

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held
March 18, 2024
at William Hall Library
Program Room, Lower Level
1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905

Members Attending: Aaron Coutu, Jessica David, Melody Drnach (Chair), Laura Kohl, Christopher La Roux, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Cheryl Space, Michelle Steever, Karisa Tashjian

Members Absent: John Bucci, Kenneth Findlay, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Tien Tran, Kate Wodehouse

Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS): Karen Andrews, Karen Mellor

Guests: Ed Garcia, Director, Cranston Public Library; Co-Chair, Rhode Island Library Association Legislative Action Committee; Chair, American Library Association Committee on Legislation

Materials Distributed:

- Legislative Report, March 2024
- LBRI H7386 Letter of Support-2024-0229
- RI Library Association Legislative Agenda

I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the February 12, 2024, meeting

Moved By: Ms. David

Seconded By: Ms. Space

The minutes were approved as presented; Mr. La Roux abstained.

III. REPORT OF THE VICE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. Chief Officers of State Library Agencies/American Library Association Congressional Fly-In

i. Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) Meeting

1. Crosby Kemper's 4-year term as the Director of the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS) expired 12/31/23. The IMLS Director is a Presidential appointment that alternates between a museum appointee and a library appointee. If an appointment is not made by term end, the director may choose to serve another year or until the position is filled; Mr. Kemper is vacating the position in March. The Acting IMLS Director will be Cyndee Landrum, the current IMLS Director of Library Services.

Because there is no current federal budget, OLIS has not received this year's Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant. Once received, which is anticipated in April, the funds will be used beginning July 1, 2024.

2. Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA)

The Museum and Library Services Act expires on September 30, 2025. Senator Jack Reed sponsored the MSLA in two past reauthorizations and is expected to sponsor the 2025 reauthorization.

COSLA and the American Library Association's (ALA) Committee on Legislation created an information-gathering task force for the MSLA reauthorization. Mr. Garcia, Chair, ALA Committee on Legislation, appointed Ms. Mellor and other COSLA members to ALA's task force on the MLSA Reauthorization.

3. Dr. Hayden

Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden, spoke at the COSLA meeting and met briefly with Ms. Mellor prior to the COSLA meeting.

ii. Voices For Libraries/American Library Association Congressional Fly-In

1. Briefing Day

Ms. Mellor reported on COSLA and ALA's aligned legislative priorities including fully funding LSTA at \$232 million in FY2025; LSTA is currently funded at \$211 million. Ms. Mellor also spoke about the reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act.

2. Congressional Visits

Ms. Mellor and Mr. Garcia met with the Rhode Island Congressional delegation in Washington, including RI's newest congressional member, Representative Gabe Amo, to discuss library funding and literacy initiatives.

B. OLIS Updates

i. Grants

1. Professional Field Experience (PFE) Grants

Professional Field Experience grants for library internships were made available to URI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies (GSLIS) students and public libraries for the spring and summer semesters. OLIS received 4 student and 10 library applications for Spring 2024 PFE grants. Thirteen students and 15 libraries applied for the summer PFE grants. OLIS has 6 grants available totaling \$30,000 (\$2,970 per student) and will provide 2 additional grants if funds are available.

2. Summer Reading Program (SRP) Mini-Grants

The Summer Reading Program (SRP) closes today; 35 of 48 libraries applied for grants to date, and OLIS expects a few more applications prior to the deadline. Public libraries may apply for \$600 for youth programs, with an additional \$300 for each branch in a system, and \$300 for their adult program. Library Services and Technology Act federal funding

rules require outcomes to be measurable and meet program goals. OLIS anticipates funding about 40 SRP grants once all requests are received.

ii. Continuing Education (CE)

1. Library Journal Courses Package

Applications are open for 5 online Library Journal courses sponsored by OLIS including Strategies for Managing Conflict, Trauma-Informed Librarianship, Project Management Fundamentals, Applying Restorative Justice in Libraries, and De-escalation Training for Libraries. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis for the 25 available openings; OLIS received 10 applications to date.

2. Sharing Visions Resource Sharing Conference

The New England State Library Agencies (NELA) will present the Sharing Visions 2024 Virtual Conference via Zoom on March 28. Presentations will include the Revised Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States by the Codes, Guidelines, and Technical Standards Committee of the Reference and User Services Association's (RUSA) Sharing and Transforming Access to Resources Section (STARS). Chris Freeland of the Internet Archive will present on Controlled Digital Lending (CDL) and other resources from the Internet Archive collections. The session is open to all.

3. Analyzing Data with OLIS & Ocean State Libraries (OSL)

Kelly Metzger, State Data Coordinator, will present a 2-part series, Analyzing Your Data, on April 25 and May 8 with Stephen Spohn, Director, Ocean State Libraries. The series will demonstrate data searches with OLIS data and Tableau dashboards, present data investigation techniques, and provide libraries an opportunity to showcase their data investigations.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Federal & State Legislative Updates

Federal and State legislation about libraries is on the [OLIS legislation webpage](#).

i. Rhode Island Legislation (Mr. Coutu, Ms. Mellor, Ms. Space, Mr. Garcia)

1. Ms. Mellor submitted a letter of support for [H 7386](#) Freedom to Read bill and attended the hearing on February 29; the Board also submitted a letter of support. Ms. Space spoke in favor of the bill and was quoted in a Providence Journal editorial about the hearing. The bill protects the acquisition of library materials without limitations and prohibits removal of materials because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. Several librarians, library supporters, students, and the ACLU spoke in favor of the bill while a small minority spoke in opposition. The bill was held for further study.
2. Mr. Garcia distributed RILA's legislative agenda and reported on [H 7575](#); the Senate companion bill is [S 2429](#). The board was requested to attend the March 21 hearing to testify for the bill. This bill establishes the defense of school, museum, and library staff for circulating obscene materials or shows to minors. RI is the only state that does not provide

these protections. RILA is building a coalition in support of the bill including the ACLU, the American Association of Publishers, the RI Council of Churches, the University of RI Association of University Professors, the Providence Teacher’s Union, RI College AFT Union, the Providence Public Library Teacher’s Union, and multiple LGBTQ groups. Mr. Garcia will provide a brief to Ms. Mellor to share with the board. The board agreed to submit testimony and a letter of support will be drafted.

Motion to support Rhode Island Bills H 7575 and S 2429

Moved By: Ms. David

Seconded By: Mr. Coutu

The Motion passed.

3. The RI Library Association (RILA) has a multi-front campaign planned to support legislation on eBook sales to libraries, [H 7508](#). Staff from Ocean State Libraries and a representative of the RI Library Association testified in support of the bill. The American Association of Publishers submitted testimony opposing the legislation. RILA is working with the Library Futures group from Harvard University on copyright law and eBook publishing issues in conjunction with this legislation. Four judiciary members hearing the bill are bill sponsors. The bill is the most vulnerable legislation because of possible litigation threats. Ms. David inquired how the legislation would be enforced. Mr. Garcia advised that eBook sellers would be required to follow the law to sell any eBooks in RI. Ms. Mellor noted that similar legislation has been introduced in other states.
4. State Grant-in-Aid (GIA), level-funded in the Governor’s budget, will result in less GIA for 24 public libraries in FY2025. Bills [H 7335](#) and [S 2589](#) require GIA be fully funded at 25% as provided for in RIGL 29-6-2. Twelve communities have passed resolutions supporting full funding of GIA. A board letter of support for the legislation will be drafted.
5. Ms. Tashjian inquired if the upcoming end of the [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (ACP) is being tracked. Ms. Mellor and Mr. Garcia discussed the ACP with RI’s Congressional Delegation earlier this month and the program is being monitored.

ii. Federal Legislation

Federal legislation was not discussed.

VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

A. Ms. Tashjian

Ms. Tashjian asked if OLIS is a member of the [Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition](#) (SHLB). OLIS is not a member of SHLB; Ms. Mellor will speak with Ms. Tashjian about membership.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. State Legislation: State Aid to Libraries ([H 7335](#)) and Freedom to Read ([H 7386](#))

Discussed in Committee Reports.

B. Public Library Minimum Standards

The committee is creating a meeting schedule.

C. Resource Sharing and School Libraries Committee

Mr. Coutu, Ms. Space, and Ms. Steever volunteered to serve on an ad hoc committee to investigate the school resource sharing process. Students, especially in underprivileged schools, do not have adequate access to books. The integrated library system (ILS) used by the [RI Library Information Network for Kids](#) (RILINK), the statewide school library consortium, makes it difficult for member libraries to engage in resource-sharing. Approximately 125 school libraries participate in RILINK.

Currently OLIS issues Ocean State Libraries (OSL) library cards to school libraries to facilitate resource sharing with school libraries, but this system is not an efficient method for resource sharing and does not address the issues with RILINK's current ILS. Discussion proceeded on the potential for school libraries to utilize the same ILS as OSL, which may provide more robust resource-sharing solutions for school libraries and potentially connect with the OSL system to provide more efficient resource sharing between schools and public libraries. Potential issues are financial and policy implications, along with the potential to drive up delivery costs as system utilization increases.

Ms. Tashjian advised that the committee charge should state that public libraries are not effectively sharing resources. Ms. Steever requested the committee investigate how other states share materials between public and school libraries. Ms. Mellor will explore how multi-type systems operate in other states.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Ms. David

Ms. David recommended a statewide voter bond initiative for the acquisition of library funding and inquired about other forms of innovative library financing from non-library sources. The Board will consider this opportunity and continue discussion on how to increase funding for libraries.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

X. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2024, from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m., at William Hall Library, 1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905. Members will be notified of date or venue changes.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Ms. Space

Seconded By: Ms. Steever

The meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.