

Director's Report

The legislative session is not yet officially underway but preliminary work has begun. The Oklahoma State Senate Education Appropriations committee held budget hearings on January 11th. The hearing with the Oklahoma House of Representatives Education Appropriations committee will occur during the week of February 6th but is not yet scheduled.

Our Senate hearing lasted an hour which is considerably longer than previous years. It allowed us to fully discuss both the agency's achievements last year and the impact of state revenue reductions on our federal funding. I had the opportunity to emphasize the programs funded by federal funds during the hearing. We were asked for additional details which we have provided. The meeting was very cordial and positive.

The reason for the focus on federal funding is that this year we failed to meet our Maintenance of Effort requirement of spending the same amount of state appropriated funds in order to continue to receive federal funds at the same level. The rules are that federal funding is reduced by the same percentage as that by which state funding is lowered. This year the percentage reduction was small but it will increase to 11 percent next year. Over three years the reduction in federal funds is estimated to be \$462,800 for Oklahoma. Federal funding is used to support the summer reading program, the statewide licenses for databases, interlibrary loan, certification and continuing education, etc.

It was a priority during the budget reductions of the last three years to protect our Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funding as much as possible. During this time, ODL funding was reduced by \$1.4 million. Of that amount only 38 % counted towards our MOE.

Another legislative activity for me at this time of year is review of prefiled bills affecting libraries and library funding. Following my report is a list of bills that affect the ODL Board. This list includes bills introduced in the last session as well as new bills. The deadline for bill filing is January 19th so not all bills are yet available at the time I write this report. At the ODL Board meeting I will have a more complete report for your information.

Another major activity during this period has been the process for evaluating the use of federal funds over the past four years. The creation of surveys for both library staff and library customers is being finalized and I expect that the first set will be sent out today. The surveys will be supplemented by in person meetings with both library staff and customers in ten locations. The evaluation is due at the end of March to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. We will be sharing the results of the evaluation with the Board.

I look forward to seeing you at our meeting on February 3rd.