

To: MSL Commission
From: Sue Jackson, Library Development Division
Re: Update on PEEL Grants
Date: January 29, 2007

Montana Library Scholarship Program

PEEL I

Three students continue to work on their MLS degrees. Kathy Mora and Sami Pierson will graduate this spring. Catherine McMullen will complete her 3-year degree program in 2008.

PEEL II

The nine scholarship recipients are now in their second quarter at the University of Washington. The group has traveled twice to Seattle to meet residency requirements and, from their quarterly reports, they seem to now be acquainted and working well together.

Because one of the original ten scholarships awarded was returned, there is currently \$25,000 available. After a short email discussion, the PEEL Advisory Committee recommended that this money be offered as a single scholarship in 2007. Announcement of the availability of the scholarship is being done through email messages, a scholarship flyer, and a mailing to career/placement centers at each Montana college and university. The timeline for this round is very short; the application deadlines are March 15th for the University of Washington and April 15th for the scholarship.

Montana Library Stipend Program

Two library stipend awards were made as part of the PEEL I project. One award was made to the Bitterroot Public Library, but because the library was not successfully in three efforts to fill the youth services position, the stipend was returned. This award has now been offered to Eureka Elementary School, one of the original stipend applicants. In a letter dated January 8, 2007, the superintendent of Eureka Public Schools, Gary Blaz, officially accepted the stipend to hire a professional librarian for Eureka Elementary to begin with the new school year in the fall. An agreement is now being transacted between MSL and the school system for the \$30,000 stipend award.

Helena Public Schools received a PEEL I stipend to hire a librarian for Jim Darcy Elementary School. The first report from HPS about the impact of the new position has just been received and Darlene asked me to share it with the Commission.

Helena Public Schools Six Month Status Report, January 2007

This report is submitted in compliance with the agreement dated May 18th, 2006 by and between the Montana State Library and the Helena Public Schools.

The Montana Library Stipend grant allowed us to employ a full time librarian at Jim Darcy Elementary School. Previously, the library shared a librarian with Warren Elementary School. The changes in services to students and staff have impacted both schools profoundly. The

changes are, in a word, wonderful. The long-delayed and much-needed attention to the collection is finally being realized as well.

Jeanne M. Morigeau started working as the elementary librarian in the Jim Darcy Library on August 28th, 2006. Jeanne is highly qualified with a Master of Library Science from Texas Woman's University, a State of Montana Educator License with a K-12 Library Endorsement, and several years of experience working in both public and school libraries. With the addition of Jeanne to our district's library media staff, we were able to double professional library staffing at both Jim Darcy and Warren elementary schools, which had previously shared one librarian, Lynn Trenary. Both schools' students and staff noticed immediate benefits to having a full-time librarian in each of their schools. As Mrs. Trenary put it, "I now have a good relationship with all the students. Skills classes are going smoother since students and teachers think of me as one of their regular teachers instead of someone who might or might not be there when they come into the library."

One of the most obvious and immediate benefits to both schools is that the library is now open and staffed during regular school hours every day of the school calendar. What a wonderful change from the past. Students can come to the library anytime during the school day and find someone there to help them. Besides the "open door" model both school libraries now enjoy, all students receive direct instruction in library skills every week in a regularly scheduled class. Additionally all students have another scheduled time each week for library checkout—with the benefit of a certified librarian for readership guidance.

Both librarians now have time to work collaboratively with classroom teachers on research projects. Teachers are really appreciating the instruction the new librarians are able to give in the area of technology. The librarians are even going into the classrooms and teaching lessons on how to take advantage of online library resources. Further, both librarians have put on staff trainings this fall. Fran Martinelli, a third grade teacher said, "I like the collaboration every week. It's a very secure feeling knowing that someone is there all the time as our teaching partner."

Terry Kirkeby, kindergarten teacher says, "It is very helpful having a librarian every day as an important resource. Planning with her every day is a benefit for all of us!"

The staffs at both schools say they now think of their librarians as a reliable resource and a partner in education. Warren School has some wonderful Big6 and Super3 projects going on or in the planning stages. First graders have been looking up their vocabulary words in the library's primary dictionaries and using them in sentences as a collaborative project with their teachers. Third graders come in each week with their teachers and integrate the writing curriculum with the library media curriculum. Kindergarten students are finding animals on InfoTrac Kids' Infobits and making booklets similar to Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Even the school nurse has voiced appreciation for both librarians' willingness to "go the extra mile" in searching for information on diabetes and asthma!! None of this was possible before with the very limited and schedule-stretched staffing scenario of years past.

Reading is being more fully promoted through the library at both Jim Darcy and Warren Schools. Jim Darcy students are now benefiting from the librarian-led Recess Read-aloud club. Students are able to go to the library during recesses and join peers in some exciting reading

activities. At Warren School, students get to have *lunch with the librarian* to discuss their favorite reads. Both libraries have been able to increase the number of books students are allowed to check out each week, and many students come in several times a week to check out new books. Since the certified librarians are available to do checkout with students (in the past library support staff did this) the librarians now know what types of books are of interest to individual students. They are able to put books on hold for students based on that knowledge, and readership guidance has dramatically increased.

The library collections in both libraries are getting some much-needed attention. Both librarians have been reclassifying and reorganizing their collections, dramatically weeding as they go. Cherished, but worn materials are getting mended or sent to the bindery. Materials selection is becoming a priority, and both librarians are finding time to base materials selection on staff and students' interests and requests coupled with quality reviews from professional journals. Both elementary libraries are starting to be able to provide the kinds of quality resources students and staff need and deserve.

Public Relations, PR, is on the rise in both libraries. Both librarians have had time to attend all the PTO meetings instead of having to divide attendance between two schools as in the past. The PTOs have responded with two monetary donations to the libraries that have considerably helped the book budgets. With more time to know student names, the librarians comment that they are able to talk to parents about their individual children, which is great PR. Also, when the librarian needs to call a parent to request an overdue book be returned, there is an already established personal and friendly relationship upon which to build.

According to Lynn Trenary (the librarian who valiantly tried to cover both libraries in years past), "I finally feel like a 'full service' librarian this year compared to those harried years past when I just had to do bits and pieces of my job as time permitted. I feel like my fairy godmother has waved her magic wand."