

Kids pumped over trip to book store

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Ogden Community School students went on a different kind of field trip Monday morning – a shopping spree.

About 160 boys and girls tore through the shelves of Chapters looking for new books to spend their Indigo Love of Reading Fund dollars on.

The \$150,000 grant was awarded to the school in 2007 and lasts for three school years. Each year \$45,000 goes toward the purchase of books, while \$5,000 is given yearly for special literacy projects. Only 10 schools in the country received the funds. "The excitement it generates with the kids is amazing," said principal Denise Baxter.

Each student had a chance to pick out one book for their classroom's library. The book they chose will have a label with their name placed on the inside cover. "It is kind of a little badge of honour," said Baxter.

Ten-year-old Grade 5 student James Laurenson chose "The Pokemon Ultimate Handbook". "It's my favourite TV show," he said while flipping through the pages.

Grade 4 student Trevor Sawler Harris, 9, said he enjoys getting to choose his own book and that the best part is "when you get to read them."

He was considering the book "Treasure Hunters" from the "Bone" series as his choice.

Before the grant, Baxter said, the school's library was in rough shape. "A lot of the books in our library were from the previous Ogden school that was taken down in the '70s . . . so a lot of the books in our library were 30 to 50 years old," she said. "Although some of the titles were still titles that kids read, the condition of the books was fairly dismal."

She said rather than teachers picking the books, it is nice to have the students' input.

"They're (choosing) what excites them . . . today is all about the fun of reading," she said.

With many boys and older students choosing non-fiction titles, she said, there ends up being a wide variety of material for students to choose from.

James Duggan, manager of Chapters, said because Monday was the third time the Ogden students visited, the situation was under control.

"We've got it down to organized chaos and it is a lot of fun," Duggan said. "It is not often that we have a group this size in the store."

Ogden Community School has one more visit to Chapters, to take place in

September 2009. Baxter said the effect of the grant has paid off.

"The library is now the heart of our school," she said.