

THE ENVOY Newsletter

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NEWSLETTER FOR IDAHO LIBRARY TRUSTEES BY THE IDAHO COMMISSION FOR LIBRARIES

Summer Reading is Relevant for Everyone . . . including Trustees

by ICfL Library Consultant Emily Sitz

Whatever role you play in support of your library -- staff member, trustee, volunteer, or member of the friends group -- you are also a "brand ambassador" for your library and its many amazing offerings -- like summer reading.

One of the biggest and most relevant programs public libraries do each year is summer reading (and learning). Do you know why your library's summer reading program is important?

More than 30 years of studies consistently show that students who do not continue reading over the summer can lose several months of academic progress.¹ For example, in Idaho, 76 percent of low-income kindergartners were reading at grade level in the spring of 2016. When they returned to school as first-graders in the fall, only 57 percent were reading at grade level.²

Public libraries throughout Idaho help curtail the "summer slide" of learning loss by offering reading and education programs within their buildings, as well as out in the community. Library staff routinely go where the kids are, which is particularly important for low-income children who tend to have few books in the home and limited access to their local library.

In 2017, more than 53,900 Idaho children and teens participated in their library's summer reading programs, and another 59,600 were served through library outreach programs.³

And summer reading and learning activities are not just for the kids. Plenty of Idahoans who are young at heart enjoy reading and partaking in their library's summer fun.

Is your library prepared for the summer onslaught? The library board should help ensure that the library is ready, through one of the trustees' most important responsibilities -- oversight.

Some things the library board should pay particular attention to:

Understanding -- Do the library staff and board members understand why your summer reading program is important?

Coverage -- Is there adequate and appropriate staff coverage to accommodate the increased library usage and program activity?

Statistics -- Are your summer reading program statistics being collected and monitored?

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MISSION

The Idaho Commission for Libraries assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their communities.

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Tell Your Whole Summer Reading Story by ICfL Library Consultant Patrick Bodily

To tell the whole story of your library's summer reading program with statistics, be sure to keep track of inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

Inputs are the things that your library puts into summer reading -- dollars spent, staff time, number of programs, etc.

Outputs are the things that happen because of the inputs you had -- number of attendees, people who signed up for summer reading, pages read, etc.

Outcomes, on the other hand, are a bit harder to report on. Outcomes are the "so what" of statistics. What happened because of your summer reading program. How many children improved their reading level? How many people reported that they were more likely to read for pleasure?

A great place to learn about collecting outcomes in Project Outcome¹, which is a free toolkit provided by the Public Library Association. It is designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of library services and programs.

¹ <https://www.projectoutcome.org>

Updated Trustee Manual Available on ICfL Website

In Idaho, the public library board of trustees is a governing, policy-making body that is elected or appointed to govern the library. The library's director is appointed by the board to administer the library and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the library.

The responsibilities of the library board include governance, finance, personnel/human resources, and service and community relations.

For more information and resources, including the "Idaho Trustee Manual," please visit the Idaho Commission for Libraries' website at: <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/trustees>.

Trustee ListServe

Truldaho is an email discussion list for public library trustees in Idaho. Truldaho is provided by the Idaho Library Association.

To subscribe to Truldaho:

1. Go to <http://lists.ala.org/sypa/info/truidaho>.
2. Select "subscribe" in the sidebar.
3. Enter your email address, then click "submit."
4. Check your email for an authentication request and click the URL provided to verify.

Summer Reading is Relevant for Everyone . . . including Trustees

by ICfL Library Consultant Emily Sitz Continued from Cover Page.

Evaluation -- Is your summer reading program evaluated?

Outcomes -- Does your summer reading evaluation include program outcomes? (i.e., how the program positively affected the children in your community)? More on this on page 2.

Advocacy -- Your summer reading program is a great topic to discuss with your legislators (invite them into the library to see what's going on!) and share with your community. There are a variety of outlets you can use, such as: email; newsletters; press releases/traditional media; social media; informal presentations to local groups and organizations; and the grassroots approach, like chatting with the person behind you in line for coffee or sitting next to you at a baseball game.

Summer is also the perfect time to take the Idaho [Trustee Challenge](#), which encourages you to contact your state legislators (at least) three times before the start of the new legislative session in January 2019.

Craft a few talking points that include your relevant summer reading statistics and information from your program evaluations. Also, there is state and national data that can be utilized. Some of that information is listed here and more may be found under the "sources" and "resources" sections at the end of this article.

- More than 30 years of studies consistently show that students who do not continue reading over the summer lose as much as three to four months of academic progress.¹ Our summer reading program helps students maintain and/or improve their skill.
- By the end of the sixth grade, much of the achievement gap between high-income and low-income children can be attributed to loss of learning over the summer months. Some studies estimate this gap to be as much as three years' worth of learning.¹ Access to their local public library and its programs and materials ensures that all children have quality reading materials and learning opportunities throughout the year.
- Data shows that 64 percent of fourth-graders in Idaho are not proficient readers.⁴ The library's summer reading program is a powerful tool to combat this deficit in our community.
- When children choose their own reading material and read for enjoyment, they make the greatest strides in reading achievement.⁵ Public libraries offer a wide variety of reading materials and educational activities that make summer reading and learning an exciting adventure for children and teens throughout the Gem State.

As an advocate (promoter, cheerleader, publicist, and more!) for your library, understanding the importance of summer reading and being able to articulate it to others is critical. And just like summer, your opportunities to share this vital information will fade quickly.

So, the next time you're talking with a neighbor at a yard sale or you spot a local official at a town gathering, take a moment to tell them about the importance of summer reading and the value of their public library.

Sources: ¹ "Summer Reading: Closing the Rich/Poor Achievement Gap," Richard L. Allington and Anne McGill-Franzen, 2013.

²State of Idaho Department of Education. ³State of Idaho: 2017 Idaho Public Library Statistics.

⁴"2017 Kids Count Data Book," The Annie E. Casey Foundation. ⁵"The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research (2nd ed.)," Stephen Krashen, 2004.

Resources: Summer Learning Loss" [video](#) that explains summer learning loss, particularly as it relates to low-income children.

FREE Online Learning Opportunity for Idaho 4-Year-Olds

The Idaho State Department of Education partnered with Achieve3000® to offer free access for 4-year-olds in Idaho to SmartyAnts®, which is an online, interactive, reading-readiness application.

The primary goal of SmartyAnts® is to help youngsters build strong early literacy skills so they are prepared for kindergarten.

SmartyAnts® joins other electronic educational and reading tools, such as Tumblebooks, that parents and caregivers can utilize in conjunction with more traditional resources to develop and reinforce their child's early literacy skills, which include print awareness, vocabulary, and the identification of letters and their sounds.

State Librarian Ann Joslin said, "This free, online tool is a good resource for Idaho parents as they prepare their children for kindergarten." Joslin continued, "SmartyAnts can be accessed from a home computer or device or from the computer that is as close as the nearest public library."

Parents can activate their free SmartyAnts® subscription by visiting: achieve3000.com/SmartyIDAHO or by calling 1-877-235-2525 and using the code: SmartyIDAHO.

A SmartyAnts® toolkit, which includes a variety of resources, in English and Spanish, may be downloaded by visiting: <http://ww2.achieve3000.com/IdahoToolkit>.



Aberdeen Library District Broadens Its Horizons

Director Stephanie Adamson of the Aberdeen Library District is broadening the horizons of the library -- and the community -- through a new partnership with Idaho State University (ISU). Adamson worked with ISU College and Career Readiness Program Director Korey Mereness to make the library the community's adult education site, upon the retirement of the program's instructor. Refreshing the program has brought it increased awareness and usage by the Aberdeen community.

If your library is located in southeastern Idaho, and you would like information about resources related to college and career readiness, contact Korey Mereness at 208-282-4133 or via email at: merekore@isu.edu.

Sandpoint Branch Expands

The Sandpoint branch of the East Bonner County Library District has been undergoing an expansion and remodelling project that brought a beautiful transformation to the space and will allow for such improvements as: an enlarged children's area; a new teen room; expanded collections; additional computers; more meeting and programming space; and a new literacy tutoring room.

To find out more, visit: <http://www.ebonnerlibrary.org/index.php/expansion-and-fundraising-info>.

Is Your Internet Traffic Gridlocked?



Do your staff and patrons travel your library's internet like they're cruising down the open road in a sports car, or is it more like a Southern California freeway at rush hour -- gridlock. If your broadband could use a boost, there are programs that can make that happen -- at little or no cost.

E-rate is the federal mechanism through which libraries and schools obtain high-speed internet access at a rate discounted from the provider of between 20 and 90 percent. In Idaho, the portion of the

internet access costs not discounted under E-rate can then be eligible for reimbursement from the State under its Education Opportunity Resource (EOR) Act.

[Idaho Code 33-5604 3](#) requires the libraries and schools that participate in EOR make a good-faith effort to provide their **bandwidth utilization data** to the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) and the State Department of Education (SDE), so that the levels of internet service can be determined for the state's libraries and schools.

Because many schools and libraries have not gathered their own bandwidth utilization data, the SDE has developed a pilot program to do it for them -- at no cost.

The SDE's Broadband Program Coordinator Mike Costa has been assisting libraries to set up small, unobtrusive software "probes" on the networks of schools and libraries, to gather their bandwidth utilization data. What is bandwidth utilization? Simply put, it is a measure of how much bandwidth (or internet speed) is being used at a snapshot in time.

For example, if a library has an internet connection with a 50 Mbps (megabits per second) download speed, bandwidth utilization can show if the library is consistently maxing out its 50-Mbps-connection, and if so, on what days and at what times that is happening.

This data is invaluable for a library to determine the priority of getting a faster internet connection with greater bandwidth. This data can also demonstrate to stakeholders how much the library's internet connection is being used, including increases over time. You can generate reports of this data that cover a time frame of your choice, such as a week, or month, or all of 2018.

Ultimately, all libraries that participate in EOR (and E-rate) will be included in the SDE's pilot program. There will be no cost for the library to participate, and the process to get started is fairly straightforward. A sensor is placed on the library's network to gather its bandwidth utilization data.

If your library participates in EOR and has not been contacted about this utilization pilot, you can expect the ICfL's Broadband Consultant, Dylan Baker, to introduce you to the SDE's Mike Costa sometime soon. (Mike is working hard this summer to get more libraries into the pilot program, while schools are out of session.)

To request your inclusion in this pilot and/or to learn more about it, please contact the ICfL's Dylan Baker at 208-639-4167 or via email at: dylan.baker@libraries.idaho.gov.



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Idaho Opportunity Scholarship for Adult Learners

During the 2018 legislative session, the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship for Adult Learners was created. This is a great opportunity for Idaho library staff who need to complete their undergraduate degree to pursue further studies in librarianship.

The Opportunity Scholarship for Adult Learners awards eligible applicants up to \$3,500 per year and is renewable for up to four years. The application period opened on July 1, 2018 and will close three weeks prior to the start of the fall semester.

Some of the requirements are:

- Have a unweighted, cumulative GPA of least 2.7;
- Be an Idaho resident;
- Must be working toward your first undergraduate degree;
- Must have earned at least 24 credits before any cease in enrollment;
- Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

For more information, visit: <https://boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships/idaho-opportunity-scholarship-for-adult-learners/>.

Changes to Contact Info

If you have a new trustee and/or the contact information for a trustee or director has changed, please contact **John Shinn** at the ICfL with that information.

John's email is: john.shinn@libraries.idaho.gov. The phone number is 208-334-2150 / 800-458-3271.



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