A Continuing Conversation
Public Libraries & LIS Education

Friday January 25, 2019
1:30pm - 4:00pm
A little background

In 2018, Marcellus Turner (Seattle Public Library), Laura Saunders (Simmons University, School of Library and Information Science), and Jennifer Cargal (Seattle Public Library) convened a group of library / information science educators and public library directors to talk about the interests and needs of the two entities in preparing library school students for the work of public libraries.

Thanks to those organizers and the participants in that discussion, there were identified several topics that should continue and next steps.
Next steps

• Bring key decision-makers together to have deeper conversations that create and develop educational curriculums
• Ensure the longevity of the profession is not lost
• Collectively articulate the educational needs of public librarians and library staff
• Determine immediate next steps to keep the conversation going
• Look to ALA to continue the conversation
• Seek a facilitator to move such groups as this one through future conversations
Topics to continue

- Determining how to gain audience and engage with library and information schools to share the staff skills, competencies and interests of public libraries
- Identifying differences between general and core skill needs and specializations
So for today

What skills and preparation will be needed for future public librarians? At the 2018 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver, the Seattle Public Library convened leaders from public libraries and LIS graduate programs to discuss the changing nature of public library services and the new and emerging skills, dispositions, and experiences necessary for success in public library work. This facilitated conversation will extend the 2018 conversation, bringing together perspectives from library practitioners, educators, and representatives from the Association's committees on accreditation and education.
Outcomes

At the end of this dialogue, participants will have:

• begun to identify the skills needed to work in public libraries today and in the future
• begun to propose ideas for developing those skills and
• identified ways that a continuum of participants – LIS graduate programs, public libraries, professional associations – can work together to ensure high quality recruitment, education, on-boarding, and successful early career experiences for LIS graduates
Working Together

• Be explicit about own assumptions
• Seek to understand others’ perspectives
• Assume good intentions
• Explore alternative ways of looking at things
• Describe interests rather than take positions
• Focus on the future
Part One:
Skills Needed for New Professionals Entering Public Libraries

What are the skills necessary for successful work in public libraries now and in the near future?

In this discussion of skills, try to clarify:

• The differences between specialized, timely skills or staffing needs; core skills/values for all professionals; and futures-oriented or anticipated skills
• Skills that can be developed; dispositions that can be nurtured
Part Two:
Developing Skills for the Current and Emerging Roles of Public Libraries

How can we – LIS graduate programs, public libraries, library associations – contribute to the development of these necessary skills?

In this discussion, try to envision the journey of the new professional through several developmental stages – the recruitment process to LIS education; education in the classroom or through course work; internships or practicums; faculty advising; participation in associations or professional networks; new workplace learning or training – and the places in which these skills can be developed or nurtured
Next Steps/Action Plan

What do participants in this dialogue commit to doing to advance the conversation and to develop the strongest LIS workforce?
Thank You!