

Minutes
State Library Agencies (StLA) Survey Steering Committee
Hilton Old Town, Alexandria
March 10-11, 2004

Introductions

Participants Present:

Members: Suzanne Miller (Vice Chair, SD), Aileen Libby Law (SC), Peggy Rudd (TX), Alan Zimmerman (WI)

Federal: Mary Chute (IMLS), Rebecca Danvers (IMLS), Suzanne Dorinski (Census), Michele Farrell (IMLS), Elaine Kroe (NCES), Kim Miller (NCLIS), Bob Molyneux (NCLIS), Johnny Monaco (Census), Patricia O'Shea (Census), Jeff Owings (NCES), Cindy Sheckells (Census), Jeffrey Williams (NCES)

Invited Guests: Ed Gleaves (TN)

Participants by Telephone: Barratt Wilkins (Chair)

Excused: Kate Nevins (SOLINET), Diana Ray Tope (Cherokee Regional Library System), Lamar Veatch (GA), J.D. Waggoner (WV)

Chair's Remarks

Mr. Wilkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and set the tone for the meeting by emphasizing the importance of state library statistics and the long history of statistics gathering. Continuing to work with NCES will insure that library statistics are standardized, impartial, and collected in one place. There has been great progress on public library statistics, academic and movement toward better collection of school statistics. To lose the core, state library agencies, at a time when their role in library development and education is increasing, would skew the perception of the whole system.

NCES Development and Plans – Mr. Owings

Mr. Owings recognized the efforts made by the Committee over the last several months and their good faith effort to insure the data collected is usable. At this time, NCES sees the need for expansion of their agency in a time when budgets are being reduced. They are experiencing increased pressure because of NCLB and schools are being surveyed every two years. There are more publications beyond the Ed Tabs to be produced as a result of the statistical collection. NCES is willing to work with NCLIS and COSLA to continue the survey but some adjustments are needed.

Possible solutions to concerns that have been raised included the potential for allowing states who submit their data early to look at raw data via password with the understanding that it has not yet been vetted; shorter Ed Tabs with full statistics via the web; and finding more funds for the survey.

It was suggested the Committee needs to establish a process to adopt new data elements similar to FSCS. This would provide for better vetting of elements.

Library Survey Plan Development - Mr. Williams

Collection has been completed for 2003 with all 50 states and the District of Columbia meeting the report deadline. It was felt that the data could be made available to state library agencies with a password. The 2002 Ed Tabs will be available March 24.

The library reports were caught in the middle of a change in procedure and this slowed production. Procedures should be smoothed out now and it should take a shorter time to produce in the future. [two internal reviewers, 5 days, reminded us not to forget the explanatory information at the beginning of the Ed Tab; this is not just a raw output of data; trend info is critical]

A peer comparison tool is now available on the web.

FSCS removed some proposed additions and clarifications to definitions

The HEGIS/IPEDS/Academic Library survey, which was broken away from the larger higher education survey, is now done every other year.

A sample survey of school library media centers used to be conducted every seven years. They are just finishing collection for this as well.

They are all set for the 2004 collection. The first changes that would be possible in the survey instrument will be for '05. NCES will work with the committee on this. A reduction of items would require minimal change for Census.

Q+A with NCES

Q. (Committee) What is the major expense for the StLA survey ?

R. (NCES) Fewer variables will be a savings in time and money.

It was recommended that we add questions which refer more to educational issues, demonstrating the educational value of the StLA. NCES wants streamlining while meeting the needs of both the states and NCES.

It was recommended that we increase the demand for the data to insulate it from attack.

Q. (NCES) If there are fewer elements, could states report sooner?

R. (Committee) Probably not because of fiscal years and end of the year reporting.

Q. (Committee) Do you wait for straggler states?

R. (NCES) It is not so much the stragglers as the fact that more and more states submit on the last day. They cannot spread the work out over the submission months.

IMLS Developments that may impact the StLA survey. – Ms. Chute

Ms. Chute reported that there is an increasing number of collaborative projects in all grant categories. Categories will be streamlined to Research and Demonstration, Building Digital Content, and Advancing Learning Communities.

NCLIS Developments that may impact the StLA survey – Mr. Molyneux

Mr. Molyneux reported that they are getting ready to advertise for an Executive Director for NCLIS. Beth Fitzsimmons is the new Chair for NCLIS. The new commissioners response to the StLA Survey and the FSCS data expressed an interest in the data as a “report card” on libraries.

Mr. Molyneux indicated his ability to do time series analysis using spreadsheets he has developed. Categories included characteristics, national trends and regional trends, charts, tables and maps.

Report from FSCS – Mr. Zimmerman

The FSCS committee requested that the StLA Survey address electronic services since so many of these are now statewide services. They also requested that regional cooperative data be collected because it does not fit into the FSCS parameters. The cooperatives would be defined as public sector cooperatives of public libraries that are tax supported with permanent staff and annual budgets. It was recommended that this information could be collected as a rapid response survey rather than added to the StLA survey.

Issues to be considered and a review of the Prospectus

Discussion on the value and use of the StLA survey data included

- Policymaking, informing policy makers on the development of libraries and information services
- FSCS allows comparison within a state; StLA data allows comparison between states
 - What are SLAs doing
 - Understanding how the state fits into the library system
 - Identifying where states rank in pertinent areas ie economically
- Building Capacity – how we support capacity of different institutions, such as support for ILL, databases, schools. It requires state and federal input to build capacity.
- Sole sources of history and library data not found anywhere else. Needed for ongoing record of library progress
- Federal and state goals for library and educational services, especially issues such as literacy and schools (NCLB)
- New portals of information
- Communicating the whole picture.

Concern was expressed over the age of information affecting decision-making. Data is not useful to the uninitiated, they need to know how to use it.

Suzanne Dorinski (Census) does have longitudinal database for StLA statistics from 1994-2002. The file was forwarded to NCES. Can this be brought up on a webpage?

Audience for this data:

- Public libraries
- State libraries (COSLA)
- Interested citizens
- Headstart
- Department of Labor
- ALA
- IMLS
- Legislators
- Researchers
- Administrators
- City managers

- Braille and Talking Book Programs – document changing services; an opportunity to bring different people together to look for redundancy and need for change.

Report from the Organizational Committee – Vice Chair Miller

Modifications to the Prospectus were offered by the Organization Committee. Changes reflected the need for participants to continue to hold positions in SLAs in order to insure statistic collection remains relevant to current needs of the agencies and introduced a term limit for an emeritus chair. It was further recommended that the Prospectus be reviewed and procedures therein be more closely followed. It was moved to accept the modifications as presented. Motion carried.

Action items identified:

Need for training sessions

Appointment letters to data coordinators on the Committee which define appointments in alignment with Prospectus.

Report from the Data Committee – Ms. Rudd

Ms. Rudd submitted the committee “Report on the Review and Evaluation of the State Library Agency Survey and Recommendations.” The Committee started the process of working through the recommendations. Reference to the report should be made as the decisions below relate directly to this discussion.

ADDITIONS: FSCS recommended addition of a question regarding regional systems. The Committee recommendation was to collect this information in a rapid survey.

DELETIONS/REVISIONS

Part A. accepted

Part B. accepted

Part D. Insert “paid” before “staff”

Add to definition that they may be non-profit organizations

Action items: Revisions to Rudd by May 11, 2004.

Part B. 026-029. Governance. Wilkins, Sheckells and Kroe will work on this;

Part D. insert certification of [paraprofessionals] other library staff. Use NISO definition

Part D. Statewide virtual reference – Zimmerman will define

Part D. Statewide digital project or services (grants?) – Miller will define

For Part E. Public Service Hours, 6A. Develop an example – Zimmerman

For Part H. 117/118. Develop attendance /events definition which includes video conferencing and web delivery. Allocate time for discussion by Steering Committee – Miller

Part K. 187. Separate Capital outlay from Operating expenditures. Zimmerman and Kroe will work on a presentation