CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA ATTACHMENT 3

MEETING DATE: Thursday, July 28, 2011
AGENDA ITEM #: 9
ITEM: CORRESPONDENCE

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- None
May 27, 2011

Joseph A. Ovick, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Contra Costa County Office of Education
77 Santa Barbara Road
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Dr. Ovick:

Thank you for your letter of May 19, 2011 and for taking the time to share your concerns regarding the FY 2011-2012 budget for the Contra Costa County Library.

I share your belief that we, as persons in positions of public service, must always be sure that our decisions are made with the best interests of our residents in mind. This is reflected in our library budget. In FY 2010-2011 there are 113.4 FTE positions in the community libraries. In FY 2011-12 there are 119.6 FTE positions in community libraries directly serving our residents.

Three management positions reporting directly to the County Librarian have been eliminated including the position of Assistant County Librarian, which is the second highest position in the Library.

Overall library staffing is reviewed each year to be sure that we are meeting the highest level of service possible in each community. The decision to fill any vacant library position is made only after careful thought and deliberation and only after I am certain that not filling the position will be detrimental to the communities the Library serves.

Maintaining library services and hours for county residents is and has always been my primary consideration.

Thank you again for your thoughtful letter and for sharing your concerns.

Yours truly,

Barbara L. Flynn
County Librarian

cc: Gayle B. Uilkema, Chair, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
    David Twa, County Administrator
    Contra Costa County Library Commissioners
Email Log Entry

Your changes have been saved. The status has changed. If this issue was assigned to anyone, they also received a copy.

Ticket # 1839

Date of original Email: 6/2/2011

Text of Email:

ccclibcommission@ccclib.org

Comments: Hi,
Last week I attended El Cerrito's storytime for the first time with my baby, and thought it was pretty poor with a disengaged leader (Adam) who didn't introduce himself, interact much with the kids, or even know the tunes to some basic children's songs. Afterward another neighborhood mom (who doesn't bother attending anymore) told me 'nobody goes anymore' since the leaders changed, and he is well known to be poor. Perhaps a nice person, but not right for storytime! Today I attended Kensington's storytime, which for some reason is at the same time/day. It was an amazing difference - Mary engages with each kid and appears to enjoy being there (Adam seemed like he was in pain). It was also packed - approx. 25 kids compared to 5 in El Cerrito. (Another attendee, who babysits her grandson in El Cerrito, told me they used to attend El Cerrito's, but stopped because it was so bad.) What is storytime policy about who leads them and when/where? It seems like generally El Cerrito has fewer little kid events/activities, but one fix would be to get Mary (or anyone else who likes kids!) to lead storytime in EC on a different day of the week. I feel like storytime is so important to instill a love of the library and literacy, and El Cerrito's is just a turnoff right now.

Name: Amalia Cunningham
emailaddress: lorentz18@yahoo.com

Assigned to: McPartland, Gail ()

Status: Closed
Dear Ms Cunningham,

Thank you for your email regarding storytimes at the El Cerrito Library. I have reviewed your concerns with Laura Martinengo, Community Library Manager, El Cerrito Library. Laura confirms that there is a temporary staff member helping out with storytimes while regular staff is on personal leave. The fellow that you saw has received storytime training from our professional librarians but has not had many opportunities to hone his skills. Laura continues to work with this person so that the storytimes will meet or exceed those in other libraries. In the meantime, the regular staff will be back this week and will be resuming storytime duties soon.

Please feel free to let me know if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Gail

Gail McPartland
Deputy County Librarian / Public Services

Additional Notes:

Last Updated: 6/8/2011
June 6, 2011

Barbara Flynn  
County Librarian  
1750 Oak Park Boulevard  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Barbara:

I want to thank you for your May 27, 2011, response to my letter of May 19, 2011. In your letter, you indicated that three management positions reporting directly to the County Librarian have been eliminated, including the position of Assistant County Librarian, which is the second highest position in the Library System.

It is important to note that the last Assistant County Librarian to serve in Contra Costa County was Anne Cain. The position has remained vacant since Anne Cain became the County Librarian 12 years ago. Additionally, the Assistant County Librarian position was not eliminated to address the current budget crisis; rather, according to the County Board of Supervisors agenda, the position was eliminated on October 14, 2008. Needless to say, the information you shared in your May 27 letter was not accurate and implies that the position was eliminated due to the current budget crisis. Also, from a quick review of the County Library’s upper management positions, one can see that the Administrative Services Officer positions have been created in the last few years: one for Personnel Services and one for Finance. I believe this is an increase of an additional management position.

My position remains unchanged. I would ask you to reconsider your current posting for another Deputy County Librarian and redirect the savings to the community libraries that directly serve our citizens. Again, the communities without the luxury of well-funded foundations or citizens with economic means to underwrite core library services and staff should be the recipients of this funding. Community libraries in Antioch, Brentwood, El Sobrante, Bay Point, Pinole, and Pleasant Hill among others should be considered.

It is unfortunate that the commission has not had the opportunity to fulfill its obligation to the County Board of Supervisors to make recommendations regarding the County Library’s budget for the coming fiscal year. This is a very important responsibility, and the process should begin early for the 2012-13 fiscal year.
As a new County Librarian, you have an opportunity to make significant changes in the use of our limited resources to better serve communities throughout Contra Costa County.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Ovick, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Contra Costa County

JAO:ldh

cc: Contra Costa County Library Commissioners
David Twa, Contra Costa County Administrator
Board of Supervisors, Contra Costa County
June 20, 2011

Laura Seaholm, Program Manager
Project Second Chance
1750 Oak Park Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Laura,

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep Project Second Chance thriving in these times when legislators are under huge pressure to make tough budget choices. Thanks also for providing the opportunity for Gladys Leeks, Ike Eikanger, and Shavae Payton to tell their stories so that the legislators could learn directly about the impact of Project Second Chance on their lives. The confidence that this program has instilled in them speaks more eloquently about the effectiveness of Project Second Chance than any number of well-written articles and letters.

We are hopeful that Project Second Chance will continue to provide such opportunities for many more in the future.

Sincerely,

Carol Brown
Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

cc: Library Commissioners
Barbara L. Flynn, County Librarian
June 20, 2011

Megan Brown, Senior Library Literacy Assistant
Project Second Chance
1750 Oak Park Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Megan,

The Library Commission appreciates all you are doing keep Project Second Chance thriving in these times when legislators are under huge pressure to make tough budget choices. Thanks also for encouraging Gladys Leeks, Ike Eikanger, and Shavae Payton to tell their stories so that the legislators could learn directly about the impact of Project Second Chance on their lives. The confidence that this program has instilled in them speaks more eloquently about the effectiveness of Project Second Chance than any number of well-written articles and letters.

We are hopeful that Project Second Chance will continue to provide such opportunities for many more in the future.

Sincerely,

Carol Brown
Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

cc: Library Commissioners

Barbara L. Flynn, County Librarian
June 16, 2011

Ms. Gladys Leeks

Dear Gladys,

Congratulations on your determination and your progress through Project Second Chance and beyond, and thank you for your willingness to speak about your experiences with a variety of legislators and their staff on May 18 in Sacramento. You did a wonderful job sharing how learning to read has helped you get a job and advance in your work.

The Contra Costa County Library Commissioners appreciate your giving back to the larger community by taking the time to go to Sacramento and share what you have learned and gained. Your being there in person gave our lawmakers a firsthand experience and made the need for continued funding of Project Second Chance palpable. You made a difference.

Please accept our thanks and congratulations.

Best regards,

Carol Brown
Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

cc: Laura Seaholm, Program Manager, Project Second Chance
Library Commissioners
Barbara L. Flynn, County Librarian
June 16, 2011

Ms. Shavae Payton

Dear Shavae,

Congratulations on your determination and your progress through Project Second Chance and beyond, and thank you for your willingness to speak about your experiences with a variety of legislators and their staff on May 18 in Sacramento. You did a wonderful job sharing how learning to read has helped you begin to read to your two year old son.

The Contra Costa County Library Commissioners appreciate your giving back to the larger community by taking the time to go to Sacramento and share what you have learned and gained. Your being there in person gave our lawmakers a firsthand experience and made the need for continued funding of Project Second Chance palpable. You made a difference.

Please accept our thanks and congratulations.

Best regards,

Carol Brown
Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

cc: Laura Seaholm, Program Manager, Project Second Chance
Library Commissioners
Barbara L. Flynn, County Librarian
June 16, 2011

Mr. Ike Eikanger

Dear Ike,

Congratulations on your determination and your progress through Project Second Chance and beyond, and thank you for your willingness to speak about your experiences with a variety of legislators and their staff on May 18 in Sacramento. You did a wonderful job sharing how learning to read has helped you become a poet and read to your grandchild.

The Contra Costa County Library Commissioners appreciate your giving back to the larger community by taking the time to go to Sacramento and share what you have learned and gained. Your being there in person gave our lawmakers a firsthand experience and made the need for continued funding of Project Second Chance palpable. You made a difference.

Please accept our thanks and congratulations.

Best regards,

Carol Brown
Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

cc: Laura Seaholm, Program Manager, Project Second Chance Library Commissioners
    Barbara L. Flynn, County Librarian