

Notes on Meeting
Steering Committee for the Survey of State Library Agencies
March 19-20, 2003

The Steering Committee for the Survey of State Library Agencies met on Wednesday and Thursday, March 19-20, 2003 at the Embassy Square Suites, Chevy Chase Pavilion, 4300 Military Road Street NW, in Washington, DC. Mr. Shubert called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

Present were: Mary **Chute** (Deputy Director for Library Services, IMLS), Suzanne **Dorinski** (Census), Michele **Farrell** (IMLS Office of Library Services), Patricia Garner (Census), Bruce Kingma (Syracuse University), Elaine **Kroe** (NCES), Aileen Libby **Law** (Data Coordinator, South Carolina State Library), Kim **Miller** (NCLIS/LSP), Suzanne **Miller** (State Librarian, South Dakota State) Library), Bob **Molyneux** (NCLIS Statistics and Surveys Director), Johnny W. **Monaco** (Census). Kate **Nevins** (ASCLA, SOLINET), Patricia **O'Shea** (Census), Amy **Owen*** (Utah State Library Director), Jeffrey **Owings*** (NCES Associate Commissioner for Library Surveys, Longitudinal Studies, and Elementary/Secondary Studies Division), Peggy **Quinn** (NCES), Cindy **Shekells** (Census), Joseph F. **Shubert** (New York State Librarian *Emeritus*), Diana Ray **Tope** (Director, Cherokee Regional Library System, Georgia), J.D. **Waggoner** (Chair of COSLA Research and Statistics Committee and State Librarian, West Virginia Library Commission, Barratt **Wilkins** (Retired State Librarian of Florida), Robert S. **Willard*** (NCLIS Executive Director), Jeffrey **Williams** (NCES), and Alan **Zimmerman** (Data Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction). *(All listed here were present for the entire meeting, except for Ms. Owen, Mr. Owings, and Mr. Willard who were present only on Wednesday, March 19.)*

Excused were Mary Jo **Lynch** (ALA Office for Research and Statistics), Robert S. Martin (Director, IMLS), and Lamar **Veatch** (Director, Georgia Public Library Service).

(1) Introductions

(2) Chair's Remarks

Mr. Shubert thanked members of the Committee for being at the meeting, and welcomed Mr. Molyneux and Mr. Waggoner as new members of the Steering Committee and Mr. Wilkins as a new "expert member". He also thanked members for (a) their e-mail and phone calls relating to various agenda items, (b) responses with suggestions for the revised *Prospectus* and (c) work on the "Task Force on Reporting Categories" headed by Mr Zimmerman.

He noted the uncertainties that many State Library Agencies (StLAs) face as a result of grave fiscal problems in the states and the various government re-organization plans that do not recognize the important roles of StLAs .

He pointed out that over the last 18 months, several StLAs have faced (or are facing) radically reduced budgets for operation and/or state aid, restructuring, or even dissolution. He noted that although one or more instances of such problems are not unusual in a period of recession or when other overwhelming change takes place in state government, the current numbers of these uncertainties has not been experienced in the last five decades.

He expressed regret that Dr. Veatch could not be present for this session to review his perspective on such developments and what he and other COSLA leaders see happening and see ahead.

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(3) StLAs in Crisis

Mr. Waggoner, Mr. Wilkins, Ms. Owen, and others amplified on the problems of the StLAs, the difficulties that some states may face in meeting matching requirements for LSTA funds, and the importance of the StLA Survey data in ensuing public policy debate. At the same time that StLA staffs are reduced, more is expected of the agencies.

Mr. Wilkins commented on the need for the “benchmark” longitudinal study that the Steering Committee discussed in September, 2002. He emphasized that while any organization or individual can use data from the StLA Surveys as they publish their own secondary analyses for public policy discussion, such publications do not carry the NCES credential. The NCES “imprimatur” is important because of the great respect for NCES, its standards, objectivity, and the quality of its reports.

(4) IMLS Reauthorization, Funds, and Developments that may impact the StLAs and IMLS Fiscal Reporting on State Expenditures.

Ms. Chute briefed the Committee on IMLS developments and priorities. She distributed fact sheets on:

- (1) reauthorization bills H.R. 13/ S. 283
- (2) status reports on FY 2003 and FY 2004 Appropriations
- (3) a March 17, 2003 draft FY 2003 allotment table.

She and Ms. Farrell responded to questions on programs for library recruitment, continuing education curriculum, and staff development, LSTA maintenance-of-effort, possible reductions in LSTA funds, and status of revised formats for StLAs to report on state programs.

(5) NCLIS Developments that May Affect StLAs

Mr. Willard provided a succinct briefing paper that reviewed and described:

- NCLIS highlights of 2002
- Current organization of the Commission and its staff
- The 2002 reappraisal of the NCLIS mission and the good news that, at the beginning of 2003, OMB no longer proposes elimination of NCLIS and proposed \$1 million for FY 2004
- The Office of Presidential Personnel is identifying individuals for appointment to the Commission

- Information on current work in national information activities, international activity, and the NCLIS/ Library Statistics Program, and research.

He provided to members of the Steering Committee copies of a CD-Rom narration of “Trust and Terror,” an audio-visual briefing on the role libraries can take in the immediate aftermath of man-made or natural disaster. The CD, narrated by Walter Cronkite, is based on Commissioner Challinor’s 2002 presentation at the IFLA meeting in Glasgow.

Steering Committee members congratulated Mr. Willard and his NCLIS colleagues on their successful work in 2001 and 2002 in preserving the Commission’s ability to advise the President, the Congress, and other public and private entities on the library and information needs of the American public.

(6) COSLA Research and Statistics Developments

Mr. Waggoner became Chair of the COSLA Statistics Committee early in January, following Mr. Wilkins’ retirement. He expressed his pleasure at representing COSLA on the Steering Committee. Noting his involvement in the FSCS Steering Committee, and his experience in submitting West Virginia data for the StLA Survey, he said that he looks forward to ensuring cooperation between COSLA and its partners in the collection, publication, and analysis of statistics.

The COSLA Research and Statistics Committee has been in communication with John Bertot and Charles McClure re their proposed “Public Library Network Statistics: Librarian Education for the Collection, Analysis, and Use of Library Networked Statistics.” They are seeking ten states to sponsor the initiative with \$5,000 from each state. He pointed out that, with the current retrenchments in the states, the prospect of such sponsorship is shaky.

He commented on his initial reading of Mr. Molyneux’s paper, particularly noting his agreement on the need for more StLA staff expertise with statistics. He also noted, with appreciation, IMLS support of training. At the same time, he pointed out that as smaller StLA staffs carry are expected to take on added responsibilities, it becomes difficult to release people for training programs.

Mr. Waggoner reported that the COSLA Research and Statistics Committee will be discussing the proposal that Mr. Wilkins developed following the September 2002 StLA Steering Committee discussion of a “benchmark” study of StLA personnel and staffing and analysis of FY 2001 data compared with FY 1994 data.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Owings encouraged the use of StLA longitudinal data and Mr. Molyneux pointed out that use of EXtensible Markup Language (XML) for storing NCES data would make it easy for individuals to prepare such analyses designed for their needs and obviate the need for more general benchmark studies.

Discussion moved to the importance of what Mr. Wilkins called the “imprimatur” of

NCES data and reports in policy-level discussions. Discussion also returned to the need for expanding knowledge of statistics at various levels of StLA management and staff.

(7) Recent Developments and Plans in NCES

Mr. Owings described recent NCES developments affecting the StLA Survey. Gary Owings has retired from the position of (Acting) NCES Commissioner. Ms. Valena Plisko now holds the Acting appointment. Following reauthorization, the functions formerly organized as the Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI) now part of the new “Institute of Education Sciences.”

Mr. Owings described increasing use of the NCES website but noted that there is relatively little use by librarians. He urged Steering Committee members to look at other sets of library data:

- The Longitudinal Study of 10th Grade students, which includes data, that Census is collecting from students, parents, and librarians.
- The school library data that are soon to be available.
- A descriptive profile of libraries across the country based on NCES library data. (Denise Davis is preparing that.)

Mr. Williams reported on the current status of the NCES surveys and what is available on the website. He pointed out the progress in more prompt publication of public library data: publication of the FSCS data has been speeded up by a year over the last several months. He also pointed out that:

- The 2000 Academic library data are now completely collected and the E.D. Tabs. should be on the website by November.
- Barbara Holton is working on a historical report on school library data.

(8) Revised Draft “Prospectus” for the StLA Survey and its Steering Committee

Mr. Shubert noted that at the September 2002 meeting, Steering Committee members identified possible changes and revisions in the document entitled *The Survey of State Library Agencies: The Survey and Its Steering Committee*. The document is also called “the prospectus” inasmuch as it was first developed in 1992 as part of the preparations for the initial StLA Survey. The document has been revised periodically, most recently, most recently in March 1998.

He pointed out that the discussion in September 2002 suggested re-organization of the document to make it easier to use and identified specific suggested changes for a draft revision by March 2003. He expressed thanks to Mary Jo Lynch and to Libby Law for sending suggestions in the months after September 2002. Their help resulted in a draft that, when approved by the Steering Committee, will replace the February 20, 1998 “prospectus.”

Steering Committee members asked for additional time to review the document, Therefore action was delayed until Thursday, March 20. At that time, the Steering Committee approved the document.

The Steering Committee recessed at 5 p.m. on Wednesday and reconvened at 9 a.m. on Thursday, March 20.

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

Mr. Molyneux reviewed his discussion paper, *A New Direction for Library Data? Ideas for Enabling Wider and Productive Use of Our Data* and led discussion of it. He pointed out that the web takes the burden off the user - and puts it on the designer of the website. He said that "technology enables us now to do a similar kind of thing to make data easier to use. And that is the focus of the paper."

He "walked" the group through the paper, pointing out the lack of a critical mass of analytical skills in the library field and the need to have data organized for people with "modest analytical skills." He also described simple and more complex data sets and pointed out that users of web-based data often want to be able to import data easily into their own documents. They also want to be able to produce tables, charts and graphs, that they can insert in reports, articles, or power point presentations they are preparing. He explained and responded to questions on XML (eXtensible Markup Language) and its implications for expanding use of StLA and other NCES statistical data.

Discussion centered on:

- the urgent need for user education for people to use statistical data and systems
- what institutions and people might provide such training,
- the possibility of a site for all data, and
- the need for connections between the several sets of NCES library data and other data sources, such as that of the Association of Research Libraries.

The Steering Committee encouraged Mr. Molyneux to test XML through providing longitudinal data related to one or more policy questions.

(10) The Task Force on Reporting Categories

At the March 2002 meeting, the Steering Committee agreed to establish a task force to review the phrasing of questions in parts O (Policy Questions), K (Financial Assistance to Libraries and Systems) and L (LSTA State Program Expenditures) for the purpose of improving StLA data in these areas.

Mr. Zimmerman, Chair of the Task Force, reviewed with the Steering Committee the March 11, 2003 Task Force Report and recommendations. Members of the Task Force were Ms. Davis, Ms. Farrell, Ms. S. Miller, Mr. Shubert, and Mr. Wilkins and Mr. Zimmerman .

Discussion focussed on the following recommendations (from pages 4, 5 and 9 of the Task Force report):

Page 4: Task Force Recommendations on StLA “State Program” Expenditures:

The State Library Agency Survey Steering Committee should not make any changes in the current survey until LSTA is reauthorized and IMLS has completed its review of reporting requirements, including adoption of a new report form and instructions.

The StLA Steering Committee should begin discussion of whether or not changes in this section of the StLA survey are advisable. Changing the StLA survey would result in the loss of historical trend data. Not changing may result in an additional data collection burden for the states and less accurate and consistent reporting.

The Steering Committee discussed this page 4 recommendation briefly and will return to it in September.

Page 5: Task Force Recommendations Relating to Operating Expenditures

The Steering Committee should review the definition of state agency operating expenditures. If the Committee determines that a desirable aim of the StLA survey is to identify expenditures for services provided internally by the state agency, and to identify major statewide service provided externally through contracts, then the identification of major vendor contract expenditures within state operating expenditures can be considered

The Committee could consider adding a data element specifically identifying state agency contracted service expenditures, perhaps gathering separate data on funds expended for contracts with libraries, and for expenditures for contracts with commercial or other non-library entities, such as database vendors. If the committee should decide to add this additional element, it should consider whether or not to include it within the broader category of state library operating expenditures.

The Steering Committee discussed this page 5 recommendation and asked the Task Force to prepare, in advance of the September meeting, a proposed data element and definition for including such a question in Part L (Operating Expenditures).

Page 7: Task Force Recommendations Relating to Part L – LSTA State Program Expenditures

The State Library Agency Survey Steering Committee should review the “Financial Assistance to Libraries and Systems” section data elements. The committee should consider specifying grant expenditures by type of library and review the consequences of redefining items 181 (Other individual libraries), 183 (Single agency or library providing statewide service) and 185 (Other assistance.)

Specifically the committee should consider:

Combining data elements #179 (Individual public libraries) and 180 (Public library systems) in "Public Libraries," although the political question of whether or not public library system aid belongs with public library aid remains an issue.

Separating #181 (Other individual libraries) out to show
181 -Academic Libraries
182 - Special Libraries
183 - School Libraries

The separation would be consistent with the categories used in the new LSTA annual report. It might also be helpful to record the number of joint projects funded to partnering libraries.

The Steering Committee discussed this page 7 recommendation in the context of changes that have taken place in StLA financial assistance programs (largely as a result of the LSTA program). The Steering Committee and asked the Task Force to provide, before the September 2003 meeting, language (questions and instructions) implementing (a) the Task Force recommendation that data elements 179 and 180 be combined; and (b) the Task Force recommendation on separating out 181 as proposed by the Task Force.

Page 9: Task Force Recommendations Relating to Part 0 – Public Policy Issues

The StLA Survey Steering Committee should review the usefulness of the data currently collected in this section. A review of the revisions made by IMLS in LSTA data collection and state reporting for the “No Child Left Behind” Act may suggest areas for development of future survey data elements.

The Steering Committee discussed this page 9 recommendation. Ms. Owen objected to the definition for the current Question 42 relating to StLA “monitoring or tracking developments in interagency cooperation or progress in library partnerships with business” and its footnote. Discussion indicated no discontent with the objective of question 42 inasmuch as there is a public policy interest in both (a) what StLAs are doing in, and accomplishing in, interagency cooperation and (b) how they relate to or encourage libraries of their states are doing in partnerships with “business, other educational and cultural institutions... and agencies and the examples given in the definition. The Steering Committee asked the Task Force to consider how the public policy questions and definitions should be improved and provide proposed revisions before the September meeting.

11) Questions from Editing of the FY 2002 Data, Experience with the New E-metrics Data and Discussion of Possible Data Element Changes

Census and NCES staff are encountering difficulty in editing StLA responses to some Part N questions in the StLA FY 2002 survey. The Steering Committee received several documents relating to the problems:

- A March 16, 2003 memorandum from Mr. Shubert and two attachments
(1) Elaine Kroe’s Analysis/Summary of virtual library reporting problems , and
(2) Part N questions 24- 46, and
- A complete set of instructions for the FY 2002 Survey

Mr. Shubert’s memorandum pointed out:

- StLA data from 1999-2001 show that StLA expenditures increased from \$24.5

million in 1999 to \$49.7 million in 2001.

- Federal funds were a significant part of the expenditure each year, but state funds constituted from 68 percent of the total in 1999 to 76.2 percent in 2001.
- These two facts are critical: (1) The investment is expanding rapidly, and (2) state funds underwrite the major costs of statewide licensing.
- We have lacked data on the use of the databases made available through this \$50 million investment. The Steering Committee discussed possible measurements over several years and, in 2002, recommended that NCES use several questions now in Part N. These were based on the continuing work of John Bertot and Charles McClure, supported by IMLS and StLAs, and carried out in consultation with numerous groups, including the NISO Z-39 committee.
- As the Steering Committee discussed means of measurement, it followed Denise Davis's report on the NISO developments.
- Detailed discussions over several meetings produced the current Part N questions about data base use.
- The StLA survey was the first of the NCES surveys to use the questions – with knowledge that NISO would be continuing its work on the Z.39 standard.
- As “early adopters” we currently face the current editing problems cited by Ms. Kroe. and that we have the problems is no surprise.

Mr. Shubert's memorandum also recognized different ways in which state and LSTA funds are channeled into database licensing, and various ways in which data base use is reported by vendors.

He advanced a principle for consideration by the StLA Steering Committee: If it is state money that pays for a service to the entire state, the use of that service should be reported in the StLA survey.

Denise Davis joined the Steering Committee's March 20 discussion by phone from Salem, Oregon.

In response to a statement by Mr. Shubert regarding guidance from Z.39 in making possible changes for the FY 2003 and 2002 surveys, Ms. Davis pointed out that it is the Steering Committee's job to decide what should be asked: The NISO Library Statistics standard (Z39.7) is not fixed in time. It is under continuous review as a draft Standard for on the NISO website: <http://www.niso.org/emetrics> .

As a web-accessible document Z39.7 includes links to all the major e-metrics projects in the U.S. and internationally; it is open for comment online; and a change log is automatically maintained so users can see how the document is developing.

Discussion ensued on the difficulty some agencies have had in getting data from vendors; What do we need to collect for the StLA survey? How does the StLA get use data when it contributes a share of the funds handled by a library or organization that does the contracting for the databases? How should the Steering Committee assist in resolving data problems now being edited? And what advice can we give for completion of questions and definitions for the 2003 and 2004 surveys?

The following points of consensus developed from discussion:

1. Do not abandon measurement and reporting of use.
2. It will not be possible to report data from several of the questions asked in the 2002 survey in the data file and in the FY 2002 E.D. Tabs.
3. But those data should be compiled so that they can be reported to our working groups and respondents as they and we improve the questions and definitions. In connection with this, the current survey has OMB clearance through 2005.

The Steering Committee agreed to form a Task Force to work over the next few weeks (and longer term as needed) to help resolve current editing problems and identify needed changes in question and definitions for the FY 2003 survey. Mr. Shubert asked for volunteers for the Task Force.

The Task Force members are: Ms. Kroe, Ms. Law, Ms. Miller, Mr. Monaco, Mr. Molyneux, Ms. Schekells, Mr. Shubert, Mr. Waggoner, Mr. Wilkins, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Zimmerman. Ms. Davis will be asked to join the Task Force if her time permits. Mr. Shubert will chair the Task Force.

(12-13)

There was no follow-up discussion from previous meetings or new business.

(14) Adjournment and Next Meetings

The meeting was adjourned at 10 noon on Thursday, March 20, 2003. The Committee will next meet in Washington, D.C on September 17-18, 2003 for two half-day sessions.

J. Shubert, April 3, 2003

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