

Memo

To: Public Library Standards Task Force

From: Tracy Cook

Date: March 6, 2021

Re: Summary of public comment

State Library staff have hosted three public comment meetings. 22 people have attended the online meetings and staff have received a few email comments.

Comments/suggestions for essential standards:

- There is concern about “If the library is a department of local government, the library receives equitable support for its budget when compared to other departments. If the library receives less funding and support as compared to other departments, the library director and Board document that they have made local government officials aware of this fact.”
 - There is concern about the execution/implementation of this standard. There is also concern about creating competition between departments.
- There is concern about the wording of “People with disabilities have access to technology and assistance with using that technology.”
 - People are concerned about application. They are in support of the concept. They mentioned that everyone should include people with disabilities. However, they supported the spirit of the standard.
 - Suggested wording changes by librarians: “Reasonable accommodations are made so that people with disabilities have access to the library’s services and assistance with using those services as staff time and knowledge allows.”
- One person expressed concern over the word “everyone.” They are not opposed to the concept. They didn’t believe they could mark the standards as achieved unless there was a note that explained what we meant – that the library was working towards the aspiration of libraries serving everyone.

- One person expressed a desire to add access to state and local government services. They believed this would support civic engagement.
- There were a few clarifying questions and suggestions for how to support libraries in the implementation of the new standards. People asked about why certain things like public surveys were removed. They asked for assistance with disaster planning, serving those with disabilities, help with board training, and the budget discussion with local government officials.
- People were concerned about the board education requirement and asking for additional funding from local government. However, they understood the reasoning and supported those standards.
- Overall, people liked the new draft. They have expressed appreciation that the task force listened to them.

Comments/suggestions about road map

- People liked the road map concept. They had questions about how it worked and what the definition of excellent and cooperative was in terms of the columns.
- One person expressed concern about "All community members see themselves reflected in the staff, volunteers, or board because the library board and/or director make every effort to recruit and select staff, volunteers, and board members that represent community demographics, with emphasis on recruiting under-represented community groups." They believed this could be a disservice to community members by asking libraries to accept lesser qualifications and not consider the fit of the person to the job and the organization.