

Minimum Standards Discussion – Status Report 2/1/17

PULISDO and DLD have been working together to explore updating the NYS Minimum Standards for Public Libraries.

An ad hoc committee made up of public library system directors and staff, which was appointed by PULISDO, had several discussions with DLD. The committee also gathered several rounds of feedback at the public library system level regarding minimum standards. The committee used this feedback and its own discussions to inform the development a revised set of minimum standards which were submitted to PULISDO in the fall of 2016. PULISDO is now sharing these revised standards with the Public Library Systems to engage their member libraries in a wider discussion on the concepts that are presented. There will also be a statewide survey as part of this process, which will be designed to gather measurable feedback on the concepts put forth.

Below please find the current thinking on what a revised set of minimum standards for public libraries might look like. Please note that these are not recommendations from PULISDO at this point. They are being shared with you for your review, reaction, and comment in an effort to better understand how these revisions could impact public libraries across NYS.

1) **By-Laws**

Current Standard: is governed by written bylaws which outline the responsibilities and procedures of the library board of trustees

Proposed Revised Standard: is governed by board-approved written bylaws which define the structure and governing functions of the library board of trustees; reviewed and re-approved at least once every 3 years or as required by changes in law

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed edits: Language matches the Trustee Handbook and reinforces that the bylaws are a policy and should be reviewed periodically.

2) **Long-Range Plan**

Current Standard: has a board-approved, written long-range plan of service

Proposed Revised Standard: the library board and staff develop a board-approved, written plan of service that covers a three to five year period

PULISDO Committee Explanation for Proposed Edits:

- A healthy planning process needs to include community, staff and board input
- Clarity on duration of the life of a plan was requested by multiple PULISDO members
- Change standard name to Plan of Service to update language used in practice and throughout this document.

3) **Annual Report to the Community**

Current Standard: presents an annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its goals and objectives

Proposed Revised Standard: Provides a board-approved, written annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its mission, goals and objectives.

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed edits: Provides rather than presents clarifies the intent of having an accessible annual report to the community

4) **Policies**

Current Standard: has board-approved written policies for the operation of the library

Proposed Revised Standard: has board-approved written policies for the operation of the library; reviewed at least every 3 years or as required by law or changes in law

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed edits: in response to multiple requests from PULISDO members the committee recommends it be clarified that policies need to be reviewed regularly

5) **Written Budget**

Current Standard: presents annually to appropriate funding agencies a written budget which would enable the library to meet or exceed these standards and to carry out its long-range plan of service

Proposed Revised Standard: prepares a board-approved, written budget that is provided annually to appropriate funding entities, which would enable the library to meet or exceed these standards and to carry out its plan of service

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed edits: in response to multiple requests from PULISDO members the committee recommends it be clarified that the budget needs to be provided to funders and the means to do so is at the discretion of the library. Public library votes already provide a budget to the public and that would satisfy this standard.

6) **Evaluation of Collections and Services**

Current Standard: periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's collection and services in meeting community needs

Proposed Revised Standard: periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the library's programs, services and collections in meeting community needs in the context of the library's plan of service

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed edits: none

7) **Hours**

Current standard: is open the following scheduled hours:

Population Minimum Weekly Hours Open

<i>Up to 500</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>500-2499</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>2,500-4,999</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>5,000-14,999</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>15,000-24,999</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>25,000-99,999</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>100,000 and above</i>	<i>60</i>

Proposed Revised Standard: No change to Standard #7: Hours is recommended at this time

PULISDO Committee Comments: None

8) **Facilities**

Current Standard: maintains a facility to meet community needs, including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, and restroom

Proposed Revised Standard: maintains a facility that meets community needs, including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, wiring infrastructure, public restrooms [and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities.]*

*NOTE – DLD has informed PULISDO that the NYSED Office of Council will not approve any reference to a specific law in the minimum standards

PULISDO Committee Explanation for Proposed Edits: We have added “wiring” to address the age of many library buildings in NYS and the need to provide the infrastructure to support devices and broadband wiring; removed broadband as it is covered in Standard #9; and were more pointed in the stated accessibility standard of the ADA to make it clear all libraries need to meet the requirements of ADA. Having an accessible bathroom without an accessible building is moot and libraries should be looking at the big picture to be ADA compliant.

9) **Equipment and Connections**

Current Standard: provides equipment and connections to meet community needs including, but not limited to telephone, photocopier, tele facsimile capability, and microcomputer or terminal with printer to provide access to other library catalogs and other electronic information

Proposed Revised Standard: provides an automated circulation system that facilitates integrated online access to the local library collection and other library catalogs; provides

equipment, technology and high-speed broadband meeting community needs and facilitating access to information

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed edits:

- 21st Century Libraries should be automated. automated ILS-Improved customer service by having access to all system library collections. Protect customers from identity theft issues by no longer using checkout cards with PULISDO Subcommittee: Minimum Standards Review & Recommendation recorded personal info. Vastly improve lending service communication between libraries.
- We choose less prescriptive language than DLD's version so regulatory language won't become outdated as frequently and stressed the importance of basic tech choices on local community needs.

10) Library Information

Current Standard: distributes printed information listing the library's hours open, borrowing rules, services, location and phone number.

Proposed Revised Standard: (proposed combination of current #10 with new DLD proposal #11 for "online presence") – provides access to current library information in print and online facilitating the understanding of library services, operations, and governance. (Information provided online will include items referenced under standards 1 through 5)

PULISDO Subcommittee explanation for proposed edits: Combining #10 & #11 addresses accessing library information in print or online methods. Regulatory language reinforces compliance with standards 1-5.

11) SEE #10 ABOVE

12) Paid Director

Current Standard: employs a paid director in accordance with the provisions of Section 90.8 of this Part.

Proposed Revised Standard: No recommendation at this time

PULISDO Subcommittee comment: There was consensus that educational standards are important for library leadership, yet there were diverging viewpoints about how this should be reflected in regulation, including:

- Some feel the lowest education level should be a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Some advocate that a category for populations of 1 million+ should be added.
- Some feel an alternate compliance path that acknowledges the value of life skills should be added.
- Some see a need for a complete overhaul of the standard.

- Some were extremely concerned about the perceived inequities in the use of the variance process related to this standard which is felt to treat smaller communities unfairly compared to the variance granted for the Queens Public Library.

13) Technology Training

Current Standard: N/A - this is a new DLD proposed standard which requires that libraries provide all library staff and volunteers with at least ten hours of technology training annually

Proposed Revised Standard: all public service staff must complete a minimum of eight hours of technology training annually

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed edits: The committee reduced the number of hours in the DLD proposed standard from ten to eight which would be the equivalent of two hours per quarter, which seems more reasonable.

14) Trustee Education

Current Standard: N/A - this is a new DLD proposed standard which requires that libraries provide all library board members, including ex-officio board members, with at least three hours of trustee training annually

Proposed Revised Standard: All library board members, including ex-officio board members, must complete at least three hours of trustee education annually

PULISDO Subcommittee explanation for proposed edits:

- Prefer “education” to the word “training.”
- Feel the emphasis should be on the receipt of education by trustees rather than a library’s provision of educational opportunities.
- Suggest the purpose of trustee education be moved to the Helpful Information doc for consistency.

15) Programming

Current Standard: N/A - this is a new DLD proposed standard which requires that libraries provide library programs and services to meet community needs for youth including, but not limited to, regular early literacy programs, summer learning support, homework help and outreach to teens

Proposed Revised Standard: provides children, teens and adults library programs meeting community needs as outlined in the library’s plan of service

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed edits:

- Committee feels that youth programming is not the only programming that should be a minimum standard.

- Rather than prescriptive program types, local programming should be based on a local community's needs
- Suggest that the Creating the Future recommendations related to desired outcomes from programs (beyond just #27) should be highlighted in the Helpful Information document on the NYSL web site

Note – DLD feels strongly that there is a need for a specific standard addressing youth programs and services.

16) Collaborations and partnerships

Current Standard: N/A - this is a DLD proposed new standard which requires that libraries collaborate or partner with at least one other education, cultural or community organization to develop one or more of the following: community engagement, economic development, literacy initiatives, promotion of cultural understanding, and/or protection of a local historical or cultural treasure.

Proposed Revised Standard: collaborates or partners with educational, cultural or community organization

PULISDO Subcommittee Explanation for Proposed Edits:

- Collaborations or partnerships should be based on local community needs, explanation of the standard should be included in the Helpful Information document on the NYSL web site for consistency

17) System Membership

Current Standard: N/A - this is a DLD proposed new standard which requires libraries to be a member in good standing of the public library system established under the provisions of Education Law 272 to serve the county in which the library is located.

Proposed Revised Standard: No proposed changes to DLD proposed standard

PULISDO Subcommittee comments: None

18) Financial Audits

Current Standard: N/A - this is a DLD proposed new standard which requires libraries to provide for an independent audit or review of the library's finances according to the following schedule:

- An annual audit, if the library's total revenue is \$500,000 or more.
- An annual audit review, if the library's total revenue is \$250,000, or more, but is less than \$500,000.
- An audit review every other year, if the library's total annual revenue is less than \$250,000.

Proposed Revised Standard: No recommendation at this time

PULISDO Subcommittee comments: There was consensus that financial transparency and accountability is a good idea, yet there were diverging viewpoints about how to get there which included:

- Go with DLD’s proposed language but a) ensure all libraries have to do “something” annually or b) use a lower threshold to \$100,000 triggering an annual review.
- Impose no regulatory standard related to audits.
- Suggested that it be addressed via legislation as it is for nonprofits, ideally tied with additional funding to underwrite this level of accountability.

Note – DLD recommends that this need will be best addressed through other regulations and not through the minimum standards.

19) Professional Development

Current Standard: N/A - this standard was proposed by the PULISDO ad hoc Committee as an additional standard for consideration

Proposed PULISDO Standard: All librarians who hold a NYS public library certificate and library directors and library managers pursuant to §90.8 will complete at least 60 hours of professional development every 5 years

PULISDO Committee explanation for proposed additional standard: Libraries are institutions of education. Other standards and regulation address professional development standards for trustees, staff who provide assistance with technology and those professional librarians who were certified post-2010. This standard addresses the current gap to require professional development for the leaders of our institutions: library directors and managers (regardless of whether or not they have a MLS or, if they do hold a MLS, when they were certified as public librarians as well as those certified public librarians who received their certification pre-2010. Managing the day-to-day complexity of running a library requires keeping up with trends and issues to better serve the community, regardless the location or size of the community. This standard would provide alignment with current state professional development for newly certified librarians.

Note – DLD recommends that this need will be best addressed through other regulations and not through the minimum standards.