

CHECKED IN LIBRARIES

KEEPING PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARIES IN THE LOOP



AT-A-GLANCE

PA HB218g: Minimum Wage

This bill proposes to increase the Pennsylvania minimum wage to:

- \$11 an hour beginning 1/1/27
- \$13 an hour beginning 1/1/28
- \$15 an hour beginning 1/1/29
- Annual cost-of-living adjustments January 1, 2030 on.

The bill also allows counties move to \$15/hr faster than the timeline.

This bill has passed a House vote and has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

PA HB200: Family Care Act

This bill requires all employers to provide paid family and medical leave, with a minimum calculation set by the state. It also sets up a grant fund to assist employers in providing leave.

The bill passed the House on March 25, 2026 and moves to the Senate.



Spotlight

Roles and Boundaries for a Healthier Library

Clear roles and boundaries between boards and the executive director are essential for healthy organizations. That said, it can be confusing, especially in smaller organizations, to align those roles with needs.

To help illustrate this, we've adapted a table with some examples of how best practices can actually be implemented using a wide variety of resources. You'll see the different roles of "Board Approves", "Board Advises", "Executive Director Oversees" for some common functions, along with a column of examples of those roles in action. The content covers common functions but is not fully comprehensive of the responsibilities of your library's board and executive director.

The "**Responsibilities Table**" follows on page 3. If you have any specific questions about any content, please reach out to your district consultant.

Checked In Libraries is a cooperative initiative of several Pennsylvania Library Districts to help develop and strengthen public libraries in Pennsylvania.

This information is provided to the best of our knowledge as of the date provided. Information is subject to change without notice. While authoritative, it is not guaranteed for accuracy or legalities. If there are questions, please reach out to your district consultant, who may encourage your library to ask a local solicitor/lawyer for further guidance.

If you have any questions about this publication or previous editions' content, feel free to reach out to info@padistrictconsultants.org.

Pennsylvania Budget

The budget preparation process is completed and we are now in the negotiation phase.

Highlights of the process thus far:

- The Governor's budget address proposed flat-funding all four library line items.
- The Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing for the Dept of Ed. was held March 5. Sen. Culver gave a brief statement on the importance of libraries in her initial statement and Sen. Williams questioned how federal IMLS funds were used and what would happen if those funds went away.
- The House Appropriations Committee Hearing for the Dept. of Ed was held March 3. Rep Webster gave kudos to the State Library, advocated funding for public libraries, and asked about the new Regulations in process. Rep. Kincaid made a comment about how flat funding should be reconsidered, noting that if the line item had kept pace with inflation it would be \$132.6 million, not \$75.47 million as it is currently.

General Impressions:

- Overall, there was less open hostility between the parties during the hearings this year. This is likely due in part because last year's budget process occurred during a time of federal upheaval; the federal pressure has levelled off and state legislators feel more comfortable in making decisions this year. There are still sharp partisan divides over the amount of overall spending, particularly the use of the rainy day fund and new taxes. (Of note: though the hearings themselves were less hostile, legislators are speaking much less civilly about partisan divides outside of the Chambers.)
- Both parties in the hearing were coming together on three main issues: accountability, literacy, and workforce readiness (though there are disagreements on specific strategies). Accountability was a major focus, highlighting both avoiding misappropriation and on ensuring that state formulas gives the best return on investment. Literacy and workforce readiness are both areas that come up year after year, but this year there was significantly more focus on concrete strategies.
- The budget process this year looks to be contentious, with midterm elections and federal politics impacting the negotiations, so chances are high that the budget will once again be late, though hopefully not as late as last year.

Pennsylvania Library Association ASK:

- Public libraries are asking for an increase of \$7.3 million to the public library subsidy (currently, the subsidy is \$75.47 million).
- Library supporters are encouraged to mention the role of libraries in literacy - especially with our youngest readers.
- Use the statewide ASK one-pager; customize the other side with information from your library to give to your library supporters.

Federal Legislation

HR7661: "Stop the Sexualization of Children Act"

Known as the "Stop Sexualization of Children" Act, this act prohibits the use of federal education funding to "develop, implement, facilitate, host, or promote any program or activity for, or to provide or promote literature or other materials to, children under the age of 18 that includes sexually oriented material, and for other purposes." The text of the bill clearly targets transgender materials; it also recommends several homeschool "Classics" lists that aren't part of standard educational curriculum.

It moved out of Committee on Education and the Workforce to the House floor on March 17, 2026 but has not had a floor vote yet. (PA Reps. Glenn Thompson & Ryan Mackenzie voted for the bill; PA Rep. Summer Lee voted against it.) Opponents of the bill cite federal overreach into state education, the anti-intellectualism of a bill that does not differentiate between Kindergarteners and Seniors, and the impact it would have on teaching uglier aspects of history (such as how enslaved women were treated).

Supporters argue that the bill is to protect children and say that it is not forbidding schools from teaching those topics, just not allowing federal funds to support it.

ALA, EveryLibrary, PEN America, and the Authors Guild have all spoken out against what is essentially a federal book-banning bill. Though the intentions of the bill authors may be positive, it is more likely that this bill will result in more harm for our children, not less. We urge you to call your federal Representatives and tell them to vote against this bill.

HR7961

Known as the "Fight Book Bans Act," would provide federal grants to schools in support of protecting collections and unhindered student access to materials. The bill was introduced and referred to the House Committee on Education and Workforce on February 25, 2026 but was not yet discussed.

HR6440/S. 3365

A concurrently-introduced bill known as the "Right to Read Act", the act would invest \$600 million annually into school libraries. It also outlines certain constitutional rights and liability protections related to school libraries. The bills were introduced in their respective Chambers December 4, 2025; no action has been taken beyond referring them to Committee.

Responsibilities Table: Board & Executive Director - Template

Clear roles and boundaries between boards and the executive director are essential for healthy organizations. Below are some examples of best practices for how responsibilities can be assigned. Responsibilities may vary depending on size and capacity of your library. The content prepared in this table includes common functions but is not fully comprehensive of the responsibilities of your library's team. If you have any specific questions about a part of the table, please reach out to your district consultant for more specific supporting documents.

With both the library director and library board present, use the table below to discuss how each party approaches various areas of library functions.

- **Board Approves:** The board makes the final decision based on all information available to it as well as input from the library director.
- **Board Advises:** The board advises the library director by providing input, asking questions, and gathering information through their other networks to help the director obtain information relevant to their functions and decision making. Board members may also share information with their fellow members on topics relevant to their performance as individual board members.
- **Executive Director Decides/Oversees:** The executive director is the final decision maker. This includes how to implement policies as well as developing and overseeing procedures to make the day-to-day things happen. When applicable, the library director informs the board of decisions made. Applicable scenarios include those that affect the board's ability to fulfill its role.
- **Examples in Action:** How might library functions play out? Examples are provided as discussion starters.

Sources: This document was built in consultation with a wide variety of resources made available by experts on the topic including BoardSource, Office of Commonwealth Libraries' *Leadership by Design*, and *Better Boards, Better Communities*.

| AREA | BOARD APPROVES | BOARD ADVISES ON | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DECIDES OR OVERSEES | EXAMPLES IN ACTION |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Strategic direction & priorities | Strategic plan, priorities, and key outcomes Key messaging (i.e. mission, vision, core values) | Risks Trade-offs Community insights | How strategic priorities are implemented | Board and executive director develop strategic goals and priorities together; the executive director develops and executes the plan of action. |
| Budget & financial oversight | Annual budget Financial policy Investment and reserve policy | Scenarios Financial risks | Day-to-day financial management | The board approves the budget and oversees how the overall budget is managed; the executive director approves expenditures within the budget framework. |
| Policy & governance | Board policies Governance policies Bylaw changes | Policy gaps Unintended impacts | Operational procedure and policy implementation | The executive director highlights a procedural need or the board recognizes a policy gap. Together, they draft a policy, and the board approves the final version before the executive director puts it into action. |
| CEO role & performance | Executive director's goals, performance evaluation, and compensation | Leadership priorities Support for the executive director Support for the library's needs and goals | Operational decisions aligned to strategy | The board has one employee to oversee and manage: the executive director. |

| AREA | BOARD APPROVES | BOARD ADVISES ON | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DECIDES OR OVERSEES | EXAMPLES IN ACTION |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| HR (non-CEO) | HR governance policies | Culture indicators Workforce risks | Hiring, managing, and terminating staff Performance evaluation of staff Disciplining staff Managing staff conflicts | The board sets policies regarding pay scales, personnel budgets, PTO, etc. and can set goals or expectations for how the executive director manages staff, such as expecting annual evaluations. The executive director is responsible for implementation and managing all other staff. |
| Professional Development | Board professional development expectations Funding to support board, executive director, and staff professional development | Maintaining current and accurate knowledge relevant to the roles and responsibilities of boards Professional development for the executive director Support for the library director and staff in professional development and lifelong learning | Professional development for the executive director and staff that builds and maintains current and accurate knowledge pertinent to their roles or library goals | The board schedules board professional development in some form. The board encourages executive director and staff development by ensuring there is funding available and that performance goals are set. The executive director works with individual staff to assign or align their professional development goals with needs and interests. |
| Collections & Intellectual Freedom | Policy & board position Values/principles Complaint framework | Community concerns Risk exposure | Selection Weeding | Collection development is a day-to-day operations. The board may report community feedback or personal experiences. |

| AREA | BOARD APPROVES | BOARD ADVISES ON | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DECIDES OR OVERSEES | EXAMPLES IN ACTION |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Facilities & Capital | Major capital direction Debt & lease approvals Bid Policy Funding for projects | Options Timelines Constraints | Vendor selection Project execution | The board approves building projects. The executive director sees that it happens in conjunction with day-to-day operations. |
| Programming & Outreach | Programming policy Meeting room policy | Community Insight | Program plans & execution | The board reports on community interests that may influence programming selection and facilitation.. The executive director considers the feedback when planning or scheduling offerings in those interests. The board does not dictate the actual programs. |
| Partnerships & major contracts | Major partnerships High-impact contracts | Partner fit Reputational risk | Negotiation and management | The board and executive director discuss current and potential partnerships to see which align with the library's needs and values. The executive director covers content, scheduling, etc. |
| Public Relations (Non-Crisis) | Communication Policy Social Media Policy | Risk exposure Community insights | Website Marketing Communications with the community | The board can report community feedback and require metrics tracking to meet a goal, but the executive director covers content, scheduling, etc. |

| AREA | BOARD APPROVES | BOARD ADVISES ON | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DECIDES OR OVERSEES | EXAMPLES IN ACTION |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Community controversy / crisis | Board stance on values Spokesperson assignment (can be assigned to executive director) | Scenario planning Risk Messaging alignment | Incident management Operational response | The board and executive director have conversations in advance of a crisis to determine what scenarios certain people are approved to be spokespeople or engage with. If an event would happen, the scenario closest to one discussed could take effect. |

In the space below, are there other areas that could be discussed? Use the space below to talk it out.

| AREA | BOARD APPROVES | BOARD ADVISES ON | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DECIDES OR OVERSEES | EXAMPLES IN ACTION |
|------|----------------|------------------|--|--------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |