



Kyle Neugebauer <kneugebauer@thomas.lib.me.us>

[MELIBS-L] New Maine State Library Standards Draft--FEEDBACK WANTED

1 message

Bryce Cundick <bryce.cundick@maine.edu>
Reply-To: Bryce Cundick <bryce.cundick@maine.edu>
To: MELIBS-L@lists.maine.edu

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All--

Historically, the Maine Library Association (MLA) developed and provided Public Library Standards for Maine's public libraries. In 2013-14, the Maine State Library Commission reviewed the public library standards and made a number of modifications. Recently, the Commission asked MLA to take the work that was done in 2013-14 and to further develop and refine the public library standards for Maine's public libraries. We agreed, and we convened a committee to take a look at the current standards and revise them. Thanks to the committee's hard work, I'm pleased to present you now with a draft of the new library standards for 2020.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qdK8vMpbJ70vKQcEXUUJE2-cppWt05Ja/view?usp=sharing>

Where do they go from here?

First of all, we'll be taking some in-person input at MLA's annual meeting this Friday in Topsham. If you can't make it and would like to offer some input, feel free to email me directly with concerns. We want to hear from as many public libraries as possible. The committee will be reconvening over the summer to revise the document. Then it'll get sent out once again in advance of MLA's annual conference at the end of September. We hope to present the finished version there for a formal vote of acceptance. Following that vote, the standards will be presented to the Maine Library Commission for their endorsement.

Why do these standards matter?

The standards have been created in hopes of giving libraries across the state a tool to measure themselves and inspire their boards to improve as needed. There are discussions about having some incentives attached to different levels of the standards, but those conversations are ongoing. (We plan on announcing them at a later date, before the final standards are approved.) Ultimately, some state services might be contingent on a library meeting a certain standard tier. To qualify for official support from the Maine State Library, all libraries will need to meet the "Essential" standard.

The Maine State Library will be gathering feedback as to what state resources should be aligned to the relevant standard tiers and how libraries not meeting the Essential Standards can develop a plan to meet that standard. In any event, we agree that there should be a long "on-ramp" for libraries to meet the standards before the benefits tied to the standards are official (i.e. over the next three years, take steps to meet at least essential standards).

How will these standards be enforced?

It'll be on an "on your honor" system. Each year, each library will submit a self-evaluation along with their annual report, indicating which tier of each standards they meet. If at any time discrepancies between what's been

reported and what's being observed arise, the State Library will discuss that directly with the library.

What's still to come?

We don't plan on having each tier of the standard be an all or nothing arrangement. To meet the "Essential" threshold, you'll need to meet all the standards, but for the "Enhanced" and "Exemplary" levels, we are considering the use of a point system that's still being developed. In other words, a library will only need to meet most of those standards to qualify for that level, giving individual libraries some leeway in how they meet each standard. We want the standards to be used to elevate library services throughout the state. If all libraries met the "Exemplary" level, we'd want to take a look at the standards to see where we could set a higher bar for ourselves. As such, we envision 25% of libraries will meet the "Essential" tier, 50% will be at the "Enhanced" level, and 25% will be at the "Exemplary" level.

Do you think the standards are too hard to meet (or too easy)? Let me know! The bottom line? Give your feedback.

Thanks for your understanding and help as we embark on this new venture.

Respectfully,

Bryce Cundick
Past President
Maine Library Association