

## Guest Editorial

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### Celebrating National Library Week: April 10-16

*A National Library Week guest editorial from State Superintendent Tony Evers*

The 2016 observance of National Library Week is of special significance in Wisconsin. It marks the 50th anniversary of public libraries joining school libraries in receiving support through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Those first years of the late 1960s were spent working with the Wisconsin Library Association to develop legislation for the state-supported regional library systems. The goal was coordinated regional service to member public libraries and their patrons. Today, the department and library community are working together to review and revise public library system services so the systems continue their valuable contributions for decades to come.

Our work in Wisconsin fits with the national theme for the April 10-16 observance: Libraries Transform. We are updating our regional library systems for the future and our local libraries are continually adapting to better serve their communities: transforming lives through literacy programs, employment support, technology training, and so many other activities for individuals, families, and groups.

Libraries today are as much about what they do as they are about providing books, resources, and information to their patrons. Libraries strengthen college and career readiness and are a key asset in our efforts to close the achievement gap. Libraries have expanded beyond being places of quiet study to encompass the role of creative and engaging community centers where people can collaborate using new technologies.

Libraries are many things to many people. Librarians work with professionals, parents, elected officials, small-business owners, students, and the public to discover and address the needs of their communities. Whether through offering e-books or technology classes, materials for English-language learners or early literacy activities for preschoolers, programs for job-seekers or a safe haven in times of crisis, libraries and librarians listen and respond to the communities they serve.

During the April 10-16 observance of National Library Week let's celebrate the varied roles of libraries and professional library staff. Visit your favorite library and let it transform your life.

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**NOTES:** A high resolution photo of the state superintendent is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at <http://dpi.wi.gov/news/contacts-resources>. A video message from the state superintendent is available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZG\\_2glb9PP8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZG_2glb9PP8). This editorial is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016\\_45.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016_45.pdf).