



Love Your Library ... Advocate!

Libraries, Legislation & You

It's that time of year again...the legislature is gathering, and bills are lined up for consideration. Among bills this year are some that take aim at K-12 education in our state, which may translate into budget cuts at the local level. In a year that has already isolated us in so many ways, it can be easy to feel forgotten. You are not! You are essential, and we want to encourage you to use this moment to find your voice.

It can be boiled down to this: ***you and your library support student achievement***. We know that we do so much more than help our students improve their test scores, but having a clear statement in mind about how you help kids succeed is a good starting point for advocacy in your district. Tell people what you do, and how it supports your school community!

SLIG wants to help. Jen Markus, one of our AASL voting delegates, shared these tips for effective communication with Legislators. Consider taking action: *after school hours*, from a personal email address. **Stay tuned** for an online SLIG discussion about these topics in March.

Here are some suggested ways to communicate with Legislators:

1. Fill out a postcard on this site that advocates for a penny sales tax directed toward education funding. The WEA will print and mail the postcard for you. *You don't have to be a teacher or a WEA member to send a postcard through this site.*
<https://www.wealegislativeinfo.com/worth-every-penny>
2. Comment directly on proposed legislation. You have up to 140 characters to share your thoughts on each bill with your representative and/or senator. If you don't know their names, there is a link right on the form to find them.
<https://wyoleg.gov/postComments/hotlinedisclaimer.aspx>

Here are some bills that will impact education funding:

- HB 61 - ~\$100,000,000 in cuts to education funding. Right now the House proposes to backfill the cuts with a 1 penny sales tax. It's possible that the tax provision could be removed by the Senate, while leaving cuts in place.

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- HB 77 – District consolidation from 48 to 24 districts. More details on this bill will be coming. Soon.
 - HB 89 – 50% reduction in activity funds. 10% cut to admin salaries. 5 fewer staff development days for teachers with reduction in pay by that amount. Total elimination of instructional facilitator funding.
 - HB 106 – School choice bill that allows families to take their public school funding to a private school.
 - HB 129 - 100% cut for activity/sports funds. No School Foundation money would be allowed to pay for activities or transportation for activities. Suggestions to replace the funding include a recreational mill levy or charging students fees to participate in activities.
3. Hand-written postcards can also be effective.
- Here is a list of members of the Education Committee:
<https://www.wyoleg.gov/Committees/2021/J04>
 - House members possibly seem more open to engagement around finding new sources of revenue than Senate members. You can find out the names of your legislators here:
<http://redistricting.state.wy.us/planviewer/#6.71/43.033/-107.553>

It is important for legislators to hear from people across the state and from both **educators** and **non-educators**. The more voices saying we value education and don't want to see it face deep cuts, the better. So...spread the word!

Updates:

- National Action: In early January, SLIG joined 48 state-level school library associations, the ALA and AASL, in sending this [letter to the incoming Biden-Harris administration](#).
- Our SLIG member survey results from September communicated a desire from members for more professional development opportunities, and support in advocating for libraries and librarians in our schools. Our group is focused on providing both, and we're always open to hearing your ideas.

Building Community

- Get to know our state school library community! Add your voice to this [Flipgrid](#).
- To **view** videos, enter Join Code: **a2e27018**
- To **record** a video, **log in** with a Microsoft or Google account (personal or school).

Get Involved!

- Visit wyla.org/join-us to **become a member** of the Wyoming Library Association, and add **SLIG** as your interest group.
- Join our **Facebook** group: Wyoming School Libraries Group (SLIG) and Info. Power
- Join our e-mail **listservs**: [Wyoming Library Association](#) (All Libraries) and [SLIG](#)
- Join the WSLA Wyoming State Literacy Association

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

- **Spring 2021 Virtual Course: [AASL 2018 Standards for Wyoming Librarians](#)**
 - Get to know the AASL standards and find ways to connect them to your curriculum and students. Earn PTSB credit and connect with other Wyoming educators! More information coming soon.



- **AASL 2021:** Register by March 20 with the Registration code **AASL80** and you will receive \$80 off the conference price.

Register now and play later, and you can bring your administrator on your conference fee!

Resources

- [AASL Advocacy Resources](#) - a great toolkit and go-to for materials in support of your district's school libraries.
- [Every Library](#) - check out this nonprofit's resources to support libraries of all kinds.
- The [ALA Youth Media Awards](#) were announced in January 2021! Here are the standout titles from last year's books for kids and young adults.
- It's time to VOTE for this year's Wyoming Book Award nominees, and NOMINATE books for *next year's* award.
 - Gather votes from your students and submit them **on or before March 15th**. Gather nominations as soon as possible to submit to the committees, and at the latest by March 15th, to give them time to read & review titles.
 - All forms for voting and nominations are found on the [WYLA Book Awards webpage](#).

If there is anything you need from us, please don't hesitate to reach out!

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