



2023 Library Visit Interview Form

Library Name: Portage Public Library

Certification Grade: 1

Date of visit: 9/26/23

Library staff present at the visit: Debbie Bird

SCLS staff present: Emily Peterson

Amount of time spent at visit: 1 hour

[Please limit this section to the answers to the specific questions, and include as much detail as possible. Report other information or observations in the “other information” section below.]

1. What's new and/or innovative at your library?

A lot! The library is going through a full refresh with new patron carrels, LED lights, new phone system, and a new patron counter by the doors. They have also updated the Teen area and the Teen room with a large manga drawing. The lobby has also gone through a redesign to better serve their patrons. Some structures have been fixed or updated too. They have one front door that wasn't working properly that has been resolved. Also repaired some structural damage and new gutters!

2. What are the next projects (big or small) on your library's to-do list in the coming year?

They are looking at adding a second boiler. They also want to refresh the children's department as well with new paint, shelves and furniture.

3. What challenges or concerns is your library facing now and in the near future?

The growth of the city has been challenging. They don't always feel supported and the city infrastructure doesn't always measure up to the growth. Specifically the water pipes under the library used for the sprinkler system are too small and over-stressed. Additionally the homeless population and substance abuse issues have been a strain on staff as they don't always have the resources to help them. They want to help, their hands are just tied with some social service issues.

4. How might SCLS help your library or staff with your challenges, concerns, or projects?

They would love more help with social services and how to help their patrons in a real and practical way. They also really want resources for staff who deal with some of these issues and have no support. They want to be able to help their community and get them answers and help fast.

5. What would you like to see SCLS focus on or prioritize in the coming year?

They would like more resources for staff and more practical training. Debbie also would like SCLS to stay on top of new and emerging trends in all areas and communicate those with libraries to keep them up to date.

6. Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?

We talked about the new HQ building and how it's coming along.

Other information gathered at the visit (interesting tidbits, general impressions of the library, or alternative topics:

Debbie was very very very happy that the county funding came through and they were able to complete projects that have been put on hold for a couple years.