

System Standards Committee

Aug. 28, 2008

Illinois State Library

Attendance

All members of the committee were present.

Charge of the Standards Committee

The committee, representing the statewide library community, is charged with reviewing and revising the service standards for the regional library systems. The committee members will seek broad-based input into the future key roles and responsibilities for library systems through a variety of methods throughout their work.

The Illinois System Act and administrative rules (23 Ill. Adm. Code 3030)

Administrative rules derive from statute. Nothing may be placed in the rules that supercedes or contradicts the law. A staff committee is reviewing the system rules in their entirety, and input will be sought from the library community. In order to garner ongoing support from the library community, the new Standards Committee agreed to follow a strategy of getting broad consensus on issues and then work down to more narrow issues. Since the committee is not starting from scratch as the original system standards committee did, the entire process of drafting the revised standards and incorporating them into the system rules is anticipated to take 12-18 months.

Rulemaking Procedures

After the amendments to the rules are written, they are submitted to the Secretary of State Index Department and published as proposed rules in the *Illinois Register*. Following a 45-day public comment period, the Second Notice version is submitted to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). The Second Notice version includes acceptable changes suggested by JCAR, the Administrative Code Division and other interested parties. The rules are then placed on the JCAR agenda and, if approved, may be submitted for publication as adopted to the Code Division.

Report of Secretary of State's Executive Inspector General

Nathan Maddox reported that the Inspector General's audit of the library systems did not find anything illegal, but there were inconsistencies and items such as some travel expenditures that are not acceptable under state guidelines. This raises the issue of accountability since there is not systematic auditing and reporting of the \$18 million annual expenditure of systems from the Secretary of State's budget. Somewhat comparable entities to the library systems are the Regional Offices of Education (ROEs). A few years ago an audit by the Illinois Auditor General (AG) nearly resulted in the elimination of the ROEs. The AG's audit found the ROEs had loose or no accountability, management control or audit compliance. While an AG audit of the library systems has not been done, the possibility exists. A revision of the system standards and rules is an opportunity to develop clean compliance controls and reporting procedures that would withstand public scrutiny. Issues that need to be addressed include standardizing travel reimbursements under the state guidelines; and the fees related to continuing education

events that are being put on with state tax dollars. By and large, systems are doing the best they can with the dollars available to them, but steps need to be taken to protect all the library systems and to take them out of the spotlight that comes with an audit that finds questionable record keeping or spending.

System Funding, Governance, Plans of Service and Expectations

The Secretary of State funds the library systems based on area and per capita formula. The Illinois State Library reviews and approves the plans of service submitted by the library systems. After approval, funds are distributed to the systems and the library systems' boards are specified in statute to direct the spending after the money is received from the Secretary of State. State Library Director Anne Craig indicated that, because some of the standards are out of date or not applicable, the Illinois State Library is approving plans that are not tied to the current standards. It is necessary to have a set of standards that funding is based upon. The library systems' plans of service do indicate much good is being done. Systems are critical to delivery of services to libraries in the state; but a single inconsistency could undermine the good being done. The Secretary of State Office has no intention of shutting down the systems, but it is difficult to envision how the systems will prosper and continue in an unfettered way based on the current framework. A totally transparent and accountable structure is needed.

Director Craig expressed the expectation of the Secretary of State and the Illinois State Library that the revised standards will identify the minimal level of system services for every library, regardless of geographical location. Additionally the Secretary of State's grant would be earmarked to support those minimal levels of service. A library system could provide services beyond the minimal level. For the expanded services, committee members were charged with using the revised standards to address how the services could be extended to constituents beyond the system that designed and launched the service. The standards should provide for consistent reporting, minimum levels of service and clarification on what the Secretary of State's system area and per capita grant supports. The standards committee should consider efficiencies gained with some services if systems join forces; committee members were asked to consider how the revised standards could encourage such cooperation and collaboration.

Assumptions and Roles for Systems in the Next 10 Years

The committee discussed assumptions guiding the development of the revised standards as well as roles for library systems in the next ten years. Draft documents based on the discussion will be sent to the committee in the next few weeks and will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The Standards Committee will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Oct. 9, 2008, at the Illinois State Library.

-----Notes by Joe Natale, Illinois State Library