

April 13, 2001

Notes on Meeting
Steering Committee for the Survey of State Library Agencies
March 28-29, 2001

The Steering Committee for the Survey of State Library Agencies met on Wednesday and Thursday, March 28-29, 2001 at the Embassy Square Suites, 2000 N Street NW, in Washington, DC. Mr. Shubert called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

Present were: Denise **Davis** (NCLIS Statistics and Surveys Director), Michele **Farrell** (IMLS Office of Library Services), Patricia **Garner** (Census), Elaine **Kroe** (NCES), Libby **Law** (Data Coordinator, South Carolina State Library), Kim **Miller** (NCLIS/LSP), Johnny **Monaco** (Census), Kate **Nevins** (ASCLA, SOLINET), Jeffrey **Owings** (NCES Associate Commissioner for Library Surveys, Longitudinal Studies, and Elementary/Secondary Studies Division), Joannel **Porter** (NCES), Cindy **Shekells** (Census), Joseph F. **Shubert** (New York State Librarian *Emeritus*), Robert S. **Willard** (NCLIS Executive Director), Jeff **Williams** (NCES), and Alan **Zimmerman** (Data Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction). *(All listed here were present for the entire meeting, except for Mr. Owings, who was present on Wednesday, March 28, and Mr. Willard, who was present on Thursday, March 29).*

Also present were Abe **Abramson** (Commissioner-member of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science), Stephanie **Brown** (Census), Cathy **Burch** (ESSI), Suzanne **Dorinski** (Census), and Karen **Peters** (Census).

Excused were Mary Jo **Lynch** (ALA Office for Research and Statistics), Amy **Owen** (Utah State Library Director), Peggy **Rudd** (Director and Librarian, Texas State Library), Diana Ray **Tope** (FSCS Steering Committee, Georgia), Lamar **Veatch** (Director, Alabama Public Library Services), and Barratt **Wilkins** (COSLA, State Librarian, Florida State Library). Mr. Wilkins reported for COSLA and participated in ensuing discussion by phone on Wednesday, March 28

(1) Introductions

Members and guests introduced themselves.

Mr. Shubert noted that Keith Lance had resigned from the Steering Committee because of the press of other responsibilities. He noted that Mr. Lance had participated in the Survey planning from its inception. The Notes of the first Steering Committee meeting on December 18, 1992 record Carol Kindel as explaining that Mr. Lance had submitted a proposal to develop the survey and that she expected to have him engaged in that work by February 1993. His participation will be missed.

(2) Chair's Remarks

Mr. Shubert expressed regret that personal circumstances had made it impossible for any of the COSLA members of the Steering Committee to be present (although Mr. Wilkins

would participate by phone on Wednesday, March 28).

He read the following excerpt from a 1967 report in an article, "On Library Statistics," that originally appeared in the journal, *Mathematica* and was also quoted by St. Angelo *et al* in their research report, *State Library Policy: Its Legislative and Environmental Contexts*, cited in the discussion under Agenda item 8.

We have rarely encountered an area of data collection which approximates the libraries in terms of the quality of thought that has been devoted to the mapping of the terrain and the small quantity of systematic information that has actually been accumulated. The field has been provided with elaborate reports specifying in considerable detail the types of statistical series which it would be desirable to assemble, the definitions of the variables which might most profitably be employed and the likelihood that one can in fact obtain, in reliable and readily interpretable form, each type of information specified. These studies are impressive I that they appear to combine a degree of understanding of library operation which can only be attained by a professional librarians with an unusual degree of sophistication in statistical matters.

Yet, in our work on the economics of library operations, we found that the available statistical data might be described with little exaggeration as a collection of gaps interspersed by n occasional bit of reliable information...

Mr. Shubert expressed his pleasure that the work of Mary Jo Lynch and others in pushing for and helping design the FSCS program and the NCES standards and commitment to the library surveys has completely changed that situation. He expressed thanks to Mr. Owings, his predecessors, and colleagues for making – and continuing to make available quality data on libraries and library services.

In brief comment on the agenda, Mr. Shubert emphasized the importance of the scheduled discussions of technology-based data elements and the continued discussion of the use of StLA data for public policy question research.

(3) Recent Developments and Plans in NCES

Mr. Owings described several recent developments. He has assigned Jeff Williams responsibility as program director for the library statistics programs and coordination with Census. NCES staff is working closely with Census. The arrangement between NCES and Census is productive. John Monaco is responsible for Census work on Common Core and Library data. Census has added one staff member to work on library surveys.

He pointed out that contracting decisions made at other levels in NCES might affect the 2001 data by making it impossible to change data items this year. He emphasized that he hopes this will not transpire. He encouraged our work on agenda item 7-b on the assumption that needed changes can be made.

The aim of NCES is to provide library data in the year in which it is collected by NCES. Staggered collection of data, based on the fiscal years of the libraries in the several states,

will make this possible for FSCS.

Mr. Owings described the school district mapping project. When fully operating, all education data will be available by school district, including a “library layer” and census population profile information. These latter data will not be available from Census until 2003.

Budget projections for FY 02 look good and reflect satisfaction with the library surveys. Priorities for FY 02 include:

- More web-based tools for using data
- Timely availability of data
- Fast Response Surveys where needed for current data in education/library policy questions
- Improved “user-friendly” reporting of data.

In conclusion, Mr. Owings expressed (1) his intention to match or surpass the StLA schedule outlined in December and (2) the hope for library data that will be worthy of attention and comment by the Secretary of Education.

(4) Recent Developments and Plans in the NCLIS Library Statistics and Surveys Office

Ms. Davis reported on plans and developments for NCLIS-sponsored research on library use of the Internet and Internet-based services. She noted:

- The report of John Bertot’s 2000 Internet Study of Public Libraries, completed in Fall, 2000, is now on the NCLIS website. The report includes recommendations.
- The platform for the next Internet study will include information on training, impact, how libraries are providing services adapted to the needs of individuals with disabilities, impact on services and staff as a result of Gates Foundation grants, and impact of resources provided by e-rate discounts.

She also pointed out the importance of an NCLIS hearing scheduled for April in Cincinnati on school library services and school library staffing. She distributed the first in a series of “pocket guides” with data on electronic library services.

(5) COSLA Research and Statistics Development

Mr. Wilkins participated in the meeting by phone to provide the COSLA report and comment on other matters before the Steering Committee. He noted COSLA’s continued work focussing on LSTA reauthorization and the impact of the first years of the LSTA program. He also noted:

- Five states will have advanced reviews and evaluation of their LSTA programs by late summer 2000 – Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, and North Carolina. *[Later confirmed by IMLS that four states are providing advanced reports; Kansas is not a participant.]*

- Need for increased visibility and public awareness of StLA roles, services and accomplishments.
- The “cultural change” in COSLA as a result of rapid turnover of chief officers. COSLA is reviewing its management services, “Washington presence,” and the way it conducts its business as chief officers find less time for committee preparation and other “volunteering” in COSLA.
- More chief officers are productively involving their State Data Coordinators in the StLA survey and having more contact with their Data Coordinators.
- Other developments impacting on StLA policy and state law, such as “privatization” of library administration and services, and corporate lobbying for changes in state aid laws to enable privatization.

(6) Status of the 2000 Survey

Thirty-three states qualify for the John Lorenz Award on the basis of having met the NCES February 15, 2001 lock-down date. Nine states (Arizona, Indiana, North Carolina, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Vermont) are still working on responses to one or more edit questions.

NCES and Census staff expects to meet the planned schedule of release of data in June and completion and release of the E.D. Tabs in September, 2001. Responses have been complete and few imputations will be required.

(7a) Preparations for the 2001 Survey - General

NCES and Census staff are on schedule. The 2001 forms will be on the Web in October.

NCES appreciates Mr. Wilkins’ work in keeping chief officers informed on the status of the survey and encouraging states to meet the deadlines

(7b) Technology and Technology-based Services Data Elements for the 2001 Survey

The Steering Committee noted the possibility that a decision by the chief NCES technical officer relating to contracts for 2001 software may preclude changes from the 2000 survey, but agreed that it is important to continue the work that Mr. Zimmerman had started.

Mr. Zimmerman expressed appreciation to Steering Committee members who responded to his e-mail posts of proposed changes. Based on responses, he provided a revised five-part *Possibilities for Deletion, Addition, and Revision*. Following discussion, the Steering Committee:

- 1) Concurred with the deletion of question 214
- 2) Decided to do, with the help of COSLA, a “quick scan” of alternatives to the several Web Site yes/no questions, using a revised “Technology Questions Matrix” as suggested by Ms. Davis.

- 3) Ms. Davis will revise the matrix on the basis of advice and suggestions provided in the March 28 discussion and seek further reactions from Steering Committee members.
- 4) After taking the preceding step, she, Mr. Zimmerman, and Mr. Shubert will explore with Mr. Wilkins using the matrix with COSLA in a “quick survey” sponsored by COSLA, NCES and NCLIS.
- 5) Asked Mr. Shubert to find out more from Rod Wagner, Nebraska chief officer, about his findings on StLA web pages and their uses.
- 6) Revised cell 220 to read “Number of library-owned public-access graphical workstations that connect to the Internet for a dedicated purpose (to access an OPAC or specific database) or multiple purposes.” Include in the definition the words “Include leased computers. Do not include staff-only computers.”
- 7) Approved use of the proposed new database series questions (point 3 in Mr. Zimmerman’s document.
- 8) Approved use of the “Virtual Visits” question (point 4 in Mr. Zimmerman’s document.
- 9) Decided that it appears impossible to develop, at this time, a question responding to point 5 in Mr. Zimmerman’s document regarding “follow through to December 2000 discussion.”

The Steering Committee enthusiastically thanked Mr. Zimmerman for his work on technology and technology-based services questions.

(7c) Other Needs for Revision, Elimination or Added Data Elements

The Steering Committee approved revision of the definition of “Serial Subscriptions” to make clear that only current serials in print format should be reported. The Steering Committee noted that this revision is timely inasmuch as online serials data will be collected separately in the Bertot series as decided in points 7 and 8 in the decisions above.

The Steering Committee decided not to revise question 31 as suggested by Mr. Shubert, but to recommend that the presentation in the table reporting the data collected in question 31 place the online access methods before CD ROM and other older methods of access.

The Steering Committee recessed at 5 p.m. on Wednesday and reconvened at 9 a.m. on Thursday, March 29.

(8) The StLA Data and Policy Questions on Governance

The Steering Committee discussed the questions at the end of Mr. Shubert’s *Working Paper 1 – Governance*, including various views of “what is the chief public policy question by the Governor’s proposal in New York State?”

Consensus indicated:

- The StLA data produced a surprising amount of data useful in considering governance policy questions.
- StLA data could be equally useful in researching various public policy questions relating to StLA finance and StLA “function and change.”
- Most state librarians who have not used the E.D. Tabs to address specific public policy questions would be surprised at the value of the data they and their colleagues are providing.
- There is no immediate need to revise the governance policy questions the Steering Committee developed in 1997 and reviewed in 1999.

Discussion also ensued on questions Mr. Wilkins raised in the March 28 phone conversation relating to this agenda topic: the need for updating earlier research on impact and significance of the location of the StLA, and public policy questions that will inevitably arise from growing interest in the privatization of public services.

Both Mr. Wilkins and Mr. Shubert commented on the political insights provided on location of a StLA in government and the relative success in securing appropriations for StLAs “directed by public officials” and StLAs “directed by public boards” in *State Library Policy: Its Legislative and Environmental Contexts*. A Florida State University research team including Douglas St. Angelo, Annie Mary Hartsfield, and Harold Goldstein conducted that 117-page study. They undertook the study with the assistance of a 1968 U.S. Office of Education research grant. ALA published the study in 1971.

Mr. Shubert noted that the text on page 25 of the Governance “Working Paper” cited from *Libraries at Large: Tradition, Innovation, and the National Interest* was excerpted from another landmark study of the same period. That study was *American State Libraries and State Library Agencies: An Overview with Recommendations* prepared by Nelson Associates in 1967. Nelson Associates prepared it as a report for the National Advisory Commission on Libraries, forerunner to NCLIS. The then Department of Health, Education and Welfare (DHEW), Office of Education (ERIC document ED 022 486, microfilmed in 1969), sponsored this study. As recently as 1986, several papers in *State Library Services and Issues: Facing Future Challenges*, edited by Charles R. McClure (Norwood, NY: Ablex Publishing Company, 1986) cited these findings from the 1960s and early 1970s.

In further discussion, Steering Committee members expressed surprise that the St. Angelo *et al* Florida study had obtained and used the political affiliations of state librarians and levels of their political activity (without identifying individual state librarians), correlating that information with other data on political, financial, and program characteristics. While political data could not be part of an NCES survey, the data led to important insights in the St. Angelo study.

Mr. Shubert observed that the process of developing the Working Paper proved that the availability of a “table generator” function in the StLA E.D. Tabs and data links between the various library and surveys would enormously simplify the organization of data for public policy research.

In summary of the discussion, the Steering Committee (1) urged that COSLA, NCES, and NCLIS encourage attention to the Working Paper as an example of the usefulness of StLA data in one policy area; (2) recommended that COSLA and NCLIS encourage benchmark research on current StLAs that will be helpful in the early part of this 21st century as libraries change further as they operate in the digital environment.

The Steering Committee urged greater distribution of the December discussion paper and the Working Paper on governance. Ms. Davis pointed out that the former is on the NCES website, and that she will post the Working Paper there, also.

(9) [There was no agenda item 9]

(10) Presentation on Imputation Process and Policies

Ms. Garner introduced Suzanne Dorinski who provided a briefing on imputation methods and policy. Ms. Dorinski described three imputation methods that can be used in NCES library surveys to achieve national totals when data are lacking from one or more states:

1. Zero Rule: If no data is reported in a fiscal year, there is no imputation done and prior year data is used.
2. Growth Rule: If there are concerns about the data reported (it falls outside a reasonable response range) a formula is applied to determine the median growth rate.
3. If there are two consecutive null responses for an item, a regression formula of predicted values is applied. This is the method of last resort.

Ms. Dorinski responded to questions, noting that both NCES and Census require a 70 percent item response rate to include data in a table or report. She also explained how a StLA E.D. Tabs user can determine if imputation has been used to report a national figure.

Steering Committee members expressed appreciation for the briefing and pleasure at the news that response rates in 2000 were sufficiently complete as required imputation for very few items for the StLA 2000 E.D. Tabs. [See also information in paragraphs 3-6 on page 3 of the *Notes on Meeting...December 6-7, 2000.*]

(11) Data Categories with Longitudinal or Trend Value

Mr. Shubert noted that the discussion of the Working Paper and studies of StLAs indicate a long-standing interest in key financial in public policy discussions and comparisons of StLAs. Data consistently of interest include:

- Income

- Total income, including state aid, from all sources - dollars and per capita
- State source income - dollars, per capita, and percent of total income
- Federal sources income – dollars, per capita, and percent of total income
- Other sources income – dollars, per capita, and percentage of total
- State Aid income and expenditure
 - Total from State sources – dollar and per capita
 - Of the State sources total, aid for public libraries
 - Of the State sources total, other aid for library services

It may also be useful to prepare for data categories that mark changes in emphasis on various functions, including resources devoted to

- library and network development
- library services operated by the StLA, and
- other StLA functions

Steering Committee consensus was that seven-year longitudinal data for the first two sets of data listed above (Income and State Aid income and expenditure) of the three sets of data listed above ought to be included in the StLA 2001 E. D. Tabs.

(12) IMLS Developments that May Impact on the StLA

Ms. Farrell reported on the status of evaluation of the five-year programs and IMLS preparation for reauthorization:

- All but four states have submitted a letter describing their plans to complete the evaluation of their LSTA five-year program as required in the LSTA law.
- The evaluation must include an overview of the last five years and analyses of a technology project and a project for targeted populations.
- The cost for evaluation in 47 states is projected \$1.6 million; costs range from a low of \$5,000 to \$101,000.
- IMLS has provided training in outcome-based evaluation to StLA personnel in 28 states and will hold a November 14-16, 2001 conference for additional training.

Ms. Farrell responded to questions and pointed out that IMLS has completed its Digitization Survey and hopes to report preliminary results at the ALA conference in San Francisco, June 14-20, 2001.

(13) NCLIS Developments that May Affect StLAs

Mr. Willard directed the attention of the Steering Committee to the long-range importance of the NCLIS Report (dated January 26, 2001), *A Comprehensive Assessment of Public Information Dissemination*. NCLIS undertook the study in June 2000 at the request of Senator John McCain (Chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and Senator Joseph Lieberman (Ranking Democrat on the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs).

Senators McCain and Lieberman, and others, had expressed their concern following the announcement that the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) would be closing.

The NCLIS report recognizes government information as “a strategic national resource with an importance similar to that accorded to land, labor, and capital.” It proposes a 21st century organizational structure for government information activities, including creation, dissemination and permanent preservation of government information.

The report includes 36 recommendations for a “Governmental Information Dissemination Program that would consolidate various governmental information programs such as the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, and NTIS into a new agency, the Public Information Resources Administration (PIRA), which is proposed as part of the Executive Branch of Government. State Librarians who served on the four panels that advanced different parts of the study included GladysAnn Wells (Arizona), James Nelson (Kentucky), and Kendall Wiggin. (Connecticut).

Mr. Willard also commented briefly on the importance of NCLIS hearings scheduled for April 26, 2001 in Cincinnati on "School Libraries, Knowledge Navigators in Troubled Times." In response to a question, he indicated that the list of hearing participants is still open.

In the course of responding to questions, Mr. Willard acknowledged that the President's budget for FY 2002 might not include NCLIS funding. The detailed document on the FY 2002 budget will be released on April 9. Steering Committee members expressed grave concern.

(14)Adjournment and Next Meetings

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m. on Thursday, March 29, 2001.

Ms. Davis noted that Mr. Wilkins had suggested a change in date for the spring meeting inasmuch as Chief Officers are often unable to be away in March that, in many states, is a critical time in the state legislative process. She also pointed out that the FSCS meeting and workshop schedule is changing, and suggested that StLA meeting dates might be September (for review and formation of work in preparation for December) and December (for final advice on the following year's survey). In brief discussion, there appeared to be no Steering Committee objection to trying a September and December meeting arrangement.

The Committee will meet next in September 2001 in Washington, D.C. The Committee will also meet in December, 2001.

J. Shubert, April 12, 2001
StLA Notes on Meeting Mar 2001

List of documents distributed before or at the meeting:

1. Agenda
2. FY2000 StLA Control Log as of 3/28/01 (**agenda item 6**)
3. State Library Agency Survey Technology and Technology-Based Questions (**agenda item 7b**)
4. StLA Survey – Technology Questions Matrix (**agenda item 7b**)
5. FY2000 StLA proposed changes (**agenda item 7c**)
6. StLA Data and Public Policy Questions Working Paper 1 – Governance; March 2001 (**agenda item 8a**)
7. StLA Survey Steering Committee Roster and Members
8. Notes on StLA Survey Steering Committee Meeting – December 6-7, 2000
9. Excerpt from the December 2000 Notes of the StLA Survey Steering Committee
10. The Survey of State Library Agencies: The Survey and Its Steering Committee; A Statement Approved by the Steering Committee February 20, 1998
11. The John G. Lorenz Award for Timely and Accurate Submission of StLA Data; Established by the StLA Survey Steering Committee, February 20, 1998