**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Update

**FROM:** Mary Hirsh and Scott Allen

**DATE:** October 9, 2020

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Report

The 2018-2022 PLA Strategic Plan was finalized and approved by the board at its June 2018 meeting. The following provides an update on PLA’s efforts to promote and implement the plan.

Implementation and Tracking

PLA continues to make progress in meeting the goals outlines in its strategic plan. PLA hosted a successful conference in 2020. Conference design and programming further all of PLA’s strategic goals, particularly around EDISJ and too numerous to mention here. Conference has a specific impact on PLA’s financial health, generating net revenue necessary to fund PLA work in nonconference years.

FY20 into FY21 also presented numerous challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the departure of PLA’s long time executive director, and ongoing operational challenges within ALA. The pandemic in particular forced PLA to pause some planned work and quickly shift to new activities. This is most evident in Transformation, as PLA enabled libraries to share emerging best practices through a series of webinars. PLA also led two field-wide survey looking at COVID impacts that garnered national attention while providing libraries with data to help inform their local practice.

Results

Overall, PLA is making good progress in meeting all of its strategic priorities. Programmatic plans continue to flux in response to environmental factors as well as changes within ALA. PLA remains nimble, flexible and committed to meeting strategic goals through a varied menu of opportunity.

**PLA STRATEGIC GOAL LINK (check all that apply)**

[x]  TRANSFORMATION [x]  LEADERSHIP [x]  ADV. & AWARENESS [x]  E.D.I.S.J. [x]  ORG. EXCELLENCE

**Goal: Transformation**

**Goal Statement:** PLA advances public libraries’ transformation from a library focus to a community focus, to meet the specific needs of people and communities.

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| **Objective** | **Recent/Current Activities** |
| **(1):** Define and support the transition of public libraries to become more responsive to – and reflective of – community needs. | *Discussed, slow progress:* Expand “professional tools” section of PLA web site to incorporate additional resources related to community needs; incorporate into CE/PD programming |
| **(2):** Increase opportunities to explore and share effective emerging best practices that are addressing community priorities. | *Accomplished:* In the wake of COVID-related closures, PLA amplified the activities of leading libraries to share best practices and increase networking across the field.*In Process, but Challenging:* Transfer lists and groups to ALA Connect for easier sharing and archiving. Groups PLA created on ALA Connect are not as active as hoped, so those forums are not reaching the state objective. |
| **(3):** Increase awareness of and access to the types of literacy necessary for skills development and success in the 21st century.  | PLA’s work has or is addressing early literacy (including computational thinking), family literacy, media literacy, digital literacy, health literacy, information literacy, and financial literacy. Some prioritization may be needed.*Accomplished/Ongoing:* * PLA completed the Capital One-funded “Ready Set Bank” program on financial literacy early in 2020, which included a conference program, e-blasts, and a webinar.
* PLA continues its expansive portfolio of work on digital literacy, including new courses and new subsites on DigitalLearn.org, and grant projects with Microsoft Corp and Google that offer devices and training to libraries, particularly rural.
* PLA’s 8 module Family Engagement e-learning course, which addresses early and family literacy, wraps up in December, and two additional cohorts are planned for 2021
* PLA promotes health literacy through its insurance promotion projects, initiated in 2018 and funded through 2021, and through collaboration with the National Library of Medicine.
* Various articles and podcasts from Public Libraries likely addressed multiple forms of literacy.

*Recently initiated:** PLA was awarded an IMLS grant to examine family engagement practices in Latinx communities
* Microsoft has launched a skilling initiative, and PLA received a grant to engage four urban libraries in promoting digital skilling tools.
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| **(4):** Increase the number of libraries using meaningful and actionable measurements to understand and expand their community impact.  | *Ongoing*: Continued support of Project Outcome *In Process:* PLA is in the process of bringing the PLDS in-house through a tech survey |

**Goal: Leadership**

**Goal Statement:** PLA builds and supports leadership for public libraries that is reflective of the needs of each community and the profession.

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| **Objective** | **Recent/Current Activities** |
| **(1):** Increase leadership and personal development training opportunities for all levels of public library staff reflective of the PLA leadership model.  | *Accomplished:* PLA held a Leadership Academy in 2019. PLA also wrapped up its consultation to the African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA) to help them develop a leadership training model.*Postponed:* The planned Leadership Academy was cancelled due to COVID-19.*In process:* Exploring online engagement bringing together aspects of leadership academy and EDISJ trainings |
| **(2):** Support public library staff in the shift from a library-centered to a community-centered approach, through PLA trainings and resources.  | *In process:* A new strategic planning publication is due in early 2021.Many PLA initiatives and continuing education offerings address this objective. |
| **(3):** Encourage learning opportunities for all library staff through collaboration with library schools and support access to other types of learning available to library staff including CE, online courses, certificate programs and conferences. |  |

**Goal: Advocacy & Awareness**

**Goal Statement:** PLA leads in public library advocacy and influencing perceptions of public libraries.

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| **Objective** | **Recent/Current Activities** |
| **(1):** Increase awareness and strengthen perceptions of public libraries among key audiences and stakeholders.  | *Accomplished*:* Exhibited at the late 2019 conferences of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and National League of Cities (NLC)
* Collected data and release two comprehensive reports on library responses to COVID, which resulted in national media coverage

*Ongoing:** PLA works with the ALA Communications and Marketing Office to respond to 3-10 media request each month, usually resulting in coverage that promotes public library value
* Many PLA initiatives engage key audiences and educate them about public libraries, for instance PLA’s current collaboration with public health professionals, work with education and family literacy groups such as Head Start, and coordination with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies and other employment groups
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| **(2):** Increase awareness and the effectiveness of PLA/ALA’s advocacy resources and create new tools to support current and future advocacy efforts.  | *Accomplished:* Created customizable advocacy templates for use with local decision-makers |
| **(3):** Increase library staff participation in public library advocacy at all levels (i.e., federal, state, local).  |  *Accomplished/Ongoing:** Support work of ALA Policy Corps
* Created and launched eBooksForAll campaign
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| **(4):** Improve PLA’s capacity to serve as a resource to public libraries outside of the U.S. that are conducting library advocacy.  | *Accomplished:* hosted exchange of 20 librarians from Africa at PLA2020 in Nashville |

**Goal: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice**

**Goal Statement:** PLA advocates for equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice in order to enable every member, library, and community group to fully and equally participate in a society mutually shaped to meet their needs.

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| **Objective** | **Recent/Current Activities** |
| **(1):** Reflect EDISJ principles in association leadership, staffing, values, mission/vision, strategies and operations.  | *Accomplished:* * Organized PLA2020 conference around the theme of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice (EDISJ), via plenary speakers, tours, and ancillary events
* Issued statement affirming commitment to Black Lives Matter and racial equity
* Created regular EDISJ column in Public Libraries magazine
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| **(2):** Equip members with tools, mentoring/coaching, learning opportunities, and other resources to advocate and apply EDISJ principles in their libraries and communities.  | *Accomplished:** Conducted 4 EDISJ regional training events in 2019
* Hosted two preconferences and several conference sessions on EDISJ topics at PLA 2020.
* Organized ALA Annual Virtual Event session with representative from GARE

*In process:** Exploring online engagement bringing together aspects of leadership academy and EDISJ trainings
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| **(3):** Identify measurable impacts, including professional competencies, that demonstrate progress in key EDISJ areas.  | *In process:** Initiated a joint project with ACRL, ODLOS and ARL to develop an EDISJ framework for public and academic libraries
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**Goal: Organizational Excellence**

**Goal Statement:** PLA is entrepreneurial, resilient, and successful in the sustaining and growing of resources to advance its mission and work.

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| **Objective** | **Recent/Current Activities** |
| **(1):** Maintain a financially stable and sustainable operating model.  | *Accomplished:** Exceeded budgeted net revenue on PLA 2020 conference
* Sustained high level of grant funding (not including Gates Foundation, received commitments of $396,287 in FY18, $772,631 in FY19, $495,740 in FY20, and $199,948 in FY21 to date)
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| **(2):** Commit to and support ongoing, regular data-driven assessment of PLA impact on the library field. |  |
| **(3):** Increase the number of income-generating products and programs.  | *Accomplished*:* Successfully re-initiated charging for select PLA webinars
* Developed and sold new products (early literacy calendar, health and family engagement posters and bookmarks)
* Offered Family Engagement online course as a model for new non-conference training
 |
| **(4):** Oversee successful stewardship of the multi-year Legacy and future grants.  |  |
| **(5):** Seek and adapt to new trends and models in association organization and membership.  | *In process:* initiated strategic plan revision process in October 2020 |
| **(6):** Maintain strong relationships with existing partners, both nationally and internationally, and explore new partnership opportunities outside of the library field. | PLA has not catalogued or assessed its relationships with dozens of partner organizations, however we believe most are well maintained and productive. In terms of new partnerships, anecdotally there is substantial interest in working with PLA and public libraries from a variety of sectors. For instance, over the last few months of 2020 alone, PLA received overtures from nearly 20 external groups, of which more than half were new relationships. |
| **(7):** Invest in more professional development training for PLA staff to strengthen their capacity to meet member and library field needs.  | *In process:* Established goal of 100% of all PLA staff engage in at least one professional development activity each year |

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| **Transformation** | **Leadership** | **Advocacy & Awareness** | **EDISJ** | **Organizational Excellence** |
| Programs that help *public libraries* be community focused, address emerging community needs, implement best practices, and address literacy | Programs that help *public librarians and library staff* become stronger leaders, and become community-centered | Programs that reach key audiences about the value of public libraries; that engage members in advocacy; or that work internationally | Programs that help PLA or members implement EDISJ principles or that help libraries create full and equal participation in their communities | Programs that help PLA sustain efforts, grow, implement best practices as an association, create external partnerships, and support staff |
| Continuing Education Project Outcome (Core Work)Every Child Ready to ReadFamily EngagementHealth Literacy and Programming (Health)Grow with Google (Digital Literacy)Microsoft/Rural Libraries (Digital Literacy)Intellectual FreedomSocial WorkStrategic Planning Publication | Leadership Academy and other leadership trainingEmerging LeadersMember EngagementPublic Libraries 101Strategic Planning Training/SupportTheory of Change CE/PD Work | Policy CorpsAwardsExternal PartnershipsProject Outcome (International Work)Turning the PageInternational/IFLA collaboration (SDGs, Global Vision) | Inclusive Internship InitiativeInsurance Enrollment (Health)DigitalLearn (Digital Literacy)EDI Regional Trainings2020 Census | Governance (Board, Committees)Membership Recruitment and RetentionFundraisingCommunications Publications and Products Technology Staffing |