

## POUDRE RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Name of Requestor: Holly Carroll  
Appearance Date: May 12, 2014  
Time Required: 10 minutes  
Date Decision Needed: May 12, 2014

**Agenda Item:**

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Approve pilot program: no-extended use fees on picture books**

**Objective:**

Board approval of a six-month pilot program to eliminate extended use fees (fines) on children's picture books to encourage greater use of these items I support of the Library district's early literacy efforts.

**Situation:**

The Library District and other public libraries across the nation provide essential early literacy services to children and to parents/caregivers of the very young in teaching them the importance of early literacy skill development. In 2012/13, the Colorado State Library conducted the study, SPELL: Supporting Parents in Early Literacy through Libraries (<http://spellproject.weebly.com/>) which provides compelling evidence of the effectiveness of early literacy services of public libraries for school readiness. National research shows that the more books that are in the home of a young child; the more likely the child will have the skills and learning development necessary for succeeding in school.

The state study also identifies barriers in the use of libraries, borrowing materials and story time attendance. One of barriers in use of the library is the fear of accumulating fines on borrowed books. This may lead to fewer items borrowed and avoidance of the library once fines are accumulated. Fines are a disincentive for low income families.

**Advantages:**

Many libraries in Colorado and the nation are eliminating extended use fees on children's materials to encourage greater use of their libraries by youth and their parents. In 2014, The Library District is seeing a 6% decrease in circulation, primarily in the borrowing of print and audio visual materials. This can be the result of several factors outside the library's control such as the improved economy, the weather and in some cases, the recent preference for borrowing electronic resources.

This pilot project will provide an opportunity to monitor borrowing of one item type, picture books, to test if extended use fees are indeed a barrier to library use. Because picture books are skinny and easily misplaced, parents may limit the number to take home, regardless of the fact that and parents and children can read through many of them in a single sitting.

The library can easily compare circulation statistics over the six-month period to identify an increase in borrowing.

**Disadvantages:**

Revenue from fines and fees in 2014 is estimated to be \$180,000. Of that total, extended use fees for picture books are estimated at \$15,000. A six-month “no fine” policy on picture books is estimated to decrease fines by \$7,500. Revenue to-date show that fines and fees are on target for generating \$180,000.

**Requested Action:**

*Board approval of eliminating extended-use fees for picture books for a six-month period effective June 1, 2014*

**Potentially Affected Interest:**

The public; especially preschoolers and their parents who rely on the public library as an essential resource for reading readiness.

**Level of Public Interest and Participation:**

Moderate