

FIELD GUIDE TO

“AS WE ALL KNOW...”

TRUSTEE TRACK

CALCON 2025



COLORADO
Department of Education
Colorado State Library

This project was made possible through grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) administered by the Colorado State Library.



Workshop Objectives

- Understand and apply the roles & responsibilities of trustees based upon Colorado Public Library Standards, Colorado Library Law, and other legal implications
- Familiar with a survey of legal topics impacting public libraries and public library board of trustees
- Consider initial steps for public library future through long range planning, financial stewardship, policy making, director evaluation, and trends
- Develop an impact & relevance story
- Identify something to take back to public library board of trustees

Trustee Track

Trustee 101: Administration & Governance, Imperial Ballroom (Fourth Floor)
Kieran Hixon & Polly Gallagher, Colorado State Library

CALCON Keynote Speaker, Colorado Ballroom (Third Floor)
Shelley Read, author *Go As A River*

Law Unpacked for Libraries, Imperial Ballroom (Fourth Floor)
Kim J. Seter, Esq. & Elizabeth A. Dauer, Esq., Seter, Vander Wall & Mielke

CAL Awards Lunch, Colorado Ballroom (Third Floor)

Trustee 201: Strategic Plan, Financial Stewardship, Library Director Oversight, Policy Making, & Trends, Imperial Ballroom (Fourth Floor)
Kieran Hixon & Polly Gallagher, Colorado State Library Consultant

Shout It Loud, Imperial Ballroom (Fourth Floor)
Kieran Hixon & Polly Gallagher, Colorado State Library Consultant

Trustee & Director Happy Hour, Base Nine (First Floor)
Thank you to our sponsors, High Plains Library District, Pueblo City-County Library District, and community partners

Public Library Leadership

Public libraries are essential community hubs. To meet the needs of every Coloradan, the State Library offers tools, standards, & resources, training and consulting, and communication infrastructure to strengthen public library leaders. We place particular emphasis on strengthening the 73% of Colorado public libraries that serve small and/or rural communities.

[Board of Trustees](#)

[Other State Library Initiatives](#)

[Library Directors](#)

[Public Library Leadership Team](#)

[Law, Policy, and Elections](#)

[Public Library Data Tools](#)

[Strategic Planning](#)

[Public Library Standards](#)

[Staff Development](#)



CSL Public Library Leadership Team

Connecting - Collaborating - Consulting

The Public Library Leadership Development team provides professional development, facilitation, consultation, peer networking, and change management help along with running national & statewide initiatives. We are here for you as you improve your library services, plan for the future, and lead impactful change.



Kieran Hixon

Rural & Small Library Senior Consultant

hixon_k@cde.state.co.us

719-285-9173



Polly Gallagher

Public Library Leadership Senior Consultant

gallagher_p@cde.state.co.us

720-879-1549

Mindsets: Fixed & Growth

Fixed Mindset

- Skills, intelligence, and talents are fixed at birth.
- Errors are shameful and should be avoided.
- Some people are just always going to be better while others are not.
- You are not in control of your abilities.

- Effort is not useful.
- Effort shows you aren't good at something. It makes you look bad.

- Back down and avoid challenges.
- Quit when something is hard.

- Get discouraged by mistakes.
- Focus on avoiding mistakes.

- Get defensive, take feedback personally.
- Ignore/reject useful criticism or feedback.

- Potential is best met individually.
- Potential is fixed. You have a fixed amount that you either achieve or don't.
- Those who don't live up to their potential are failures.

Beliefs

Effort

Challenges

Mistakes

Feedback

Potential

Growth Mindset

- You have the capacity to learn and grow your skills and talents.
- Errors help us to be curious and to learn new things.
- People are good at something because they built their ability.
- You are in control of your abilities.

- Effort is an important part of learning.
- With effort, you focus on learning the process.
- You'd rather improve than worry about looking good.

- Embrace challenges
- Persevere, focusing on process rather than achieving success.

- Mistakes are learning opportunities and ways to improve.
- Focus on mistake recovery

- Appreciate constructive feedback.
- Welcome learning from criticism.

- Potential is expanded by collaborating with others.
- Potential is limitless & grows with effort, competence, and mastery.
- Life is filled with ways to grow potential in myriad of arenas.

*Chart based on Accredited Online Training. (May 15, 2018); Dweck, C. (2007). Growth mindset: The new psychology of success. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, and Achor, S. (2018). Big Potential: How transforming the pursuit of success raises our achievement, happiness, and well-being. New York, NY: Currency. This chart was modified by Sharon Morris, Ph.D., MLIS.

Core Values of Librarianship

Access

All information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users.

Equity

Library workers play a crucial role in fostering equity by actively working to dismantle barriers and create spaces that are accessible, welcoming, and beneficial for all. This is accomplished by recognizing and addressing systemic barriers, biases, and inequalities to create inclusive library environments where everyone can benefit from the library's offerings and services.

Intellectual Freedom & Privacy

Intellectual freedom empowers people to think for themselves and to make informed decisions while respecting each individual's dignity and independence. Library workers encourage people to cultivate curiosity and form ideas by questioning the world and accessing information from diverse viewpoints and formats without restrictions or censorship. The right to privacy is a crucial safeguard to this freedom, ensuring everyone has the right to develop their thoughts and opinions free of surveillance.

The Public Good

Public good is working to improve society and protect the rights to education, literacy, and intellectual freedom. Libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies. Library workers provide the highest service levels to create informed, connected, educated, and empowered communities.

Sustainability

Sustainable libraries consist of practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible and socially equitable. They are also leading by example by taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint.

*These are abridged statements with the full wording at:

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues>

Trustee 101: Administration & Governance

Objectives

- Review Colorado Public Library Standards for Administration & Governance, Budget & Finance
- SOAR Evaluation
- Trustee Self-Evaluation

Why did you choose to become a public library trustee?	What do you think is most important to include in a trustee onboarding?
What has surprised you about being a trustee?	

Colorado Public Library Standards Intent

- Model for achieving a consistent quality library offering across the state.
- Inform community leaders and residents about what they can expect from their community library(ies) as well as ideas for growth and development
- Assist library leaders in planning, administration, and implementation of library responsibilities
- Provide an authoritative document to which library administrators and supporters may refer when justifying requests for funds and expanded library offerings.
- Assist library staff and leadership in connecting with the communities they serve.
- Spark discussion, assessment, planning, and other action in all public libraries so they remain vital community hubs.
- (And Colorado Library Law requires)

Colorado Public Library Standards are located digitally on the Colorado State Library Website under Public Library Leadership. Click on the link for Public Library Standards or go to <https://cde.state.co.us/cdelib/standards/index>.

How to Use

- ✓ Guide for decision-making
- ✓ Identify key areas for policy development, adjustments to services or budgets, review of existing practices
- ✓ Detect training needs
- ✓ _____

Strengths

Opportunities

Aspirations

Results

Library Trustee Self-Evaluation

Board Documents

	We have	I can locate	The public can access without CORA request
Bylaws*			
Strategic Plan/Strategic Priorities			
Financial Plan			
Capital Plan			
Financial Audit*			
Library Policies*			
Annual Report			

*Items statutorily required.

Directions: In the next four sections, read each line and mark your response.

Y = Yes

S = Sometimes

N = No

U = Uncertain

Leadership

	Y	S	N	U
I can share the goals of the library's strategic plan or strategic priorities.				
I can share with others our library's current actions towards the strategic plan or strategic priorities.				
I know the library's core values and ethical standards that drive my decision making.				
I visit the library and participate in library programs or events.				
I engage with Friends & Foundation events and fundraising.				
I promote the library with local community leaders, stakeholder groups, or public officials by sharing our impact and relevance at least two times a year.				
I have established a relationship with my local and state representatives, and discuss library issues with them, advocating for their support.				
I belong to a state or national library organization and/or attend conferences.				
I have read one or more national library organization journals or blog posts over the past six months.				
I am aware of legislation, trends, issues, and emerging risks affecting public libraries.				
Comments:				

Governance

	Y	S	N	U
Bylaws are followed.				
Library policies allow effective management and legal compliance.				
I am a member of a board committee.				
I understand and respect the distinct roles and duties of the library director, the library board, the Foundation, and Friends.				
I route my requests of staff through the library director.				
The library director is consistently evaluated.				
A compensation review has occurred.				
I am prepared for board and committee meetings by reviewing the board packet prior to meetings so I can ask relevant questions and make better decisions.				
I meet my attendance obligation for board and committee meetings.				
I ask relevant questions and contribute to discussion about library business during board and committee meetings.				
After speaking, I allow all other trustees to speak before speaking again.				
Comments:				

Stewardship

	Y	S	N	U
I am able to answer questions about the expenses and revenue of the budget.				
I am aware of our reserve funds, rough amounts, and purpose behind.				
I review at least quarterly the budget to actuals and spending to know the financial standing of the library and where funds are being spent.				
I can summarize the key findings including the financial picture and recommendations of the library.				
Comments:				

Management

	Y	S	N	U
I seek out and recommend potential trustees.				
I participate in orienting new trustees.				
I follow through on my board commitments.				
I support other trustees by... (record in the comments how you support)				
Comments:				

Law Unpacked for Libraries

Topics:

- ✓ First Amendment
- ✓ New CO Laws Impacting Libraries
- ✓ CORA
- ✓ Taxation & Finance Changes
- ✓ Bylaws, IGA, MOU

Notes:

Trustee 201: Strategic Planning, Financial Stewardship, Library Director Oversight, Policy Making, and Library Trends

Objectives

- Dive into two roles of a trustee and obtain ideas for implementation and resources to expand
- Become familiar with library trends and identify resources to stay aware of the greater library world

For Further Thought

What struck you in breakout group 1?

What is your mind lingering on from breakout group 2?

Strategic Plan



Items to Consider

Purpose	
Data Collection	
Data Analysis for Key Findings & Trends	
Values, Vision, Mission	
Goals, Objectives, Strategic Priorities	
Action Plan & Measurements	

Financial Stewardship

The legal fiscal responsibilities are laid out in Colorado Library Law *C.R.S. 24-90-109*.

Financial stewardship is demonstrated when advisory and governing library boards:

- approve an annual budget based on the library's strategic plan and other key objectives,
- review monthly financial statements that include a comparison to budgeted amounts
- make financial information available to the public
- establish policies and procedures for the library's financial management

Each board member should:

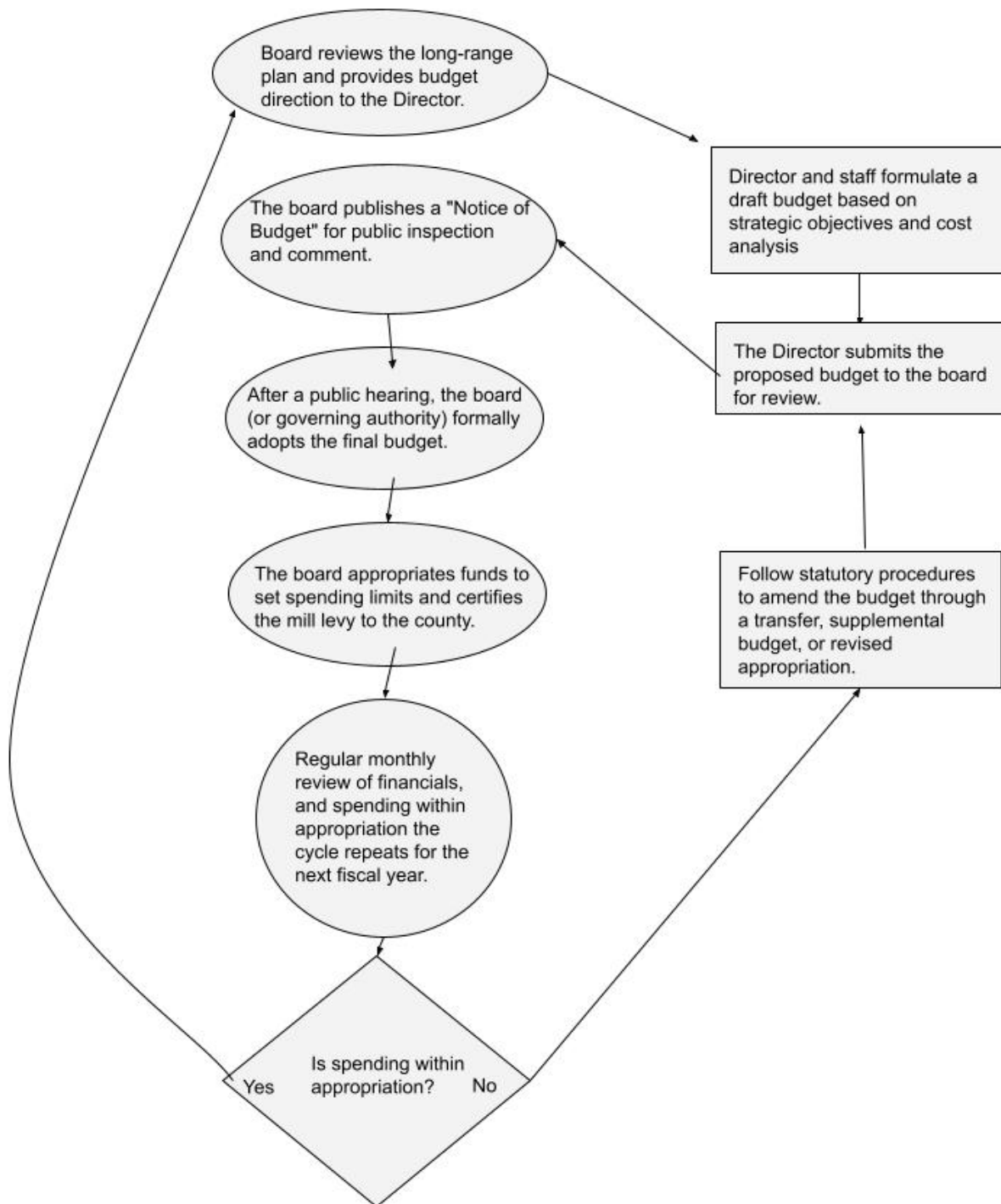
- Know the library's financial base and background, including source of funding, history of funding, endowments, designated accounts, and reserves, including TABOR
- Know the local, state, and federal allocating authorities for library funds
- Know the supplementary sources of revenue, such as trust funds
- Investigate other possible sources of funding: bond issues, endowments, trusts, memorials, dedicated tax revenue, foundation grants, donations, and gifts
- Understand the financial needs of the library's operation and the funds needed for maintenance, growth, and expansion
- Understand the basics of legal requirements and reporting requirements for library funding
- Be able to manage trusts and endowment funds when appropriate.

Key considerations for trustees:

1. Develop or have the Director develop an equipment replacement schedule and budget.
2. Consider capital improvement needs.
3. Understand the impact of TABOR on revenue and spending.
4. Budgeting for staff compensation to keep pace with other costs like utilities.

Notes:

The Process



Policy Making

What Is a Policy?

- A policy is a set of guidelines, rules, or plans of action adopted by a public library board of trustees. A policy defines general guidelines and principles. Policies answer the “why.”
- There is one exception to the board of trustees identifying the “how” in policy -due process.

Policy Review & Maintenance

New Policy Needed?

- Issues arise
- Changes in operating practice including size, scope, service, method of delivery
- External change
- Federal or state laws
 - Recent changes: Accessibility, CORA (update charges), Decisions Regarding Library Materials, Civil Rights in the Library
- Reduce ambiguity (ensure practice + policy)



Policy Should Include

- Purpose -
- Applicability -
- Definitions -
- Detailed policy statement -
- Sources of help -
- Policy authority -
- Related forms, policies, and references -

Key Policy Areas

Board Policies

- By-laws
 - Length and number of terms of board members
 - Good cause for removal of a trustee
 - Designation of officers
 - Rules and regulations for conducting a meeting
 - Rules for public participation in meetings
 - Procedures for amending the bylaws
 - Director responsibilities and functions
 - Colorado Open Records Act ([CORA](#))
 - Library finance
 - Purchasing
 - Investments
 - Financial development
 - Long-range planning
 - Library facilities

Library Operational Policies

- Privacy and Confidentiality
 - Patron records and upholding intellectual freedom (C.R.S. §24-90-119)
 - Data Disposal
- Resource sharing and cooperation with other libraries
 - Schools
 - Interlibrary loan
- Reciprocal borrowing
- Access
 - Borrower privileges

- Building and/or equipment
- Meeting rooms, exhibits, displays, bulletin boards
- Public computers
- Digital Accessibility ([Accessibility Law for CO State and Local Government](#))
- Standards for Decisions Regarding Library Resources ([SB24-216](#))
 - Collection development: material selection, weeding
 - Programming
 - Reconsideration of library resources
 - Purchasing, selling, and retention of materials
- Child Safety
 - Unattended children
 - Internet and youth
- Gifts, donations, and memorials
- Library Use/Behavior
 - User conduct
 - Weapons
 - Complaints
 - Political activity
 - Accident, disturbance, vandalism
- Public demonstrations & petitions

Library Personnel Policies

- Organizational authority and responsibility
- Equal opportunity
- Americans with disabilities
- Sexual harassment

- Conflict of interest
- Grievance procedures
- Communication: Email, text, social media
- Employment procedure
 - Educational qualification
 - Evaluation of staff
 - Promotions
 - Raises
- Staff benefits and privileges
 - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program ([FAMLI](#))
 - Leave Time
 - Vacation leave
 - Sick leave
 - Bereavement leave
 - Parental leave
 - Educational leave
 - Leave without pay
 - Family & medical leave
 - Holidays
- Professional conduct / staff responsibilities
 - Development and training of staff
 - Drug-free workplace
 - Smoking
 - Social media
 - Political activity
- Work week
 - Absenteeism and tardiness
 - Overtime
 - Salary / wage payment
 - Timecards
- Expense reimbursement
- Termination of employment (resignation, dismissal, retirement, references)
- Emergency notification
 - Extreme weather
 - Emergency conditions
- Volunteers

Policy Title: _____

Purpose Statement: _____

Applicability Statement: _____

Definitions: _____

Policy Statement: _____

Sources of help: _____

Related Forms, Policies, References: _____

Development Date: _____

Library Director's Review

One of the most important decisions a public library board of trustees makes is the hiring of a library director. This individual is responsible for taking the vision of the board and putting it into practice.

The library director is an employee of the board in a library district. In municipal and county libraries, the library director is typically an employee of the city or county government. The process is outlined in Colorado Library Law *C.R.S. §24-6-402*

Why an Annual Review?

Ensure the director remains the right fit as times, communities, and boards change.

1. Clearly states and reviews expectations.
2. Strengthens the relationship between the board and director.
3. Reaffirms the board's oversight role.

Ongoing Coaching and Goal Setting

Goals are identified annually based on the review, strategic priorities, and the job description. Regular Check-ins:

1. A designated trustee or committee should meet with the director 2-3 times a year.
2. These meetings are for reviewing goals and the working relationship.
3. Documentation should be added to the director's HR folder.

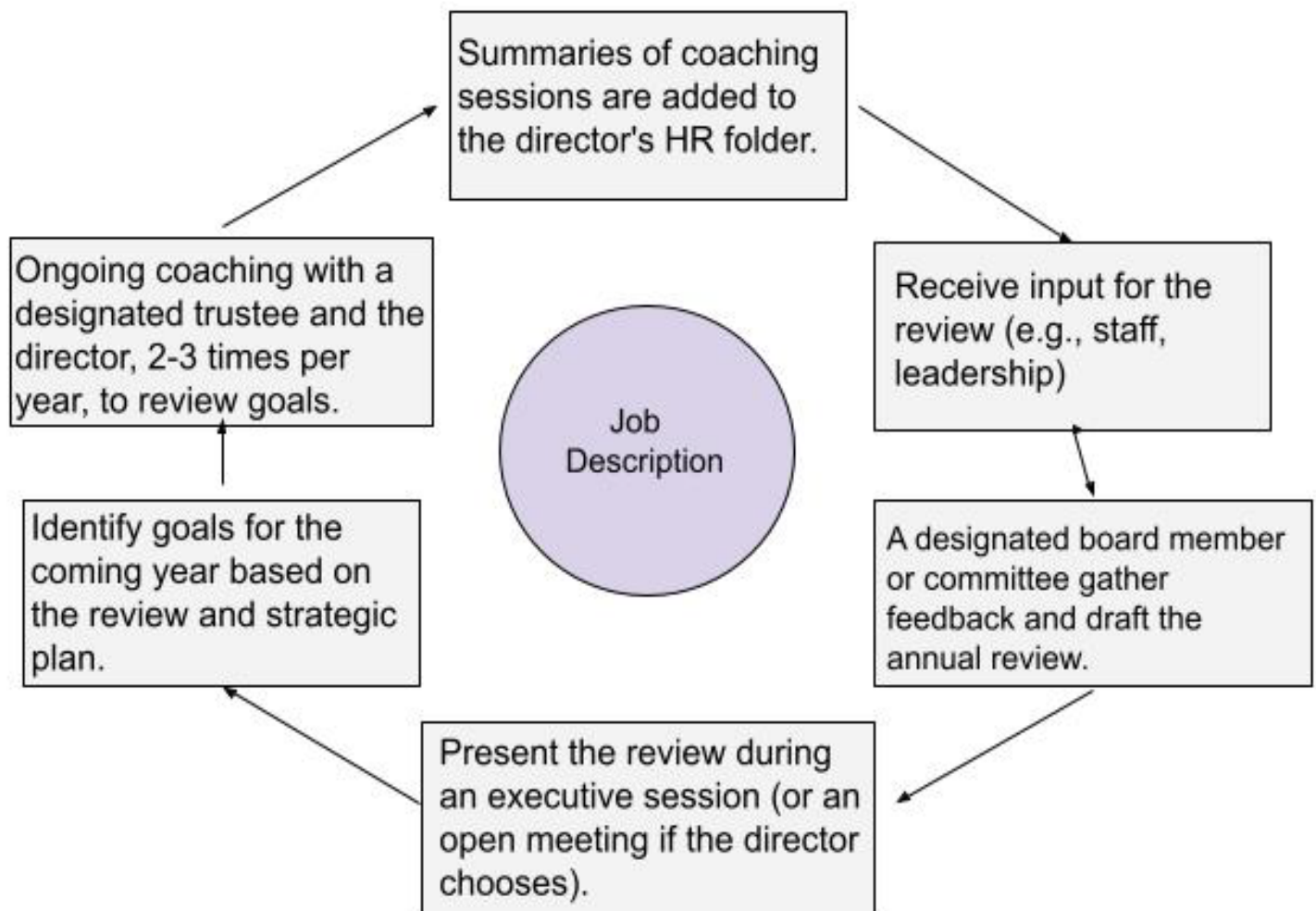
The review process should be a positive and reflective one, fostering commitment to growth for everyone involved.

Key Points on the Library Director's Review

The annual review for a Library Director should be based on their job description, skills, and goals. It is a critical opportunity for the board to provide coaching and clarify expectations.

- **Who conducts the review?** A designated board member or committee is responsible for putting the review together.
- **Who contributes?** The board should consistently determine who provides input, such as the leadership team, staff, or Friends/Foundation groups.
- **What about the meeting?** The review should be presented during an executive session unless the director requests that it be held in an open meeting.
- **Ongoing Process:** A designated trustee should meet with the director throughout the year (2-3 times) to check in on goals and the working relationship.

The Annual Review Process



- The board must determine who will contribute to the review (e.g., leadership team, staff, Friends/Foundation). This should be consistent year-to-year.
- A designated board member or committee is responsible for compiling the review.
- The review is presented to the director, typically in an executive session, unless the director chooses an open meeting.
- For **advisory boards**, expectations for the review process should be established with the governing authority.

Trends

Trends are a general direction in which something is changing
Trends represent the present
Trends are medium to long-term duration & can gain momentum

Staffing Shift

MLIS or not, trained or not, co-directorships



Demonstrated by innovation outside of information centered role, training needs in information literacy & librarianship, hiring to fit a partner

Digitization

eBooks, Audiobooks, AI, self-service, robotics



Demonstrated by space shift, creative partnerships, increased subscription costs, bad information is free/good information behind a paywall, transformation rather than transactional work

Wellness

Work-life balance, living wage & economic security, meaningful interactions, social connection



Demonstrated by flexibility in hours, shared leadership, inclusion of wellness benefits, increase in program participation, aging in place,

Literacy Consumption

Aliteracy Crisis, Short Form, AI Literacy



Demonstrated by teaching how to read, sound bite and rise of social media for consumption, increase need from media to digital and now AI literacy (need to be AI literate in job market)

Collaborative Consumption

Collaborative consumption is a grassroots movement, facilitated by social media in which individuals and businesses share or rent items (e.g., cars, spare rooms, tools, even skills). As this trend continues to manifest, we are quickly moving into a world where access to assets is trumping ownership.

Philanthropic Models

In our increasingly interconnected world, there is a hyperawareness of both global humanitarian crises as well as those charitable causes that fall closer to home. As a result, new philanthropic models, fueled by social media & backed by wealthy benefactors, have begun to replace traditional capital campaigns.

Virtual Workplaces

The days of the 9-to-5 job are coming to an end. Due to the ubiquity of digital & virtual technologies, individuals can work remotely from anywhere in the world. This landscape of intangibility may reframe the issue of work/life balance & even allow people to be more connected than ever before.

Personalization

Using new technologies and platforms, consumers can create their own, individual brands and experiences. This shift away from the 'one-size-fits-all' mentality is driving greater expectations for custom products in every facet of an individual's complex lifestyle, including health & wellness.

Cyber Warfare

With the Internet increasingly becoming the global hub for economic, social, & political development, governments & businesses must be vigilant in safeguarding against cyber-attacks. This is today's warfare with the goal of disrupting existing systems, challenging the prevailing order & undermining trust in society's foundations.

Entertainment Everything

Approximately 2 billion people worldwide are avid gamers, and most of these individuals play on their mobile devices. Coupled with the popularity of social media, user-generated content, and VR/AR technology, will we expect everyday activities such as working, shopping, and eating be delivered through the lens of entertainment?

Citizen Science

Science no longer relegated to sterile labs or experts with advanced degrees. With the help of technology, average citizens can engage in real scientific discovery and research in their own homes and backyards. Their data collection, analysis and experiments have led to major breakthroughs & achievements.

Maker Movement

DIYers, hackers, and makers share a common passion of hand-on tinkering to develop innovative products. This creative class develops not only artwork, technology and tools but even genetically-modified organisms, robots, and drones. They are inspiring a worldwide maker movement to develop solutions to grand problems.

Shout It Out

Advocacy Defined

- The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal; to support or argue for a cause, policy, et. (*Merriam-Webster*)
- Increasing public support for and recommendations of a particular cause or policy. (*Oxford Dictionary*)

Public Library Advocacy Defined

- Promote public awareness of and support for the library's mission, services, programs, and spaces

Purposes for Advocacy

- Promote library programs & services to prompt use
- Build awareness of library services, programs, hours, and use to those who may not know about them and need them
- Inform on library use & impact to increase perception of the library's value
- Clarify & instill the public library roles in the community & society
- Speak & act locally to promote policy & fit/or funding for your library
- Engage at the state, national, &/or international level to strengthen all libraries

Prophet or Profit?

Mandated by law to complete and submit an Annual Report

Find your legislature: leg.colorado.gov/FindMyLegislator

What are commonalities in the stories?

Everybody has a library story. Keep it short & simple.

- Project/Services/Focus _____

- Hero of the story _____

- Tribulation _____

- Impact _____

- The hero is not the only one
 - Lrs.org
 - Director
 - Board report
 - Census, community reports, strategic plans_____

- (If an ask) _____

Who are you going to tell this story? (Circle all that apply)

Commissioner	Local Chamber of Commerce	Representative (state, federal)
Non-Profit Leader	Local Tourism Board	Town Manager/Council
Neighbor	Bartender/Budtender/Soultender	Other_____

Action to Take

Low Hanging Fruit _____ Arm Stretched

Action Plan

I am taking back to my board

Woo-hoos

Ahas

We need to

Follow Up

I need to remember these resources:

- State Library website for policy samples and standards
- CSL and CLiC will do board training
- CAL Legislative Committee
-
-
-
-
-

People I met, where they are from, what I should remember about them

- Kieran Hixon, Colorado State Library Small & Rural Library Senior Consultant
- Polly Gallagher, Colorado State Library Public Library Leadership Senior Consultant
-
-
-
-
-
-



COLORADO
Department of Education
Colorado State Library

Made possible in part through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) administered by the Colorado State Library

September 2025. Facilitated by Kieran Hixon & Polly Gallagher