



Thursday, February 10, 2017



## "Need to Know" Legislative Newsletter for Library Leaders

...from Wisconsin Library Association

### February 21 Primary Election Update State Superintendent of Public Instruction Race

**February 21 is Spring Primary Election Day.** The only statewide race is for an office that is very important to libraries: State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSOPI). Incumbent Tony Evers is running for re-election against two registered opponents - former Beloit School District superintendent Lowell Holtz, and former Dodgeville School District administrator John Humphries. There is also one [write-in candidate](#). The top two vote-getters will face off in the general Spring Election on April 4.

WLA's Library Development and Legislation Committee (LD&L) asked the three candidates whose names will appear on the ballot to respond to this question: **"How do libraries (public, school, academic) fit into your vision for an educated and economically strong Wisconsin?"** [Their responses are linked here in a single document.](#)

If you're attending Library Legislative Day and cannot return to your polling place before 8 PM on Election Day, you can either do **in-person (early) voting** (going on NOW and ending at 5 PM on Friday, February 17) OR **request an absentee ballot** from your municipal clerk by 5 PM on Thursday, February 16. For more information, go to <http://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/voters/absentee>

### Library Legislative Day is Tuesday February 21, 2017

**Library Legislative Day** will be held Tuesday, February 21, 2017, at the Madison Concourse Hotel. Close to 200 registrants are expected. [MORE INFORMATION HERE](#) Although registration has closed, anyone who still wants to attend can register onsite and pick from available legislator meetings that have already been scheduled. Please contact LLD Chair Nick Dimassis [ndimassis@beloitlibrary.org](mailto:ndimassis@beloitlibrary.org) or the [WLA Office](#) with questions.

February 21 was chosen to best coordinate available downtown Madison meeting space with the legislative session calendar and budget process. **If you're attending, please note ABSENTEE BALLOT information above.**

## **WLA 2017-2019 State Budget Update**

[Governor Walker's Executive Budget Proposal](#) for 2017-19 was released on February 8 to coincide with his address to a joint session of the legislature.

### **The Wisconsin Library Association is advocating for these library items in the 2017-2019 Wisconsin Biennial Budget:**

- Requesting a modest increase of \$1,500,000 in FY18, for an ongoing annual allocation of \$16,513, for public library system aids (emphasis on system support for local library services in the areas of broadband access, workforce development and lifelong learning). **Governor's budget: Public library system aids remain at the same level since 2012. WLA will continue to pursue the modest increase.**
- Maintaining funding for core library services including BadgerLink, Newsline for the Blind and the four statewide resource contracts (Cooperative Children's Book Center, Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library, and inter-library loan access to Milwaukee Public Library and UW-Madison collections). **Governor's budget: All core services were maintained at cost to continue support for current programs.**
- Requesting a statutory language change to allow expenditure from the WISEdash and WISEdata programs for public library related collections and data maintenance as well as for public schools. **Governor's budget did not include this request. WLA will continue to support this statutory language change.**

LD&L is continuing to study the [actual budget bill](#) and will report any new information in time for legislative day.

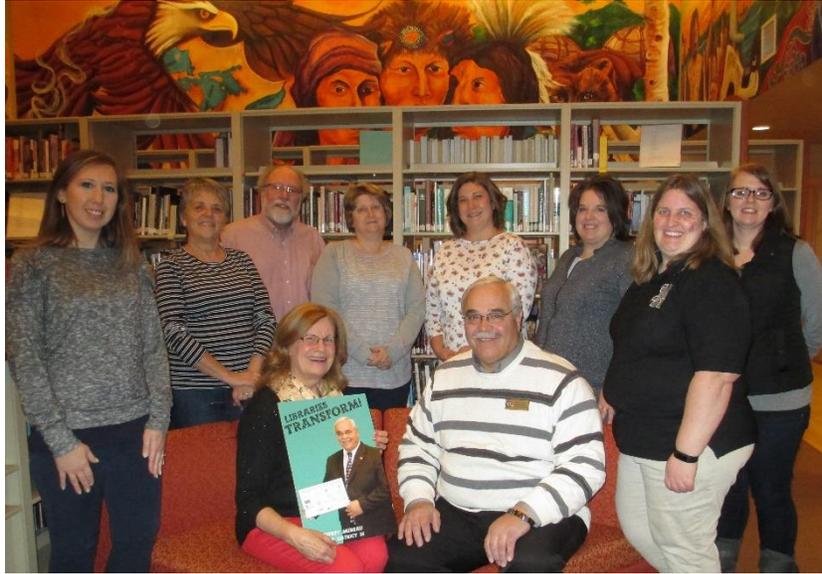
During December and January, a team of WLA representatives held multiple meetings at the capitol with more than two dozen members of the powerful Joint Finance Committee (JFC) and other legislative leaders. Kudos to Kathy Pletcher, Connie Meyer, Nick Dimassis, Jean Anderson, and Plumer Lovelace under the guidance of "Coach" Steve Conway, our Government Relations Advisor.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:** The work begun by the WLA budget team is a continuation of the excellent relationship building accomplished by WLA members in the last legislative session. It continues at Library Legislative Day. If you cannot join us at the Capitol on February 21, please continue to make contacts with your State Senators and Assembly Representatives when they are in your area. (See Legislative Reference Resources below) Snail them a friendly letter and...

**TELL YOUR LIBRARY STORY!** What public library system does your county belong to? How do public library system services strengthen your local library? How does your local public library support community members seeking to improve their employment skills, change careers and apply for jobs? Or provide citizens of all ages who have no reliable home Internet access with vital broadband for homework assignments, government services, and online courses? Or offer lifelong learning opportunities from early literacy programs that help young brains get ready for school to programs for the elderly that help preserve cognitive function and build important social networks?

## Legislators @ The Library!

Our state Senators and Assembly Representatives are holding **LISTENING SESSIONS** in their districts to which members of the general public are invited to share concerns and ask questions. These opportunities are usually scheduled on Mondays or Fridays when the legislature is in session. Many of them are held in libraries. Information tools to assist local libraries interested in **hosting library listening sessions** can be found on the WLA website [Advocacy Resources](#) page.



**Representative Jeff Mursau** (R-Crivitz) was presented with a *Libraries Transform!* poster featuring his photo on January 23 at a meeting of the **Forest Co. Library Board** hosted by the Forest Co. Potawatomi Cultural Center Museum and Library.



**Senator Tom Tiffany** (R-Hazelhurst) and **Representative Rob Swearingen** (R-Rhineland) held a listening session at the **Olson Memorial Library, Eagle River**, on January 23. They are pictured with librarians and library trustees from Vilas and Oneida Counties who shared stories about the potential impact of a modest increase in public library system aids on local library services.



Librarians and trustees from Lincoln and Oneida Counties surprised newly married **Representative Mary Felzkowski** (R-Irma) with an updated copy of her Libraries Transform poster during a listening session hosted by the **Tomahawk Public Library** on January 25. Rep. Felzkowski offered a special half hour opportunity dedicated to discussion of state library aids in the upcoming budget and related issues prior to the start of the general public session shared with Senator Tiffany. Both legislators are members of the Joint Finance Committee.

**Send us your "Libraries Transform!" News!** Do you have stories or photos of legislative listening sessions held at your library or other visits with legislators to share? Contact Kris at [kawendt@wvls.org](mailto:kawendt@wvls.org)

## Legislative Reference Resources

[WLA's 2017-2018 Legislative Guide](#) is sorted for public library system boundaries and includes libraries in each legislative district.

- Click links for companion guides listing [Wisconsin Legislative Leaders](#) (including members of Joint Finance Committee) and [New Members of the Assembly and Senate](#). FRESHMAN legislators need library love! **If your Senator or Representative is on the new members list, invite them to your library!**
- Check here to see if your legislators are members of the budget-writing [Joint Finance Committee](#). Their review is the next step in the budget process.
- To verify your correct Senate and Assembly districts, enter your personal address or the address of your library in the search box at [Who are my legislators?](#)

**Addresses for State Senators:** P. O. BOX 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882

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## Concluding Thought

*Whatever the costs of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation. ~ Walter Cronkite*

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## About the WLA...

The Wisconsin Library Association engages, inspires and advocates for library workers and supporters to improve and promote library services for the people of Wisconsin.

Visit our [website](#) to learn more about us and how you can get involved.



## Join Us



Check out WLA Upcoming events and conferences [here!](#)

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