

# Library System of Lancaster County Strategic Plan: 2011-2014

Presented to the Library System Board & Public  
June 15, 2011



## PRESENTATION AREAS

- A. E4 Exchange Engagement Charge
- B. Process Elements
- C. Environmental Scanning Highlights
- D. Mission
- E. Organizational Beliefs
- F. Strategic Focus Areas & Strategic Priorities
- G. Lancaster County Public Library Task Force Report  
(September 2010)



## E4 EXCHANGE ENGAGEMENT CHARGE

- Work with the Library System Board and staff to develop a strategic plan.
- Determine whether the current facility occupied by the Library System of Lancaster County is appropriate and/or whether other options are available, specifically in the County of Lancaster offices at 150 North Queen Street.
- Determine whether the Administrator of the Library System of Lancaster County should remain an employee of the System and accountable to the System board, or should become a County employee accountable to the County Commissioners.



## PROCESS ELEMENTS

1. Facilitated a half-day session to which all member library staff were invited
2. Conducted dozens of interviews with business, community and library leaders
3. Met numerous times with the Library Directors Council
4. Interviewed the vast majority of the member library Board Presidents
5. Met with all but one member library Board
6. Worked closely with the Library System staff on the planning process



## PROCESS ELEMENTS

7. Worked with the Library System Board and staff to develop a strategic plan
8. Researched the "future of libraries"
9. Presenting the strategic plan to the public on June 15, 2011
10. The Library System Board will formally approve the 2011-2014 strategic plan at their July Board meeting
11. Will review the strategic plan with all member library Boards



## ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING HIGHLIGHTS

1. Many individuals are *mistakenly* overlaying their childhood perceptions of libraries on current libraries.
2. There is extreme pride and significant ownership by library supporters of "their" library.
3. Community leaders, public officials and residents do not understand the county's system of libraries; find the funding extremely confusing; and don't realize the services the libraries provide.
4. The size of the library (number of users; size of collection; budget) significantly impacts its perspective and needs.





## ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING HIGHLIGHTS

5. Funding is a critical and challenging issue; there are no easy answers regarding funding.
6. There are significant differences between how the county's various municipalities view and fund libraries.
7. Other than those intimately involved with the Library System, individuals do not know about or understand the System.
8. Each member library board has its own culture, areas of emphasis, funding philosophies and beliefs.
9. Technology is a priority for all the member libraries as their users are asking for it.



## ORIGINAL MISSION

**The Mission of the Library System of Lancaster County is to bring together all 14 member libraries to plan and create a cost effective network of technology, facilities and resources to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of all the residents of Lancaster County. The Library System ensures that a network of support services is provided to member libraries.**

**NOTE:**

**A paragraph with 60 words**



## MISSION

**Provide resources, services, and expertise in a collaborative manner to and with the member public libraries in order to effectively serve our communities.**



## THE LIBRARY SYSTEM'S ROLES

- **Serve as catalyst and facilitator**
- **Serve as a model of collaboration**



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Embrace a service mentality
- Collaboration is how we initiate and achieve our desired goals
- Start by questioning our own assumptions
- Begin with the end in mind; it is about outcomes and results
- Decisions are evidence based
- No service lasts forever



## STRATEGIC PLAN: 2011-2014



## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

1. **Modify and improve relationship with member libraries**
2. **Rethink and restructure how The Library System conducts business**
3. **Upgrade technology**
4. **Support libraries' product relevancy**
5. **Advocate for libraries**



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES





## MODIFY AND IMPROVE RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMBER LIBRARIES

*(Member Library Want)*

### Strategic Priorities:

1. Work with member libraries collectively to identify those areas in which The Library System can assist them.
2. Improve efficiency and effectiveness of The Library System's communications with member libraries.
3. Be mindful of the realities (e.g. staffing, funding, volunteer competencies) and operations of the member libraries.
4. Member libraries and The Library System work collaboratively to jointly design and assess services, programming and initiatives based on agreed upon outcomes.



## RETHINK AND RESTRUCTURE HOW THE LIBRARY SYSTEM CONDUCTS BUSINESS

*(Internal business operations based on member library needs; incorporation of a service mindset)*

### Strategic Priorities:

1. Review and redesign the processes associated with getting materials from the publishers to shelves of member libraries (in the shortest possible time; with the least amount of dollars; creating the least amount of work for the member libraries; while retaining quality).
2. Redesign and expand training including (e.g. technology, customer service and professional development) using varied methodologies (e.g. webinars, online tutorials, one on one sessions) ensuring it is member-library friendly.
3. Identify service and program redundancies to be addressed.





## RETHINK AND RESTRUCTURE HOW THE LIBRARY SYSTEM CONDUCTS BUSINESS

*(Internal business operations based on member library needs; incorporation of a service mindset)*

### Strategic Priorities:

4. Review and refine processes to significantly increase efficiencies.
5. Work to expand Bookmobile services.
6. Incorporate "Best Practices" based on current needs and trends throughout The Library System's business operations.
7. Improve The Library System's collaboration and communication among and between its own staff.



## UPGRADE TECHNOLOGY

*(Member Library Need & Want)*

### Strategic Priorities:

1. Provide easy access to online resources, databases and e-books.
2. Work with member libraries to develop relevant and easily accessible websites and web-based services.
3. Provide those databases that are most desired by end users.
4. The Library System staff and departments will become increasingly technologically proficient.
5. Make all services provided remotely to users by The Library System and member libraries accessible on end users' mobile devices (Android, iPhone, Kindle, Nook, etc.).
6. Assist member libraries' transition to new operating systems and software applications.



## SUPPORT LIBRARIES' PRODUCT RELEVANCY

*(Tracking the future of libraries)*

### Strategic Priorities:

1. Conduct ongoing research regarding the future of libraries and related shifts and trends to be shared with member libraries, library supporters, and elected officials.
2. Member libraries and The Library System work collaboratively to annually review the county's library services and products and compare with consumer trends to ensure relevancy.



## ADVOCATE FOR LIBRARIES

*(Critical to long-term sustainability of libraries)*

### Strategic Priorities:

1. Partner with member libraries to develop a comprehensive public education program highlighting the benefits and value of Lancaster County's libraries, and allocate appropriate resources.
2. Work with the County Commissioners to expand their understanding of the county's libraries.
3. Address all of the "Lancaster County Public Library Task Force's" observations and recommendations.



# Lancaster County Public Library Task Force Final Report

September 8, 2010



## WHAT THE TASK FORCE HEARD

1. "Who's in charge?" The Lancaster County Library System needs to speak with one voice.
2. Stable, predictable funding is absolutely necessary.
3. Local municipalities, school districts and residents should be resources for additional financial support.
4. Two-way communication between County Commissioners and the Library System Board must be improved.
5. An advocacy organization to promote Lancaster County Libraries should be developed.
6. The state needs to relax some requirements since there are currently insufficient funds to meet regulations.





## WHAT THE TASK FORCE HEARD

7. The Library System should be defined as a source of essential support services to local libraries. The most commonly cited services are Information Technology and Collection Development Technical Services.
8. Some library directors are reluctant to be outspoken in their cooperation with the Task Force because history has caused them to fear retribution.
9. Some library directors do not believe that, in the current funding climate, reductions in system operations have equitably matched staff and operational cutbacks at local libraries.
10. Some library directors are not confident that the State and County funds are allocated appropriately or fairly among member libraries.
11. Some library directors do not believe that the System is currently managing resources wisely.



## RECOMMENDATION

The System Board and the Library Directors Council must collaborate to define a process to improve communication between the System and library directors, and the System Board must assign accountability for this improvement to the System Administrator.





## RECOMMENDATION

The new System Board and the Library Directors council must collaborate to:

- Define the essential System services that are critical to the operation of every member library.



## RECOMMENDATION

The new System Board should seek outside firms for fundraising, corporate sponsorships, and grant writing & application to provide additional new funds for all county libraries without eroding the current base of community financial support for any individual local library.

