

Southern Systems Group
Lewis & Clark Library System Report
February 25, 2011

The Lewis & Clark Library System Board of Directors considered several documents, and took some actions related to the planned merger at its February 15, 2011, meeting.

Intergovernmental Agreement (V. 2.1)

--unanimously approved

Transition Board Nominees

--nominees approved by unanimous vote to serve on Transition Board:

James Fenton (alternate)	Public Library Trustee
Betsy Mahoney	Special Library Representative
Linda McDonnell	Public Library Trustee
JoAnn Nabe	Public Library Trustee
Diane Steele	Public Library Director

Membership Criteria (dated February 3, 2011)

--resolution passed unanimously:

Resolve to recommend all current members of Systems be continued in their current membership status until such time that the boards of both the northern and southern Systems can establish uniform membership criteria. This recommendation is based on the following rationale:

- *The funding: EAV (Equalized Assessed Valuation) is not valid due to the inequities of local assessors.*
- *Tax caps, which limit the amount of funds in some districts, have not been considered.*
- *Educational requirements: The proposed membership requirements exceed ISBE requirements for schools (which require 1 media specialist per district, not per school).*
- *The MLS expectation may not be appropriate for certain communities.*
- *It is premature to set continuing education requirements prior to determining what funding is available for provision of continuing educational opportunities.*

We hope that the new membership criteria will be more inclusive rather than exclusive, particularly during these difficult economic times.

By Laws (PP DOC 2.10.11 E)

--based on concerns over proposed membership criteria, had concerns regarding Article V Membership
--suggested concern over Article VI Board of Directors Section 11 Committees Standing Committees.
The Board should not prepare budgets, determine cost of living, develop membership eligibility. They review and recommend approval of budget and finance, personnel, membership, and policy and planning.

--suggested consistent wording in Article VIII Advisory Councils. The suggestion from members was that the new super system develop a mechanism to provide forums for members to bring concerns to Executive Director and the Board. Therefore, the term Advisory Councils is appropriate in this section.

Resource Sharing Plan (dated February 11, 2011)

--pleased to see V. Cooperative Discounts, especially for non-LLSAP member libraries!

--requests that definition of Delinquent Patron be added to II. Resource Sharing Policy Definitions.

Through discussion, board suggests that term be defined at the local library level.

--page 16, LLSAP Capital Reserve Accounts Recommendation 2nd bullet. Suggested adding additional wording:

Maintain the current LLSAP governance, fee allocation, and budgeting structures and processes currently in place (in FY2011) for each LLSAP until *additional area and per capita funds are available and/or* such time as each LLSAP group decides to join the merged automation system...

Strategic Plan (PP DOC 2.10.11 G)

--in consideration of the growing volume of electronic library materials, suggests addition of statement regarding delivery of electronic materials. Rationale from discussion is to remain cognizant of this future trend of library materials delivery. Operational Assumptions, 4th bullet, recommend additional wording: Monitor trends (*including eResources*) and create opportunities for innovative services.

--in support of information literacy, recommends addition of Value to read: Literacy for Illinois library communities

Delivery Recommendations (dated 10 February 2011)

--pleased that member libraries have option to choose community delivery (i.e. CATs)

--in School Libraries, recommends addition to end of first sentence:

Due to safety concerns in school buildings, the drop off location will be the school office *or other secure location*.

Lewis & Clark Library System staff received several comments from member libraries that have not been posted electronically (i.e. CooperationToday). The first two were shared with the Board at its February 15, 2011, meeting.

Proposed Standards – System Merger

Debra Lehman, Director Nokomis Public Library emailed February 10, 2011: *Leslie,*

As a small, rural library Nokomis Public is concerned with the Staffing and Category levels. At this point, the way it is stated will work, but if anything increases we would have trouble paying a director with a degree.

Is there anyway to have the system sponsor free classes to library employees that would earn an LTA? I know there are

lessons available on WebJunction, but I don't believe they work toward a certificate.

The continuing hours of education could be more specific as to what qualifies. I think this would be helpful.

I appreciate all the work being done on the planning and feel the Planning Panel is doing a great job!

*Sincerely,
Debra Lehman*

Comments from a Small Library Concerning the Illinois Library System Membership Criteria as Proposed

Sara Zumwalt, Director, Litchfield Public Library District emailed February 9, 2011:

Let me begin by introducing myself. My name is Sara Zumwalt. I am the director of the Litchfield Public Library District in Litchfield, Illinois. Our library serves a local population of just over 6300 people and has a budget of just over \$150,000. Our library has a staff of seven: one full-time library director, five part time library clerks, and a part time janitor, and is open to the public 52 hours a week. I am the only employee who works more than 25 hours a week. I would be in attendance at this planning meeting, except that Thursday mornings are the days I am scheduled to man the circulation / reference / computer help desk alone. Scheduling would not allow me to take the time away from the Library to come to you today.

I have been employed with the Library since 1993. I began as children's librarian, and when the director resigned in 1995, I took her position. I have been in the library director's position since then. In my tenure, we have done a complete renovation of our 1904 Carnegie building with a budget of over \$2.5 million dollars. We have become a library district, breaking away from our less-than-supportive city council. We have expanded our public access computers from one terminal to ten, added an in-house web-based circulation system, host programming events for toddlers, elementary school-aged children, high schoolers, and adults, and we have a well-rounded collection of material for every age group and reading interest.

I do not have an MLS. I have a bachelor's degree in English and Secondary Education. The library director before me had a degree in elementary education, and the one before her had no secondary education. All three of us excelled at our jobs, and worked hard to make the Litchfield Library a success.

After informing you of my history, I would like to discuss the draft of the new multi-system merger membership standards you have presented for member library review. Let me begin by saying that this step is not one that I believe the planning committee needs to take. The planning committee needs only to produce a statement that allows all current members of LCLS, RPLS, LTLS, and SHLS to become full members of the new yet-to-be named super-library system. The document you presented makes rules and regulations to be enforced five years from the creation of the new supersystem. In five years, the planning committee will be a fond memory and the provisional board will be replaced by new members, many of whom may disagree with the membership standards that were approved in the infancy of the organization.

Membership standards that go into effect July 1, 2011 should be set so that any current library – school, academic, or public – is “grandfathered” into the new supersystem. What then constitutes a “full” member of the supersystem should be decided by the board elected to oversee the new supersystem, not the planning committee.

In addition, I feel the standards set by the planning committee are wrong. Public libraries already have standards to which they must adhere. It's called "Serving Our Public" and has been designed by the Illinois State Library to encourage all Illinois libraries to strive for greatness. It sets "core" standards, which every library should meet – and can, as none of the core standards are insurmountable to even the smallest public library. The qualifications set forth for public libraries in the draft membership criteria supercede those standards set in Serving Our Public? How is it possible that the super-library system expect more from its members than the Illinois State Library?

Serving Our Public instructs the local library boards to hire a "qualified librarian" as the administrator, and defines such as someone with an MLS or someone who actively participates in "continuing education opportunities each year" and who will "utilize the consultant services of their regional library system." Yes these consultant services are those very same which have been taken away from most library systems, and which are no longer part of the overall plan of the supersystem. In addition, the draft membership standards state which libraries must employ an MLS-certified librarian, depending on their population and equalized assessed value. The state of Illinois does not divide libraries in these ways. Why should the supersystem?

The draft membership standards take away all the powers and options from the library board of trustees. Instead of allowing the library board – those who live and work in their communities – to decide what factors are important in a library director, they must focus on hiring someone with a degree. Some smaller libraries cannot offer a salary or benefits that would draw in a person holding a bachelor's degree. In fact, many of the libraries in Montgomery County do not have library directors with college degrees. The lack of a degree does not make that library any less valuable to its patrons, or that library director any less qualified to run his or her library in the way the community desires and needs it run.

While touching on qualifications, I would like to point out the school standards of membership. School librarians are not mandated in Illinois, as they are in Missouri. School districts are facing budget crunches, and some are letting their media centers be run by non-certified personnel. By implementing the standards suggested in the draft membership criteria, the supersystem is giving the school districts another reason to say "oh wow – we will have to cut the school library" because they cannot afford to keep a certified staff member in place, as well as additional paraprofessional staff. The benefit to the school district – which in some cases is nothing more than the school library per capita grant – is not large enough to merit the expenditures in staff and benefits.

The membership standards as written are tying the hands of the local library boards and school districts. I cannot help but notice that the special libraries are met with no additional qualifications or mandates than to "strive to meet standards as designated by the appropriate division" of the organization to which they may belong. Why? Because the special libraries receive little or no financial benefit to being "in" a library system. They are governed by their own niche organization's rules and regulations.

Why shouldn't the public, school, and academic libraries be awarded the same luxury? Public libraries should follow, to the best of their financial and legal ability, to strive for 100 percent achievement of the Serving Our Public core and supplemental standards. School and academic libraries should be held to the standards of the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois School Library Media Association, and Standards for Libraries in Higher Education. Those works were in place long before the library system merger. They, not the supersystem membership requirements, should be used to determine if a library is actually a library.

In closing, with all the requirements the new supersystem is demanding of hours worked, degrees possessed, and number of staff present, they are only asking for contact interaction with the supersytem staff on "at least an annual basis?" The library system which makes us struggle to jump through the hoops to qualify for membership to their elite club only wants to interact with us on an annual basis?

Thanks for your support. It's obvious to me, and to the many small to tiny libraries involved in this merger of systems, that the focus of these standards is to force small libraries out of business. I can promise this planning committee that if these standards are approved, at least three Lewis and Clark Library System libraries will never be able to achieve the library greatness that is expected of the supersystem. You can bet that the patrons who are turned away from those small rural libraries will be told exactly who and where to lay blame.

*Sincerely,
Sara Zumwalt
Library Director since 1995
Litchfield Public Library District
Litchfield, Illinois 62056*

Membership Criteria:

Harriett Zipfel, Director, Belleville Public Library, adds: TIFs (tax increment financing) can also reduce funding available to libraries.

New Name Suggestion:

Greg Cash, Greg Cash, Asst. Director, Reference Services, Reid Memorial Library, Lewis & Clark Community College emails February 23, 2011: *I wasn't sure where to post suggestions, but here's one:*

Illinois Cooperative Library System