

# Gov. Walker: Investing in Rural Wisconsin: Signs bill helping rural community libraries

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**FLORENCE** - Governor Walker signed Assembly Bill 572 into law today at the Florence County Public Library, which is located at the Florence High School. The bill expands eligibility in the Technology for Educational Achievement program (TEACH) to include certain rural community libraries. TEACH provides information technology grants to school districts to improve technology infrastructure and technology training grants for educators. The current state budget Governor Walker signed into law increased funding for TEACH by \$22.5 million.

"Wisconsin's libraries are important institutions of learning in communities across our state," said Governor Walker. "This bill allows local libraries to benefit from the TEACH program and upgrade their technology systems. We were proud to increase funding for TEACH by \$22.5 million in this budget."

Assembly Bill 572 - Currently, under the Technology for Educational Achievement Program (TEACH), the Department of Administration provides information technology block grants for training or technology to school districts. This bill expands eligibility for the TEACH grants to public libraries or library systems in rural areas.

Currently, the Department of Public Instruction is able to develop, maintain, and enhance a student information system and a longitudinal data system. Under this bill, DPI will also be able to collect and maintain public library-related data, including software purchases, data training, creation of library dashboards, establishing digital collection, allowing for data exchanges, creating an automated system for public librarian certifications, and establishing user authentication systems.

Authored by Senator Sheila Harsdorf (R-River Falls) and Representative Mary Felzkowski (R-Irma), the bill passed unanimously in the Assembly on a vote of 94-0 and concurred unanimously in the Senate on a vote of 31-0. It is Act 142.