WISCONSIN PLSR
PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM REDESIGN PROJECT

Steering Committee

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

February 22, 2019

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Acknowledgements

The Public Library System Redesign Project (PLSR) Steering Committee would like to thank the following for their assistance and input on the project.

- Kurt Kiefer, Assistant State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
- DPI Division for Libraries and Technology: Public Library Development Team and Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning staff
- WiLS (Wisconsin Library Services)
- Russell Consulting, Inc. (RCI)
- Wisconsin Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND)

A special thank you to the Wisconsin library community for sharing their time, expertise, and insights throughout the project as well as their passion for improving services to libraries and the communities they serve.

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report summarizes the process, goals, participation, and resulting recommendations of the Public Library System Redesign Project (PLSR), which was undertaken between 2015 and 2019. Launched in the fall of 2015, the project was led by a 10-member Steering Committee appointed by the State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The committee represented the regional and service level diversity of Wisconsin Libraries, from small rural public library systems to large urban public libraries. The committee was formed to oversee a process created and endorsed by the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND)[1] and accepted by the Superintendent to consider how to best provide public library system services in Wisconsin. This process recommended by COLAND is commonly referred to as the Road Map.[2]

Building on the work of many, the goal of PLSR is to develop a plan for implementation of new equitable, efficient and effective models of service to provide the best service possible for all public libraries and library users. Public library systems have provided residents with high quality services for over 40 years. However, needs and expectations of libraries and communities have changed over time since the original development of this framework. As with any organization or structure, continuous assessment and evaluation are vital to ensure continued efficient and effective use of the resources available to support Wisconsin's public libraries.

General Overview of the Project

The PLSR Steering Committee was recommended by COLAND and appointed by the State Superintendent. The project consisted of three major phases.

Phase 1 — Capacity and Concept Building — established the framework and initial participants for the project. A project management team was hired to support the Steering Committee and helped recruit and appoint members to a number of workgroups. These workgroups were charged with developing service delivery models and implementation plans with a focus on improving services to libraries and library users while gaining efficiency. Preliminary recommendations were presented at the 2016 Wisconsin Library Association Conference.

Phase 2 — Intensive Research, Development of Service Models — workgroup model development continued with feedback from the community and Steering Committee subcommittees informing their work. Steering Committee members made presentations at public library systems and collected feedback. Open communication with COLAND, the State Superintendent, public library system directors, and the library community continued.

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[1] Created by the Wisconsin State Legislature in 1979, the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND) advises the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (DPI) to ensure that all state citizens have access to library and information services. The 19-member council, appointed by the governor, functions as a forum through which librarians and members of the public identify, study, and collect public testimony on issues affecting Wisconsin libraries and other information services.

[2] COLAND, *Future of System Services Road Map*, 8 Jan. 2015, https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/coland/pdf/Future%20of%20system%20services%20road%20map%201-8-15%20FINAL.pdf (last accessed 4 Dec. 2018).

Phase 3 — Consensus Building, Final Recommendations — workgroup reports were completed and made available in April 2018. Additional participants were recruited to help craft final recommendations. The Core Recommendation Collaborators (CRC) worked with the Steering Committee and joined others at a Recommendation Development Summit held on July 30-31 of 2018.

Participation, Communication, and Engagement

This project was informed by hundreds of individuals from across the state who served on workgroups and subcommittees, provided feedback, completed questionnaires, answered surveys, made comments, asked questions, or participated at summit meetings.

- The Steering Committee formed four subcommittees, which, with the addition of the CRC members and Recommendation Development Summit participants, resulted in 71 Wisconsin library community members helping the Steering Committee shape the recommendations in this report.
- More than 70 public library system service experts comprised the workgroups that developed public library system service model recommendations provided to the Steering Committee. The workgroups received input from over 40 review panel library services experts.
- Others involved in sharing information with the project include the staff at each of the 16 Wisconsin public library systems, with key assistance from the directors and business managers assisting with public library system funding and expense information gathering, past Wisconsin library leaders, and library professionals from nearly 30 other states.
- DPI staff at the Division for Libraries and Technology had a vital role in the process, assisting the Steering Committee and serving as expert resources to assist all committees and workgroups that were formed during the project.
- Both the workgroup process and Steering Committee's recommendation development process included numerous times the committee communicated project information and progress and asked for feedback, in addition to the 45 open meetings the Steering Committee held in person or online. This included:
    - All project information and resources were maintained on the PLSR Project Website.[3] This site also contained contact forms for the Steering Committee and workgroups which many library community members used to share feedback.
    - A network of communication liaisons created with staff from each of the 16 public library systems to regularly share project communications with the public library community.
    - Other communication channels, including the Division for Libraries and Technology *Libraries for Everyone* blog, were utilized.
    - Steering Committee members traveled around the state three different times, holding 33 meetings in the regional public library systems to provide project updates and gather input.
    - The workgroups shared information and solicited feedback throughout their work at state library conferences and through surveys, including utilizing a voluntary survey panel of 226 library community members as needed.
    - To keep the library community up-to-date on the process and provide another opportunity for feedback, the project manager and Steering Committee held 16 hour-long Virtual Q & As via webinar.

[3] PLSR Project Website, http://www.plsr.info/ (last accessed 4 Dec. 2018).

- The Steering Committee provided project updates and opportunities for input at regular meetings of the System and Resource Libraries Administrators Association of Wisconsin[4] (SRLAAW), COLAND, DPI State Superintendent, Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Board, and WLA's Library Development and Legislation (LD&L) committee. In addition, the committee held eight one-hour calls with public library system directors on non-SRLAAW meeting months to discuss the project.
- The Steering Committee also shared information and solicited feedback at state library conferences. In addition, the committee gathered feedback at four main points in the last year of the project for their recommendation development process.
    - In February of 2018, a consultant was hired to conduct a broad assessment of public library needs, perceptions, and expectations in respect to their current public library system and its services and what an ideal system might look like. The consultant held three focus groups of nearly 40 public library directors followed up the administration of a survey to all 381 public library directors, with 311 libraries responding.
    - During April of 2018, a survey form was open for four weeks following the release of the PLSR Workgroup Recommendations Report that gathered feedback from 145 respondents.
    - In June and July, 155 members of the library community completed a survey, open for six weeks, providing feedback on the initial Steering Committee Recommendation Report model ideas.
    - A survey was administered between December 3-9, 2018 that gathered feedback from 149 Wisconsin public library directors regarding the Steering Committee's Draft Recommendation Report.

Recommendations

Seven recommendations emerged from the workgroup reports, community input, and continuous dialog that represent areas of consensus within the library community.

1. *Develop Standards, Best Practices and Accountability Structures for Public Library Systems* – Develop and implement an appropriate set of standards, best practices and accountability measures designed to support equity of access to high-quality public library system services by public libraries in all parts of Wisconsin. Structure any accountability measures in a manner that does not adversely affect member libraries.

2. *Enhance Collaboration by Creating Incentives and Removing Barriers* – Accelerate collaboration among Wisconsin's public library systems by establishing incentives and removing barriers. When prudent, seek statutory changes that would achieve and sustain momentum in this area.

3. *Reduce the Number of Public Library Systems* – Apply the approaches of enhancing collaboration and reducing barriers to support voluntary changes in territory served by public library systems with the ultimate goal of reducing the current number of public library systems.

[4] SRLAAW is composed of Administrators from all sixteen Wisconsin Public Library Systems and the Library Directors of the Resource Libraries from each System.

4. *Analyze the Current Funding Formula* – Conduct a thorough analysis of the current funding formula for public library systems, including practices utilized to apportion state aid. Identify and propose alternative funding formulas, methods of apportionment, or other solutions with potential to improve equity of access to high-quality library services.

5. *Initiate Delivery Service Pilot Projects* – Stimulate development within the resource-sharing environment by initiating one or more pilot projects related to library delivery services.

6. *Create an Effective, Well-Managed, State-Scale Discovery Layer* – Engage with topical experts, public library systems, and the library community at-large to expand access to collections from around the State.

7. *Implement a Learning Management System for Professional Development* – Oversee the design, deployment, and operation of a learning management system capable of meeting the current and future needs of librarians in Wisconsin.

Directives Gleaned from the Library Community

1. *Service improvements must benefit library users* – Any service improvements moving forward must fulfill a principle of the project related to equitable access for all and ultimately benefit the library user.

2. *Workgroup reports should be used as frameworks for specific service improvements* –The workgroup reports contain thoughtful and in-depth recommendations from public library system and library service area experts and provide a solid foundation for improving services across the state.

3. *Take action on recommendations with robust support* – Recommendations 5, 6, and 7 have been identified and are supported as service areas where improvement can provide immediate, positive outcomes through collaborative and organic change.

4. *Service improvements must be soundly-implemented* – Implementation of service improvements must be driven by effective research, planning, execution, and change-management, and supported by adequate resources.

5. *Potential unintended consequences should be anticipated and studied* – Any efforts to implement recommendations should be preceded by assessments to identify risk factors that could lead to unintended negative outcomes.

Background

At their meeting in August 2012, the System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) conducted a summit and subsequent survey to examine how public library systems could continue to most effectively deliver services to their member libraries. Their final report, *Creating More Effective Library Systems*, recommended a need to conduct further studies on public library system services, size, and strategies for implementing optimally configured public library systems and establishing service and administrative standards for public library systems.[5]

During the development of the 2014-2015 biennial budget, the Joint Finance Committee recommended the Department of Administration "conduct a study to identify potential savings in public library systems through consolidation, technology, efficiencies, Lean practices and service sharing" in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The Governor deemed this recommendation unnecessary, vetoed it from the budget bill, and acknowledged DPI as the appropriate agency to conduct such a study without the need for legislative directive.[6]

In response, DPI's Division for Libraries and Technology initiated a Lean System Study Work Group to examine demand for services by member libraries, and the resources and capacity of public library systems to provide these services. This work group identified areas of service provided by public library systems that could be made more efficient. The major recommendation was that study continue and experts from each topical area be tapped to develop further recommendations and implementation strategies.[7]

While the Lean System Study Work Group finalized their report, the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND) appointed a workgroup in July 2014 to develop a strategic vision for public library systems in the 21st century. In January 2015, COLAND approved their workgroup report[8], and the following recommendations were presented to the State Superintendent:

- Library Consulting – leverage distributed expertise to provide specialized consulting verified by DPI;
- Provide and Support Technology Access – achieved through aggregation of software and services including shared platforms and expertise;
- One State, One Collection – achieved through a statewide discovery layer and underlying library automation software;

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[5] System and Resource Library Administrators' Association of Wisconsin, *Creating More Effective Library Systems*, 2 Aug. 2013, http://srlaaw.org/reports/2013Process (last accessed 4 Dec. 2018).

[6] Governor's Veto Message, 1 Jul. 2013, https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2013/related/veto_messages/2013_wisconsin_act_20 (last accessed 4 Dec. 2018).

[7] *DPI Lean System Study Work Group Recommendations*, 5 Sep. 2014, https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/pld/pdf/LSSWG_recommendations.pdf (last accessed 5 Dec. 2018).

[8] COLAND, *Strategic Vision for Library Systems in the 21st Century*, Jan. 2015, https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/pld/pdf/Strategic_vision_for_systems.pdf (last accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

- Resource libraries must redefine their value proposition for the twenty-first century;
- Delivery Service – transition to multi-hub delivery network;
- Coordinate Electronic Resources – maximize purchasing power;
- Continuing Education – maximize impact of continuing education funding;
- Eliminate statutory language requiring DPI to request 13% for public library system aid.

COLAND included a road map and timeline for further study on how public library systems could most efficiently and effectively deliver services in the topic areas identified by the Lean System Study Work group. The intent was to lead change at the local and regional level to maximize organizational resources and state funding in order to deliver the highest quality library services to Wisconsin residents for the tax dollars provided.

Recommendation Development Process

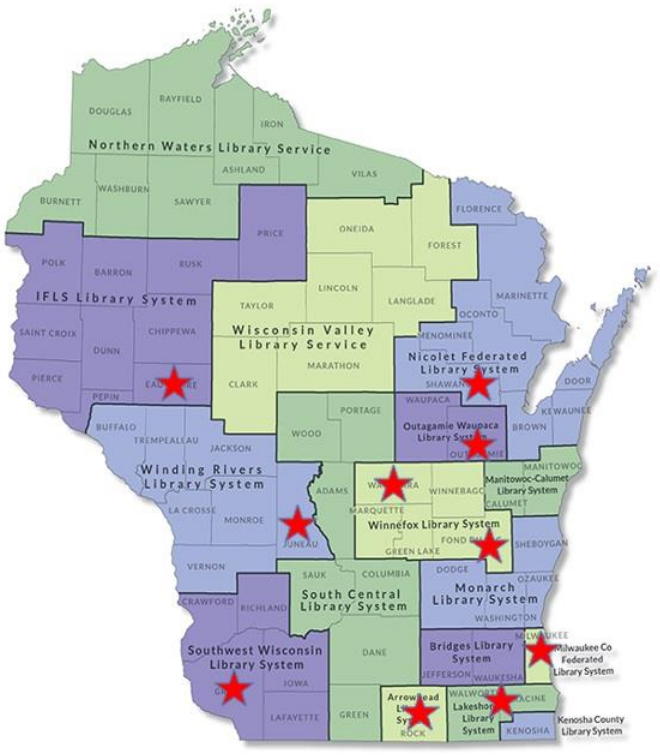
In September 2015, the State Superintendent appointed a 10-member Steering Committee to oversee a multi-year project to re-envision how Wisconsin public library systems serve Wisconsin's 381 public libraries. Membership was selected based upon library and public library system size as well as consideration for geographic distribution.

Members of the Steering Committee:

Name	**Library**	**Type of Library**	**Role**
Kent A. Barnard	Patterson Memorial Library, Wild Rose	Very Small Public Library	Member
Jon Mark Bolthouse	Fond du Lac Public Library	Large Public Library	Member
Beth A. Carpenter	Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library[9]	Mid-sized Public Library	Member
Bridget C. Christenson	Hatch Public Library, Mauston	Small Public Library	Member
John DeBacher	Department of Public Instruction	State Library Agency	DPI Liaison[10]
Kristie L. Hauer	Shawano County Library	County Library, Joint Library	Member

[9] One year after appointment, Carpenter accepted a position with the Appleton Public Library.
[10] Non-voting.

Paula Kiely	Milwaukee Public Library	Large Public Library, Resource Library[11]	Vice-Chair
Jessamyn C. Lee-Jones	Platteville Public Library	Mid-sized Public Library, Resource Library	Member
Bryan J. McCormick	Hedberg Public Library, Janesville	Large Public Library, Resource Library	COLAND Representative
Stephen R. Ohs	Lakeshores Library System	Small Public Library System	Member
John T. Thompson	IFLS Library System	Large Public Library System	Chair



Map 1: Steering Committee member library or system locations

[11] A Resource Library is usually the largest library within the system area. It provides backup reference, information and interlibrary loan services to the system area including the development of and access to specialized collections, as evidenced by a written agreement with that library.

The State Superintendent charged the Steering Committee with providing strategic vision, oversight, and general leadership in the development of recommendations to update and refine the roles and services of public library systems and maximize investment in public library systems and public libraries.[12]

The Steering Committee, as well as the workgroups, was made up of volunteers. The Steering Committee issued a nationwide Request for Proposal for a project manager to plan, organize, and implement a process focused on eliciting recommendations from the library community. The project manager was also charged with facilitating meetings and structuring the idea generation of the workgroups. Two responses were received. The Steering Committee selected WiLS[13] as the project manager during a meeting held November 4, 2015 at the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Annual Conference. The following core principles were adopted by the Steering Committee in December 2015:

- Communication is critical for the success of the process;
- The process relies on openness and trust from all participants;
- Information and data should be the bedrock of the process;
- Outside expertise will add credibility and weight to the outcomes;
- The process will be used to grow skills needed to maintain flexible and community-driven service into the future. [14]

The project manager formed service workgroups in March 2016. Members of the workgroups were selected by the project managers, workgroup leadership, and Steering Committee members from a pool of voluntary applicants.[15] These members were assigned to workgroups based on their subject matter expertise or their status as a user or customer of a service area. Originally nine workgroups were formed. Upon completion of Phase 1 of the project, there were two mergers of workgroups and another workgroup that changed its name to reflect a broader scope for their work. The following seven workgroups existed after Phase 1:

- *Chapter 43* [16] – relating to the Wisconsin State law that provides funding for coordinated regional library services.
- *Collections* (previously Electronic Resources) – relating to coordination, purchasing, contracting, and management of electronic, print, and digital resources for Wisconsin public libraries.
- *Continuing Education & Consulting* (merged) – relating to the professional development and consulting needs, methods, and resources that support public libraries.

[12] Appointment letter from Dr. Tony Evers, State Superintendent, Aug. 2015
[13] WiLS (Wisconsin Library Services) is a nonprofit agency that provides cooperative services to libraries in Wisconsin and elsewhere.
[14] *Public Library System Redesign Project (PLSR) Principles and Goals*, 10 Dec. 2015.
[15] *Information and Call for Workgroup Volunteers*, 27 Jan. 2016.
[16] Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin State Statutes refers to libraries, public library systems, and the roles of the State Superintendent and DPI.

- *Delivery* – relating to the delivery of physical materials to and from public libraries in Wisconsin.
- *Interlibrary Loan & Integrated Library System/Discovery* (merged) – relating to how resources are shared, how library services are automated, and how resources are discovered online at public libraries in Wisconsin.
- *Resource Libraries* – relating to how resource libraries can best serve the needs of Wisconsin public library systems and member libraries.
- *Technology* – relating to new technologies, infrastructure, and support.

These workgroups were instructed to research their service area extensively and meet regularly to develop recommendations to the Steering Committee for inclusion in their final report. Workgroups were also instructed to identify, illustrate and contextualize existing inequities in library service throughout the state and focus on maximizing equity of access for the citizens of Wisconsin, not the libraries or public library systems.[17]

As workgroups developed recommendations, feedback was solicited from the library community in a number of ways, including: an external group of participants asked to review findings through surveys[18]; presentations made at the 2016 and 2017 Wisconsin Library Association's annual conferences; monthly calls scheduled with directors of public library systems; and virtual question and answer periods open to the public.[19] The Steering Committee also identified communication liaisons in each public library system to help disseminate information to member libraries and library boards.

Final reports from each workgroup and the project manager were delivered to the Steering Committee on April 2, 2018.[20] After the completion of the workgroup phase, WiLS transitioned from an active project manager role to an administrative and logistics coordinator role. The Steering Committee contracted with Russell Consulting, Inc. (RCI) to perform the project manager role of facilitating meetings and the preliminary recommendation development process.

The Steering Committee reviewed workgroup recommendations individually, as well as at two in-person retreats in February and April of 2018. During these retreats, two groups of collaborators outside of the committee were identified to help craft a final report.

The Steering Committee selected 10 library professionals from a pool of applicants to be the members of the CRC based on geographic area and type of library to attempt to instill diverse thought into the process.[21] The CRC worked with the Steering Committee on developing and testing overarching models of governance that could accommodate the workgroup report recommendations. This work was facilitated by RCI and took place during two all-day meetings.

[17] PLSR Workgroup Findings Report – Draft Outline, 12-13 Jul. 2017.
[18] PLSR Survey Panel Volunteer Form.
[19] Workgroup presentations, recordings, and materials as well as recorded calls with system directors were shared on the PLSR website.
[20] *PLSR Workgroup Recommendations Report*, 4 April 2018.
[21] *Core Recommendation Collaborators Announcement*, 5 Mar 2018.

The findings of this work were shared with the library community and officially made available for public comment from June 11 to July 20.[22] All public comments were compiled and made available to Steering Committee and CRC members.[23]

A Model Development Summit was held July 30-31 with additional participants joining the Steering Committee and CRC members to further test and discuss the model of governance. At the conclusion of the Summit, several areas of consensus were identified.[24]

The Steering Committee reconvened on August 16 to discuss the outcomes of the Summit and to begin to form concrete recommendations. Steering Committee members were individually tasked with drafting recommendations for review by the full committee. A small writing team worked to refine initial drafts and shared progress with the Steering Committee. The writing team held weekly phone calls to organize work and coordinate with Steering Leadership on the timing of upcoming Steering Committee meetings.

In total, the Steering Committee met nine times (virtually and in-person) to discuss and develop their final recommendations. A draft version of the final report was prepared prior to and at the end of each meeting and shared with the library community for comment. All comments received were distributed to the whole of the Steering Committee for consideration.[25]

Directives Gleaned from the Library Community through the Recommendation Development Process

Wisconsin public libraries and public library systems have a strong history of working together to provide excellent services. A wide range of stakeholder groups were consulted for feedback. Library directors, library staff, public library system directors, public library system staff, library and public library system board trustees, and county officials were all involved in the process. Past and present library leaders were involved in discussions regarding statutory issues.

Large amounts of project documentation were made available to these stakeholder groups and feedback was received from individuals and boards at the library, public library system, and county levels. There were multiple open comment periods geared toward various audiences. The recommendation development process culminated in a summit-style meeting, followed by a final public comment period on the content derived from that summit. The feedback received by the Steering Committee was extremely valuable. An effort was therefore made to distill key directives expressed by the community at-large.

[22] Preliminary models, a comparison tool, and introduction to the comparison tool can be found on the Steering Recommendation Development Phase page of the PLSR website, in the Preliminary Model Framework section.
[23] *PLSR Model Development Comments*, 23 Jul. 2018.
[24] *Model Development Summit Notes*, 30-31 Jul. 2018.
[25] Project documents will be retained on the project website through 2020, maintained according to the approved records retention schedule. Records requests may be submitted to DPI.

Service improvements must benefit library users.

One of the Principles of PLSR Structure is to "ensure all Wisconsin public libraries have the capacity to provide equitable access to excellent library services regardless of the race, ethnicity, income, gender, or employment status of the people they serve, or their location within the state".[26] DPI supported and championed that the focus of any service improvements moving forward must fulfill this principle and ultimately benefit the library user[27].

Use workgroup reports as frameworks for specific service improvements.

Service workgroups consisted of experts from across the state. The studies they completed of current service areas were thoughtful and in-depth. Inequities were examined, which led to recommendations for improving service. Upon review by the library community, several workgroup recommendations garnered early support for service improvements in specific areas: delivery, discovery layer, technology, and the creation of a Continuing Education (CE) portal[28]. The workgroup reports provide a solid foundation for moving forward in these areas.

Take action on recommendations with strong support.

The specific areas mentioned above represent areas of greatest need for libraries and areas that would provide immediate, positive service outcomes to Wisconsin residents. With the workgroup reports serving as frameworks for improvements, purposeful action should be taken. Some of the workgroup recommendations require more significant changes to affect service improvement. For example, state-scale implementation of a service such as technology would require changes to governance structures, funding, and administration, and would require widespread support from the library community. It became clear throughout the recommendation development process that organic, non-mandated change should lead improvements forward.

Service improvements must be soundly-implemented.

Implementation of service improvements must be driven by effective research, planning, execution, and change-management. Implementation should also be supported by adequate resources. The library community expressed concerns about how administration, funding, and governance might change with proposed service improvements. Any service improvement moving forward must have a detailed plan for how it will be managed, who will govern the service, how it will be implemented, how local relationships will be maintained or developed, and evidence of how efficiencies will be gained.

Anticipate and study potential unintended consequences.

Each of the recommendations contained in this report include suggestions for implementation. However, it was made extremely clear by the library community that any efforts to implement recommendations should be preceded by assessments to identify risk factors that could lead to unintended negative outcomes.

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[26] *PLSR Steering Committee Principles of Structure: http://www.plsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Principles-of-PLSR-Structure-Development.pdf,* 14 Aug. 2017.

[27] System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) April 2017 Meeting. http://srlaaw.org/sites/srlaaw.org/files/SRLAAW_04262017_minutes.pdf (last accessed 19 Feb. 2019).

[28] The concept of a CE (Continuing Education) portal is hereafter referred to as a learning management system for professional development.

Recommendation 1: Develop Standards, Best Practices, and Accountability Structures for Public Library Systems

Recommendation

Develop and implement a set of standards, best practices, and accountability measures designed to support equity of access to high-quality public library system services by public libraries in all parts of Wisconsin. Structure any accountability measures in a manner that does not adversely affect member libraries.

Summary

Since their establishment in the 1970s, public library systems and the services they provide have evolved as a response to local need, availability of resources, and local board decisions. Therefore, services provided to member libraries vary greatly from system to system in availability, funding, and scope. Regional customization of services is a benefit from Wisconsin's unique library structure. It is not the intent of this recommendation to restrict regional customization. Rather, a baseline of essential services should be established upon which public library systems can build. In 2013, SRLAAW created a set of voluntary standards to help, but statewide agreement on essential services and the levels of which to provide those services remains elusive.

Public library systems are currently required to provide a range of services detailed in Wisconsin State Statute 43.24 to qualify and maintain eligibility to receive state aid.[29] These standards include agreements with member libraries, provision of backup reference services to member libraries, and the provision of training to member libraries, among other requirements. Wisconsin statutes currently allow DPI to reduce aid to public library systems if they do not comply with existing standards.

The PLSR project has shown a number of areas in which best practices relating to the operation of public library systems exist. Specific areas for improvement include common accounting procedures, collaborative tracking of consulting services, board trustee development, and collection consistency. This need for best practices may not be addressed through formal standards or regulation, but should be captured, refined, shared, and in some cases, incentivized for widespread use.

Creation of a formal mechanism to define best practices and standardization of data collection would provide immediate benefits to public library systems and their members. It may also provide Wisconsin public library systems with a more effective means to compare services and to identify further opportunities to collaborate.

Any accountability measures for public library systems must be designed to avoid negative impacts on member libraries. As previously indicated, DPI may reduce state aid to public library systems not meeting the current standards. While a reduction in aid would impact the public library

[29] Wisconsin State Statute 43.24, https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/43/24 (last accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

system, it would also certainly impact member libraries by diminishing the services they have access to through the public library system. Reduction in aid could place additional complications on a public library system to meet any standards, current or future. It is therefore recommended by the Steering Committee that any accountability measures be designed to minimize negative impacts on member libraries.

Goals of the Recommendation

- Provide equitable access to high quality services and support for all public libraries.
- Construct and implement a process to analyze services currently offered by public library systems, gather feedback, and determine which services should be codified in standards. Standards could include a "tiered" structure, and/or be based upon recently developed standards for public libraries.
- Create effective mechanisms to identify best practices, for the library community to refine them, and for public library systems to begin using them.
- Inform initiatives related to other recommendations in this report concerning statewide policies that ensure equity of access to services.
- Enhance the ability of libraries to compare the services they receive from their public library system to the services provided by other public library systems.

Value Proposition

- The creation of standards will ensure every library in the state can expect high-quality, consistent service from their public library system. Enhanced standards will also help public library systems have a clear understanding of not only the types of services they should provide using state funding, but also the level at which they provide those services.
- A substantial amount of time was spent during the PLSR process gathering data from public library systems to analyze system services and make recommendations for improvements. Sharing best practices and standard reporting practices between public library systems will establish a base measurement for the success of PLSR recommendations and will make further analysis and improvements possible. Best practices can reduce the time required for mandatory reporting for all public library systems, especially as it relates to financial data. Libraries will also be able to compare public library system services easily, allowing libraries to identify and correct inequities of service delivery that may arise in the future.

Suggested Implementation Process

- Appoint a task force, made up of public library system directors and staff and public library directors representing each certification "grade," charged with identifying, developing, and recommending specific public library system standards.
- Obtain an in-depth review of current public library system standards and accountability measures, preferably by an outside entity. Additional initial comments may be sought from DPI and the Wisconsin Library Association's LD&L Committee.

- Present recommended standards to the library community for comment. Include an additional opportunity for feedback from WLA in this process.
- Convene a gathering of public library system directors, DPI personnel, and others to create a list of immediately-evident useful best practices. Create a plan for capturing, refining, and publishing future best practices.
- Create methods by which to learn and formalize future best practices through existing collaborations. For example: existing meetings of the System Office Managers and Bookkeepers Association of Wisconsin (SOMBAW) could be used to formalize accounting standards and meetings of public library system staff could identify standards for consultant and/or continuing education tracking.

Measuring Success

- Standards are drafted and endorsed by stakeholder groups (SRLAAW, COLAND, member libraries, etc.) and delivered to DPI as a package to implement change.
- Establishment of a process by which best practices can be captured, refined, and promulgated. A formal process will allow best practices to be retained, curated, and made tangible.

Recommendation 2: Enhance Collaboration by Creating Incentives and Removing Barriers

Recommendation

Accelerate collaboration among Wisconsin's public library systems by establishing incentives and removing barriers. When prudent, seek statutory changes that would achieve and sustain momentum in this area.

Summary

Through the PLSR project, the library community has achieved an unprecedented level of self-awareness about opportunities to collaborate. Specific examples of new collaboration between public library systems include service consolidations, sharing of staff positions, and group purchasing. This recommendation is an outgrowth of multiple workgroup reports and other previous studies. Feedback gathered from the library community throughout the project includes strong support for collaboration that is based upon voluntary partnerships.

Unsuccessful attempts of public library system service collaborations and mergers that have happened over the years[30] should be studied to determine if financial or other incentives could facilitate efforts where initial coordination or equipment costs may present barriers.

Voluntary partnerships and reduced barriers to collaboration could potentially serve as building blocks to changes in territory served by public library systems and the reduction of the number of public library systems.

Goals of the Recommendation

- Using the workgroup reports as a guiding framework, identify and prioritize specific incentives, disincentives, and barriers that could be implemented or removed to further stimulate collaboration between public library systems.
- Cultivate and connect the expertise, leadership, and capacities that currently exist in libraries throughout the state.
- Leverage the experience, knowledge, and talents of those that directly serve library users in developing and providing innovative services to communities of all sizes.
- Improve equity of access to high-quality services.

Value Proposition

- Public library systems provide a broad range of critical services to their member libraries. Many of these services are delivered at economies of scale that could never be achieved

[30] Appendix A: History of Library Systems

by individual libraries, and this model continues to evolve. Several collaborative ventures — not possible just a few short years ago — have now been put into practice successfully among the regional systems. For example, public library systems are beginning to share bookkeeping services, hosting server and network equipment on shared infrastructure, and collaborating to provide professional development opportunities to a much broader audience than ever before.

- Based upon the rapid pace of technology changes, it is possible even greater economies of scale may be realized through collaboration by and between public library systems. In many cases, more favorable distributions of costs and administrative overhead mean that public library systems and libraries can provide better services and/or more comprehensive collections to the people they serve.

- A focus on identifying, incentivizing, and supporting opportunities for voluntary change will help ensure future success. Stakeholders can engage having a mutual interest in positive outcomes. This approach can help fuel any number of processes, from merging two public library systems, to trying out a new service collaboration, to taking part in a delivery pilot, or becoming a partner in some other project with positive impacts on services to the citizens of Wisconsin. Such changes, when appropriately supported, can be empowering to those directly involved and inspiring to others.

Suggested Implementation Process

- Appoint an implementation team and/or appoint or hire a project manager tasked with accomplishing the goals set in this recommendation.

- Craft an appropriate timeline for completion of research and other work.

- Conduct a needs assessment to determine the resources currently available and/or required to complete the goals set in this recommendation.

- Identify key individuals with involvement in public library system mergers or other significant collaborations between public library systems. Devise a process to interview them and build a knowledge base.

- Engage with library community experts, DPI, and other relevant professionals to create an assessment of potential incentives, disincentives, or barriers that might be enacted or removed.

- Using the workgroup reports as a framework, develop a guide that outlines resources for future collaborative projects, potential funding options, and available experts for facilitators. Generate a plan to effect statutory changes, if needed.

Measuring Success

- Creation of mechanisms to aid public library systems. Examples include:

    - A process document developed to guide the planning and completion of a service collaboration, merger, or expansion;

    - Non-financial incentives (change management consulting services, other forms of in-kind support made available through DPI or other agencies, etc.);
    - Financial incentives (including Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant categories or other grant awards).
- Public library systems undertake collaborative ventures.
- Further quantitative and qualitative measures, including results from process surveys, satisfaction surveys, data analytics, interviews, etc. are created, gathered, and made available to assess success.
- Public library systems are able to meet service standards more efficiently.

Recommendation 3: Reduce the Number of Public Library Systems

Recommendation

Apply the approaches of enhancing collaboration and reducing barriers to support voluntary changes in territory served by public library systems with the ultimate goal of reducing the current number of public library systems.

Summary

Sixteen regional public library systems provide services to public libraries in Wisconsin. These services, delivered at-scale, are critical to member libraries. The original statutory framework allowing formation of public library systems was set in place in 1971. Since that time, each public library system has evolved differently to meet local needs. Counties are the basic geographic building blocks for public library systems, thus public library systems range in size from ten counties to a single county. Due to advancements in technology and the evolving needs of libraries, a reduction in the number of regional public library systems may help address service capacity issues. This idea is echoed in previous reports by several key stakeholder groups, including:

- "Creating More Effective Public Library Systems" (2013/SRLAAW);
- "Lean System Study Work Group Recommendations" (2014/DPI); and
- "Strategic Vision for Library Systems in the 21st Century" (2015/COLAND).

In addition to cooperative ventures centered on specific services, the topic of changes in territory served by public library systems was of significant discussion during each phase of the PLSR process and was a key recommendation reinforced by participants in the PLSR Model Development Summit.

Changes in territory served by a public library system typically refers to the act of two or more public library systems uniting into a new entity on equal terms, however, statutory provisions also exist for a library or county to withdraw from one public library system to join another. In recent years, a number of counties or public library systems in Wisconsin have attempted to merge with or join another public library system. These collective experiences provide a unique opportunity to study the factors (obstacles, successes, funding, etc.) behind each outcome and apply the results.

There is general consensus among the library community that changes in territory of public library systems have the best service outcomes when they are voluntary. Mandatory system mergers could increase the chances of undesired outcomes. Attempts at territory change can be challenging due to many issues, including local control, trust, fiscal issues, and transition processes that are in any way unclear. Incentives would be helpful, but detailed analysis is still needed to determine the specific form(s) incentives should take. DPI is uniquely suited to play a

leadership role in developing tools and new structures of support to increase chances of success. Organizations such as SRLAAW and WLA are also key allies.

Goals of the Recommendation

- Capture the knowledge of individuals experienced in public library system merger and expansion. Utilize this knowledge to create an analysis of significant factors that play a role in the public library system mergers or expansion: specifically, how they may be addressed effectively. Involve the previously identified individuals directly in the process of identifying and implementing specific incentives, disincentives, or barriers in need of removal.

- Publish a document or guide to assist public library systems in effectively planning for any future system merger or expansion. At minimum, the guide must include a checklist of steps, a detailed example timeline, and fiscal best practices. It must also be current regarding state statutes, the administrative code, and DPI interpretations. The document should include specific recommendations for organizing and completing a public library system merger.

- Conduct and complete a process to identify which regional public library systems have the greatest possibilities of voluntarily system merging.

- Identify and recommend specific statutory changes to DPI and/or WLA that would streamline the process of voluntary public library system mergers.

- Create a system of incentives that would encourage or assist public library systems down the path of system merger (see also Recommendation 2).

- Create a structure of support, including detailed resources for the libraries, public library systems, and counties choosing to undertake any degree of public library system mergers.

Value Proposition

- There is potential in some areas of the state that a reduction in the number of public library systems will result in higher quality and more comprehensive services than smaller public library systems are typically able to provide on their own.

- Voluntary changes in territory have the strongest potential to preserve the structures of trust and relationships that are prerequisite for the effective delivery of services to member libraries.

Suggested Implementation Process

- Create a best practices checklist and resource document for public library system boards/member libraries to consider options for filling director vacancies and/or public library system mergers.

- Provide adequate resources and full support by DPI for implementation of Recommendation 2, Enhance Collaboration by Creating Incentives and Removing Barriers.

- Support precursors to mergers and expansions, such as partnerships related to library management software, shared positions, shared procurement, or merged services.

Measuring Success

- Achievement of at least one successful public library system merger.
- Comparison of pre- and post-inventory of public library system services provides service improvement and response information for member libraries and library users as a result of public library system mergers.
- Public library system services are delivered more cost-effectively and member libraries experience improved levels and quality of services.
- Reduction in duplication of public library system administration or service activities and efforts.

Recommendation 4: Analyze the Current Funding Formula

Recommendation

Conduct a thorough analysis of the current funding formula for public library systems, including practices utilized to apportion state aid. Identify and propose alternative funding formulas, methods of apportionment, or other solutions with potential to improve equity of access to high-quality library services.

Summary

Each biennium, the Wisconsin legislature approves an amount of state aid intended to fund the operation of public library systems. The formula as originally written combined aspects of population, geographic area and municipal and county expenditures to determine the amount each regional public library system receives on an annual basis. In the late 1990's, statutory changes occurred which in effect "froze" the data sets used to calculate funding levels of that time.[31] Therefore, for at least twenty years, apportionment of state aid to public library systems has not been based upon up-to-date population demographics or municipal expenditures. This reality is at odds with the intent of the original formula design.

Funding mechanisms for public library systems have remained a persistent discourse throughout the library community for the duration of the PLSR process. At least one alternative funding formula was proposed[32] and it was discussed during the process that alternative factors could be considered. It is the belief of the Steering Committee that an investigation of alternatives to current funding distribution practice should occur.

Goals of the Recommendation

- Identify minor statutory changes that will, at minimal risk, improve the funding model underpinning public library system services.
- Coordinate the efforts of stakeholder groups to create and implement an action plan for any necessary statutory changes.
- Improve equity of access to high-quality public library services across Wisconsin, while ensuring that no public library system experiences a decrease in base funding.

[31] The Department of Public Instruction provides a clear explanation of the formula and changes since its inception at https://wilibrariesforeveryone.blogspot.com/2015/05/calculating-state-aid-to-systems.html (last accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

[32] Public Library Service Model W, including an alternative funding proposal, was released for public comment after the conclusion of the second CRC meeting, 8 Jun. 2018.

Value Proposition

- Public library system funding has a direct impact on local libraries' ability to provide services to library users. To ensure every Wisconsin resident benefits from library services, state funding must equitably support the public library system services that public libraries need.
- Conducting an objective analysis of the current state funding formula and alternative formula options will result in a foundation for further decision-making.

Suggested Implementation Process

- Appoint an implementation team made up of 3-7 topical experts with minimal potential for conflicts of interest to complete the recommendation.
- Conduct an in-depth analysis of the current funding formula and practices utilized to apportion state aids for public library systems as described in the recommendation.
- Seek input on the results of the analysis from key constituent entities, including public library system directors, DPI leadership, WLA Board, WLA LD&L, etc.
- Identify specific improvements that could be made and construct a legislative action plan.
- Implement legislative outreach.

Measuring Success

- Preservation of existing public library system service capacities while expanding public library system service equity in areas of need.

Recommendation 5: Initiate Delivery Service Pilot Projects

Recommendation

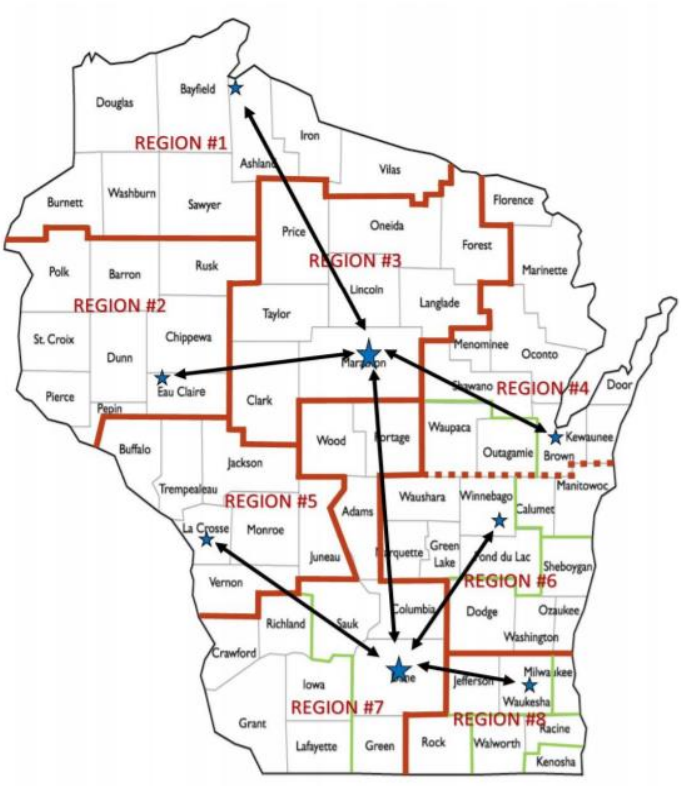
Stimulate development within the resource-sharing environment by initiating one or more pilot projects relating to library delivery services.

Summary

Physical resource-sharing generates tremendous value for libraries and, therefore, taxpayers. Sixteen independent regional delivery networks currently provide physical delivery of library materials between Wisconsin libraries. These regional networks are each operated and administered by public library systems. Each regional network's hub is linked to the delivery service of the South Central Library System (SCLS), headquartered in Madison. The result is a resource-sharing infrastructure whereby a library patron in Superior can request an item from a library branch in Kenosha and receive it within a matter of days.

The delivery workgroup produced a number of recommendations geared toward providing more equitable delivery services to all areas of the State.[33] The end-model originally described by the workgroup features eight larger delivery regions — each with a single "hub" location — that are all interlinked (see Map 2).

This delivery network was envisioned by the workgroup to be funded and coordinated in a manner akin to a single statewide delivery service. It is important to note that, although the funding and coordination components of the model would differ from current practice, the intention of the workgroup in creating their delivery model was that libraries would not experience any change in their current *frequency and quality of service*. Rather, the model proposed in the Delivery workgroup report is intended to *increase the frequency* of service for any libraries in need.



Map 2: Delivery workgroup recommended hub network

[33] Delivery workgroup report, 2 Apr. 2018.

Goals of the Recommendation

- Increase equity of access to rapid, efficient delivery services.
- Utilize the Delivery workgroup report as a starting point from which to:
    - Incentivize merging of regional delivery services in certain regions of the state;
    - Work towards a reduction in the number of separate delivery regions in the state from 16 to 8 while utilizing existing delivery assets, locations, and/or shared contracting.
- Determine, through the pilot approach, whether a restructured regional delivery hub connection network improves delivery between Wisconsin libraries (COLAND Strategic Direction 5).
- Decrease wait times for library users by lowering the percentage of requested items that must travel long distances and/or through a centralized sorting house.
- Improve overall redundancy of the statewide delivery system, thus increasing resiliency in the face of inclement weather or staffing issues.
- Reduce duplicated efforts in some areas of the state through converged delivery service infrastructure and administration.

Value Proposition

- Through the pilot project approach, many of the concepts addressed in the Delivery workgroup report may be tested incrementally without putting the entire statewide infrastructure under stress.
- Efficiencies of regional service mergers include:
    - Shorter transit times - library users getting materials faster;
    - Fewer miles travelled - fuel cost savings; and
    - Reduction of duplicated administrative overhead - economies of scale.
- A successful pilot project will provide a blueprint for future projects.

Suggested Implementation Process

- Appoint an implementation team and/or appoint or hire a project manager charged with performing necessary research, coordinating stakeholder groups, and managing implementation issues relating to this recommendation.
- Identify specific areas of the state where opportunities exist for delivery-related pilot projects.

- Work with public library systems in these areas to identify opportunities to coordinate delivery services, up to and including establishment of multi-system hubs. Include creation of a link to SCLS in this process.
- Utilize feedback from the coordination process to construct useful incentives (example: LSTA grants to help with start-up costs).
- Provide ongoing implementation and contingency support to the public library systems participating in a pilot project.
- Plan for future transitions to regional hub links, as described in the Delivery workgroup report.
- Utilize the Delivery workgroup recommendations to guide further coordination, including the intermediary "North/South" hub arrangement, as detailed in the Delivery workgroup report.

Measuring Success

- A detailed service inventory of key metrics is developed from the data gathered by the Delivery workgroup and Funding Subcommittee[34] and is used to analyze whether or not anticipated cost efficiencies and service improvements are achieved in any pilot projects.

[34] http://www.plsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PLSR-Funding-Cost-Standards-Report.pdf, May 14, 2018

Recommendation 6: Create an Effective, Well-Managed, State-Scale Discovery Layer

Recommendation

Engage with topical experts, public library systems, and the library community at-large to expand access to collections from around the state.

Summary

A “discovery layer” refers to the visual interface used by library users to find, identify, select, and obtain the various types of resources offered by the 21st century public library. These resources include physical books and audiovisual materials, and an ever-broadening variety of downloadable and streaming digital resources such as audiobooks, feature films, news and/or scholarly articles, and other digital content.

The PLSR process has resulted in an unprecedented degree of understanding of the commonalities and differences of the software used to manage library resources, how discovery services are provided by public library systems, and how those services are funded and managed. The library community now has a greater understanding of how library users seek resources and how their experience can be improved.

Throughout the PLSR process, the concept of a state-scale discovery layer option has garnered support from project participants, the library community, and other stakeholder groups. Additionally, DPI already maintains a resource-sharing platform called WISCAT[35]. There is, therefore, a strong foundation for achievement of this recommendation.

Goals of the Recommendation

- Achieve interoperability between the various library management software platforms used in Wisconsin (COLAND Strategic Direction 2).
- Provide a user-friendly interface option that allows library users seamless access to library physical and digital collections across the state regardless of where they live (COLAND Strategic Direction 3).
- Reduce procurement, budgeting, training, and technical administration efforts that are duplicated by the current 16 public library systems in maintaining 14 unique online discovery platforms.
- Embrace the critical need of libraries (and public library systems) to make decisions and tailor services in response to the needs of library users where they are.
- Improve collaboration related to procurement and access of electronic materials. Several discovery layer software platforms can now flexibly display content licensed at state-scale.

[35] https://dpi.wi.gov/rl3/wiscat

For example, BadgerLink[36] resources could be displayed alongside content licensed by smaller groups of libraries. This would provide great opportunity for libraries, public library systems, and other groups, such as Wisconsin Public Library Consortium[37] to collaborate in unprecedented ways (COLAND Strategic Direction 4).

Value Proposition

Wisconsin libraries already share resources. However, the set of technologies relied upon to accomplish this sharing are aging, some dating to the 1970s.[38] The successful creation of a discovery layer at state-scale will improve services to library users in the following ways:

- Library users may search the collections of any public library in the state, obtaining high-quality results that are optimized for the shortest delivery time based on geographic location;
- Public library systems and/or individual libraries that do not have the resources to purchase or operate top-tier library management software would nonetheless benefit, improving the baseline patron experience; and
- Interoperability between existing library management software would encourage collaboration between libraries by removing current resource discovery barriers to new partnerships and improving communication between libraries.

Suggested Implementation Process

- Appoint an implementation team and/or appoint or hire a project manager vested with the ability to drive the project.
- Conduct a governance assessment to determine how decisions impacting the look, feel, and function of the state-scale discovery layer will be made.
- Conduct a needs assessment to identify minimum technical requirements necessary to achieve interoperability between different library management software platforms.
- Identify a communication protocol that meets the above-determined requirements for interoperability.
- Working with DPI, create technical standards for use in negotiating vendor agreements.
- If necessary, create an application capable of translating action messages between the library management systems in use in Wisconsin.
- Explore the current capabilities of library discovery products, including open-source platforms.

[36] https://badgerlink.dpi.wi.gov/
[37] https://www.wplc.info/
[38] Lynch, Clifford. *The Z39.50 Information Retrieval Standard*, D-Lib Magazine: Apr. 1997, http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april97/04lynch.html (last accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

- Conduct a fiscal assessment to determine costs when scaled to the entire state.
- Organize a process to evaluate and select a product that will serve as the state-scale discovery layer.
- Create a structure for ongoing evaluation and improvement.
- Establish a group charged with taking a leadership role in fostering collaborations in the area of library management software.

Measuring Success

- Use of pre- and post-implementation assessment tools, including statewide surveys to library users and libraries, to identify user experience improvements and prioritize desired functionalities and features for a library discovery software platform.
- A pre- and post-implementation assessment of the usage pattern of physical and electronic collections will indicate increased use and access for library users and improved resource sharing efficiencies for public libraries and public library systems.

Recommendation 7: Implement a Learning Management System for Professional Development

Recommendation

Oversee the design, deployment, and operation of a learning management system[39] capable of meeting the current and future needs of librarians in Wisconsin.

Summary

Wisconsin is made stronger by its library professionals and ongoing development opportunities are needed to maintain a sharp edge. Wisconsin requires that library directors and public library system directors maintain certification through DPI. Public library systems are statutorily obligated to provide professional development opportunities for these individuals, as well as library staff and board trustees. This professional development ensures that libraries are managed efficiently and effectively.

Historically, each public library system has provided local professional development opportunities to its member libraries and managed the process of certifying local staff. As the availability of new learning technologies has accelerated, many public library systems have begun to collaborate, share content, and work together. However, the certification process is still paper-based and requires many "touches" by local, regional, and state individuals.

The learning management system will meet the current professional development needs of library professionals and library board trustees throughout Wisconsin and will evolve as needs change. This system will serve as a repository of online professional development content including streaming courses, webinars, etc. while also providing library staff and trustees with the ability to locate nearby in-person professional development activities through an interactive event calendar. This portal will include the capability for library professionals to manage their own certification status online, while providing DPI the capability to exercise their statutory oversight more efficiently.

Goals of the Recommendation

- Furnish library professionals with a more effective means of discovering and obtaining content and instruction that is directly applicable to their professional development.
- Eliminate the current paper-based process of certification, in favor of an online learning management system.

[39] Watson, W. R. & Watson, S. L. define a Learning Management System as "the infrastructure that delivers and manages instructional content, identifies and assesses individual and organizational learning or training goals, tracks the progress towards meeting those goals, and collects and presents data for supervising the learning process of an organization as a whole." See: *What are Learning Management Systems, what are they not, and what should they become?* TechTrends 51(2): 28-34.

- Foster collaboration between agencies that offer professional development opportunities through a statewide calendar of events.

Value Proposition

- An online learning management system will benefit the state by ensuring library professionals possess needed skills throughout their careers while leveraging technology to reduce general administrative overhead (COLAND Strategic Direction 5).

- An online learning management system will significantly reduce valuable time required to locate professional development opportunities. This reduction will result in more time spent providing direct service to the public (COLAND Strategic Direction 2).

- An online learning management system geared toward professional development for library staff and library trustees will reduce duplication of effort and will spur collaboration while improving equity of access to high-quality professional development opportunities statewide (COLAND Strategic Direction 5).

Suggested Implementation Process

- Appoint an implementation team and/or appoint or hire a project manager tasked with evaluating platform needs in the context of user experience and effective content management, driving the project, and serving as a bridge between stakeholder groups.

- Utilize previous work by project work groups and knowledge experts to create a comprehensive specifications document for the learning management system.

- Compare specifications with existing learning management system vendor capabilities.

- Explore potential cost, quality, and feasibility of a learning management system developed or licensed “in house” by DPI or another partner.

- Distribute a Request for Information to learning management system vendors and/or software development agencies.

Measuring Success

- Demonstrated improvements in effectiveness and efficiencies of the certification process.

- Increased levels of satisfaction among library professionals with respect to access to (and quality of) professional development resources determined via an assessment survey completed before and after implementation of any changes.

- Levels of collaborative professional development opportunities between public library systems will be compared before and after implementation.

Appendix A: Public Library Systems in Wisconsin: A Brief History

Wisconsin's public library system law, providing funding for coordinated regional library services, officially went into effect in 1971 when Senate Bill 47 was signed into law. The creation of public library systems fostered the establishment of a strong network of resource sharing and mutually beneficial interdependence. At their inception, public library systems were intended to bring library services to unserved rural residents, improve library services to those who found local library resources to be insufficient, and provide structure for interlibrary cooperation while maintaining local control.[40]

The creation and development of public library systems in Wisconsin was a voluntary and gradual process. No county or public library is required to be a member of a public library system; yet, all of Wisconsin's 72 counties and over 380 public libraries are public library system members. Wisconsin's public library systems developed in distinct ways in response to the needs of their member libraries and area residents. The public library systems have continued to evolve as changes in society, resources, and technologies create new demands and opportunities.

The seeds for regional library services had been planted years earlier and several regional services had coordinated cooperative services. In 1956, the American Library Association published *Public Library Service: A Guide to Evaluation with Minimum Standards*[41]*,* which introduced the public library system concept. That same year the United States Congress enacted the Library Services Act (LSA) to provide federal funding for extending and improving public library service to rural communities. Wisconsin's Free Library Commission worked with the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) to submit a plan for Wisconsin's LSA funds. Also, in 1956, twenty-five public libraries joined together to form the Southwest Association of Public Libraries. In 1959 they obtained LSA funding to establish an ordering and processing center serving five counties, the predecessor to the Southwest Wisconsin Library System. A precursor of the Northern Waters Library System was established in northwest Wisconsin serving five counties in the same year.

In 1963, the Free Library Commission, WLA and the Wisconsin Library Trustees Association adopted *A Design for Public Library Development in Wisconsin: Standards for Measuring Progress*[42]*.* The following statement summarizes the vision:

"Simply stated, the library system concept means that only by working together, sharing services and materials, can libraries meet the full needs of their users. Each public library, whatever its size, is an important link in a system of libraries joined together either formally or informally."

That document described a shared vision of public library systems that ultimately led to the development and adoption of 1971 Senate Bill 47 through a series of events.

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[40] WLA Public Library Systems brochure, publication date unknown.

[41] American Library Association. Public Libraries Division. Coordinating Committee on Revision of Public Library Standards. (1956). Public library service: a guide to evaluation, with minimum standards. Chicago: American Library Association.

[42] Wisconsin Free Library Commission. (1963). A design for public library development in Wisconsin: standards for measuring progress. Madison.

- In 1965, the Wisconsin Library Commission was folded into DPI and became the Division for Library Services.
- In 1966, WLA approved a legislative study program calling for legislation to "implement the public library system concept and interlibrary cooperation in Wisconsin.
- In 1968, the Wisconsin Library Association's LD&L Committee developed a report for the legislature.
- In 1969, that report was introduced as Senate Bill 363.
- The Senate Education Committee recommended the bill be revised.
- In 1971, Senate Bill 47 was introduced and, after extensive legislative efforts by WLA, was passed by both houses. The bill included the following declaration:

  "Recognizing the importance of making quality library resources and services readily available to all of the citizens of Wisconsin, the legislature, through this act, seeks to modernize library laws for public and school libraries, to promote development and improvement of public libraries through library systems and to provide maximum opportunities for cooperation among all types of libraries in order to encourage the most effective use of the library resources in this state."

  It was the first major change in Wisconsin library statute since the establishment of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission in 1895.[43]

On March 1, 1972, the Division for Library Services granted provisional certification to the first four Wisconsin public library systems: the Milwaukee County Federated Library System, the Wisconsin Valley Library System, the La Crosse Area Library System, and a Multi-County Library System centered in Ashland that would later become the Northern Waters Library Service.[44] By January of 1979, 15 public library systems had been established in 64 Wisconsin counties.[45] That number increased to 17 in 1981 with the addition of the Kenosha County Library System and the Waukesha County Library System.[46]

An analysis in 1982 found that of the 354 public libraries in the state only 25 were not participating in a public library system. Prior to the establishment of public library systems, an estimated 325,000 residents were unable to access library services; the establishment of the 17 federated public library systems had reduced that number to 42,651.[47] The issue of unserved residents was eliminated in 1990 when Florence County became the last county in the state to become part of a public library system.[48]

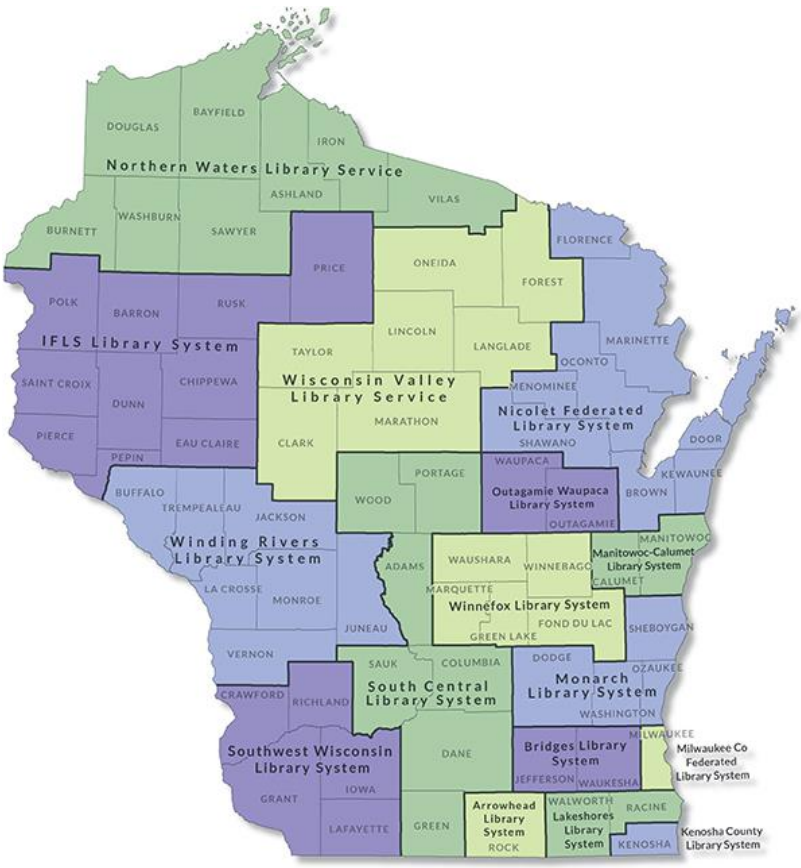
In the mid-1990s, disharmony among libraries and needs in member counties led to withdrawal of counties from one public library system to join another. Wood County, Portage County, and Adams County withdrew from the Wisconsin Valley Library Service to join South Central Library System in 1996, making it the state's largest public library system in terms of number libraries

[43] Wisconsin Library Bulletin, March-April 1971
[44] Wisconsin Library Bulletin, May-June, 1972
[45] *The System and what it can do for you* pamphlet
[46] http://heritage.wisconsinlibraries.org/history/timeline (last accessed 19 Nov. 2018)
[47] Wisconsin Library Bulletin, Spring 1983
[48] http://heritage.wisconsinlibraries.org/history/timeline (last accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

and outlets.[49] Then, Fond du Lac County withdrew from the Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System (MWFLS) to become a fifth county in the Winnefox Library System.

Following the 10% reduction in state funding to public library systems, as part of the 2012-13 biennial budget, new dissatisfaction emerged within the MWFLS that eventually led to its demise. Local library funding shortfalls began to affect library service, and the public library system was unable to provide adequate services to make up for these shortfalls, partially due to the reduction of state library aid that same year.[50] In 2016, Jefferson County withdrew from the MWFLS to join Waukesha County Federated Library System (WCFLS), forming the new two-county Bridges Library System. The remaining two counties of the MWFLS (Dodge and Washington) merged with the two-county Eastern Shores Library System to form the four-county Monarch Library System in 2017, reducing the total number of public library systems to sixteen.

Not all discussions of changes in territory were successful. In 2012-13, two separate mergers were discussed in detail between Eastern Shores Library System/Manitowoc-Calumet Library System and Lakeshores Library System/MWFLS. Both discussions were unsuccessful.



Map 3: Current sixteen public library systems in Wisconsin

[49] https://www.scls.info/about/scls_history.htm (last accessed 26 Nov. 2018).
[50] 2013 Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System Plan, https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/data-reports/system-plans (last accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

Appendix B: Funding Strategies and Sources

The Public Library System Redesign (PLSR) project resulted in the recommendations in this report and a series of in-depth workgroup reports evaluating the services provided by public library systems. It is clear there are a variety of opportunities to improve access to services and to improve the effectiveness of the services themselves. To move forward without significant disruption to libraries and library users, new service infrastructure must be put in place in parallel with the old. Additional sources of funding beyond what is currently available in the form of state aid to public library systems will also be required.

Through the process of recommendation development, a number of common themes have emerged in regard to potential sources of additional funding to support implementation.

- Resources contributed by state agencies. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Department of Administration, and others have significant staff assets, though it is understood that resources are finite and priorities are many. These agencies could incorporate implementation of PLSR recommendations into their planning processes. Examples of such resources might include:
    - User experience or design consulting expertise regarding a library staff learning management system for professional development;
    - Direct development of software or web applications related to a library staff learning management system for professional development or state-scale discovery layer;
    - Web hosting for a library staff continuing education portal and validation tracker; and
    - Administrative coordination of ongoing initiatives related to moving the PLSR recommendations forward.
- Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding derived from the "Grants to States" program. Through this program, Wisconsin is allocated roughly 2.8 million dollars.[51] Expenditures of these dollars are prioritized by DPI. Future planning by the department could incorporate funding to support implementation of PLSR recommendations. Specific examples may include:
    - A grant category to support a regional delivery pilot build-out;
    - A grant category to support development of a state-scale discovery layer; and
    - A grant category to incentivize development and implementation of public library system best practices.

[51] IMLS, Grants to States: State Allotments, https://www.imls.gov/grants/grants-state/state-allotments (last accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

- LSTA funding derived from other specific grant programs. Several non-block grant programs exist, including the "Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian" and "National Leadership Grant for Libraries" programs. Other programs may be established in the future. These programs may provide an opportunity to acquire funding for components of the recommendations that require more in-depth work, such as grant applications designed to fund additional project management capacity.

- Funding related to the Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) program. The WISE program is focused on creating and coordinating the services and infrastructure required to improve how we use data to learn and educate.[52] This program has recently been broadened to include libraries. It is possible that WISE-related funding (or other assets) may be allocated to implementing certain recommendations. Examples may include:

    - Funding the development of a common communication protocol among Integrated Library Systems (ILS);

    - Using the common communication protocol to build a universal ILS communicator tool to aid regional delivery pilots;

    - Working with ILS vendors who do business in Wisconsin to ensure compliance with uniform communication specifications; and

    - Funding and coordinating a process of product evaluation.

- Increase in state aids to the public library systems. Annual state aid funding is allocated according to state statutes and the administrative code. However, the library community could establish future legislative priorities which include requesting a modest increase in state aid which the existing public library systems would use to collectively fund specific implementation components of PLSR recommendations. Examples may include:

    - Funding for the development of a universal ILS communicator tool to aid in regional delivery pilots;

    - Funding designed to ease transition of any changes resulting from a modified funding allocation formula; and

    - Any components of the recommendations or opportunities identified through the PLSR process with strong collaborative potential.

This document should be read as an initial consideration of potential funding sources. It is possible other sources may exist.

[52] WI Information System for Education, https://dpi.wi.gov/wise (last accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

Appendix C: Additional Considerations

In developing this report, it became clear to the Steering Committee that there are important issues or concerns that are applicable on a broader scale. Therefore, this appendix was developed as a repository.

Budgeting for Effective Outcomes
Implementation of any of the recommendations contained in this report must be adequately supported. Therefore, at minimum, budgeting must be developed and funding allocated for meetings, mileage, and necessary administrative overhead. Sufficient funding must also be allocated should professional project management be required. Other funding may be required for additional studies relating to funding, risk/benefit, or legislative analysis beyond that which has already occurred.

Implementation
One of the most common themes expressed by the library community through feedback during the Public Library System Redesign process is that change should be rooted in sound empirical research, well-planned, incremental, and voluntary. The Steering Committee understands that to satisfy these imperatives the ways and means used to implement these recommendations may differ from those described in this report. The Steering Committee encourages all stakeholder groups to consider the best interests of library users at every level moving forward.

Implementation Teams
In writing this report, the Steering Committee considered the concept of "implementation teams." Small teams of individuals appointed by the State Superintendent is one possible method of bringing formal organization to the transition from recommendation to action. Members of implementation teams would be expected to have a high degree of relevant professional experience with the given topic. In some cases, these teams may be paired with a project manager. As an alternative to DPI-appointed implementation teams, stakeholder groups within the library community could collaborate to create some of the management structures necessary to make headway on recommendations, including implementation teams.

Incremental Approach
Using an incremental implementation process, the individuals and/or agency responsible for implementation will measure feasibility in an ongoing fashion through data gathering, cost analysis and evaluation of standards.

Leadership
Effective leadership will be required to implement any of these recommendations. Based upon the body of work completed by the Steering Committee, project managers, consultants, and service workgroups, leadership in implementing any of these recommendations can come in many different forms. While DPI occupies a unique position in the architecture of library service in Wisconsin, it is not possible for them to take up and implement these recommendations on their own. Nor is it possible for public library systems to implement these recommendations on their own. The Steering Committee encourages DPI, the public library systems, and the greater library community to become active partners in transforming these recommendations into smart, meaningful, effective changes that will benefit library users.

Procurement
Any procurement process should emphasize results over cost benefit. For example, selection of a platform simply because it complies with procurement guidelines and is low-cost would not be appropriate and should be avoided through process design. Service stability is of paramount importance. As part of this, careful consideration should be given to the selection of service providers, whether selecting private vendors or considering in-house positions, to balance long-term needs for service consistency, sustainability, and affordability.

Project Management
Many of these recommendations are such that a great deal of management will be required to ensure positive outcomes. Some hypothetical duties of a project management entity include:

- Facilitating the work of implementation teams;
- Serving as a communication bridge between stakeholder groups; and
- Providing vision and direction when such is not readily available from the implementation team or greater library community.

To this end, the Steering Committee recommends that DPI consider the following scenarios:

1. Retain a full-time project manager dedicated solely to managing all service improvements contained in this report from “recommendation” to “completion.” In this scenario, recommendation implementation would more than likely need to be handled one by one. This method may be preferable.
2. Take a contract-based approach to project management. Retain project management services to handle individual recommendation implementations as needed.