

2020 Annual Report System Effectiveness Statements

Brodhead: Yes—While the Brodhead Memorial Public Library (BMPL) Board of Trustees feels that South Central Library System (SCLS) adequately met the needs of our library in 2020, we would like to see more transparency and better communication around budgeting and fiscal decisions. Our efforts to be good stewards of our own budget require that we understand how SCLS is using the fees we pay to them each year, and we do not feel that there is sufficient transparency to show us that SCLS income is used to efficiently provide services nor do we receive regular reports on how state funding directly benefits our patrons. We would appreciate seeing the true costs of all services we receive as well as an avenue to provide feedback to the SCLS Board on the level of effectiveness of services provided. To further expand on our concerns, the BMPL Board of Trustees will draft a more complete statement to send directly to the SCLS Board of Trustees in order to start a larger conversation.

Cambridge: Yes— Couldn't have done all we do for our patrons if we didn't have as great a system as we do.

Columbus: Yes— The library board is highly satisfied.

LaValle: Yes— Board agrees.

Rome: Yes— I have used the resources of South Central to find items that supplement our collection in Rome. These additional resources are very helpful. I sincerely appreciate the technology support and the expansion of our collection afforded by South Central. South Central was a valuable resource during the Covid pandemic.

Lodi: Yes— The library appreciates access to the library system's diverse materials, technology help line, and various consultants. The library looks forward to SCLS addressing issues connected with Internet slowness and ILS slowness and other technical irregularities.

McMillan of Wisconsin Rapids: Yes— Our library users have benefited greatly from SCLS library automation and delivery services. In all areas of system service we were pleased with the leadership of Martha Van Pelt and her talented staff.

Middleton: No— It is imperative that member libraries are able to explain rising costs in membership fees with a meaningful way to measure the return on investment. The Middleton Public Library Board understands that many of the challenges in working with SCLS are systemic, will not change overnight, and will take teamwork to solve. Middleton is happy to provide specific examples of areas that we believe could be improved, and the Board of Trustees at the Middleton Public library is happy to work collaboratively with SCLS to resolve these issues. Our hope is to move forward with a strategic conversation around SCLS's Framework to Measure the Impact of Strategic Plan to better meet the needs of Middleton and to strengthen system services for all.

Portage: Yes— I would like SCLS to lead the libraries they work for, instead of reacting to requests and situations. COVID is a great example. Public libraries are in the trenches and do not have the luxury of waiting. The public demands action. Choosing to keep our doors closed or remaining open is, in fact, a choice. If libraries are essential to their communities then public libraries have the responsibility to support community needs, while walking the tightrope of providing safety to its workers and under the heavy burden of economic distress. SCLS could:

1. Offer immediate support. Be reachable by telephone, as if they are still in their offices, instead of using an email system to get a message through and then eventually responding for help. As a participant,

member libraries invest heavily in the cooperation and infrastructure of a library system. Member libraries would benefit from more clear and thorough communication from system administration.

2. Offer recommendations. Research options. Lay out creative choices. The mounting blizzard of information and the workload of librarians can make it overwhelming to sift through options. Compiling lists of neighboring libraries and their decisions on how to move ahead allow libraries to compare. But researching options and laying out choices-making recommendations, would take some of the burden off the library and help communities with the ongoing struggle. Portage Public Library wants the system to anticipate and lead libraries. There is so much information to sift through that the purpose of a system can simply be to monitor the growing mountain of options and offer suggestions for solutions.

Reedsburg: Yes— The South Central Library System did provide effective leadership to assist the Library in 2020. Among services provided to our library and library staff, were support for regular operations including technology, circulation and patron services. System staff also helped our libraries make transitions to programming models and technology to allow us to create socially-distant workspaces for staff and our patrons in-library. 2020 provided additional challenges for library staff in all elements of library programming, services and planning. While services overall were successful, staff did report that the challenges of remote work environments were noticed in the response times and collaborative results of our interactions with system staff.

Sun Prairie: Yes— The Sun Prairie Public Library really appreciated the support and guidance SCLS provided, especially with all the changes to operations due to the pandemic.