

South Carolina State Library Board
Meeting Notes
January 26, 2011
10:30-12:00

Present: Debbie Hyler, Dan Mackey, Maria Macaulay and representatives from public library staff, trustees, and friends groups from around the state.

The State Library Board attended the State Library's hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee.

Remarks made by Director Goble before the House Ways and Means Committee:

Good morning Chairman Limehouse, Representative Skelton and Representative Neal. Thank you for this opportunity.

Before I start, I want to introduce Dan Mackey Chair and Debbie Hyler, Vice Chair of the State Library Board and Maria Macaulay member and former chair of the State Library Board. If you work in, support or use the State Library or one of our public libraries, – Please raise your hand.

Thank you for your past support of the South Carolina State Library and our Public Libraries. I will make my comments brief. I realize that no matter how long I speak it will not change the brutal realities of the budget situation we face.

The State Library's mission is to optimize the state's investment in Library and Information services and we devote all our energy to carrying out that mission.

Here are a few of the things we are doing:

The State Library is leading an effort to help South Carolinians get back to work by creating web based tools, by delivering face to face training, and by providing electronic resources such as WorkSC.org, Learning Express and the Career E-Book Collection. Our leadership in this area is having a positive effect on citizens and reducing costs for libraries.

Our Talking Book Services provides library services to more than 6,000 blind and physically handicapped men, women, and children including more than 700 veterans. The National Library Services' official guidelines state that we need 16 full time staff. Through innovation and energy, we provide the service with half that number.

The State Library's Summer Reading program reaches more than 138,000 children statewide in partnership with our public libraries. Research demonstrates that children who do not read over the summer lose much of what they learned during the previous school year. Our Day-by Day Family Literacy Calendar, used by South Carolina First Steps and others, makes it possible for our most at risk families to make literacy a part of their everyday lives.

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The State Library's SCLENDS project will soon include 25% of the state's population and 1/3 of its counties. SCLENDS is a shared open source library catalogue which facilitates resource sharing between libraries. Open source means it is freely downloaded from the web. The State Library and the 13 county library systems involved are redirecting the high costs of vendor licenses and maintenance fees to direct customer benefit. More than 1.2 million citizens have access to more than 1.7 million items. The information world for a citizen of Calhoun County, once limited to 30 thousand items, has been expanded by more than 550%.

To apply for a job, and soon, to file for unemployment, you must be able to access a web connected computer. Working with the K-12 Technology Committee and leveraging the funds that you provide to that committee, the State Library helps provide more than \$464,000 in internet connectivity to public libraries. In recent years libraries have experienced increases in internet usage by as much as 155%. Much of this is employment related. Additional increases will be difficult with declining resources. One of the things this points to, and I hope will be recognized, is that our public libraries are the best natural distribution chain for electronic or e-government. E-government represents one of South Carolina's greatest opportunities to reduce costs, increase transparency and streamline state government. The public libraries are essential to that effort.

DISCUS is the states' virtual library. If every library who provides access to DISCUS bought these databases individually, the cost would exceed \$52 million. The State Library provides DISCUS to all citizens for less than 2 million in state funds. Last year more than 11.7 million items were retrieved from DISCUS Resources. We are in discussion with PASCAL (Partnership Among SC Academic Libraries), to combine DISCUS and Collegiate DISCUS in order to provide greater returns on the state's investment in this area.

Without state aid, the State Library receives \$3.7 million in state funding. Our return on investment in services, cost avoidance, and actual funds exceeds \$60 million. That \$60 million is returned directly to your constituents. Reducing the State Library's budget reduces benefits to county libraries and citizens.

Every day South Carolinians use their public library and the resources provided by the State Library to help their children learn to read, to enhance their family budgeting skills, to explore their history, to enjoy family programs, and recently in desperate hopes of finding work. 3 years ago state aid to public libraries was \$2.25 per capita with the smallest counties receiving \$60 thousand. This year the rate is 96 cents per capita with the smallest libraries receiving \$60,000. If it is at all possible, please sustain this rate. State aid is critical to many of our libraries for staffing, director salaries, and

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collections. Cuts to state aid will reduce hours and access to vital resources for your constituents. State aid funds are also critical to the State Library's federal grant maintenance of effort. The federal grant supports such things as service to the blind and physically handicapped, summer reading, DISCUS, and sub-grants to county libraries. We will not meet our maintenance of effort this year, but state aid might make a waiver possible.

Last year you supported the State Libraries request to include public libraries in the education lottery's unclaimed prize money account in an amount equal to \$50 thousand per library. Thank you for that! I ask that you do the same again this year, but if at all possible advance public libraries in the payout schedule.

Our public libraries and your State Library are not first responders in the way police, fire, and Emergency Medical Services are, but in this economy they are first responders for those citizens seeking to improve the quality of life for their families, improve the future for their children, and looking for work in today's information based environment. In a state where we believe in personal responsibility and accountability there is no other institution which supports self reliance better or more effectively than libraries.

In closing, I would ask you to remember the following:

1. The State Library and our public libraries are essential to getting South Carolinians back to work.
2. The State Library and our public libraries are essential to early childhood literacy, education, including k-12, higher education and home schoolers, essential lifelong learning, and helping citizens become self reliant
3. The funding you provide the State Library provides a significant, financial, social and educational return on investment to our citizens.

Thank You

The consensus of the board members in attendance was that we had made our point to the committee.

The board adjourned.

David S. Goble
Director