**Wisconsin's Common School Fund - What Can Be Purchased?**

**Supporting School Libraries Through Common School Fund Library Aid**

October 2014

The framers of Wisconsin’s Constitution were pioneers with the foresight to create a constitutionally protected form of public education financing. They established the Common School Fund to hold in trust the proceeds from the sale of millions of acres of land granted to Wisconsin by the federal government as well as the “clear proceeds” of fees, fines and forfeitures that accrued to the state. At that time, they also created the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands to manage the Fund. The Board consists of the Secretary of State, the State Treasurer and the Attorney General.

The Common School Fund provides annual  library aid support to all Wisconsin public school districts. The Fund is invested in state bonds, the State Investment Fund and in loans to municipalities and school districts through the State Trust Fund Loan Program. In April of each year, the Board forwards the available earnings of the Fund to DPI which then re-distributes the earnings as library aid to all K-12 public school districts in the state. The allocation which each school district receives is based upon the number of children aged 4 through 20 living in the district. The aid is sent to school districts by May 1 of each year. Each district must spend their total Library Aid allocation for appropriate library materials by June 30 of that same year. These materials include books, newspapers, periodicals, other media resources, and to a limited extent, computers.

Further information about the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands, the State Trust Fund Loan Program and the history of the Common School Fund can be found at[http://bcpl.wisconsin.gov](http://bcpl.wisconsin.gov/).

**Purchase Requirements**

Wisconsin Statute 43.70(3) provides that money generated by the CSF be used for the purchase of library books and other instructional materials for school libraries and for the purchase of instructional materials from the state historical society for use in teaching Wisconsin history. In addition, a school district may use Common School Funds received in a fiscal year to purchase school library computers and related software if the school board consults with the person who supervises the school district’s libraries and the computers and software are housed in the school library. The person who supervises the school libraries is the district’s designated certified library media coordinator as per Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 8.01(2)(h).

Library media materials implies:

* Housed within and/or directly in support of the library media program
* Listed in the library media center catalog
* Accessible to all students and teachers in the building and district through the library program
* Circulated and used in a manner consistent with the Wisconsin School Library Media Program Vision 2010

**Eligible Purchases**

The following items are examples of those considered eligible for purchase with CSF money:

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| DESCRIPTION | WUFAR CODE |
| CDs, DVDs, | (431 Audiovisual) |
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* Library books (print and e-books); up to 10 print copies per title per library (432 Library books)
* Pre-processing fees for vendors who provide shelf-ready LMC materials; Re-binding of library books (432 Library books)
* Professional materials housed in the school library media program
* eReader devices, e.g. Nooks, Kindles (439 Other media)
* Newspapers and periodicals for the LMC (print and e-subscriptions) 433 Newspapers and 434 Periodicals)
* Digital, video-streamed or web-based resources that support the school library media program
* Instructional research software, e.g. graphic organizers, draft writers, or citation generators
* Library automation software and related software components or licenses; WISCAT license (435 )
* Reference materials and realia for the LMC, e.g. print and electronic reference books and subscriptions, globes, maps, kits (439 Other media)
* WILS membership to purchase databases.
* Computers for the LMC (550 Equipment addition or 560 Equipment replacement)
* iPads, interactive portable devices, instructional media based applications included in the library program portion of the district library and technology plan.

**Non-eligible Purchases**

The following items are examples of those considered ***not***eligible for purchase with CSF money:

* Listening and viewing equipment, e.g. VCRs, DVD players, headsets, speakers
* Textbooks, including teachers’ copies, classroom sets of trade books, workbooks (470), furniture and book storage items (444)
* Barcodes, labels, book jacket covers and other supplies (411); Rebinding of textbooks (354)
* Professional materials for a teacher center, professional library, department, or classroom housed outside of the library (479)
* Individual copies or sets of newspapers and magazines for classrooms or teachers (479)
* Administrative or Network operation software (480)
* Department or course-specific software, e.g. online or virtual courses, NovaNET, Plato, Accelerated Reader, Destination Math
* Application software, e.g. Microsoft Office, KidPix, Frontpage, Turnitin.com (480)
* Internet filters or Internet access (358)
* Computer peripherals and other hardware, e.g. wiring, amplifiers, cables, modems (360, 440, 460, 550, or 560)
* Long distance telephone charges (355)
* Classroom sets of encyclopedias or other reference books (479)
* Borrowing, delivery or usage fees imposed by other libraries or services (490)
* Other equipment, e.g., printers, LCD projectors, scanners (550 or 560)

Note that many instructional resources today are in electronic format and may be housed in a distant database and simply accessed from library media centers. The statutory language must be interpreted to apply to this media format and, at the same time, remain true to its intent which is supporting the school library program. For a detailed explanation of Common School Fund rules and guidance, check [http://sfs.dpi.wi.gov/sfs\_comsch.](http://sfs.dpi.wi.gov/sfs_comsch)

**Who is Eligible to Apply?**

No application is necessary. The Common School Fund is automatically distributed to all Wisconsin public PK-12 school districts, as described above.

**Amount of Funds Available**

Amount is determined by the BCPL, as described above.

**Application Due Date**

In January of each year the BCPL informs DPI of the estimated amounts to be allocated to school districts; DPI then informs each public PK-12 school district.

**Contact Information**

Questions regarding school library purchases that meet the requirements of the Common School Fund can be directed to Nancy Anderson, School Library Media Consultant. (608) 224-5383 or Martha Berninger, Director and Records Officer (608) 224-6161.

Questions regarding school library aid can be directed to Bruce Anderson, School Finance Consultant. 608-267-9707.

**Links**