

August 3, 2004

To: State Library Commission  
Karen Strege, State Librarian

From: Public Library Standards Review Committee

Re: Draft of revised Standards

In mid May, Karen as State Librarian and Lois Dissley, chair of Montana Library Association's Public Library Division, put together a revised public library standards committee (Membership attached). The charge to the Committee was to:

- review and suggest necessary changes in the standards to the Montana State Library (MSL) Commission at their February 2005 meeting
- advise MLA/MSL on how best to receive and respond to comments from the public library community

Tracy Cook reviewed the current standards as well as other states' standards and drafted a first rough draft for the Committee. The Committee has met twice and with the following goals in mind has come up with this draft to share with the library community in order to get its input.

Goals:

- We want to provide a tool to assess the quality and effectiveness of the library.
- We want to help each library determine areas to improve.
- We want to aid each library in taking an active role to gain maximum community support.

Additionally the Committee decided that they wanted all standards to be measurable and that they wanted to have tiers, so libraries could move on beyond essential standards to enhanced and/or excellent.

The recommendations of the Committee at this time are:

- Libraries are required to meet all of the essential standards to receive state aid.
- Libraries must meet all of the enhanced standards to receive recognition for being at the enhanced level.
- Libraries must meet the majority of the excellent standards under each section to receive recognition as excellent.
- Libraries who achieve the essential standards will receive state aid and a bronze colored certificate.
- Libraries who achieve the enhanced level will receive state aid, recognition at MLA, a silver colored certificate, and a press release to be put in the local newspaper, FOCUS, and Big Sky.
- Libraries who achieve the excellent level will receive state aid, recognition at MLA, a gold colored certificate, a press release to be put in the local newspaper, FOCUS, and Big Sky, and a letter will be sent to their funding authority informing the funding authority of the library's achievement.

- The State Library Staff provide sample and/or guidelines for certain products such as long range plans.

These drafts will be shared for public comment. Various committee members will present to Federation Meetings, MLA and MSL workshops. One committee member will post a section of the revised standards on wired-mt each week. Interested parties have until October 29, 2004 to comment.

#### **Timeline and next steps:**

**August 18, 2004** Present to MSL Commission.

**August 23 to September 24, 2004** Weekly posting on wired about the revised standards.

**August 23 to October 29, 2004** Committee members present at any appropriate meeting or opportunity. Public Comment Period.

**November 2004** Committee may meet again to make suggested changes to draft.

**December 8, 2004** Final draft is presented to Commission for review.

**February 2005** Commission Meeting. Commission approves final draft of standards and authorizes opening of Administrative rule process.

**March/April 2005** Administrative rule process with public hearings.

**May/June 2005** Libraries formally receive new standards and certification form, but distribution of State aid in July 2005 will be based on the current standards not these revised new standards.

**July 2005** New Standards would go into effect and libraries would be given this year to work towards new essential standards

**July 2006** The certification form for state aid distribution will require each library to reach all essential standards.

As you look at the draft the standards that are bold are in the current public library standards and those that are shaded are the ones that are currently tied to state aid distribution.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns at this time.