Rural Schools and Libraries

Kurt Kiefer
Kurt.kiefer@dpi.wi.gov

Martha Berninger
martha.berninger@dpi.wi.gov

Ryan Claringboele
ryan.claringboele@dpi.wi.gov

John DeBacher
john.debacher@dpi.wi.gov

Ben Miller
benjamin.miller@dpi.wi.gov
Aspen Report

- **Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries**
- To meet the changing needs of a digital age, libraries must leverage their 3 core assets:
  - People
  - Place
  - Platform
- Framework encourages libraries to broaden the amount of resources offered while maintaining a local presence.
- Focused on aligning library services to support community goals.
Aspen Report

• “The challenges have been particularly acute for small libraries, those in rural communities [...] where limited budgets make access to e-books and upgrades to high-speed broadband difficult despite high community need for and interest in both.” (xi)
• “City library systems have many more users per year than rural, town or suburban libraries, and thus have different costs to cover, but all libraries need the same outcomes: high speed broadband that meets the needs of every library user and is not dependent on one’s zip code.” (50)
• “In some cases, notably in small cities and rural areas, libraries struggle to keep up because of extremely limited and unpredictable funding.” (52)
• “Support rural and small libraries to ensure that all residents have access to world-class resources regardless of where they live.” (64)
• “Structure grant opportunities in ways that small and rural libraries can take advantage of them; for example, not always emphasizing cutting-edge technology.” (65)
Aspen Report

Recommendations for the special case of rural and small communities:

- Explore regional models to create economies of scale
- Maximize grant opportunities
- Create connections for librarians to share models and lessons
- Become part of larger library platforms that provide access to larger bodies of content
ILEAD USA

- Leadership development with a focus on participatory technology tools.
- Worked in partnership with 9 other states, led by the Illinois State Library.
- Six teams, each consisting of five librarians (multitype)
  - Each team focused on a project to address a specific community need.
- One of the participants was Amanda Burns, former director of the Suring Public Library. Her team’s project was a website and framework to encourage collaboration between public libraries and schools.
Public Library Systems: Background

• Wisconsin’s regional library systems began 40 years ago to enhance services and encourage resource sharing among public libraries.

• Legislation has been updated, but composition and service structure has remained fairly constant.

• Meanwhile, technology has affected the context in which libraries operate.

• In 2015, the Division conducted efficiency and cost-effectiveness studies, reviewed by COLAND.

• COLAND recommended that the Superintendent appoint a steering committee to make specific recommendations.
Public Library System Redesign

- Ten person steering committee appointed
- Project Manager selected from proposals
- Project Work Groups selected from library community
- Town Hall Forum on May 12 at professional conference in Oshkosh
- Federal LSTA grant funds allocated to support project & development of recommendations
- Recommendations may require legislation
- Goal: Achieve a more efficient and effective structure & more consistent, equitable public library services
Digital Public Library of America

- **DPLA** can share the unique stories of rural communities with people from across the street and around the world.
- It offers a single point of access to millions of items from local, state and national libraries, archives, and museums.
- DPI is on the Wisconsin DPLA governing board.
- Wisconsin’s “hub” will go live early this summer.

*Image of school in Ringle, WI, 1949* from the Libraries and Schools in Lincoln and Marathon Counties collection, supported in part by LSTA grants and soon to be discoverable through DPLA.
Common School Funds

- Common School Funds (CSF) are typically the only source of funding for public school libraries in communities across the state.

- **Board of Commissioners of Public Lands** (BCLP) just reported Wisconsin school districts will receive $37.7 million or $31.78 per student in Common School Funds.

- CSF are allocated to public school districts based on student population.

- **BCPL Trust Fund Loan Program** offers fixed rate loans to municipalities through a simple process with no application or pre-payment penalty fees.

- DPI is launching a comprehensive new CSF website in early May,
School Library Media Licensing Update

• Creating a more accessible path to licensure should help rural districts to “grow their own.”

• The goal is to maintain high standards that fit the role as it exists now and in the future, while reducing the time and cost of attaining the license.

• DPI has draft content guidelines which are under community review.

• In June the Professional Standards Council will review.

• State Superintendent Tony Evers will review prior to implementation.
Lifelong Learning Support for Job Seekers

• DPI and the statewide library community agree that not every public library, on its own, can build and maintain robust support for job seekers.

• Public libraries and DPI’s RL&LL team are co-creating a Job Seeker’s Support portal.

• Any public or school library can link to it or load the content to its own website.

• This will make it easy for rural school and public libraries to better serve the job search needs of their communities.

• We WELCOME your ideas
Lifelong Learning Support for Job Seekers

• 60 public and school libraries have completed surveys.

• 150+ web-based resources were recommended by partners.

• DPI is holding feedback sessions with libraries to get more ideas.

• The website will include help on setting up an email account, BadgerLink tools like Learning Express Library, and local newspapers from rural areas.

• Connections with job centers and DWD are being strengthened.
Lifelong Learning Support for Job Seekers

• DPI and Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND) raised awareness of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

• DPI and SRLAAW (Directors of Public Library Systems and Resource Libraries) have raised awareness.

• WIOA Plans filed by Workforce Development Boards - recently submitted to DWD.
offers high-quality content to everyone

- All Wisconsin residents can connect to BadgerLink from any computing device connected to the internet.
- Offers local newspapers from many Wisconsin communities.
- Includes tools to build computer software and job search skills.
- Content for all age groups covering most school subject areas.
- Genealogy tools offer insights into family and local history.

- BadgerLink connects to military families - featured on DPI’s Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.
- Local libraries are highlighted monthly.
Interlibrary Loan

- Rural libraries have access to specialized materials outside of their local collection.
- DPI’s Interlibrary Loan staff refer Interlibrary Loan requests that cannot be filled in Wisconsin to give rural libraries access to materials nationwide.
- Catalog records can be quickly and easily incorporated into a library’s catalog using WISCAT, the state’s Interlibrary Loan software. These high quality records help library users discover materials on the shelf at their library.
Interlibrary Loan

• Interlibrary loan gives rural schools access to the broadest possible collection of library materials.

• Educators often request multiple copies of books for class discussion. School libraries don’t have to spend funds purchasing multiple copies.

• College students that use Interlibrary Loan at high volumes have a GPA 1.43 higher than students who don’t take advantage of Interlibrary Loans.

• Interlibrary Loan can also supply journal articles. In rural areas where broadband is limited, students can still have offline access to BadgerLink-like content.

• Distance college students living in rural areas can take advantage of ILL using their public library.
School Access to e-Books

- Ebook collections can make it easy for school districts to provide more materials to students without increasing the size of the library.

- They also reduce the risk and cost of lost books - students, parents and schools love that.

- School librarians have been talking with DPI about this since 2013.

- Multiple surveys have revealed needs and preferences.

- WiLS (Wisconsin-based school and library consulting firm) is leading the process.
School Access to e-Books

• In December, 2014, WiLS shared a report summarizing their project research.

• In March, 2016, WiLS convened a “Think Tank.”

• Think Tank attendees reviewed school e-book purchasing models used in other states, and agreed on the mandatory and critical features of a school e-book purchasing model for Wisconsin.

• School library staff provided more feedback at the recent Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association conference.

• DPI will be meeting with WiLS soon to review recommendations.
Stay Connected with DPI’s RL&LL and PLD teams

- DPI RL&LL Website: http://dpi.wi.gov/rl3
- DPI PLD Website: http://dpi.wi.gov/pld
- WI Libraries blog
- BadgerLink outreach materials
- Google+ Communities
  - Library Services
  - Library Technology
  - School Library Media