



2022 Library Visit Interview Form

Library Name: Waunakee Public Library

Certification Grade: 1

Date of visit: 10/11/22

Library staff present at the visit: Erick Plumb

SCLS staff present: Amy Gannaway

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. How are you and your staff doing?
 - Doing well, library is back to “normal” (in quotes because the normal is still “new”).
 - Very busy summer – was first “normal summer” in new building.
 - Staff are tired. In the past three years, they have moved to new building, had COVID shutdown, changed services seven times, dealt with mask policies, etc. Erick wishes they could close for 3 weeks just to give staff a break.
 - Teens rediscovered the library this spring, which was good, but there were behavior issues and the library wasn’t prepared to have 30-40 teens around at once. They had to re-evaluate policies, behaviors, etc. For example, they weren’t prepared for the possibility that people would bring lasagna to the library.

2. What are the next projects (big or small) on your library’s to-do list?
 - They don’t have any big projects on the horizon because they need to take a breath.
 - They had a relatively slow September after the busy summer.
 - They are continuing to grow services slowly. They are at where they should have been in fall 2020. They are slowly adding staff.

3. Are there service changes or new services from the last two years that you plan on continuing?
 - Last year they started Sunday hours and that was great.
 - They are looking at how to stay open during the summer on Sundays. Erick would rather take away open hours on weekdays and add them to Sundays.
 - They are working to add a second full time children’s librarian and that would grow children’s services. The new librarian could focus on 4K-4th grade-ish while the current children’s librarian would focus on birth to 5. They also have a YA librarian who does tweens/teens.
 - They would love to hire someone who speaks Spanish. WAU has a small but growing community of primarily Spanish speakers and they are working to serve that

community better. Want to be sure that people are aware that library is a “Safe Place.” Erick does have a board member who speaks Spanish and has provided tips. They have also worked with a local group (Waunakee Neighborhood Connection).

4. How can SCLS help?

- No major concrete ideas.
- SCLS has been very helpful especially with regard to technology.
- Erick will always push to have more digital options and he would pay more for OverDrive. Erick realizes that WAU is a “large library” within SCLS and that SCLS has to serve all its members, large and small.
- It would be helpful if SCLS could provide information on translation services. WAU is willing to pay but could SCLS work as a consortium to help libraries access translation services?
- Erick said that he has talked with other Dane County libraries about having substitutes that float from library to library but that doesn’t really work.

5. Is there anything else you’d like to share or discuss?

- Pre-COVID Erick felt like that staff knew what to expect in general from day to day – there were patterns to library busy/slow times. Now things change day to day and there aren’t set patterns like there were before COVID. For example, last week when it was cold the library was slow, which was not what would happen pre-COVID.
- He has talked to other directors and found that others have noticed that patrons aren’t following the same patterns as they did before COVID. The WAU board is supportive of changes due to this, for example, they now close at 8 instead of 9.
- Circulation is good but it seems that patrons won’t go back to before. They are using more digital resources and that is part of the issue, but they may have also found other things to do.
- Overall, Erick is pretty pleased with how things are going.
- He feels disconnected on what is going at SCLS and acknowledged that is partly his fault. He doesn’t want to go back to the full LINK Directors meetings (10+ years ago) but things that it would be a good idea to review/refresh the governance structure every decade or so. It could be that the current governance structure continues to be the best option.
- Now that All Directors is available virtually he is unlikely to attend in person. Perhaps there could be an annual in-person get together and the other meetings could be hybrid.

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

- Erick gave me a tour of the library. I had never been there before. It’s a great space – I wish that I lived closer so I could go there more often!