

**Date:** January 16, 2026

**TO:** RAILS Board of Directors

**FROM:** Monica Harris, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Palace Project Update

This memo provides a brief update on RAILS' transition to The Palace Project for eRead Illinois, with more detail to be shared during the board meeting. The onboarding of hundreds of member libraries in less than eight weeks should be viewed as a tremendous success and a clear testament to the strength of our collaborators. The collective efforts of the RAILS team, The Palace Project team, our many statewide library partner organizations and individual member libraries across Illinois were essential to making this migration successful. Early usage reflects strong patron engagement, with more than 14,000 items checked out through The Palace Project during the month of December.

In support of this transition, RAILS and The Palace Project team hosted eight informational webinars in late 2025, attended by more than 600 members. These sessions played an important role in helping libraries prepare for and adopt this new platform. This moment provides an opportunity to reflect on—and take pride in—the level of cooperation and shared problem-solving that enabled a relatively smooth transition for so many eRead members in such a short period of time.

As we have acknowledged, the complexity of K-12 institutions require a significantly greater level of development and customization. Development work specific to K-12 is the highest priority for The Palace Project team in early 2026, alongside temporary solutions to provide immediate access for many of our school libraries. To support faster onboarding, RAILS has established three collection instances within The Palace Project app—one each for elementary, middle, and high schools. For school libraries that require web-based access to the eRead Illinois collection, RAILS will proactively reach out in February.

For the hundreds of libraries already using The Palace Project app, we will continue to actively solicit feedback on the user experience and share that input with The Palace Project team to help guide future improvements and enhancements. We look forward to sharing more details and answering questions during our meeting.