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***RESEARCH LINKS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT TO SCHOOL LIBRARIES:
MAJOR STUDY RESULTS***

Glen Ellyn, IL -- The findings of a major study, showing how student achievement is positively impacted by Illinois school libraries, is the subject of a news conference on **Friday, February 18th at 10:00 a.m. at Glen Crest Middle School, 725 Sheehan Avenue, in Glen Ellyn.**

“The study confirms that the strongest library predictor of high student achievement scores is a staff that includes at least one trained librarian, as well as support staff,” says Keith Curry Lance of the RSL Research Group in Colorado. “Reading, writing, and ACT scores rise when students have larger, more current book collections.”

Lance is the author of the study "Powerful Libraries Make Powerful Learners: The Study of Illinois School Libraries". Lance will release and discuss the results of the study at Glen Crest Middle School.

Also speaking at the news conference is Mike Ragen, Acting Director of the Illinois State Library; Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, DuPage County Regional Superintendent of Schools; Joyce Karon, member of the board of trustees of the Illinois State Board of Education and LouAnn Jacobs, President of the Illinois School Library Media Association.

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"Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White and the Illinois State Library were pleased to help fund this important survey," said Mike Ragen, Acting Director of the Illinois State Library. "The results indicate that school libraries and the caring, committed staff who run school libraries help to shape students who succeed on tests and achieve higher average reading and writing scores. Every year the Illinois State Library awards school per capita grants that allow hundreds of school libraries to enhance their technology infrastructure. This study clearly shows that a strong technology infrastructure is essential to student learning. School libraries are now much more than books. The electronic resources school libraries provide give students the skills they need to be successful."

The report, which sampled 661 Illinois public elementary and secondary schools, compared Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) scores with the presence of school libraries and librarians.

Key research findings of the study include:

1. Schools with better-staffed libraries have more students who succeed on tests.
2. High schools with computers that connect to library catalogs and databases average 6.2% improvement on ACT scores.
3. Students that visit the library more frequently receive improved reading and writing scores.
4. Students with access to larger, more current book collections achieve higher reading, writing, and ACT scores.

The study was commissioned by the Illinois School Library Media Association with a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant awarded by the Illinois State Library, a division of the office of Jesse White, Secretary of State and State Librarian. Funding for the study was also provided by the 21st Century Information Fluency Program.

The study is endorsed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Illinois School Library Media Association, based in Canton, was created in 1988 to provide leadership and support for the development, promotion, and improvement of the school library media profession and programs in Illinois. ISLMA website: www.islma.org.

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