

Librarian's Report
For January 5, 2026 Meeting

1. Equalization Grants

Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias led a legislative effort to change the library Equalization Aid Grant formula. This increases the eligibility from 17 public libraries to 108 public libraries serving more than 700,000 residents across the state while freeing up additional funds. As a result, more underserved and rural libraries will have access to new funding, quality library materials and essential services.

Since the 1960s, the state has provided Equalization Aid Grants to support libraries that fail to meet an adequate funding threshold because of low tax bases, which means fewer tax dollars are available to support them. This creates financial disparities in available materials, programming, and even the structural conditions of library buildings.

Giannoulias spearheaded an effort, approved by the Illinois General Assembly, to raise the base minimum funding from \$7.50 per person in a library's service population to \$17.50 per person. The funding allows libraries to implement needed physical or technological upgrades, purchase new learning materials and provide community programming.

The Sparta Public Library's estimated 2026 Equalization Aid Grant amount is \$13,404.86, where in the past, the library has never received this grant.

2. Per Capita Grant Requirements

In the past, the board and I have gone through the checklist for the Per Capita grant using the "2020 Serving Our Public". This publication has been revised and is now called "Illinois Public Library Standards." Again, we are to review each topic and determine if our library meets each Core standard, or if not met, explain how we are making progress toward meeting or explain why we are not meeting them.

In addition, I will fill out the form of how we used last year's Per Capita grant.

Both reports are due by January 30, 2026.

3. Requests

Two people have contacted me about setting up donation boxes in the library.

The first person was a parent from Sparta Lincoln. She said that the school library has very few books for checkout by the students. She would like to have a box set up for donated books from the community.

For your consideration: Shall the library agree to be a drop-off point for donated books for Sparta Lincoln children – Motion, discussion & vote

The second person is representing a newly formed women's Bible study group. Their group would like to set up a donation box for women's hygiene products.

For your consideration: Shall the library agree to be a drop-off point for donated women's hygiene products – Motion, discussion & vote

4. Change in Librarian's In-Service Date

Since the library has been closed so many days due to the furnace issue, and since it will be closed again on January 19 for Martin Luther King Day, I would like to change the Librarian's In-Service day to later in the year.

5. Change in February Board Meeting date

The February board meeting is scheduled for February 2, 2026. I will be on vacation on that date and will not be back until February 10. Would the board prefer to go ahead and meet on February 2nd or change the meeting date for sometime after February 10th?

For your consideration: Shall the Board of Trustee's February meeting be held on February 2nd or on another February date decided in this motion – Motion, discussion & vote

6. Upcoming Events

Respectfully submitted by Susan Colbert on January 5, 2026