

Governor's Advisory Council on Library Development

*September 17, 2020
Virtual Zoom Meeting*

Minutes - Draft

Members Present: David Belanger, Marsha Everton, Mary Garm, Rebecca Long, Allison Mackley, Beth Mellor, Larry Nesbit, Susan Werner, Barbara Zaborowski

Office of Commonwealth

Libraries (OCL): Susan Banks, Director, Bureau of Library Development (BLD)
Beth Bisbano, BLD, Library Development Advisor
Carrie Cleary, Executive Assistant, OCL
Sarah Greene, Director, Bureau of State Library (BSL)
Corri Hines, BLD Library Development Advisor, School-Age Services
Anne Kruger, BLD, Library Development Advisor
Ed Lupico, BLD, Library Development Advisor, Keystone Program
Glenn Miller, Deputy Secretary / Commissioner for Libraries
Stacey Mulligan, BLD, Library Development Advisor
Chris Noble, OCL, Administrative Officer
Heather Sharpe, BLD, Division Manager for Grants and Subsidies

Guests: Honorable Pedro Rivera, Secretary, PA Department of Education (PDE)

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Mary Garm called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. Council members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the July 21, 2020 meeting

Barbara Zaborowski moved that the minutes of the July 21, 2020 meeting be approved as submitted. Beth Mellor seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Chair's Report – Mary Garm

Garm explained that GAC started virtual meetings recently and were asked to consider recording of the meeting. The GAC encourages continued participation in these meetings. GAC meeting minutes are posted shortly after they have been approved. The GAC will explore recording the meetings and make them available after the meeting if accessibility issues and a place to post them can be resolved. Highlights of the meeting will come out approximately a week after the meeting. The Communications Committee is continuing work on this.

Garm announced that a former GAC member, **Lou LaBar**, will receive PaLA's Trustee of the Year Award during the conference. He is recently retired and will be honored for his work

with Wayne County libraries. The virtual awards ceremony is planned for Oct 1, and Garm will share details when available.

Garm took a moment to recognize and thank **Cindy Heasley**, OCL's former administrative assistant who accepted a position at the Pennsylvania State Employees Retirement System. Cindy was the organizer and handled arrangements for many GAC meetings and she will be missed. On behalf of the GAC, Garm wished her well in her new position. Until that position is filled, OCL's administrative officer, **Chris Noble**, will assume these responsibilities.

Garm added that there will be a special surprise guest joining the meeting later.

4. Deputy Secretary's Report – Glenn Miller

Miller began by explaining that OCL staff remains working via telework, committed until at least the end of December 2020. The State Library continues to operate remotely as long as the Capitol Complex remains closed.

Miller thanked Mary Garm for her recognition of Cindy Heasley's departure and Chris Noble's role in filling the gap. Miller recognized other OCL staff in attendance and welcomed OCL's new executive assistant, Carrie Cleary.

Acknowledging the great work carried out by local libraries, Miller noted that two days earlier, a federal judge in Pittsburgh struck down part of the Governor's pandemic response order regarding the size of gatherings. While there is a wide belief that this will be overturned, it will cause confusion during the interim. He urged all to continue to do their best to protect the health and safety of Pennsylvanians.

He reported that OCL continues to work on responding to systemic racism and white supremacy and all that involves. OCL has crafted and distributed three statements in support of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI.) OCL will share them widely after the meeting as attachments. Mandatory training for OCL staff will take place at the end of the month. Miller recognized and thanked Sarah Greene and the EDI Committee for leading the way. There is an ongoing emphasis on anti-racism efforts within PDE and across state government. He noted OCL desire to serve as a model for all libraries.

OCL continues to operate under a five-month state budget and the balance of the budget year will be decided by the legislature in November. For the Public Library Subsidy, libraries will experience a streamlined process that integrates the Application/Plan for Use of State Aid along with a simple form to apply for a waiver of standards. OCL will endeavor to accelerate the payment schedule as well.

Miller reported on the recently released study on Broadband Access across Pennsylvania conducted by the Joint State Government Committee (JSGC.) Unsurprisingly, connectivity remains a serious problem for many Pennsylvanians. Links were provided in the chat to the report from the JSGC: See [the Summary](#) and [full report](#). Recommendations we included were highlighted: broadband access projects and leverage for e-rate funding that will require some action and legislative approval. In the course of this work, we learned about a new connectivity resource created by the Penn State Extension Service which identifies a lack of connectivity down to the building structure level. This resource is divided into four regions and links are shared in chat:

- NW <https://bit.ly/PSUextNWPAservice>
- SW https://bit.ly/PSUEXT_SWPASDs

- NE <https://bit.ly/PSUEXNESDs>
- SE https://bit.ly/PSUEXT_SESDs

Related to connectivity, OCL will administer \$2 million in emergency educational relief in three parts: Increasing college affordability through deployment of Open Educational Resources (OER), \$500,000; Enhancing online homework help through POWER Library's Chat with a Librarian, \$100,000; and addressing broadband connectivity gaps, \$1.4 million. On the last project, OCL will leverage data from the Penn State Extension Service and coordinate with local libraries in a collaboration on projects in high-need areas and those ready to launch which may have an immediate impact. Special project information will be shared as the program takes shape.

On the broadband front, Miller noted the recent news released that KINBER, the developer and administrator of the Pennsylvania Research and Education Network (PennREN) announced that they will be selling off their fiber assets and will focus its energy on serving the connectivity needs of higher education, libraries, and non-profits.

He updated the Council on the Forum Building renovations. A general contractor has been selected but the construction schedule is not yet released. Good news: bids came in at prices that allowed the Department of General Services to include a full restoration of the State Library's Main Reading Room in the building renovation project.

Upcoming virtual meetings include the Fall Meeting of the Council of State Library Agencies (COSLA) originally planned for Austin, Texas, and the Pennsylvania Library Association Annual Conference in October which will include a number of OCL staff as presenters and attendees.

Finally, Miller noted that he will invite PDE's new Acting Secretary of Education Noe Ortega, to attend a future GAC meeting. Ortega had been PDE Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education since 2017.

5. Special Guest: Honorable Pedro Rivera

Mary Garm welcomed Secretary of Education, Pedro Rivera, and congratulated him on his new position, president of the Thaddeus Steven College of Technology in Lancaster, effective October 1, 2020. Garm noted that one of the very first meetings that Secretary Rivera attended was a GAC meeting and that the library community is grateful for his years of service and leadership of the Department. She expressed sadness at his departure but excitement over his new position and invited the Secretary to offer some comments.

Secretary Rivera thanked Mary Garm for her comments and reminisced about his tenure as Secretary and his work with Glenn Miller as Deputy Secretary. He expressed appreciation to the GAC for recommending Miller for the deputy position and noted that he has become a trusted colleague and friend while constantly advocating on behalf of libraries. He also remarked on Miller's sense of humor which is a great quality to have especially over these recent stressful months.

Rivera expanded on his new role at Thaddeus Stevens, a two-year technical education school with a mission and purpose to uplift and serve the underserved—an opportunity to make a difference in a direct way. It was a hard decision to leave his position, but this was the only position he would have left for. This move is an opportunity for him to engage more personally and directly with underserved populations.

He reflected on his time as Secretary especially leading through COVID-19 and the civil unrest. The heightened focus on racism forces us all to do a lot of soul searching. During the early stages of the pandemic, the first issue was how to feed families, then how to support them with health care access, social services, mental health, and more issues all exacerbated by the pandemic. He expressed thanks and pride in the PDE team that worked hard to continue serving communities.

He noted that every individual student and family circumstances are different. As Secretary Rivera transitions, Deputy Secretary Noe Ortega will assume the role of Acting Secretary. He believes that the GAC and libraries will continue to have the ear of the new Secretary. PDE has great talent on the team and will continue to do great, focused work as members of the leadership team take on some new responsibilities, and new members join.

Mary Garm invited Council members to offer their comments for the Secretary.

Marsha Everton offered personal thanks for his support and acknowledgement of libraries and librarians as individuals. Librarians drive and develop to prepare us for the 21st century.

Barb Zaborwski offered thanks to Secretary Rivera for his work and that of special assistant Judd Pittman. She noted that we are working hard around the state to partner businesses, libraries, and municipalities. Rivera's vision for equity and STEM has carried through all the work being done by Judd and others.

Allison Mackley noted that the Secretary may not remember, but their first meeting was 2008 in Lancaster. She thanked him for making sure school librarians are at the table with ESSA work groups, for example. Subsequently, opportunities for teacher/school librarian voices have been heard and included. We appreciated your transparency, integrity, and grace.

Glenn Miller thanked the Secretary for being a great leader. He believes that the senior leadership functioned well as a team because of the Secretary's tone and integrity and his constant focus on doing the right thing even if it's the hardest thing. The PDE senior staff was fortunate to benefit from his vision and his leadership.

Mary Garm offered appreciation for the Secretary and all that he was open to. His influence on the GAC to focus on workforce development and educational equity remains hugely important to the future of libraries.

The Secretary thanked everyone for their kind remarks and called libraries a "special group." He promised to carry forward his support of libraries in his new role at Thaddeus Stevens.

6. LSTA Spotlight – Toward Gigabit Libraries in PA / Jennifer Oxenford, Director of Research and Community Engagement, KINBER

Mary Garm introduced Jennifer Oxenford from KINBER, noting the organization's role in providing broadband access and conducting trainings and webinars. She is here to update the GAC on the Toward Gigabit Libraries project. Oxenford's presentation slides may be reviewed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/17-RJdZw2PeeUo-qs-2V7ujsko1qizk0/view?usp=sharing>

Oxenford expressed appreciation for the opportunity to update the GAC and thanked Glenn Miller for sharing the news about KINBER's forthcoming sale of network assets. She

believes that this will enable KINBER to be in a stronger position to assist libraries with their connectivity challenges.

She provided the GAC with some background about KINBER which created the 18,000-mile PennREN network for research and education serving un/underserved, and which positioned Pennsylvania as a leader in broadband. This project included library network assessments to help libraries improve their technology infrastructure. She noted the importance of providing opportunities for training and awareness for broadband. KINBER facilitates partnerships and encourages libraries to understand and build their capacity. She thanked the inaugural group of 2020 Fellows as well as those libraries partnered with the Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC) on an active install project.

Garm invited Council member to offer feedback or ask questions.

Marsha Everton noted how difficult it is for education staff to work with students who don't have broadband access but also some of the hurdles that exist within certain learning platforms. Oxenford agreed noting that it is not enough to solve the connectivity problem, that the learning platform needs to be able to support the work of students and teachers.

Beth Mellor asked for Oxenford's observations on the biggest obstacle that she confronts as she travels around the state. Oxenford answered is that it is not that libraries don't recognize the importance of it, but the biggest challenge is they don't have anybody to help them. It is a resource challenge to run a library network. Some libraries are resource trapped because they don't have staff/capacity—and need support and funding—sometimes it's as small as a \$200 router.

Mary Garm asked for libraries not involved with ITDRC to this point, what can they do in the future? Oxenford agreed that it has been a challenge to communicate the availability of the resources and would welcome any advice on spreading the word. It is still open to everyone and the recording of an information webinar is available in the archive. It's a simple process of submitting a request via the project connect site. They will be in touch from there. Oxenford shared this link: <https://www.itdrc.org/projectconnect>

7. Special Guests – Workforce Development in PA Public Libraries / Ashley Flynn, Cambria County Library, and Jennifer Knisely, Altoona Area Public Library

Stacey Mulligan introduced Ashley Flynn and Jennifer Knisely to speak about Workforce Development. Mulligan noted that many more job seekers exist now more than ever and it's a good time to consider how you might co-locate or share resources. Flynn and Knisely will share some information and updates about their projects.

Flynn and Knisely shared a PowerPoint presentation entitled: Partnering with PA CareerLink: Colocation Efforts in Cambria and Blair Counties. These were quick-moving projects to apportion space in library facilities to CareerLink staff and services. Both libraries adjusted what they had to make space. For both, it was a process of getting buy-in and approvals but has resulted in a big success. Staff from both the libraries and from CareerLink had to adapt to the changes and work out things together. Among the many issues to be resolved were shared breakrooms, parking, meshing work cultures, and the costs for physical improvements. Benefits include increased foot traffic, better access to literacy and legal aid programs, and improved workforce resources and programs.

Becca Long asked about efforts to mitigate noise, perhaps acoustic tiles? Flynn noted that their building has asbestos ceilings which limited options. Instead, the library has branded the first floor with CareerLink as the “social floor” and their second floor as quiet space.

Mary Garm asked Flynn and Knisely if they would do it again? Both indicated yes while acknowledging that not every library has the space to do a co-location. Garm noted that the GAC hopes to visit one of these sites in the future as a past meeting had been scheduled for Altoona but was cancelled due to COVID-19.

8. Reports from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

Bureau of Library Development – Sue Banks, director

Banks provided a written report which may be accessed at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SL1hlp2gFBwUC53G3aAky5pKI4nnU87R/view?usp=sharing>

Sue Banks offered some highlights from that report. Thanks to BLD folks a great end to the LSTA year. There are lots of other big things happening: Trina Walker and Amy Geisinger working on board retreats, information about CARES funding, Keystone, and the new Public Library Subsidy application process are just a few.

Banks introduced Library Advisor, Corri Hines, who reviewed efforts to build stronger relationships between public and school librarians to benefit young people. She is working with leaders at the Pennsylvania Library Association and the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association to explore shared values and opportunities for growth, safe spaces, support systems, and connected learning ecosystems. The short-term goal is to establish a committee of school librarians and public library youth services district coordinators to further dialogue, sharing, and collaboration benefit all of Pennsylvania’s young people. She offered special thanks to PaLA’s Christi Buker and PSLA’s Cathi Fuhrman.

Banks concluded with brief comments about BLD’s connectivity project in the planning stages, and the forthcoming new identity for Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. It will soon be known as Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians (LAMP) offering a new consolidated approach to statewide services for the print disabled. A new website, mylamp.org, will go live early in 2021.

Bureau of State Library – Sarah Greene, director

The State Library remains closed for in-person service at least through the end of December. No in-person services can restart until the Capitol Complex reopens. Staff members are providing services virtually and doing work online.

As Glenn mentioned, bids for the Forum Building renovation are completed and everyone at the State Library is excited that the Main Reading Room will be renovated just as the Law Library was several years ago. While the Forum Building remains closed, BSL staff continue twice-a-week monitoring of the building environment and the condition of the collections.

BSL’s Makerspace now is conducting online programming. They hosted 10 summer classes as well as a weekly coding class for homeschoolers. They plan to have a full session through the end of December.

9. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

Garm opened the floor for comments on any agenda items. None were offered.

10. Update on Lancaster Public Library and District Library Center – Sue Banks

At the outset, OCL understands that what is happening in Lancaster could well be precedent setting for all District Library Centers (DLC.) As such, we are taking the time to do this as a collaborative project with good feedback loops and incorporating current info about access, services, and priorities for DLCs. Garm and Banks are working on the process and ways to facilitate focused conversations about modernizing district services within the confines of current regulations. The process is expected to get underway hopefully by October.

11. State Budget and Public Library Funding – Glenn Miller

Already briefly covered and much remains unknown about what may happen in November. Christi Buker from PALA later may offer some helpful perspective about the work that needs to be done prior to the legislature taking up the seven-month budget.

12. School Libraries Update – Allison Mackley

GAC member and past PSLA president, Allison Mackley updated the Council on what's happening in school libraries. At the outset, she noted that the emerging collaboration between public and school libraries reported earlier in the meeting is fantastic and exciting. She added that, starting in October, PSLA will launch a major focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion, seeking to infuse these values throughout all of the work of the association.

Starting back to school was difficult with different circumstances for everyone. Some librarians were furloughed or lost jobs, and some aides and paraprofessionals lost jobs. Budgets for materials were cut in some districts. Mackley expressed great thanks for OCL's POWER Library because it sustains resources for every library during times like these.

Mackley noted that school librarians are becoming even more valuable because they can find online resources that teachers can use for remote instruction. Many school librarians have additional degrees and a number have been re-purposed based on other certifications and subject area expertise. Allison noted that even a large well-funded school district like her own did not rehire a middle school librarian after a retirement. Allison will do that work now as she continues to work on programming and Zoom into classes for instruction.

She called GAC members' attention to important pandemic-related resources developed by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL.) They have led the way by creating specific information about the librarian's crucial role titled, AASL School Librarian Role in Pandemic Learning Conditions:

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/advocacy/SchoolLibrarianRolePandemicResourcesChart200713.pdf>

Finally, she highlighted another dimension of school librarians' work related to the social and emotional well-being of students. She serves on the Pennsylvania Teacher's Advisory Committee working with PDE working on these issues. The Committee put forward three recommendations and the first references the role that school librarians play in focusing on the holistic well-being of all students.

Beth Mellor welcomed Mackley's report and commented that despite circumstances created by COVID-19 and Mackley's report at the prior GAC meeting, things seem to have stabilized a bit as the valuable roles of school librarians are more widely communicated.

13. Rare Books Fund Update – Larry Nesbit

For the first time in many quarters, due to the Forum Building closure and limitations of COVID-19, there are no transactions for new materials or repairs to report. Balance in the rare collections fund stands at \$207,012.95.

14. Committee Reports

Bylaws Committee—Committee Chair, Larry Nesbit, noted that since COVID-19 limits the GAC's ability to meet in person, the Council should amend their bylaws to indicate that GAC business may be conducted by means of a virtual meeting. Nesbit offered a first reading of a proposed motion to amend the GAC Bylaws in the Meetings Section:

“Any Council meeting may be conducted solely by one or more means of remote communication through which all of the Council members may participate with each other during the meeting, if the number of Council members participating in the meeting would be sufficient to constitute a quorum. Participation in a virtual meeting constitutes presence in person at the meeting.”

Garm asked that any questions be forwarded to her and noted that a vote on this could be anticipated at the December meeting.

Allison Mackley suggested that there may be other things in the bylaws, last updated in 2014, that could be updated. Mary Garm explained that Nesbit currently is the only committee member, a Chair, but said they could appoint members if bylaws work is needed. Garm called for volunteers. Allison Mackley, Barbara Zaborowski, and Larry Nesbit volunteered.

Communications Committee—Committee Chair, Marsha Everton, thanked Beth Mellor for taking the lead and using her expertise to summarize our meetings for public distribution.

Legislative Committee – Committee Chair, Allison Mackley, updated the Council on PA Virtual Library Advocacy Day, September 21, 2020 and asked **PaLA's** executive director, **Christi Buker** to provide more details.

Buker noted that everything is different and unusual this year, but that advocacy is more important than ever in light of the five-month/seven-month budget for many state agencies including libraries. She indicated that virtual advocacy is not the norm and that PaLA conducted some training and provided talking points that are available at:

<https://www.palibraries.org/blogpost/1652016/356029/PA-Library-Legislative-Day--Sept-21>

While there are four library line items, the primary goal is to secure level funding for all four and especially for the Public Library Subsidy which would protect the \$5 million increase from the previous year. She is confident that House Appropriations Committee chairman Stan Saylor will advocate for level funding. She acknowledges that this year is especially difficult with COVID and a huge hole in the budget caused by decreased tax revenues.

Buker urged all to participate in Legislative Day because repetition is needed for our message about the value of libraries supporting all areas of education and helping people find jobs or access to health care. The talking points are very generic, not a script. She encouraged people to take the time contact their legislators and ask a question or share a story about the great things your library is doing and how level funding will allow you to continue to serve their constituents. Everyone is welcome to participate and, if you do, you'll be asked to submit a simple follow-up report form about your meeting.

One other note of interest. Buker reported that the ALA President, Julius Jefferson, began his intended national bus tour of libraries with a virtual visit to the Cambria County Library to learn about their workforce partnership with CareerLink. She noted that this also provided a spotlight for one of PA Forward's Gold Star Libraries.

Guidelines and Policies Committee—Committee Chair, David Belanger. No meetings and nothing to report.

Planning Committee—Committee Chair, Mary Garm. No meetings and nothing to report.

15. Public Comment

Mary Garm invited comments from the Council or any attendees.

Maryam Phillips from **HSLC** provided updates on the POWER Library. In advance of the meeting, she shared a handout summarizing information in her verbal report. Currently with no travel permitted, all training has been conducted virtually. HSLC is sending out special packages to promote resources and reinforce the value of POWER Library during the pandemic. HSLC estimates that the e-resources within POWER Library save a K-12 school over \$59,000/year and save a public library over \$86,000.

Another project in the works is a beta-test of school district level authentication for K-12 schools. This allows a school to integrate POWER Library authentication into a single sign on—without having to enter additional logins. This will facilitate ease-of-use for students learning in remote environments at home.

Finally, HSLC launched an OER lesson plans hub which is designed to help create packaged lesson plans that leverage the resources in POWER Library. Phillips provided a link to the hub: <https://lessonplans.powerlibrary.org>

GAC member, **Marsha Everton**, shared two things that are coming up now in other organizations she works with. The first is the possible need for scenario planning around potential social unrest particularly around the November election. The second is growing and clear evidence of a second wave of employee burnout due to COVID. Everton describes this as a normal and expected but that all of our organizations should be keeping close tabs on both issues as upcoming weeks unfold.

16. Adjourn

David Belanger moved that the meeting be adjourned. Barb Zaborowski seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carrie Cleary, Executive Assistant, Office of Commonwealth Libraries

Meeting Dates for 2020

October 21	PaLA Conference, Virtual (morning meeting 9:00 a.m.)
December 3	Virtual Business Meeting