

A positive, flexible approach is stressed. As experienced programmers, the authors address common problems that may arise and offer many strategies for creating a welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere. They also realistically state that "it is impossible to plan for every eventuality, and no matter how well organized you are, there will be unexpected and unplanned events. Embrace these with a smile!" (p. 12). The text is accompanied by sidebars, such as "Bright Ideas" and "Confidence Boosters," that add visual interest and offer further advice.

Other noteworthy features include a compiled Author/Title/First Line index and a thorough Subject Index. A bibliography of professional literature offers recommendations for further reading on emergent literacy, child development, and library programming.

*The Big Book of Stories, Songs, and Sing-Alongs* is an excellent training guide for public librarians new to children's services. Highly recommended, this book is a valuable resource for anyone working with young children and their families.

*Linda Ludke, Librarian, London Public Library, Jalna Branch, London, ON*

Haycock, Ken. 2003. *The Crisis in School Libraries: The Case for Reform and Re-Investment* [PDF]. Toronto, ON: Association of Canadian Publishers. 54 pages. <http://www.peopleforeducation.com/librarycoalition/Report03.pdf>

This report on the state of Canada's school libraries was funded by the Association of Canadian Publishers and the Department of Canadian Heritage. The author, Dr. Ken Haycock, is a well-respected school library researcher and educator. As a reviewer, I came to this work as a "critical friend," a school library researcher and educator, able to subject the report to tough scrutiny, based on my knowledge of the Canadian school library situation and of the research (including my own) that is cited within the report. Does the report stand up to scrutiny? Is there a crisis in school libraries? and Is there a case for their reform and re-investment?

The data presented in "The Current Context" show that there is a crisis in school libraries in Canada. The neglect of school libraries is reflected in severe reductions in funding for library materials and in the number of teacher-librarians serving in our schools. This neglect is particularly devastating to children in the least advantaged communities and neighbour-

hoods of our country. This neglect matters deeply. School libraries are essential components of Canada's educational, literary, and cultural environment because of their potential to have a positive impact on our children and youth—on their learning, on their reading, and on their sense of cultural identity.

The report's author brings together the research evidence to support three arguments for the reform and re-investment in school libraries. When school libraries are well stocked and staffed with qualified staff, there are improvements in students' academic achievement, improvements in students' reading (their ability to read, their motivation to read, and the quantity they read), and positive impacts on students' sense of cultural identity and social cohesion. The academic achievement evidence comes from over 200 studies, conducted across 40 years; the reading ability evidence comes from a similarly long and substantial line of research. Haycock has marshalled a compelling body of evidence to support each of these arguments and has done a masterful job of communicating the research evidence clearly and succinctly. The national identity and social cohesion argument is well articulated but less well supported with evidence. This is not a criticism of the author's work; there has been less research done in this area. However, there is evidence that, without the expertise of teacher-librarians, who know the sources for Canadian materials, there is less attention being paid to Canadian books in school libraries and classrooms.

The section titled "Best Practice" outlines what needs to be done to reform Canada's school libraries. What needs to be done is well supported by research: Clarify and promote the role of the school library program and the teacher-librarian; encourage collaboration with classroom teachers; insist on flexible scheduling; engage exemplary teacher-librarians; encourage staff development and change agent roles for teacher-librarians; require relevant, graduate-level education for teacher-librarianship; insist on teaching qualifications and classroom experience; place an emphasis on collaborative program planning and team teaching; and provide continuing education following basic qualifications. Ironically, as Haycock points out, Canada has long been the leader in the development of school library policies and standards and of models for school library programming, but we have been far behind in the implementation of these policies, standards, and models.

The report's recommendations for reform and re-investment in Canada's school libraries are logical and reasonable, based on the current situation

and drawing on findings of research. The 13 recommendations are directed to the ministries of education, but they are unlikely to be heard or heeded unless librarians of all kinds plus our other colleagues in the information and cultural sectors join with their school library colleagues in taking up the challenge of communicating these recommendations to their provincial ministries of education. The reason for this is just one piece of the data that points to the crisis in school libraries in Canada—there are too few teacher-librarians left in the country for them to be able to make the case to ministries of education on their own. Unfortunately, unlike the United States or the United Kingdom, in Canada we have no national office of education to set the standards for school libraries, to fund the research on school libraries, or to fund the re-investment in school libraries. The case has to be made province by province, by a broader constituency than just the school library community. The crisis in school libraries in this country affects us all—just ask your colleagues in the publishing industry, as well as your colleagues in public libraries, special libraries, and academic libraries!

Haycock has written an excellent report, accessible to a broad audience—parents, publishers, librarians, educators, and researchers. The list of current provincial school library guidelines and the list of annotated references that conclude the report are useful additions to the “toolkit” needed to begin the work of reform and re-investment in Canada’s school libraries.

*Dr. Dianne Oberg, Department of Elementary Education, University of Alberta*

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