2019 State Legislative Update – Library-related items

Public Libraries

The City of Saint Paul supports legislation that will ensure that the Saint Paul Public Library has the resources necessary to provide high quality educational tools and programming. The City supports funding for Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS), Regional Library Telecommunication Aid (RLTA), and continuing access to Legacy/Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund for public library programs.

- On Tuesday, February 26th, the House Education Finance Committee heard testimony related to **HF 1282,** authored by Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown).

  HF 1282 would add $4 million/year to the current $13.57 million/year base for Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS). The bill also amends the RLBSS distribution formula, as agreed to by the governing boards of all 12 regional public library systems. The new plan would move more funding into "base" factor providing more stability as funds are distributed annually to each region -- and generating more aid for the smaller, rural regions. **The bill also creates additional allowable uses under the Regional Library Telecommunication Aid (RLTA) program.** Governor Walz included the library community's RLTA recommendations in his education budget plan. HF 1282 will now be considered for inclusion in the final House Omnibus Education bill.

- **A hearing for the companion Senate bill (SF 1704) is planned for Wednesday (March 6th) in the E-12 Finance and Policy Committee.** The chief author for the Senate file is Sen. Mark Johnson (R-East Grand Forks). At this point, the file is identical to the House version described above -- with both RLBSS and RLTA components.

High Quality Afterschool and Summer Learning

High-quality afterschool and summer learning programs have evidence-based benefits that will positively impact the persistent challenges facing Saint Paul's young people, families, businesses, educators, and communities. The City of Saint Paul supports new state public funding for competitive grants for afterschool and summer programs targeted to youth below 185% of poverty

- The **Afterschool Community Learning Program** is a competitive grants program that has not had an appropriation since 2009. Rep. Fue Lee is chief author on **HF 907 to appropriate 12.1million/year for competitive grants under this program.** His bill updates bill language as well. It requires partnership and does allow government entities including schools, cities, libraries to apply. This bill has been heard by House Education FInance and was laid over for possible inclusion in the House education omnibus bill. There is a companion bill in the Senate chief authored by Senator Eichorn-SF1428, but no hearing date has been set for the Senate bill.

- The Governor's budget did not include afterschool funding. It did include a small amount of funding for community schools which can include afterschool.

Other matters of interest:

- Sen. Wiger has also introduced **SF 81, a bill to establish a Minnesota Reads Task Force.** The task force would advise the Education Commissioner on matters related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs designed to increase the reading proficiency of children and adults. A companion House bill (HF 835) has been authored by Rep. Shelley Christensen. No hearings or committee actions in the House or Senate have been posted at this time.