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# Memo

**To:** Public Library Standards Task Force

**From:** Tracy Cook

**Date:** March 6, 2021

**Re: Possible changes to the current drafts**

The standard about comparing the library's budget to other departments - #8 under Essential Standards – Library Board, Governance, and Working with the Director – received multiple comments.

- People were concerned about the implementation part of the standard as well as the competitive nature of it. They believed it could be problematic. They also asked what "equitable" means under this standard.
  - Should we remove, change, or leave this standard?

The standard regarding people with disabilities having access to technology - #11 under Essential Standards – Serving the Community – also received multiple comments.

- People saw value in this standard. They believed it could be worded better.
  - Question – doesn't everyone include "people with disabilities"? Again, they understood the spirit behind the standard. They were curious about why we called out this group of people.
  - If we keep the standard, would we consider changing the wording to "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"?

Suggestions for standards that came from a single individual

- There was concern expressed about the use of the word "everyone" due to the realities of the world we live in and how difficult it is to serve everyone. Examples included lack of Internet access for certain residents or perceptions that if one group is welcome in the library than another group is not. The

director appreciated the spirit of the word. However, they would be unable to answer yes. The suggestion was to add a note on the application form that says we recognize that "everyone" is aspirational and if the library is working to improve services to those who are currently underserved, they can answer the standard with a yes.

- Would the task force like to reconsider "everyone"?
- If not, are you okay with a note on the public library standards form explaining what is expected?
- There was a suggestion to add "the library shall provide online access to state and local government information." This suggestion was made because of the important role that libraries play in providing access to government information.
  - Would the task force like to add this standard?
  - If not, reviewing the essential standards – serving the community revealed the lack of a standard addressing reference services. Should we add a more general standard like "everyone receives assistance in finding answers to their questions"?

#### Road map

- There was only one comment requesting follow-up on the road map. This individual was concerned about the first item under "Personnel" in the road map. This is the item regarding "community members see themselves reflected in library staff." There is concern that this could be a disservice to the community because libraries could end up selecting someone who has fewer qualifications or isn't a good fit for the organization or position. The person believed in community members seeing themselves in library staff. They disagreed with the concept of using demographics to make hiring decisions.
  - Does the task force wish to change this item on the road map?