

KANSAS Trustee Education Program  
Trustee Handout

**Topic: EVALUATING THE DIRECTOR**

Definition: Evaluating the director's performance means comparing expectations about his/her achievements with what actually happened. It is a "must do" library task.

**Discussion:**

**Why evaluate.** "There are several reasons for conducting annual evaluations of the director. First, the evaluation lets the library director know if he or she is effectively performing the job expected by the library board. If the library director is not living up to the board's expectations, it may be due to a lack of communication ... the annual evaluation is a good time to clear up any miscommunications.

"[It] is also a good time for the board to communicate its expectations for the upcoming year. It will be easier for the library director to fulfill the board's expectations if they are clearly communicated during the evaluation process.

**New director.** "The library director's first annual evaluation should not be sprung on the library director "by surprise" or with short notice. Rather, shortly after the director is hired, he or she should meet with the board to outline goals for the year and determine criteria for evaluation." From the *Michigan Public Library Trustee Manual* (go to [www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17451\\_18668\\_18689---.00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17451_18668_18689---.00.html)), then click the two pdf documents.

**Ongoing process.** "The evaluation of the library director should be an ongoing process, a natural outgrowth of a good relationship between trustees and library administrator. The director should be given help with problems and advice on mistakes in a timely fashion that facilitates quick resolution.

"A formal annual evaluation of the library director is an excellent management practice. If the director's performance is generally satisfactory, this should be an appraisal of the job description and of progress with specific objectives. ... There are times when the director is not performing to the board's satisfaction in certain areas. At such time, the board's watchword should be SPECIFICS. The director should be given specific tasks to accomplish within a specific period or specific behaviors to change.

**Be specific.** "Unspecific charges such as 'bad attitude' are more likely to result in frustration and anger than constructive change. Many directors have successfully corrected an unsatisfactory situation after they gained a clear understanding of the board's expectations.

"Any evaluation of the library director should be based on how the library itself is doing. The board might consider questions such as:

- Has the director managed the library so that it can provide the intended services?

- Has the director managed the staff so that operations are friendly, efficient and cost effective?
- Is the community visibly pleased with the public library?
- Has the director been a leader in making the community aware of the library as an important service?
- Has the director made progress in achieving the objectives in the library's plan?
- Has the director provided sufficient information to the board so that it can perform effectively?
- Has the director kept in touch with new trends in library service and relayed these to the staff and the board?"

From "Evaluating the director" in *Kansas Trustee Topics: Caring for the Library Director's Position*, at <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/KLS/development/trusteetopics.html>.

**Forms.** Various types of forms are used to evaluate the director's performance. The forms used by Salina Public Library (board and staff evaluate the director) and by Olathe Public Library (board only) are available on the KLTA website menu, [www.kslibtrustees.org](http://www.kslibtrustees.org); click "Director Evaluation Forms." For other sample forms, contact your regional system.

#### **Additional resources:**

√Kansas sources

- "Evaluating the director" in *Trustee Topics: Caring for the Library Director's Position*, at <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/KLS/development/trusteetopics.html>.
- "Board employs a qualified library director and provides for the continuing education and annual or semi-annual evaluation of the director." -- *Standards for Kansas Public Libraries, 2006 Revision*, Chapter 1, "Structure and Governance Checklist," #5.
- "Evaluating your Director: Worth It or Worthless?" *TrusteeTalk*, January 2006, p.4-5. Go to [www.kslibtrustees.org](http://www.kslibtrustees.org); click TrusteeTalk Archive for a pdf.
- For sample forms, see the KLTA website menu, [www.kslibtrustees.org](http://www.kslibtrustees.org); click "Director Evaluation Forms." One set is from Olathe, the other from Salina (which includes staff evaluation of the director). Also contact your regional system office.

√Other: Mary Moore, *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook*, ALA Editions, 2005, p. 52-56.

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