

# PLD Standards Committee Minutes

May 10, 2013, 10:00 a.m.  
Salem Public Library in Salem

**Call to order:** Su Liudahl, chair of the Public Library Division Board, brought the meeting together at 10:05. In attendance were: Su Liudahl, Mo Cole, Pam North, Ted Smith, Dan White, Kevin Barclay Buzzy Nielsen, Paul Lightcap, Kirsten Brodbeck-Kenney, Taylor Worley, Emily-Jane Dawson, Kate Lasky and Darci Hanning. Karen Muller, Gayle Weiss, Margaret Hazel, Amy Blossom, and Jane Tucker attended by GoToMeeting. Sami Pierson, MaryKay Dahlgreen, John Goodyear and Perry Stokes were not available.

**Online survey results and discussion of how to use the results:** Mo and Emily-Jane started a conversation about the survey results, which Mo had sent out earlier. There were 87 responses (see attached), mostly from Oregon public library directors, managers, and librarians, which are the people most likely to use the Standards. Although Mo had tried to categorize those topics most frequently mentioned as needing attention, staffing and technology, it was noted that other topics mentioned less, such as funding, should not be ignored as sometimes these are topics which are more situationally required. Also, it was noted that this was not a scientifically written survey and perhaps those topics which were mentioned most or first by the survey writers would be the topics which survey takers responded to at the highest rate. Further, the timing of the survey is important: it came out during budget time for most of us, so this may be one of the reasons that staffing was premier in many minds. We could also weight the results and get different indications from the responses. However, we all agreed that there was very useful information in the survey and that we should all read through all of the comments to pick out those things which appeared to apply to the Standards we are working on in subcommittees.

Having said that, the topics most frequently mentioned as needing to be addressed are staffing and technology, two topics which all of us are struggling with. It was also apparent that people want outcomes rather than just inputs, which is essentially how the current Standards are framed. It is still unclear about some topic areas and if they should be separate from each other, i.e. access, materials/collections, services. Some areas are so interwoven throughout all of the Standards that it is difficult to pull them out and these are areas which we have discovered each State does differently. We need to make these results available online.

Accreditation as a topic received generally positive feedback; the 'I'm not sure' response received the most hits at 51% but 'No' only received 10%. This is an indication that this topic should be explored.

Presentations of revisions by each team and group discussion of any changes needed to each, based on survey results and/or discussions at conference

- **Introduction/Mission/Vision:**

Some people believe we still need to answer the question: are the Standards a carrot or a stick? In the beginning, this is what we had decided: it is a tool to guide the development, tool to inform and advocate, and a tool for planning and strategic planning. Therefore, they exist so that libraries will always be working towards improvement; those who are sub-par will benefit the most. Strategic thinking is really

hard and if it can be promoted through the standard that would be really good; further, if communication between libraries can be encouraged, that would be really good as well. If the idea is to provide for just baby steps, we will just get baby steps. For libraries which do not care about the Standards, there has to be a reason to participate, i.e. participation is connected to LSTA funding or other funding. Having the State Library behind would help, so perhaps the State Library Board adopts these.

At this point, we believed it was really important to get input from each person, so we went around the room. Here are the comments:

-I do not want a document that that caters to the lowest common denominator;

-we need something that says this is where we need to go next, here is where we need to improve; if we hit this one thing, we'll be accredited. Also, we need them for talking to governing bodies;

-I can't answer this completely but obviously they are aspirational; but there are so many kinds of libraries and many will not be able to fix things and achieve the standards; can we address that by saying 17 out of 20? Accreditation distasteful to me;

-if standards are not something that are achievable, we need new ways to talk to elected officials is; using the accomplishment of achieving levels might really help

- how we format, the need for simplicity, and their usefulness will determine if they are used. If they are to be useful, they need to have benchmarks, assist with strategic planning, and easy to implement- otherwise sit on a shelf

-We must have accreditation; I support having three levels, basic levels of accreditation.

Also, the standards must substantially change from current standards or there is no reason for doing them. They may change in more than how they look. Ours have a lot of abstract, outcomes measures; they must push us but not be completely unreachable.

Love the state library to take this on and award plaques; people would take pride in it.

-even Ready to Read awards plaques; we need to incorporate Vision 2012, creating and sharing opportunities, sharing collections. I want accreditation and don't want standards to be punitive; people who fall below essentials need to be motivated, not demotivated.

They should be a pathway for improvement on three tiers, ways to weight it, so a library does not have to reach every standard but still could meet accreditation. Standards need toolkits and experts. Maybe we can talk to some foundations for grants and assistance to help people achieve standards;

-the key is providing tools that people need to reach basic levels and reward people who reach the exemplary level

-I do not like three levels and I waffle about accreditation; whoever is reviewing must have feedback loop and offer some contacts and toolkits; standards should have teeth

- do we see certification process as becoming cumbersome in the future; ; will it bog us down? Will the extra level of reporting be too onerous? Perhaps we could use it as a self-evaluation tool annually tied to the State annual statistics; what about using existing development staff-is there room for them to take this on? (Darci- we are looking at this work load right now and the state library is of course on board with improving libraries)

One of my priorities is that it must be manageable; accreditation-what does it mean;

access to LSTA is very important to her library and makes impact which will change people's hearts about libraries; must be aspirational; ok with accreditation if it takes into account that there is a responsibility of us all to improve libraries and libraries must communicate with each other;

-I like the idea of the toolkit and solving the problems areas which don't meet

standards; that will help with motivation; we must be non-judgmental; this is more

about where you are at and where you can go next; must give language right in the document that this is the goal; state goal that it is to help improve libraries; role of state library-they want to be very direct about stepping up their game;

-the state library report becomes like a big report card if we add to it the status of achieving the standards to it; it would show us where we are we falling short, this would be a big help for everyone as well as help with planning and training;

-there should be a limit on helping libraries; we also need to remember the legal definition of public library; would this change?

-we need to encourage recognition of innovation

-not sold on accreditation but could listen; include some of this in annual state survey, in terms of providing resources, publish the more specific info, OLA could beef up round tables which could help as resources; , state development could support the round tables; there could be a percentage of items to meet the levels rather than having to meet everything; it is very complex

-accreditation has to not be seeking perfection, but that standards should not be lowest common denominator either; the schools pair highest achievers with lowest achieving to let them help the other; what if we did that and PLD coordinated that? Recognition and contribution

-Why accreditation?

**We have agreed to add a page to the State Report which says whether we meet standards**

-I use the standards a lot in talking to politicians about where we are going; they should be a motivating tool and include tool boxes;

-it should be a motivating, mentoring system; she would support accreditation; let's call it something else-certification, if we tie it to LSTA it will stifle creativity; and a lot of projects look odd from an outside perspective that the librarians are responding to needs in the community

Some level of flexibility based on community; that is why some other services may be able to suffer a bit without being punished;

Right now certification is just a binary thing: accredited yes or no without the subtlety of focusing on individual standards; need a rating system with more nuance;

-I just want something that goes outside library world

-The accreditation is not hooked to anything right now; need more meaning? Maybe accredited creates a non-egalitarian world; what would it look like if we did different kinds of rating

-the state library could look at specific areas to lift up and tie it to LSTA;

-What have we already agreed on---vision 2020. We all agree that Vision 2020 needs to be incorporated into all of the Standards

- **Technology:** we recognize that other approaches may achieve the same end; is strategic technology planning interwoven; how much detail do we want to have in a technology? I.E. here's where you rank yourself and here's your strategic plan (doesn't the strategic plan have to be created by the people who are need it/); some people picture this more organic of a process, the parties who are going to carry it out must be involved, but that does not negate the usefulness of seeing elements of a good plan; this gives them a start; i.e. here are some ways to improve later on; especially where you need to decide on priorities; Darci needs the whole loop; Su wants to be much more basic than this-like imposing classes on some libraries does not make sense; the checkboxes are important for easy and evaluative process and toolboxes are the meat; allow for depth and

breadth in tool boxes; not prescriptive; figuring out what your community needs are is important; this works in technology but perhaps not in governance, but how do we know this? Maybe not do a full review every year.

**Breakthrough on format: All of the indicators still exist under each section but the full list of them becomes the worksheet; for reporting purposes, the question is answered so:**

Community value

1. Library provides etc etc

Essential            enhanced            exemplary

In one question to you can be at one level, for the next question you can be at another level; in this way we can stay broad enough so that it works for more than one size of library;

Also, **another breakthrough: if we are actively engaged in partners who work with us, we can use our access to their resources in our standards.** This provides for better use of community resources, multiple uses for access to patrons, and this would be cascading throughout the standards expanding service through partnership but promote that to not duplicate; engaged and we provide the bridge. Format is changing to allow for more individual diverse libraries from around the state; truncated version; share the mock up; then specifics are captured in worksheet

**Also new decision: Certification not accreditation**

- **Staffing:** What followed in review of this standard was a very in-depth conversation about MLS degreed people in libraries. Vision 2020 statement re training; the requirement for professional; what does that mean; MLS –strongly encouraged or required; sometimes other training make sense; made sense to say you have this many on staff but not here, here and here; they could not come up with anything that was not arbitrary; let’s not leave out very small public libraries; don’t want to undermine ourselves as professionals-where is this value from this degree; how does Oregon feel about MLS; the achievement of the degree clearly shows a commitment to the profession; have MLS in the enhanced level; if we are going to ask libraries to have professional staff with experience in specific training, we want people to help others, help beyond the library. Either we take it out and define what it is; this is supposed to help not hinder; how do you draw the line on size and who MUST have mls librarians; Su likes enhanced; should be to test to achieve; say MLS or equivalent experience or training; equivalent under essential, degree under enhanced. Need to try to define or stated-fostering the professional environment; access to...
- **Materials:** collections are big! Stressing age over quantity; create ‘scale’ somehow; two tiers, within the state and nationally; identify themes and create the same kind of structure like technology-currency, maintenance; collapse-do you hit this-get this into the same format as technology; satisfaction survey of some sort that asks if collection is relevant, current, etc; asking for input from community for collection decisions-teen counsel i.e.-just one idea
- **Advocacy:** tying to vision 2020; marketing and pr is the means; important but not beating over the head; hard to measure; community engagement cross over; standards themselves are the greatest advocacy tool we have; this is the starting point of the conversation, advocacy is the overarching function of why you are doing marketing; definition in the glossary, maybe two; marketing might be the task;
- **Facilities:** nothing changed substantially; compare it to where we are now; break out square footage of all libraries NOW; that could be are starting point; exception ‘access’

space; that would be a real number; something that states trends; what about ability to change floor plan quickly; fix format; tool kit; appropriate for community; innovation, responsiveness; looking at community; greater obligation to have covered inside space-third place; measure by foot traffic, butts in seats, circulation and door count, architects standards-per person, public meeting spaces. Building code?

- **Governance:** ALA codes in essential; policies-have them; reviewed regularly;
- **Community Engagement:** the library is part of the community; know your community

**Next Steps:** It was determined that the large group needs to meet at least one more time with a revision. Next meeting on July 12 at Oregon State Library; the draft deadline is June 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjourn:** 2:00 p.m.

**Many thanks to the Salem Public Library Staff for technology and meeting room**

**Tasks:**

**Review survey results for those comments applicable to individual standards**

**Look at Vision 2020 and make sure that any applicable aspects are reflected in standards**

**Review these minutes for comments applicable to individual standard**

**Reformat standards according to collapsed format; sample to be sent to group by Paul**

**Send revised standard to entire group by June 28th**

**PLD Board: post survey results on OLA web; post current iterations of standards online also**