003 was 15.4 books per student.

### **We give money to teachers for classroom libraries. Doesn't that cover the need for books?**

While classroom libraries are important, they do not replace a well-stocked central library where students choose their reading materials from a wide variety of topics and reading levels. Build the library enough for every class to have books checked out.

### **Our library gets money from other sources like PTA, Friends of the Library or book fair proceeds. Why should it get School and Library Improvement Block Grant funds?**

It is important for the library program to have a consistently dependable budget. Donations can fluctuate widely from year to year making it difficult to build a collection that meets student needs.

### **Why did the Legislature combine library funds with School Improvement Program funds?**

There has been an ongoing trend to reduce the number of categorical programs to allow school districts more control over their budgets. Combining these two funds is logical because improving the school library improves the school.

### **We have a public library. Isn't that enough?**

The mission of the public library and the mission of the school library, while they overlap in some ways, are not the same. The school library is integral to teaching and learning and is therefore more specifically related to the curriculum. In addition, many students cannot easily get to their public library.

### **What is the school site council required to do?**

AB 825 requires that a library plan component be added to the school site plan. The school site council might want to answer the following four questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- What can we do this year?
- How are we going to get there?

The California School Library Association has prepared a tool kit to help answer these questions. Go to <http://www.csla.net>

### **Why is this block grant a great opportunity for school libraries?**

In 1999, when the California Public School Library Act was passed it was funded at \$158.5 million dollars, or \$28 per student. In 2004, that amount was reduced to \$8.8 million, or \$1.50 per student. This is a natural partnership. School site councils have supported school libraries through good times and bad.

