



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Iwen Chu

## SENATOR IWEN CHU ADVANCING CRUCIAL LEGISLATION FOR RESOURCES AND MATERIAL AID FOR LIBRARIES

IWEN CHU March 20, 2024

| ISSUE: **LIBRARIES**

| COMMITTEE: **LIBRARIES**



(Albany, NY) Today, Senator Chu (SD-17) chaired the first Libraries Committee meeting of the 2024 legislative session. Building on her successful first year leading Libraries, Senator Chu continued to advance transformative bills that will increase the resources available at these institutions, as well as make reading and books more accessible to all New Yorkers. This meeting comes after the announcement of the Senate Majority's One House Budget

Resolution, which included historic levels of investment to New York's libraries and related programming.

One of the advanced legislation sponsored by Senator Iwen Chu (**S8478**) increases the per-pupil rate for school library material aid to \$11 and indexes it to inflation. This had been held flat since 2007 at \$6.25 per student and insufficient for the rising cost of materials.

Accounting for inflation, keeping this funding flat for 17 years amounts to a 33% cut. With the increase, schools will be more able to purchase materials such as books, digital, video and audio materials for their school libraries.

“For New Yorkers of all ages, libraries are the introduction to a path of knowledge, programming, and critical thinking – and the exposure to this world typically begins at our school libraries. And in order to open this door to the vast array of literature, culture, and educational wonder, we need to provide the best resources and materials for our future generations. It is absolutely unacceptable that the rate for school library material has been flat for 17 years when the needs of our students have only grown,” **said Senator Iwen Chu**. “I am proud to advance key bills that boost aid to libraries so they can better serve their students and patrons. These are the human and financial investments we need to be making now, so we can reap the rewards for years down the line.”

Highlights of the legislation passed by the Libraries Committee:

- **S7093**, sponsored by Senator Iwen Chu, lifts the cap on library construction aid, allowing institutions—particularly in distressed regions—to better fund their projects.
- **S8478**, sponsored by Senator Iwen Chu, increases the per-pupil rate for school library material aid to \$11 and indexes it to inflation. This had been held flat since 2007. With the increase, schools will be more able to purchase the materials needed for their students.
- **S8514A**, sponsored by Senator Jeremy Cooney, creates a statewide Imagination Library program, based on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library flagship program, which would provide age-appropriate books on a monthly basis, at home, to each child ages 0-5 registered in the program at no cost to the family.