

THE IMPLICATIONS OF NETWORKING ON SCHOOL-PUBLIC
LIBRARY COOPERATION IN RURAL AMERICA

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Let me begin by saying, I love New York! I also love Pennsylvania. I was born here, and I spent through the sixth grade here. So, this is sort of a homecoming, a bridging of my two favorite states. And I hope that those of you who will be able to come to ALA next summer in New York will go away saying what I just stated: "I love New York."

I enjoyed this morning's presentation very much and would like to comment briefly on one or two of the statements made. Regarding Alice Fite's comment about there being no national format yet, I'm not sure that that's bad, as we review our experiences in New York. I think we need models, but I don't think we can ever have a national or state format that will serve everyone. I favor the flexibility for local decision-making, as well.

I also like Shirley Mills' comment when she says "and we don't know." We say a lot of "don't knows" in New York when we talk about networking and cooperation. We don't know because we are really on new turf and pioneering. There aren't answers to all the questions that we are asking ourselves, or to those that others are asking of us. So I think that hers is a very appropriate quote and one which you'll probably say many times over as you get involved in the net-

working or cooperative movement. I'd also like to quote my own superintendent, Dr. Burton Ramer, who isn't here of course, but I think he has a philosophy which serves us very well in everything we do in our BOCES organization and most certainly in terms of what we are trying to do with networks and the cooperative movement. His comment, whenever we are talking about a new development, whether it be a library development, a development in special education, gifted education, school transportation, or some other area, is simply this: "If it is good for kids, then we'll find a way to make it happen." I think that's a very basic thing to ask ourselves with networking. Is it good for our client? Is it good for our community? Is it good for our students? Then we'll find a way to make it happen. It has been a very good guiding principle for us.

I would like to present my credentials for being here today. I do represent rural America in the sense that I work in Oswego County. I mentioned Mexico, New York. It always sounds so glamorous until I tack on the New York! Consultants have a great time returning my calls rapidly because they forget to read the New York after the Mexico, and they think I'm inviting them for an assignment in Mexico. Mexico, New York, as a matter of fact, is in the snow land, not the sun land, and we are located about forty miles north of Syracuse on the shores of Lake Ontario. We have approximately 250 inches of snow a year in Mexico, New York, so you see it's not a sun belt by any means.

The county has a population base of approximately 100,000 people. It is agricultural with a modest amount of industry. We have two small cities in the county, Fulton and Oswego. Beyond that, the rest of the county is all villages, townships, and rural America. It's a poor county economically. The unemployment rate in Oswego County has been in double digits over the last decade. The educational profile of our citizenry shows a modest level of achievement. We have 50% of the adult population lacking a high school diploma, which is a

very high statistic for New York State. I'm not sure how that would fare in your state, probably high also. We have almost no racial distribution. Our racial makeup is 99% white, 1% other; the largest "other" is American Indian. We have few cultural benefits. One college in the county does bring in a certain amount of culture, but beyond that there are primarily just little local arts and crafts groups. We have access to Syracuse, however. It is truly a rural, poor county in many respects.

Now, Oswego County has great advantages, and I don't want you to think I'm putting down Oswego County. I've been working there eight years, and I love it. Some of the advantages as I see them are: we have a very strong work ethic in Oswego County; we can get things done because people are willing to work hard and find a way; there is a great deal of pride; there are a lot of traditional values which enable us to move forward in pioneering efforts. We very much use a people-to-people orientation; it is that kind of a place to work. You know everyone you are working with on a first name basis, be it the mayor, the legislator, the superintendent, the teacher, or a person in the community, and this truly facilitates any kind of cooperation. If you know the people you are working with, you can often go a long way on friendship. There exists a great deal of loyalty; if our schools make up their minds to do something, such as they have in the area of library networking, they stick with it through thick and thin, never pulling the rug out from under you. I see perseverance, and, I guess, just plain old American gumption. It's a very nice place to be.

In order to understand what we are doing in Oswego County with a school library network, which will eventually interface with the public and academic networks that exist now for library service, I think it's important for you to have a little background on New York State educational and library systems. If you'll bear with me, I'd like to share some of that within the next ten minutes or so.

Basically, our structure of education in New York looks like this. We have a Board of Regents, which is the policy-making body for all education in New York State, public, private, K-12, post-secondary, cradle to grave. Education is funded primarily through a combination of local money from property taxes and state aid from the legislature. The State Education Department is the administrative unit for all education in New York, and that is an advantage which we have that maybe some states do not have. That is, all of our libraries, be they school libraries, college libraries, or public libraries, report through the same administrative agency and through the Commissioner of Education.

We have forty-four intermediate units working with the schools called BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services). These might be likened to your Intermediate Units in Pennsylvania. In Colorado they have the same name, BOCES. Iowa has regional agencies. There are approximately thirty states in the country that have some form of intermediate level educational unit. In addition to the forty-four BOCES, there are five big cities which operate independently from any intermediate agency. The five big cities are: Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers, and New York City. Under the structure of the intermediate units there are 737 school districts clustered to feed through one of those forty-four intermediate units.

Within New York's 737 school districts there are approximately 4300 school buildings and 4300 school libraries. Every school in New York State is, by Commissioner's Regulation, required to have a school library and school library program. Unfortunately, we don't have the equal mandate for staffing. We only have certified staffing (school library media specialists) mandated at the secondary level. K-12 certified staffing is an area we are working hard to address.

The BOCES, which is the area of education where I work, has two basic responsibilities. One is to serve as an extension of the State Education Department. My superintendent represents "the

Commissioner in the field" for his component school districts. In that regard he has a state education department role. Implementation of education law, education finance, certification of teachers, program, referenda and so on are parts of this role. The other charge to the intermediate unit is that of providing cooperative services to its member school districts. In that regard, we provide services in the area of education for special children, occupational education, data processing, transportation, media service and so forth. Our BOCES offers some forty cooperative services for the districts in our area. In Oswego County, we have nine public school districts and one parochial school district. There are fifty-two school buildings in the county. There are 1600 school teachers and nearly 28,000 students. (By the way, in terms of public libraries, we have two city public libraries and seven village or town libraries; there is also one academic library at the State University College in Oswego.) That gives you enough of the background and maybe will help in our discussions today.

Library Services In New York State

We are proud of library services in New York and have what we think is good service for our several publics. But we still fall short in areas, and we are working hard all the time to correct under-served areas and deficiencies. In terms of statewide numbers, we have 715 public libraries and 245 academic libraries; special libraries amount to over 1200; public school libraries, over 4300; libraries in state facilities, such as correctional institutions and so forth, 90; two regional libraries for the blind and physically handicapped; and the one New York State Library.

We also have library systems in two situations. Twenty-two public library systems combine those 715 local public libraries into system configurations. And we have nine Reference and Research Library Resources Councils (3 R's). Those Councils are systems primarily for

academic and special libraries and do include the public library systems. For example, the one in my area brings together all the college libraries in northern New York State as well as corporate libraries, industrial libraries, hospital libraries and so on, plus two public library systems in Watertown and Plattsburgh.

What we do not have yet, but we are working toward, are school library systems. To sum up the situation, we have "in-place" public library systems; we have "in-place" systems for academic and special libraries; we are hoping and planning to develop school library systems.

Background of How We Began and Where We Are Today

Our twenty-two public library systems over the years have developed many cooperative services for their member libraries. They have the things that you all know about; they have interlibrary loan, delivery services, cooperative technical services, cooperative acquisitions programs, consultant services, shared data bases, special client programming, inservice training, central book collections, and so forth. The nine 3 R's have many similar cooperative services.

As the fiscal crunch hit us, and as we continued to lobby with our legislators for more money to enhance the local public library, as well as for the system and for the 3 R's, and to do something supporting the school libraries, we received back two pieces of information which we took very seriously. One was that from the legislator's point of view there was a great deal of confusion about the needs for library funding. We, in the field, were all going separate ways with special interest priorities. They said to us, "Why don't you people work together; why don't you cooperate? Why should we be putting money into the public library and be asked to do a similar thing in the school library next door? Can't you pool some of the resources and work together?" That was a lesson for us in our

lobbying efforts more than anything else. We became careful and cautious about having diversified lobbying efforts. We unified as a profession through the New York Library Association and together went forward with the mission being, "What's good for one library in New York is good for all libraries in New York. What hurts one library, hurts all libraries". This premise has been of enormous psychological value, both within the field and within the dollar-givers, the legislators. We are seen as a unified force.

The second thing legislators said to us was, "If you, in fact, say there are unmet needs of your clientele, and there are, New York State is not in a fiscal position to help you establish new structures and levels of bureaucracy. That would cost a lot of money, and we cannot do that. What you will have to find within your profession is a way to utilize what's already in place and expand upon that." So we were given the charge to look at what was out there and extend it.

Our State Education Department initiates a legislation program for libraries each year, both at the state and federal levels. The field usually supports or amends much of this program, as we have opportunities to be involved in the initial and ongoing planning. In 1977 the Department put forth a bill concept for the Legislature which expanded the structure for library systems. That bill fell short in the area of the equality or partnership issue with respect to school libraries. It was a bill which essentially said that the school libraries could participate in networking by becoming associate members of the existing public library systems. The field resisted that concept on all fronts. We felt that there was too much to be contributed and to be gained by the school library not to have equity in status among the types of libraries involved as we developed a state network. So we worked on that idea and reworked it and reworked it. The school community became much more involved than they had been in the past, particularly some of the decision-makers in the school

community beyond the library media specialist, that is, the superintendents and the school boards. By working together with all affected parties, the Department, the Legislature and the field were able to come up with what all thought was a better approach for a bill.

I must say that regarding some of the fears and concerns about systems and networks which existed in the field, we found that in most cases we were our own worst enemies. We suspected problems that never developed. Some of the concerns that were raised over and over, such as, the school libraries will inundate the public libraries with loan requests, never were documented and did not come to pass. It was really a fear more than a reality.

In 1978, a new bill was developed under totally revised thinking. We were in a year when there were great economic problems being suffered by the public libraries and the public library systems in New York. If you follow the national media, you will probably remember that New York City had mass closings of branch libraries and greatly reduced hours of service. Part of the revised concept said: We feel that in order for libraries to participate in networks, they must be helped in meeting their first level service responsibilities. So part of the bill had to be a basic aid bill; it had to provide some new money, some new dollars, to help those libraries which were closing and saying, "How can we start to cooperate if we are limiting services for our primary clients?" The bill also had to do something for those nine 3 R's. Primarily it had to give them statutory authority. They had operated since their beginnings on a year-to-year basis. So we tried to strengthen what existed. In other words, we strengthened those twenty-two systems and the local public library, strengthened those 3 R's, and at the same time brought in an imaginative new concept which would get school library systems started. In order to do that, we identified a pilot program approach. This idea stemmed indirectly from our legislators who wisely said to us, "How can we fund something (school library systems) that doesn't exist? You're

asking us to provide dollars for school library systems, and we don't know where they will be, what they will do, or anything else. How can we devise a funding formula?" So, we transferred that thinking to the idea that we should pilot a few models in the state. We ended up with an annual appropriation in the bill of \$800,000 for pilot projects to exist over a thirty-six month period in different parts of New York State. By the way, I might point out it was eventually determined that the pilot projects would be selected on a competitive grant basis; in other words, let the cream come to the top. Let those who are ready and have been most innovative about what they can do be the ones to get the money.

I also want to point out that we had citizens support for the need for school library sharing and cooperation. You won't have time to read all of this perhaps, but there is a Resolution which was passed at the New York's Governors Conference on Libraries in June 1978 by the delegates. It very clearly says that they, as citizens and library professionals, endorse the fact that the school libraries need to be brought into the system movement in our state. This Resolution was very persuasive with legislators and with Governor Carey, who ultimately had to sign our bill.

We are now testing models for school libraries to engage in formal cooperation and to get them into some manageable scheme, partly so that their eventual interface with the public library systems and with the 3 R's is manageable. One public library system does not want to have to deal with eighteen, twenty-five, or numerous independent school districts. It would much prefer working with one school library system on behalf of the member schools; thus, we are working toward models which have the actual cooperation interface being system-to-system.

In order to get to whatever model your state would devise, the first step is to have acceptance of the concept of library systems/networks, and that first step is a big one! I know those who are here

today accept it, or we probably wouldn't be here. But all those who are not here may not necessarily accept it. Attitudinal barriers take a great deal of time. Once they have been overcome, however, formal planning and implementation can proceed with great force and speed.

In Oswego County we began working with our secondary school libraries going back four to five years. The first full year was spent visiting one another's libraries, talking about and seeing what each other was doing. Finally, almost a full year later, at one of the meetings, a school library media specialist had the courage to say, "When are we going to start to do something together? We all know everyone has something to share, so let's share!" Once that decision was made, and there was that level of trust established, that feeling that they could work together, it took us a matter of one or two further meetings to design and endorse areas for planning and cooperation. This step in developing attitudes and trust must be achieved early on.

Going back to our legislative effort for a moment, I would like to give you further background. Real networking for your state will not come about without some kind of state authority or legislative enabling effort. You will have a lot of good, informal, local cooperation, but if you want to get to a position of a state effort with intersystem cooperation, you must have an underlying basis ultimately. I'm going to read just a few paragraphs from an article that describes New York's legislative effort in this regard. This was written from the perspective of the New York Library Association, and because of my position with the legislative chair for that Association over the last three years, it gives Kudos to NYLA! There are many other Kudos deserved by other people, however.

The New York Library Association's aim was to assure passage of a library bill to provide fiscal relief for libraries and the more effective delivery of library and information services through encouragement of the emerging networking potential. Our campaign began in late 1977/early

1978 with the bill drafting. Working closely with the State Library agency, appropriate legislative sponsors were secured. The process through committees was uneven and on five occasions the Association was advised that there was no hope for passage in 1978. Give up! The NYLA forces refused to accept defeat and returned each time to the legislative leadership with new evidence of need and increased citizen support. When the Legislature recessed after an extraordinary summer session with no indication of interest in the library bill, realistic prospects for success diminished but our lobbying efforts did not. We seized the opportunity of a post election, third extraordinary session called for December 7 and 8 to pull out all of the stops and found ourselves number three on a seven item limited agenda. The bill passed unanimously in both houses during a late night session with the NYLA Legislative Chairperson and Executive Director on hand to cheer the bill home at 2:00 a.m. in the Assembly. It was an astonishing legislative victory and made national news. To us it is the classic study. Yes, you can if you are persistent, believable, flexible, fair, and fearless. American Libraries, the official publication of the American Library Association, headlined its report of NYLA's accomplishment with a quote: "No way, but they did it nevertheless." The NYLA lobbying effort is legend. It was a stunning legislative victory set as it was against Proposition 13 in California and the basic tax reform moves across the country. It reinforced our belief that if you represent a valuable public service, tell your story clearly and graphically, and study the art of politics carefully, legislative victory is attainable. In a statewide televised ceremony on December 15, 1978, Governor Hugh L. Carey signed the bill into a law. The leadership of the Library Association was invited to participate in the bill signing ceremony and are acknowledged by Governor Carey to have "accomplished the legislative victory with grace and skill".

We are proud of our accomplishments and our Governor Carey, a consistent and long-time library supporter. Perhaps I boast a little bit, but I also share all this with you in encouragement, because if we can do it, you can do it.

Now we have the law passed and signed. Let me talk a moment about implementation of this law. The law was passed in late December. Our fiscal year in New York ends March 31. There were three months left, then, to do all the work that would be necessary to award those pilot grant dollars. The month of January was spent by the staff of the State Education Department developing Commissioner Regulations which would allow for the implementation of the law. As you know, a law is very general and should be. Implementation detail comes in our state via Commissioner's Regulations; there is probably something similar in your states. It was amazing that the Department staff was able to put together those Regulations, have field input, and get them passed by the Board of Regents, our policy-making body, by late January. Announcement to the field and solicitation for proposals occurred in February. The field had one month to plan and write very detailed proposals. This was very difficult to do, because we had no precedent for models in the area of school library and intersystem cooperation. Participants had one month to refine an idea that was truly new and creative; it also required a proposal process for involving all affected parties.

Those of you who work in schools can appreciate the problems we had: there were about two weeks in which to conduct meetings with every librarian in our schools, every principal, all our Advisory Council members, our Boards of Education, our local politicians and so on. We needed at least to let them know that we were going to be applying for a project and to get their endorsement for what we hoped to be able to do. Fortunately, we in Oswego County had been laying ground work for several years. But it was still a very difficult situation in view of the time constraints. I might also mention in terms of proposals, which were due in early March, it was interesting to note that as the bill was being put together and moved along over the previous year or so, there were skeptics among us in the field.

People were saying, "This isn't going to help us, and we don't want any part of that." In the end though, of the proposals submitted to Albany, eighteen of the twenty-two public library systems were part of a proposal. All nine of the 3 R's engaged in a proposal. Nearly half of the forty-four BOCES were on a proposal representing the schools. Again, considering the time crunch, I think that's a remarkable bit of statistic. Now, I don't fool myself into saying this happened because the concept was so terrific. Certainly the dollars were there and a factor. People were willing to test possibilities if they were going to have financial aid available.

The legislative effort and resultant modest funding were helpful for another reason: one can only go so far on good will and volunteerism. Eventually some money has to be available, as networking is not free. Networking will not necessarily save any dollars, and may cost money, but it will be cost-effective. It will allow services which your clients do not now receive.

By the end of March, the grants were ready to be awarded. The March 31st deadline was met, and Commissioner Ambach sent out letters authorizing the selected pilots, and we were off! In the blue printed booklet I distributed you will see a map which shows the areas of the state which received pilot projects. Or, it might be easier for you to look on the pink sheet because that is a sheet just on the pilot projects. We had two intersystem pilot projects. On this visual you see a shaded area in Upstate New York, around Rochester, which was one of the intersystem grants, and the New York City-lower Westchester County area as the other intersystem grant. The intersystem grants, if you go back to the model I showed you in the circle, will seek to establish the necessary school library systems in that area and put them in cooperative ventures with the existing public library system(s) and 3 R's system. So those two projects, Rochester area and New York City area, are the most completely cooperative systems. They are trying out what we hope to see someday across the state.

The other pilot projects, which are designated by dots, are those projects focusing on the development of a school library system only. Theirs will be a system which brings together all the school libraries from one jurisdiction and which provides cooperative services among and for them. The grant which we have in Oswego County is a school library system grant, although we have a few ideas built in which bring together sharing with the area public and academic libraries. Basically, though, we are developing a model which will bring school libraries into cooperation with each other.

If you want to look for a moment inside the handout which is entitled, "School Library Systems, A Background Paper," at a sheet which reads, "School Library Systems Pilot Project." That sheet is something that I used with our own schools when we began our proposal planning, and it defines what membership in such a system would require and yield. Most importantly, on page 2 you see a heading, "Plan of Service." The points cited under "Plan of Service" really are the essence of the proposal. They detail what such a system has to do or should be doing. You notice that there should be a standing Advisory Council for each system which could be termed a loose form of governance. With the pilot project, we have only thirty-six months of support. So the standing Advisory Council and all other factors are selected for the three years of the pilot. What happens in terms of permanence in such a system is yet to be designed, following the study of pilot project data.

You notice under point B and point C the two basic requirements for a school library system. First you had to find the means to identify what exists in the cooperating school library systems. You can't share things until you know who has what. So one thing which every pilot project in the state has to do is come up with a means for a union catalog. We will be using OCLC for ours, but not all others will. That's the beauty of the pilots; we are testing all directions and hopefully we will determine what best can serve New York. The

second thing, point C, which is required of every system is a procedure or mechanism for sharing what we find is there. Those are the only two requirements you really have to meet in terms of programming for your project. To repeat, you had to come up with 1) a plan that would say how you will know who has what, and 2) a plan for sharing what is then identified. Now, in that regard, I'd like to point out that one of the fears people often begin with is: "To do a union catalog with the hundreds of thousands of items in our libraries, print and non-print, will require twenty years!" True. So our legislation allowed us to be selective with our union catalog. You do not have to go back any further than 1978 acquisitions if you do not want to. You could begin with the recent present and go forward. Decisions to go retrospective will be made once the need to do so is seen. You can or cannot include audio visual materials and special collections. You can exclude what you feel would be cumbersome to the effort initially. In our case, we chose to devise the union catalog to begin with 1977 holdings, and our reason for that was that our school districts fared very poorly budgetwise in 1978. Thus, we had few new acquisitions in the county and would have had a very small union catalog. Also, we are including all resources, print and non-print, according to the decision of our schools. The other points on the handout can be read at your leisure, as it basically is guideline information for those of us who had to develop proposals and for the schools in terms of their wanting to participate in such a proposal.

A pilot project can do many other things of its choosing in terms of cooperative ventures. Discussions of such possibilities were of particular interest with our school administrators, because they would say, "Now I can see why we would share materials from library-to-library, but what else would we do?" They had no background in what system services would be viable and appropriate to the school libraries.

You could be as creative as you wanted to be beyond the interloan of materials. In our proposals we identified thirteen objectives, the required two plus eleven more which I'm going to discuss with you in a moment.

I want to speak further about our pilot structure. As I said, Oswego County has nine public school districts and one private school district. We were fortunate in that all ten of our districts asked to be part of our proposal from year one. We have a System Advisory Council, which is our policy-making group. The Advisory Council is representative of all the people we would serve, that is, the school librarian, the school administrator, the classroom teacher, the student. We have ex-officio seats on the Council for the public librarian, the college librarian, and other system staff. This Advisory Council will be meeting about four or five times a year and will help guide us in terms of service and policy development. Some of the most interesting input comes from students on the Council, so don't ever forget to include them in any venture you are doing. They know their needs and are probably as creative as anybody who will come to such a group.

We also have a group of district contact people or coordinators. These are the people who will implement the system services in each district. They all are, by Commissioners Regulations, certified library media specialists. We wanted to be certain that any state effort recognize that professional training and competence is critical to the implementation of a system or network. Each district has identified one certified librarian who is our contact person for that district. It is through that individual that we do the actual delivery of services. That person then implements sharing with all the other buildings of his/her district. These people have not been given any extra time, support, or anything else for these assignments. They are doing it because they believe in it. It is extra work, but it can save some time too. I'll give you an illustration of that a bit later.

We received \$50,000 a year for our project for the three years. That sounds like a terrific amount of money, perhaps, but it buys one project coordinator, a part time staff clerical person, and the rest of the money goes into OCLC contracts, communications services, printing, publications, consultants, and so forth. It does not stretch very far. We are working hard to be innovative and creative with what we want to do and the means available. There are not a lot of dollars. It may sound rich until you start to spend it, and then it is not a lot of money.

I would like to show you our thirteen objectives now, and you can follow them on the yellow Fact Sheet. I will enumerate briefly within each one.

1. Initiation of OCLC support for: a) development of a Union Catalog(s); b) cataloging and processing service; and c) interlibrary loan.

We are going to be using OCLC for the development of our union catalog, and we may also use it to receive cataloging and processing for our schools because that is a feature of OCLC. They have just announced an interlibrary loan subsystem through OCLC, so we may eventually use that for interlibrary loan transactions even beyond the county.

In regard to OCLC and everything we are doing, I might mention that we had very little trouble coming up with what we wanted to do. But as you get into something and really start to negotiate contracts, develop the profiles with all the work involved, it is much more time consuming and slower than meets the eye. You have to be prepared for some frustration when you are initiating a new idea. In the role we have in coordinating our school districts, we also have to be prepared to keep them enthusiastic, motivated, and excited as we find delays. Our school librarians hoped to come back to school in September with our OCLC terminal here, ready to go. It is going to be at least December before this happens, so in the meantime we have to show them what else is happening and keep their motivation at a peak

while helping them understand delays. And, there are unavoidable delays in anything new like this.

2. Expansion of an existing Union List of Serials to include elementary school and area public and academic libraries.

We have had, in Oswego County, a union list of serials in our high school libraries for some four years. Now, here is where I can give you an illustration of cost-effectiveness. The high schools in our county subscribe to over 350 periodical titles. We have only nine high schools, each district having one. Their only way to share and cooperate is across district lines. By the way, the first place to start is with serials or periodicals as it is easy and can be done manually. You don't have great numbers of titles to deal with. By creating our union list and just knowing what each other had, and by using delivery service which already existed in my Center, every high school in the county increased its access to periodical holdings by a minimum of 70%. No new dollars were spent! Superintendents liked that kind of information! We did not spend a new dollar, and yet our teachers and students had access to many additional periodical titles. That union list is going to be expanded through the system project to include the holdings of the elementary school libraries and the public libraries. So, we will have a county list of serials.

3. Improved availability for easy communication between participating agencies via telephones, mail and delivery services, newsletter and directories.

The next objective was the communications one. Those of you who work in school libraries know the frustration of not always being able to call someone on the telephone. It is still one of the major problems which confronts us. So, through the system grant, we will place a telephone in each of the district coordinator's offices. Every district will at least have immediate telephone service to us and to each other at that level. We will also be funding a long distance allowance charge for them on a monthly basis, because we have three telephone companies in Oswego County and to call almost anywhere

costs money. Two of our schools already had telephone service in place in their school libraries; in those cases they may not ask us to fund anything new except the long distance allowance. Again, this goes back to the premise that I shared with you from the Regents and the legislators which was to use what already exists.

We also have developed a system newsletter, the first issue of which went out about a month ago, and this is very useful. And, we are developing a directory of all the libraries in the county, with such information as staff people, telephone numbers, hours of service, special programs, special collections, etc. This will be useful for the general public, as well as the schools.

4. Photocopying support including xerography and microform printing.

The fourth point, or objective, for system service has to do with photocopying support, that is, budget allowances to copy items for loan, within the provisions of the Copyright Law, and for microform printing. This may differ in implementation from school to school. For example, we have one school which has excellent microform holdings, i.e., the New York Times Data Bank and several other special holdings. Their comment to the system was, if you help fund duplication costs using our equipment, we will share those resources with every school in the county. This means that no other school has to buy that material. All we have to do is give them money to pay for the cost of copying from their holdings for other schools. It is that sort of support which a system can provide.

5. Consultant services in identified areas of need, for example, library skills curriculum development, teaching methodology, storytelling and booktalks, library public relations, copyright, federal projects, technology, and staff training; and

6. Public relations -- improvement and support.

The next objective is consultant services. In rural areas particularly, I think our staff members can become isolated from pro-

fessional experiences. This is true of the clerical and support staffs as well. It is very difficult, just geographically, to get to the meetings, state conferences, and other professional development activities. One of the things we want to do is make some of those opportunities available right at home, within the confines of our county. We want to take the consultant services into that school library, if that's where they need to be. For this coming year, we have two to three programs already planned. We will have very intense training for support staffs in utilization of OCLC that will be an inservice program for people in all the school libraries.

For the professionals, especially the elementary school librarians, we will have Lucille Thomas (a former president of the New York Library Association) meet with us on a city-wide storytelling contest in New York City for young children. Imagine the logistics of doing that in New York City. Yet it has been highly successful, and she has the process documented. It begins with building level competition of elementary school children learning to tell stories. You can readily see the articulation with their other educational experiences, e.g., reading. Usually it is the school librarian in a building and the reading consultant who start by working with the children who are interested. There is then competition at the building level which goes on to competition at the district level. A run-off within the five boroughs is followed finally by the citywide contest with ten children finalists who are unbelievably good. They compete in front of large audiences, tell their folktales, and then are judged with awards given. It has been a marvelous thing for librarians and reading and children in New York City. We hope to use Lucille's model and begin a countywide storytelling contest for the children in Oswego County. The elementary school librarians will be the primary people working with us in this regard.

The other area of staff development which we are emphasizing this year is public relations. I think this is such a necessary

focus. We will be capitalizing on the White House Conference event, "Be With a Book for a Day," and have ordered thousands of the stickers. Further, the system will write columns in local papers, do talk-show work on television, do public speaking, etc., just to let people know what the school library is doing and able to do and the excitement that goes on there. Good PR is unfortunately usually left until budget time. We hope not to do that any more, instead doing it all year long and making people aware of the services of school libraries. A public relations "make and take" workshop is also planned for December.

7. Duplicates exchange.

The next area of objectives is a duplicates exchange program. By the way, most of our meetings are on school time, which is another reason why it works. We are not asking people to volunteer, but rather this is a part of their work, a part of their job. The superintendents have agreed to accept this. Since we started meeting, there has been an informal exchange of materials going on. Now we will be doing it formally; we will have lists for gifts and exchange.

8. Expansion of existing "Book Look" project to be a full cooperative materials review service.

For two years we have been in contact with major publishers and media producers in the country and have asked for examination materials to be sent to our BOCES centers. In turn, we publicize what is available to the local school librarians and teachers so they can examine these first-hand before they make purchase decisions. They find this service of enormous value for two reasons. One is that many of them cannot frequently attend meetings with commercial exhibits, and they are then dependent upon the book review or the media review, which is good only to a certain extent because very few book reviews give you the true potential or dimensions of an individual item. Secondly, our school librarians are increasingly looking for books with multicurricular application. Those potentials require being able

to evaluate the book in-hand. As a result of "Book Look," they can spend their precious dollars much more wisely. We intend to include more books and audio visual material and in fact have already begun doing that.

9. Identification and/or development of special collections for system-wide ownership and/or sharing.

The next objective is to develop special collections and/or share special collections. We have a high school librarian who has a great interest in Africa. She visits there every several years. And she has a social studies teacher on her faculty who is also informed on Africa, having made several visitations there. Together they have developed an excellent African studies collection for their high school, superior to anything we would expect from a high school in our area. She is delighted to make this a countywide special collection.

Where such special collections don't exist and we identify a need for them, the system can see that they begin to exist, either through central collections developed at the system-level or through funding individual libraries to develop them at a local level with the agreement to share.

10. Countywide "ready-reference" service.

Countywide ready reference service is a long-lived dream! With the telephones it will be easier. We can just pick up the phone, knowing who has what reference collection; this is where a time-savings element comes into the system. We won't have to exhaust ourselves on the mere chance that one of our reference books might have the answer to that question, knowing it probably doesn't. Instead we can say "so and so" has an excellent reference collection in the area of, for example, nutrition or health education. So, I won't spend my time looking but will call there and get the information needed.

The same factor is true with our interlibrary loans. The school librarians in our area now do not spend their valuable time looking and looking for that elusive material if they know it's

readily available some place else. It takes two minutes to write out an interlibrary loan transaction as opposed to maybe two hours of futile searching just because you want to be sure that you don't have it.

11. Expanded access to and use of available area, state and national data base services.

We are fortunate in being close to the State University College in Oswego because they have some eighteen data bases on-line, e.g., agricultural, medical and psychology data bases. In the schools many teachers, gifted students or students doing independent study projects need access to such data bases. So, the system will be contracting with the College library for use of their data bases to meet those people's special needs.

12. Feasibility of countywide "library card"; and

13. Feasibility study of expanding access to school library resources and/or services during times of non-school operation.

The last two objectives are simply feasibility objectives at this point. One is the feasibility of expanding access to our school library collections beyond the school day. This is a situation which should concern all of us. The school libraries in this nation have more materials than any other kind of library, i.e., 650,000,000 items. It is a "crime" that those 650,000,000 items are accessible at best six hours a day, five days a week, nine to ten months a year, particularly in rural areas where school libraries are often the closest points of access for the citizenry. Some of our rural areas have no direct public library service. In other cases, they have only a bookmobile every two weeks. The school library, however, in most places is within walking distance or at the very least a few miles away. Every community has a school. We will be doing a feasibility study to see how we might expand access to those resources in the summer, in the evening, or on the weekend. If we have to find some special funding we are going to try to find that special funding. We

have instances of local village boards who have been willing to contract with their school library for summer service emphasizing children's reading programs.

The other feasibility study is that of having a county-wide library card so that any resident in Oswego County could go to any library in Oswego County and have use and borrowing privileges. Because taxes have paid for almost everything that's there, our belief is that everyone has a right to use what's there. Local governmental and jurisdictional boundaries are artificial in this case. We must find a way to open access to everyone who needs a particular bit of information.

Now these two areas, as you notice, are really couched in the term of "feasibility," because we are not sure what all the implications are. We want to look at the possibilities, and hopefully within the three years of our project, we will come up with a way to do them or a reason that is valid for not doing them.

I also mentioned earlier that we are looking toward some formal cooperation, even though we are basically a school library system, with academic and public libraries through the two systems that already exist in our area. We have identified four particular directions for beginning the first year. One area is to participate in the North County Library System Gifts and Exchange Program. We can send our lists; we will get theirs. Secondly, we will share our union list of serial holdings for all the schools with their serial lists for the region. They do not have any school library holdings in their union list at this point, but only those of academic, public, and special libraries. Third, we will be offering joint continuing education programs for our respective staffs.

Fourth, we will have an inter-face of our delivery systems. Our Center has a van which goes to every school district in our county twice a week. We deliver items from our regional collections to all those schools. The public library system also has a delivery service

that goes to the local public libraries on a regular basis. It's a very simple thing, really, to put our schedules together and find at least one or two spots where we can meet on a regular basis and swap materials from system to system.

And last, we operate a Job Information Center (JIC) within our Center. That Job Information Center is something we have done with CETA funding for years. We are hoping the North Country Public Library System will cooperate in its ongoing funding, because typically in New York State it is the public libraries systems which offer Job Information Center service to residents. The North Country Library System has not provided one in the past, and they seem delighted that we have one in-place for which they can cross-contract.

In conclusion, I would like to share with you what I call some quotable quotes, re: school library systems.

..." I was going to retire this year, but this system is just too exciting not to be a part of it."

...(Principal): "My librarian doesn't have time for all she wants to do or has to do. How in the world can I ask her to add responsibilities such as preparing interlibrary loan transactions."

...(Librarian): "She will have time saved" (and I have explained to you how that is defensible).

..."Don't we all have basically the same collection? What would there be to share?" (Our system research show only about 40% is duplication!)

In conclusion, I can report enthusiasm and superb cooperation to date. Tangible results would much better be reported a year or two from now, because in reality we have only been into programming for two to three months. Already the New York Library Association is working toward a study bill for introduction into the next legislative session to allow discussions on a mechanism for providing ongoing state operational aid. This goes back to the point of the Legislature

saying "How can we fund something that doesn't exist?" With a study bill, you don't expect passage, but rather study.

We have had good cooperation from all parts of New York State, and I want to close by saying that we are blessed in having superb leadership at the state level: in the Governor's office, the Legislature, and the State Education Department. That is an extremely important factor in our success to date.