

Indian Prairie Public Library

Board Focus Group, 11/19/14

Facilitated by Dan Wiseman

Summary and Key Points:

The community is viewed as very multi-lingual and culturally diverse with many Eastern European residents. English is still the dominant language. As the community matures more young people are moving to the community. Families are quite busy and challenged to engage their children as well as help them succeed in schools. Schools are pushing for college enrollment but many “blue collar” jobs are going unfilled in the region. Literacy remains a critical need in minority communities. The community has a wide diversity of economic realities ranging from very wealthy to low income residents. None of the communities has a town center

Many people still have little idea of all the ways the library may serve their needs in spite of a great many means deployed by the library to inform them. Those who do use the library are very happy with the extraordinary service levels they receive. The library is viewed as forward thinking, innovative, and up to any challenge. The physical facility is first rate as is the Library’s leadership. The Library’s DVD collection, youth service, website, computer classes, participating in SWAN, use of volunteers and impressive collection were among the many strengths cited by board. Special education students find the library welcoming.

Among the items on the wish list were for the library to continue to build a robust multi-language collection and hire bilingual staff. Reaching out to the schools should continue to be a priority. Space repurposing was mentioned several times in order to create more meeting and study space. The staff was encouraged to find new ways of distributing materials to the community (Red Box?). Getting everyone to be served by the Library is a long term goal. Finally finding way to improve community transportation systems as a means of improving access to the library was mentioned. The board wishes for a vibrant funding raising program to be found. Resolution to the E-book issue with publishers was mentioned by several people. And finally the hope is for the library to remain a part of people’s lives long after their formal schooling is completed.

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Staff Focus Groups, Nov. 19th, 2014

Facilitated by Dan Wiseman

Summary:

28 people (staff and department heads) met with me on Nov. 19th, 2014 at the Library. In general the thoughts on the community revealed a highly eclectic region with diversity of religion, ethnicity, lifestyles, and socio-economic levels. The community overall has very high expectations for those organizations that serve them. The region is stable, heavily family oriented with a strong willingness to collaborate and work together across district and organizational boundaries. The staff is quite proud of the library and the high level of service that they deliver. The customer are quite varied and spread across at least 3 municipalities none of whom has a downtown. The library's customers' appreciate its collection, facilities (especially study and meeting rooms). The public likes the wide variety of programs and classes available to both youth and adults. The staff feels supported and encouraged by the Library's leaders. The staff offered a number of suggestions for enhancing the Library's technical capabilities, facility, signage, and appearance. They also felt like finding ways to get the word out about the library is vital. They want the library to continue to be a vital partner to the many stakeholders in its district. At times the staff feels they are pulled in a lot of directions and communication could be somewhat improved. Overall the staff feels like the library is a beloved and highly effective contributor to the quality of life in the communities it serves.