

STATE LIBRARY ADVISORY PANEL MEETING NOTES

MARCH 14, 2018



IN ATTENDANCE: Ellen Petty, Dianna Geers, Ben Johnson, Cindy Davis, Mary Fran Nikolai, Sandy Long, Dee Schrodt, Glenda Mulder, Kim Nelson, Carrie Falk, Anne Coulter

ONLINE ATTENDEES: Susan Schrader, Victor Lieberman, Rebecca Bock

STATE LIBRARY STAFF: Michael Scott, Nancy Medema, Emily Bainter, Maryann Mori, Alysia Peich, Jay Peterson

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:

- Anne Coulter called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.
- Michael introduced new members Ben Johnson from the Cedar Rapids Public Library representing Size H Libraries, Dianna Geers from College Community Schools representing School Libraries, and Rebecca Bock from Winterset Community Schools, also representing School Libraries.

REVIEW AGENDA:

- No changes or additional items to the agenda.

STATE LIBRARY UPDATES:

- **State Librarian Report (attachment):**
 - **State Budget-** Second Funnel Week at the Iowa Legislature which means legislation must move forward to either floor to stay alive, although funding bills are the exception. One of the big issues that remains uncertain is related to budgets, with both the State Library budget and the Enrich Iowa line item. An additional cut to state agency budgets is still up in the air. Last Friday the Revenue Estimating Committee met and their findings will be used to determine the state budget. They did find that revenues are up but that it will not be enough to cover the budget shortfall so we could face another mid-year cut before the end of FY18. We should know in another month or so the FY19 budget as the Legislature wants to adjourn around April 9 at the earliest.
 - **Public Service Desk Consolidation-** The transition of public and reference services over to the Law Library has been complete and things are going well. We ended up adding an additional public service desk, so the main desk in the Law Library focuses on servicing visitors, and the other desk located at the south end of the library takes care of the queries that come in online via chat or email, and answer the main reference phone line. We have three staff members who handle these reference tasks: Amy Rollinger, Pam Rees, and Helen Dagley. Once the Legislative session ends we are going to regroup and determine service needs going forward.
 - **Edge Program-** The State Library is working on a contract to use Edge, a technology assessment tool from the Urban Libraries Council. State Library staff will work with

- libraries to complete the assessment and a toolkit for libraries will provide resources, recommendations, and tools for strategic planning and community engagement.
- **Project Outcome-** State Library staff and Iowa libraries have the opportunity to receive specialized training on the Project Outcome program from the Public Library Association. Project Outcome focuses on seven key library service areas, and the goal of this program is to allow libraries and the State Library to collect more data related to outcomes
 - **Debbie Crane Retirement-** Debbie has been the Library Resource Technician for the southeast district for seven years and will be retiring March 23. We will be doing some reconfiguring our LRT positions to ensure coverage. We will be rehiring this position, which will be focused on providing support to the Continuing Education program. We will then have three LRTs focused on providing support to each district (each will be responsible for two districts).
 - **Online Resources Update:**
 - We are looking at opportunities to provide additional online resources to Iowa libraries. One is from Credo for the InfoLit modules; academic libraries have expressed interest in this resource and we have obtained a quote. There will be webinars on March 21 for information and feedback. Michael will be attending PLA next week and will talk to vendors about possibilities for additional resources. **Susan Schrader:** Will Credo will be available to public libraries? **Michael Scott:** Credo is available currently as part of the online resources package. These modules would also be available to pubs. **Ben Johnson:** is there a survey or method to ask about additional online resources? **Michael:** Yes, just let me know which ones you are interested in and I can talk to them. We also have a team who is getting together to determine criteria for which ones we will solicit and offer to libraries. One of the biggest requests we get from libraries is to have a genealogy resource. **Kim Nelson:** are you looking for general resources or more specific ones? We have a demand for medical resources. **Cindy Davis:** is there a way to do a survey of Iowa libraries to see what resources they offer? **Ben:** I would second that. Could be used to see what people are already using and then pool resources. **Anne Coulter:** TumbleBooks is another request and would be interesting to see which libraries already offer it. Academic libraries might also be interested for education programs. **Nancy:** Our team will start taking these into consideration; a survey would be a great idea to get started to determine cost sharing/saving possibilities. **Cindy:** kids at my library love ABC mouse. **Nancy:** another one is Consumer Reports, which is owned by EBSCO, but a statewide contract could still a possibility. **Michael:** it's an interesting time to be thinking about this because access is changing to a more digital demand model which could definitely benefit patrons.

STATE LIBRARY LSTA STRATEGIC PLAN:

- **Update on FY18-22 Plan:** Emily Bainter presented the new format of the Strategic Plan on the State Library's website at www.statelibraryofiaowa.org/about/sp. The three Strategic Plan goals are arranged in columns with the Objectives and Projects below. Each project is clickable and takes users to an individual project page with the activities listed and status updates from State Library teams that are working on the projects. Nancy Medema gave updates to the Strategic Plan, including the merging of the Continuing Education and Certification projects into one, offering a survey to libraries on the new Standards and what barriers they may face on becoming accredited; completed framework on SILO interlibrary loan for libraries to request multiple copies of a title for book discussion purposes; summer reading roundtables occurring

this month; and the CE team is discussing the possibility of having community engagement as a topic focus for CE in 2019.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- **Intellectual Freedom and the State Library**
 - **Nancy:** Alysia Peich, the State Library's Continuing Education (CE) Coordinator and Maryann Mori, Central District Consultant will lead this discussion on Intellectual Freedom (IF). Hopefully this discussion will help form our CE opportunities on this topic in the future.
 - **Alysia Peich:** to provide some context, the State Library had already been talking about IF for CE before the situation in Orange city. The CE Team meets monthly and has a retreat once a year in the fall to determine a "theme" for the next year. One of the first things we look at is the write-in suggestions on the CE surveys that libraries submit after CE courses. We look for trends and patterns with these answers. We are going to do a Comprehensive Needs Assessment this late spring or early summer. We haven't done one since 2012 and this will have libraries rate knowledge on certain topics. We also read posts on LibraryTalk and get feedback from the district consultants who hear directly from libraries. IF was not trending, but as we started talking in meetings, district consultants and Mandy Easter, our legal consultant, were mentioning that libraries have had questions on IF Then the Orange City situation happened. We have offered the IF topic in a CE session and it is also covered in PLM 1. If you have any questions please contact me.
 - **Maryann Mori:** To cover the orange city situation, which is now national and international news coverage, a patron objected to books in the collection with LGBTQ themes. So my question is if you had to explain intellectual freedom, how would you explain it? **Dianna Geers:** The library is supposed to be a place for patrons to get information, so having a balanced collection is important, even though some of the topics might be objectionable to people, they will be able to find all of the information, not what someone determines is "appropriate." **Cindy:** The library is a safe zone where you can come and look up anything you need and any sort of information. **Mary Fran Nikolai:** We are talking about nonfiction, but what about fiction books that are racy? Those need to be available to those that are interested in them. We had a large print book that a patron found objectionable, but I put it back on the shelf because for some people that content is not objectionable. **Ben:** I try to make a point that we buy from all sides of the political spectrum and would be interested in adding people's suggestions. I have also been looking into the legal precedents and have a list from the ACLU of successful legal challenges. **Glenda Mulder:** I have also told patrons to come to the board meeting to present their concerns; they usually back off at that point. **Ben:** It's also important to educate boards on this subject, especially if they don't understand the historic arc of IF and its impact. Once they see that perspective they are usually supportive.
 - **Maryann:** How do you get those board members educated? **Glenda:** I send them links to these news articles to show them that it's happening. We also recently reviewed our collection development policy. **Maryann:** It's important to have your board and staff understand those policies so they are aware if they get questions. **Cindy:** We make sure this is part of their training during our orientation process for the board and staff. **Kim Nelson:** We have to know our policies, but also keep in mind our mission, which is about freedom and access to information; providing a safe place.

- **Maryann:** What are the principles of IF? If they say that's just ALA or library talk, how do you respond? **Cindy:** That it's based on individual liberties and freedom. People who carry guns are allowed to look up info and have these discussions at the library. **Dianna:** this is based in our Constitution and freedom of speech. **Ben:** I'd be curious to know from academic libraries if there has been a shift away from free speech support and away from controversial speakers or topics, with students leading these efforts. **Kim:** I used to work at an academic library and materials would disappear, every year Mein Kampf would go missing. Every once in a while we'd get a challenge to a book, sometimes from our own faculty; rarely from students. **Ben:** ALA's statement is pretty vague; what about things that are plain false? We have challenge forms but is there any situation where we would remove materials? **Maryann:** How would you make that determination? **Cindy:** I have patrons who don't think something is appropriate for children, but we are not school libraries and it's not our job to make that determination.
- **Maryann:** I'm glad you mentioned speakers, Ben. What are some other aspects that might get challenged besides books? **Glenda:** We had a psychic program that received a negative Facebook comment. **Cindy:** Rated R movies. **Mary Fran:** We've implemented internet forms for parents to sign off on what their kids can access. We didn't have anything to say what kids can access on the internet, so we are leaving it up to the parents. **Ben:** We've had programs challenged. And public meetings have been challenged for our meeting spaces that are available to the public, even though we have statements that we do not endorse any viewpoint. **Cindy:** We had a complaint about someone announcing their campaign. **Maryann:** I don't know that libraries typically have a policy about how they develop their programming. How did you respond? **Ben:** A lot of times it's someone wanting to do their own program and then accuses the library of being biased. For a supernatural program, a patron wanted a religious program to counter. We had to flush out our process to determine programs, so we're meeting regularly to coordinate programs.
- **Maryann:** How does IF relate to patron privacy? How do you explain it to a parent who wants to know what their child checked out? **Dianna:** A principal asked for a parent to see a list of what their child checked out. I just did what the principal asked instead of contacting my library leader as they wanted it right then. Every week parents get a list of what links their children have accessed on their account. So that makes me wonder if the list of books issue is similar. **Ben:** With kids it's interesting, we say parents are responsible for kids, but when parents want to be responsible and see what their kids are accessing we say no, they can't have that information due to privacy. But the kids could come in to the library and access resources and materials without checking them out. **Glenda:** We have a line in our circulation policy that we can give a list of overdue titles to parents.
- **Maryann:** What steps would you take or have you taken when you've had a formal challenge? **Cindy:** I know two librarians that have pulled everything that would be controversial in their children's collection and are keeping the materials in their office for the time being.
- **Maryann:** Do any of you have Google Alerts for your library? Google alerts will send you an email whenever certain terms appear online, either on news pages or blogs, etc. **Cindy:** We try to be proactive and advertise banned books week to prevent challenges from happening.
- **Maryann:** Where have you previously received info about IF? **Mary Fran:** From the ALA and PLA. **Dianna:** Another school librarian received a challenge and contacted the ALA

Office of IF; the principal came and pulled all of the books off the shelf despite the district policy. **Maryann:** Are you aware that ILA has an IF committee? **Cindy:** Yes, they send out information via email. **Ben:** What does that procedure look like when you contact these offices and committees? What's been done with Orange City? **Maryann:** I'm not sure about Orange City, but in the past I went straight to ALA because there was a legal aspect with privacy. ALA attorneys helped free of charge. **Cindy:** One of the first responses to Orange City was was a letter from ALA and ILA.

- **Maryann:** The State Library offered a webinar on IF, led by our legal consultant Mandy Easter and me, which is available on our website and you can share with your staff and boards. (Link: www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/c-d/continuing-ed/conted-ials/archives-webinar/intel-freedom) **Cindy:** One book recommendation is *The Dismissal of Miss Ruth Brown: Civil Rights, Censorship, and the American Library* by Louise S. Robbins. **Nancy:** I would also recommend offering training to your board. The Orange City board was very thoughtful on how they planned their public meeting to avoid chaos. They are concerned that trustees in other communities would not know how to respond to a challenge. The webinar would be really good to show to your boards and you can use the Orange City situation as an example of why this training is important. This would also fulfill the standard for public libraries to provide board training.
- **Glenda:** It would be interesting to offer a library program on IF and to have the public come and discuss this issue. **Maryann:** We are planning on offering more information on library programs and how librarians can facilitate those discussions. Thank you for your thoughts and this productive discussion.

ROUND ROBIN

- Members gave updates on current events at their library.

OTHER TOPICS OR QUESTIONS

- None presented.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Anne Coulter adjourned the meeting at 12:22 p.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- Michael will send out a Doodle poll to determine the next meeting date which will be in August, 2018. An online option will be offered.