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## **Executive Director's Report February 2022**

### ***2022 Library Advocacy Day Events***

In support of New York Library Association's (NYLA) 2022 Library Advocacy Day efforts, Westchester Library System (WLS) will be hosting two virtual events:

**Wednesday, February 23, 2022, from 7 PM-8 PM** – This virtual advocacy workshop for library trustees and directors interested in participating in Library Advocacy Day activities will provide a review of NYLA's key financial and legislative "asks" for New York State's FY 2022-2023 Budget and legislative calendar. [Registration is required for this event.](#)

**Wednesday, March 2, 2022, from 9 AM-10 AM** – Similar to last year, this virtual advocacy event will be held with the Westchester Delegation of the New York State Legislators. The registration link for this event will be sent out soon.

Governor Kathy Hochul's Executive Budget for FY 2022-2023 includes \$96.1 Million for Library Aid and \$14 Million for Public Library Construction Aid. In recent public forums on the NYS budget, WLS has supported NYLA's request for an increase of Library Aid to \$123.1 Million and Public Library Construction Aid to \$45 Million in this year's budget.

Even though the operational expenses of running a library have continued to rise, Library Aid funding over the past two years has seen a slight decline from \$96.6 Million in FY 2019-2020 to \$94.1 Million in FY 2021-2022. NYLA's recommended increase in Public Library Construction Aid to \$45 Million recognizes that more investment is needed to maintain and develop the physical infrastructure of the State's libraries in order to ensure a safe, accessible and sustainable environment for the future.

Non-financial legislative issues that have been raised in ongoing conversations with the NYS legislators include updating Civil Service regulations and Open Meetings Law. In terms of Civil Service, the goal is to make it easier for Civil Service to create updated job descriptions and to adjust the competitive criteria used so that directors could more effectively and efficiently attract, hire and retain staff best suited to today's community-engaged public libraries. In terms of Open Meetings Law, can what lessons learned from hosting virtual public meetings during the pandemic be applied to the existing laws to maximize the transparency and accessibility of public meetings? Updating Open Meetings Law would give organizations hosting options—with the ideal being an onsite meeting, an online meeting, or a hybrid meeting setup.

**WLS invites directors and trustees to join us at these Library Advocacy Day events to discuss these issues.**

## **2021 NYS Annual Reports for Public and Association Libraries**

The 2021 NYS Annual Reports online software portal is open, and this year's system deadline is **Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>**. This will allow for time for review by the system in order to meet the NYS Library Division of Library Development's (DLD) deadline on Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Information about the main changes to this year's Reports, which revolve around library-sponsored programs that are now classified as synchronous (all in-person events and live, virtual program sessions) and asynchronous (any recording of program content that cannot be viewed live as it unfolds), has been distributed to the directors. The information that WLS supplies to the member libraries for certain sections of the Report is being compiled and should be made available within the next week. A workshop to review the software and the report itself will be held on February 16<sup>th</sup>, and another will be scheduled if needed.

## **Central Library/Maintenance of Effort Update**

WLS received official notification from DLD that the System's Central Library, the Mount Vernon Public Library, has failed to meet the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements. The failure of a Central Library to meet the MOE requirements in Education Law triggers a 25% reduction of 2022 formula State Aid for Central Library Services (State FY 2022-2023) as defined under the Provisions of Education Law 272 (1)(j)(2) shown below. The anticipated reduction for WLS Central Library Services Aid for this year is anticipated to be approximately \$85,500. The final amount will be determined by total funding allocations that are currently under discussion as part of the NYS budget process.

[§272\(1\)\(j\)\(2\)](#) *In the event that the total sum raised by local taxation, exclusive of the sum raised for capital expenditures, for the support of a central library of a public library system in a twelve month period, is less than ninety-five per centum of the average of the amounts raised for such purposes by local taxation for the two preceding twelve month periods, the state aid to which such library system would otherwise be entitled for the development of its central library shall be reduced by twenty-five per centum.*

Under the Provisions of Education Law 272 (1)(j)(3) shown below, a public library system may request a waiver from the Commissioner of Education. Upon receipt and review of legal documentation from the system, the Commissioner is authorized to waive the MOE requirement for a period of up to three calendar years.

[§272\(1\)\(j\)\(3\)](#) *The commissioner may waive the requirements of subparagraphs one and two of this paragraph, if the commissioner determines that the application of such subparagraphs would result in excessive hardship for the public library system or central library brought about by an extraordinary change in a local sponsor's economic condition, loss by a local sponsor of state aid to local governments provided under section fifty-four of the state finance law, or by a natural disaster.*

### *Why did this occur?*

The failure to meet the MOE requirement was triggered because the Mount Vernon Public Library's 2020 Annual Report has not yet been accepted and approved by DLD.

Because the library's 2020 Annual Report has not been approved, DLD used the default amount of \$0 as the amounts raised for the 2020 MOE requirement calculation. When this amount of \$0 was compared to the average of the amounts raised reported in the 2018 & 2019 Annual Reports, the calculation was below the MOE threshold. *It's important to note that if one were to just look at the funds raised through the library's annual public vote, the library has not failed maintenance of effort. The triggering event was that the 2020 Annual Report has not been approved.*

### *What are the next steps?*

March 31, 2022, is an important date to keep in mind throughout this process as that is the date by which the Mount Vernon Public Library is required to have their registration application approved by DLD. If the library does not have an approved registration application by that date, then they would no longer be eligible to serve as the Central Library of the Westchester Library System.

Getting the Mount Vernon Public Library's 2020 Annual Report approved by DLD is the most important first step in responding to this situation, as is receiving DLD approval of the library's registration application. Dr. Kirchner and Executive Assistant Elise Burke have been working with Timur Davis, Director of the Mount Vernon Public Library, to move the 2020 Annual Report and the registration application forward so that the documents can be reviewed and approved by the Mount Vernon Public Library Board of Trustees and then forwarded to DLD for review and approval.

At this point, it is important that three documents be successfully submitted to and approved by DLD to strengthen WLS's chances of having the MOE waiver approved if Mount Vernon Public Library is to remain as the System's Central Library:

- 2020 Annual Report – the deadline for submission has passed, but approval by DLD is still required.
- Registration application – the deadline for the completed application's review and approval by DLD is March 31, 2022. Final approval requires that the library's 2020 Annual Report be approved by DLD first so that the financial data from the 2020 Annual Report can be incorporated into the library's registration application.
- 2021 Annual Report – the deadline for the submission is Friday, March 11, 2022. DLD approval of the 2021 Annual Report is contingent on approval of the 2020 Annual Report.

The MOE waiver process, which WLS needs to complete, requires an explanation of why the triggering event occurred and what steps have been taken to address the cause of the MOE triggering event.

## 2022 Digital Access Survey

WLS thanks the member libraries for their support of the Westchester Children's Association's efforts to distribute their [2022 Digital Access Survey](#). This survey is a way for Westchester parents and caregivers to give their own feedback about the challenges they face with internet access, computer device availability, and experiences in using online resources. This survey aims to help bridge the digital divide by finding out the areas of need and sharing the analyzed data with county and state decision-makers.

There is still time to help them in this effort by promoting and sharing the link below, which provides access to the survey in English and Spanish.

[https://pace.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0PpoPyQC8pWhNT8?Source=Library](https://pace.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0PpoPyQC8pWhNT8?Source=Library)

This survey is open until March 30, 2022, to all parents/caregivers/guardians with school children attending school in Westchester County. No personal information will be collected and all responses will be kept confidential. The Westchester Children's Association has printed out copies of the surveys for distribution at each library, and they will pick up the completed surveys at each library once the collection period is over. After survey data is collected, Pace University will analyze the data. For access to additional printed copies or questions about the survey, email Limarie Cabrera at [lcabrera@wca4kids.org](mailto:lcabrera@wca4kids.org) or call 914.946.7676.

## Upcoming Events

*TRUSTEE HANDBOOK BOOK CLUB*: Thanks to the success of this series, it will be continued in 2022. All sessions will be held on Tuesdays from 5-6:30 p.m. Below is the schedule and the registration links:

### **February 22 | Topic: Facilities**

Registration link: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_KacE2TMZTaqrnDIdS3\\_ljQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KacE2TMZTaqrnDIdS3_ljQ)

### **March 29 | Topic: Policies & Risk Management**

Registration link: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Ji0sYwV9TxiHeuWmJq8v8w](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ji0sYwV9TxiHeuWmJq8v8w)

### **April 19 | Topic: Ethics & Conflicts of Interest + Intellectual Freedom, Censorship and Privacy**

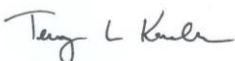
Registration link: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_TFxfAFS9Rz-OSk--iswhQw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TFxfAFS9Rz-OSk--iswhQw)

## *PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (PLA) CONFERENCE*

### **March 23-25 | Portland Oregon**

Registration link: <https://www.placonference.org>

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner  
Executive Director