

# The 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature & Libraries

Texas Library Association  
[www.txla.org/advocate](http://www.txla.org/advocate)  
PDF Version of Newsletter



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## **Table of Contents**

1. [Session Overview](#)
2. [Action Needed](#)
3. [Tools for Advocating](#)
4. [Virtual Action Day – Feb. 12](#)
5. [The Funding Issues](#)
6. [School Librarian Certification](#)
7. [School Librarian Standards](#)
8. [Telecommunications](#) Program for Libraries, Schools, and Universities
9. [Legislative PreConference](#)
10. [Stipends for PreConference](#)
11. [LSTA Reauthorization](#)

## **Dear Librarians, Friends, Educators, and Advocates,**

The 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature has now started, and our collective action is needed. Now and throughout the session, we need you to contact your state elected officials and ask them to support funding for libraries.

We ask you to email, write, call, or visit your legislators' offices. Get to know the office staff as well as your legislator. Your mission is to offer them your unique reasons for urging their active support for library funding initiatives. You can continue communications with them throughout the session by: providing updates on your own library's activities, giving them current information as to the status of pending legislative actions (they appreciate hearing from constituents who keep them posted on important legislation and activities), and offering additional information about services and programs.

**[TAKE ACTION NOW!](#)**

## Session Update

The 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature convened on Tuesday with few surprises. Although challenged by one representative, Rep. Joe Straus of San Antonio was re-elected to serve his fourth term as Speaker of the House. Governor-Elect Greg Abbott and Lt. Governor-Elect Dan Patrick will both be sworn in next week.

Once the state's leadership is fully installed, both legislative chambers will begin the process of naming the committees (including those for funding and education) that will craft policy and the state budget for the next two years.

The introduced version of the Appropriations Bill (HB 1) funds the State Library's base budget request but not the additional funds requested. See [issues](#) below at right. Persuading lawmakers to fund these requests during this Legislative Session is our mission!

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### Action Needed: YOU Can Make a Difference!

1) Contact your legislators' offices (now and throughout the session) and ask them to support library funding initiatives and other library-related legislation. Describe to them how their constituents (students, the public, workers, etc.) benefit from the funding and services your library receives. **Show them how state funding translates to good outcomes in their community. That approach is the key to success!**

2) February 12, 2015 – Library Virtual Action Day: Plan some advocacy campaign back home such as getting fellow supporters, your friends groups, students, or customers to send social media messages out to legislators asking for support of library funding issues.

You can conduct letter writing activities that day, public relations events highlighting the critical work of libraries, or host a “**jotting jam session**” where a few library enthusiasts get together to co-write a letter to the editor (which you then submit) on the value of libraries. Basically, this day is for you to undertake activities to get the message directly to legislators: Support of Libraries! And don't forget to tweet out or post your activities!

Visiting Austin – If you and other library supporters want to come to Austin on February 12 to make in-person visits, contact [gloriam@txla.org](mailto:gloriam@txla.org).

3) Ask your city, county, institution, supporters, PTA, or other groups to support funding for libraries by contacting your state legislators. You can draft a letter and ask them to co-sign, or they can draft one and send it directly to your reps.

4) Keep up the communication throughout the session!

## [Where can I learn more?](#)

### Show Me the Tools!

- 1) One page handout ([BUDGET PRIORITIES](#)) - describes the main budget issues and talking points
- 2) How do I know who represents me and how do I contact them? Click on [TLA's Advocate!](#) site for links to legislator look-up tools and other resources.
- 3) I want to make a phone call and eventually schedule a visit, how do I do this? [Read the TLA Advocacy Primer.](#)
- 4) Attend [Storming the Capitol – A TLA PreConference](#) that includes training and scheduled visits to legislative offices. TLA is offering some stipends to new advocates to attend this energizing and action-oriented library team activity!



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### First Things First: What is the message? What is our ASK?

We **are asking** our legislators to support the educational and workforce infrastructure in their communities by working with colleagues to ensure funding for library initiatives:

**Urge them to fully fund the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's base and exceptional items requests. Key items for libraries are:**

**Shared Digital Content (Exceptional Item #2) - \$6.4 million to build digital educational collections:** Through TexShare (for public and college library users) & TexQuest (for K-12 public school students), libraries support education and economic development through shared digital content. **These programs** leverage the purchasing power of the state and reap enormous savings. A conservative Return on Investment (ROI) shows that, for every \$1 spent, taxpayers gain \$8 of valuable resources.

**Funds for Libraries in Support of Workforce and Economic Development (exceptional item #6) - \$550,000 to train and help equip libraries of all types to support the Texas workforce:** Libraries provide a central path for meeting the state's priorities of establishing educational opportunities, creating a favorable environment for business, and increasing literacy. Throughout the state, libraries and local Workforce Solutions offices are partnering to meet the demands for

worker training programs. However, these efforts are only a fraction of the activity that could be undertaken. With additional training, the State Library can position many of the state's libraries to increase services and opportunities.

Other important TSLAC requests concern: **archival preservation of state agency electronic records** (\$900,000/biennium for staff and resources); **targeted salary adjustments** to address long-term salary deficiencies in key areas (\$900,000/biennium); and **records management analysts** to assist with making public information available at the state and local level (\$400,000/biennium).

### **Legislative Pre-Conference Stipends**

The TLA Legislative Committee is offering ten stipends to TLA members to participate in the pre-conference, "Taking the Capitol by Storm: Libraries, Legislation, and Leadership" on April 14, 2015, in Austin. With the 84th Legislature in full swing, this kick-off event to the 2015 TLA Annual Conference will provide intensive training on the key library issues and give participants an opportunity to visit legislative offices with experienced leaders.

These legislative program stipends are designed to help new professionals and recruits to the library community learn about the legislative process and issues. Eligible are librarians, library school students, and citizen advocates who are relatively new to the field. The stipend will cover the registration fee for the all-day event which runs from 9 to 5 p.m.

The application process is straight-forward. All that is required is your name, address, telephone, email address, current position, library or institution name, number of years as a TLA member, and a list of your primary legislative concerns. This simple application form is available on the TLA website at <http://www.tsla.org/legislative-preconference-stipends>.

[\*\*Apply Now for the  
Legislative  
PreConference  
Stipend\*\*](http://www.tsla.org/legislative-preconference-stipends)

**The applications are due on January 30, 2015, and the decision will be made by Legislative Committee leaders in mid-February.**

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### **School Librarian Certification**

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) will meet on March 6, 2015 in Austin. One of the items up for discussion is the certification of school librarians. SBEC members will review the various components of the certification requirements, including the critical element of two years of teaching experience.

TLA's Texas Association of School Librarians (TASL) has been hard at work drafting information for SBEC members. Additionally, TLA worked with SBEC in providing information and support as SBEC gathered school library representatives to discuss the criteria and make recommendations. A

taskforce met in November and offered key points for consideration. The TASL and TLA position was conveyed to SBEC in a letter submitted by TASL leaders. See: [School Librarians are Teachers](#).

Agenda information for the March 6 meeting will be available at [the SBEC website](#) along with information on contacting members of the Board.

### **School Library Standards**

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission has been asked to make a presentation on the School Library Standards to the State Board of Education (SBOE). This update will be an agenda item in the regular SBOE meeting scheduled February 11-13, 2015 in Austin. The agenda has not been finalized, and updated information is available at:

[http://tea.texas.gov/About\\_TEA/Leadership/State\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/SBOE - State Board of Education/](http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Leadership/State_Board_of_Education/SBOE_-_State_Board_of_Education/).

TSLAC is working to begin the process of updating the School Library Standards, and as state statute stipulates, the agency must work TEA on the process. The update being presented to the SBOE is an important step in moving the process forward. The School Library Standards were last revised several years ago, and Texas students, teachers, education stakeholders, and librarians will benefit from updated standards reflective of quality school library programs today.

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### **Telecommunications Special Pricing for Libraries**

TLA and allied groups from public education, higher education, and healthcare are working on the passage of legislation to extend the state's current telecommunications program for libraries, schools, institutions of higher education, and hospitals.

We aim to continue the special pricing made available to these anchor institutions with the passage of HB 2128 back in 1995. We want to ensure that all telecommunications providers offer this program to eligible institutions. A bill will be forthcoming.

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### **Taking the Capitol by Storm: Libraries, Legislation, and Leadership (Ticketed)**

9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Tuesday, April 14

With the 84th Legislature in full swing, join colleagues and experts as you study key library issues and become an articulate and knowledgeable advocate with decision-makers. The first half of the preconference is an intensive training and skill-building workshop.

The second half is an afternoon of actual visits with legislative offices coordinated through TLA. Participants will earn a badge of honor to wear throughout conference. Lunch will be provided. TLA is offering 10 stipends to help new advocates attend this program. See above.

## **Federal Work on LSTA**

The American Library Association (ALA) is asking ALA members for any suggestions on changes and updates regarding the Library Services and Technology Act (the main federal statute for library services and funding). ALA is working now on the reauthorization of this essential federal legislation, which is part of the Museum and Library Services Act.

Please email the ALA Washington Office ([esheketoff@alawash.org](mailto:esheketoff@alawash.org)) with your ideas by February 11, email what you would like included, what the impact would be, and any language ideas you have.

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***Thank you for your support and passion for libraries.  
Texas libraries need your voice!***

***We also offer our thanks to Gale Cengage Learning, EBSCO Information Services, and LearningExpress, LLC. for their support of library advocacy.***

Texline is produced by the Texas Library Association. It is published as needed to provide information on state and other policy matters related to libraries. For additional information, send an email to Gloria Meraz, Director of Communications, [gloriam@txla.org](mailto:gloriam@txla.org).

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