

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



CARL E. HEASTIE, SPEAKER
KIMBERLY JEAN-PIERRE, CHAIR

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES & EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Libraries and Education
Technology

Legislative Women's Caucus

COMMITTEES

Banks

Children and Families

Corporations, Authorities and

Commissions

Education

Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian

Legislative Caucus

Task Force on Women's Issues

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December 15, 2021

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to present to you the 2021 Annual Report for the Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology. The work accomplished during the unprecedented 2021 legislative session reflects the commitment of the Committee and myself to ensure libraries and library systems throughout the state can continue to be community hubs providing critical services, educational resources, and access to information for all New Yorkers.

This year, the Assembly Majority and the Committee remained dedicated to increasing resources for libraries throughout New York State. The 2021-22 enacted state budget provided \$94.1 million in state aid for libraries and library systems and increased capital funding for library projects to \$34 million.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for their continued contributions to this past year's achievements. Finally, Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership and support of our libraries.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Jean-Pierre
Chair, Committee on Libraries and Education
Technology

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

**NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

Kimberly Jean-Pierre, Chair

Committee Members

Majority

Michaelle C. Solages
Inez E. Dickens
Yuh-Line Niou
Karen M. McMahon
Jennifer A. Lunsford

Minority

Josh Jensen, *Ranker*
Mary Beth Walsh

Majority Staff

Maria Volpe-McDermott, Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy
Benjamin Decker, Associate Counsel
Hannah Gauthier, Committee Assistant
Abigail Mellon, Program and Counsel Executive Secretary

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I. COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology was created in 1997. It has jurisdiction over legislation affecting public, academic, school and special libraries as well as the administration and funding of libraries and library systems across New York State. The Committee has endeavored to assist libraries in sustaining and upgrading their infrastructure, as well as meeting the challenges of the information age. Libraries have become modern community centers playing an integral part in the education and cultural development of New Yorkers.

New York State is home to a total of 73 library systems: 23 public library systems, nine reference and research library systems, and 40 school library systems. There are 755 public libraries statewide. Six of the 40 largest libraries in the United States are in New York, more than any other state. New York's largest library, the New York Public Library, contains over 10 million volumes and is among the top research institutions in the world. Statewide, over 19 million people utilize New York State's public library systems. From the largest library to the smallest community-based book exchange, all of New York's libraries play a vital role in our communities.

During the 2021 legislative session, 15 bills were referred to the Libraries and Education Technology Committee. This report provides a detailed examination of the Committee's budgetary and legislative achievements in 2021.

II. STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

New York State libraries work hard to meet the diverse needs of our state. The Committee's efforts and commitment to providing libraries with sufficient funding reflects the Assembly's longstanding support for libraries and the educational, economic, and cultural roles they play in their communities.

State Aid

Chapter 917 of the Laws of 1990 established a formula to provide stable funding for libraries and library systems based on the most recent census data.

The Legislature provided \$94.1 million in state aid for libraries and library systems.

The Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL) is a free library service for eligible residents of upstate New York who are unable to use standard print materials due to a visual or physical disability. TBBL serves over 15,000 New Yorkers. The Legislature maintained funding for the Conservation and Preservation Program and the Talking Book and Braille Library at a combined \$693,000.

The Legislature also maintained \$250,000 for the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and \$75,000 for the Langston Hughes Community Library.

Capital

The Legislature provided \$34 million in funding to continue statewide library capital projects, an increase of \$14 million from the 2020-21 state fiscal year.

III. IMPROVING AND EXPANDING NEW YORK STATE LIBRARIES

The Committee acted on several important measures this session designed to expand and improve libraries throughout New York State.

A.6121-B, Jean-Pierre; Chapter 468 of the Laws of 2021: This law requires all members of library boards to complete a minimum of two hours of trustee education annually from a provider approved by the Commissioner of Education, beginning January 1, 2023.

A.6163-A, Darling, Chapter 511 of the Laws of 2021: This law moves the date of the Uniondale Public Library District board of trustees' election from the first Tuesday in December to the third Tuesday in October, removes the requirement of land ownership for running as a trustee, and makes various changes related to absentee ballots, notice, polling hours, election inspectors, and nominating petitions.

A.7021, Jean-Pierre; Chapter 563 of the Laws of 2021: This law streamlines and modernizes library aid formulas and program requirements and extends the time period in which a library can use library construction grant funds.

A.7060-A, Jean-Pierre; Chapter 627 of the Laws of 2021: This law increases the percentage of library capital funds that may be used to subsidize public library construction projects in economically distressed communities that have less than a 25% match from 10% to 50%.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Adaptation and Recovery of Libraries throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic

November 16, 2021

10:00 A.M.

Albany, New York

The Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology held a hearing on Tuesday, November 16, 2021 on the adaption and recovery of libraries throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the Committee sought to hear testimony on how libraries have adapted and recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic by utilizing different technologies, community partnerships, and creative approaches to best serve their communities.

The Committee heard testimony from the State Education Department, the New York Library Association, the Long Island Library Resources Council, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Lindenhurst Memorial Library, and the Monroe Library System.

The Committee heard how libraries are evolving institutions, serving as vaccination centers, food pantry drop-off locations, and internet hot spots. The Committee also heard about the future funding needs of libraries, how libraries became a hub for nontraditional services, and the crucial support libraries and library systems provide across New York State.

V. OUTLOOK FOR 2022

For the upcoming legislative session, the Committee will further its efforts to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on libraries and library systems as they continue to meet the diverse and changing needs of their communities. Now more than ever, the Committee must ensure digital equity and bolster access to technology to enable individuals and families around the state to attend school, go to work, and connect with their communities during these unprecedented times.

In addition, the Committee will continue to advocate for an increase in Aid to Public Libraries and capital funding to ensure our libraries are adequately funded.

Finally, the Committee will continue to advance local legislation important to the library community. With an increasingly diverse New York State population, we must provide each library with the flexibility it needs to properly serve the needs of its community.

APPENDIX A

**SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON
LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD: 1

	<u>ASSEMBLY BILLS</u>	<u>SENATE BILLS</u>	<u>TOTAL BILLS</u>
BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO			
TO CODES	0	0	0
TO JUDICIARY	0	0	0
TO WAYS AND MEANS	3	0	3
TO RULES	1	0	1
TO FLOOR	0	0	0
TOTAL	4	0	4
COMMITTEE ACTION			
HELD FOR CONSIDERATION	0	0	0
DEFEATED	0	0	0
ENACTING CLAUSE STRICKEN	0	0	0
REMAINING IN COMMITTEE	11	1	12
BILLS REFERENCE CHANGED TO:			
TOTAL	1	0	1