

Committee Name:
Joint Committee on Finance – Budget Hearings (JCF_BH)

Appointments

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Clearinghouse Rules

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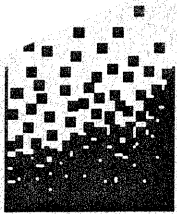
Misc.

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Record of Committee Proceedings

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Multiple Topics



South Central Library System

Administration Office

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Testimony on Behalf of the South Central Library System Presented to the Joint Finance Committee April 15, 1999

My name is Peter Hamon. I am the Director of the South Central Library System, which serves the 50 public libraries and almost 700,000 residents of Adams, Columbia, Dane, Green, Portage, Sauk, and Wood Counties. I am here to urge you to recommend restoration of dollars for an increase in public library system aids to the biennial budget bill now before the legislature.

In this information age, literacy and education often determine whether a child will become a responsible tax paying adult, or a resident of one of Wisconsin's ever growing number of prisons. Access to practical, reliable information frequently determines whether a small business will become a success, or just another failed dream. Information is a lifelong need, and (as those of you who use the Internet no doubt know) a complex commodity. Public libraries are there to serve long after the initial process of formal education is completed, and our information specialists exist to guide you to exactly the information you require, when you need it. **Public libraries provide great value to our society.**

No library can afford all of the print and electronic resources required by its customers. By cooperating, libraries multiply the value of the public dollar enormously. In 1998, South Central member public libraries checked out almost 8 million books directly to the public, more than a million of which were borrowed free of charge from libraries which owned them by libraries which did not. At a conservative estimate of ten dollars per book, this direct and shared traffic represents almost eighty million dollars in value to the public. The actual budgets of all my libraries together total less than \$19 million dollars. 5.5 million items were shipped through the interlibrary van delivery service (operated by the South Central Library System), at a cost of about 13¢ per item. Each book would have cost about \$2.41 to send through the US mail. The list goes on. **When you fund public libraries and public library systems, you get a bargain in return.**

The Background:

In the early 1970's, almost a quarter of Wisconsin's population had no access to public libraries. To solve this, the state entered into a partnership with local municipalities and counties for the provision of library service. Counties agreed to pay cities to enable library access for rural residents. Cities agreed to open the doors of their libraries to non-residents from rural areas, as well as those from other nearby cities and counties. In return for this, the state created public library systems to undertake projects too expensive or complex for

cities and counties acting alone, and agreed to fund systems at a set percentage of previous year's local public library expenditures.

The Problem:

The state has never fully funded its commitment to public library systems. Over the years, system services, and thus their ability to serve the citizens of Wisconsin, have eroded badly. To correct this, in the last session, a legislative council study recommended restoring the state commitment to public library system funding to the level of 13% of the previous year's public library expenditures. Legislation to this effect was passed by both houses of the legislature and signed by the Governor. To achieve this 13% funding commitment, the Department of Public Instruction requested an addition to base increase of just over \$5 million in the first year of the biennium, and just over \$6 million in the second for public library systems. The South Central Library System (SCLS) share of this new funding would be about \$750,000 annually. The Governor recommended no increase whatsoever.

The Consequences:

Automation: The South Central Library System, in cooperation with its member libraries, operates the LINK shared automated system, which makes the resources of 34 of the major public libraries in the system area readily available to all area residents. The success of this endeavor is indicated by the fact that over half of the 700,000 residents of the system area have LINK library cards and more than 8 million books were checked out last year by area residents from all our member public libraries. Over a million books and other materials that citizens requested, but which their local libraries did not own, were successfully provided to them by other SCLS member libraries through the LINK interlibrary loan system. The LINK system was installed in 1994 and is approaching the end of its useful life span. During the next biennium, we must begin the replacement process. The South Central share required to create the LINK system was \$400,000. More will be needed this time. In addition to the LINK system, several major SCLS member public libraries also operate their own stand-alone automated systems. One of our challenges is to connect these separate systems electronically to LINK, so that all our area residents will have equal access. The technology to do this is available. The dollars are not.

Delivery: The South Central Library System delivers material requested by area residents to member libraries and, when they have finished with these materials, returns these materials to their home libraries again. Last year, our "red truck" delivery service carried more than 5.5 million items within the system area. This represented a 28% annual increase. The system and the members together spend more than \$615,000 on this service annually. We have no idea how to cope with this increasing public demand without additional funds.

New Technologies: Every library in our system area now has Internet access, but in many cases they have only one computer to serve an entire municipality and access the Internet only through a slow local dial-up provider. All our members need access through high-speed TEACH-subsidized lines and multiple workstations. The process of obtaining and deploying these lines is complex, local equipment and maintenance costs are great, and

ongoing training must be provided for both the staff and the public. We have two computer maintenance personnel to serve 50 member public libraries with over 500 computers. This is not enough. We can provide hands-on training at our system office for up to eight people at a time. Many member libraries can provide none at all. We must change this. At this time, the funds to meet these needs are simply not there.

Resources: The South Central Library System and its members jointly fund a shared periodical database which ensures that the full text of more than 1,000 magazines and other library resources is available to the public through every member library, no matter how small. The state BadgerLink project (which also was not funded in the Governor's Budget) provides even more. These are only the tip of the iceberg. Literally thousands of resources--ranging from high quality encyclopedias to specialized reference materials far too expensive to ever be purchased in print form by any but the largest libraries--are available on-line... for a price. Our citizenry has sophisticated information needs. These resources would enable us to help meet these needs. We cannot afford them. And what of the book collections that still represent well over 90% of what people use in libraries? Without additional system aids, member libraries have had to pay with local dollars for the services the state should have been providing. We have kept automation and delivery going, but at great cost. The book budget at the Madison Public Library alone was cut by over \$125,000 last year to scrape up the funds required by other projects. In other member libraries, the problem is much the same. If current trends continue, children will be turned away without the materials they need for their homework, and senior citizens will watch one of their most important remaining windows to the world slowly close. Small businesses will not be able to obtain information critical to their survival, and the general public will continue to gradually lose information resources vital to the quality of their lives.

The Solution:

The need is critical, and the consequences of inaction are severe. The economy of the state is robust. Dollars are available. Priorities are the only question. I urge you, on behalf of the public we all serve, to do anything you can to help restore dollars to the state budget for increased aid to public library systems, and to thus honor the state's commitment to this important service. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to do my best to respond to any questions you might have concerning this issue.

Written Testimony to Joint Finance Committee
in Support of Aid to Public Library Systems
April 15, 1999

Shannon Lang, Director
Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System

As the director of Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System, you would expect me to support the Department of Instruction's request for Public Library System funding equal to thirteen percent of the total operating expenditures from local and county sources. After all, this is my business.

I am also a citizen of the State of Wisconsin. I believe that equal access to information is critical to my success as a contributing member of society. Every single day, I tell a friend, a relative and a stranger that they can find the information they need at their public library. Why would I do this? Because they are telling me about their need for information about their health, their child's learning problems, their need of a resume, their care of aging parents, their vacation plans, their gardens, their finances, their government. . .their *lives*.

I do not suggest that they go to one library rather than another because of size or resources because I know that Public Library Systems insure access to information through the sharing of resources among libraries. I know that Public Library Systems provide delivery services to move these resources to where they are needed and return them to their owning library. I know that Public Library Systems provide technological assistance to make the sharing of resources more cost effective and efficient. I know that Public Library Systems help all libraries offer equitable services.

Yet how can libraries offer the services needed by your constituents if they are not adequately funded? Systems were established by the State of Wisconsin to facilitate the sharing of resources. We're very good at this. In fact, we are so good at this you may not be able to see the reduction of services and our lack of progress, particularly in the area of technology, due to 4 years of frozen funding followed by a small increase in the last budget.

The cost of sharing resources continues to rise. Libraries cannot continue to absorb the cost of this service. And Systems can no longer balance this local cost with the services and programs we provide. Over the last several years, we have been unable to afford to provide a balance of service to our largest library, Fond du Lac Public. Thus, they have elected to move to a System where they

will no longer be the largest library. Several years ago, Waukesha County Library System closed its border to our system's residents. Again, they could not afford to serve without direct payment for services rendered. Next year, we anticipate a closed border with Arrowhead Library System, primarily because Janesville, their largest library can no longer afford to share resources without financial support. Rather than making equitable services a reality, lack of adequate funding is dividing us into territories of service.

Then, there is the technology needed to support effective, cost efficient resource sharing. In order to afford to move—very slowly--forward in this area, we are forced to cut programs highly desired by our members.

We make known both in our mission statement and our programs that we are not a substitute for local and county funding and planning. We emphasize funding responsibilities of each level of government. The State of Wisconsin inadequately funds Public Library Systems. How can you ask less of yourself than you ask of local and county governments?

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Testimony before the Joint Finance Committee
on behalf of Eastern Shores Library System,
a joint agency of Ozaukee and Sheboygan Counties,
presented at the Committee Hearing of April 15, 1999

I am David Weinhold, Director of Eastern Shores Library System, headquartered in Sheboygan, whose 13 member libraries are located in Ozaukee and Sheboygan County.

I am here today to speak in support of the Department of Public Instruction's proposal for an increase in public library system aids to 13% of the previous year's expenditures for public library services. This proposal is the result of a recommendation approved by the Joint Legislative Council from its Special Committee on Public Libraries in 1997, and enacted by the Legislature in 1998. The proposal provides \$18.4 million in the 2000 and \$19.5 million in 2001 for aid to public library systems.

Why is state aid to public library systems important?

The success of local public library service is not only dependent on the local municipality's investment, but also dependent on the county's and the state's investment in public library service - a partnership with the local municipality, the county and the state. Through local property taxes, the municipalities supporting the 381 public libraries provide the lion's share of the support for public library service. A local municipal service which is now available to every resident of the state by virtue of library system membership. Counties are now required to appropriate a specific share of the costs for serving nonlibrarians in the county, so that the cost is not unduly borne by the local municipality. The DPI proposal is the third part of the funding partnership - the state's share.

What does the state aid produce?

It produces Cost Effective Local Library Service!

Eastern Shores Library System provides its member libraries with a variety of services to extend and improve public library service for the residents of the library system. All those services have a common underlying principle - that a common operation at all thirteen libraries can be accomplished more efficiently, more effectively and at less cost through a centralized operation, than duplicating that service at thirteen libraries using local funds. I give you three examples:

1. A centralized cataloging service.

Crucial and central to every public library is its catalog of holdings - whether that catalog uses paper catalog cards or electronic records. That catalog is the key to finding out if the library holds the latest book advertised by Oprah, if the library has information on the past conflicts in the Balkans, if the library carries your favorite home improvement magazine "Fine Homebuilding" or "Family Handyman", or if the library owns the most recent edition of Kiplinger's tax guide to complete your 1998 tax return today.

The Eastern Shores Library System has a service that provides our member libraries with a catalog record for each item they purchase. We employ one fulltime professional cataloger to produce this record and a fulltime cataloging assistant who searches a database of an international catalog of library holdings for the record that matches the material owned by the member library. We purchase the searching service from the company that operates this

database. Last year we cataloged 46,000 materials for our member libraries at a cost less than \$3 per item. Our total cost for this program was \$138,000. The 13 local libraries did not spend the cost of employing staff to provide this information as well as the cost of preparing the record for their catalog from the local property taxes.

2. A delivery service among local libraries.

Library systems promote the effective use of the library resources by encouraging libraries to share their materials with other libraries and to allow people of the system to borrow books from any library. Prior to the delivery service and the library system, our member librarians would package the books and cart them to the post office in order to send them to other libraries, or to send books that a customer returned at the local library but belonged to another library. A tedious, time consuming task that takes the librarian away from serving the library's customers and from doing the necessary work to operate a library. It is also costly, even with the preferential postage rates for library books (\$1.13 per pound).

The Library System provides a delivery service 3 days a week using a cargo van to deliver materials among not only the 13 public libraries but also three academic libraries, a school library, a hospital library, the technical college, and Kettle Moraine Correctional Institute. Last year we carried 98,000 items, including books, letters, boxes of book bags at an average cost of \$.33 per item, a savings of at least \$.80 per item over the postal service and without calculating the savings in staff time at the local library.

3. Internet Service to member libraries.

This past year, thanks to your efforts, our public libraries received fast, reliable T1 lines through the TEACH program. However, the libraries wanted those discounted T1 lines connected to the Internet and were faced with costs of \$4,800 per library per year for service from an Internet Service Provider.

The Library System took advantage of its inherent ability to negotiate on behalf of its members to provide Internet service to not only our 13 libraries, but also the 6 libraries in the Manitowoc Calumet Library System for a total cost of \$4,800 per year - a savings of local property taxes of \$91,200 annually.

What can the increase do for local library service?

In Eastern Shores, the member libraries have already identified a need for an additional \$15,000 annually for 5 day a week delivery service. Library customers can now identify materials owned by another library through the Badgerlink resources. The member librarians want to satisfy their customer needs by providing these materials in a timely manner. This delivery service would do that.

ESLS must also plan for an increased level of cataloging service required by the libraries. Libraries are not only investing in books, but also new audio, video and electronic formats. We anticipate needing \$13,000 in 2000 for the additional staff and activity.

Our present level of funding does not allow us to respond to Mead Public Library's concern that Sheboygan's taxpayers bear a disproportionate share of the cost of serving people who live outside of the City. Because of this, Mead Public Library has indicated that it will withdraw from the library system by Jan. 1, 2001. It is seeking financial support from local or state sources. Its withdrawal from the library system would mean the loss of open access to library services for Wisconsin residents. It's withdrawal would deny 140,000 residents of Ozaukee and Sheboygan Counties access to high quality library services, access to one of the nation's 50 best libraries, and access to a major library resource for businesses who live outside of the city. Library systems are to provide a level of service that makes participation

in a library system desirable. Even with those cost effective services described earlier, we are not able to provide sufficient services to Mead, that makes their continued participation desirable. The Library System needs at least \$60,000 to address Mead Public Library's concern.

Finally, member librarians have a renewed interest in a shared automated circulation system similar to the one serving the South Central Library System headquartered here in Madison. Such a system requires a large investment in hardware and software both at the local libraries and at the library system. To make this an effective investment at the local libraries, the Library System needs to offer financial assistance to attract the local investment. These shared automation circulation systems provide a higher level of service for residents of the Library System.

What happens without the increase?

ESLS is faced with the same questions we had 2 years ago. Without an increase in library system aids, what services do we maintain, reduce or eliminate? Second, if we reduce a service, do we ask the local library to spend its funds on the service? Even maintaining a service will force us to reduce or eliminate other services. Our member libraries have placed a high priority on some of our services because those services have a major impact on their local library services.

Our biggest concern is the lack of resources to maintain Mead Public Library's desire to participate in the library system. Without state funding to address this concern, we believe they will withdraw by 1/1/2001. When they withdraw, ESLS loses \$190,000 - and the ability to provide library system services which the remaining libraries find desirable is made more difficult.

Why should the legislature approve such an increase?

Because library systems work and work well.

They work to make local library service effective and efficient.

They work to distribute the costs of serving all Wisconsin's citizens - so that local residents do not bear the full burden of providing these services.

They work because they improve the overall equity in financing a local service that is extended beyond the local municipality's borders.

They work because they improve the local library's services which improves the local community which makes the local municipality attractive to new residents, new businesses, new investment.

It works because for every \$1 the state invests, Wisconsin residents receive \$7 of library services.

Presented by

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Testimony

to the *Joint Finance Committee of the Wisconsin Legislature*

April 15, 1999

I am here to urge support for increasing public library system aids to the 13% indexing level recommended in Act 150, enacted in 1998. In Wisconsin, local property taxes fund municipal libraries. Increasingly, pressures on the municipal property tax base continue to increase, as, especially in Madison's case, state aids and revenue sharing continue to decrease each year. Even as popular demand for quality library services increases, the city's ability to fund those library services without substantial increases in property taxes is severely compromised.

Library systems were set up to form a partnership with local libraries to improve basic services to all people within that system, and one of the requirements of system membership is that local libraries serve people outside their municipal boundaries. Therefore, the local property tax base supports library staff, facilities and collections not only for local tax payers, but for all others in the system area who choose to use the services of the local library. In Madison's case, the South Central Library System has funded, in whole or in part, a service for delivery of library materials across municipal boundaries, and an automation project that spans seven counties and involves Madison and 35 other municipal libraries. Both of these system services address this regional issue, and it is vital that our library system continues to adequately fund both these services so that local library property tax dollars can be allocated to local collections and local library services. This supporting partnership between state-supported library systems and local governments for delivery of library services to all of our citizens makes sense; this is what was envisioned when library systems were originally created. But the lack of state monetary support for public library systems over the years threatens that partnership, and therefore, threatens the viability of local libraries.

For many of the same reasons listed above, I am also supporting SB 59, a library lending aid bill. The Special Legislative Committee on Public Libraries in 1998 recommended that local libraries receive a monetary incentive to help libraries with the costs they incur as a result of usage from citizens outside their boundaries. This monetary incentive, as proposed, is not a reimbursement for these costs, but is intended as an incentive to maintain an "open door" policy to all library users, regardless of to whom they pay taxes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Barbara Dimick,
Director, Madison Public Library



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My name is Jane Pearlmutter. I am the President of the Wisconsin Library Association. I am here today to speak on behalf of the Association and the 60 library boards of trustees that have endorsed WLA's legislative agenda. A list of these organizations is attached to my testimony as a reminder that I come here before you to represent them. Now, let me share with you our position on the Governor's biennial budget proposal.

We are extremely pleased that Governor Thompson included funds in his state budget proposal to increase the materials budget for the UW libraries. We hope you will support his request. We also urge you to support BadgerLink funding as outlined in the recent letter on this subject from State School Superintendent John Benson and Administration Dept. Secretary Mark Bugher to this Committee. I am also asking your support for several other important library-related initiatives that were somehow not included in the governor's budget.

Funding for public library systems. In 1998 the legislature passed and the governor signed SB 269 (Act 150), which required the Department of Public Instruction to request funding for library systems at 13% of local and county expenditures for public library service. Currently the index of state aid to local and county aid for public library service has dropped to approximately 10%. Continued inadequate state funding for public library systems places at risk a program of library access, resource sharing, and improvement that the state has worked to develop since 1972. I am asking you to support the DPI request for increases in the library system aid **as required by this law**. Why is this funding so important? No individual public library can provide the knowledge and information resources necessary to meet all the needs of its community. A key purpose and responsibility of our 17 state-funded public library systems is to promote and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and information resources among all 381 public libraries in the state. Through the services provided by our library systems, local libraries are better able to meet the information needs of their residents in a very cost-effective manner. These funds provide a wide range of services to Wisconsin residents through their local libraries, including interlibrary loan, programs and grants to enable open access, delivery, automation, central collections, consultation, continuing education, and resource library services.

Library service contracts. The Department of Public Instruction contracts with the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the Cooperative Children's Book Center, Wisconsin Interlibrary Services and Milwaukee Public Library to supplement materials held in local Wisconsin libraries. Through these contracts, citizens in the state have access to over 16 million titles. DPI has requested modest increase in these service contracts, and we hope to see these increases in the budget.

Restore the Common School Fund Income: Initiatives in the Governor's budget proposal to improve the TEACH Wisconsin program are certainly worthwhile. However, to continue to pay for this program with revenue from the Common School Fund robs our school libraries of the resources essential to their mission. As a state, we cannot continue to invest in educational technology with money that was meant to buy schoolbooks. WLA endorses the restoration of the full amount of the Common School Fund income to its original purpose, namely "the purchase of library books and other instructional materials for school libraries" [Wis. Stat. § #43.70(2)]. WLA strongly opposes the use of interest on the Common School Fund for any other purpose.

The above library initiatives will significantly help increase access to information for all our state's residents. Better access to information is also critical to keep our state's businesses competitive in the evolving global economy. I hope you will give these library initiatives your full support.

Thank you.

Wisconsin Library Association Board of Directors, 1999

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The following Wisconsin organizations have gone on record in support of the 1999 WLA Legislative Agenda:

Abbotsford Public Library Board of Trustees
Albany Public Library Board of Trustees
Algoma Public Library Board of Trustees
Appleton Public Library Board of Trustees
Aram Public Library Board of Trustees, Delavan
Arrowhead Library System Board of Trustees
Beloit Public Library Board of Trustees
Caestecker Public Library Board of Trustees, Green Lake

Chippewa Falls Public Library Board of Trustees
Council on Library and Network Development
Door County Library Board of Trustees
Public Board of the Durand Community Library
Eastern Shores Library System Board of Trustees
Fox Valley Library Council
Friends of Wisconsin Libraries
Hortonville Public Library Board of Trustees
Indianhead Federated Library System Board of Trustees
Kaukauna Public Library Board of Trustees
Kenosha County Library System Board of Trustees
Kenosha Public Library Board of Trustees
Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library Board of Trustees
La Crosse Public Library Board of Trustees
Lakeshores Library System Board of Trustees
McMillan Memorial Library Board of Trustees, Wisconsin Rapids
Madison Public Library Board of Trustees
Manitowoc-Calumet Library System Board of Trustees
Manitowoc Public Library Board of Trustees
Marathon County Public Library Board of Trustees
Marinette County Consolidated Public Library Board of Trustees
Marion Public Library Board of Trustees
Marshfield Public Library Board of Trustees
Mead Public Library Board of Trustees, Sheboygan
Middleton Public Library Board of Trustees
Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System Board of Trustees
Monona Public Library Board of Trustees
Neenah Public Library Board of Trustees
New Glarus Public Library Board of Trustees
New Holstein Public Library Board of Trustees
New London Public Library Board of Trustees
Nicolet Federated Library System Board of Trustees
Northern Waters Library System Board of Trustees
Oconto Falls Community Library Board of Trustees
Oregon Public Library Board of Trustees
Outagamie Waupaca Library System Board of Trustees
Pauline Haass Public Library Board of Trustees, Sussex and Lisbon
Racine Public Library Board of Trustees
Rhineland Area Joint Library District Board of Trustees
Rosemary Garfoot Public Library Board of Trustees, Cross Plains
Sauk City Public Library Board of Trustees
Shawano City-County Library Board of Trustees
South Central Library System Board of Trustees
South Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees
Sturm Memorial Library Board of Trustees, Manawa
System and Resource Library Administrators of Wisconsin
Waukesha County Federated Library System Board of Trustees
Waukesha Public Library Board of Trustees
Waupaca Area Public Library Board of Trustees
Winding Rivers Library System Board of Trustees
Winnefox Library System Board of Trustees
Wisconsin Valley Library Service Board



Middleton Public Library • 7425 Hubbard Avenue • Middleton, WI 53562
Paul Nelson, Director • 608/831-5564

**Testimony of Paul Nelson
Director, Middleton Public Library
to Joint Finance Committee
Thursday, April 15, 1999**

My name is Paul Nelson, and I am the director of the Middleton Public Library. I also am here on behalf of the South Central Library System, of which my library is a member, and the Wisconsin Library Association, for which I serve this year as Past President.

UW Library Collections and BadgerLink

First of all, I am pleased that Governor Thompson has included funds in his state budget to increase the materials budget for UW libraries. I sincerely hope that you will support this request. I also ask that you support the Governor's proposal to fund BadgerLink with funds from the TEACH Wisconsin's telecommunications access program. The BadgerLink databases have quickly become an important component of the service program of all Wisconsin's libraries. I ask you to please support this initiative.

Now to the more difficult part of my testimony, asking for General Purpose Revenue funds when you'll probably tell me there just isn't any money available. But let me persist.

Public Library System Aids

An increase of \$11,385,900 for public library system aids over the next biennium might seem extreme, but I assure you this will be money well-spent, the benefits of which will be felt throughout the entire state. System funds provide a wide range of services in a cost-efficient manner to Wisconsin residents through their local libraries. In 1998, the legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 269 (Act 150), which required the Department of Public Instruction to request funding for library systems at 13% of local and county expenditures for public library service. I ask you to support the DPI request for this increase in public library system aids.

Statewide Library Service Contracts

The Department of Public Instruction contracts with the Regional Library for the Blind and Physical Handicapped, Wisconsin Interlibrary Services, the Cooperative Children's Book Center, and the Milwaukee Public Library to supplement materials in local Wisconsin libraries. Through these contracts, citizens of our state have access to over 16 million titles. Avoiding unnecessary and costly duplication of services at the

local level is an important result of these contracts. I urge you to support the modest increase (\$111,900) in these service contracts.

Local Impact

The availability of BadgerLink has already strengthened the service program of the Middleton Public Library. Additional funds for public library systems will have a similar effect, especially in the areas of library automation, sharing of resources, physical and electronic delivery of materials and information, and, ideally, open access to all of the public libraries in our state. Additional dollars for the service contracts allows Middleton to continue to meet the special service needs of our customers.

Please give these requests serious consideration during your final deliberations on the 1999-2001 budget. Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

**Joint Committee on Finance
Budget Hearing
April 15, 1999**

Statements by :

Sherry Freiberg, President, Wisconsin Educational Media Association (WEMA)
Supervisor for Instructional Technology and Information Management
Fond du Lac School District

To:

Honorable Senator Burke, Representative Gard and Members of the Joint Committee

I have written letters, and visited personally with several members of the Legislature. Today I am here to reiterate some of the issues previously addressed.

BadgerLink

We were delighted to hear that the Departments of Administration and Public Instruction have presented a budget amendment to fund BadgerLink. One of the most important services provided to schools, universities, libraries and the general public this year has been BadgerLink. This full text periodical, newspaper and online reference database has insured all Wisconsin citizens access to a wide range of up-to-date information. Providing over 4,000 magazines and newspapers via the World Wide Web, this rich information resource is beyond affordability for the majority of schools and libraries without state subsidies. We estimate that for our school district it would cost over \$50,000 to provide the resources included in BadgerLink. This is almost half of our Common School Fund monies, and there is no way we would be able to allocate that amount for magazines and newspapers on line or in print. Our students have access to the Internet in all of our computer labs, library media centers and many classrooms, making BadgerLink readily available to them for research and personal information. We have put a hyperlink to BadgerLink on our Intranet server, so with one click of a mouse our students and staff have this wealth of information at their fingertips. I urge you to support the budget amendment, and fund this wonderful technology tool.

Common School Fund

As you already know, the Common School Fund provides the majority of funding for materials purchased for Wisconsin school library media programs. In the 1997-99 biennium, Common School Fund distributions to school library media programs were capped at \$14.3 million, routing about \$5 million annually from the Fund to TEACH Wisconsin. This cap has resulted in an allocation of \$3.20 (22%) less per child than districts received in 1997, for a total of \$11.64 per child. This loss is particularly disadvantageous to school districts like Fond du Lac with declining enrollments. With the average cost of a picture book more than twice the per pupil allocation, it will take the funds of two children to buy one additional book for one library media center -- and we have fourteen media centers! We are finding it increasingly difficult to provide resource materials to support the curriculum, because in addition to books, Common School Fund monies must purchase audiovisual materials, newspapers, periodicals, instructional computer software, microfilm and reference materials. Perhaps growing districts were able to allocate 'new' dollars to sustain their library media centers, but for Fond du Lac, and many other districts who are not growing, this is simply not possible.

With the increase in student population state-wide, maintaining a fixed cap on the Common School Fund distribution means reduced funding on a per pupil basis, as evidenced by the decline of 9¢ per child from last year. We have all benefited from TEACH Wisconsin. It has made a significant difference in our ability to provide connectivity and technology resources for our students, but we also need our library media resources. Common School Fund monies account for over 80% of school library funding statewide. In some school districts, these are the only dollars budgeted for library materials. Please support the restoration of Common School Fund distributions solely for underwriting school library media programs.

Educational Communications Board

The 1999 executive budget proposes that a private, nonprofit corporation hold and operate the broadcast licenses held by the University of Wisconsin System and the Educational Communications Board. A nine-member board of directors would oversee the activities of the new organization. In its present structure, PreK-12 education would have no representation on this board. We presently have a person on the ECB board who assures the inclusion of instructional television programming and production for the students of Wisconsin. We are concerned that services to schools will be lost or greatly diminished if we lose that representation.

The Federal Communications Commission is requiring all TV programming be digitally broadcast by 2006 -- a costly venture, but one which could vastly increase the availability and flexibility of instructional programming. It is essential that PreK-12 educators have input on the development of digital services. As you oversee funding for this new board, please ensure adequate representation for our students and staff.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

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**Joint Finance Committee Hearing
Thursday, April 15th, 1999
Room 411 South, State Capitol**

**Statements by Vonna J. Pitel, Library/Media Director/District Coordinator
Cedarburg School District and Representative of the
Wisconsin Educational Media Association (WEMA)**

**To: Senator Brian Burke and Representative John Gard, Co-Chairs, and members of
the Joint Finance Committee**

Today's School Library Media Center

First of all, I would like to emphasize that school library media centers have changed greatly in the past 10 years and are now transforming their collections and facilities into information and technology centers within schools. My facility and many others around the state have been expanded to provide more room for technologies and a variety of groups and activities which are an integral part of the instructional program. We cannot refer to the school library that we remember years ago in today's environment of expanded resources. School library media specialists are providing more instructional, curriculum and staff development services than ever before. Many school library media specialists are the technology coordinators for their building or district in addition to providing the traditional reader's advisory services. There are two important budget priorities that impact the quality and services of school library media programs.

Common School Fund

WEMA supports the full restoration of the Common School Fund distributions solely for the underwriting of school library media programs. The Common School Fund provides all or nearly all of the funding for materials purchased in most Wisconsin school library media programs, including my own. In the 1997-99 biennium Common School fund distributions to school library media programs were capped at \$14.3 million, routing about \$5 million annually from the Fund to TEACH technology grants. The loss of over \$4 per students was particularly disadvantageous to small, rural schools and other districts where additional funding is not provided.

Technology is only one instructional resource today. The Internet and CD-ROMs do not provide for every information need that students have. Good literature collections, nonfiction books and reference sets need to be purchased through the school library media budget, which is provided through the Common School Fund. Book collections need to be updated annually, and with the

cap on the Common School Fund I am not able to purchase the variety of titles I did before. The cost of paperbacks and hardback titles continues to increase each year. Faculty and students enjoy reading newspapers and magazines for leisure reading during the day. The exciting and challenging part of my job is assisting staff and students to determine which is the best resource for a particular information need. For example, the other day a book with a criticism, biographical material and essays about an author was the best resource for a student, while on another day I helped a student search the Internet for the medical term "phantom pain."

I feel I provide a leadership role in the integration of technology in my school building, but I also promote different genres of books and teach reference collections along side the technology software. The teachers in my building expect students to use a variety of resources they have evaluated carefully for their research projects. *Please help school library media centers keep a balanced collection of print and media along with technologies. We cannot sacrifice one for the other.*

BadgerLink Databases

BadgerLink is benefiting not only the research needs of my students and staff but everyone in a community that uses a public library or has a connection to the Internet with a registered Internet service provider. Since its inception I have been teaching every class completing research in the library media center how to access this database of full-text magazines and newspapers, and teachers are learning to use BadgerLink through staff development sessions after school. Every freshman this year was given introductory lessons so they would use it for many of their research needs. I could never afford to purchase the periodical or newspaper databases individually. A statewide license is a great way to provide access to the widest spectrum of patrons.

Students in our Future Problem Solving Class receive a list of magazine articles to use for research. Many of the titles are specialized magazines in a subject area such as oceanography. I helped our students locate magazine articles for an upcoming assignment. We found that over half of the titles were not indexed in our local database. We used BadgerLink and found that all but one article in the EBSCOhost Database. This is an excellent example of how Badgerlink expands the access to quality information resources for student research. Access to online resources such as BadgerLink teaches students technology skills they will use for their advanced education and lifelong learning. Although school library media centers need access to this wonderful resource, I want to clarify that it is not a substitute for print, CD-ROM and other media I purchase through the Common School Fund. *I encourage you to provide funding for BadgerLink in the 1999-2001 biennial budget.*

Thank you for taking time to read and hear my testimony.

Sincerely,



Vonna J. Pitel



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WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO
THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
CONCERNING THE 1999-01 BUDGET
April 15, 1999

On behalf of the Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA), an organization representing over 350 public health professionals throughout this state, we ask that you reevaluate the budget recommendations of the Governor as it relates to the *tobacco settlement*. The Governor's proposal allocates less than 2% of tobacco settlement moneys to measures to keep our young people from taking up this deadly, addictive habit or to assist Wisconsin citizens who want to stop smoking.

We urge you to take a hard look at the Governor's proposal and the longer term health improvements and cost-savings that could accrue through more decisive commitment to smoking prevention and cessation programs. By committing so few dollars to anti-smoking initiatives, the Governor is asking the taxpayers of Wisconsin to continue to pay out \$200 million a year in Medicaid expenses to treat people with tobacco related illnesses. In addition, citizens will also continue to pay higher insurance rates and higher prices for products due to the high cost of illness care.

Anti-tobacco programs work. States such as California, Massachusetts and Florida have documented successes in reducing cigarette consumption and reduced smoking rates among their youth as results of strong legislative leadership and proper funding. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make an historical impact on the public's health in Wisconsin. You will make a difference on the lives of our young people now and in the future by helping them say no to tobacco; you will reduce the costs of illness care and prevent premature deaths due to heart disease and cancer.

The tobacco settlement funds were intended to be spent to overcome *the #1 preventable health problem*: tobacco usage. The time to make a difference for our future is now.

WPHA supports the Trust campaign and the recently introduced bill of Senator Robson and Representative Urban to set aside a minimum of \$50 million annually to fund smoking prevention and cessation programs.

Barbara Theis
WPHA Board Member
Mauston, Wisconsin

Peggy Hintzman
WPHA, President-elect
Madison, Wisconsin