





THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: Cultural Education Committee

FROM: Mark Schaming 

SUBJECT: *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*

DATE: March 23, 2017

AUTHORIZATION(S): 
SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

An update on the status of the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* initiative and plans for 2017 through 2019. The Committee will also learn about the impact on families and young children of the successful early literacy and early learning services offered by the Rochester Public Library and the Monroe County Library System.

Ready to Read at New York Libraries is an initiative of the New York State Education Department designed to improve and expand the availability of quality public library early literacy and early learning services in local communities across the State. Through this statewide initiative, coordinated by the New York State Library in partnership with the 23 public library systems, public libraries are providing families and caregivers with the knowledge needed to prepare their young children for their school years ahead.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For Information.

Background Information

In 2013, in response to recommendations in *Creating the Future: A 2020 Vision for Library Services in New York State* (2012), State Library staff began researching and developing a statewide early literacy initiative for public libraries. A modest planning

grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services helped to support this work. The grant enabled the State Library to convene a statewide Early Literacy Summit in Spring 2015. Fifty-five library leaders and early learning partners came together from across the State to reflect on planning year results and accomplishments, discuss next steps for implementation of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*, and work towards developing relationships that would benefit New York's youngest learners.

Ready to Read at New York Libraries is designed to provide public library staff with access to the training and materials they need to make the library a vital community hub for early learning and a key community partner in every community, large and small.

Phase One (2014-2016) focused on three major components:

1. Offering state-level resources for families with young children, caregivers and libraries that help to support early literacy and early learning;
2. Developing a comprehensive and coordinated program of early literacy training for public library staff and caregivers based on best practices; and
3. Developing strong partnerships for success and sustainability.

The training program, called the *Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program*, is delivered in partnership with the public library systems and is an important key to the success and sustainability of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*. The State Library has trained and certified 35 *Ready to Read* librarians to train library staff across the State. The State Library also provides the *DayByDayNY* website which offers a virtual calendar of daily early literacy resources and literacy reinforcement strategies for librarians, teachers, caregivers and families. Some 13 statewide partnerships have been forged in support of this program.

Phase Two (2017-2019) focuses on:

1. Enhancing the state-level resources for families with young children, caregivers and libraries that help to support early literacy and early learning;
2. Supporting the *Ready to Read* Training Cohort members as they deliver early literacy training to local public library staff across the State;
3. Enhancing statewide partnerships for success and sustainability.

Public libraries are working with their library system to tailor the statewide program to local needs. The State Library plans to continue to offer high-quality educational materials and support through the *DayByDayNY* website and the State Library's *Ready to Read* website and to provide specialized statewide training via webinars and other means. A Spanish version of *DayByDayNY* will be launched in Spring 2017. The state-funded Family Library Literacy Program is providing modest support for the library systems to deliver early literacy training through June 2019.

Ready to Read at New York Libraries has grown over the past three years and has now touched 444 of the over 1,000 public libraries and neighborhood branches in New York State. More than 850 library staff have benefited from the training programs thus far.

Ready to Read at New York Libraries is also bringing an increase in individuals of all ages into local public libraries for reading, literacy and learning activities all year long. Since the inception of this new statewide initiative, the number of public libraries offering early literacy programs has grown from 575 to 621 (out of 756 libraries). Annual participation in early literacy library programs grew from 1.98 million in 2012 to more than 2.4 million children and caregivers as of December 2015.