



Pioneer Library System

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT Wednesday, March 10, 2021

ADVOCACY 2021

Advocacy Day Recap – February 26, 2021

Advocacy Day was not as smooth as it has been in years past, but overall it went well. The meetings where it was just our System seemed to be the best. No offense to the other Systems who participated, but this solidifies my feelings that the local visits we schedule make a stronger impression.

A few follow-up requests have come in, asking us to meet again in six months. I will work on scheduling these and attend with libraries.

We met with the following legislators:

- Assemblyman Jeff Gallahan, 131st District
- Assemblyman David DiPietro, 147th District
- Assemblyman Brian Manktelow, 130th District
- Assemblywoman Marjorie Byrnes, 133rd District
- Senator Samra Brouk, 55th District
- Senator George Borrello, 57th District
- Senator Patrick Gallivan, 59th District

State Budget Update

There have been no significant updates to the State Budget since my last report. To help explain our funding situation, below is a passage from the State's FY 2022 Executive Budget Briefing Book released in mid-January 2021.

"Reduce Funding for Library Aid. The Executive Budget reduces FY2022 funding for Library Aid by 5 percent, from \$91.6 million to \$87 million. This funding provides operating support to public libraries, library systems [...]. These spending reductions may be restored if the State receives requested Federal COVID relief funds."

There are concerns from other Systems that the proposed 15% "restoration" of funds (which may not arrive until the last quarter of 2021) will include specific categories of funding that can put a strain on our operating budget. My assumption, however, is that any withheld payments will be split accordingly across all categorical budget lines.

The concerns in the library community show that there are still many unknowns. I hope to have a better picture of the impacts on State Funding by the end of March.

Special note – As of March 8, 2021, we have received a portion of the funds "withheld" in FY 2020. We are unsure of other pending aid payments, but we will keep the board up to date on the progress.

Build America's Libraries

The American Library Association (ALA) acclaimed the re-introduction of the Build America's Libraries Act (S. 127) by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR). The legislation would provide \$5 billion to support long-term improvements to library facilities, including addressing needs that have arisen due to COVID-19, to enable libraries to serve rural, low-income, and underserved areas, as well as people with disabilities and other vulnerable library users.

Attached is a letter I wrote to Senator Gillibrand and Senator Schumer in support of this Act.

COVID-19 UPDATE

State of the System

On February 23, 2021, I informed staff that we would increase the number of individuals allowed in any three zones across headquarters by one person. While most of the team continues to work remotely, this increase will help with transactional work for individuals reporting to the office. This change allows three staff members to occupy the Admin, Outreach, or IT area simultaneously. This change puts us back in-line with our original reopening plan.

OTHER NEWS

Dr. Seuss Enterprises Removes Six Titles from Publication

Libraries are working to handle the six titles that have been removed from publication by Dr. Seuss Enterprises due to racist images. While this is not a new situation, it has gained media coverage over the past few weeks. The System is encouraging libraries to read all of the information available and consult their policies to make informed decisions about their collections. An email detailing the situation, sent to directors on March 4, 2021, appears in this past week's Monday Briefing (<https://docs.owwl.org/Community/MondayBriefingMarch82021>).



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leading libraries forward

February 4, 2021

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
100 State Street, Room 4195
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear Senator Gillibrand,

Enclosed is information about the Build America's Library Act (S. 127) that aims to provide historic funding to improve libraries across the country. The Act includes \$5 billion to repair, modernize, and build library facilities in underserved and marginalized communities.

While we depend on the Library Construction Aid already provided by New York State, these federal funds would be a significant addition to supporting your region's libraries.

Projects our libraries could consider if this funding was made available would address facility response to the COVID-19 pandemic, prepare for natural disasters, and meet current connectivity and accessibility standards to ensure service to all community members.

Senator Reed (RI) introduced this Act on January 28. Co-sponsors to date are Senator Whitehouse (RI), Senator Wyden (OR), and Senator Sanders (VT).

Given your history of supporting libraries, I ask that you consider adding your name to the Build America's Libraries Act (S. 127) co-sponsors list.

Sincerely,

Ronald Kirsop
Executive Director
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