

Recommendations Submitted for Discussion at 11-17-14 Meeting

Additional Research/Study



2) Once we establish what every citizen needs, we should perhaps hire an independent consultant to take a look at Minnesota and see how library services can best be delivered. Dare I say, wipe the slate clean and start over? If not, then take a look at current structures and recommend changes. Library districts vs current regional systems? County districts vs county libraries? Other ideas?



1) The issue of Libraries and Service Delivery is a “quality of life” issue for Minnesota and really should be looked at thoughtfully and strategically. I think there may be better ways to leverage limited financial resources at the local and state levels given the changes that have occurred over the past 5-10 years. Rather than trying to approach this important issue piece meal, I think it would be beneficial to recommend that a Task Force (or something similar) be formed with representation from all pertinent groups to examine the existing situations, identify each of their unique challenges, and identify collaboratively ways to attempt to address the major challenges.



3) Study and address the **inequity in city and county library funding**.

Library Services



1) K-12 ebook initiative: To ensure equal access to content for all schools and alleviate gaps in education, the state library should develop a statewide collection of ebooks that support school curricula, the common core standards, and K-12 literacy. (Comments added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Do it.”; “Address ebook summit.”)



6) Statewide Access to Shared Library Materials: To ensure equitable access to library materials for schools and public libraries throughout Minnesota and to provide stable funding, the library community should seek \$1.2 million in state government support for resource sharing and delivery through Minitex. – (Comment added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Free up federal.”)



2) Facilitate a Minnesota e book collection. Bring together statewide consortia arrangement with 3M.



3) Local content creation: To enhance the role of the local library as cultural center, the MN library community should be offered an easy-to-use platform where libraries can share community-generated content and create online exhibits that tell local stories. Examples might include county fair history, school yearbooks, recipe or writing contest winners, local reporting, stories about floods or tornadoes, and more.



4) Statewide services such as ELM and MnLink are wonderfully successful. There should be more funding and expansion of those services and explore additional statewide services. (ebooks for example).



5) Fully fund the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library and State Library Services with state funds, freeing federal LSTA for broader initiatives that serve more libraries and library users and offer the opportunity for experimental programs or projects. – (Comment added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Free up federal.”)

7) Add @ 11-17-14 meeting: Telecommunications issue

Multitype Structure

1) Review multitype library systems role in Minnesota’s library infrastructure and consider defining their role as continuing education, ebook managers, or other specific responsibilities with associated funding. Strengthen their role in supporting school libraries. (Comment added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Statute”)

Public Library Standards and Service Levels



5) The State Library needs to establish standards for public libraries and public library systems. We recently did a space needs study and our consultant had to use standards from Iowa and Wisconsin. I think that before we can recommend any solutions to equity issues, we need to first define what every citizen in Minnesota should expect when they enter a public library.



1) State Library Services, in collaboration with stakeholders, create standards for public libraries that address minimum levels of service for participation in library systems and statewide services.



2) More clearly define the roles and responsibilities for library service at the state, regional, and local levels. What entity/agency is responsible for what type of service delivery, how are services funded, what does every MN resident deserve from their libraries. (This relates to standards and structure recommendations below.)

3) Study the use of standards in other states and develop standards/performance measures for public libraries, regional systems and school districts.



4) The consultation group recognizes that libraries' roles are ever-changing with their public viewing them as educational, community, entertainment, cultural and tech centers. With the disparity of funding among libraries, the group wishes to ensure a minimum quality of service at each institution and recommends basic standards regarding education of staff, quality of collections, status of and access to technology, etc.

6) Add @ 11-17-14 meeting: include early education initiative to this

Public/Regional Library Funding



7) Need for increase in amount of RLBSS, Regional Library Basic System Support (state funds to regional public library systems). Need for stabilization of the formula through which RLBSS is distributed among 12 regional public library systems. While an increase in funding is the critical need, it must be accompanied by a change in the distribution formula. Otherwise the increase will mostly go to metro counties, and outstate counties may receive even less. This is what happened when last RLBSS was increased in 2009.



3) The scope of regional libraries services provided by Regional Public Library Basic System Services has changed dramatically. Unfortunately the funding has not, so many of those expenses have been assumed by local budgets. It is imperative that RLBSS funding levels be increased to reflect what is needed by libraries. For example, 30 years ago each library has its own physical card catalog, maintain by each library. Today card catalogs are a responsibility of Regional Libraries Systems. Those costs should be part of regional libraries budgets. This funding must reflect current technologies. I also might suggest that those services be specifically stated in the service agreements.

1) Due to dwindling LGA, the group recommends a baseline per capita expenditure requirement of \$___ for all libraries. (State funds the difference between MOE amount and per capita requirement?)

2) I recommend that the State look at **equalization funding**** similar to Iowa. Knowing that our tax capacity varies so widely across the state, equalization of some form is long overdue on the local level. Like Iowa, I would recommend this be tied to state standards. This would be to build some libraries up, not reduce funding for those already providing great funding to their libraries.

4) The variety of structures of regional libraries even with the broad categories of Consolidated and Federated Systems has caused unique funding situations across the state. There are further funding challenges with ownership of library buildings themselves. In other words, cities especially but also counties that are vested and engaged in their libraries are more likely to support at a more generous level. Therefore it seems important to keep those local vested supporters involved in library discussions.

5) Funding inequity is great especially in Greater Minnesota. Funding alternatives at the local and regional level may have some merit. Library Service Districts with taxing power may work for Consolidated Regional Library Systems. Allowing Library Service District throughout the state may be one alternative. **The League of Minnesota Cities legislative platform does include the establishment of Library Service District as an option.*

6) Maintenance of Effort (MOE) has worked only moderately well and I would suggest not very in some areas of the state. An alternative might be to establish a relationship ratio between library owning entities and the entities that do not actually own the library building but support the regional library system. For example, a city owns the library building and supports it over and above MOE. The county it sits in continually pays minimum MOE. After many years the difference in these levels of support continues to grow until it becomes problematic. My thought is that if the owning library building entity (in this case the city has X amount for it library) the corresponding non-owning entity (in this case the county) must contribute X amount - a certain % for basic library support. This could work the other way around depending on who owns the library building. My point is there should be a relationship % of these entities. This of course would mean a reworking of MOE which could be a huge legislative challenge. A compromise might be achieved if a monetary relationship could be required.

Regional System Structure



2) Study in detail whether or not 19 regional systems serve the current and future needs of Minnesotans; bring some standardization to the 19 different joint powers agreements.



1) Review the regional public library system structure with an eye to streamlining and consolidating for efficiency and better service. Involve a library-unaffiliated neutral party in creating a revision of the RBLSS formula, not the RPLS directors or city/county administrators—these people would serve as information providers for the revision, not the final deciders.

3) State money for libraries should be spent to achieve results that benefit all Minnesotans. Because most of the money for libraries is generated locally, the local units of government should have a strong say in the kinds of support they need from their region. The world is so different from the days when regional libraries were created. Geography is no longer the critical factor that it once was. The system envisioned below honors the past yet creates additional flexibility and accountability.

- Remove the geographic restriction for regional participation. Allow a library to join any region that provides the service that best meets their needs.
 - For example, a regional system may offer an automation system that any library in the state could use. The library would join the region and contract for those services and pay accordingly. Another region may decide not to provide automation services, but may provide robust programming and marketing support that meets the needs of other libraries that may choose to join it. Understanding that there are costs for moving around, I would expect that libraries would need to sign a contract for a period of time.
 - The regional library systems could still decide if they wanted to be federated or consolidated or even a library district.
 - The regional systems would need to be truly customer service focused. Those who aren't providing good services at reasonable prices would lose members and may cease to exist. (There was a question whether 12 was the right number of regions. The "right" number would happen organically.)
 - Require public libraries to join a region? I would expect that it wouldn't be an issue to require public libraries to belong to a region as long as they had choice in structure and services. Public libraries would want to belong to a region that is providing value.
 - Counties would still be required to provide library services/funding.
 - If the county and libraries within that county wanted to belong to a consolidated region, it would work much like it works now for the consolidated regions.
 - If the county and libraries within the county wanted to belong to a region that is a library district, it could.
 - Counties that are part of areas that are currently federated would provide funding directly to the public libraries in their county.
 - Different structures/regions could exist within one county. For example, if there are 3 public libraries within one county, they could all belong to different regions.
 - We would need to revisit the RLBS formula. For example, large libraries may find more value in a similar regional system. If all the large libraries join one region, the population factor would make it difficult for a region that caters to smaller libraries. Perhaps look at service outlets as an additional factor?
 - Acknowledging that we have different types of library funding structures in Minnesota, this system would still honor that. Cities could still have strong city libraries, county systems could still flourish, and a consolidated region could still provide robust services.

- Continuing education may be cited as a reason for being close geographically, but even that is changing. Regions are already providing opportunities that require less travel:
 - Online meeting options
 - Bringing in trainers/speakers who present a program multiple times in various locations around the state
 - Webinars are used frequently for training purposes

4) A concern which I have heard from other city elected officials is that cities that would like to have a library and currently do not, have been shut out of that process by regional library systems. So what is the criteria for establishing a library in a city? Is it statewide criteria or is it established by each library system? These cities also need to be part of conversation. (Comments added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Standard.”; “Statutory.”)

School Library Media Centers



1) MDE/SLS state support for equitable access for every K-12 student to a school library that has appropriate resources, programming, and certified staff. MDE have a person on its staff who is an expert in school library media programs.



2) MDE/SLS create a series of benchmarks for school library media centers so Librarians and Media Specialists and administrators would have a way to measure their school libraries and their teaching in relationship to standards and student outcomes. (See The Library of Michigan, an office of the Michigan Department of Education, has developed the [“SL21 Measurement Benchmarks for Michigan School Libraries for 21st Century Schools.”](#)) (Comments added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Standards.”; “1990s.”)

3) Librarians could contact and work with media specialists at school sites for classroom visits, Kindergarten library card program and summer reading program appearances instead of classroom teachers. I know our public librarian only visits with grade 2 and I share summer reading program promotions with the rest of the student and staff population, including summer school. (Comment added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Do it.”)

4) Could public libraries send print copies (cost, I know) of newsletters to schools within their boundaries. For example, could Ramsey County send a print copy of its activities and events newsletter to the school directed to the media center for media specialists to share with students and staff? (Comment added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Do it.”)

5) And, could events or even meetings between public and school librarians be planned at a local level, like you are planning in April? For example, Ramsey County Public Library meeting with media specialists in the school districts found in the county, White Bear, Roseville, Moundsview etc. The meetings could even be held by branch with the districts served by that

branch library. (Comments added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Do it.”; “Communicate with schools.”)

6) **Communication** can go both ways. Media specialists should also be reaching out to their public libraries to find out what activities and resources are available to help students. (Comment added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Do it.”)

State Level Activities



7) Partner through MDE with school districts on formal incentives and grant programs so that school districts and public libraries have some state supported funds to work together. It needs be more than internal interactions and reminders. Some good places would be with the areas in the department such as the challenge program to keep students learning in the summer (public libraries are all about keeping children reading in the summer...); college knowledge (public libraries have test and skill building resources...; meals for children in the summer months (get summer reading program activities at these locations, some libraries could be locations for meals.)



1) “Every Minnesotan a library”—physical and/or digital; any type public, academic, school; a **library passport/card** that works anywhere virtual or physical at any library. Get a motto that can resonate statewide.



3) That the Commissioner recommends the creation of a Seven (or whatever) Point Plan for Better Libraries in Minnesota that incorporates the recommendations from this Group. Including the recognition/acknowledgement that public library service in all its range is a core mission of MDE not an extension of k-12 education. Recognize that public libraries have a broader mission and audience than k-12 and are an important entity in the economic development of MN and in creating and assisting lifelong learners. This Plan could be a foundation for a statewide plan for library development so that as a community we would know what our vision and mission are as we work toward Better Libraries—how library services are provided to Minnesotans, what is being offered, what could/should be offered, how should it be delivered, how it should be funded, how systems work, what library staff need, and so on.

2) Find a way to partner with school districts to get **every child a library card**. (Comments added during 11-17-14 meeting: “Awareness of resources.”; “Communication.”)

4) Move key services to statewide responsibility such as delivery.

5) The state library would take over contracting for delivery for the entire state. There may be economies of scale and efficiencies to be gained by looking at the state as a whole rather than a series of regions.

6) All public libraries that meet the definition of being a public library by state statute would be eligible for interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing, and delivery.

Statutes and/or Rule Changes



1) Review the responsibilities of State Library Services and consider what needs to be added/changed/strengthened so the SLS has the power to serve in a leadership and developmental role. Expand Mn 134 as needed for legislative authority.

2) Rewrite Minnesota statutes Chapter 134 (including law libraries); bring it up-to-date; clarify

3) Request funds to create Minnesota rules for libraries; delete any obsolete rules