**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**FROM:** Mary Hirsh, deputy director

**RE:** PLA Professional Development Theory of Change

**DATE:** June 3, 2019

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:** Information

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:** Discussion

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**  N/A

**OVERVIEW**

In 2017, PLA fielded a survey to all its members as well as ALA members who work in public libraries to help inform PLA’s future continuing education and professional development (PD) offerings. The survey collected perceptions on 10 key competencies, the importance of these competencies to both library leaders and staff, and the skills necessary to meet those competencies. From these survey results, PLA worked to develop a professional development Theory of Change (ToC), attached document no. 102b.

**KEY CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

PLA initially intended to use the ToC as an internal planning document. The goals and strategies described in the ToC point to learning objectives to address in PD offering. After sharing the ToC with the board as well as CE and Conference committees, it became evident that the ToC would be useful to people who work in libraries too. Members have long expressed desire to track their learning and other professional development engagements, and the ToC provides a guide to do so.

The theory of change is a complex document and initial communication to the field would need to be compelling and understandable if PLA is promoting the ToC for broad adoption. PLA engaged GMMB, a strategic communications firm, to help clarify the messaging as well as the visuals for the public ToC launch.

GMMB interviewed 10 practitioners, including the incoming PLA president and a board member, to gauge response and receptiveness to the ToC. The summary findings are in the attached document no. 102c. Overall, the response was positive, and interviewees provided important feedback for PLA to consider. From this, less complex visuals were developed, along with talking points and less- academic language.

PLA will pilot the ToC messaging at a News You Can Use session at Annual Conference. Additional activities will follow through the year, building towards a full launch at PLA2020. Language from the ToC was used in the program proposal process, so the concepts will be embedded throughout conference sessions. PLA is also exploring how to best operationalize the ToC through consistent content tagging, downloadable forms, and other practices that would enable member engagement with the PD pathways.

**BUDGET**

GMMB was contracted at $29,000 to undertake the communications work. Costs going forward have not yet been determined. Because the ToC relates so strongly to existing PLA work, it may be difficult to assign distinct costs to the work.

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

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