

The MLS Connection

Last Updated Sunday, 27 February 2011

Long Range Planning is a Sound Strategy

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The Massachusetts Library System has been offering workshops on long range planning around the Commonwealth. You can check our Continuing Education Calendar to see if one is going to be held near you. Be aware we are also offering workshops for the public library planning process and the two are different! In this article I am going to present a brief outline of the process. Why plan? Even if you are not a member of MLS (Massachusetts Library System), long range planning is a sound strategy. Too often we get caught up in daily details, which prohibit us from seeing the big picture. Planning is a process, which determines:

- Where do you want to go
- Where you are now
- Ways to get from "here" to "there" The benefits of planning include:
- Explaining your program to your stakeholders (administration, parents, students)
- Identifying priorities
- Providing a blueprint for the future

- Meeting the requirement for LSTA Direct Grant Funds (this is only available to members of MLS) The planning process includes creating a planning committee. Who should be on the committee? Members should represent as many library stakeholders as possible. To keep a committee a manageable size, consider individuals who wear more than one hat! Consider:

- Library staff
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Parents
- Students

- Community members (public library) What needs to be in the plan? The Massachusetts Board of Library

Commissioners requires specific elements. You can find out more about these at

<http://mblc.state.ma.us/grants/lsta/planning/planningFAQ/faq.php>

- Mission statement
- Assessment of user need
- Multi-year goals and objectives
- Action plan for (year) (if not incorporated into Goals and Objectives)
- Methodology

- Approval of governing board (trustees, school committee, superintendent, provost, board of directors, etc) and date your plan was approved How long is the planning process? This is totally dependent upon how often you can meet and for how long. The process is a nice one to begin in the fall and finish up in the spring before summer! New plans must be submitted to the MBLC for review no later than October 1. Annual Action Plans must be submitted no later than December 1. How can MLS (Massachusetts Library System) help?

- Provides the School Library Media Center Long-Range Planning Guide
- Gives assistance in the planning process Contact MLS:
- Toll Free: 866-627-7228 (Waltham)

- Toll Free: 800-282-7755 (Whately)

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