

Marketing and Public Relations February 2013 – April 8, 2013

Prepared for the April 2013 Commission meeting
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Goal One – Content - *Montana State Library (MSL) acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana library partners and patrons.*

Library Outreach – I met with First Lady of Montana, Lisa Bullock, as well as with Janet Walsh, the LT. Governor’s wife, and Siri Smillie, Associate Policy Advisor with the Governor’s office. I hoped to have Mrs. Bullock and Mrs. Walsh sign on as the “spokespeople” for the Ready 2 Read campaign. To that end, I presented them with a history of the Ready 2 Read program, highlighting our many successes over the past few years and shared with them the importance of early literacy outreach in libraries.

I spent a lot of time emphasizing why libraries are such an important part of the early childhood picture. I also talked about the EPP request for an early literacy position from MSL, how it was taken out of Governor Schweitzer’s budget and not put back into Governor Bullock’s budget, and how a request for a position was one of two priorities from the Montana Library Association but it was not funded. Mrs. Bullock was very upset that this position was not funded.

Selling the importance of early literacy was not a hard sell. Mrs. Bullock (the mother of three children) volunteers to work on student reading at her children’s Title I school. Mrs. Walsh is a paraprofessional at another Title I school in a kindergarten classroom and sees firsthand every day the vast difference in skill sets with which children enter school and how if a child struggles with reading in kindergarten, they continue to struggle throughout elementary school.

Additionally, Siri said that developing a comprehensive plan to address early childhood development will be a priority for Governor Bullock and that he is already laying the groundwork to make this a priority for the 2015 session. She said she was glad to meet with me and to have the opportunity to better understand the importance of libraries as part of this picture.

Both Mrs. Bullock and Mrs. Walsh said that they would be happy to assist us with whatever we need for the Ready 2 Read campaign – whether that is making appearances, providing quotes for press releases, posing for new marketing materials, or providing letters of support for grant applications and making phone calls on our behalf. Mrs. Bullock, Mrs. Walsh, and Siri said that they would work to make an early literacy position happen for the State Library as well. I followed up with all three of them with thank you notes and will continue to work with them on Ready 2 Read.

I also wrote and submitted my final report on the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation grant. We expended all \$35,000 they provided to us. I spoke with their Foundation director after she reviewed the grant and she said that working with us was a real pleasure and that everyone on the Foundation board thoroughly enjoyed watching what good stewards we were of their funding, as well as how far their money went.