

## **Statement from the Tennessee Association of School Librarians On the position of State Coordinator of School Library Services**

**The Tennessee Association of School Librarians** strongly urges the governor of Tennessee to appoint a certified school librarian to the position of **State Coordinator of School Library Services** within the Department of Education. The appointment of a state coordinator will help to assure that school library media specialists and their respective districts receive leadership, advocacy, and advisory services pertinent to their needs at the state level.

The State Coordinator of School Library Services would be responsible for the following:

- Collaborations-Interact with administrators, educators, and school library media specialists through the creation of task forces to explore issues pertaining to academic achievement, instructional programs, and assessment.
- Professional Development-Plan statewide and regional workshops on curriculum and standards, federal and state legislation, library media program development, technology, and library facilities.
- Library Resources-Provide direction to improve school library collections and to help align these collections with mandated state standards.
- Advocacy-Communicate with the governor, state legislators, state education officials, and state agencies on behalf of school library media centers. Serve as a liaison between state government and school districts.
- Research-Initiate research showing the benefits of school library media programs to overall school programs, similar to studies in other states (Colorado, 1995 and 1999; Alaska, 1999; and Pennsylvania, 2000).

The Tennessee Association of School Librarians encourages the governor of Tennessee to act upon this request at his earliest opportunity. During the previous administrations, a State Coordinator was not appointed. There is a critical need for a certified person within the Department of Education to serve as a primary contact for school library media specialists across the state.

The development of exemplary school library programs and collections is vital to the academic success of students. Numerous research studies (most notably *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards* by Keith Curry Lance et al, Colorado Department of Education, 2000) have shown that the degree to which students are successful academically in school impinges upon the quality of their individual school library media centers. Therefore, it is imperative that there be an official at the state level who will work in partnership with school library media specialists, state government officials, educators, and administrators in fostering better library services and resources so that no child will be left behind in Tennessee.