

BOARD ACADEMY



This publication shares information of interest to public library boards. Links to the resources and full content can be found in the e-newsletter version.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE ECOSYSTEM?

STATE BUDGET

Gov. Shapiro proposed no increases or new line items that would affect the public library subsidy or public access lines. He also is again proposing a \$15 minimum wage.



NOTES FROM HOUSE AND SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Overall, the main focus was on the basic education funding formula, so only two questions about libraries.

Trends we noticed in the questioning:

- Accountability for PDE - Committee members wanted strong justifications for each value that was put forth
- Projections - Committee members wanted to see what the projected costs would be to meet Commonwealth goals
- Mandates - There were pointed questions about mandates and whether or not the Department of Education was accurately tracking and/or enforcing them.

Senator Elder Vogel (District 47, part of SNOE region) questioned why libraries were not mentioned at any point in the Department's budget request booklet. Dr. Mumin replied that due to the focus on the court-mandated basic education funding changes, there wasn't budgetary room this year but that libraries were still seen as integral parts of the educational ecosystem.

Representative Benjamin Sanchez (District 153, Montgomery County) also mentioned libraries, questioning what PDE was hearing from our public libraries about our needs and goals.

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE ECOSYSTEM? (CONT'D)

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

SB667: Mobile Payment Services for Small Games of Chance

Many libraries (or their Friends groups) conduct Small Games of Chance. Currently only cash or check payments are legal tender for Small Games of Chance (raffles, 50/50s, etc). This bill would allow credit cards, or debit card, mobile payment services or other electronic payment method for the purchase of raffle tickets. Organizations would have to verify that the purchaser is over 18 years of age. (Note: this would not change the requirement to register to solicit outside of Pennsylvania.)

Currently this bill is working its way through Senate considerations; it has gone through two and has been referred for a third consideration by committee.

Sponsorship Memorandum: The existing payment options for small games of chance in Pennsylvania are limited and antiquated, only allowing cash or check.

This outdated law significantly hinders fundraising efforts by volunteer fire companies, churches, youth sports leagues, veterans' groups and other civic organizations that rely on small games of chance as a fundraising mechanism for charitable contributions, as well as operational costs.

Therefore, we intend to introduce legislation that will modernize the small games of chance law to allow mobile payment services.

We live in a cashless society, and utilization of mobile payment services is becoming increasingly commonplace. Allowing this type of 21st century technology will open accessibility for small games of chance across Pennsylvania, help non-profit groups recover from pandemic-related setbacks, and augment charitable endeavors in our local communities.



Minimum Wage Talk

Along with Gov. Shapiro's call for raising minimum wage, there are roughly 8 bills currently in Legislature for consideration of raising minimum wage. One goes as high as \$20/hour. While these are in committees for discussion, it is not yet clear if any have traction to take further steps.

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE ECOSYSTEM? (CONT'D)

LIBRARY REGULATIONS UPDATE

The Regulations Exposure Draft was released. You can find it, along with other clarifying documents, at <https://pa-gov.libguides.com/libraryregulations>.

Feedback on this draft is due via the form on April 29. It is lengthy and does not save your work, so I recommend using the PDF to prepare any feedback.

As a refresher: These are draft regulations and not in effect. It would be as early as 2026-2027 if they pass. The Library Code (which lays out the standards to receive State aid) is composed of two parts: the Statutes and the Regulations. The Statutes are law, passed by the Legislature, and can only be edited by an act of the Assembly. The Regulations enact the Statutes and provide better clarity and definitions for the broader terms contained in the law.

Our current Regulations have not been updated since the 1980s and do not properly enact the 2012 statute revisions. The Office of Commonwealth Libraries have been working over the past year to revise the Regulations to present their Exposure Draft. This step in the process is asking for internal feedback from the library field. It is not a public document at this time or in this version. Once the feedback period closes at the end of the month, the Regulations Work Group will review the comments, make any changes they wish, then submit it for review and public comment through the International Regulatory Review Commission.

We'll continue to keep you posted. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your district consultant. As with anything State related, there are a lot of pieces to this process, and we'll do our best to clarify what we can.



Hierarchy of Library Law

Statutes: Laws enacted by the legislature.

Regulations: Written by administrative agencies to fill in the details of how to apply statutes. They increase flexibility and efficiency in the operation of laws.

Policies: How the agency interprets and implements regulations.

Guidance: Best practice, not mandatory.

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TIMELY TOPICS & SPOTLIGHT ON LEARNING

ADVOCACY - PALA 2024 ASK

From Christi Buker, Executive Director of Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA):

[PaLA] creates an annual "ASK" statement. The intention is that all library advocates across the state are meeting with their local representatives and asking for the same thing. In 2024, we are asking for a small increase after a year of level funding. The full [ASK document](#) is attached; it is a one-page handout with bullet points for you to cover when contacting your legislators.

The current state budget line for the Public Library Subsidy is \$70.47 million. We thank the General Assembly for an increase in 2022-2023, and stable funding last year. However, we are still working to restore the previous funding level of more than \$75 million in 2001 and 2008.

Stable library funding is essential to maintain library services and access for communities, but funding for public library varies widely by community. State funds help ensure stability and equitable access to service for every Pennsylvanian.

Please support the small increases in funding for public libraries: Public Library Subsidy \$73.27 million, Library Services for the Visually Impaired & Disabled \$2.567 million, Library Access \$3.071 million, State Library \$2.673 million."

UPCOMING TRAININGS

Budgeting and Cash Reserves Webinar **Thursday, May 2, 2024 | 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.** **See Board Academy email for registration link**

Do you feel lost trying to figure out whether your library is on the right track? Does budgeting give you nightmares? Jim Krimmel can help! He will break down clearly what to be looking at and considering in budgeting as well as guidelines for cash reserves. Not only is he qualified professionally, he serves as a board member for a variety of organizations, so he knows what boards deal with.

Disability Accommodations **Friday, May 17, 2024 | 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.** **See Board Academy email for registration link**

Do you employ someone? Do you receive any government funding? Are you below the minimum number of employees to fall under ADA's employer arm?

If you said yes to these questions, this webinar is for you! Many do not know that Pennsylvania has a mirror law to ADA - Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. The requirements under this law are similar to the ADA requirements but have a significantly lower threshold. Stephanie Chapman will be going through our legal obligations so we can understand what we as employers need to be considering.

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SNOE REGION

We've been hearing from board members that they would like to learn more about their role on the board, within the library, and library-related information from across the State. So, we're coming to you with a new publication: Board Academy. This will be distributed by e-mail about 4 times a year, with special editions to cover major breaking news. There will also be a PDF version available to print for distribution to other members of your board. While SNOE had previously put energy into the SNOEBall Advocacy e-newsletters, those resources will be converted to a webpage soon for on-demand access.

The SNOE Region is a cooperative initiative of the Seneca, New Castle, Oil Creek, and Erie & Crawford Library Districts to help develop and strengthen the libraries in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

This information is provided to the best of our knowledge as of the date provided. Information is subject to change without notice. While authoritative, it is not guaranteed for accuracy or legalities. If there are questions, please reach out to your district consultant, who may encourage your library to ask a local solicitor/lawyer for further guidance.

If you have any questions about this publication or previous editions' content, feel free to reach out to all of the SNOE Region's District Consultants at consultant@snoelibraries.org. If you have questions on any topics related to board governance, duties, advocacy, or libraries, please feel free to reach out to your library's District Consultant:

Leslie LaBarte, Seneca Library District: districtconsultant@senecadistrictlibraries.org

Neva Lilla, New Castle Library District: nlilla@ncdlc.org

Erin Joyce, Oil Creek Library District: consultant@oilcreek.org

Jessica Church, Erie & Crawford Library District: districtconsultant@eriecountypa.gov

Public libraries are asking for an increase of \$2.8 million to the public library subsidy which is 4%.

Libraries are supporting lifelong learning, and access to resources.

- ✚ Public libraries support educational resources and programs for all ages.
- ✚ Homeschool and cyber study families are frequent users of public libraries.
- ✚ Adults and seniors seek library programs to keep their minds engaged, and to find needed social engagement for positive mental health.
- ✚ Broadband access is still limited in PA especially in rural areas. Libraries are key places for access to equipment such as laptops, hotspots, printers.
- ✚ Libraries are one of the few places to receive free, in-person support on essential technology skills like creating email accounts, creating resumes, and various digital training programs.

Expenses for library services have increased beyond the capacity to sustain these services.

- ✚ E-book and e-audio demand increased during the pandemic. Due to difficult licensing agreements, libraries need to repurchase these resources every two years, but their costs are 5 times higher than a hardback book.
- ✚ Fees to libraries for providing interlibrary loan services almost doubled going into 2024. Many library locations have cut or will now limit patron use of this service.
- ✚ 85% of PA public libraries are non-profits who fundraise for up to 80% of their **annual operating** budgets. Fundraising during our current economy is not yielding the same revenue and purchasing power.
- ✚ The majority of library workers are part-time employees. Non-profit libraries can't offer competitive wage rates and retain staff when funding is flat or losing ground.

Libraries power literacy and our communities!

- ✚ The current state budget line for the Public Library Subsidy is \$70.47 million. We thank the General Assembly for an increase in 2022-2023, and stable funding last year. However, we are still working to restore the previous funding level of more than \$75 million in 2001 and 2008.

Questions? Christi Buker, Executive Director, christi@palibraries.org, 717-766-7663.