



# Library Advisory Board Meeting

## Monday, October 20, 2025 12:30 pm

### Via zoom

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85948600690?pwd=1326mAtyXfrLnHjBtxLZLrU1aWLITc.1>

District 1-Fischer (Secretary)	District 4- Howells (Vice-President)	District 7- Aoh
District 2- Rosenthal	District 5- Bennett	At-Large- Murphy
District 3- Kubiak	District 6- Grove	At-Large- Groves (President)

#### AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of Minutes – September 15, 2025**
3. **Public Comment- (limit to 15 minutes)**
4. **Library Reports**
  - a. Report of the Director- Jessica Spitulski
  - b. Staff Reports- none
  - c. Review of Financial Report-
  - d. Statistical and Other Reports-
  - e. Report of District Consultant-Jessica Church
  - f. Report of County Council Liaison- Councilman Horton
  - g. Report of Friends of the Library-
  - h. Report of Erie Regional Library Foundation-
5. **Unfinished Business-**
  - a. Slate of Officers
6. **New Business-**
  - a. Workshop Session
7. **Adjournment**
8. **Appendix**
  - a. Announcements
  - b. News Articles

## 1. Call to Order

## 2. Approval of Minutes – September 15, 2025

## 3. Public Comment- (limit to 15 minutes)

## 4. Library Reports

### a. Report of the Director- Jessica Spitulski

- Upcoming Library Closures  
November 11<sup>th</sup> – Veteran’s Day
- Staffing Updates  
4 new clerks across all locations  
New Circulation Manager- Casey Velcko  
New Fiscal Technician- Rachel Ferretti
- Construction Updates  
Blasco Stairs – Waiting for installation of vinyl  
CLEER opening  
PennDot Bayfront Construction Impact/ Concerns
- Children’s Renovation Update
- HIRT Grant Application
- Fall Staff Development Day recap
- PaLa Annual Conference in Erie, PA – October 19-22

### b. Staff Reports- none

### c. Review of Financial Report- Financials attached

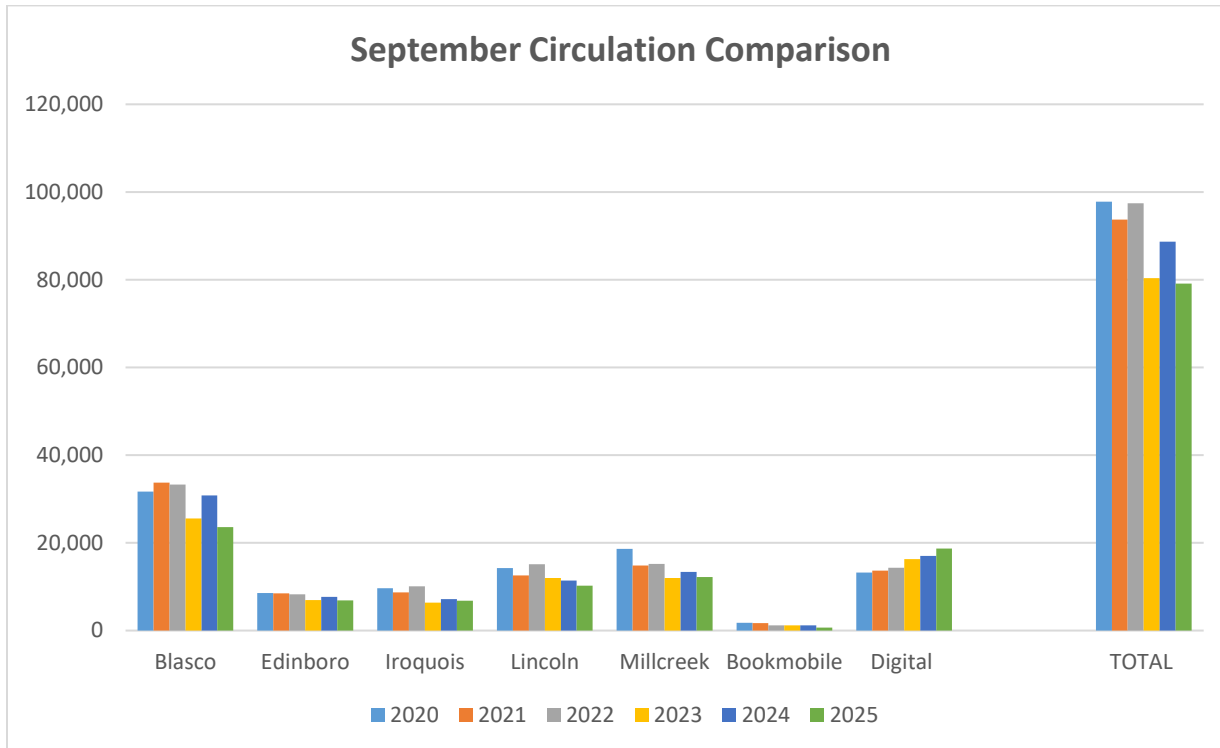
### d. Statistical and Other Reports-

## September 2025 Statistics

### Numbers Snapshot

- 475 new cards issued, including 110 e-cards
- 3078 WiFi logins, 2998 public PC logins across locations ↓08% from 2024
- Patron visits – 28,711 visits. Blasco foot traffic ↓27% from 2024
- **127 programs, 2040 attendees (No Blasco programming first half of month for new traffic pattern adjustment)**
- Desk questions

Month	Type	Directions	Collection	Electronic	Program	Research	Total
Sept	In person	867	1184	538	390	309	3288
Sept	Online	14	3	0	0	0	17
Sept	phone	358	378	193	213	272	1414
		<b>1239</b>	<b>1565</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>4719</b>



\* 9/2/25 Bayfront Road closure. Impact- Blasco foot traffic ↓27% and Blasco circulation ↓23% from 2024.

September Circulation Statistics						
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Blasco</b>	31,714	33,734	33,270	25,558	30,804	23,563
<b>Edinboro</b>	8,574	8,508	8,291	6,957	7,685	6,908
<b>Iroquois</b>	9,625	8,716	10,113	6,338	7,146	6,838
<b>Lincoln</b>	14,242	12,596	15,125	12,001	11,414	10,270
<b>Millcreek</b>	18,621	14,802	15,169	11,987	13,362	12,205
<b>Bookmobile</b>	1,771	1,707	1,187	1,210	1,180	656
<b>Digital</b>	13,240	13,682	14,313	16,300	17,055	18,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97,787</b>	<b>93,745</b>	<b>97,468</b>	<b>80,351</b>	<b>88,646</b>	<b>79,140</b>

e. Report of District Consultant-Jessica Church

**Updates for ECPL LAB Report  
Submitted by Jessica Church, District Consultant**

**Library District Updates**

Libraries continue to work on their Plans for State Aid. As the budget impasse continues, the Office of Commonwealth Libraries instructed libraries to complete their plans as if they received the same amount as they did earlier this year.

The District Advisory Council (DAC) will meet on October 29 at the Edinboro Branch. The DAC is made up of the library director and one trustee of each of the 16 member libraries.

**State & Federal Updates**

No updates at this time regarding the state or federal budget impasses.

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries has released an updated *Public Library Board Trustee Manual*. Due to the various types, sizes, and governing structures of libraries in Pennsylvania, the manual is more so a guide which libraries can use and adapt as applicable to their organization.

- f. [Report of County Council Liaison- Councilman Horton](#)
- g. [Report of Friends of the Library-](#)
- h. [Report of Erie Regional Library Foundation-](#)

**5. Unfinished Business-**

- a. [Slate of Officers](#)

**6. New Business-**

- a. [Workshop Session](#)

**7. Adjournment**

**8. Appendix**

- a. [Announcements](#)

**The next board meeting will be Monday, November 17, 2025, at 12:30pm via zoom.**

- b. [News Articles](#)

**Find used books and more at Friends of Erie  
County Library's fall 'S-Book-tacular' sale**

October 12, 2025 | Erie Times-News: Web Edition Articles (PA)

Author/Byline: Nicholas Sorensen, Erie Times-News | Section: News

336 Words | Readability: Lexile: 1110, grade level(s): 9 10 11-12

### [Read News Document](#)

Whether you are in need of a new mystery, fiction, history or children's book this fall, the Friends of the Erie County Library might be able to help you out.

The Friends of the Erie County Library is hosting its annual fall "S-Book-tacular" sale in the Admiral Room at Blasco Library located at 106 E. Front St from Oct. 16-18.

Here's more on what to expect from this sale.

More: What are the most challenged and banned books? Erie County Public Library names them

What will the sale offer?

This year the spooktacular sale will feature newer mystery, fiction, history, art and children's books, plus puzzles, CDs and DVDs.

What hours will the sale be running?

The sale will begin on Oct. 16 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. On Oct. 17, the sale will continue from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The sale will then conclude on Oct. 18 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

What does the sale benefit?

Each of the annual book sales supports the Erie County Library and library programs across Erie County.

Bayfront Bookshelf open during the sale

During the hours of the spooktacular sale, the Bayfront Bookshelf, located in the lobby of the Blasco Library, will be open.

The Bayfront Bookshelf is run by the Friends of the Erie County Library and gives all of the proceeds from the shop to help fund library programs.

At the Bayfront Bookshelf, customers can find used hardback and paperback books along with used audio books, DVDs and music CDs. The store also sells souvenirs.

Where can I learn more about the Erie County Library sale?

Visitors and customers can learn more about the sale by visiting [erielibraryfriends.org](http://erielibraryfriends.org).

How to get to the Erie County Library sale

Even with the bayfront construction, shoppers can use Holland Street to access the Blasco Library.

More: Gannon opens interactive Lake Erie education and research center at Blasco Library

For customers who are coming from the southwest, they can take the bayfront roundabout north on Sassafras Street and turn right on Front Street to head east to the library.

Nicholas Sorensen can be contacted at [nsorensen@gannett.com](mailto:nsorensen@gannett.com).

## What are the most challenged and banned books? Erie County Public Library names them

October 10, 2025 | Erie Times-News: Web Edition Articles (PA)

Author/Byline: Nicholas Sorensen, Erie Times-News | Section: News

1041 Words | Readability: Lexile: 1240, grade level(s): 11-12

[Read News Document](#)

Oct. 5-11 is Banned Books Week, a week launched in 1982 in response to a sudden surge in the number of challenges to books in libraries, bookstores and schools, according to [bannedbooksweek.org](http://bannedbooksweek.org).

The week is held annually in the last week of September or first full week of October to highlight values including free and open access to information and the power of the book community from authors to publishers and booksellers.

In Erie, banned books were highlighted through the Lake Erie Lit Festival. In fact, the Erie County Public Library created a guide to banned books exhibit for the Lit Festival, which was held Sept. 13 at Frontier Park.

The books exhibited by the Erie County Public Library on the banned list for Lit Fest included some frequently challenged books, some banned pictured books, the American Library Association top five most challenged books from 2024 and the top banned books in public schools from the school year and reasons why the books were banned.

The ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom compiles a list of the top 10 most challenged books every year to inform the public about censorship in libraries and schools. The lists are based on information from media stories and voluntary reports from communities across the country, according to the American Library Association.

Five frequently banned and challenged classic books

The following is the list of frequently challenged classic books, according to the American Library Association.

- \* "The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger: This book was banned for reasons including being anti-white, obscene, blasphemous and centered around negative activity, according to the ALA.
- \* "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck: Banned frequently due to spreading propaganda unfavorable to the state, being filled with filth and containing a profanity.
- \* "To Kill a Mocking Bird" by Harper Lee: Banned because the book contains profanities and racial slurs, has conflicts with values of the community and does psychological damage to the positive integration process.
- \* "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker: Banned for rough language, smut and being too violent.
- \* "Welcome to the Monkey House" by Kurt Vonnegut: Banned for explicit sex and scenes of sexual assault while containing scenes of euthanasia.

More than just books: There's more to do than check out books at the Erie County Public Library

### Top four banned and challenged picture books

The following is a list of the top banned and challenged picture books.

- \* "The Family Book" by Todd Parr: Banned for containing the sentence "some families have two moms or dads."
- \* "The Lorax" by Dr. Suess: Banned for negative portrayal of the logging industry.
- \* "Granddads Camper" by Harry Woodgate: Banned for LGBTQIA+ content and being contrary to natural biology.
- \* "Unicorns are the Worst" by Alex Willan: Banned for illustrations of a goblin's rear end and being harmful to minors.

### The American Library Association's top five most challenged books for 2024

Every year, the American Library Association compiles a list of the most frequently challenged books based on information from confidential reports filed by library professionals, community members and news stories published throughout the United States.

Listed below are the top five from the list and the reasons why.

- \* "All Boys Aren't Blue" by George M. Johnson: This book has 39 challenges against it for LGBTQIA+ content while claiming to be sexually explicit.
- \* "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison: This book has 35 challenges against it for deception of sexual assault, deception of incest, claiming to be sexually explicit and for EDI content.
- \* "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" by Stephen Chbosky: This book has 35 challenges for claiming to be sexually explicit, LGBTQIA+ content, deception of sexual assault, deception of drug use and having profanities.
- \* "Tricks" by Ellen Hopkins: This book has 33 challenges for claiming to be sexually explicit.
- \* "Looking for Alaska" by John Green: This book has 30 challenges for claiming to be sexually explicit.

### Top banned books in public schools in 2023-2024

According to the pen.org website, PEN America works to ensure that people have the freedom to create literature, to convey information and ideas, to express their views, and to access the views, ideas, and literatures of others. PEN America compiled a list of the top five banned books from public schools in the previous school year.

- \* "Nineteen Minutes" by Jodi Picoult: This book contains a brief scene depicting date rape and use of anatomically correct words for the human body.
- \* "Thirteen Reasons Why" by Jay Asher: This book was banned for drug and alcohol use, sexual content,

suicide and being unsuited for age groups.

\* "Identical" by Ellen Hopkins: The plot of this book includes an abusive father.

\* "The Kite Runner" by Khalid Hosseini: This book contains sexual content, racially diverse rhetoric, LGBTQ themes, references to abortion and criticism of Christianity.

\* "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood: This book contains profanity, sexual content, alleged anti-Christian themes and the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters.

More: Pennsylvania lawmakers weigh gun law reform in aftermath of high-profile shootings

PEN America reported that between 2021 and 2024, there were nearly 16,000 instances of individual books banned in public schools in the U.S. and 664 book bans in Pennsylvania, as reported by the Education Law Center.

The commonwealth ranked third nationally in 2022 for book bans, with more than 450 titles contested or removed, according to legalclarity.org.

How are books challenged in the Erie County Public Library system?

The Erie County Public Library follows national standards and a structured process for book challenges.

According to the library's collection development policy, "Anyone who wishes to request that a specific item be reconsidered for inclusion in the Library's collection is asked to complete and sign the Request for Reconsideration Form."

The form, available at the library, is reviewed by the Request for Reconsideration Committee and a decision is made "regarding the retention or removal of the material within 10 business days of receiving the request."

A letter explaining the decision is then sent to the requester using contact information provided. The title remains in the collection during the reconsideration process. After a decision is made on a title, it remains in effect for 90 days regardless of subsequent requests of the same title.

Where can I find more information on banned books?

If you are interested in diving deeper into banned books and reasonings, more information can be found on the American Library Association's website.

Nicholas Sorensen can be contacted at [Nsorensen@gannett.com](mailto:Nsorensen@gannett.com).

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## **A new chapter - Gannon's new center brings Lake Erie science to Blasco Library**

October 8, 2025 | Erie Times-News (PA)

Author/Byline: A.J. Rao; Erie Times-News | Page: A1 | Section: News

611 Words | Readability: Lexile: 1330, grade level(s): >12

## Read News Document

Lake Erie has a new hub for discovery on the bayfront.

On Oct. 4, Gannon University officially opened its Center for Lake Erie Education and Research or CLEER at the Blasco Memorial **Library**. The center, located on the first floor of the **library**'s eastern wing, gives the public free access to hands-on exhibits, educational programs and lab space focused on Lake Erie and the Great Lakes.

"CLEER embodies our mission as a university connecting education, research and community," said Sarah Ewing, provost and vice president for student experience at Gannon.

"It's designed not only as a resource for our students and faculty, but as a community asset where families, schoolchildren and tourists to Erie can learn more about Lake Erie and all of our Great Lakes."

The opening involved a ceremonial ribbon cutting and a weekend of family-friendly, water-focused activities hosted in collaboration with several community partners.

Inside the new center

The 3,280-square-foot center contains three main components: an interactive exhibit space, a NOAA Science on a Sphere and an education and wet lab.

Interactive displays highlight Lake Erie as well as the other Great Lakes, allowing visitors to explore several features, from water temperatures, wildlife patterns, algae growth and even ship movements.

The NOAA Science on a Sphere adds a global perspective. Developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the system uses four projectors to display dynamic data on a six-foot globe. With more than 600 programs available, it can illustrate topics such as hurricanes, climate change and ocean currents for classes and the public.

Turning the **library** into a 'destination'

Erie County Executive Brenton Davis said the new center is part of an effort to make Blasco **Library** a destination.

"If you look around, you see all the young faces and the babies and the children in strollers — that's precisely what we want to bring back to the **library**," he said. "We want to make this **library** a destination. And I think this is the first step, not only into the future, but in the right direction."

"We're really taking libraries into the next generation," he said. "It's things to do for families on a rainy day, and the first step into the future."

Erie County **Library** Director Jessica Spitulski said the center will help visitors "see the world in new ways, to broaden our perspective and to ask questions that matter."

"At Blasco **Library**, we won't just be inviting people to read and observe research. We'll actually be inviting them to participate — and that makes us a more creative and more engaged community," she said.

CLEER will be open in conjunction with Blasco **Library**'s standard operating hours.

Lawsuit still looms over center

The Oct. 4 ribbon cutting comes even as Gannon and the county face an ongoing lawsuit.

Filed in June 2024, the suit argues that the county improperly leased space inside Blasco **Library** to a private, religiously affiliated university at below-market rates. The citizen group behind the case — Keep Our **Library** Public — contends that the **library** building was donated specifically for public use, and that taxpayers are disadvantaged by the arrangement.

Judge Marshall Arner, presiding over the case in Erie County Common Pleas Court, has suggested potential compromises, including a Gannon-funded endowment to support **library** services, lease amendments that would limit the center's footprint and purpose, and possibly shortening the 25-year lease term.

No agreement has been reached yet.

CLEER is part of Gannon's \$24 million environmental initiative called Project NePTWNE, which includes a makerspace on the Gannon campus and a greenhouse at West Fourth and Myrtle streets.

A.J. Rao can be reached at [arao@gannett.com](mailto:arao@gannett.com) or 814-440-5080.

Caption:

A ribbon cutting on Oct. 4 marks the official opening of Gannon University's Center for Lake Erie Education and Research at the Blasco **Library**.

A.J. RAO/ERIE TIMES-NEWS

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