

APPENDIX B

Maine LSTA Interview Report

Thirteen individuals identified by staff of the Maine State Library (MSL) were interviewed via telephone about the programs and services of the MSL. Those interviewed included officers of the professional associations of Maine libraries and librarians, i.e., Maine Library Association, Maine Association of School Libraries, District Boards, Maine Library Commission, Area Reference and Resource Centers, Friends of Maine Libraries, and the InfoNet Board. They also represented public, school, academic, and special libraries.

The consultants asked how well Maine libraries are doing in addressing the six goals in the LSTA program, how important the various initiatives of the MSL are to the libraries and residents of Maine, and how well the services to the blind and to people with disabilities and outreach programs meet the needs of Maine residents. The interviewees were also asked what they think the top two priorities should be in the next five year plan. They were given an opportunity near the end of the conversation to add any other comments they chose.

There were many areas of agreement in the answers given by those interviewed.

- Overall Maine libraries are doing very well in the areas related to LSTA goals, especially the electronic networks that overcome economic and geographic differences in the state.
- Interviewees were less familiar public/private partnerships and services to the underserved.
- Outreach from the Maine State Library is excellent.
- Marvel databases and Minerva provide access to resources many libraries would be unable to afford on their own.
- State library consultants are knowledgeable and proactive.
- Those in libraries other than public libraries were generally unwilling to comment on the services to people with disabilities or the summer reading programs because they did not use them.
- Those who commented on the library for the blind and handicapped services were quite positive about it.
- There were kudos to the State Library for their advocacy and guidance.

There was some disagreement on continuing education. Some thought it was great; others made comments that indicate continuing education was better at some point in the past. Almost all thought it was important. In a similar fashion there was some disagreement about the summer reading program. Some thought it was especially helpful to smaller public libraries without a children's librarian; others chose not to use it.

Respondents were diverse in their recommendations for top priorities in the next five year plan. No one said any particular service or program was

completed and it was time to move on to new priorities; however, the priorities ranged from continuing education to funding to a statewide borrowing system, to digitization, to facilities.

Excerpts from the interviews follow, organized by question areas.

How well are Maine libraries doing in addressing the six goals in the LSTA program?

Overall Maine libraries are doing very well, particularly considering Maine is a large geographic state with not much population. I am astonished with the efforts of the state library to reach a geographically dispersed population. Networks here are really amazingly advanced with what we offer electronically...wireless, for example.

Maine is doing a good job of addressing these goals because they're aware of situations throughout the state.

There's room for improvement on all fronts in the State of Maine. The state library does an excellent job in promoting those goals. It's a matter of the localities following their lead or not. The state's electronic networks are fabulous. They are a model for the rest of the country. There is room for improvement in the linkages between libraries. The district consultants' roles have a lot of potential towards that improvement. Focus of library consultants could be more on interlibrary linkages. They could each have a specialty that's not limited to their district, for example youth services and serve as a role model for the entire state; another could be electronic resources; another whose specialty is fundraising. One could be an expert in consulting with non-governmental non-profit libraries. The recent letter from the state about not being able to support educational needs of trustees is unfortunate. I don't see a lot of public/private partnerships benefiting libraries. There are some foundations. There's room for more of that. Many libraries do a great job individually. Diversity is a tough question; we're the whitest state. There are too many libraries that don't take physical access as seriously as they should, for example aisle widths, ramps. ADA accessibility has improved in the last six years, but there's room for improvement.

Access to learning—we do some things very well. The requirement for certified librarians in schools is good. It results in encouraging library service to all learners. Access through Maine school library network addresses access as well as the underserved. Having electronic resources available through the network has evened the field. Our state has done a good job of working to make resources available to all regardless of income. We're even with other states if not ahead. Linkages are not well promoted at a state level. I think it's done well at a local level. In our town we do cooperate and support each other.

New Century Grant has helped a lot of public libraries provide access to people with disabilities. The state has made a concerted effort to make sure libraries are in compliance with ADA. School libraries make sure when there's new construction that we're accessible. School libraries don't do much with public/private partnerships. My overall assessment is that Maine libraries are ahead of the middle of the pack.

Overall they're doing well. There is probably some geographic disparity. Maine libraries are all across the board as to the resources they receive or how they're set up. There's a lot of collaboration. There's a listserv..ask for advice. There's a real sincere intention. I would rate Maine highly in electronic networks. There is much sharing. There are listservs for different interest groups. Linkages are very good. The listserv is open to all types of libraries. Partnerships vary from one region to another. Overall it's good. Some libraries more aware of the opportunities than others. Diversity is very good. Outreach from the Maine State Library is excellent. The Coordinator is very dedicated to serving underserved. Maine Humanities Council has been a good resource for Maine libraries...new books new readers program. Literacy for adults. Efforts to reach out to immigrant populations, ESL. Maine's first lady is very interested in children's family literacy. She was a teacher. Verizon has made monetary donations. Business, school and public libraries are cooperating in this program. Governor's office spearheaded the effort.

Electronic networks, linkages, and in targeting the underserved the libraries have done really well. We have a big large print and talking book collection. There are development services the libraries can rely on statewide for employees and trustees. They target people with disabilities and those who have trouble using the library. There is a huge books by mail program that is amazing for people who don't have a library or whose library is not open many hours. Minerva, SOLAR, URSUS provide links between all the libraries. Those linkages allow for the patron with one search to go to all the libraries in the state. The CEO for Infonet is going to further those linkages. With a lot of this the libraries are doing very, very well. We buy a lot of databases that are accessible to any resident in the state. Ability to gain access to print or electronic has so blossomed in the last few years; I can't think of a word grand enough to describe how much this has grown. People have access to things they never had before quicker than ever before. The libraries are doing quite well. Partnerships I can't speak to quite as well. There are a lot of connections with historical societies, arts organizations.

We're doing very well on the first three. In particular because of the formation of the Maine InfoNet partnership; this is a big step forward as it looks to expand the digital library throughout Maine. While not exclusively electronic, that is the focus. The multitype cooperation is outstanding and a real step forward. I'm not aware of much related to public/private partnerships. We could do better in that area or maybe I just don't know what's going on. Diversity, the thrust of the

statewide digital resources through catalogs to databases crosses economic and geographic lines. We do have a lot of economic diversity in Maine. The work we do with statewide databases and catalogs really make these resources available no matter who you are or where you're at.

We're doing fairly well. We've been pretty successful with a good suite of databases. We're making progress; it's slow but we're moving. We're exceptional in electronic networks; now we have Minerva and Maine InfoNet. I feel we're one of the leaders in the nation as far as electronic networks. We started with Maine Cat. 20 years ago. That's the role of Minerva and Maine InfoNet for multitype. There are still a lot of Maine libraries that cannot afford to join Minerva, but they do participate in the Maine InfoNet catalog. It would be nice if we had the funding that all libraries no matter what their economic needs could be part of Maine InfoNet. I don't think we're doing so well in public and private partnerships.

The state library is doing an excellent job with people with various disabilities and various public libraries are addressing the cultural diversity, trying to include programming for different ethnic groups, making sure our collections reflect the diversity of our communities. We could do more for the underserved. We used to have a lot of bookmobiles traveling rural Maine. Bookmobile may not be the answer nowadays, but something needs to be done to reach large areas of northern Maine where there is much economic disadvantage.

I think with LSTA we've made major headway in electronic networks and access to free information through Marvel and access to a number of catalogs with links to major public and college libraries. That's been of great help in linking people to information regardless of where they live. That's very positive. There has been progress in serving various areas and types of patrons. There has been a major push to reach people who have disabilities through programs such as talking books. There's been good publicity. Those services are becoming more widely known. The project Libraries for Everyone, PR effort through the different regional libraries has brought information about libraries to the public. They done a lot of PR about things libraries can offer in addition to books. That's a plus in terms of the diversity goal.

There are many people that would not have library services without the state library's outreach. We're doing well overcoming geographic barriers. That is the underserved for us in the rural isolated areas. As far as diversity, we do an outstanding job recognizing cultural diversity and trying to incorporate all facets of our culture. Not everybody has the Internet connectivity that they need. That goes back to how rural we are and the lack of funds available. Libraries in this state don't have state of the art stuff. We have partnerships; we share resources as much as we can; we try to include special and university libraries. We are not able to be leaders in technology. We want to offer new cutting

edge technologies, but we can't afford it. We purchase as we are able from our own budgets, usually well after something has been released.

I think we are addressing all of these goals. We're especially good at linking all types of libraries and developing electronic networks. We could do a little more work on public and private relationships.

It's always a question of infrastructure; some is good; some is bad. The Maine/School library network is good. The problem is the infrastructure in terms of capacity. Some of the heavy school users and larger public libraries are having the same kind of stresses. On the one hand Maine was aggressive when we built infrastructure about 8 years ago. That's good. The development of the individual consortia, such as Minerva and Maine InfoNet, has been good. When you think about networks in Maine it's incredible, multitype and on the same platform. In the last six months we have gotten a lot more direction and structure with the creation of the Maine Info Net Board and hiring an executive director.

Regarding the underserved, ILL has gone way up throughout the state. This is directly the result of the infrastructure. Interlibrary cooperation is tremendous. Prestigious private colleges, university system, public libraries of all sizes and school libraries are in InfoNet. I don't know how you could do any better on the inclusion end. There are things in place for underserved; there are tremendous resources in place with Marvel. I would include business in the underserved. We're not very good at raising awareness about some of our terrific resources. We know it's a problem and we are working on it. People can be underserved if they need info and we're not delivering it in a systematic well known way.

The development of partnerships with other state cultural agencies has been tremendous, for example, the New Century Program. State library is doing tremendous with Humanities Council and state archives. We're inaugurating a statewide marketing campaign for online library business resources coordinated through the state library in cooperation with MaineBiz, the statewide business journal.

Over the past decade there have been many times special library colleagues in New England are envious of where we are in respect to cooperative things, online things we have, Marvel, Minerva. I don't feel that we lag behind.

How important are the various initiatives of the Maine State Library to your library and the people you serve?

Continuing education has a tremendous impact. The consultants provide the bulk of the continuing education efforts around the state. Many of the libraries in the state are run by people without professional training. Given the reality of

running libraries the continuing education is a worthwhile effort. Sometimes there's almost too much continuing education offered, but a lot is duplicated because we are geographically disbursed. Libraries are not open full time so it is necessary to repeat programs.

The state library has taken an exemplary role in promoting resource sharing: Infonet, catalog, delivery van. Those are visionary moves. The continuing education opportunities could be greatly improved. Consultants do as fine a job as they can with the resources they have. There's room for more continuing education spread throughout the state, having multiple sessions offered around the state. The vast majority happen in central Maine.

When we have access to materials in databases that benefits everybody.

My library could never afford the Marvel databases. The T-1 line was very important. Minerva makes easy access to libraries throughout the state. Those are some things the state has done really well. The big one is the databases which would be prohibitively expensive for some schools. Marvel is a wonderful teaching and information tool. Minerva gives me access to resources I can't afford. I use URSUS and Minerva just to see the resources that are available. They're really important, not just a little important. In our district the consultants provide professional development. I haven't attended a lot because it's difficult for me to get out during the day. It's nice to know there is somebody with connections at the state library who I can talk to...for example, putting the catalog on the web, calling to get information and advice.

They're a great resource. The consultants are knowledgeable in their own territory and beyond. They're available by telephone and by e-mail. They're proactive and you can also go and get the help you need. There's access to a professional collection of resource materials.

We work very closely with MSL. We partner with that library. We do rely on MSL. Perhaps not as much as public libraries do. It's a resource we'd all notice if it went away. Together we really do try to expand the services to the citizens.

The MSL is truly a leader in the state. I see this particularly in the partnership between the University of Maine and the state library. We have frequent interaction through the Directors Council and are very engaged together in legislative issues. Without the strong state library we would not be nearly as sharing across the state. We're a relatively under-funded state so it's very important that we work together.

I think they're doing a fairly good job. Continuing education is very lacking and MSL needs to take a stronger initiative to reinstate. We used to have several classes. There's only one now and that's cataloging. Since we have so many libraries not staffed by professional librarians this is important. They provide the

loan of large print books to our libraries. And their recent initiative providing SRP materials is very much a plus. Consulting is an uneven service. There are some consultants that do an above excellent job, others are weak. We do need to address that unevenness of consultant services. Need more money to update a professional collection.

I think services through the state library are excellent. The consultant staff is excellent. In the past we've used consultant help for facility planning and evaluation. Resource sharing has improved because of the work that has been done in improving ILL services. Just the ability to access resources online has made a huge difference. Using fax and email has made a significant difference to libraries as far as quality and quantity of materials provided. The state and the regional districts have done a good job with continuing education with different district council meetings and workshops. They're doing training in the use of computers now. There's also strong leadership in developing good training opportunities. Some people have commented that there seems to be a slight movement away from the needs of school libraries. It's not at a point where it's really bad, but people are beginning to notice. The state library staff should keep an eye on this.

Without our district consultants I wouldn't know how to deal with political issues and I wouldn't know about affordable professional development opportunities. Professional development indirectly benefits our patrons because we're better librarians. The consultants also bring opportunities closer to us. Without the consultants I'm not sure we would have contact with other libraries or be aware of the strength of other libraries and share resources in that way.

I think they are important. We are a net lender of ILL, but we are seeing that our patrons are borrowing more and more from other libraries as that gets easier to do. I would like to see the state library work more toward a policy on cooperative collection development and retention. We're seeing that print is very important to our patrons. Our patrons are using ILL and are happy with how it works. We need to work more on continuing education programs.

The state library has been phenomenally creative in taking advantage of opportunities. They're smart about leveraging. Databases became reasonable because we had a backbone to deliver them. The state library gets high marks for developing initiatives that build on existing programs. The focus has been on infrastructure. We don't have a good continuing education program any more in the state. The Gates grant has been very helpful, but we don't have enough systematic training going on. We don't bring enough training into the state. I'd like to see us do more in a coordinated fashion. We're not good at that right now.

They are very important. We take advantage of various continuing education offerings and sometimes contribute to them. Because of LSTA everyone in the

state can access Marvel, online databases. Staff and students make great use of full text journals that we have access to partly thanks to LSTA. We participate in Minerva. The doctors love it. It's incredibly useful. We're open to the public as well. The other things that LSTA provides, patients and families as well as our staff and students are able to make use of. As money gets tighter it seems we're able to magically provide more, but that is because of these outside developments that augment what we do here.

How well do the services to the blind and to people with disabilities and the outreach programs to children and rural residents meet the needs of Maine residents who have difficulty accessing traditional library services?

I don't have first hand knowledge of this. Quite a few times we have referred people to state/federal program; I think that is worthwhile. Because of the kind of state we are nearly impossible for libraries our size to serve people who are blind. Our children's librarian says the summer reading program is very popular. It's also a good networking tool. Good for kids to know they are part of a statewide effort

Programs for the blind are excellent programs, have an impassioned librarian pushing them. She's to be commended. They could use more promotion. Services to rural communities undermine the efforts of nearby libraries. We have no use for the summer reading program. It is not something that we need here.

I don't know that I can answer this question specifically. I know there are talking books and services to the blind.

The public librarians come to the school and promote the summer reading program. It does help us indirectly.

Outreach services are very effective. A lot of folks have availed themselves of the summer reading program because it gives them an easy way.

The MSL provides a tremendous number of services to persons with disabilities...large print/Talking Books. It would be a huge blow to that population not to have those services. There is a strong and dedicated outreach services department to rural and persons with disabilities. I think the summer reading programs are really rich from what I am able to observe. I've heard nothing but praise.

I think they're doing a good job. The summer reading program is new within the last few years; it's helpful for small libraries that don't have a children's librarian.

As far as visually handicapped service, that has improved. Three years ago I would have said large print collection is terrible, but they are addressing that.

I can't answer those very well because we're a school. Services to the blind...I know those services are offered. How well they're offered I don't know because I don't deal with that through my own school.

Without the state's outreach services shut-ins would not have any sort of reading material. We simply could not pack up a van of materials and deliver them. The outreach service of the MSL is extremely active and fills the needs of those patrons. It's a tremendous help. The summer reading program fills a need for children who can't afford any fee based recreational service. Because of the state library's help we are able to provide a summer reading program that includes a couple hundred kids. It saves the library in costs and planning and development.

I can't see that the summer reading program has helped us reach children. I wish there was more statewide PR about it. The service to the blind works very, very well. I know of many instances where people are getting talking books and are delighted with the service; materials come quickly. I haven't heard about problems at all. There are many people who don't have libraries. We get a lot of those people because we give free cards. I haven't seen a decrease in those people because of the outreach the state is providing.

I feel totally unqualified to answer the outreach part. The summer reading program is very helpful because it helps tie us into a grand theme to the state at large. Having the baseline program articulated is a good thing.

There is a wonderful outreach program, but it is more focused on delivering things to people in their homes. Patients in the hospital could make use of these things, but the reality of hospitalization today is that people are in for a short time and when hospitalized are very ill. It's really the public library that would be dealing with this.

What do you think the top two priorities should be in the next five year plan?

Large part of the state library's thrust now is to boost efforts made by very small libraries in very small communities. I would suggest more effort be made to boost the efforts of larger libraries that have already been successful in reaching out to outlying populations. Ask/enable successful libraries to do more outreach to underserved populations, for example, a statewide library card. Bring more formalized library service to outlying communities using legislation and larger libraries to back them up.

We have many communities that don't think libraries are a priority in their funding. I would like to see some kind of library legislation/official recognition that the choices those communities have made by not funding libraries still have some kind of price that they pay because they rely on other communities to pick up the slack.

I think that public libraries need to become more professional. There should be state funding for any libraries that meet the minimum definition of a public library. Funding shouldn't fall on municipalities.

Address the change from book to electronic services and provide continuing education for librarians to help the public access electronic resources.

The consortium for continuing and possibly expanding the databases should continue to be a priority. Funding for advocacy. It's certainly a priority for school libraries. I would like to be a web based system. It would help to have a consortium at the state level that could help to find a way to work as a group. Or perhaps somebody at the state could develop a system for smaller libraries.

There is a great deal of interest in having a statewide library borrowing system. There is great interest in having reciprocity. It would take a lot of work because libraries are set up so differently, different funding bases and governing. There continues to be a lot of interest in collaboration when state grant money is available. Examples are 7 groups working together with grant funding. New Century Grants (cultural alliance, museums, libraries, community groups). They did tremendous things with that. Good to see more such efforts. In Maine a little money goes a long way. Continued funding is important.

Maine is rural and poor. One priority would be to continue working on the linkages, electronic network and linkages that bring all libraries together to serve as many people as possible. Expand the services for general learning across the general population from those still in the education system, K-12 through college through graduate school, on to lifelong learning.

Continued development of digital libraries, digitization of materials and local collections, those are our future. State library as a physical entity desperately needs to be addressed. It's really important that something be done about the state library as a place. The building has multiple issues as a structure; it has not aged well. It is in poor physical condition and at capacity; either modernize the current facility or move. Legislative efforts have to continue. We rely on the state librarian to work with our state legislature. Strong and increased support for electronic resources and helping to equalize access are important. Lobbying is right up at the top.

Continuing education, especially for support staff and for people who don't have degree, is important, especially in the one person/two person libraries. They

need all the help they can get. It needs to be done through some form of distance education. It's very hard to gather people together in one town. Continued improvement in provision of electronic information. I would hope they would continue to push for legislative support of the statewide electronic programs, the whole Maine InfoNet system with Marvel. That's been a major benefit to people throughout the state of all ages. Support for continuing education of library staff about the electronic programs. Support for publicity about it. Continue to provide training for librarians not familiar with Marvel databases and Maine InfoCat. The more library staff knows about these services, the more people around the state will be able to use them.

The technology needs attention. Our buildings are falling apart. We have leaks, space issues, programs that we would like to provide but there's no money or space. Our buildings eat up a lot of the money that would otherwise go into programming.

Linking all types of libraries and providing good public relations. Regionalization is becoming a priority in Maine. Libraries need to demonstrate that we are very efficient; we cooperate a lot, but we don't blow our horn enough. Expand our service to the underserved. We have to look to how we can expand our e-services, audios, videos, databases. Get broadband at all libraries.

We've got to rebuild our infrastructure and the funding has to be predictable. The second thing is we have to develop a new generation of leaders. I don't think we have the focus and understanding by a new group of people coming up that are trained to do advocacy and governmental relations on the broad scheme of what is going on. Third we somehow need to develop an equitable funding formula that would allow us to create a Maine card. And finally we need a construction program for public libraries. Everything now in Maine is locally funded.

There is an ever increasing focus on literacy at hospitals. The nursing staff in particular is concerned with parent education materials at the right level. There's also a really big focus here on multiculturalism, doing things appropriate to the culture of a patient. Anything that would help us deliver culturally appropriate things or make our patrons more aware would be good.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

The service for the blind does a great job with outreach. I would like to congratulate them on the job they do. I continue to be pleased and surprised at the support that comes from the state library. They pay attention to what the libraries are doing around the state.

Overall the state library is doing a fine job. They are very responsive and very helpful. I would like to suggest that the state library report their statistics like any other library in the state, circulation, financial information.

Communication between state library and schools has improved over the last couple years. The public benefits when we all work together.

Sometimes school libraries get the feeling that state library is advocating for public libraries. We feel that the work we do is very important. It ends up producing library users for life. We appreciate any kind of consideration we can get. I'm not saying the state library does a bad job, just sometimes we feel forgotten.

The state library is very welcoming to its community of users. When I go to them I feel I'm getting good advice and turning to friends who want to help me do my job better. They get high marks, dedicated, personable.

I think, and I hear this nationally, the libraries within the state of Maine are very well connected with one another. The state library has taken a leadership role in these areas. I would put Maine up against any other state. All the credit goes go to the state library. They have the initiative and enthusiasm for service to everyone.

I think there needs to be more attention to the tiny libraries that are struggling. We used to have per capita funding. There are many tiny libraries that could use some extra funding.

Overall I would give the state library very positive marks. People there work very well; they provide excellent service, good consultant services, good continuing education opportunities. The work that they've done with the Maine InfoNet system with the regional districts, the University of Maine, the bigger public libraries (Portland/Bangor) as well as support from the legislature is remarkable and has produced a lot of fine resources

MSL is our lifeline with political issues and other challenges. Without being able to pick up the phone we'd be dealing with tough patron and community issues all by ourselves. If the MSL service was removed, our communities would suffer tremendously for not having professionals to call. There is so much we draw on from the state library. They're unsung heroes.

The state library does a good job especially in having all kinds of libraries work together. I think that works well for all of us.

I think that the state library's leadership is very, very good. Creativity is tremendous. We need to devote some energy into developing a new group of

leaders and we need to get a new sense of the challenges libraries are facing through a governor's conference on public libraries.

I think that their heads (at the state library) are in the right place. They do wonderfully with the amount of resources they have. I commend them. They work very well to use LSTA to leverage more from state legislature. They're really working on having resources that involve everyone in the state. I'm real happy. I think they do a great job.

Interviewees:

RICH BOULET, Vice-President, Maine Library Association, Blue Hill Public Library

TERI CAOUETTE, President, Maine Association of School Libraries, Lincoln Middle School, Portland

DONNA CHALE, 2nd VP Maine Association of School Libraries, Warsaw Middle School, Pittsfield

JO HIPSHER, Chair, Central Maine Library District Executive Board, Brunswick High School

SUELLEN JAGELS, Eastern Maine Medical Center, Parrot Health Sciences Library. Member, InfoNet Executive Board, Immediate Past Member, Maine Library Commission

NIKKI MAOUNIS, President, Maine Library Association, Rockland Public Library

BARBARA McDADE, Director, Area Reference and Resource Center, Bangor Public Library

NANCY McGINNES, President, Friends of Maine Libraries, Hallowell

STEPHEN PODGAJNY, Area Reference and Resource Center Director, Portland Public Library

JOYCE RUMMERY, Dean of University Libraries, University of Maine, Maine Library Commission

ELIZABETH MORAN, Immediate Past Chair, Maine Library Commission, Director, Camden Public Library

DAVID NUTTY, Director of Libraries, University of Southern Maine, Chair of InfoNet Board

SONJA PLUMMER-MORGAN, Chair, Northeastern Maine Library District, Presque Isle Public Library