



# Memorandum

**TO:** ALL CHILDREN ACHIEVE  
COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Jane Light

**SUBJECT:** LIBRARY DEPARTMENT  
ANNUAL UPDATE

**DATE:** April 28, 2005

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Approved

Date

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This report is a mid year review of Library Department activities.

1) 2000 Library Bond Measure Projects status:

- Tully Community Branch Library opened in January
- Replacement Berryessa Branch opened in March
- New Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Branch opens July 9
- Replacement Rose Garden Branch estimated opening September
- Almaden Community Center and Library on track to open in January 2006
- Replacement Evergreen, Cambrian and Hillview Branches under construction
- New Edenvale Branch will begin construction this summer
- Replacement Joyce Ellington Branch in design

The new buildings are extremely popular and have become the center of their neighborhoods. Grand openings consistently attract over 7000 residents and use of the library collections, computers, and facility skyrockets.

Construction costs have risen substantially during the past year, largely because of the cost of construction materials.

2) Library use:

In July, due to budget reductions (24 FTE library staff), the library made popular media items (feature film DVDs and videos and music CDs) “browsing only” collections. Customers could no longer request that these items be sent to their branch from another one or captured upon return and held for them to pick up. This service reduction has been accepted by most customers. They are aware of the budget challenges that the city is experiencing.

We were uncertain what the impact on library checkouts would be with this change in service level. Although the rapid increase in number of items checked out has slowed somewhat this year, to date customers have checked out over 10.4 million items this fiscal year, a 4% increase over the same period last fiscal year. By the end of the fiscal year, customers will have checked out nearly 15 million items. Library visits also are rising at about 5% for the year. We continue to be one of the busiest large public libraries in the country measured both by total circulation and checkouts per capita.

Library staff are doing a remarkable job of serving customers in spite of staffing reductions, frozen vacant positions, the stresses of managing new, large spaces, and ever-increasing use of the libraries. They are willing to try new service models and to be flexible in order to provide the best possible services.

3) Self service & automation options:

Over 90% of our circulation is now handled by self service checkout machines. Surveys and focus groups have shown that customers prefer self service as long as staff assistance is readily available when needed. We are presently testing software that will allow customers who want to do so to pay library fines and fees online using credit cards. By fall we will add a feature that allows library card applications to be completed online. Customers will complete the application process by verifying their address when they first visit the library.

We are monitoring new products that automate the process of checking in and/or sorting returned materials. As the technology improves and prices fall, these have considerable potential for keeping our libraries very efficient and freeing our staff to directly assist library users.

A “pay for print” system has been installed at all facilities. Some months ago all printers were removed from public use computers because of the costs of paper and toner. An RFP for a vendor to install and maintain printers in branches for which customers would pay a per print cost resulted in a contract and the installation of printers in each branch.

4) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Library

Dr. Patricia Senn Breivik, Dean of the SJSU Library is retiring in June after 6 years of service. She has been an excellent partner in our unique collaboration. A search is underway for her successor and I am participating in that process.

5) Espresso service now at Vineland Branch

SJPL has just announced the introduction of espresso beverage and other light refreshment service at Vineland. The vendor has previous experience at a Kaiser medical facility. If successful, other branches will offer this service, for which we have many requests.

JANE LIGHT  
Director, Library Department