

# Designs Th@t Work

Make literacy a main focus with a reader-friendly building.



## Byram Lakes School Stanhope, New Jersey

**Opened:** October 2003

**Size:** 85,173-square-foot K-4 school; houses 682 students

**Cost:** \$13 million, funded through a \$17 million bond issue.

**Special features:** About four of the school's 42 classrooms were designed for small group instruction (i.e.—special ed and ESL classes).

**Architect:** Design Resources Group (DRG) of Raritan, New Jersey



Natural light is key for the school. Its main entrance boasts a skylight on the canopy over the drop-off area. The canopy protects students from inclement weather when they exit their school buses.



Literacy was central in designing the school's media center/library. A semicircular storytelling area, located under a group of windows (with blinds closed in photo), encourages group gatherings. The view from the windows captures students' interest and piques their imaginations.



Every classroom has a separate story-time area. The space can fit a 10'x10' rug that is rolled out for group reading in upper grades, but remains in place in kindergarten classes, like the one shown above.

## CREATING A LITERACY-FRIENDLY SCHOOL BUILDING

Designing an environment where children would enjoy reading was critical to school officials and architects. Here's their advice on how to make reader-friendly spaces part of your school building plans:

### **Make the library the school's hub.**

A centrally located library with lots of reading spots, easily accessible books, and other literacy-based activities is key.

**Provide lots of natural light.** Placing as many windows in classrooms as possible is important in helping student learning and comprehension. Windows can also help their imaginations as they gaze outside.

**Provide adaptable spaces for reading.** When designing classrooms, think of an area for story time in addition to space for desks and chairs.