Directives gleaned from the library community through the Recommendation Development Process

Several directives from the library community emerged through the Recommendation Development Process described above.

First, the Workgroup reports should be used as frameworks for specific service improvements. The Workgroups consisted of service experts from across the state. The study they completed of current service areas was thoughtful and in-depth. Inequities were examined, which led to recommendations for improving service. The work and expertise provided were invaluable. Upon review by the library community, several Workgroup recommendations garnered early support for service improvements in specific areas, such as delivery, discovery layer, technology, and the creation of a CE portal. The Workgroup reports provide a solid foundation for moving forward in these areas in particular.

The second directive gleaned from the library community is to take action now on recommendations with robust support. The specific areas mentioned above represent areas of great need for many libraries -- services that have fallen behind due to budget constraints and/or local decisions about what can be supported. They are also areas that would provide immediate, positive impact on service to Wisconsin residents. The need is clear, and progress required. With the Workgroup reports serving as frameworks for improvements, action can and should be taken quickly and purposefully.

Some of the Workgroup recommendations would require more complex change in order to affect service improvement. For example, centralizing a service such as technology or changing how resource library is defined, would require complex change to governance structures, law, and important buy-in from the library community. It became clear, throughout the Recommendation Development Process, that organic, non-mandated change should lead complex improvements forward. The related directive gleaned from the Process is to enshrine more complex service improvements in the Workgroup reports as targets for future progress with organic change in mind.

Next, implementation of service improvements must be driven by effective management and coordination. Effective governance practices must be featured, as well. The library community expressed concerns about how administration, funding, and governance might change with proposed service improvements. Concerns included county funding, relationships with legislators, required changes to Chapter 43, and local control. Any service improvement moving forward must have a well-developed plan for how it will be managed, who will govern the service, how it will be implemented, as well as evidence of how efficiencies will be gained.
Whether service areas with robust support mentioned earlier or more complex change, improvements need to be effective and responsive.

Lastly, the Recommendation Development Process confirmed how important it is for service improvements to benefit library patrons. Wisconsin public libraries and systems have a strong history of working together to provide excellent services. One of the Principles of the Process is to “ensure all Wisconsin public libraries have the capacity to provide equitable access to excellent library services regardless of the race, ethnicity, income, gender, or employment status of the people they service, or their location within the state” [http://www.plsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Principles-of-PLSR-Structure-Development.pdf] Any service improvements moving forward must fulfill this principle and ultimately benefit the end-user, the library patron.

### CE Portal

One of the recommendations of the CE and Consulting Workgroup was to have a CE Portal for organizing and tracking CE courses and credits. This is a recommendation that has widespread support and is being recommended for implementation.

**What is a CE Portal?**

A Continuing Education (CE) Portal is a web-based tool for library staff to log in to and track their CE classes and credits. Online CE courses, upcoming classes, and webinars are all resources that may be available via the portal. Staff that use the portal have their own unique log in and can track and monitor their CE progress.

**Why Do we need it?**

In today’s fast paced and diverse world, CE is becoming even more important. Many organizations are putting more resources into the effective training of their staff so that they have the skills and information needed to be successful at their jobs.

A web-based portal allows staff to quickly see what is available, where it will be offered, at what time, and will it be offered at a location or via a webinar. Courses taken will automatically be logged and credited to the individual. Having one location where this information will be available will be more cost effective and efficient. The CE Portal will also be available to any library staff in Wisconsin.

**Where would it be?**

The CE Portal can be stored virtually anywhere that a server is located. The State of Wisconsin/DPI has server storage available, or it could be housed at a Regional Data Center like the one at CVTC (Chippewa Valley Technical College).

**Who would be involved?**

Content for the CE Portal would be provided by CE Coordinators, who would update with new courses, webinars, and other information for the portal. DPI staff may also provide some
support to the CE Coordinators, as CE Coordinators would want to be providing content in support of DPI initiatives.

Support on the technical end would be provided by the server host. They would maintain the server equipment and provide troubleshooting assistance when necessary.

**What are the components?**

An important feature of the CE Portal is a calendar of CE activities available throughout the state. Having one source for CE opportunities creates a one-stop-shop where staff can see what opportunities are available locally, regionally or even statewide. For example, a course may be offered one afternoon in one city and another afternoon in another city. It will also note whether or not the session will be recorded and archived for later viewing by the staff member. The number of CE credits/hours available for participating in this course will also be listed.

If a course is offered strictly as a webinar it will list the date and time the webinar is to be offered, technology needed to view the webinar, and when it will be archived or available for viewing at a later date. As with in person CE opportunities, the credits/hours for a webinar will also be listed with the course offering.

An effective tool of the CE Portal will be automatic tracking of courses taken by the staff member. As each staff person will have their own unique log in, courses taken by that individual will be stored and maintained. For many staff, including library directors, this information can be forwarded or printed out to verify attendance and participation in these courses. For directors it will be helpful for maintaining certification with DPI, and for staff members who aren’t directors the courses may be helpful for promotions within an organization, merit reviews, or when applying for a position at another library.

When an individual takes a course offering through the CE Portal, their profile is updated and shows their attendance at the event. If it is a live event, the instructor will submit information verifying attendance at the session. If it is a webinar the profile will be updated following completion of the webinar. Basically, as courses are completed the profile is updated and shows all the work completed by the user.

For those who are attending conferences or other CE training events, including those offered by a county or municipality, those CE events may also be added to an individual's profile. These are typically course offerings that may not be made available through the CE Portal, but can still be tracked and added to the users profile for ease of tracking. Verification of what was attended or taken would be submitted to CE staff and once verified the course information will be attached to the user profile.

Courses that are offered by CE Coordinators will be authenticated or approved by DPI so that there is a record of what was offered and that it fulfills the requirements of DPI licensure. When a participant takes a course offered offsite by a university, trainer, consultant, city staff, etc., they should provide information about that course and submit to the CE Coordinators so that those courses can be verified and the appropriate CE credit added to the individual's profile.

**Administration**

We envision that the CE Portal will be managed by one of the CE Coordinators. As part of CE implementation there will be several CE Coordinators, one of whom will likely be the
supervisor or manager of the team of CE Coordinators. This individual will be tasked with managing the CE Portal content and information.

The manager of the CE Portal will also work closely with DPI to ensure that the content available through the portal is creditable. The idea is that library staff should be comfortable knowing that the courses offered through the portal have been vetted by appropriate personnel, offer effective and timely content, and will count toward the appropriate accreditation.

The manager of the CE Portal will also be in charge of making sure that content stays current, adding new courses and information as appropriate and removing any courses that did not meet expectations or were found to be irrelevant. In addition, the manager may also assist other CE Coordinators in identifying course instructors and securing any contracts with them in providing classes for the CE Portal.

Website

As noted previously, servers available either through DPI or a regional data center would be able to host the CE Portal and website. The website would simply be the access point for getting to the information provided by the CE Portal. Technicians from the server host site would be responsible for maintenance of the equipment and would help troubleshoot technical problems. CE Coordinators would be responsible for content management and training of how to use the CE Portal.

Website Content

As noted before, the CE Manager will oversee the CE Portal, but all CE Coordinators will help provide content for the CE Portal. Working together, they will provide timely updates to the Calendar; they will make sure the webinars that are recorded are archived correctly and available for viewing at a later date; they will organize the recording of programs; they will identify how much credit a course will be worth and noting that on the course information page; and they will work to familiarize themselves with librarians in their region who are skilled and can present courses for CE credit.

CE Coordinators would also have access to a list of “their” librarians with a running total of Credit hours earned to date. This will allow for relationships to be built between library staff and the CE Coordinators so that the two can work together to make sure that they are taking appropriate classes or at least know when appropriate classes are being offered through the CE Portal.

Create and Maintain Log-in Information

In order to access the CE Portal users will have to Log-in and create a profile. These profiles should be able to be created by the user, but be verified by the CE Manager before becoming active. The CE Manager will verify the level of access for the user.

In addition to the creation of profiles, there should be a feature that allows for a report to be run that will show all the courses taken under that profile. This will allow for effective and efficient tracking and reporting of coursework taken to DPI or any other reporting body.

Secure Access to portal

Access to the CE Portal will be on a tier-based security system. The following are proposed levels for log-in access:
- DPI/Regional Data Center Staff for Server Maintenance and Software updates – Admin Level 1
- DPI Staff – licensing verification; content verification – Admin Level 2
- Regional/System CE coordinator – Admin Level 3 – calendar access; archive access (admin type); Uploading content; check requests for CE hours; Librarian Grid.
- Wisconsin Librarians User Level 1 – access to portal to sign up: view content; check CE credits; submit CE requests
- Wisconsin State Teachers User Level 2 – Access and cross-training CE credit hours as applicable and determined by DPI
- Out of State Librarians: User Level 3 – view content
- General Public User Level 3 – view content

**Support of the Continuing Education Portal**

**What is the CE Portal?**
The CE Portal (hereon known as the Portal), is an online portal accessible by any librarian in the state to assist in fulfilling and tracking Continuing Education hours necessary to stay current with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).
The Portal will be an integral part of the DPI continuing Education certification program, currently librarians must earn 100 contact hours of certification credits for their license, every 5 years.

**Why Is the portal necessary?**
Currently, each librarian in the state must write or type a CE Form for every class. Each form is saved for the end of the year, when they are tallied and sent in to their system CE person who validates them and approves the hours, sending a form to DPI.
This creates a lot of wasted time.
In many cases, and in most cases in small libraries, this creates a hardship, both monetarily and in time spent, as small libraries may have only one person working, and that person must still maintain their license, order media. Pay bills and perform all the duties of the Library Director.

**The Process**
Library director logs on to the Badger Sett Learning Portal. Their name has been submitted the day they are hired and entered into the access permitted database by the Regional/System CE Coordinator
Step 1 – Set up account with Library Name, Size, Certification Level
Step 2 - Browse calendar for CE ops
Step 3- Watch material
Step 4- Take a short quiz/write a paragraph about the training
Step 5 – System adds CE hours to file
Step 6 – At year’s end – Librarian submits a request through the portal to submit CE Credits for review OR CE credits are automatically sent to CE Coordinator for that librarian.
Evaluate Funding Distribution

This section of the report will cover the issues concerning funding distributions, particularly the funding library systems receive from the State via the Universal Fund. The current method of funding, as laid out in State Statute 43.24 (1)(a), distributes a portion of the fund to each of the 16 systems, based on the formula laid out in the statute. Systems located in densely populated areas receive a significantly larger amount than systems made up of primarily rural counties, one county systems, or any system with a smaller service population. This method of funds distribution creates inequity in the services a system can provide to its libraries. For example, South Central Library system serves 54 libraries and receives nearly $2 million in State aid—13.7% of the entire State Aid. Conversely, Indianhead Federated Library System serves a nearly identical number of libraries (53) that require the same services provided to the South Central libraries, yet only receives half of what South Central receives, around $1,125,000. Though the libraries in the seven counties in South Central serve a greater number of patrons than Indianhead, there are several fundamental services that any library—large or small—must provide to their users. The catch is that none of the fundamental services currently provided by Systems in a variety of ways are required by State Statute.

There are a multitude of services that Wisconsin Library Systems provide, based on the needs of their member libraries, historical precedence, and the vision of past and present Library System directors and their boards. These services include consulting, technology support, maintenance of the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), delivery of physical materials, purchase of electronic databases, continuing education coordination, and many more. The three most important services are delivery, technology, and OPAC support, none of which are mentioned in the State Statutes.

Moving forward, the Steering committee recommends that these three services become the baseline of system service standards. In order for systems to provide these three services at an equitable level throughout Wisconsin, all systems—large or small—must receive a minimum amount of funding, or the services must be provided outside of the current system configuration. The workgroup reports from both Technology and Delivery give an accurate picture of the cost needed to provide their respective services throughout Wisconsin.

The cost to provide Technology services to all Wisconsin Libraries is $3,970,429.00. By consolidating key technology services to a central location and creating multiple “first responder” hubs throughout the state, multiple efficiencies are realized while never decreasing quality customer service.
The cost to provide Delivery services to all Wisconsin libraries is $3,825,801.00. The model proposed by the Delivery Workgroup committee allows for a combination of third-party vendors and in-house delivery systems, creating a network of delivery hubs that can deliver items to libraries faster and at a lower cost.

The cost to provide ILS services to all Wisconsin libraries is much more difficult to calculate. Each system not only has its own ILS to support, the cost of support varies widely. Moreover, there are a number of libraries throughout the state that do not participate in their systems ILS, choosing instead to run their own ILS independently. The Funding subcommittee calculated the cost spent on ILS services to be $6,797,513.00. This amount includes a little over $1.8 million in State Aid, nearly $4.8 million from member libraries, and then minor amounts from LSTA grants, county funding, and other miscellaneous revenue sources. This amount does not include the cost of supporting the independent Integrated Library Systems throughout the State.

The ILS model workgroup did not propose a model of consolidation or merging so any research on this topic needs to be independently of this report. However, we can approximate the minimum cost for ILS services based on the number of libraries divided by the cost spent within each system and then calculate the median of each of these figures.

<insert a calculation as described above>

When the legislature increases the amount of total funding for systems, this amount is divided based on the formula above. In recent years, this amount has hovered in the $1 - $1.5 million range. While this amount is significant, once it's divided up amongst the system its effectiveness to produce meaningful services globally is diluted. If, instead, systems were provided with adequate minimum amounts to provide the basic three services—or if the services such as Delivery and Technology were provided in another way—this additional funding could be used to provide all libraries some of the new services mentioned in the workgroup reports.

Another option to increasing equity would be to reevaluate the current funding formula by utilizing the formula outline in State Statute 43.24(1)(c). This formula factors in shared revenue payments instead of local funding, providing a more equitable division of the State funding allocation.

As stated previously, the three services minimally needed by libraries are not required to be provided under state statute. Consequently, OPAC, Delivery, and Technology Services have been funded in a wide variety of ways. Over time, systems have developed their own unique manner of sharing the cost of each service—including 100% funded from State Aid, 100% funded by member libraries, and multiple combinations in between.
Delivery tends to be the most consistent, with systems funding the service primarily from State Aid, sometimes supplemented with additional funds from counties for bookmobile services, or from member libraries who require an increase in delivery days.

Technology funding is not at all consistent. For some libraries, their system covers nearly 100% of the costs, like Bridges, Nicolet, and Monarch. In others, the member libraries are expected to cover the lion's share, including South Central. For most, it's a split between member libraries and a supplement from State Aid. Moreover, the information gathered by the funding subcommittee did not include any supplemental spending by member libraries to third party vendors. In some cases, the technology support is little to non-existent, forcing libraries to rely on local IT support from their municipality or from commercial vendors.

ILS funding is also a mixed bag of State Aid and member library funding. Some systems such as Southwest, South Central, Winnefox, Winding Rivers, Arrowhead, and Indianhead fund the ILS services at nearly 100% from member library contributions. Others such as Manitowoc/Calumet utilize a significantly greater amount of State Aid. Still others have close to a 50/50 balance in funding sources.

For systems such as Kenosha county, who relies on state aid to fund 100% of delivery, technology, and ILS services, any change to the current model will prove to be a challenge in the very least.

This wide range of funding options will prove to be a significant obstacle to any changes. Libraries that are accustomed to not paying at all for services will be hard pressed to increase their budgets to accommodate the change. Libraries that do pay for services from their local budgets will expect the same or better services once the new models are put in place.

**Explore the possibility of delivery pilots**

Exploring the possibility of delivery pilots is based on the extensive research of the PLSR Delivery Workgroup and the Regions Topic Team. A delivery pilot would begin to prove the concepts recommended by the Delivery Workgroup on a small regional scale, and serve as a starting point toward implementing the Workgroup's recommendation of an eight-region, state-wide delivery network.

Why explore the possibility of delivery pilots?
1. To provide more equitable delivery service to all regions of the State
2. To realize efficiencies (hours and miles)
3. Because other coordinated services, including technology, rely on efficiencies from establishing fewer service regions and the daily delivery between regions as outlined in the Delivery workgroup report.

Current delivery services in library systems are rated high by member libraries, but data from the Delivery workgroup report identifies reasons to explore a delivery pilot project which would prove the concept.

Issues with the current delivery model

- The frequency of delivery to libraries across the state varies greatly. The following factors lead to service delays that impact some areas of the state more than others:
  - Within the 16 systems delivery ranges from one stop, two days a week to twice daily stops, six days a week.
  - SCLS Delivery statewide routes are run four days per week. With the SCLS hub in Madison connecting to some locations, due to their distance from Madison, through a contracted courier, which can add an additional day of delivery time in some cases.

- Delivery to non-public libraries may not be coordinated between regional and statewide delivery, which leads to wasted effort and duplication. Here are two examples:
  - SCLS Delivery currently provides delivery to the Southwest Wisconsin Library System (SWLS) headquarters in Fennimore four days a week. From there, SCLS Delivery travels to UW-Platteville. SWLS delivery, located at the SWLS headquarters, also travels to Platteville to provide delivery to the public library three days per week.
  - Winding Rivers Library System (WRLS) delivery currently stops at both Viterbo University and the UW-La Crosse, which are close to La Crosse Public Library, to which it provides delivery. SCLS Delivery also goes to Viterbo University and UW-La Crosse on one of its statewide routes.

- Physical delivery is vulnerable to weather-related cancellations and having a single statewide delivery service hub in Madison can lead to unnecessary service interruptions.

The two key components of the Delivery workgroups model are
1. eight delivery regions and
2.) a single hub location in each region serving as the connection point to the other regions.

The following map shows the recommended eight regions model and possible hubs (starred on the map) in each region. While the delivery hubs during implementation will likely coincide with existing system or vendor locations in some regions, delivery hubs in this model are not fixed long-term as the potential for changing vendors through a competitive bid process may impact where a delivery hub is located.
The Process of implementing a delivery pilot

Only through phased implementation will the best options for forming regions and then connecting hubs within each region, to create the fastest transit times between all hubs and to create connections that are cost effective, be determined.

Additionally it is understood that the formation of any new delivery regions would be in cooperation and coordination with the existing system delivery service(s) within each of the new regions. Specifically, the workgroup recommends targeting the development of a few regions to establish initial core statewide hub connections between regions in the south and north of the new model and, through this incremental implementation process, measure the feasibility of the new model through data gathering, cost analysis and determination of standards.

1. Establish and hire for the position of Statewide Delivery Services Coordinator to oversee implementation of a pilot service model.

2. Work with systems in the following regions to coordinate development of the new regional service model and establish a single hub for connecting to other regional hubs.
   a. Region 8 - All library locations but one branch in Kenosha County currently receive 5-day per week service, which provides the opportunity to monitor costs to analyze changes from the transition to libraries in the region currently on statewide routes being served by regional routes and to establish a single hub to connect to other regions. ii. Three of the five systems have already developed a single hub connection for their system delivery services since they are part of the
same automated shared catalog (ILS). In addition, the Bridges Library System recently expanded their delivery when Jefferson County joined their library system. This provides existing information and learning opportunities for how a region with multiple library systems can combine into a single region for delivery service, including establishing a connection from wherever the single regional hub is established in this region to the delivery hub for Region 7 (south).

b. Regions 1, 2, 3 and 5 - These regions currently are a single system delivery service with a single delivery hub. Regions 2 and 3 currently contract with the same delivery service vendor, while Region 1 contracts with a different vendor and Region 5 is an in-house delivery service. ii. During this time, these regions transition to providing delivery to libraries within their region that currently get delivery from the statewide delivery service. Because they are currently single service, single hub regions, it also allows the exploration of different options for connecting these hubs to the Region 3 (north) and Region 7 (south) Hubs.

c. Region 7 - Establish route connection to Region 3 (north) Hub. This connection, combined with the establishment of single hubs in Regions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8 to either Region 3 (north) or Region 7 (south) will create the delivery connection from the far northwest corner of the state to the far southeast corner. Establishing these connections allow for cost analysis of statewide hub connection along with a clear understanding of logistical capacities to connect regions and libraries in this new model to achieve faster transit times through better-coordinated delivery logistics. During this time, the two systems within this region will work cooperatively to explore how to coordinate delivery together as a single region.

d. Regions 4 and 6 - These are the two regions separated by a dotted line on the model's proposed region map. Any final determination of borders for delivery services in these two regions will be informed by any potential changes that happen in regards to ILS consortia in the current systems in these regions. This initial implementation phase allows time for the landscape of resource sharing in these two regions to become more clear before determining and implementing new delivery service regions in this part of the state.

Delivery has the ability to help improve the effectiveness of other coordinated services to libraries and improve staff efficiencies at libraries. A delivery pilot does not prescribe specific ideas to be implemented immediately but the Delivery workgroup identified the following potential opportunities:

1. Automated Materials Handling (AMH) and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)
a. Currently, the SHARE consortium is testing new sorting methods and ways to integrate delivery sorting to help Kenosha Public Library best utilize their RFID automated materials handling system.

b. While the return on investment of automating sorting at central delivery sorting sites is questionable4, regional sorting sites equipped with AMH might result in savings for libraries. The ability for a library to do a single scan of a tote to check in returned delivery materials using RFID, instead of checking the items individually, has the potential to save a significant amount of staff time across the state.

2. Delivery sorting hubs should be:
   a. Locations to store shared collections, such as infrequently used or last copy items that could be accessible for discovery and request by patrons without taking up space at libraries. In addition, rotating kits, like those for makerspace activities or computer labs can be stored at a delivery hub for libraries to request to use.
   b. Regionally centralized sites for mailing interlibrary loan materials. c. Sites for printing services to libraries.

3. Connection to other states delivery services as currently happens with Minitex. Region 8 in the Southeast corner of the state would be an ideal connection point to Illinois library delivery and beyond to other Great Lakes states.

EQUITY IMPROVEMENT
1. Having fewer regions of more uniform size to equalize resources
2. Reducing duplication to make more resources available to improve service
3. Ensuring that it's possible for libraries to receive delivery every weekday they are open
4. Having a system of moving materials between regions that is uniform throughout the state

EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS DURING AND AFTER IMPLEMENTATION
The following assessments and metrics should be used to evaluate the delivery service model:
1. Cost analysis of implementation using 2017 delivery costs as gathered by the PLSR Funding and Cost Standards Subcommittee as a base reference. Cost per stop will be the main standard for analysis.
2. Cost analysis of any bid process for regional delivery services and statewide hub connections based on information gathered during the first four years of implementation. Cost per stop will be the main standard for analysis.
3. Other delivery efficiency and effectiveness improvement measurements that will be assessed include
a. Study of delivery volume transported regionally and via the statewide hub network to determine if more items move regionally and fewer across regions, lessening the overall distance traveled by items.

b. Transit time between libraries within regions and libraries in different regions as a measurement of service improvement.

c. Average stops made per week at public library locations in each region as a measurement of equity improvement.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

SCLS DELIVERY
The statewide delivery network exists due to the South Central Library System’s work to establish it beginning in the early 1990’s. As the statewide delivery service has evolved and grown, it required SCLS to locate to a sufficiently sized facility for the service’s headquarters and develop an internal management structure to support both the statewide service and SCLS’s delivery service to its member libraries. A portion of SCLS overhead costs for the facility, management and other administrative overhead has been factored into the costs for statewide delivery participation.

The model ideally sees the regional and the statewide regional hub connection model funded and coordinated as a single statewide delivery service. This is a significant change from the current model and will not occur immediately. The transition is recommended to be phased in over the first five years. A good portion of the SCLS Delivery overhead costs will not be reduced in the same proportion as any reduction in revenue to SCLS as the new model is phased in. Thus, there will need to be careful consideration of the impact on SCLS as any funding model changes take effect during implementation.

SERVICE STABILITY
The workgroup strongly believes, based on the vital support role of delivery to statewide resource sharing and the experiences of other states with vendors not fulfilling contract obligations, that a hybrid approach of contracted vendors and in-house delivery operations is the best model for a stable delivery service. The workgroup recommends that any competitive bid processes would not make final decisions of service providers based on cost alone. The average per stop costs that currently exist in the state is essentially equal between the systems utilizing a contracted delivery service and those operating an in-house service. The workgroup believes that a balanced approach to maintain service stability can be done in a way that is also most cost effective.
Investigate Discovery Layer

Recommendation

The PLSR Steering Committee recommends that the Department of Public Instruction should engage with topical experts, regional public library systems, and the library community at-large in order to create the technical and collaborative conditions necessary to undertake creation of an effective, well-managed, state-scale library discovery layer.

Executive Summary

Throughout the entire PLSR process, the concept of a unified, state-scale discovery layer has maintained a robust degree of support from project participants, the library community, and other stakeholder groups alike. For the purpose of definition, a “discovery layer” refers to the visual interface used by library patrons to find, identify, select, and obtain the various types of resources offered by the 21st century public library. These resources frequently include physical books and audiovisual materials, as well as an ever-broadening variety of “downloadable” and “streamable” digital resources such as audiobooks, feature films, news and/or scholarly articles, and other digital content. The ultimate goals of this recommendation are A) to create the technical coordination necessary for a variety of library management software platforms to become interoperable, B) create a single powerful search interface that allows patrons seamless access to library collections across the state regardless of where they live and, C) generate cost savings to Wisconsin’s regional library systems which can then be repurposed to further enhance service offerings to member libraries.

Suggested Process

In order to achieve the underlying goals of this recommendation, the following process (or some version thereof) is advisable:

1. Appoint an appropriately knowledgeable principal investigator or project manager vested with the ability to drive the project. As an alternative, appoint (and similarly vest) a small task-force of individuals who are highly-knowledgeable in areas of library management software, communication protocols, and library policy issues.

2. Conduct a needs assessment (that is, a list of discovery capabilities -features- necessary to provide top-notch discovery services to patrons). Use the results of the needs assessment to identify a message protocol or communication framework that best matches the results of the needs assessment (examples: SIP2, NCIP, JSON, REST, SOAP).

3. Take steps to ensure that all major library software vendors doing business in the Wisconsin market space are able to support the chosen protocol or framework.

4. Work with the Department of Administration (or other appropriate office) to secure software development resources necessary to create an application capable of “translating” action messages between various library management softwares (ILS’s).

5. Compare the results of the needs assessment to the current capabilities of library software vendor discovery products, including open-source platforms.

6. Conduct a fiscal assessment to determine what each vendor (or open source) solution would cost when scaled to the entire state.
7. Work with the principal investigator, manager, or task force to organize a process to evaluate and select a vendor product that will serve as the state-scale discovery layer henceforth.

Residual Thoughts & Questions:
- Where does governance fit in? Example: advisory group concept to handle reevaluation of vendor if necessary, governance, etc.
- Staffing issue. How will this be handled? Possible to administer a state-scale platform with only a couple of FTE’s and rely on coordination/cooperation/crowdsourcing with regional systems as key player/stakeholders??

Reduce the Number of Systems

In recent years, discussion and research into the viability and benefit of reducing the number of Wisconsin’s public libraries systems has been prevalent. Several papers by varying state groups have addressed this topic, all hitting upon reducing duplication of services and/or identifying savings through consolidation. Additionally, attention has focused on improving or maintaining system services, with clear effort not to diminish services. The target throughout has been to deliver high quality services to Wisconsin residents for the tax dollars provided.

SRLAAW’s final report “Creating More Effective Public Library Systems”, dated August 2013, recommended a study to determine “optimal size” of a library system. Through their process, SRLAAW identified that “the library community believes that having fewer public library systems in Wisconsin is inevitable.” Determining optimal size, however, has become elusive.

The study was to address four elements:

- “The study would identify potential savings in systems through consolidation, technology, efficiencies, LEAN practices, and service sharing.
- The library community would be involved in studying the relationship between system effectiveness and system size in order to determine the factors that define optimal system size.
- Outside experts (e.g., regional planners) would be asked to suggest strategies for implementing optimal system configurations given the optimal system size, the current configuration of systems, and demographic patterns in the state.
- The system funding formula would be examined in light of optimal system size and configuration to determine how it could be altered to incentivize change.”

Suggestions stemming from the DPI-sponsored “Lean System Study Work Group Recommendations”, from 2014, determined potential savings through:
- “Consolidating systems
- Increasing the use of technology
- Reducing duplications and inefficiencies
Utilizing lean production principles
Increasing the sharing of services among library systems”

In addition, COLAND’s report “Strategic Vision for Library Systems in the 21st Century” dated 2015, also addressed the number of public library systems in an effort to reduce duplication, primarily regarding administrative services. Furthermore, emphasis has been placed on maximizing resources available to libraries and systems through LEAN principles and increasing the use and capabilities of technology.

Develop System Standards, Best Practices, and Accountability

a. Provide compelling rationale
Library systems are required to provide a full range of services per Wisconsin State Statute 43.24 to qualify and maintain its eligibility to receive state aid. The purpose of standards for Wisconsin public library systems and system staff is to encourage the further development of quality service by providing public library systems with a tool to identify strengths, recognize areas for improvement, and strengthen accountability to member libraries. It could be unlikely that all systems would meet these standards with current state funding. Instead, system may collaborate and/or consolidate in order to provide the level of service the standards would represent.

b. Recommend DPI appoints a task force to draft standards

Model the process and document after the one used for current edition of the public library standards

Appoint a Task Force using a structure similar to the one used for the public library standards (page iii of the public library standards)

Steering Group 6-7 Members – System Directors; Public Library Directors or Library Staff representing Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 libraries

Standard Area Working Groups (Representatives from Systems and Public Libraries)
  System Governance and Administration
  Service Groups
  Library Advocacy and Awareness
Public Library Development Team (Task Force Resources and Project Lead)

i. Define characteristics of task force members
Task force members should represent a diversity of locations and sizes of systems as service providers and of libraries as service recipients whenever possible. Individuals with experience with different libraries and systems would be a desired characteristic.

ii. Review current accountability measures, what’s working, what isn’t
Currently there are several measures of accountability for library systems—Governance; System Plan and Program Budget; System Annual Report; and System Plan and Program Budget.

**Governance**
The level of individual board member awareness of library statutes and system operations can vary. A “Trustee Essentials” does not exist for system board members instead they rely on the more general version as their guide.

43.17(1) BOARD TERMS. Every public library system shall be governed by a board appointed under s. 43.19 or 43.21.

The use of an advisory committee is optional and not required as a mechanism for libraries to provide input.

43.17(2m) ADVISORY COMMITTEE. Every public library system may appoint a public library advisory committee to, among other things, advise the system board about the status and needs of libraries in the system, serve as a conduit of information between the system board
and individual libraries in the system and make recommendations to the system board relating to libraries in the system

Public Library System Plan and Certification of Intent to Comply (Form PI-2446)
This is a self reporting tool that is approved by the system board.

43.24(3)  Annually, the division shall review the reports and proposed service plans submitted by the public library systems under s. 43.17 (5) for conformity with this chapter and such rules and standards as are applicable........The division may reduce state aid payments when any system or any participant thereof fails to meet the requirements of sub. (2).
Beginning September 1, 1991, the division may reduce state aid payments to any system if the system or any participant in the system fails to meet the requirements of s. 43.15 (4).

System Effectiveness--Public Library Annual Report
This statement is approved by individual library boards but there is no set accountabilities or measurement techniques to assess system compliance based on required system services.

43.58(6)(c) The report to the division shall contain a statement by the library board indicating whether the public library system in which the library participated during the year of the report did or did not provide effective leadership and adequately meet the needs of the library and an explanation of why the library board believes so. The division shall design the form of the statement so that it may be removed from the report and forwarded to the division before it is sent to the public library system.

43.05(14)(b) (b) Conduct a review of a public library system if at least 30 percent of the libraries in participating municipalities that include at least 30 percent of the population of all participating municipalities state in the report under s. 43.58 (6) (c) that the public library system did not adequately meet the needs of the library. If the division determines that the public library system did not adequately meet the needs of libraries participating in the system, it shall prepare an advisory plan suggesting how the public library system can so do in the future, including suggestions designed to foster intrasystem communications and local dispute resolution. The advisory plan shall be distributed to the public library system board, the boards of all libraries participating in the system and the county boards of all counties participating in the system.

Wisconsin Public Library System Service Standards (Appendix A)  Creating More Effective Public Library Systems Report
These voluntary standards were adopted by the System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin on August 2, 2013. Some of the recommendations including documenting collaborative activities on the system plans and annual reports along with the ILS study have been adopted. Some systems began voluntary implementation of the standards within their planning process. As part of the standards development process, it is recommended that all systems assess and document their ability to comply with the standards. The assessment could include a checklist—currently meet ourselves; currently collaborate/contract with others to meet; could implement easily; have done in the last 2 year; or unable to implement with current funding.

iii. Sorting process: what could be done under ch 43, what are goals, administrative rules, best practices?

Chapter 43
Can 43.09 (2) be modified to included 43.24 -- such rules shall be consistent with s. 43.15 and 43.24 (2)....

Administrative Rules
If 43.24 is added to statute can the DPI create standards in PI 6

Best Practices
System Standards

System Plan/Program Budget
DPI adopt new accounting recommendations
Incorporate basic standards (best practices) into plan check boxes

iv. Is this a tiered model like the library standards?
It is recommended that the library system standards mirror the design of the public library standards for ease of use. The sections should include:

Statutory Requirements (Chapter 43.15; 43.16; 43.17; 43.19; 43.24; 43.58)
  Systems
  Library Membership
Tier One, a system must meet all of the Tier 1 standards (base funding?)

Tier Two, all of Tier 1 and all but two of the Tier 2 standards (performance incentives)
(While public libraries have three tiers does creating three tiers maintain equity gaps?)

v. What if systems can’t adhere to the standards? How do they communicate needed resources to adhere?

Wisconsin State Statute 43.24(3) currently allows the Department to reduce aid to systems if they don’t comply with existing standards. Reduction in aid could place additional complications on a system to meet the standards. It is recommended that any system unable to adhere to the standards should be required to develop a 12 month compliance plan approved by the Division to maintain current aid levels. The compliance plan should include resources needed, collaborative and/or consolidation opportunities and a stakeholders communication plan. . .

vi. Identify performance measures, is there a foundational document(s) to be used as an example?

3. PLSR Workgroup Reports
5.

vii. Best practices: how do we track consulting services, accounting standards, accounting for services

Consulting Services
It is recommended that a team of system directors/consultants representing the 17 library systems along with Division representation develop a tracking system which uses the broad consulting areas identified in the PLSR Consulting Workgroup report as well as the type (email, phone, in-person, site) and number of interactions per year.

Accounting Standards
The system business managers working with the Michael Dennison, the Public Library Data, Funding and Compliance Consultant build upon the work of the Funding Subcommittee to
develop standardized revenue and expenditure accounts and terminology to provide consistent and uniform reporting of income and expenditures for the System Annual Reports and System Program Budgets and Plans.

viii. Sync to system planning cycle

ix. Task force should be formed ASAP – progress report out to systems August 2019ish

C. Create timeline

Establish Library System Task Force (December 31, 2018)
  Release Draft for Comment (April 1, 2019)
  Final Draft (June 1, 2019)
  Implementation (July 1, 2019)
  Incorporate into System Planning Document (August 1, 2019)

System Accounting Standardization
  Convene Working Group of System Business Managers (December 2018)
  Release draft recommendations (April 1, 2019)
  Final Draft and Implementation (June 1, 2019)
  Incorporate into System Annual Report, Planning and Program Budget Documents (July 1, 2019)

Incentives for Change
Using incentives to motivate Library Systems to consolidate gained consensus throughout the process. While it was generally acknowledged that benefits would come with fewer systems, regionalized services, and larger pools of funds with fewer administrative costs, it was generally agreed, that compelling systems to merge was likely to be a failed strategy. Surveys indicate an extremely high percentage of member libraries are satisfied or very satisfied with their System’s services. This is particularly true in some systems. Bridges, Monarch, South Central and XXXX, comprised 74% of the survey respondents. These systems and their members demonstrated their opposition to forced mergers through public comments at various meetings, and through formal and informal written communication to the Steering Team.

It is also important to note that among the principals the Steering Team endorsed for the project, Systems and member libraries were to be held harmless to the greatest extent possible. While the goal of driving equity of service to all areas of the state is a primary goal for the project,
there was strong resistance to shifting resources to create new benefits in one system at the expense to another system.

Still, it was generally understood and accepted that inequities do exist, that changes are needed to eliminate them, and that this can be achieved, at least in part, through regionalizing some services and/or the consolidation of Systems.

The use of incentives to drive change was determined to be the preferred, and ultimately, the only way to successfully achieve change. Incentives are a well-known device used in many organizations to achieve desired change or specific actions. What specific incentives would be effective in undertaking mergers was not explored during the process. One could assume that the most compelling incentive would be financial. Another question not explored was who any specific incentive would be targeted toward. With the varied stakeholders within each system, county, and municipality, would different incentives be needed for each group?

Research
In exploring the effective use of incentives, a search for general information about the use of incentives resulted in several articles that offered several important pieces of advice. First, incentives can be tangible or intangible. Examples are rewards of money, recognition, status, development, satisfaction. In any case, the desired action must be attainable and must provide a positive reinforcement, i.e. “make a person happier.” Rewards narrow our focus, concentrate the mind – for obvious task/goals it’s the right approach. When cognitive skills are required, a larger reward will lead to poorer performance. Other studies also found that financial incentives can result in a negative impact on overall performance. (LSE)These articles address the use of incentives on individuals, but it is worth considering whether these same notions can be applied to organizations, who are after all, made up of individuals.

A Princeton Study (Pink, 2009) (Sam Glucksberg) found that incentives don’t have the desired effect and that a better method of attaining a desired outcome is to motivate. Doing things that matter, because they’re interesting, because we like them, because they are part of something important may well be the motivation needed to achieve the desired result. Autonomy, mastery, and purpose are cited as the building blocks of a new system. “Get money off the table and then give people lots of autonomy.”

The idea of autonomy rings true. Throughout the process, local control was highly valued and a principle to be protected.

Mergers, whether in the non-profit, public, or private sector, offer an impressive list of benefits that must be seriously considered: Economies of Scale, Operating Efficiencies, Positive impact of collective synergy, Increased Financial Stability, Increased Financial Resources, Growth and Expansion of services, Help in Facing Competition, Research and Development more feasible, and ultimately increased benefits to the customer/patron.

Recommendation
The Department of Public Instruction should identify resources to incentivize the consolidation of one or more Wisconsin Public Library Systems. Arrowhead, Lakeshores, and Kenosha County Systems should be targeted as the first consolidation. The grant could be used for project management, consulting, direct costs, planning, facilitation, evaluation, lobbying, a cost-benefit analysis, and other related expenses.