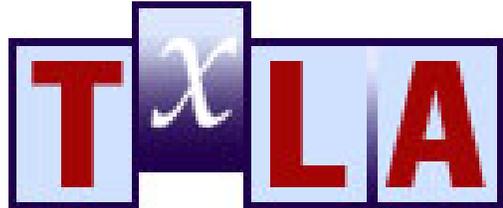


# Texas State Library and Archives Commission

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## **Report On the Implementation Of the Public Library Development Study**

*Joint TSLAC/TLA Task Force  
July 5, 2005*

## **Joint TSLAC/TLA Task Force on Implementation of the Public Library Development Study**

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In FY 2003, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission contracted with Himmel and Wilson Consultants to study a wide range of factors that impact the future of public library development in Texas and to make recommendations for future development based on their study. This study was completed in July 2003. The Texas State Library and Archives Commission in cooperation with the Texas Library Association appointed a joint Task Force to:

- Review and evaluate recommendations in the study
- Recommend to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission which study recommendations should be implemented, including priorities for implementation, a feasible timeline, and resources required
- Identify and report to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the Texas Library Association Executive Board and Legislative Committee any legislative issues related to public library development for the 2005 legislative session.

## Task Force Membership

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<b>Member</b>	<b>Library</b>
Julie Todaro, Task Force Chair	Austin Community College
Barry Bishop, Librarian	Spring Branch Independent School District
Brenda Branch, Director	Austin Public Library
Ricki Brown, Director	Abilene Public Library
Diana Cox, Commissioner	TSLAC Liaison
April Dillon, Director	Hemphill County Library
Martha Edmundson, Librarian	Denton Public Library TLA PLD Liaison
Barbara Buehler, Director	Allen Public Library
Alice Coleman, Director	Texarkana Public Library
Malinda Cowen	Beeville
Beth Fox, Director	Westbank Community Library
Barbara Gubbin, Director	Houston Public Library (now Jacksonville Public Library)
Doris Herrington, Director	Teague Public Library
Gwen Hopper, Director	Crowley Public Library
Linda Hughes, Director	Wichita Falls Public Library
Marilyn Johnson, Manager, CE and Consulting	TSLAC Liaison
Larry Justiss, Director	Tom Green County Library System
Meller Langford-Allen, Coordinator	Houston Area Library System
Donna Littlejohn, Director	Amarillo Public Library
Deborah Littrell, Director,	Library Dev. Division TSLAC Liaison

Susan Mann, Director	Hillsboro City Library
Hollis McCright, Director	Howard County Library
Margaret Nichols	Denton
Julie Ousley	New Braunfels

Eva Poole, Director	Denton Public Library TLA Board Liaison
Jim Przepasniak, Administrator	El Paso Public Library
Ruben Rendon, Director	Harlingen Public Library
Mary Rodne, Director	Colleyville Public Library
JoAnn Rogers, Director	Eules Public Library
Peggy Rudd, Director and Librarian	TSLAC Liaison
Ramiro Salazar, Director	Dallas Public Library (now San Antonio Public Library)
Pat Tuohy, Coordinator	Central Texas Library System
Janice Weber, Director	Laredo Public Library
Mary Kay Wells, Coordinator	Texas Panhandle Library System

## Project Timetable

May 2003	Rudd and Poole jointly appoint Task Force members.
July 2003	First meeting of Task Force at Annual Assembly
Fall 2003	Held additional meetings with constituents, stakeholders
November 7, 2003	Second meeting of Task Force
January 30, 2004	Third meeting of the Task Force
March 2004	<p>Submit DRAFT report to Texas State Library and Archives Commission and Texas Library Association Executive Board and Legislative Committee</p> <p>Draft report handed out at TLA annual conference. Hearing on report at TLA conference and 150 attended. Copies of “draft” report handed out at TLA in “Final” Appendices. Task Force asked to comment on drafts and distribute to constituencies. Comments gathered.</p>
March 2004	<p>Post-hearing Task Force meeting indicated based on hearing input. Three areas for change needed are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. consolidate “like” recommendations such as databases</li> <li>2. revisit recommendation on systems for consensus on final recommendations</li> <li>3. consolidate other “like” recommendations</li> </ol> <p>Small groups were appointed to address the changes needed.</p>
July 2004	<p>Task Force Meeting at TLA Annual Assembly</p> <p>No comments on draft documents were sent in from any Task Force members.</p> <p>Task Force members in attendance agreed to extend timeline to early fall. Small group representatives agreed to complete their recommendation area rewrites.</p>

October 2004	One small group reports back with work related to their area.
January 2005 – April 4th	Task Force Chair works on consolidating information as appropriate.
April 4th	Draft report emailed out/re-distributed for basis of comparison. New introduction is included.
April 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	Final Draft distributed by email to Task Force and to TSLAC email listserv of interested members. Report is distributed/posted to TSLAC website. Comments accepted for recommendations.
April 30 <sup>th</sup>	Suggestions taken/changes made as Task Force decides./Final report is posted to the Task Force list, submitted to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, and to the TLA Executive Board.

### Actual Time Table of Events

May 2003	Rudd and Poole jointly appoint Task Force members Set date for first meeting (members will be polled for May 30 or June 11, 2003)
July 2003	First meeting of Task Force at Annual Assembly/accept comments from the field
Fall 2003	Hold additional meetings with constituents, stakeholders/accept comments from the field
November 7, 2003	Second meeting of Task Force/accept comments from the field
January 30, 2004	Third meeting of the Task Force/accept comments from the field
March 2004	DRAFT report submitted to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and Texas Library Association Executive Board and Legislative Committee  Hearing on our report at TLA/comments taken/content posted to PLS listserv/accept comments from the field
April 2005	First Final Draft submitted to Joint Committee/TSLAC/TLA/accept comments from the field
April 2005 – June 2005	Comments accepted.
July 2005	Report submitted to Committee/TSLAC/TLA

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# Introduction

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This Report is designed to fulfill the charge of the Implementation Task Force to "review and evaluate recommendations" in the Public Library Development Study; "to recommend to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission which study recommendations should be implemented, including priorities for implementation, a feasible timeline, and resources required" and to "identify and report to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the Texas Library Association Executive Board and Legislative Committee any legislative issues related to public library development for 2005 legislative session" and beyond.

The first draft Report content included reviews and comments on all fifteen recommendations; however, at the time the first draft Report was distributed (TLA, March 2004) several recommendations did not have in-depth content as the TSLAC/TLA Standards Task Force had been scheduled to present in-depth information on standards issues (# 9 and #15) and the TLA Task Force on Resource Sharing had been scheduled to present in-depth information on resource sharing (#14.)

This final Report includes a number of ancillary documents in the Appendices created for the Report on the Study and related documents created by stakeholders as well as the original "drafts" created for each recommendation and distributed in March 2004.

Strengths of this final Report include:

- Broad input from the field that provides general opinion on the study
- Good research data in some areas provided for future work
- Data gathered includes data from stakeholders
- Related recommendations are combined
- Specific cost savings recommendations

Weaknesses of this final Report include:

- No consensus from the Task Force in some areas on directions for recommendations
- No consensus in the field in some areas on directions for recommendations

- Lack of input, data, and content from some Task Force Small Groups in some areas
- Recommendations add much additional work for major research/data gathering in several areas
- Failure of the Report to provide definitive “answers” or approaches to solutions on all recommendations
- Questions, future research alone provide a large amount of work for Texas entities

Data was gathered for the Report through:

#### Task Force (TF) General Work

Task Force work (membership list on page 3) took place over the listserv and through four meetings. Members were to attend meetings, participate in discussions; review and comment on listserv content; disseminate and encourage feedback on documents; share feedback received; participate in small groups and small group content design and discussion; attend, and as needed host and/or facilitate geographic/area Focus Groups.

#### Task Force Small Group (TFSG) Work

The TF was divided into smaller groups to discuss technology/databases, alternative administrative structures for public libraries, systems and standards. The responsibilities of smaller groups included discussion and recommendation on grouped recommendations (ex. all standards recommendations.) Small groups included members of the larger Task Force and additional people from the field.

#### Focus Groups (FG)

Focus groups were held throughout Texas, during some District meetings, during some system meetings and for targeted groups (ex. ILL librarians, staff development/system consultants.)

#### Hearings (H)

Open Hearings were held at Texas Library Association meetings and *Study* recommendations were discussed.

## Individuals (I)

A general listserv was established for comments. Listserv availability was advertised through the TSLAC website, through all Focus Groups and group meetings. Individuals joined the listserv and commented. Individuals also sent written comments to TF members, TFSG members and the TF chair.

*Study* recommendations were presented under the Study's five challenge objectives. Although *Study* recommendations were presented under these objectives, the Task Force grouped recommendation comments under related subject or content areas.

# Summary

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The Public Library Development Study offered five challenge areas, presented in objectives, in the future of Texas public libraries and then provided 15 recommendations for facing those challenges. This Report summary is an *outline* of response to those challenge areas and recommendations.

## Challenges/Objectives

Five objectives present the challenges faced by the Texas library community in seeking to improve library service. The objectives are:

1. Increase efficiency
2. Expand governance options
3. Increase funding
4. Improve cooperation and coordination
5. Adopt and implement higher standards

TF, Focus Group, Hearing members and individuals had few - if any - comments on the five general challenge areas of the Study listed. All comments taken on these challenges supported the inclusion of the objectives, however, several comments gathered centered around prioritizing the challenges to list “increase funding” first. Discussions centered around the fact that the cost savings discussed throughout the document could not – in fact – adequately provide the funding to support existing and future statewide initiatives, and that new monies were needed to shore up existing deficits and provide money for continuing services (such as databases) and increased services (such as more databases.) In addition, the TF recommended that “improve cooperation and coordination” be second, “adopt and implement higher standards” be third and “expand governance options” be fourth. If the Task Force were to suggest changes to the challenges/objectives for future planning it would be to reword “increase efficiency” and the best approach would be to reword it to something such as:

“Efficient and effective use of limited resources (dollars, staff, materials etc.)”

A TF decision was made - following the '04 TLA Hearing - to combine recommendations by general subject areas instead of challenge areas, however, initially, for this Summary, comments on the fifteen recommendations are summarized separately and in the order from the Study.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation # 1

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Texas should encourage and provide incentives for the formation of “larger units of service.”

- A. Combining libraries into larger or different units of service
- B. Multi-county administrative services
- C. Accomplish through incentive programs

*TF comments were supportive overall of the recommendation (#1) to encourage and provide incentives for the formation of larger units of service. Specific comments focused on critical research needed (on related Texas law and existing relationships) to identify incentives and benefits in general, but specific benefits beyond possible cost savings for both formal and informal service relationships.*

### Recommendation # 2

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Eliminate or reduce indirect charges applied to system grants.

Alternative governance structures (such as becoming a 501(c)(3) organization)

*TF comments are supportive of and positive about the known benefits of moving from an MRC model to a 501c3 model.*

Explore the imposition of a maximum allowable indirect percentage as a condition of awarding a system contract

*There was uniform support from the TF for the TSLAC investigating a maximum allowable indirect cost percent. .*

Competitive bidding process for hosting regional systems

*TF discussions were primarily skeptical on a possible bidding process due to perceived decreased benefits of communities hosting systems.*

### Recommendation # 3

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Reduce the number of system administrative units.

*This recommendation was the least popular and the most discussed of all recommendations by all groups and data gathering methods. No support for this overall recommendation was articulated by TF members or from the community in general.*

We believe that several different courses of action might be taken to address this situation. They are:

1. The continuation of ten regional offices operating under a reduced number of administrative hubs

*Data collected by the TF indicated that it is likely there were functions existing in systems that could be consolidated or shared - especially in the office management/business and accounting areas.*

2. The consolidation of the current 10 systems into 9 systems with significantly different boundaries. (with an attempt to equalize the number of libraries served by systems)

*No support for this section of the recommendation was articulated by TF members or through FG discussions. The community in general was not supportive of this recommendation section.*

3. The consolidation of the current 10 systems into 7 administrative units with up to 13 regional “presences.” The final scenario presented above would consolidate the ten systems into seven regions that would provide some service/staff presence in as many as 13 different locations. Following are the offices that would be paired under a seven-system plan: Amarillo & Lubbock; Abilene & Midland; Corpus Christi & McAllen; San Antonio & Austin; Houston & Lufkin or Nacogdoches; Dallas & Ft. Worth; and, El Paso.

*No support for this section of the recommendation was articulated by TF members or through FG discussions. General opinion was that - given current system funding levels or even moderately expanded levels - this would not be an economic or efficient support for Texas public libraries.*

#### Recommendation # 4

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Consider a significant reduction in the number of interlibrary loan “clearinghouses.”

Moving toward a significantly more centralized system of ILL

*No support for this recommendation was articulated by TF members or through FG discussions.*

#### Recommendation # 5

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TSLAC should explore the possibility of establishing a program that would enable libraries to gain the maximum benefit from the State’s program for leasing computers and computer peripherals.

*A statewide program for purchasing and leasing computers and computer peripherals is already in effect and has been in effect for many years in Texas through the Department of Information Resources (DIR). TF and FG discussions identified only a few public libraries that currently take advantage of this program.*

#### Recommendation # 6

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Encourage the exploration of the establishment of joint school-public libraries under inter local agreements in areas where stand-alone public libraries are unlikely to remain viable.

Encourage these service models

*TF members are overall supportive of this recommendation and of these types of environments, but urge that benchmark information be gathered and disseminated to support communities interested in assessing their existing environments or planning for new ones. FG discussions provided both positive and negative examples of joint-use environments and supported research on Texas successes and failures.*

## Recommendation # 7

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Encourage libraries that would benefit from current library district legislation to consider this course and work to expand library district legislation to allow for districts funded with property tax revenues.

*TF opinion is that this recommendation is very much supported and that TLA commit resources to support approved '05 legislative initiatives through committee work, task force work and research. FG's attendees are very interested in taxing district models..*

## Recommendation # 8

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Regional library systems should be encouraged to consider alternative governance structures.

Reexamination of the MRC host model

501(c) 3

Hosting of Systems by smaller libraries meeting the criteria for an MRC (although the quote from the Study was “Hosting of systems by medium-sized libraries” this comment more accurately identifies what is recommended)

*TF members recommend that pros and cons of MRC host models (varied somewhat throughout Texas), 501c3 environments and medium-sized hosting models be closely examined. TF members encourage systems to assess the variety of models offered to them - not limited to these - to determine the best possible economies of funding models. TF members feel that moving to 501c3 is a viable option for some systems.*

## Recommendation # 9

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*The work of the TSLAC/TLA Joint Task Force on Public Library Standards and Accreditation should consider long-term strategies to link funding with the implementation of standards.*

Standards should be considered from the user point of view

Libraries need to see real evidence that assistance will be available that will enable them to work toward the attainment of the standards that are adopted through support and incentives from TSLAC and systems.

*The TF and FG's are very supportive of standards and feel that standards should be used by management for measurement and assessment to support change and growth and to better serve communities. TF's feel strongly there should be incentives for using standards. In addition, they are very supportive of the TSLAC "Minimum Criteria for System Membership" being reviewed for revisions based on the Standards.*

## Recommendation # 10

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The partners in public library development should explore non-traditional sources of potential income for libraries including, but not limited to, impact fees.

Impact fees, may only be feasible in high growth areas

Explore non-traditional sources of tax and non-tax revenues for libraries.

*The TF and FG's are very supportive of this recommendation.*

## Recommendation # 11

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TSLAC, TLA, and the regional library systems should work together with friends in charitable organizations to develop a coordinated plan designed to ensure that all libraries are aware of and take advantage of opportunities to secure gifts and grants of all types.

Help in identifying needs, grants sources, and writing grants ((although the quote from the Study was “Help in identifying and writing” this comment more accurately identifies what is recommended)

Aggregate libraries into groups to pursue grants

Pursue direct IMLS funding through programs such as "National Leadership Grants for Libraries" and "National Leadership Grants for Library-Museum Collaboration"

*TF general opinion is very supportive of this recommendation and supports the idea of a specific group being designated to create such a plan.*

## Recommendation #12

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TSLAC and the regional systems should use their mutual interest in continuing education as a platform for developing a new and higher level of cooperation.

Develop a statewide plan for continuing education for librarianship that builds on the respective strengths and resources of each of the partners

Design a statewide continuing education curriculum

*TF general opinion is very supportive of this recommendation and the idea of a specific group of partnership organizations (agency, library, non-profits) being designated to create such a plan.*

## Recommendation # 13

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Regional library systems should explore ways to cooperate more closely with each other.

Greater coordination in collection development activities

Identify and pool expertise

Multiple systems could pool their resources to retain a consultant or a limited term employee with expertise in a particular area of interest.

*TF general opinion is very supportive of this recommendation.*

#### Recommendation # 14

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TSLAC should continue to work closely with all of the partners in public library development to ensure that all public libraries continue to have access to a significant selection of online databases.

Need databases for all libraries

Need shared costs

*The TF is supportive of this recommendation. General opinion of the FG's is supportive as well but a common belief held is that databases should not be supported to the exclusion of other critical support for Texas public libraries.*

#### Recommendation # 15

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The Joint TSLAC/TLA Task Force on Public Library Standards needs to develop a plan for standards implementation that accomplishes three goals. They are:

- creating an awareness that standards can be a valuable tool in public library development,
- identifying a core subset of minimum standards that are challenging but, with assistance, achievable, and
- clearly spelling out the kind of assistance and aid that will be sought to help libraries meet standards.

*Primary discussion from the TF on this recommendation focused on concerns on how Minimum Criteria for system membership might be wrapped into the Standards, however, the TF is very supportive of the creation of an awareness tool; of the need to identify a core subset of minimum standards and is supportive of the recommendation for identifying assistance, but pessimistic given the variety and number of Texas public libraries.*

## Grouped Recommendations

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Even though how to solve or even address problems and challenges isn't easily clear, what is clear is that Texas libraries – and certainly Texas public libraries - are in crisis. Although commitment to all libraries and library services remains high from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, from the Texas Library Association, from librarians, from some umbrella entities, from some Texas legislators and especially from a large network of community advocates and supporters, Texas public libraries are clearly under siege. Texas public libraries are considered “in crisis.”

What are the issues related to public libraries?

- The Texas public library environment is consistently listed in the bottom five of the US rankings for library funding.
- Texas public libraries are struggling to maintain local support and local funding for critical services and resources such as staff and locally purchased print and online materials.
- Texas public libraries are scrambling for funds to maintain current hardware and software resources.
- The Texas legislature has consistently withdrawn and reduced statewide funding for libraries.
- Texas public libraries are fighting for existing local funds, scrambling for increased local funds for maintaining library services and struggling to contribute to the maintenance of statewide database programs.
- The statewide infrastructure to support public libraries (ex. systems, the state library) has been stretched to accommodate greater needs local public library needs with fewer dollars.

What's the good news? Although we live in challenging times in Texas, Texas public libraries:

- have many strong supporters and advocates in both formal and informal support programs;
- have an infrastructure in place to support statewide public library services (systems, the state library, statewide fund program for public library programs, a structure to deliver statewide online resources;)
- have the desire for statewide cooperation in many areas and specifically database and online resource sharing to be maintained to serve all Texans; and,
- have a very strong professional association.

Future changes must be made by increasing cooperation and partnerships among types of libraries, by increasing legislative involvement and opportunities, by establishing pathways to build on strengths of existing libraries and library structures as well as strength in relationships among libraries, organizations and entities.

### *Study Comments*

Comments from the field on the Public Library Study in general were overall favorable. Respondents felt that – for the most part – there were many good recommendations included, there were good suggestions in many areas of the report and that the *Study* included good supporting document information in many sections.

Several recommendations – obviously – were more controversial than others. Several *Study* recommendations received no substantive or specific Task Force recommendations based on the controversial nature of the recommendations and lack of consensus within not only community groups but with the Task Force, specifically in Small Groups, on how to approach the topic.

One critical component of Task Force discussions and comments from the field concerned the need for – in future activities and Report-related actions - a wide variety of people to be involved in the design and process of change and the wide variety of people or stakeholders needed to ultimately carry out changes. While this feeling was not as strong for some areas, it was clearly indicated for recommendations dealing with assessing system funding and organization and

administration. Groups wanted the people to be involved in planning and implementing change to include representatives from:

- Texas libraries of *all* types and sizes
- Texas library supporters/advocates
- Regional library systems
- TSLAC Commissioners
- TSLAC Administration
- TSLAC Library Development
- TSLAC Library Resource Sharing
- Texas Library Association Staff
- TLA Divisions such as PLD, CULD, TASL
- TLA Committees such as Legislative Committee
- TLA AdHoc Groups (existing and future)
- Related non-profit and profit world (organizations, consortiums, etc.) of library businesses

Concern within the Task Force – primarily in small groups - over how recommendations on funding, consolidation, might be realized or carried out at the statewide level, prevented some study recommendations from being more substantive or in some cases addressed in any significant way.

## **Alternative Structures (Recommendations 1,4,6,7)**

Considering alternative structures for doing business is always a difficult and often controversial path. Although many recommendations in the Report proposed doing business differently in Texas libraries and structures that support Texas libraries, four specific recommendations in the *Study* proposed changes that included:

- Encouraging and providing incentive programs for the formation of “larger units of service” including combining libraries into larger or different units of service and multi-county administrative services (Recommendation #1)
- Encouraging the exploration of the establishment of joint school-public library service models under inter local agreements in areas where stand-alone public libraries are unlikely to remain viable. (Recommendation #6)
- Encouraging libraries that would benefit from current library district legislation to consider this course and work to expand library district legislation to allow for districts funded with property tax revenues. (Recommendation #7)
- Moving toward a significantly more centralized system of ILL with consideration of a significant reduction in the number of interlibrary loan “clearinghouses.” (Recommendation #4)

### **Summary**

#### **Combining Libraries/Larger Units of Service/Joint-Use**

*TF comments were overall supportive of combining services or forming larger units of services. Specific comments focused on:*

- *Combining libraries or designing combined library services should be explored, however, the decision to combine should not focus exclusively on a community or entities need to provide less money for library services or just on “saving money”, rather communities should assess combined units of service for efficient and effective use of community resources and, most importantly, combining services to provide the best possible library service for the community.*

- *Estimates are there are currently fewer than five multi-county administrative units in Texas at this time, although there are a larger number of counties where library services – through both formal and informal arrangements - extend across county lines. Texas county government is typically not historically or easily conducive to across-county relationships and partnerships.*
- *Incentive programs - specifically monetary incentives - are the critical components of possible relationships. These programs tend to be the most effective and sustainable when **maintenance of effort for all partners** is built into program vision and reality.*

*TF and FG members were primarily supportive of most joint-use environments currently underway. Texas currently has a wide variety of successful joint-use library projects including school-public (23+) and academic-public projects (3-4.) There are more successful than non- successful projects in Texas at this time and they exist in communities where it has been determined that the community is better served by joint-use facilities and services.*

*Although TF opinion is supportive of the joint-use recommendation and of these types of shared environments, members urge that benchmark information be gathered and disseminated to support communities interested in assessing their existing environments or planning for new ones. This recommendation is supported with the caveat that – in information gathered and disseminated - there be **both** pro's and con's outlined in relationships and partnerships and that significant data-gathering and discussions throughout communities take place prior to community decisions.*

*FG's were forthcoming with locations where these organizations are working and not working as well as locations around Texas where joint-use was under discussion. Other less knowledgeable FG attendees were curious about successful projects in Texas and much interest was expressed for guidance on benchmark projects. Additional comments included:*

1. *A desire for financial or other incentives for joint-use services to come from TSLAC;*
2. *A desire for financial or other incentives for joint-use services to come from the systems;*

3. *Data-gathering be made available for librarians and library staff and stakeholders including governing and advisory boards and city and county staff;*
4. *Training be made available for librarians and library staff and stakeholders including governing and advisory boards and city and county staff;*
5. *Texas standards for public libraries be assessed to determine the use and viability of standards in designing joint-use environments; and,*
6. *Benefits are articulated individually for the variety of joint-use opportunities such as “benefits for school and public” and “benefits for public and academic.”*

### *Taxing Districts*

*Supporting libraries adequately, no matter the structure may mean future changes in funding models. Taxing districts have been identified – in some economic models – as structures that might better support public libraries, however, at this time there are approximately 15 public libraries in Texas that are libraries supported by a taxing district. This model has proven to be a very successful model for most of those communities.*

- *TF opinion is that this recommendation is very much supported and that TSLAC and TLA support – through partnership committees or task forces or research monies – be identified to support research and design of a process to assist libraries in using the '05 legislation that now allows larger communities to explore this funding model.*
- *TF and FG's were very supportive of Texas libraries' need to gather benchmark community design and marketing information for maximum community involvement and support for ALL sizes of library environments for pathways or toolkits to assessing whether or not communities should move to this model.*

### **Restructuring ILL**

*After reviewing the data gathered at ILL Focus Group and at other Focus Groups around the state, it was determined that there was little discussion about ILL centers or services with ILL staff or other library staff who use ILL services throughout Texas during the Study data-gathering phase. Therefore, it was unclear how the aspects of this recommendation were determined other*

*than as a cost savings by reduction in number of service points. In the absence of data, the TF and FG did not support this recommendation.*

*While this recommendation could have been just as easily placed in the “Systems” section of this Report, not all ILL service points are located at system offices, therefore, it was considered more a restructuring or an alternative organization.*

**Report/Research Recommendations**

Recommendation/Research	Who*	Priority**
<p><b>Models of combined library environments should be explored by partners including TSLAC, systems, and appropriate TLA groups. Larger or combined units of service discussions should include discussions of school and public, academic and public and multi-county relationships and partnerships.</b> Combining for larger units of service has moved past the public library/school library model and communities were expanding into academic partnerships with public libraries as the growing model with Texas examples were at both ends of the success and failure spectrum. Multi-county examples were few. This concept had some interest but models of multi-county library <i>partnerships</i> were not as available (only two were mentioned) and comments included general problems that were incurred when counties tried to cooperate with other counties. Several felt that there might be other shared or across-county activities in Texas to use as precedents for discussions.</p>	TSLAC Systems TLA	HIGH
<p><b>Models, best practices and/or toolkits should be created and made available.</b></p>	TSLAC TLA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Models, best practices and toolkits should be designed with specific concern for balance in presenting cost savings for all partners. General opinion is that while combination ventures may save money they should not be chosen as a service model only because they are cheaper, or because the community doesn't have enough money for separate service points.</li> </ul>	See above.	HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model, best practice and toolkit information should address a concern that many have that the more successful ventures are “personality based.” TF and FG attendees need to know if partnerships and</li> </ul>	See above.	Moderate

relationships can be successful with a variety of personalities involved and what personality and attitude issues might be.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model, best practice and toolkit information needs to include examples of partnerships and relationships – specifically county partnerships - that exist outside library laws in Texas.</li> </ul>	See above.	HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models, best practices and toolkits should include communities and library managers who have had experience with unsuccessful partnerships and unsuccessful discussions with content that includes “what not to do” and “what environmental elements – if in place – do NOT lend themselves to successful ventures.</li> </ul>	See above.	HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models, best practices and toolkits should include plans of action for moving to alternative structures; experts list of Texans and others (for both successful and unsuccessful projects;) model contracts (including examples of joint governing and single management contracts); attention to how policies and procedures might work together; impact of deep rivalries; clearly articulated purposes of consolidation; elements from partnerships other than libraries (ex. county jail partnerships;) practice administration and management information; specific examples of current, measured, efficiency improvements in “larger units of service” such as central processing, union catalog, technology repair assistance, youth library services; and, extensive marketing information with specific concern for communities considering joint-use facilities in discussions of new libraries, expanded facilities and remodeled facilities.</li> </ul>	See above.	Moderate
<p><b>Toolkits and best practices should be used to used to market the concept and paths to partnerships and relationships</b> with specific concern for considering joint-use facilities in discussions of new libraries, expanded facilities and remodeled facilities.</p>	TSLAC TLA Systems	Moderate
<p><b>Incentives for partnerships and relationships need to be</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH

<p><b>clearly articulated.</b> Could incentives include increased funding from Systems? Could incentives include TexShare savings for the basic program or for Texselect? Could a special fund from the State library be available for start up of partnership or relationship library services? Could TSLAC grant monies be available to establish partnerships? Could groups be identified to partner for IMLS funding to explore partnerships and relationships?</p>		<p>(This was considered a critical/most important elements of new structures.</p>
<p><b>The infrastructure for Texas public library development should be assessed to ensure adequate support for partnerships and relationships.</b></p>	<p>See below</p>	<p>See below</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas public library standards - and other relevant standards such as school library standards and academic library standards - should clearly address standards for larger units of service and joint-use facilities to ensure adequate service for all patrons.</li> </ul>	<p>TLA TSLAC</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TSLAC and Systems should review Minimum Criteria and Standards to assess issues raised by joint-use facilities for system membership.</li> </ul>	<p>TSLAC Systems</p>	<p>HIGH (minimum criteria – in general - was discussed in many – if not all – groups.</p>
<p><b>The Texas Library Association and TSLAC should adopt statements concerning partnership, relationship and joint-use libraries for use by communities when beginning local discussions.</b> (See the Australian Library Association under “Resources” With attention to Statements of Issues (Australia;) Guidelines for Design (New South Wales;) Definitions (Ohio)</p>	<p>TLA TSLAC</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p><b>TSLAC should – in partnership with ILL centers and library users - conduct research before ILL centers are reduced in number.</b> This research should address issues that came up in TF and FG’s including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confusion on this recommendation to reduce clearinghouses due to steady (and in some areas dramatic) increase of ILL activities in Texas;</li> <li>2. A lack of information on economies and efficiencies that</li> </ol>	<p>TSLAC  ILL Center Staff  Texas Libraries</p>	<p>Low (Only one focus group discussed this area at length as most did not want</p>

<p>a centralized ILL system would bring; and,  <b>3.</b> Probable future increases in ILL activities based on new Library of Texas resource-identification service.</p>	<p>ILL Users</p>	<p>ILL altered, nor were aware of where the research for Study content came from.)</p>
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\*in order by group discussion

\*\*indicated by level of interest in topic

-High (many discussions and comments/immediately)

-Moderate (some discussions and comments/within two years)

-Low (few discussions and comments/needed but no time line)

### Comments

Impact of elections on local situations is great...one political environment forming an alternative structure may be altered after a new election...there are vagaries in views of local politicians

Local views of taxation would impact view of library district changes.

What about counties that are not spending anything on libraries (Parmer County).

What about entities other than libraries (e.g. education service centers)

Examples of a variety of service models includes:

- Marion - school public
- RockSprings – school public
- Karnes Co -- school public
- LaSalle – county/relationships
- Medina – school cooperation/testing
- Benbrook
- Forest Hill - new
- Alice/Orange Grove – City, county and school district funded.  
 Contact: Alicia Salinas, Library Director, Alice Public Library and Cheryl Acklen, Librarian, Orange Grove.
- Corpus Christi/local high school – City and school district funded.

- Zapata County/San Ignacio County School District. Contact: Aida Garcia, Director, Zapata County Public Library.
- Rocksprings
- Marion
- Uvalde – serves as school library
- Olney - since 1977
- Wellington
- Booker
- Northwest Branch and Amarillo College (There are many successes in the Panhandle—identify additional models)
- Forest Hill served by Everman Public Library until Forest Hill gets new library built (AALS)
- The STLS region has several federated environments and has the following examples of public libraries cooperating with each other to leverage their ability to provide services.
  - Cameron County Library System – County funded library system consisting of all 8 public libraries in Cameron County.
  - Hidalgo County Library System – County funded library system consisting of several public libraries in Hidalgo County.
  - Valley Information Alliance – a public library cooperative consisting of 19 public libraries in Cameron and Hidalgo counties.
- Denton County - signed agreement to exchange materials
- Venus high school/public
- Irving public/community college
- Little Elm has gone from city/hs to stand alone
- San Benito/local high school – currently under study to make high school library open to public to complement existing single public library outlet. Contact: Victor Trevino, City Manager, City of San Benito.
- City of Laredo paid the county for land for the main library - they provide public library service to the county.
- Huntington joint use for 5 years – advantages to reaching out to community –2,500 population Advantages – several, including marketing to parents, etc. received grants, including TEA, technology through formal cooperation
- Port Arthur started cooperative with school libraries – provide resources – to stay open in evenings – cost effective to reach students / parents, city salaries to help keep school libraries open in evenings.

- Harris Co – 2 examples – public library / community college joint academic library – challenge and not cheaper but advantages of larger building, longer hours – but benefits out. Challenges Cy-Fair offers larger facility and better services and Tomball coming
- Sour Lake – worked with school districts – load accelerated readers – brought new students to library – also on computer training.
- Snyder five years ago county proposed junior college / county library building – location problem, voted down
- Junction – TIF computers / high child use, problem –got groups together to provide after school programs, with schools now – other programs to cooperate
- Coleman – also school collaborations

Eliminate dis-incentives (reference system minimum criteria – pop. Assignment)

Change wording of recommendation from “encourage” to “require.” It was suggested that we use state legislation to enforce this recommendation – such as State of Oklahoma as an example.

Sense of local ownership and price in local library should not be sacrificed

Look at SE Oklahoma System - McAllister- for example of cooperation - 12 counties banded together - property taxes used

Look at Council of Government structures

County road taxes are supposed to be available for county libraries - are they?

In Texas, if do accept county funding, (increased) population assignment / detrimental potentially – can it be made rewarding?

Recommendation #1 not realistic for rural Texas – don’t want to consolidate schools – or libraries –

Recommendation #1 – may not close local library but combine administrative costs, for example.

1-person library accelerated library program offered for first time by school district for us in public libraries offered computer training

Concerned about schools being open to the general public, especially adults  
(Lay representative)

Needs to be determined by local community

When joint use is located within a school, it doesn't work well; when it is located in a public library it is more successful, but still problems

Current troubling perception – “if public library is weak should join with school”

Joint use in schools need to serve community adults *and* children

Will not work for all types & sizes of populations - smaller communities best or very specific settings

Will mission of TSLAC be changed from concentrating on public libraries?

Public libraries can't meet accreditation needs of other types (example: Moore County Public and Amarillo College). Location of joint use is critical for public libraries.

Would consolidation of ILL environments (that already save money!) have an impact on:

- Tex-Express service? It is an important service and it is important to have control of ILL service delivery hours and locations.
- Turn-around time? A quick turn-around time is important .
- Availability of materials with cultural differences—types of materials held by ILL center/library (need to) vary dramatically.
- Need for more automated ILL services?
- ILL/group access?
- ILL delivery?
- Role of RDS vis-à-vis ILL?

## **Resources**

Models of combined library environments; "Tool kit" for communities to move to combined environments; Incentive models from other states

- Benchmark model of web environment including statewide brochure; the how to kit; the website itself; and the statewide public library implementation team for taxing district kit.  
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/pldtools/index.html>
- “Academic/Public Joint-Use Libraries”  
[http://institute21.stanford.edu/Current\\_Programs/2000\\_Institute/Presenters/papers/jointusebibl.htm](http://institute21.stanford.edu/Current_Programs/2000_Institute/Presenters/papers/jointusebibl.htm) Bibliography w/some weblinks
- Combined Libraries – ALA/ Bibliography  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/alalibrary/libraryfactsheet/alalibraryfactsheet20.htm>
- “Establishing Joint-Use Libraries”  
[http://www.ccla.lib.fl.us/docs/reports/joint\\_use.pdf](http://www.ccla.lib.fl.us/docs/reports/joint_use.pdf) Extensive still-relevant document for decision-making, planning and design
- “Joint-Use Libraries”  
<http://www.unt.edu/slis/students/projects/5320/reist.htm> Graduate Work Position Paper- overview of issues and related information
- Librarian’s Tool Kit – definitions - Ohio” Joint-Use Facilities” – State Library of Ohio Definitions for discussions of all types of joint use and excellent definitions and other tool kit items including: Laws; Standards; Issues; Overviews; Policies; Examples; Studies; Checklists; Bibliographies  
[http://winslo.state.oh.us/services/LPD/tk\\_jointuse.html](http://winslo.state.oh.us/services/LPD/tk_jointuse.html)
- Mariners Joint-Use Library Newport Beach (school/public)  
<http://www.olc.library.ca.gov/appdox/mariners/MarinersBuildingProgram.pdf>
- Merging Libraries  
<http://www.sjsu.edu/~skendal2/bibliography2.doc>
- New South Wales, State Library  
<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/pls/policies/jointuse.cfm>

Bibliography of “who did” and “how to” of merging existing libraries  
– foreign but extremely relevant

- Guidelines for Design - “Statement on Joint-Use Libraries” by the Australian Library and Information Association”  
<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/joint-use.html>
- Position paper from the profession - Tippecanoe County Public Library (public/college)  
<http://www.tcpl.lib.in.us/foundation/newlibrary.html>

### **Legislative**

- Taxation legislation for all sizes of libraries including library districts, etc.
- Library laws concerning:
  - Multi-county partnerships
  - Minimum criteria

## **Funding (Recommendations 5, 10, 11)**

Texas libraries should explore the widest possible variety of ways of creative funding for resources and services. Although many Study recommendations were designed for cost saving and efficiency and effectiveness, three recommendations offered ideas for both saving and raising money. All three recommendations – obviously – were supported by the TF and all FG's. Study ideas included:

- Exploring the possibility of establishing a program that would enable libraries to gain the maximum benefit from the State's program for leasing computers and computer peripherals.
- Exploring non-traditional sources of potential income for libraries including, but not limited to, impact fees (possibly only feasible in high growth areas) and non-traditional sources of tax and non-tax revenues for libraries.
- Developing a coordinated plan designed to ensure that all libraries are aware of and take advantage of opportunities to secure gifts and grants of all types including help in identifying needs, sources and writing grants; aggregating libraries into groups to pursue grants; and pursuing direct IMLS funding through programs such as "National Leadership Grants for Libraries" and "National Leadership Grants for Library-Museum Collaboration"

### Summary

*TF and FG's were highly supportive of all three recommendations, although it should be noted that a statewide program for purchasing and leasing computers and computer peripherals is already in effect and has been in effect for many years in Texas through the Department of Information Resources (DIR).*

*TF and FG discussions identified only a few public libraries that currently take advantage of this program.*

## Report/Research Recommendations

Recommendation/Research	Who*	Priority**
<p><b>Texas public libraries should seek out and use existing cooperative purchasing mechanisms for the best possible economies and efficiencies.</b></p>	TSLAC Systems	HIGH
<p><b>Mechanisms to facilitate use of these services by Texas public libraries should be identified and/or designed and implemented.</b></p> <p>These mechanisms should include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a state library information gateway for purchasing all eligible materials</li> <li>▪ weblinks from existing agency and system homepages to this gateway</li> <li>▪ articles in relevant newsletters</li> <li>▪ data gathering on current cost savings</li> <li>▪ establishing benchmark libraries and/or a “mentor” library process for pairing new cooperative buyers with experienced buyers</li> <li>▪ expanded processes for systems to facilitate and even aggregate system purchases using cooperative purchasing plans</li> <li>▪ workshops on cooperative purchasing programs</li> <li>▪ programs on cooperative purchasing programs at district, system and association meetings</li> </ul>	TSLAC Systems	HIGH
<p>Explore taxing district opportunities for all sizes of public libraries and recommend a legislative agenda. Their activities should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assessing the state library agency survey data to provide information on alternative funding opportunities available in other states.</li> <li>○ Assessing the Texas Association of Counties review of alternative funding opportunities in Texas counties.</li> <li>○ Assessing TSLAC Library Science Librarian raw data culled for Mr. Amdursky’s February 2004 <i>Library Journal</i> article on alternative funding opportunities</li> </ul>	TLA TSLAC	HIGH

for public libraries. Create a master list of alternative funding sources for Texas libraries.		
Create and maintain a web environment to assist libraries in gathering and disseminating data on alternative funding sources.	TSLAC TLA	Moderate
A clearinghouse for grant information should be created to gather grant source information for Texas libraries. This clearinghouse process should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a central point for supply and storing information from other non profit grant information agencies, such as Grants Centers and Foundation Center.</li> <li>▪ Build a resource data center of grant reviewers, grant writers, and local agencies within the state and region (COG, School District, etc.) that work within the grant process</li> <li>▪ Consider development and alternative funding information as integral to the mission of the clearinghouse</li> <li>▪ Develop a mechanism for identifying and sharing ongoing grant opportunities</li> <li>▪ Identify opportunities for education in the art of writing grants</li> <li>▪ Maintain an expert list of grant mentors to assist others in grant development</li> </ul>	TSLAC Systems TLA	HIGH
Create and maintain a clearinghouse.	TSLAC TLA Systems	Moderate

\*in order by group discussion

\*\*indicated by level of interest in topic

-High (many discussions and comments/immediately)

-Moderate (some discussions and comments/within two years)

-Low (few discussions and comments/needed but no time line)

### Comments

Purchasing

Why should this recommendation be limited to technology expenditures? It is suggested that this recommendation be expanded to include the use of

competitive state contracts for all suitable products/services used by public libraries across the state.

Leasing may not be better and purchasing vs. leasing should be explored.

Be sure to include working with vendors for matching prices with state contracts.

The following libraries indicated that they use the State of Texas DIR state contracts for computer hardware and software related purchases.

- Victoria Public Library
- Laredo Public Library
- Wilson County
- Tyler and Sulphur Springs do participate in state leasing contracts
- The majority of public libraries in Cameron and Hidalgo counties buy cooperatively.

Better purchasing is needed now more than ever due to loss of TIF funding for technology.

Can the State Library serve as clearing house for all types of contacts?

Few libraries are currently using cooperative purchasing opportunities.

Academic libraries cooperatively purchase books - books, audiovisual, furniture, etc. Can public libraries piggyback on the academic program?

## Grants

STLS staff is looking into local grant opportunities for STLS member libraries.

Library Partners and other models of support need to be identified.

We need grant models that are better/easier to complete such as Tocker rather than the TIF model.

Sustainability needs to be built into grant processes.

Income/revenue possibilities

Libraries should look into possibility of using state lottery proceeds for public libraries.

Harlingen Public Library charges fees for proctoring of examinations, as one example.

Several libraries charge fees for the use of meeting room facilities.

Several libraries are not allowed use of the fees collected. Income is turned over to governing entity.

One problem is that people in “high growth” area are already taxed higher than other areas.

Devote sales tax on sale of books and other materials to libraries?

Suggested fund-raising - passport applications, notary public fees, exam proctoring fees, Amazon.com as a partner. (Income from the federal government for processing of passport applications can be generated. If 20+ miles from passport office, librarian can accept passport application and \$30 each \$11,000 received in first year – city okayed application funding coming to library.)

Library districts should be able to take advantage of impact fees. Fees in high growth areas only?

Explore non-traditional sources of tax and non-tax revenues for libraries.

Impact fees not relevant for many communities. Alternate sources may need more staff, which could be a problem.

## **Resources**

## Cooperative Purchasing

### 1. Department of Information Resources

<http://www.dir.state.tx.us/store/busops/go-direct/index.htm>

From DIR homepage:

- Go to "Products and Services" They include multiple vendors for purchase and leasing including:

- Computers
- Software
- Networking Equipment
- Data Storage/Storage Area Network Equipment
- Printers
- Videoconferencing & Communications Equipment
- Graphing Calculators
- IT Equipment
- Seat Management
- Security Products
- Security Services
- Training
- Internship Resources (for IT projects)

- Select "Go DIRect"
- Browse for products and vendors
- Verify pricing
- Follow institutional/city/county purchasing procedures such as requisitions, purchasing orders, and vendor delivery/contact.

Benefits of the Go DIRect Program (content taken primarily from the DIR website):

- Meets all requirements of State of Texas term contracts
- All products and services qualify under E-Rate.
- Allows DIR customers to take advantage of the purchasing power of the State of Texas
- Streamlines order processing
- Enables procurement card and/or credit card purchases

DIR's administrative fee has already been included in the vendor pricing

Using DIR avoids most bidding processes required.

Several libraries are also exploring the use of TCPN for many things including vendors and/or items not available on DIR.

## 2. The Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN)

<http://www.tcpn.org/index-texas.htm>

**“The Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN)** is the Region IV Education Service Center cooperative purchasing program. Enabling statues for TCPN can be found in the Government Code, Title 7. Intergovernmental Relations, Chapter 791 Inter local Cooperation Contracts, Subchapter B, General Inter local Contracting Authority, Subchapter C, Specific Inter local Contracting Authority.

**TCPN** is available for use by all public and private schools, colleges, universities, cities, counties, and other government entities in the State of Texas. Participation in **TCPN** is not required of government entities. However, participation by government entities can provide the legally required competition for contracts for commonly purchased items thereby saving the individual entity the cost of going through the competitive process.

Vendors with **TCPN** awarded contracts have agreed to provide the best pricing, terms and conditions available to similar customers.

Vendors and participating entities both benefit. If a vendor is successful at competing for a **TCPN** contract, the vendor can avoid the time and expense of going through the competitive process for each individual participating entity. The participating entity also avoids the cost and time of going through the competitive process.

The Purpose of **TCPN** is to:

- Provide school districts and other government entities opportunities for greater efficiency and economy in acquiring goods and services.

- Take advantage of state-of-the-art purchasing procedures to insure the most competitive contracts.
- Provide competitive price solicitation and bulk purchasing for multiple government entities that yields economic benefits unobtainable by individual entities.
- Provide quick and efficient delivery of goods and services by contracting with "high performance" vendors.
- Equalize purchasing power for smaller entities that are not able to command the best contracts for themselves.
- Maintain credibility and confidence in business procedures by maintaining open competition for purchases and by complying with purchasing laws and ethical business practices.
- Assist entities in maintaining the essential controls for budget and accounting purposes.

#### Financing of TCPN

The total cost of the **TCPN** program is funded through a fee paid by the participating vendors that is based on actual sales.

**TCPN** does not charge any membership fees to participating entities.

Any sales made to participating entities without the participation fee do not qualify as competitive contracts issued by **TCPN**, therefore, the participating entity must take competitive bids or proposals for these contracts, as required by law.

### **3. TBPC Cooperative Purchasing Program**

<http://www.tbpc.state.tx.us/stpurch/coopmain.html>

The Texas Building and Procurement Commission Cooperative Purchasing Program (TBPC Co-Op) offers members a unique opportunity to purchase goods and services from state term contracts and the CISV Catalog Purchasing

Program. Using these services through TBPC will meet your competitive bidding requirements.

Currently Penny Farias is the state purchaser "P." She is responsible for getting the library state materials contract revised and out for bid. She intends for public libraries to have the option of using the contract through the state's cooperative purchasing program. The new contract (website indicates that the current contract now goes through 1/05) may include the opportunity for libraries to buy from multiple vendors.

In reviewing the TBPC website the following commodities areas include library materials and related library items: 208, 395, 420, 420, 525, 715, 801, 832, 908, 956, 981, 985, 998.

Who can join?

Sections 271.081-271.083 Local Government Code, V. T. C. A., Section 2155.202 and 2175.001(1) of the Texas Government Code, Title 10, Subtitle D, provide the legal authority for the following entities to participate in TBPC Co-Op:

- Local governments (municipalities, counties, school districts, etc.)  
Click on membership lists for a link to your city and your cities purchasing agent information.
- MHMR community centers
- Assistance organizations

If you are not a member, please contact us by [E-mail](#), or by phone at 512-463-3368.

Benefits

Using the TBPC Co-Op can be highly beneficial. All state contract purchases made through the TBPC Co-Op have already been competitively bid, saving you valuable time. To use state contracts all you need to do is send us a requisition for the items you need. We will generate a purchase order on your behalf and send a copy of it to both you and the vendor. The vendor will then ship the merchandise and invoice your entity directly.

Grants

Models of web environments include:

- The Meadows Foundation web page at <http://www.mfi.org/Grants/texas.asp>
- State of Texas Governor's Grants Page at <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/stategrants>
- IMLS Grants Information at <http://www.imls.gov/grants/index.htm>
- TSLAC at <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/funding/resources/index.html>

### Alternative Funding Survey

See preliminary data on alternative funding survey results to date in Appendices.

### **Research**

- Additional cooperative purchasing programs – beyond the ones listed above - in Texas to be identified for use.
- Identify benchmark libraries using DIR, TCPN or other cooperative purchasing plans.
- Design a plan to purchase books bought with system monies cooperatively.
- Perform data analysis on survey results to determine if Texas law allows funding opportunities found in state results.
- Identify benchmark clearinghouses in other states.

### **Legislative**

Assess and revise as needed – Texas statewide law to determine if funding opportunities and purchasing will be possible across Texas library environments.

Assess and revise as needed – Texas city and county law to determine if funding opportunities and purchasing will be possible across Texas library environments.

## **Systems (Recommendations 2, 3, 8, 12, 13)**

### Introduction

Although many recommendations related to Systems, five recommendations were specific to Systems. These five recommendations focused on a variety of scenarios for systems including combining system *administrative* functions across systems; reducing the number of systems by combining *all* system functions – based on geography; exploring other avenues for the structure of systems (ex. forming non-profits, assessing the MRC host model;) investigating MRC indirect cost charges for systems; greater coordination of some system functions (ex. consultant expertise, technology support, collection development functions;) and the coordination of CE planning and delivery across the state including state library and system CE planning and delivery.

TF, FG and individual discussion were primarily supportive of greater coordination and cooperation among system functions and service delivery. Specifically, TF and FG and individual discussions were not supportive of the recommendations to reduce the number of systems, while alternative means of managing systems, reducing costs imposed on systems and cooperation of functions and expertise across systems received support.

### **Summary**

#### **Reduce the number of system administrative units. (#3)**

*This recommendation was the least popular and the most discussed of all recommendations by all groups and data gathering methods.*

There are several different courses of action might be taken to address this situation. They are:

#### **3. The continuation of ten regional offices operating under a reduced number of administrative hubs**

*Data collected by the TF indicated that it is likely there were functions existing in systems that could be consolidated or shared - especially in the office management/business and accounting areas. This option was discussed in all*

*FG's. General consensus was that a cost model could be developed for this if the plan was developed with the goal remaining increased efficiency and not only cost savings.*

**4. The consolidation of the current 10 systems into 9 systems with significantly different boundaries. (with an attempt to equalize the number of libraries served by systems)**

*TF discussion was not supportive of this recommendation. Some data collected for alternative governance structures indicated that the savings generated by this model would need to be put back into the 9 systems to accommodate increased/expanded areas of service. FG discussions were not supportive of this recommendation section.*

**3. The consolidation of the current 10 systems into 7 administrative units with up to 13 regional “presences.” The final scenario presented above would consolidate the ten systems into seven regions that would provide some service/staff presence in as many as 13 different locations. Following are the offices that would be paired under a seven-system plan:**

<b>Amarillo &amp; Lubbock</b>	<b>Houston &amp; Lufkin or Nacogdoches</b>
<b>Abilene &amp; Midland</b>	<b>Dallas &amp; Ft. Worth</b>
<b>Corpus Christi &amp; McAllen</b>	<b>El Paso</b>
<b>San Antonio &amp; Austin</b>	

*These pairings - not a new idea in Texas - were discussed extensively in the TF small groups. General opinion was that - given current system funding levels or even moderately expanded levels - this would not be an economic or efficient support for public libraries given current system funding, needs of Texas public libraries, especially smaller public libraries, and staffing and geographic issues in Texas. This was not a popular recommendation among attendees at FG meeting and did not receive support.*

**Eliminate or reduce indirect costs for systems (#2)**

**A. Alternative governance structures (such as becoming a 501(c)(3) organization)**

**B. Explore the imposition of a maximum allowable indirect percentage as a condition of awarding a system contract**

**C. Competitive bidding process for hosting regional systems**

**A. Alternative governance structures (such as becoming a 501(c)(3) organization)**

*TF comments are supportive of and positive about the benefits of moving from a MRC model to a 501c3 model. FG comments were neither supportive nor negative as most attendees were not familiar with the pros and cons of MRC or city/library administration vs. 501c3 organizations.*

**B. Explore the imposition of a maximum allowable indirect percentage as a condition of awarding a system contract**

*Indirect costs used to, but no longer vary greatly from system environment to system environment and costs have changed over the years in several cities. There was uniform support from the TF for investigating a maximum allowable indirect cost percent. TSLAC administration requested and received an audit of the guidelines governing the indirect costs and preliminary information in 2004 and are currently negotiating with cities to lower indirect costs..*

**C. Competitive bidding process for hosting regional systems**

*TF discussions were primarily skeptical on a possible bidding process, as there was not general agreement on the benefits a system brings to the city environment with today's dollars and system funding levels. FG's discussed this somewhat, however, general support for competitive bidding was not generally indicated, again, as the benefits were not readily apparent for other – potentially significantly smaller – communities.*

Regional library systems should explore ways to cooperate more closely with each other. (#13)

**Greater coordination in collection development activities**

**Identify and pool expertise**

**Multiple systems could pool their resources to retain a consultant, or a limited term employee with expertise in a particular area of interest.**

*TF general opinion is very supportive of this recommendation. TF members are aware that these types of activities are already taking place (ex. technology staff sharing expertise) and encourage systems to formalize and standardize successful activities. TF opinion is that – due to the magnitude of changes possible in the next two to five years - that consultants or limited term employees might be hired to assist with system changes such as moving to 501c3 status. System membership would also profit from consultants and content, as many libraries are 501c3 environments as well.*

**TSLAC and the regional systems should use their mutual interest in continuing education as a platform for developing a new and higher level of cooperation. (#12)**

**Develop a statewide plan for continuing education for librarianship that builds on the respective strengths and resources of each of the partners**

**Design a statewide continuing education curriculum**

*TF general opinion is very supportive of this recommendation and the idea of a specific group being designated to create such a plan. FG and TF suggest, however, that the design group be expanded to include designated representatives from the Texas Library Association staff as well as the appropriate TLA membership. TF members also feel that other partners such as non-profit C.E. environment such as Amigos and independent consultants might be included during the data gathering and design process.*

**Regional library systems should be encouraged to consider alternative governance structures. (#8)**

**Reexamination of the MRC host model**

**501(c) 3**

**Hosting of Systems by smaller libraries meeting the criteria for a MRC (although the quote from the Study was “Hosting of systems**

**by medium-sized libraries” this comment more accurately identifies what is recommended)**

*There are ten systems in Texas and two of the ten would be considered as currently operating under alternative governance structures. One system is a 501c3 and another is exploring 501c3 status. One system is located in a MRC library that is not the largest library in the system.*

*TF members recommend that pros and cons of MRC host models (varied throughout Texas), 501c3 environments and medium-sized hosting models be closely examined. TF members encourage systems to assess the variety of models offered to them - not limited to these - to determine the best possible economies of funding models. TF members feel that moving to 501c3 is a viable option for some systems.*

### **Report/Research Recommendations**

General content on Recommendation #3 includes:

- In the absence of data that supports the recommendation for the continuation of ten regional offices operating under a reduced number of administrative hubs as providing a more efficient or effective system organization, the majority of people who contributed to the TF process felt that there should be no change in the boundaries of systems and in the number of systems..
- TF discussion and some data collected for alternative governance structures indicated that the savings generated by the model for consolidation of the current 10 systems into 9 systems with significantly different boundaries would need to be put back into the 9 systems to accommodate increased/expanded areas of service. FG discussions were not supportive of this recommendation. In the absence of data that supports the recommendation as being a more efficient or effective system organization, the majority of people who contributed to the TF process felt that there should not be an attempt to equalize the number of libraries served by systems by the consolidation of the current 10 systems into 9 systems with significantly different boundaries.
- TF small group and FG discussion was extensive on the consolidation of the current 10 systems into 7 administrative units with up to 13

regional “presences.” General opinion was that - given current system funding levels or even moderately expanded levels - this would not be an economic or efficient support for public libraries given current system funding, staffing and geographic issues in Texas. This was not a popular recommendation among attendees at FG meetings.

- The TF sub group on systems supports page 44 H &W statement “that the population shifts mentioned much earlier in this report demand a new look at this issue “significant alteration in the distribution of system funds” quite aside from system reconfiguration.

<b>Recommendation/Research for Recommendation #3</b>	<b>Who*</b>	<b>Priority**</b>
<p><b>Uniform administrative costs should be identified and defined for systems.</b> (see Appendix for data)  This data is critical as the administrative percentages (H&amp; W study, system cost estimates) vary. With clear definitions, a true assessment of the administrative costs can be prepared. This research should answer the question “What is the basis for those administrative costs.”</p>	TSLAC staff  System Coord.	HIGH
<p><b>Research should be conducted on “The continuation of ten regional offices operating under a reduced number of administrative hubs.”</b>  The TF small group indicated that several different courses of action might be taken to address this situation. Data collected by the TF indicated that it is likely there were functions existing in systems that could be consolidated - especially in the office management/business and accounting areas. This option was discussed in all FG's. General consensus was that a cost model could be developed for this if the plan was developed with the goal remaining of efficient and effective use of limited resources and not only cost savings. It could be accomplished through Systems paying other systems fees to manage their administrative services with redirected funding used for improved or expanded services to public libraries. This research should also include a look into collaborating systems working together on continuing education and consulting. Outsourcing should also be part of this discussion. Possible disadvantages include: barriers of policies and procedures of the MRC's; cities unwilling to allow fiscal action outside the city's control; other possible city legal issues; the length of time to implement; and need for regional planning to maintain regional</p>	TSLAC staff  System Coord  New or existing TLA group	Low

<p>identify.</p>		
<p><b>Given that most elements of Recommendation #3 suggested reconfiguration of systems for economy and efficiency/cost savings, the TF small group recommends that – prior to assessments on reconfiguring - a number of questions be researched and answered.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are administrative costs really too high?</li> <li>• Are the systems inefficient?</li> <li>• If the systems are inefficient, can efficiency be increased with the destruction of regional system identities?</li> <li>• What are the services that could be centralized while maintaining the integrity of the individual system and while following the policies and procedures of the governing body?</li> <li>• What are the issues that need to be addressed while assessing outsourcing?</li> <li>• What is the financial impact of any proposed reconfiguration of systems with new boundaries?</li> </ul>	<p>TSLAC System Coord Outside consult.</p>	<p>HIGH</p>
<p><b>All stakeholders should be actively involved in the decision making process for systems, specifically System Coordinators and System membership.</b></p>	<p>TSLAC Systems TLA</p>	<p>HIGH</p>
<p><b>Every effort should be made to establish a process to allow statewide stakeholders to reach</b></p>	<p>TSLAC Systems TLA</p>	<p>HIGH</p>

<b>consensus on changes for systems.</b>		
<b>The funding formula should be reviewed and revised to meet the changing needs of public libraries and their systems.</b>	TSLAC Systems TLA	HIGH
<b>New funding for research and – as recommended from assessment and study – should be obtained for investigating systems’ futures and subsequent implementation of changes.</b>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>Recommendation/Research for Recommendation #8</b></p> <p>The TF small groups focused on answering these questions and making the recommendations listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What alternative governance structures are available to systems now? Are other alternatives needed?</li> <li>• What are the financial and non-financial costs of each governance structure and what are the benefits and drawbacks?</li> <li>• How can systems and member librarians determine which governance structure best meets their needs</li> </ul>	<b>Who*</b>	<b>Priority**</b>

<p><b>Budgeting guidelines should be implemented for both system and TANG grants with new standardized budget categories to clearly identify administrative and indirect costs.</b> There should be a separate category for the costs of complying with MRC and TSLAC requirements, such as preparing reports and evaluations, which are not directly related to the administration of programs for members. Having detailed, comparable costs will make it possible for a system to compare its costs with other systems and with proposals from other organizations seeking to operate systems. The budget categories should enable systems to clearly identify the different kinds of costs. (See Appendices for suggestions by the TF small group and the System coordinators for standard budget categories for administrative costs. TSLAC’s audit of indirect and direct costs also provides standard categories which could be used if they are detailed enough to make meaningful comparisons.)</p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>The study of indirect cost rates at representative non-MRC cities TSLAC should be initiated and published as a supplement to the audit of current MRC indirect costs.</b> This will provide systems with an additional tool to evaluate their costs.</p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>MRCs and other organizations should be required to clearly identify and justify their administrative costs for the system and TANG grants using the new standardized TSLAC budget categories.</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>A recommended maximum level of administrative costs should be established for the system and TANG grants based on the new standardized budget categories.</b> The recommendation should take into account the effect on costs of complying with MRC and TSLAC requirements, such as preparing reports and evaluations.</p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>The administrative and indirect costs for all</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH

<p><b>system and TANG grants should be published annually in detail so that systems may easily compare their costs.</b> The specific costs for complying with MRC and TSLAC requirements – which directly affect the level of administrative costs -- should be clearly identified.</p>		
<p><b>A campaign should be created, perhaps including workshops to be offered in systems and at TLA Annual Conference, to publicize the advantages of using inter local agreements for reducing costs and avoiding unnecessary bidding.</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>TSLAC should collect and publish current information about specific discount agreements or contracts which systems and libraries can take advantage of through inter local agreements.</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>A process should be explored to allow systems to make direct grants, like the Loan Star Libraries grants, to their members.</b> Direct grants would significantly reduce the administrative costs for system programs, which purchase materials or equipment for their members and provide greater flexibility for members in choosing the vendors and taking advantage of inter local agreements.</p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>A study should be initiated to determine whether systems can significantly reduce costs by centralizing administration of some tasks – e. g., bookkeeping, paying invoices, payroll, benefits, or coordination of continuing education.</b> The study should also take into account the positive and negative <b>non-financial</b> implications of centralizing administrative tasks. (See other recommendations in this section for similar recommendations.)</p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>A workshop should be created to publicize the advantages and disadvantages of MRC and nonprofit governance and the procedures for changing governance.</b> The workshop should be offered to systems and through TLA Conferences.</p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>Supporting materials should be collected and</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH

<p><b>published, such as model articles of incorporation, bylaws, policies, and business plans, and a model RFP for soliciting proposals to operate the system.</b> These materials should be referenced in the chapter on regional library systems in the <i>System Orientation Manual</i> on the TSLAC web site and any future printed edition</p>		
<p><b>TSLAC should proactively assist systems desiring to change their governance</b> by providing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projected amounts for each system of the TANG grants in next biennium</li> <li>• Standardized budget categories for administrative and indirect costs</li> <li>• A recommended maximum level of administrative costs as a percentage of the total system and TANG grant to assist systems in evaluating proposals</li> <li>• The specific cash reserve amounts (based on the current system and TANG budget) each system would need in order to change to nonprofit governance or to be operated by a business</li> <li>• A detailed list of allowable methods for obtaining the cash reserve amounts required for changing to non-profits</li> <li>• A detailed description (i. e., more detailed than that outlined in the <i>System Orientation Manual</i>) of the procedure by which a MRC system determines that it has secured the approval of two-thirds of the governing bodies as required by Sec. 441.131.(a) of the Library Systems Act</li> <li>• A formal policy that when more than one entity is qualified and interested, system members will make the final recommendation to TSLAC of the entity to administer the system</li> <li>• A model RFP which allows systems to solicit proposals from organizations interested in operating the system that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Selection criteria that weight most</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	TSLAC	HIGH

<p>heavily the quality and extent of services provided and make clear that the lowest bid will not necessarily determine the successful proposer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standardized budget categories for administrative and indirect costs to allow comparison among proposals</li> <li>▪ That the system members will select the successful proposer and recommend that entity to TSLAC</li> <li>▪ A statement that the contract between the successful proposer and TSLAC will be renewed each year only if the system members formally agree to the renewal</li> </ul> <p>See related recommendation lists in “Alternative Structures.”</p>		
<p><b>The rules for administering systems should be amended so that when more than one interested entity meets TSLAC criteria to administer the system, the system members will formally recommend to TSLAC which entity TSLAC should contract with to administer the system.</b></p> <p>The TF small group suggests that the recommendation be based on a vote of two-thirds of the directors of member libraries, with each director having one vote. A vote of two-thirds of the directors should also be the procedure used when a MRC system desires to change to a different qualified MRC and to make a recommendation each year to TSLAC on whether to accept the MRC’s proposed plan of service.</p>	TSLAC	HIGH

\*in order by group discussion

\*\*indicated by level of interest in topic

-High (many discussions and comments/immediately)

-Moderate (some discussions and comments/within two years)

-Low (few discussions and comments/needed but no time line)

<b>Recommendation/Research for Recommendation #2</b>	<b>Who*</b>	<b>Priority**</b>
<b>Systems should explore the benefits of alternative governance to ensure that system dollars are being spent in most economic and efficient manner.</b> (See appendices.)	Systems TSLAC	Moderate
<b>The benefits of alternative governance should be explored to ensure that member libraries have the maximum benefits and maximum flexibility to meet their needs.</b> (See appendices .)	Systems TSLAC	Moderate
<b>A sample RFP to use to determine benefits/pros and cons of hosting by non-MRC city environments.</b> (See appendices )	Systems MRC's TSLAC	HIGH
<b>A checklist should be created - using the TF small group initial checklist in Recommendation #8 - a model 501c3 system checklist to use in planning and assessing the move from MRC model to 501c3.</b>	Systems TSLAC MRC's	HIGH

\*in order by group discussion

\*\*indicated by level of interest in topic

-High (many discussions and comments/immediately)

-Moderate (some discussions and comments/within two years)

-Low (few discussions and comments/needed but no time line)

<b>Recommendation/Research for Recommendation #13</b>	<b>Who*</b>	<b>Priority**</b>
<p>Systems and system members would greatly benefit from greater coordination in collection development activities. This coordination could come from- but not be limited to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggregate buying programs among systems/city purchasing agreements.</li> <li>• Aggregate buying programs from state agencies (see Recommendation #5 for mechanism)</li> <li>• Contracting collection development management activities such as administration, billing, etc.</li> <li>• Loaning materials among systems</li> <li>• Sharing materials and resources with other types of libraries</li> <li>• Using other types of libraries purchasing agreements as available</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Inter local Agreements should be investigated as a way for MRC systems to reduce the administrative costs for paying collection development invoices.</b> MRC systems should also investigate the feasibility of contracting with the non-profit regional library system to perform invoice processing for one or more MRC system. TSLAC and Systems with supportive host cities and few administrative barriers to cooperative purchasing should lead the effort to combine the purchasing power of interested systems. Further study is needed to determine which commodities would provide the best financial advantages for cooperative purchasing for the MRC systems.</p>	MRC's Systems TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>Data should be collected on system staff expertise and availability and organize, maintain and use data to share system staff expertise.</b> A survey</p>	Systems TSLAC	Moderate

<p>should be used to identify the skill sets of the professional staff in the 10 library systems. Job analysis/human resources professionals should construct the survey, analyze the results, and prepare a database that makes this information accessible to the library systems.</p>		
<p><b>Cooperative agreements should be considered to hire professional consulting services in areas that are outside the expertise of system consulting staffs.</b> Inter-local agreements may be used to pool funds to hire a specialist(s) to be shared among the contracting systems.</p>	<p>Systems TSLAC MRC's</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p><b>Identify the benefits from greater coordination in using staff expertise, given a cost-beneficial funding model.</b> System staff should explore the feasibility and cost effectiveness of providing professional consulting services to systems that lack the needed expertise “in-house”. Systems should participate voluntarily when the best interests of the member libraries in both systems will be served. Agreements for participation (such as formal Inter local Agreement) in staff-sharing programs should be developed in concert with TSLAC, system staff and system Advisory Councils. Coordination in using staff expertise could include - but not be limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff moving (virtually or actually) among systems to assist with system support</li> <li>▪ Staff moving (virtually or actually) among systems to assist with system member training and development</li> <li>▪ Assessing local expertise from other entities such as other types of libraries, other community organizations</li> </ul>	<p>Systems TSLAC MRC's</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
	<p>Systems</p>	<p>Moderate</p>

<b>The benefits from collective contracting/hiring of staff expertise to assist in short-term/long-term projects should be identified.</b>	MRC's TSLAC	
<b>Data should be collected and opportunities identified for using staff expertise and availability from other types of libraries and other community entities for local and regional sharing for systems and system members.</b>	Systems MRC's TSLAC	Moderate
<b>Professional collection materials in all formats should be actively promoted and shared with all system members and other cooperating local and regional partners across the state.</b> A union catalog should be developed and made widely accessible.	Systems	Moderate
<b>Ways to standardize the continuing education calendars posted on all systems web sites should be identified.</b> Once standardized these calendars would be consolidated quarterly and sent to each system. This unified calendar could also be posted on the TSL web site.	TSLAC Systems TLA	Moderate
<b>Other resource sharing opportunities – not identified in the Study - should be explored for their feasibility</b>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Systems could swap materials collections (i.e. large print) so that each partner would have access to different materials.</li> <li>2. Systems could actively promote and share professional collection materials in all formats to all system members across the state.</li> <li>3. A union catalog could be developed and offered to all public librarians around the state.</li> <li>4. An aggressive marketing program should be developed to make librarians aware of these materials</li> </ol>	Systems TSLAC	Not rated as these were not discussed

\*in order by group discussion

\*\*indicated by level of interest in topic

- High (many discussions and comments/immediately)
- Moderate (some discussions and comments/within two years)
- Low (few discussions and comments/needed but no time line)

<b>Recommendation/Research for Recommendation #12</b>	<b>Who*</b>	<b>Priority**</b>
<p><b>A Texas C.E. “leader” must be identified in order for any progress to occur.</b> Some FG suggestions indicated that TLA might be the most effective as “leader” – perhaps through the new CE Coordinator position located at the Association. (This position has been in the TLA Strategic Plan for many years and is slated for funding for the '06 fiscal year.)</p>	<p>TLA TSLAC Systems</p>	<p>HIGH</p>
<p><b>An umbrella organization should take responsibility for serving as an umbrella organization to tap into the activities of other CE providers – fostering better lines of communication for discovering just what opportunities are available and then making that information available to others.</b> This communication role suggested was seen as “different” and not to be confused with the “leadership” role suggested for the statewide initiative for TLA. TSLAC was suggested as this coordinating entity.</p>	<p>TSLAC TLA Systems</p>	<p>HIGH</p>
<p><b>A group should be formed (of all CE providers) to discuss the issues (find common ground) BEFORE attempting to “design” a statewide CE plan.</b> The TLSAC and System Consultants were very concerned that the unique needs of the various “types” of libraries could present issues and wanted clarification on TF recommendations for “all” CE providers and on the exclusion of special libraries as a population.</p>	<p>TSLAC TLA Systems</p>	<p>HIGH</p>
<p><b>A task force should be established by CE providers including TSLAC, systems, and other</b></p>	<p>TLA TSLAC</p>	<p>HIGH</p>

<p><b>partners (ex. ESCs, Amigos, local and regional training initiatives, TLA, academics) to design a statewide plan for CE priorities and delivery of and access to CE opportunities in all forms and formats.</b> Again, the TSLAC and System Consultant FG felt a “leader”(TLA was suggested) must be identified or nothing will change in the design and delivery of Texas CE.</p>	<p>Systems</p>	
<p><b>An expanded statewide CE web presence should be created – in cooperation with appropriate CE partners – that expand the TSLAC CE web presence and coordinates the design of a statewide CE calendar.</b> With the cooperation of various TLA committees, interests groups, TSLAC and the System Consultants and other entities, this can be accomplished.</p>	<p>TSLAC Systems TLA</p>	<p>HIGH</p>
<p><b>Contracting for statewide CE programs and projects should be explored for such programs as Planning for Results, advocacy training, specialized manuals such as security, advanced training for library staff and administrators, and expanded technology training.</b> It was suggested that “technology training” either be further clarified – or removed completely. “General” technology training is possible at a higher level, but eventually the training must be specific to a library’s needs. At least one other program (TANG) exists to cover this area of training need.</p>	<p>TSLAC Systems TLA</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p><b>In coordination with systems and other appropriate CE partners should collect and disseminate information about successful regional CE innovations, CE best practice library topics, emerging trends, outreach to communities, and collaborative efforts with local entities.</b></p>	<p>TSLAC Systems Non-profits TLA</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p><b>The standards should be assessed for their impact on statewide CE - in coordination with systems and other appropriate CE partners.</b></p>	<p>TSLAC Systems Non-profits TLA</p>	<p>Moderate</p>

<b>A multi-state plan for coordinated and reciprocal certification of librarians expanded Texas CE credentials such as county library certification (See the Legislative section) should continue to be explored.</b>	TSLAC Systems TLA	Moderate
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\*in order by group discussion

\*\*indicated by level of interest in topic

- High (many discussions and comments/immediately)
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- Low (few discussions and comments/needed but no time line)

### **Comments (TF, FG, Individual) on recommendations on alternative structures**

The staffing expertise that exists in each of the 10 library systems is extensive and impressive. This expertise covers a wide breadth of knowledge and experience in library management practices and is the core of the human capital so vital to an information and service organization like a cooperative library system. Professional staffs working in the regional systems have both extensive library field experience and academic preparation for their areas of expertise. Other non-library science related areas of competency, principally in computer technology and network management, also exist in nearly every one of the regional systems.

Three major hurdles exist for harnessing this “in-house” expertise on a statewide basis:

- the formidable task of identifying and documenting the specific skill sets that exist among the staffs of the 10 regions,
- the ever present staff turnover and shortages of professional staff in the system offices, and
- the most daunting barrier is the allocation of costs for shared professional services among the regional systems.

These barriers call for different strategies for dealing with the challenges they represent to cooperation between the 10 regional systems.

Allocation of costs for shared “in-house” professional services among regional systems

*“The consultants also believe that the regional systems can work together to build special talents and skills that can be shared on a statewide basis. Larger systems with greater staffing depth could assist the smaller systems, while at the same time, enhance their revenue.”*

No precedent could be found for providing the professional services of one Texas library system’s staff to another library system on a regular basis, although informal sharing of staff expertise has occurred among the systems for many years. Coordinators have repeatedly stated that such arrangements have been both welcomed and successful. Most sharing takes the form of a system staff member taking vacation and receiving a presenter’s fee to present a workshop or series of workshops in another system. Other forms of sharing expertise include referring consulting questions to a system with a recognized expert in a specialized area of library services. (i.e. TIF grants, E-rate, children’s services, etc.) This is done on an irregular basis and no reimbursement for such service is asked or expected by the systems.

The specific recommendation by the PLDS consultant that larger systems offer expertise to the smaller systems and that these larger systems get paid for providing these services uncovers several issues that would have to be addressed:

- identifying the appropriate method for calculating cost recovery for these services,
- whether the lowest population systems would be able or willing to pay for these services out of their increasingly smaller budgets, and
- the challenge of dealing with program income for the system providing the service (payment for consulting services would be considered program income so it must be expended in the year it is received).

In the survey data included in this report under “Resources, most coordinators indicated a willingness to consider some form of staff sharing among the systems. Cost allocation and contractual issues touched on in this report would have to be thoroughly investigated and resolved before systems would commit to embracing this strategy.

A follow-on recommendation that systems pool funds to hire a specialist(s) to be shared among the contracting systems would require only changes in the annual plans of service of the participating systems. The greatest barrier to implementation of this recommendation is institutional. Several of the nine host cities have administrative or policy barriers that may make such

cooperative hiring difficult. Those barriers are addressed elsewhere in the document.

Survey responses from the coordinators indicate a general willingness to explore these sharing opportunities. Recommendations 2 & 3 won the strongest support. Further study is needed to determine when and how the recommendations might be implemented.

“There are frequently errors in shipping, billing, defective materials, incorrect discounts, etc. that are more easily solved by the system office. “

“The City of MRC Town won’t even allow deposit accounts.”

“As long as we are part of a MRC system, we are bound by the local purchasing and administrative rules. Outsourcing has not become common in MRC Town nor are inter local agreements.”

“If we were no longer part of a MRC system, it might work. The transition would be difficult, however. Area librarians like to know whom they are working with so that they feel comfortable calling with questions. In time that could be accomplished even when all contact is by phone and mail/email. “

Survey comments from the coordinators identified some of the logistical and organizational barriers that would have to be overcome for staff sharing to become workable. Here are some of the concerns expressed:

“There will be many issues to be resolved, not the least of which is local city policies for travel, reimbursement, etc. I don’t think we should assume that there will be any cost savings. We need to create some models and test them for costs and viability.”

“Some area librarians would be glad to have access to specialists in certain areas. Some of our members have already taken advantage of other system’s staffs’ expertise regarding e-rate and.... they occasionally called him about automation generally. Others are hesitant to call our system office for help and would probably not use someone located even further away.”

Sharing staff expertise without charge with other systems was strongly supported by the coordinators but with reservations:

“Depends on the extent of the service. Perhaps limited by the amount of staff time involved per request. I can anticipate some problems if libraries requiring extensive handholding could call another system without restrictions. “

“On the rare occasions when this comes up, we do it now. Our philosophy has always been that systems were intended to cooperate to the fullest extent that the rules allow.”

Sharing the professional collections in system offices was generally favorable but a few coordinators had reservations. Here their comments:

“This collection is first and foremost for use by the system staff in consulting and by member libraries. However, this system is happy to lend this collection to other system offices. Demand and abuse of loan periods by distance education students (both locally and through ILL) have resulted in materials being restricted to building use only. “

“We do that anyway through ILL. Currently our professional collection is rapidly becoming out of date, because we have not been able to budget to add to it. We have been relying more on TSLAC’s collection, the MRC’s collection, and ILL for current materials.”

Staff turnover and shortages of professional staff in the system offices needs to be factored in to decision making.

- Turnover of professional staff is a fact of life in every organization. Professional librarians with the knowledge, experience, and skills essential for a successful library consultant are in demand in the larger library community. Systems compete for the most qualified individuals on a statewide basis, and salary caps in many of the MRC systems put them at a competitive disadvantage when recruiting consultants. Retaining qualified staff is equally difficult for many systems. Serving as a system consultant gives professional staff broad exposure to

an array of projects, situations, people, and experiences that expand the knowledge base of the individual. The opportunity for greater professional responsibility, a higher salary, or a more stable funding future can be irresistible to qualified and talented system staff.

- The impact of staffing turnover and shortages has been felt most acutely in the western regional systems. (TPLS, TTPLS, WTLS) Declining budgets of the lowest population systems makes recruitment and retention of staff a critical issue for these systems.

Historically, continuing education events provided by the 10 library systems have been open and free to anyone associated with the public library community in Texas. Librarians have shown little hesitation about crossing system boundaries when the training offered in a neighboring system met the needs of the individual. This open door philosophy is hindered by the lack of a systematic and dependable way to make training known to public librarians around the state. Attempts have been made by the State Library and members of the Texas Library Association to develop and keep current a unified continuing education calendar for the state of Texas. This task has proven to be greater than the resources available to do the job.

A less ambitious approach to the unified calendar concept might be the standardization of continuing education calendars posted on the systems' web sites. Systems could adopt a single format for displaying continuing education events. This would make searching the various calendars easier for the user looking for training topics. To make this standard format even more useful, a volunteer or Friend of the Library in a system could periodically "harvest" the lists from the systems' web site and compile it into a "Union Calendar" of opportunities for system provided training only. This quarterly calendar of system continuing education opportunities would display by topic, date, and location. Local contact information would also be provided. This unified list would then be sent to each coordinator and be posted on a commonly accessible web page (TSLAC, for example).

Purchasing and Invoice Payment

While the legal framework exists for cooperation between systems, the ability to engage in cooperative purchasing agreements varies considerably among the nine MRC systems. Survey responses and individual comments indicated that local administrative barriers in some cities make cooperation difficult or impossible for some systems. Other cities erect no barriers to cooperative purchasing. Still, interest in receiving higher discounts on library materials was strong among the coordinators. All respondents indicated an interest in sharing purchasing contracts if the administrative barriers could be overcome.

Centralizing administrative or clerical functions related to payment of collection development invoices also received support among survey respondents. However, sharing of staff costs among different municipalities presents even greater challenges than cooperative purchasing programs. Since state law does allow for Inter local Agreements for services, it is possible in theory to contract out invoice payment functions to another local government. Such an Inter local Agreement would cover the costs for both staff and for the materials purchased through this agreement. Significant cooperation from purchasing department officials in each of the host cities would be needed. This proposal is of sufficient complexity that it requires further study by purchasing professionals.

Not to be overlooked is the possibility of MRC systems contracting the invoice payment function out to the non-profit regional library system. State purchasing law requiring competitive bidding of service contracts should be examined to see if this is an advisable alternative. In a competitive bidding situation, it is possible that an entity other than the regional library system might offer to perform services at a lower cost. Local government policies may also restrict the ability of the non-profit library system to provide services to a MRC system.

#### Professional Services

The ability of the MRC systems to contract with each other for services is clearly allowed under the Inter local Cooperation Act. However, local policy and practice regarding Inter local Agreements varies considerably among the nine MRC systems. These agreements for consulting or other professional services would be initiated between each local government and require city council approval in each jurisdiction. Cost of services rendered would be specifically described and payment for services made in accordance with the agreement. Considerable effort would go in to structuring such agreements to insure that the interests of the member libraries in each system are well served.

The annual plan of service of each participating system would incorporate performance measures and financial information about program income of each arrangement. As mentioned before, survey responses from coordinators indicate concern about overcoming local administrative barriers to acquiring services through alternatives such as Inter local Agreements

We need to look at what becoming a 501c3 will affect – ex. Staff with service credits with city/benefit package

MRCs may not see any of the indirect cost savings? Could administrative costs be moved to cities/MRC – incentives to do so? Could others – Amigos, TSLAC... do this (administration)?

Use RFP and other competitive processes to select providers of system services.

Costs included in administration should be very carefully identified and defined

What resources designate a MRC? Population - collection - size  
NTRLS was established as a non-profit nine years ago. We have been a pathfinder and as such, have identified and overcome problems other systems wishing to achieve non-profit status will be able to circumvent or avoid. As a non-profit system, we pay no indirect costs, are not bound by city policies and procedures, can accept monies from fund-raising and grant sources, and can easily collaborate with other entities. Based on our experience, we believe that a mix of city, suburban and outlying libraries serves all libraries better than some of the suggested alternatives

## Resources

### CE

- Idaho State Library Strategic Plan for Library Training and Continuing Education 2003-2006  
<http://www.lili.org/forlibs/ce/ce-plan-2003-2006.pdf>
- MLA Continuing Education Clearinghouse  
<http://www.mlanet.org/education/cech/index.php3>
- New Jersey Library Events  
<http://www.huntcal.com/cgi/calview.cgi/njlibraries/njlibraries?vm=r>
- Ohio State Library Automated Statewide Calendar System  
<http://www.ceohio.org/>

### Cooperative Purchasing

- Texas statute authorizes and encourages agreements between governmental entities for the purpose of acquiring goods and services. These are non-competitive agreements. These Inter local agreements and specific provisions of these agreements can be found in the State of Texas Government Code Chapter 791, *Inter local Cooperation Contracts*, cited as the Inter local Cooperation Act. The intent of this act is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments by authorizing them to contract with one another and with agencies of the state. The Inter local Act was modified in 2001 to allow “cross-jurisdictional” inter local agreements. This authorizes local governments to enter into agreements with any other government, not just local or contiguous states. A local government may perform services under an Inter local or may acquire services under an Inter local. Commercial-purpose Inter local Agreements are usually prepared as freestanding documents and require the approval of the governing body of the contracting governments. State law also allows local governments to make purchases from State of Texas contracts when those state contracts are the result of a competitive acquisition process.

- Electronic links to these laws are found at:
  - <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/lg/lg0027100.html#lg051.271.081>
  - <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/lg/lg0027100.html#lg061.271.102>

## **Research**

### **Research by systems needed:**

1. How difficult and/or divisive will it be to convince the governing bodies of the member libraries to agree to such a momentous change?
  2. Are there mid-size libraries acceptable to TSLAC as MRCs which are willing to host a system and whose costs would be lower than the existing MRC?
  3. Will existing staff be willing to relocate to the new location(s), or can new staff be hired there?
  4. What benefits can be identified to interest a mid-size library in hosting the system?
  5. What are the office space requirements for system staff? What is the variety of models based on size of system staff?
  6. What are the average rental costs in cities where the regional library system would locate?
  7. Even if the indirect cost is high, will the change be cost effective for this system?
  8. How will the system raise the unallowable costs reserve (which can't come from the system grant; see *System Orientation Manual for 1998*, p. 82)
  9. What would be the timeline for changing governance or the MRC?
  10. Can an existing nonprofit – such as Library Partners or Amigos – contract with TSLAC to operate a system? Two or more systems? (Resource: Margaret Nichols letter to Peggy Rudd)
- (See also Appendix for Checklist for Change from Traditional MRC Model.)

### **Other research needed...**

1. What are best practices in statewide delivery of CE?

2. What are models of delivering CE in geographically disparate environments?
3. Are there sample/best practice sample RFP's for system hosting from other areas?
4. Is there a model checklist for 501c3?
5. What are the funding model for cooperative activities included but not limited to: cost for sharing staff; consulting service via phone, fax or email for a set **fee**; and jointly hiring a specialized consultant?
6. Are there cost benefits assessments for using statewide cooperative materials purchasing/leasing plans?
7. What are the internal barriers to systems contracting out for services?
8. What is a best practice for system's using purchasing agreement from other entities. (Other modes of cooperative purchasing and procurement that are available to local governmental entities should be identified and documented for use by the entire library community. )
9. Are there best practice processes for systems or other entities sharing materials.

## **Legislative**

- Review statewide library laws for systems moving to non-profits including allowable cash reserves.
  - Explore amending LSA SEC.441.138 (d)
  - Eliminate barriers – as needed – for cooperative purchasing of system materials.
- Identify city and county laws related to libraries and system activities for any legislative activity needed in areas that include outsourcing, purchasing, and contracts across entities.

## Technology (Recommendation 14)

Many Study recommendations involved technology specifically and some are dependent upon technology such as the ILL recommendation. This recommendation focuses on technology as a means to deliver library resources and materials through online databases to Texas public and academic libraries.

The recommendation is for TSLAC to continue to work closely with all of the partners in public library development to ensure that all public libraries continue to have access to a significant selection of online databases. In addition, the recommendation goal is for databases for all libraries and to deliver databases through shared costs.

### Summary

*While the databases in and of themselves are not controversial, but much valued resources, there was much discussion during TF and FG Report data gathering on the use of databases, the marketing of databases and the TexShare program overall, the value of the databases for small public libraries, the cost of databases, the cost model and how it is applied to participating libraries, and future cost models and where the money is coming from to support the program.*

*The TF is supportive of this recommendation. General opinion of the FG's is supportive as well but a common belief held is that databases should not be supported to the exclusion of other critical support for Texas public libraries.*

### Report/Research Recommendations

Recommendation/Research	Who*	Priority**
<p><b>The Texas State Library and Archives Commission should have as its goal the provision of online databases to all residents of the state of Texas through all types of libraries in the state including academic, public and school libraries.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To address funding concerns of those libraries which are currently served with online databases licensed by the Texas State Library, the TF small group</li> </ul>	<p>TSLAC TLA</p>	<p><b>HIGH</b></p>

<p>recommends that any new types of libraries added to the service would be required to identify a new source of funding in order to access the service and not require existing funding for current library customers to be redistributed in order to them. Specifically, legislation should continue to be introduced to allow school libraries to join TexShare but include a “hold harmless” clause in the legislation so that the inclusion of school libraries does not financially or otherwise negatively impact the current members of TexShare.</p> <p>Libraries will be required to be members of TexShare to access the database service.</p>		
<p><b>Centralize the coordination of the licensed database program in the Texas State Library but consider alternatives in order to make available more flexible payment options including outsourcing components of the plan’s administration, and provide a menu of licensed databases from which libraries may choose to subscribe in order to meet the needs of each library’s customers.</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>Expand and refine a marketing plan to ensure library customers, including legislators, understand the value of online databases and the TexShare program.</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>Price should not be a barrier to libraries wishing to participate in TexShare.</b></p>	TSLAC	Moderate
<p><b>Educate library staffs throughout the state on how to use the licensed databases effectively and thus enhance their understanding of the value TexShare and its databases to the education of our communities and their economic success.</b></p>	TSLAC	HIGH
<p><b>Recommend that the Texas State Library continue to prepare scenarios to accommodate the possibility that in the future there may be fewer, very limited or no funds to support the TexShare program and address funding and participation issues in these scenarios.</b> These scenarios may include (but not be limited to) a core of databases common to all libraries as well as providing selections of databases targeted to distinct user communities, offering a wider range of databases which may</p>	TSLAC	HIGH

require cost sharing by individual libraries, and facilitating the formation of consortial groups to purchase databases through established library partners. These new scenarios may require a change in philosophy from current practice.		
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## Comments

Joint purchasing database programs are working in several places and there is a need to speed up plans for varieties of purchasing programs at the state level as several counties near Houston are already involved in purchasing programs for databases through Amigos

There is some conflict between libraries purchase programs and state purchasing programs. Need databases available for all but also need menu driven database program to provide additional databases for those with extra money. TexShare vs. TexSelect

The loss of the Texas Library Connection (TEA) databases for public schools is affecting public libraries. The Laredo Public Library has seen an increase of 39% in public computer use.

From a system meeting.... “ What do we think our patrons need? Looking at the library from the patron’s point of view, the most important services we offer are computers, the collection, hours, customer service, accessibility, online services and parking.”

Libraries cannot afford not to use databases.

Losing BIP a problem - even sale cost is too high.

Create a tier structure so that small libraries as well as large libraries can buy into ...different libraries need different types of databases - regardless of size.

Share costs, but not if sacrifice system. Databases becoming more important, contacts for remote areas. Databases are information suppliers, Systems work with people. Can't sacrifice system services for databases/ People come first.

## Resources

- Statewide programs  
[http://www.baker.edu/library/dlls/statewide\\_resources.htm](http://www.baker.edu/library/dlls/statewide_resources.htm)

## **Research**

- Identify models for alternative administration of databases from successful statewide programs
- Design scenarios of pricing structures for future funding models
- Design a marketing plan to create awareness among legislators, general population, librarians
- Continue to maintain and expand where necessary – an education plan for librarians to make use of online resources for patrons

## **Legislative**

- Seek more permanent funding for current statewide database program
- Expand TexShare (holding member libraries harmless) to school library membership

## Standards (Recommendations 9,15)

Standards are a critical element of quality library service. A variety of entities have partnered to design and disseminate Texas public library standards and the Study identified a variety of areas of standards issues. They include:

- The use of long-term strategies to link funding with the implementation of standards
- Standards should be considered from the user point of view
- Libraries need to see real evidence that assistance will be available that will enable them to work toward the attainment of the standards that are adopted through support and incentives from TSLAC and systems.
- The development of a plan for standards implementation that:
  - creates an awareness that standards can be a valuable tool in public library development,
  - identifies a core subset of minimum standards that are challenging but, with assistance, achievable, and
  - clearly spells out the kind of assistance and aid that will be sought to help libraries meet standards.

### Summary

*The TF and FG's are very supportive of standards and feel that standards should be used by management for measurement and assessment to support change and growth and to better serve communities. TF's feel strongly there should be incentives for using standards. In addition, they are very supportive of the TSLAC "Minimum Criteria for System Membership" being reviewed for revisions based on the Standards.*

*Primary discussion from the TF on this recommendation focused on concerns on how Minimum Criteria for system membership might be wrapped into the Standards, however, the TF is very supportive of the creation of an awareness tool; of the need to identify a core subset of minimum standards and is*

*supportive of the recommendation for identifying assistance, but pessimistic given the variety and number of Texas public libraries.*

### **Report/Research Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation/Research</b>	<b>Who*</b>	<b>Priority**</b>
Determine pros and cons and steps that need to be taken to make the voluntary standards, required.	TSLAC TLA	HIGH
Determine incentive programs for libraries meeting standards.	TSLAC TLA Systems	HIGH
Develop a marketing plan to create awareness that standards can be a valuable tool in public library development and to market the standards and minimum criteria to the libraries and librarians, library supporters and legislative entities.	TSLAC TLA Systems	HIGH
Identify a core subset of minimum standards that are challenging but with assistance, achievable.	TSLAC TLA Systems	HIGH
Identify the kind of assistance and aid that will be sought to help libraries meet standards.	TSLAC TLA Systems	HIGH

\*In order by group discussion

\*\*Indicated by level of interest in topic

-High (many discussions and comments/immediately)

-Moderate (some discussions and comments/within two years)

-Low (few discussions and comments/needed but no time line)

## Comments

Standards should be considered from the user point of view.

Libraries need to see real evidence that assistance will be available that will enable them to work toward the attainment of the standards that are adopted through support and incentives from TSLAC and systems.

FG's identified concerns and comments by Standards categories

- Outreach – requires more staff/resources -- good idea – but not practical
- Compliance – not required to have library – need something at state level to require a library
- Don't have TIF/Tocker and can't write grants
- Hard to get resources from city- enough funds for 1/capita – if weed won't meet standard
- ADA compliance expensive
- Parking may not be possible with historic structures
- Educational requirements – 5 yrs experience for pop. groups – may be hard to meet
- Hours open/week – question on numbers
- CE requirement – may be hard to meet
- Promotion – may not have resources to meet
- Services available during hours open – will require more resources – needs better definition
- Computer instruction – don't have time to do
- Reference service –
- Community programming – how many? Resource constraints
- Question – what does non-compliance mean?
- Historic buildings/limitations
- Probation could be part of process
- Programming – not measurable “adequate”

Smaller libraries need more flexibility on when open – not requiring morning/afternoon/ evening.

Are there pros/cons of Federated systems?

Is it possible for standards to look at measuring financial resources as well as size?

### **Resources**

- Standards (on TSLAC website)
- Minimum Criteria – New/with phased in process (on TSLAC website)
- Review of standards in other states  
<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/plstandards/minstand.html>
- Standards FAQ's  
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Standards/FAQs.htm>

### **Research**

- Core/subset of standards
- Benchmark libraries that have achieved levels of Standards
- Incentives programs for standards from other states
- Funding impact of libraries moving among standards

### **Legislative**

Identify legislative issues related to statewide voluntary standards becoming required standards.