

### **Introductions – Group Lead**

Good morning/afternoon! Thank you for your time today. Let's start with introductions, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I work at \_\_\_\_\_ library as a \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Go around the room until everyone has introduced themselves)

OLA has three top-priority issues this session:

1. Funding the Ready to Read Grants at the current service level,
2. Securing funding for broadband infrastructure matching fund and for a broadband E-rate consultant, and
3. Adding a new School Library Specialist position at the Oregon Department of Education (ODE).

### **Ready to Ready Grants – Member 1**

In 1993, the Legislature created the Ready to Read grant program to improve public library services to children. Grants are distributed annually to all the public libraries who apply, in an effort to improve early literacy for kids 0-6 or the grants can be used for summer reading programs for children 0-14. The Oregon Library Association (OLA) strongly supports the State Library's budget, including Ready to Read grants at their current level of \$1,653,457, or \$1.20 per child. This was included in the Governor's Recommended Budget. OLA will be testifying to support the State Library Budget this afternoon in the Ways and Means General Subcommittee.

### **Broadband (SB 885) – Member 2**

40% of Oregon's public libraries do not have adequate broadband, meaning they don't meet speeds of at least 100 Megabits per second download and 100 upload.

1. OLA is asking for on-going funding for a part-time consultant to contract with the State Library to act as a E-Rate consultant for all of Oregon's public libraries. Their job would be to help under resourced libraries apply for Federal E-Rate grants. This E-Rate consultant would be similar to the one schools requested and received from the legislature previously.
2. OLA is also asking for \$750,000 to be directed to the newly created Connecting Oregon Libraries Fund, established by HB 4092 in 2022. This funding would be used to cover the remainder of the broadband infrastructure projects, not covered by an E-Rate discount. For example, if a library has an \$20,000 project and gets \$16,000 or 80% in E-rate discounts, the library would be on the hook for \$4,000, which could be cost prohibitive for our small libraries. This funding would cover the remaining post E-rate technology costs.

### **New Media Program Studies Person at ODE – Member 3**

In 2021 OLA worked with Oregon Education Association to get a budget note that directed Oregon Dept. of education to conduct a statewide media programs study. One of the recommendations from the final report, sent to the legislature in December 2021, was funding a full-time FTE School Library Specialist at ODE, who will work to strengthen the media program standards, update terminology, provide professional learning and technical assistance, develop academic content standards through a process of statewide engagement, and provide technical assistance to districts to implement the standards. Bill will be introduced by Senator Dembrow and we are looking for more sponsors.

### **Questions – Group Lead**

Do you have any questions for us about OLA's priorities this session?

## **OLA Day – Member 4 or other**

Before we go we want to remind you that all day today legislators are invited across the street to the State Library to pick out a book to donate to a local library of your choice. We will have a photographer taking pictures of the books you choose and we can send them to you after. Tonight starting at 5pm, we will also have a reception at Ritter's in downtown Salem. Hope you can make it!

Thank you again for your time. We appreciate your support for libraries.

### **FAQ:**

*How are the ready to read grants used?*

*Ready to Read Grants can be used flexibly by public libraries to suit the needs of their communities. The grants can be used to improve early literacy for kids 0-6 by helping them develop literacy skills by the time they start kindergarten. The grants are also used for children 0-14 to help them develop or improve literacy skills and engage in reading activities over the summer.*

*Ready to Read Program Success:*

- *In 2021, 326,058 participants attended Ready to Read-funded library literacy-based activities.*
- *Summer Reading participants in 2021 read over 4 million hours - 4,545,566 - over the summer.*
- *143 eligible public libraries in Oregon applied for and will be awarded a grant for 2023.*

*What can I do to support OLA's priorities?*

*There are several things you can do to support OLA:*

- *Weigh in with the Ways and Means Co-Chairs to tell them you support OLA's funding requests,*
- *Sign onto our broadband bill (SB 885 – Senators Only) or the ODE School Library Specialist Legislative concept, and/or*
- *Vote to support the bills and state library budget in committee and on the Floor.*

*How does E-Rate work:*

*E-Rate Program Basics:*

*The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) runs the E-Rate program that provides discounts for internet connectivity and network infrastructure to eligible schools and libraries. Discounts range from 20% to 90% based on the poverty level of the schools in the region. In many cases, we see Oregon libraries qualifying for 80% and 90% discounts. The Federal government will cover the majority of the connection fees and infrastructure costs for large broadband projects for our libraries, however, only 30% of libraries are currently accessing the available E-Rate discounts. The discounts cover broadband infrastructure investments, on-going reductions on internet bills and on-going network monitoring and maintenance.*

*Why can't libraries apply for E-rate on their own? Why do they need a consultant?*

*Many libraries are small and under-resourced, lacking staff capacity to apply for the E-Rate discount. The application and procurement process are also extremely challenging. Many libraries have to hire specialized consultants to guide them through the E-Rate application process. That is why we see less than one-third of Oregon's libraries applying for and accessing E-Rate.*

*What is the study?*

*Budget Note for Media Program Standards Study Report done by ODE and submitted to the legislature in December 2021. If you google the title it will come right up.*