

During Tuesday's break out sessions we had the opportunity to discuss some of the positive changes at MLS and some of the things that are inhibiting staff for fully performing.

All of the group members that work at a library agreed that the increased staffing at their location has helped tremendously. It has reduced the amount of time supervisors have previously had to spend resolving scheduling and other issues. It is not only the number of new staff members that we appreciate. We all agreed that the quality of the new staff members will impact the locations that they are at positively.

There is some noticeable anxiety in regards to both the number of changes and with the impact of some of these decisions. For staff members that are accustomed to how things operated under previous directors, the perceived rapid pace of changes (both Project K and the implementation of SOaP) has created an uncomfortable level of uncertainty. Some staff positions have changed so drastically and without a comfortable level of warning that they are anxious about what will be expected of them in the future. This uncertainty negatively colors their perception of the direction of the MLS. There is also the perception that they and their opinions are not properly valued or taken into consideration.

We also discussed some remedies for these perceived ills. One solution that I want to highlight involves utilizing the regional structure of Project K for the system's overall benefit. Since there is the perception that some directives from administration (for example the new programming mapping and the decision to set aide hours at 20) were made without consideration for the needs of their particular location or that the idea was not fully thought out. The suggestion was made that some changes should be piloted in one region before fully implemented system wide. Obviously not every change can be tested this way for standardization reasons but when feasible there are two potential benefits. First, the change will not be perceived as a sudden change like many of them currently do. When a change is limited to one or two regions, the other regions are aware of what is happening. When the change is made system wide, staff has already become used to the idea. Second, the staff in the test regions can give feedback to Administration so that the policy or procedure can be modified to better serve our communities.