# PLSR Steering Committee Report Draft Version 6

Version of report draft upon adjournment of the in-person committee meeting on November 7, 2018

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Background

At their meeting in August 2012, System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) conducted a summit and subsequent survey\(^a\) to examine how library systems could continue to most effectively deliver services to their member libraries. This action was largely in response to shrinking governmental budgets and consolidation of public library systems in other states throughout the nation. The subsequent report, Creating Effective Systems, recommended a need\(^b\) to conduct further studies on library system services, size, and strategies for implementing optimally configured systems and establishing service and administrative standards for public library systems.\(^1\)

During the development of the 2014-2015 biennial budget, the Joint Finance Committee recommended the Department of Administration analyze library systems to “conduct a study to identify potential savings in public library systems through consolidation, technology, efficiencies, LEAN practices and service sharing” in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The Governor deemed this recommendation unnecessary and vetoed it and acknowledged DPI as the appropriate agency to conduct such a study without the need for legislative directive.\(^2\)

In response, DPI’s Division for Libraries and Technology initiated a Lean System Study Work Group to examine demand for services by member libraries and the resources and capacity of public library systems to provide these services. This work group identified areas of service provided by library systems that could\(^c\) be made more efficient. The major recommendation was that study continue and experts from each topical area be tapped to develop further recommendations and implementation strategies.\(^3\)

While the Lean System Study Work Group finalized their report, the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND) appointed a workgroup in July of 2014 to develop a strategic vision for library systems in the 21st century. This workgroup presented a series of recommendations to State Superintendent\(^d\) Tony Evers in January of 2015\(^4\):

- Library Consulting - Leverage distributed expertise to provide specialized consulting, verified by DPI;\(^e\)
- Provide and Support Technology Access through aggregation of software and services including shared platforms and expertise;
- One State, One Collection;
- Resource libraries must redefine their value proposition for the twenty-first century;
- Delivery Service - Transition to multi-hub delivery network;
- Coordinate Electronic Resources - Maximize purchasing power;
- Continuing Education - Maximize impact of continuing education funding
- Eliminate statutory language requiring Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to request 13% for library system aid.
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COLAND included a road map and timeline with their recommendations to further study how public library systems could most efficiently and effectively deliver services in the topic areas identified by the Lean System Study Work group. The intent was to lead change at the local and regional level to maximize organizational resources and state funding in order to deliver the highest quality library services to Wisconsin residents for the tax dollars provided.

Recommendation Development Process

In September 2015, the State Superintendent appointed an 11-member steering committee to oversee a multi-year project to re-envision how Wisconsin Public Library Systems serve Wisconsin’s 381 public libraries. Membership was selected based upon library and system size as well as consideration for geographic distribution.

Members of the Steering Committee:

<table>
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<th>Library</th>
<th>Type of Library</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<td>Patterson Memorial Library, Wild Rose</td>
<td>Very Small Public</td>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jon M. Bolthouse</td>
<td>Fond du Lac Public Library</td>
<td>Large Public, non-resource</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth A. Carpenter</td>
<td>Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library</td>
<td>Mid-sized Public</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget C. Christenson</td>
<td>Hatch Public Library, Mauston</td>
<td>Small Public</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John DeBacher</td>
<td>Department of Public Instruction</td>
<td>State Library Agency</td>
<td>DPI Liaison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristie L. Hauer</td>
<td>Shawano City-County Library</td>
<td>County Joint Public (&amp; Rural)</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Kiely</td>
<td>Milwaukee Public Library</td>
<td>Large Public &amp; System Resource</td>
<td>Vice-Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessamyn C. Lee-Jones</td>
<td>Platteville Public Library</td>
<td>Small to Mid Public (Small Resource)</td>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bryan J. McCormick</td>
<td>Hedberg Public Library,</td>
<td>Public ( &amp; COLAND</td>
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1 After appointment, Beth accepted a position with the Appleton Public Library.
The State Superintendent charged the Steering Committee with providing strategic vision, oversight, and general leadership in the development of recommendations to update and refine the roles and services of Public Library Systems and maximize public investment\(^6\) in library systems and public libraries.\(^6\)

The Steering Committee, as well as all workgroup members\(^1\), were made up of volunteers who had other full time jobs. Recognizing this, the Steering Committee issued a nationwide Request for Proposal for a project manager to plan, organize, and implement a process focused on eliciting recommendations from the library community. The project manager was also charged with facilitating meetings and structuring the idea generation of the workgroups. Two responses were received. The Steering Committee selected WILS as the project manager during a meeting held in October during the 2015 Wisconsin Library Association’s Annual Conference.\(^7\) The following core principles were adopted by the Steering Committee in December 2015:

- Communication is critical for the success of the process\(^m\);
- The process relies on openness and trust from all participants\(^n\);
- Information and data should be the bedrock of the process\(^o\);
- Outside expertise will add credibility and weight to the outcomes\(^p\);
- The process will be used to grow skills needed to maintain flexible and community-driven service into the future.

The project manager led the Steering Committee through a process to form topical workgroups in March of 2016. Members of the workgroups were selected from a pool of voluntary applicants. These members were assigned to workgroups based on their subject matter expertise or their status as a user or customer of a service area. Each workgroup was meant to address statutory library system obligations as defined by statute.\(^8\) Ultimately, the following 7 workgroups were formed:

- Chapter 43
- Collections\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Originally called XXXXX
● Continuing Education/Consulting
● Delivery
● ILL/ILS/Discovery
● Resource Libraries
● Technology

These workgroups were instructed to research their service area extensively and meet regularly to develop recommendations to the steering committee for inclusion in their final report. Workgroups were also instructed to identify, illustrate, and contextualize existing inequities in library service throughout the state and focus on maximizing equity of access for the citizens of Wisconsin, not the libraries or library systems. As workgroups developed recommendations, feedback was solicited from the library community in a number of ways, including: an external group of participants tapped to review findings through surveys, presentations made at the 2016 and 2017 Wisconsin Library Association’s annual conference, monthly calls scheduled with SRLAAW, and virtual question and answer periods open to the public. The Steering Committee also identified communication liaisons in each system to help disseminate information to member libraries and library boards. Final reports from each workgroup were delivered to the Steering Committee on April 2, 2018.

After the completion of the workgroup phase, WiLS transitioned from an active project manager role to an administrative and logistics coordinator role. The Steering Committee awarded a bid from Russell Consulting to perform the role of facilitating meetings and the decision making process.

The Steering Committee reviewed workgroup recommendations independently, as well as more formally at two in-person retreats in February and April of 2018. During these retreats, two groups of collaborators outside of the committee were identified to help craft a final report.

Ten library professionals were selected from a pool of applicants to be Core Recommendation Collaborators (CRC). The Steering Committee selected the members of the CRC based on geographic area and type of library to attempt to instill diverse thought into the process. The CRC worked with the Steering Committee on developing and testing overarching models of governance that could accommodate the workgroup report recommendations. This work was facilitated by Russell Consulting and took place during two all day meetings.

The findings of this work was shared with the library community and officially made available for public comment from June 11 to July 20. All public comments were compiled by WiLS and made available to Steering Committee and CRC members.

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3 Originally two workgroups, merged as overlap was identified.
4 Originally two workgroups, merged as overlap was identified.
A Model Recommendation Summit was held July 30-31 with XX participants joining the Steering Committee and CRC members to further test and discuss the model of governance. At the conclusion of the Summit, XX areas of consensus were identified.

The Steering Committee reconvened in person on August 16, to discuss the outcomes of the Summit and to begin to form concrete recommendations. Steering committee members were individually tasked with drafting concrete recommendations for review by the larger committee. A small writing subcommittee worked to refine the initial drafts and shared their progress with the Steering Committee
Directives Gleaned from the Library Community through the Recommendation Development Process

The process of developing the recommendations contained in this report was robust. A wide range of stakeholder groups were consulted for feedback. Library directors, library staff, system directors, system staff, library and system board trustees, county officials, as well as past and present DPI officials were all involved in the process. Large amounts of project documentation were made available to these stakeholder groups, and feedback was received from individuals and boards at the library, system and county levels. The Recommendation development process culminated in a summit-style meeting, followed by a final public comment period on the content derived from that summit. The amount of feedback received by the Steering Committee was both significant and prescriptive. An effort was therefore made to distill key directives expressed by the community at-large.

Service improvements must 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 serve, or their location within the state”. Any service improvements moving forward must fulfill this principle and ultimately benefit the end-user, the library patron.

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

Take action now on recommendations with robust support. The specific areas mentioned above represent areas of greatest need for libraries; areas that would provide immediate, positive impact on service to Wisconsin residents. With the Workgroup reports serving as frameworks for improvements, action must be taken quickly and purposefully. Some of the Workgroup recommendations require more significant changes in order to affect service improvement. For example, state-scale implementation of a service such as technology would require changes to governance structures, funding, administration, and would require widespread support from the library community.

It became clear throughout
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the
Recommendation Development Process that organic, non-mandated change should lead improvements forward.

Service improvements must be soundly-implemented. Implementation of service improvements must be driven by effective research, planning, execution, and change-management. Implementation should also be supported by adequate resources. The library community expressed concerns about how administration, funding, and governance might change with proposed service improvements. 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, how local relationships will be maintained or developed, as well as evidence of how efficiencies will be gained.

Potential Unintended Consequences Should Be Anticipated and Studied
Tweak and add content later.
Recommendation 1 - Develop System Standards, Best Practices, and **Accountability**

Recommendation

Establish mandatory system standards to ensure equitable delivery of services to **member libraries** in all parts of the state.

Create a formal mechanism for library systems to define best practices outside of system standards and make those best practices available to all library systems in the state.

Summary

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, systems may collaborate and/or consolidate in order to provide the level of service the standards would represent.

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. . .

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)
It is also recognized that there are best practices in operating a library system that should not be necessarily addressed through formal standards but would be valuable in standardizing for further study and improvement of library systems in the future. For example:

- **Accounting Standards**

  The system business managers working with the 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.

- **Consulting Services**

  It is recommended that a team of system directors/consultants representing the 16 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.

- **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.

The creation of a formal mechanism to define best practices and standardization of data collection would better allow Wisconsin library systems to review the impact of the PLSR process on state residents as well as continue to improve system services into the future.

**Value Proposition**

Library services in the state are currently delivered to member libraries on an inequitable basis. Member libraries are often unaware of system standards and often systems use their best judgement in delivering services that may or may not be viewed as standard system services in other parts of the state. In 2013, SRLAAW created a set of voluntary standards to help with this, but service inequity continues. Creating mandatory standards would establish a baseline to ensure every library in the state has consistent expectations of service from their system. This will better enable local libraries to utilize local funding to augment system services in a way that best serves their community.

A substantial amount of time was spent during the PLSR process in gathering disparate data from systems to analyze system services and make recommendations for improvements. Sharing best practices and standard reporting practices between systems will better allow for
the measuring the success of PLSR recommendations as well as making further analysis and improvements possible. In addition, especially with financial data, standardization will reduce the time required for mandatory reporting for all systems. Libraries will also be able to compare system services easily, allowing libraries to easily identify and correct inequities of service delivery that may arise in the future.

Feedback on PLSR Version 6 Steering Report Draft of 11-07-2018

This feedback is in the form of footnotes in the above document. I also have some overarching comments.

In my opinion, the PLSR process has suffered from significant flaws, and the unwillingness or inability of the Steering Committee, and both consultant firms to address those. Feedback from the community has been welcomed when it indicates agreement, but valid concerns about the process have been ignored. On May 1, I sent a letter to one of the Co-chairs, in lieu of a survey response, and it was eventually shared with the remainder of the Steering Committee. It expressed most of the same concerns that are listed below, such as a lack of scientific method, sloppy data gathering, conclusions being drawn from insufficient or wrong information, etc. That was never discussed and no changes were made. This Version 6 document attempts to paint the recommendations as flowing from a strong source, but they do not.

The recommendations all suffer from the authors’ propensity to make sweeping unsupported statements and to ignore large questions that must be answered. The recommendation to reduce the number of systems, for example, states that large savings would result. We don’t know that. We also don’t know that services would improve. The recommendation for a discovery layer completely ignores the essential question of how demand management would be handled (Do holds for residents of the community whose library purchased the item always go to the top of the holds list?) The devil is always in the details and details are completely lacking in this report.

a It would be helpful to note who performed the survey, who was surveyed, and the date.

b Suggest rephrasing. One doesn’t generally recommend a need.

c “Could” is probably not the best word choice as its meanings include both “having the possibility of” and “being capable of.” We don’t know if the latter is true at this point, so substituting “might possibly” would be more precise.
e  I don’t know what this phrase (verified by DPI) is trying to convey.

f  It would be nice to see the COLAND vision statements presented in parallel construction (unless this is how their report read.)

g  Did COLAND want to maximize resources and funding (get more of both) or maximize the efficiency of use of resources and funding?

h  In what way does this PLSR report meet the goal of using only the tax dollars provided? That should be addressed since the report is trying to say it’s based on COLAND.

i  Was this the exact charge? Whatever the charge was, it should be quoted, and if too long, it should be summarized with the full charge in a footnote or Appendix. Note, also, that the SOPI’s charge, not COLAND’s vision, is what PLSR was to work from. During the PLSR process, the COLAND vision was at times held up as a directive. It was not; the SOPI’s charge was the directive.

j  Adding “and remained on the committee” adds clarity to this statement.

k  Is that accurate wording? Maximize investment, not efficiency or maximizing output/results?

l  This is the first time workgroups have been mentioned. The reader is left wondering what those are. I believe workgroups came after the project manager RFP, so they probably don’t need to be mentioned here.

m  Communication was lacking in crucial ways. Some examples:

- Despite more than one request, items added to the website were never tagged to make them searchable. A search of the word “survey” delivers every call for community members to complete surveys but none of the survey results. The words “results,” “comments,” “feedback,” and “letters” (just as some examples) pull up nothing on the website. While some information was pushed to the community, other information was buried in the website structure and lack of access.

- Letters sent to the Steering Committee were not read into the record of any meetings and were only acknowledged as being received when community members demanded that be done. Communication is two-way, yet when letters were finally acknowledged individually as being received, not one Steering Committee member had a single comment on any of them.

- The most important meetings, such as the two Stevens Point summits, were not audio-recorded or made available remotely. Recording what was happening in each breakout
group would have been very difficult but recording the full-group discussions and the facilitation to conclusions was quite possible.

- It’s agreed that in-person meetings are more productive than virtual meetings but this should not have meant that members of the library community had to choose between traveling long distances or not knowing what was happening at the in-person meetings; virtual attendance could have been offered. In some cases, such as the Sun Prairie wrap-up meeting for the Steering Committee, virtual attendance was not made available to the community, so some traveled to the meeting only to find that a committee members was participating via GoToMeeting.

- There were long waiting periods between a meeting and the posting of its recording and minutes online. The minutes of the Chapter 43 subcommittee meeting with past library leaders have never been posted.

- With this particular response opportunity for the Version 6 report, the response form greatly limits the number of words possible. I inquired about how to send a longer response and was told how to do that; my suggestion of letting the rest of the community know the same information was ignored.

Openness and trust were lacking from some of the Steering Committee and summit participants. Expressions of concern about the process or its interim conclusions were regularly viewed and labeled as “resistant,” “hijacking the agenda” and other pejoratives. Those who exercised their professional responsibility (and met their library board’s expectations) by attending the Stevens Point summits were viewed with hostility, even when they did not speak. The sense that was promulgated was one of “they don’t belong here; they’re troublemakers.” Attendees at these events were criticized by some participants as representing “inequity” because they could “afford” to be there instead of welcomed as informed and participatory colleagues who would in many cases be working nights and weekends to make their absences from their libraries work. From the beginning, the PLSR process has entailed casting aspersions on anyone asking questions or challenging ideas. This hostility and the uneven communication discussed earlier have led to mistrust of the process by some in the community.

Information and data was used, but as detailed in a May, 2018 letter to the Steering Committee, the quality of both was greatly lacking due to poor survey methodology and inadequate or inappropriate information-gathering. This is important to take into consideration when reading the conclusions and recommendations.

It’s unfortunate that the quality of workgroup recommendations suffered because outside expertise was almost never sought. Take delivery, for example. It would have made sense to engage several logistics firms to map out the best delivery option, and to compare their
recommendations for common themes. That wasn’t done. The phrasing of this principle (“Outside expertise will add credibility”) implies that outside expertise was viewed by the Steering Committee as something that would bolster conclusions rather than something that would inform decisions and recommendations.

This phrase could be removed as redundant.

According to participants in several of the workgroups, the groups were also instructed to think big and not to worry about details of budget or implementation because those would be considered later. This should be noted in the discussion of workgroup instructions because it resulted in workgroup products which were substantially different than they would have been had details been considered. Reading the feedback received on these reports through survey results (that I cannot locate on the PLSR website without a link sent in an e-mail from the Co-chair) shows that the reports are missing huge amounts of crucial information, as would be expected given the directive the participants received, and are far from complete. The first three sections of this document (Background, Process, and Directives) seek to portray the workgroup reports as well researched and well reasoned but feedback from the library community via the survey indicates otherwise. Repeatedly stating that the workgroup recommendations are “thoughtful and in-depth” is misleading and does not change the fact that they quite honestly are not. Here is the survey response link:


This is another case in which the survey responses were never discussed.

Differences in services provided by library systems to their member libraries were at times noted by workgroups, and were labeled “inequities” but no background information was obtained to ascertain whether these differences were simply different choices of service provision or represented true inequities in terms of patron access to services. Context was lacking.

More importantly, “equity of access for citizens” was not defined, which made it impossible to properly identify the lack thereof. What does access mean in this study? Does it mean that all patrons have the ability to borrow items from across the entire state (regardless of whether they can use a statewide catalog)? If so, that already exists. Does it mean that patrons all have the ability to borrow e-materials? That already exists? Does it mean that if library system A provides marketing assistance to its member libraries that library system B must also do so? If so, how does that relate to equity of patron access? Does it mean that if system A pays for the member libraries’ ILS but doesn’t provide centralized cataloging or a building consultant, while system B member libraries pay for their ILS and get centralized cataloging
In addition, no discussion took place and no research was done to determine whether it is realistic to expect state funding provided to library systems (equal to just 6% of total library funding in the state) to be able to result in equity of access to service for all patrons.

Feedback was solicited, but the community was never informed of whether the feedback was discussed and how it affected decisions. In listening to Steering Committee virtual meetings, I did not hear discussion of specific feedback, so I’m unaware of how it could have been considered. Such discussion was notably missing. Surveys were taken and their results not discussed. A good example is the survey about the workgroup reports. The community’s understanding of that survey was that it was meant to be used to work with the workgroups to help them refine their reports by addressing concerns itemized in the survey. Nothing at all appears to have been done with the survey results and that was the end of the workgroups’ output. It came as a surprise, then, when workgroup reports were treated as complete at the CRC and Summit meetings. Despite the statement that a “directive” expressed “by the community at large” was that “Workgroup reports should be used as a framework for specific service improvements.” (page 8)

Public comment sessions were restricted to 15 minutes at major events such as the WLA conferences, and Stevens Point CRC and Summit. Feedback was sought by the Chapter 43 workgroup from past library leaders and the minutes of that meeting have never been made public.

Feedback received via surveys was repeatedly addressed in a dismissive fashion at meetings, as the facilitator of the Summit and some on the Steering Committee made it a point to note that certain library systems were more heavily represented in the feedback. The facilitator further emphasized that “These are only the voices of those who have spoken.” An entity which truly values feedback as a means of improving its product does not dismiss that which is received by engaged and informed individuals (those who have spoken) but instead values that feedback and also finds ways to encourage those who are not engaged or informed to become so, and to participate.

Transparency requires explaining why this was done. The reader needs to understand that WiLS business model is to offer the types of services that some of the recommendations may point to. Also, the word “transition” may not be accurate unless this was a gradual process; it’s possible that “switched” might better describe the change.

This is inaccurate. The CRC members were told they would be developing models, but they did not do so. They were given two models which had already created by the Steering Co-chairs “and someone else who I can’t remember,” according to one of the Co-chairs. This statement should be corrected. Additionally, this section should include information that the CRC members asked
to be able to create models and were told that they could work individually to do so, outside of this two-day meeting, and that additional models would be due in one week. The fact that a third model resulted from this should be included in the narrative.

w When will their feedback be posted on the PLSR website for the community, or shared with the Steering Committee members? These leaders spoke at length with the Chapter 43 workgroup and it was reported at an LD&L meeting that they had much to offer. Since the minutes have never been posted, one can only assume that the 8 Steering Committee members who weren’t in attendance that day have never received the benefit of hearing the thoughts of our past library leaders; only the Steering Committee Co-chairs and DPI liaison were in attendance.

x What is this sentence trying to say? An amount can be significant but it cannot be prescriptive. Useful feedback is generally prescriptive, but how that relates to the next sentence “An effort...” isn’t clear.

y This was, indeed, the charge of PLSR. It’s somewhat embarrassing that a “robust process” was necessary to circle around and conclude that we should do what we were asked to do.

z Earlier in the document it is stated that only some were “experts” while others were users of the service or simply represented a certain area of the state or size of library. Consistency in this statement will be important.

aa How is “robust support” to be determined? This reads as though it has already been decided which have robust support, but we have yet to be presented with any detailed recommendations that include budget, governance, funding, etc. I would expect that “robust support” would need to include more than the very low number (in terms of the number of possible respondents in the state) of supportive comments in the workgroup recommendation survey.

ab An area cannot be guaranteed to “provide immediate, positive impact?” More importantly, the workgroup recommendations about these areas cannot unequivocally be said to do so, given the realities noted in footnote r. There are not enough details provided, research done, or pilots completed to tell us what the exact actions would be much less what their impact would be. Statements like this are unfounded.

ac Why? This is such an urgent-sounding statement and no reason is given for the haste.

ad Do you mean “effect?” Either way, the implication in this sentence is that the other workgroup reports do effect service improvement, but in some cases that has merely been stated, not determined.

ae How does this report reflect that? It would be helpful to flesh out this concept.
Regarding the directive to “study” potential unintended consequences, it is probably more to the point to make plans to mitigate unintended consequences.

It’s not only the implementation of a “service improvement” (which should be called something else since no one knows if service is improved until after the fact) that should be driven by effective research, it’s the very concept of the new service or change in service delivery. It would be irresponsible to implement a service first and researching later.

I thought that the PLSR process was intended to accomplish all of these goals. Instead, the workgroup reports, these directives, and the following recommendations are all simply generalized thoughts with predominantly unsubstantiated claims.

This one’s hard to react to.

This should probably read “accountability structures” since you can’t develop accountability.

On page 6, and on page 8, the report states that it’s the patrons, not the libraries that should be getting equitable access to services. This is inconsistent with those statements.

Implementing mandatory system standards is a good idea if standards are well chosen. A case is made about the importance of doing so. It is stated that current funding probably won’t support that so the recommendation is simply that systems should merge. That’s quite a blithe statement. Why isn’t the recommendation to get the funding needed to make these important changes? Funding is assumed in later recommendations, so why not here for arguably the most important recommendation? This focus on system mergers does not belong in a recommendation for implementing standards.

This does not fit the definition of a value proposition.

Throughout this document and the entire process, the word “inequitable” has been misused. Some systems pay for their libraries’ ILS, in others the ILS is funded by the libraries. Is that inequitable or just different? Inequitable situations have not been clearly identified and examined.

At this point, I have 6 pages of comment on 13 pages of the report, and I’ve run out of time to continue in a specific fashion. I cannot support this report as it currently stands.