

Treasurer Godlewski: \$5.25 Million in new funds for distance learning needs during COVID-19

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MADISON, Wis. – Today, the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL), the agency that manages the Common School Fund, made a special distribution of \$5.25 million in additional aid for public school libraries to address distance learning needs during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The 2020 distribution of \$38.2 million in school library aid, a record amount since the Common School Fund's creation when Wisconsin became a state, had already been planned on in January. Given the unprecedented nature of the public health emergency, the BCPL approved an additional distribution at their most recent board meeting. Coming together in the wake of COVID-19, the partnership between the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and BCPL represents an all-hands-on-deck approach to best serve Wisconsin's public schools.

“Wisconsin kids deserve the ability to learn despite the barriers created by COVID-19.” said State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, who serves as Chair of the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. “As a product of public schools myself, I’m proud we are able to step up and make this special distribution to support distance learning needs.”

This special distribution of \$5.25 million from the fund will not impact expected annual distributions in the future. Distributions from this fund can be utilized by school librarians to purchase eBooks, high-quality online resources to support inquiry and research, and devices to increase access to digital learning.

“These special funds offer immediate assistance to Wisconsin students during this unprecedented time,” State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said. “This aid, along with the annual Common School Fund allocation, directly addresses Wisconsin’s digital divide and will help meet students’ remote learning needs.”

As April represents “Public School Library Month”, the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) remain committed partners to Wisconsin public schools. Both the special distribution of \$5.25 million and the regular annual 2020 distribution of \$38.2 million will be sent to DPI on April 15, and then distributed across school districts by May 1. School districts will then spend that money by June 30.

[**Video Announcement from State Treasurer Godlewski**](#)

[**Audio clip from the Superintendent Stanford Taylor**](#)