



## Washington Coalition for School Libraries and Information Technology (WCSLit)

### Coalition Origins and Timeline

#### SPOKANE EFFORT

**May 23, 2007** Lisa Layera Brunkan addresses the Spokane Public Schools Board of Directors at their regular meeting, asking them to remove full-time elementary school librarians from the proposed list of budget cuts.

**June 6, 2007** An online petition is launched, calling on the District 81 superintendent and school board members to remove full-time librarians from their list of proposed cuts. Petitions are also posted around the community, and citizen involvement is quick and strong -- within a week, over 300 residents have signed.

**June 13, 2007** Spokane Schools Superintendent and staff present the proposed budget for the 2007-2008 school year to the SPS Board of Directors. The proposed budget includes further reductions to elementary library positions (ten additional schools will be reduced to half time, making for a total of 15 elementary schools with half time teacher librarians). The Board of Directors enters into a time of evaluation, where they will consider the proposed budget. Susan McBurney speaks to the Board of Directors, on behalf of the 300+ Spokane residents who have signed the petition, urging them to refrain from further cuts to Spokane school library programs. Members of the Board are provided with a summary of research illustrating the connections between strong school library programs and student achievement. In the coming weeks, they are also presented with letters of support from local and national leaders, educational experts, teacher-librarians, and parents – all asking that library programs be protected.

**June 27, 2007** Lisa Layera Brunkan and others continue to address District 81 Board members at their meeting, providing additional information and letters of support from an even wider cadre of community members and educational professionals.

**July 25, 2007** Several members of the community address the Board of Directors, urging them to take cuts to elementary school librarians out of the proposed budget. Among those weighing in are parents, community leaders, teacher-librarians, and a letter of support from business and community leader Don Barbieri is read at the meeting. Additional letters of support from members of the higher education community and business leaders are also made available to the members of the Board.

**August 8, 2007** Spokane School Board adopts the proposed 2007-2008 budget as is, and ten more elementary schools have their librarians cut to half time. By this time, nearly 900 Spokane residents have signed the petition in support of fully-funding school library programs.

We are told that these cuts are necessary because the state does not fund school library programs. In the words of the board chair, ... 'swim upstream to Olympia.'

## STATE-WIDE EFFORT

**November 1, 2007** Lisa Layera Brunkan is notified that the Spokane School Board of Directors voted the week before to include library funding as one of their listed 2008 legislative priorities.

**November 9, 2007** Three moms sitting at a kitchen table decide to form the Washington Coalition for School Libraries and Information Technology (WCSLit) to make school library funding a community legislative priority. Efforts are begun to enlist a broad range of support across the state.

**November 13, 2007** Lisa Layera Brunkan and Susan McBurney send letter to Dr. Bergeson, WA State Superintendent of Public Instruction, notifying her and Gayle Pauley of the coalition's intent to seek adequate and sustained funding for WA school library programs.

**November 15, 2007** State-wide online petition is launched, calling upon Washington State Legislators, Governor Gregoire, and the members of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance to ensure that Washington students have full-time access to school libraries and a certified teacher librarian to provide a competitive education in information technology and literacy.

**November 16, 2007** Initial charter members join the coalition, including

- Dr. Michael Eisenberg, Founding Dean of the Information School at UW
- Jan Walsh, WA State Librarian, Office of the Secretary of State
- Dr. Gene Sharratt, Director of WSU's Superintendent Certification Program
- Don Barbieri, Chairman of the Board, Red Lion Corporation
- Washington Library Media Association (WLMA)

**November 19-20, 2007** Meeting of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance. WCSLit Co-Chair Lisa Layera Brunkan attends the meeting and hand-delivers copies of the petition and 350 signatures to members of the committee. This marks the beginning of the coalition's efforts to lobby the Joint Task Force to include library programs in the definition of Basic Education and the future proposed funding formula.

**November 20, 2007** Article appears in *The Seattle Times*, profiling the coalition's efforts to save school libraries. By this time, over 800 people have signed the petition. It is suggested to Lisa Layera Brunkan by different people in Olympia to consider submitting a supplemental budget request for school library programs.

**November 28, 2007** Recognizing that a line-item for school library programs is, at best, a couple of years off (and will only be assured if the JTF recommends it AND the recommendations are adopted by the legislature), **WCSLit submits a draft of a Supplemental Budget Request for School Library Programs** to members of the legislature as well as members of the Joint Task Force. The SBR seeks immediate funding to stop the hemorrhaging in school library programs. By this time, over 1400 Washington residents have signed the petition in support of school libraries.

**December 3, 2007** Philippines-based National Geographic award-winning photographer Edwin Loyola agrees to allow the coalition to use his photograph as a silhouette for the coalition logo and T-shirt design (T-shirts on sale through [www.cafepress.com/fundlibraries](http://www.cafepress.com/fundlibraries)).

**December 9, 2007** The Washington State PTA formally joins the coalition as a partner.

**December 12, 2007** Kathy Egawa joins the coalition as a charter member. She worked for 25 years as a teacher and four years as a teacher librarian in the Pacific Northwest before assuming the role of Associate Executive Director at the National Council of Teachers of English in 1999. She recently

returned to Seattle and currently serves as an educational consultant.

**December 13, 2007** Members of the coalition attend the meeting of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance and provide committee members with updated petition signatures and comments (numbering nearly 2500 signatories). They meet with individual committee members and legislators, and begin to enlist support from members of both the House and Senate.

**December 10-15, 2007** Education leaders from both the House and Senate agree to serve as sponsors for a bill that aims to fund school library programs. Bill writers begin working on the language and specifics of the legislation. Bills are to be introduced in the 2008 legislative session.

**December 17-21, 2007** The coalition leadership hears from different Senators and Representatives that they plan to support the bills and receive offers for co-sponsorship.

**December 18, 2007** Dr. Bill Ellis joins the coalition as a charter member focused on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Initiative. Dr. Ellis has served as CEO of several high-tech Washington companies, and is currently on the Board of Directors of the Puget Sound Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology.

**December 23, 2007** *The Los Angeles Times* prints an article on the front page of the National section, Sunday edition on the coalition's efforts to secure funding for school libraries in Washington State.

**December 24, 2007** Dr. Mike Eisenberg, founding dean of the Information School at the University of Washington and Lisa Layera Brunkan draft a plan for a summit to be held February 1<sup>st</sup> in Olympia. National experts will gather to spend half the day in a substantive examination of the issue, resulting in action planning. The second half of the summit will be a presentation to Washington legislators, highlighting why the state should fund school library programs.

**December 25-?** In the days that follow, newspapers across the state run modified versions of the LA Times article with syndications from Boston, San Francisco and Honolulu, to Ohio and Connecticut. More newspapers continue to carry the story.

**December 27, 2007**

- The Washington Library Association formally joins the coalition as a partner.
- The American Association of School Librarians formally joins the coalition as a partner, its executive director, Julie Walker, joins the Coalition's Research Advisory Council.
- The 65,000 member strong national American Library Association formally joins the coalition as a partner.

**December 29, 2007** Antioch University President Cassandra Manuelito-Kerkvliet joins the coalition – the first university president to do so.

**December 31, 2007** Spokane Mayor Mary Verner joins the coalition – the first elected official to do so.

**January 3, 2008** The League of Education Voters formally joins the coalition as a partner.

**January 11, 2008** Meeting of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance. WCSLit Co-Chair Susan McBurney, WCSLit Charter Member Kathy Egawa, and WCSLit member Sarah Applegate provide public testimony to committee members on the importance of school library media programs.\_

**January 14, 2008** House Bill 2773 ('Instructional Support Services') is introduced in the 2008 legislative session. Sponsors of the bill include Representatives Barlow, Haigh, Seaquist, O'Brien, McCoy, Ormsby, Hasegawa, Schual-Berke, Moeller, Warnick, Roberts, Morrell, and Kenney.

**January 16, 2008** Senate Bill 6380 ('Enhancing School Library Media Programs') is introduced in the 2008 legislative session. Sponsors of the bill include Senators Eide, Brown, McAuliffe, and Marr.

**January 23, 2008** SB 6380 receives a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education. Testimonies provided by Senator Tracy Eide (prime sponsor), Lisa Layera Brunkan (WCSLit), Mike Eisenberg (Univ. of WA); Stephen Coker (Rainier School District), Sarah Applegate, NBCT (North Thurston Public Schools), Jan Walsh (Washington State Library), and Jennifer Priddy (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction).

**January 31, 2008** HB 2773 receives a public hearing in the House Committee on Education. Lisa Layera Brunkan and Spokane T-L Kathy Kalich testify on behalf of the Coalition.

### **February 1, 2008**

- READ – CONNECT – THINK – GROW: Why School Libraries Matter *Washington School Library Media Program Summit* is held in Olympia Washington. This day-long conference brought together representatives of the Washington library media community, parents, K-12 administrators, teachers, and national leaders in the library and education communities. The purpose of the summit was to affirm a vision for 21st century library media programs in Washington State and set an action agenda for teacher-librarians, schools, and communities.
- Fund Our Future Washington Rally, Capitol Steps, Olympia WA  
Over 100 supporters gathered in the rain and wind to thank the bill sponsors and call for school library funding in the 2008 Legislative session. Rally speakers included Marty Brown, Governor Gregoire's Legislative Director; Sarah Kelly Johns, AASL President; Rep. Kathy Haigh, House bill sponsor; Rep. Pat Sullivan, House bill supporter; Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe, Senate bill sponsor.
- ...
- Fund Our Future Oregon is launched!
- Executive action is taken in the House Committee on Education. Substitute House Bill 2773 is approved and given a 'do pass'.

**February 5, 2008** Substitute HB 2773 is referred on to the House Appropriations Committee.

**February 6, 2008** Executive action is taken on SB 6380 in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12. Revisions to the original bill are undertaken

**February 8, 2008** Substitute Senate Bill 6380 is approved, given a 'do pass' by the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12, then referred on to the Senate Committee on Ways & Means.

**February 11, 2008** Substitute SB 6380 is given a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Ways & Means. Bill co-sponsor Senator Rosemary McAuliffe and WCS-Lit Co-Chair Lisa Layera Brunkan testify on behalf of the bill.

### **February 12, 2008**

Executive action is taken in the Senate Committee on Ways & Means: 2nd substitute Senate Bill 6380 is given a 'do pass' and moves to the Senate Rules Committee for second reading.

### **February 13, 2008**

Senate Rules Committee places SB 6380 on second reading, and the bill goes for a full Senate floor vote. Second substitute bill is *not* substituted, the first substitute bill *is* substituted, and a floor

amendment is adopted. Following inspiring speeches by Senators McAuliffe, Eide, Marr, Brown, Honeyford, Hargrove, and Parlette, the Washington State Senate votes unanimously (49-0) to pass SB 6380. The bill moves over to the House of Representatives for consideration (and is thereafter referred to as Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6380 (ESSB 6380).

**February 19, 2008** Not having been referred to the Appropriations committee by the cutoff date, House Bill 2773 dies.

**February 15, 2008** ESSB 6380 is referred to the House Education Committee, and is scheduled to be heard on February 21<sup>st</sup>.