

Report of the

Ohio Library Council

Task Force on Local Government Reform and Collaboration Commission

March, 2011

Introduction and Overview

In August 2010, the Ohio Local Government Reform and Collaboration Commission issued their final report. This commission took 18 months to examine a variety of issues that impact the efficiency and effectiveness of local government service delivery. One of the recommendations of this commission was:

[Encourage the State Library of Ohio to research issues of collaborations, mergers and consolidation of library systems.](#)

[The Commission recommends that the State Library of Ohio look at areas of services, delivery and costs and the benefits associated with various collaboration and consolidation models.](#)

The Ohio Library Council formed a Task Force to review the Ohio Local Government Reform and Collaboration Commission's recommendation and provide a report with some preliminary information to the State Library of Ohio Board of Trustees. In selecting members to serve on this Task Force, the Ohio Library Council considered both the geographic location and library size of the Task Force member.

Task Force Members

Alan Radnor, Task Force Chairman
Trustee, Bexley Public Library

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Director, Minerva Public Library

Tim Kambitsch
Director, Dayton Metro Library

Elaine Paulette
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Task Force Resources

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Driscoll & Fleeter

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Fortunately, this report was able to use existing research and data. The data on the effects of consolidation however, is new and unique to this report. All of the Task Force members were struck by a report issued in 1947 to the Governor and the 97th General Assembly. We were surprised to read in this report a discussion about many of the same issues this 2010 – 2011 report will address. This report was so striking that we have included a complete copy of it as part of the appendix of this report.

Overview

Public libraries in Ohio are unique in the nation. They are, indisputably The Best In The Nation. This has important consequences for education, economic development, and job creation in the state. But it also means that Ohioans have come to expect, perhaps demand, this outstanding level of library service. Recently, there was a national news story about a young boy in Pennsylvania who was an avid reader and library user. He was selected to lead the Summer Reading Program parade in his library because he was such a familiar face in the library. When his picture appeared in the local newspaper with his address, it was discovered that he didn't live in that library's service district and they were forced to take away his library card privileges. That would never happen in Ohio. In Ohio we are able to provide outstanding library services throughout the state, even in economically challenged areas, because we have a base of state funding. In every other state, but Hawaii, funding for public libraries is left to the vagaries of local government budgets and levies.

With the reduction in state funding during the last 10 years, public libraries have become more dependent on local property taxes. However, the remaining state funding still provides the necessary incentive for public libraries to share materials, staff, programming, and a wide range of other resources.

Public libraries are always reinventing themselves. The early 1990's the Internet ignited the Information and Technology Age. There were those who predicted that this would be the end of public libraries – that libraries would be replaced by computers. Instead of decrying technology as their death knell, libraries embraced technology. Public libraries brought technology into their libraries, taught their patrons how to use technology, and provided it to their users at no charge. Once again, public libraries were the equalizer in world of haves and havenots.

Therefore, any report or discussion about collaboration or consolidation of public libraries must include the value of the delivery of service. In a fragile economy that is in the process of recovery, it is important to study and understand the cost / benefit of a public service, not just the cost.

Background

There are 251 public library systems in Ohio, with slightly more than 700 locations. Public libraries receive state funding, but are locally controlled by Boards of Trustees appointed by the local taxing district. Libraries are organized as one of six types of libraries. The chart below shows the organizational structure of Ohio's public libraries.

Types of Libraries	Number
School District	149
County District	57
County	3
Municipal	19
Township	4
Association	19

EARLY HISTORY

The history of public library funding in Ohio traces the growing commitment of its citizens to the importance of life-long learning. In 1817, the Ohio General Assembly enacted legislation providing for the incorporation of public libraries, but provided no financial support. The School Act of 1853 codified local tax support for public schools, and some of that tax money was used to create school libraries, which were open to the public. In 1869, legislation was passed which authorized municipalities to open and maintain free public libraries. This legislation made it possible for communities to apply for Carnegie grants in the early 1900s.

ANDREW CARNEGIE

The Carnegie "free library" program provided funds for the construction of 1,689 public libraries in 1,419 communities across the United States. Communities requesting a Carnegie Library were required to provide a site and pledge an annual appropriation for books and maintenance. The pledge would usually amount to 10 percent of the Carnegie gift. The size of the Carnegie gift was based on the population of the town—usually \$2 per capita.

Ohio built 106 public libraries with Carnegie grants and many of these libraries continue to serve their communities today. As an example, in 1901 the main library in Columbus received a grant for \$200,000. That building, with the words "Open To All" etched in the stone above the front door, has remained an integral part of downtown Columbus.

STATE SUPPORT

Beginning in 1933, public libraries in Ohio were supported almost entirely from revenues from the intangible personal property tax. This was a tax levied on individuals' holdings of intangible assets—mainly stocks and bonds. Though the tax was state-imposed and

applied uniformly throughout Ohio, it was collected locally. The revenue remained in the county of origin, where it was distributed to library systems in that county in accordance with “need.” This system of library finance, unique in the United States, had several results. Some counties, because of large holdings of taxable intangible property or vigorous local tax enforcement efforts, realized great revenue. Others received very little. By the late 1960s some of Ohio’s largest library systems were justly renowned for the strength of their collections, the breadth and variety of services offered, and their qualified professional staffs. However, there were many areas of Ohio where public library service was virtually nonexistent. In Adams County, with a 1970 population of about 19,000, the public library consisted of two small local libraries that received a total of only \$19,100.

LIBRARY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FUND (LLGSF)

In 1983, the Ohio General Assembly repealed the intangible tax based on recommendations from a bi-partisan study of the state’s entire tax system. Governor Richard Celeste then created the Public Library Financing and Support Committee, consisting of members of the House and Senate, public library directors, the dean of the Kent State University School of Library Science, teachers, and financial experts, to determine how the state should replace the intangible tax funding for public libraries. This committee determined that the loss libraries experienced through the repeal of the intangible tax was equal to 6.3% of Ohio’s personal income tax revenue. Therefore, 6.3% of Ohio’s personal income tax receipts were earmarked for the Library and Local Government Support Fund (LLGSF). The Public Library Finance and Support Committee set forth two goals for the state’s library fund distribution plan: 1. To preserve excellence in existing service, and 2. To improve library service in under funded and underserved areas. To accomplish these goals, the distribution formula divides the LLGSF among all of the state’s 88 counties in two ways. First, the formula guarantees each county the amount of revenue received from the fund in the preceding year plus an adjustment for inflation. This part of the distribution is called the “guarantee share.” Second, if any money remains in the fund after paying each county’s guarantee share, then that remainder is distributed according to an “equalization ration.” The equalization aspect of the formula distributes the excess over the guarantee in inverse proportion to per capita funding levels among the counties—those counties which received less per capita in the guarantee share, receive more in the equalization share. Thus, over time, the distribution to counties begins to balance. The equalization formula only works when there is growth in the fund. In the years when there has been equalization, there has been successful balancing of state funds.

FUNDING FREEZE (1991)

In July 1991, in response to a weakening economy and a state budget crisis, Governor George Voinovich froze the LLGSF in H.B. 298, the biennial budget bill. This freeze was to take place over a 12-month period and a partial “thaw” for six months after that. However, before the thaw ever began, it was replaced by another six-month total freeze

in H.B. 904, the budget corrections bill enacted in December 1992. This freeze denied \$31.6 million in expected revenues to the LLGSF.

LIBRARY GROWTH

As the economy began to recover in 1993, and personal income tax revenues began to grow, the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation that reduced the 6.3% set aside for public libraries to 5.7%. The 1993 tax distribution was the first year that the LLGSF was set at 5.7% in permanent law.

From 1993 through December 2001, the LLGSF experienced increases parallel to economic growth experienced in the state budget. Over that time period, the LLGSF grew from \$284,700,000 to \$496,458,342. In addition to these levels of growth, the state passed a temporary income tax reduction and held harmless the public libraries by establishing an Income Tax Reduction Replacement Fund. This fund returned to the LLGSF from the General Revenue Fund an amount equal to the income tax reduction each year.

FUNDING FREEZE (2002-2007)

Beginning in January 2001, it became clear the country was beginning a decline in economic growth. The state began cutting state agency budgets and proposed a no-growth biennium budget. The state's fiscal year (FY) 2002-2003 biennium budget called for the LLGSF to be frozen to the distribution levels of July 2000–June 2001, and to divert the money necessary to fund the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) from the LLGSF. As the national economy continued its downward trend in the second half of 2001, it became increasingly clear that additional cuts in the state budget were going to be necessary. Again, state agencies and programs endured across-the-board cuts. In the budget corrections bill (H.B. 405) for (FY) 2002-2003 introduced in October 2001, the three local government funds including the LLGSF were initially slated for a 6% cut in funding. Instead, the General Assembly agreed to allow the LLGSF to collect 5.7% of the personal income tax or the freeze amount, whichever was less. The result was that libraries collected the frozen amount of money each month, but an adjustment was made in March (\$5 million) and July (\$31 million) of 2002 because the freeze amount that was distributed exceeded the amount of money libraries would have collected at 5.7% of the personal income tax. The decline in the economy continued throughout the rest of the biennium. Early in 2003, it was apparent that the state budget was still out of balance, despite previous budget corrections bills. To respond to this continuing budget problem, the Ohio General Assembly passed another budget corrections bill, H.B. 40. This legislation allowed the Governor to reduce library funding by an additional \$10 million.

The 2004-2005 biennium budget (H.B. 95) had a proposal to return public library funding to its permanent law percentage of 5.7% with a 2% growth cap. Unfortunately, alterations were made to the proposal and the LLGSF remained frozen at the 2002 distribution

levels. In the 2006-2007 biennium state budget, library funding was frozen as it had been since 2004.

PUBLIC LIBRARY FUND (PLF)

On June 30, 2007, Governor Ted Strickland signed into law the state's fiscal year (FY) 2008-2009 biennium budget and, with it, began a new era of anticipated stability and the opportunity for growth in public library funding in Ohio. As of January 2008, Ohio's public libraries are funded through 2.22% of the state's total general tax revenue. The new funding source broadens the base of library funding to all General Revenue tax revenues, not just personal income tax. The funding is projected to generate approximately \$462 million for public libraries in calendar year 2008, and \$465 million in 2009. The proposed funding change does allow for a true funding partnership between the state and public libraries. As the opportunities for state revenue grow, so will the funding for public libraries; and conversely, when state revenue declines, public libraries share in the state's revenue reductions. As a result of this formula, library funding mirrors state revenue.

CURRENT STATUS

In September 2008, the nation's economy began heading toward its historic crash and with it went the budgets of every state government including Ohio's. August 2008 was the last month that the Public Library Fund (PLF) had even a small amount of growth.

The PLF was funded with 2.22% of the total tax revenue received by the state, but as state tax revenues were forecasted to decline, so was the funding for the PLF. It was clear that along with the economy, library funding from the state was in a downward spiral. In January 2009, as Governor Strickland was putting the finishing touches on H.B. 1, the state (FY) 2010-2011 biennium budget, it was still unclear just how far the economy would deteriorate. The PLF was projected to lose 15-20% just based on the declining state revenue.

On June 19, 2009, as H.B. 1 languished in Conference Committee, Governor Strickland held his "Budget Framework" press conference, where he announced a series of recommendations to the legislature to balance the state's budget. The two largest proposed cuts were a reduction in the state's employer contribution share of the Ohio Public Employment Retirement System (OPERS) and a 30% reduction in funding to the PLF, in addition to the already projected 15-20% loss (projected to cost libraries more than \$200 million).

The patrons of public libraries were stunned and mounted an unprecedented response to this proposal. Quickly, the Ohio General Assembly rejected the Governor's proposal. Instead, legislators reduced the PLF funding percentage from 2.22% to 1.97%. The result of this was an 18% loss in state funding in 2009 for public libraries. The decline in state funding for public libraries continued in 2010 because state revenues have not rebounded. As of December 2010, public libraries received nearly 23% less than they did in 2008.

Year	LLGSF/PLF
2001	\$ 496,458,342
2002	\$ 457,671,290
2003	\$ 452,648,009
2004	\$ 455,470,323
2005	\$ 457,692,919
2006	\$ 457,970,324
2007	\$ 457,970,324
2008	\$ 450,578,991
2009	\$ 370,367,615
2010	\$ 347,952,235

The Ohio General Assembly is currently considering the FY 12 – 13 biennium budget bill (HB 153) which would reduce the PLF by 6 ½ % over their FY 11 collections.

Collaboration in Ohio’s Public Libraries

Who hasn’t walked into an unfamiliar grocery store or retailer searching for some illusive item? Is the grated cheese with the pasta, over by the bread, close to the sliced cheesed? In public libraries, you always know how materials are shelved. From one public library system to the next Fiction is alphabetical by author’s last name, Non-Fiction is by the Dewey decimal system. The Dewey decimal system is probably the longest lasting, single most collaborative measure in government.

Of course, libraries in Ohio have gone way beyond the Dewey decimal system.

In Ohio, libraries have formed consortiums. These consortiums of public libraries provide the network of interlibrary loan between library systems. Libraries lend their materials to other libraries to fill the demands of patrons all around Ohio. Some consortiums focus primarily on interlibrary loan. Some consortiums provide joint professional development between library systems, or collaborative author visits, group purchasing of materials or equipment, Summer Reading Program collaborations, and a whole host of other partnership opportunities. Although these collaborative efforts sometimes have a cost-saving aspect to them, they are primarily a way to expand and provide better services to our patrons. Appendix A provides a complete list of library consortia.

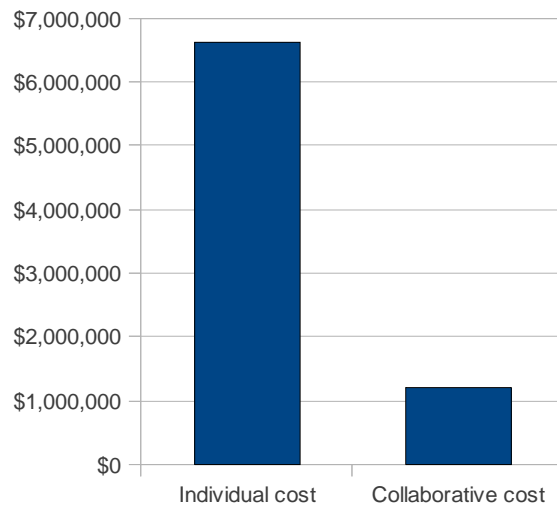
The Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) is perhaps Ohio public libraries’ most significant and successful collaborative effort. See Appendix B (*LJ editorial on OPLIN*). OPLIN provides the Internet access and certain data bases to all of Ohio’s public libraries.

The Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) purchases services for use by each Ohio public library system, falling primarily into three categories: an online database of general-interest *periodicals*; library connections to the *Internet*; and online

Ohio *newspapers* and archives. Such collaborative purchasing has demonstrable financial benefits.

ONLINE PERIODICALS: OPLIN contributes funds to Libraries Connect Ohio, a partnership between OPLIN (serving public libraries), OhioLINK (academic libraries), INFOhio (K-12 libraries), and the State Library; the pooled resources of these four library entities are then used to purchase a collection of thousands of online publications and research resources that are freely available to all Ohioans, regardless of their location, age, education or economic status. OPLIN's contribution goes mainly toward the cost of online Ohio newspapers and EBSCOhost, which contains the full text for nearly 1,700 periodicals covering general reference, business, health, education, general science, multicultural issues and more.

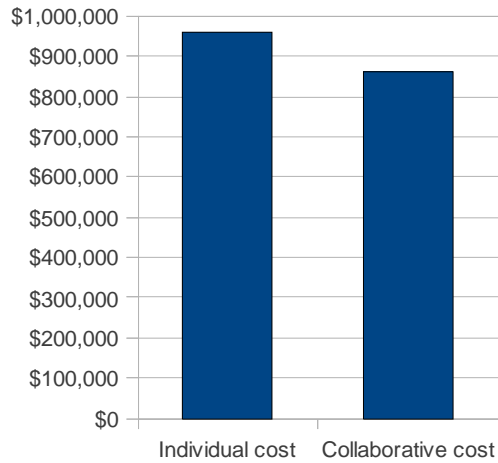
EBSCOhost annual cost



Because OPLIN aggregates all public library subscriptions to EBSCOhost and combines them with the subscriptions for academic and school libraries, we are able to negotiate remarkable savings.

LIBRARY INTERNET CONNECTIONS: OPLIN-provided circuits are all commercial-grade, dedicated circuits. Unlike residential-grade circuits, they provide stable IP addresses, are not oversubscribed and provide the entire “advertised” bandwidth in both directions (upload and download) at all times. They are guaranteed by the telco to be operational at least 99.95% of the time. OPLIN provides routers on the library end of each circuit, and all circuits and routers are actively monitored and managed 24/7/365.

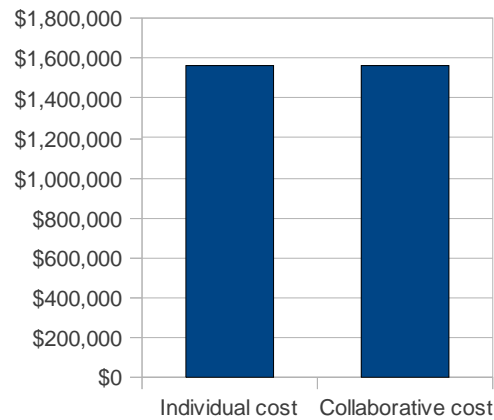
Internet access bandwidth (annual cost of accessing the general Internet)



OPLIN aggregates all library Internet traffic and then pays only for the amount of Internet access the libraries are actually using. If libraries purchased this access individually, they would need to pay for their entire potential use at any time, losing the benefit of combining their bandwidth needs with other libraries' bandwidth needs.

Data transport circuits

(annual cost of the “pipes” to carry data traffic)



Since all public libraries can purchase from the same statewide contracts OPLIN purchases from, as negotiated by the Ohio Office of Information Technology, the savings to libraries is not in circuit costs, but in staff resources, since *OPLIN staff handles all purchasing and trouble-shooting*, while the *State Library staff handles all bill payments*.

NEWSPAPERS: OPLIN provides statewide access to the entire contents and archives of the following newspapers:

- The Blade (1/1/1996 - Current)
- Cincinnati Post (4/1/1990 – 12/31/2007)
- Columbus Dispatch (7/16/1985 – Current)
- Dayton Daily News (1/1/1990 – Current)
- Plain Dealer (6/1/1991 – Current)

While OPLIN pays \$320,000 annually to make these available to all libraries statewide, it would be difficult to calculate the individual costs to libraries. Whereas almost all public libraries would purchase an Internet connection and a periodical collection like EBSCOhost, only a few would ultimately consider the expense of purchasing all of these newspapers online, despite their value. About **30,000 articles** are downloaded *each month* from these newspaper subscriptions.

Comparison of Ohio's System of Public Libraries

Recent fiscal problems caused by the economic recession have focused attention on the efficiency of local government operations. However, an analysis of "efficiency" lacks validity if it ignores the quality of services provided. The Task Force, through an LSTA grant, commissioned a study by Driscoll & Fleeter to compare Ohio's public libraries to public libraries around the country. The complete study is Appendix C of the Task Force report. This study used data collected by the Institute of Museum and Library Services from the 50 state libraries in 2008.

The information obtained from these data establish three points about Ohio's public libraries:

- 1) Ohio public libraries deliver far more services to Ohio residents than any other state.
- 2) Ohio public library districts are substantially larger than the average library district size for all public libraries in the United States.
- 3) As of 2008, Ohio provided more support per capita on public libraries than any other state.

In 2008, Ohio public libraries spent about \$63 per capita compared to a national average of \$35 per capita.

A combination of four measures of library usage shows that Ohioans used their public libraries more than any other state except California in *absolute terms*. The sum of reference inquiries, circulation, library program attendance, and library internet terminal usage in Ohio equaled 241 million transactions. By comparison, California with more

than three times Ohio's population registered 298 million transactions in those categories of library usage.

When the same measures of library usage are related to state populations, Ohio's 21 per capita transactions more than double the national average of 10 transactions per capita. Utah, the second highest state in library transactions per capita, registered 16.5. Thus, Ohio had more than 25% greater library usage per capita than the #2 state.

While Ohio ranks first in dollars per capita expended on public libraries, the per transaction cost of Ohio library activities ranks the state thirty-first. In other words, when Ohio spends money on public libraries, the libraries deliver more in services per dollar than most other states. Compared to the national average of \$3.54 per library transaction, Ohio spends 16% less (\$2.99).

Ohio public libraries recorded more patron visits than any state except New York and California.

In the case of one additional cutting edge form of library service, no measurement of use exists at the present time. This service involves the purchase by libraries of proprietary online services for the benefit of library patrons. Patrons can use some of these services from home. Ohio provides 79,758 such databases. The next most active state in the provision electronic database services is Texas with 29,066. While Ohio leads the nation in providing such services, this measure of library activity does not figure into the comparative cost analyses provided above because no usage measure can apportion comparative costs. Thus, these electronic services enhance Ohio's position within the context of its very competitive delivery of other services in a cost effective manner.

Ohio's 251 library districts average almost 45,900 residents. Thirty-five states have smaller average library district population. The national average of 32,784 means that Ohio has larger than average library districts even though a significant number of Ohio library districts have fewer than 10,000 residents.

Conclusion

No perfect method exists to quantify library services in a comprehensive way. However, the combination of four major measures of library usage places Ohio as the second highest state in the absolute quantity of library activities in the form of reference transactions, circulation, program attendance, and Internet terminal usage. Only California with more than three times Ohio's population exceeds Ohio in absolute usage of these library services. Adjustment of library usage data by population size places Ohio as the number one state in per capita library service provision by a large margin.

While no specific measure of library quality exists, the quantity of library usage should offer some measure of quality as well. To the extent that library patrons can vote with their feet, Ohio libraries registered more visits per capita than any other state. Ohioans

visited their libraries at a rate of eight times per year when no other state registered as many as seven visits per year.

Measurement of the cost of libraries per use measured by circulation, program attendance, and Internet terminal users shows that Ohio's per use cost ranks the state as 31st. Measurement of library use in terms of the cost per patron visit puts Ohio even lower with the 42nd highest cost. Both of these cost measures do not account for the state's position as the leader in cutting edge distribution of electronic database technology. Because the usage measures provide no method for incorporating the benefits of electronic database subscriptions, the per usage measures short-change Ohio by omitting that aspect of library services in which Ohio shows the most dominance. Thus, Ohioans get all of the benefits shown in terms of visits, reference services, circulation, program attendance, and Internet terminal use at a very competitive cost, and, on top of those benefits, a whole new dimension of library services through access to proprietary online databases at no extra cost beyond those already accounted for.

While Ohio has 251 library districts of which many are relatively small, the state's overall average library size does not set it apart as an area with an excessive number of library districts relative to the state's population. Thirty-five states have smaller average library districts measured by each state's population divided by the number of library districts in that state.

The Impact of Merging Ohio Public Libraries Two Case Studies

Is merging small independent public libraries into larger systems a way to reduce the cost of providing library service in Ohio?

There is an easy assumption that larger library systems are more efficient since they can exercise greater buying power and volume purchasing of goods and services. It is also assumed that merging small independent libraries into the larger systems would result in considerable cost savings, particularly through the elimination of positions.

These assumptions may be true in some cases; however, as the following case studies illustrate, merging independent public libraries into a larger system can drive systems toward additional expenditures and as a consequences result in additional Ohio homeowners being asked to support new or additional property taxes.

This analysis explores the fiscal impact of theoretically merging two different library districts into an established larger system. The first case study examines a theoretical merger of the Germantown Public Library, a small rural independent library with the Dayton Metro Library. In the second case study, the costs associated with merging the

Wright Memorial Public Library, an independent urban library, into the Dayton Metro Library.

One conclusion of this study suggests that as a result of a merger the Dayton Metro Library would spend an additional \$275,000 annually to operate the Germantown Public Library as a branch of its system. This represents a 42% increase over current spending to operate the Germantown Public Library. While it may seem counter intuitive to some that expenditures would be higher, most of these increased expenditures would reflect a 200% increase in spending for materials and a 31% increase in public service hours to meet standards of service in place at other branches of the Dayton Metro Library.

In contrast, a merger of the Wright Memorial Public Library into the Dayton Metro Library could result in approximately \$293,000 in “potential” savings annually. Much of this potential savings could only be realized with significant reductions in staffing at Wright Memorial Public Library.

The net savings of merging both independent libraries into the Dayton Metro Library totals only about \$18,000 annually. With the Germantown Public Library operating without a levy and the Wright Memorial Public Library operating with a reduced levy, the bigger consequence of a merged system would be a likely initiation of property taxes in the Valley View School District and an increase of property taxes in the Oakwood School District.

Methodology, Assumptions and Background

The ultimate answer policy makers want to know is, “Would any kind of operating cost saving be realized if these smaller libraries were to be merged into the Dayton Metro Library System.” This study looks at the issue and asks a slightly narrower question, “Could the Dayton Metro Library operate the Germantown Public Library or the Wright Memorial Public Library as branches of its system for less money than is currently being spent by their respective Library Boards?”

To support its conclusions this study examines standard statistical and financial data reported to the State Library of Ohio by each of the independent libraries and compares performance measurements and financial data of similarly sized and situated branches of the Dayton Metro Library. This in-house data provides valuable benchmarks by which to estimate the cost of operating these independent libraries. Dayton Metro Library data was generated from internal tracking and control mechanisms already in place for the system. All data referenced in this case study is from calendar year 2009.

It should be recognized that even within the Dayton Metro Library branch system, unique cost factors related to each facility and service program and the unique needs of the populations served make direct comparisons difficult. As a result, the following comparisons do not suggest identical levels of service. They do suggest what is possible within the range of costs.

A key assumption of this analysis is that if the libraries were to merge, the current facilities would remain open. From a political perspective, it is hard to imagine that either school board would consider a merger without ironclad guarantees that their library at its current location would continue to operate. Since current state law governing the merger of two public library districts mandates that the two boards would operate as a merged board on an interim basis, it is guaranteed that operation of the current facility would continue for an extended period of time.

There are many practical and service justifications to ensure that a library service outlet in Germantown would continue in any merger scenario. As a recently renovated facility, it is also hard to imagine leaving a Board owned facility without such a move increasing operating and capital expenses. Given its size matches the space planning guidelines currently in place for DML branches, no change in facilities can be envisioned. Also, the geographic isolation of the Valley View School District relative to existing Dayton Metro Library branches makes it difficult to imagine that DML branch libraries could effectively serve the residents of this school district.

While the Wright Memorial Public Library is located in a library-rich area of the county, maintaining the Wright Memorial Public Library can be justified by the historic high levels of use. The Dayton Metro Library has been investigating the possibility of reducing the number of locations while at the same time increasing the amount of square feet devoted to library services. Its planning has identified branch sizes of 20-30,000 sq. ft., similar to the size of the Wright Memorial Public Library not the Kettering Moraine Branch Library of the Dayton Metro Library system located approximately 1.25 miles to the south. While the WMPL building doesn't correspond with current library space planning ideals, an alternative possibility is that in a merged system the Wright Memorial Public Library would be maintained and the Kettering Moraine Branch would be relocated, probably to the west of its current location. Alternatively, the existing branch could be closed and or merged with the other Kettering branch located a few miles to the east. This study does not attempt to address the cost and service impact of these options.

Profile of the Germantown Public Library

The Germantown Public Library (GPL) is an independent school district library serving the Valley View School District in Southwest Montgomery County. The district is classic small town America with farming as one of its most significant economic activities.

As a predominantly rural district the GPL has operated its library primarily with receipts from the State of Ohio Public Library Fund (PLF). GPL does not have a local property tax levy to supplement the PLF.

Profile of the Wright Memorial Public Library

The Wright Memorial Public Library (WMPL) is an independent school district library serving the Oakwood School District. This district is surrounded by the Dayton Metro Library service area. The Oakwood school district is suburban with middle class to affluent residents.

As a predominantly suburban district the WMPL has operated its library primarily with receipts from the State of Ohio Public Library Fund (PLF) but is also supported by a 2007 operating levy with an effective millage of 0.923 mills. An additional 0.5 mil levy was passed in 2009.

Profile of the Dayton Metro Library

The Dayton Metro Library (DML) is a county public library district serving about 80% of Montgomery County in Southwest Ohio. The system is one of the seven largest libraries in the state with 20 urban, suburban and rural branches, a main library, and an outreach service program.

DML is supported by a 1.25 mil operating levy passed in 2004. A replacement 1.75 mil levy was passed in 2009.

Levels of Collaboration

The Germantown Public Library is an automation partner with the Dayton Metro Library participating as a member of DML's integrated library system (ILS) for circulation control and collection access and management. The two libraries share their collections and the Dayton Metro Library provides cataloging and other technical services to the Germantown Public Library as a part of its annual fees.

The cost savings of sharing an automated system is hard to calculate from published data and is beyond the scope of this study. It is safe to assume that if the Germantown Public Library were operating its own ILS, costs of operating the library's automation efforts would certainly be higher.

In essence the Dayton Metro Library and the Germantown Public Library have already merged operations for at least one major area of costs. While the amount of costs saving is difficult to document, the service benefits of doing so are quite clear. Prior to joining DML's automation network, the number of items loaned between the GPL and DML amounted to only a few hundred items annually. After the Germantown Public Library merged into the DML automated system, the number of items shared between the two libraries immediately rose to more than 40,000 items per year.

The Dayton Metro Library and Wright Memorial Public Library have only participated in "soft" collaboration. While the two libraries have done some joint purchasing of electronic databases, joint programming, and some coordination of advocacy, these efforts have minimal financial or service impact. The two districts do not participate in the same resource sharing systems and as a result patrons of each system are less aware of available materials. Also usage of each others' collections requires separate registration of borrowers.

Comparison of 2009 Revenues, Expenses and Service Programs

Funding Formula within Montgomery County

State funding within Montgomery County is determined by a formula agreed to by the Montgomery County Budget Commission and the boards of trustees of the four library districts in the county. Fund distributions to each library are based upon a formula that starts with each library receiving a base allocation reflecting funds distributed in the prior year. If additional funds are available the distribution is adjusted for inflation and by the relative changes in reported square feet of buildings, circulation and registered borrowers.

In 1995, the four public library districts agreed to a principal that if the PLF distributions received as a result of this formula were insufficient to meet the needs of any of the libraries, those libraries would seek additional funding through local property tax levies.

Per Capita Comparison of Revenues

Using 2010 official census data demonstrates a significantly higher per capita PLF distribution to the Wright Memorial Public Library than is distributed to the Germantown Public Library or the Dayton Metro Library.

Table 1. Public Library Fund Receipts	Population Served	Public Library Fund	Public Library Fund Receipts Per Capita
Dayton Metro Library	465,127	\$15,361,658	\$33.03
Germantown Public Library	9,574	\$690,870	\$72.16
Wright Memorial Public Library	8,870	1,187,463	\$133.87

With tax levies passed by the electorate of the Dayton Metro Library and the Wright Memorial Public Library in effect during 2009 the per capita total revenues of the Dayton Metro Library and Germantown Public Library reaches greater parity. However, the Wright Memorial Public Library continues to dominate in overall funding per capita.

Table 2. Total Revenues	Population Served	Total Operating Revenues	Total Revenues Per Capita
Dayton Metro Library	465,127	\$26,443,559	\$56.85
Germantown Public Library	9,574	\$723,203	\$75.54
Wright Memorial Public Library	8,870	\$1,542,593	\$173.91

Per Borrower Comparison of Revenues

Caution should be used when interpreting per capita data as official population figures attributed to each library district do not take into consideration patrons from adjoining counties and library districts. Since each library in Ohio is committed to offering full services to every Ohio resident, the number of patrons who use any particular library may differ significantly from the official population.

Each year libraries report the number of registered borrowers to the State Library of Ohio. The Dayton Metro Library reported that 76% of its population was issued or used one of its library cards within the last three years. In contrast, the Germantown Public library reported that there are actually more registered borrowers than population (1.3 cards per capita). The Wright Memorial Public Library reported 2.5 registrations for every resident, suggesting that 60% of its users actually live outside its service area.

Table 3. Card Holders	Registered Borrowers	Total Operating Revenues	Total Revenues Per Registration
Dayton Metro Library	354,690	\$26,443,559	\$ 74.55
Germantown Public Library	12,456	\$723,207	\$ 58.06
Wright Memorial Public Library	22,000	\$1,542,593	\$ 70.12

When the three libraries are compared by revenues per registered borrower, the Dayton Metro Library’s revenues of \$74.55 per registration is actually higher than both the \$58.06 per registered borrower for the Germantown Public Library and the \$70.12 per registration for the Wright Memorial Public Library.

The challenge of using official population counts or registration counts is that neither tells the whole story. The Wright Memorial Public Library is completely surrounded by Dayton Metro Library service district, and as a result it is certainly more exposed to DML residents who visit whatever library is most convenient, has the best collections and offer the most compelling programs.

Based upon the reported registrations number, it is likely that more Dayton Metro Library residents have a card of the Wright Memorial Public Library than residents of the Oakwood School District. As many of these patrons have cards from both library systems, comparing libraries with any measure that attempts to attribute usage by either population or by registration remains problematic.

Expenditures

Any comparison of expenditures per capita follows a similar pattern to that of revenues; each library is spending most of what it receives. As a percentage of total expenditures, the Dayton Metro Library and the Wright Memorial Public Library each spend 13.5% of their budget on new books, media and other materials. Germantown Public Library spends significantly less at only 7.4% of total expenditures.

Table 4. Collection Development	Total Operating Expenditures	Per Capita	Total Library Materials	Per Capita
Dayton Metro Library	\$27,119,376	\$58.31	\$3,664,853	\$7.88
Germantown Public Library	\$648,886	\$67.78	\$48,000	\$5.01
Wright Memorial Public Library	\$1,526,315	\$172.07	\$206,204	\$23.25

When comparing the three libraries on a per registration basis, the Dayton Metro Library is spending only slightly more per registration on materials than is spent by the Wright

Memorial Public Library and both are spending nearly three times as much for materials than the Germantown Public Library.

Table 5.

Collection Development	Total Operating Expenditures	Per Registrant	Total Library Materials	Per Registrant
Dayton Metro Library	\$27,119,376	\$76.46	\$3,664,853	\$10.33
Germantown Public Library	\$648,886	\$52.09	\$48,000	\$3.85
Wright Memorial Public Library	\$1,526,315	\$69.38	\$206,204	\$9.37

Both the Germantown Public Library and the Wright Memorial Public Library operate with a higher percentage of their expenditures devoted to salaries and benefits. This could be attributed to higher overhead costs for administration. In 2009, the Dayton Metro Library spent 69.7% of its budget on human resources while the Germantown Public Library and the Wright Memorial Public Library spent 78.9% and 74.7% respectively.

Table 6.

Salaries and Benefits	Salaries	Benefits	Benefits as % of Total Comp	Total Salaries and Benefits	Salaries and Benefits as % of Total Expenses
Dayton Metro Library	\$14,032,750	\$4,863,955	25.7%	\$18,896,705	69.7%
Germantown Public Library	\$410,362	\$101,518	19.8%	\$511,880	78.9%
Wright Memorial Public Library	\$927,507	\$213,111	18.7%	\$1,140,618	74.7%

It should be noted that expenditures for non-salary employee benefits as a percentage of total employee compensation are noticeably smaller for the two independent libraries. This may be due to the unionized environment operated by the Dayton Metro Library as well as a higher level of spending for training and staff development and other benefits such as tuition reimbursement and conference attendance.

Case Study 1

Costs for Operating the “Germantown Branch” of the Dayton Metro Library

As stated previously, another assumption used in this study is that eventually the formerly independent libraries would operate as branches of the Dayton Metro Library. Hours of operation, spending for new materials and staffing would eventually become homogenized and consistent with the policies and service program of the Dayton Metro Library. The logic of this study design is based upon the assumption that the merged locations would be operated just like any other branch of the Dayton Metro Library.

Table 7 uses several measures to illustrate how the extent and cost of service programs of the Germantown Public Library compare to individual Dayton Metro Library branches. Cost figures for the operation of the Germantown Public Library are inclusive of all operating costs while costs for operating Dayton Metro Library branches are exclusive of system-wide overhead costs. This apples and oranges difference is addressed below.

Table 7.

Ranking of Germantown Public Library against Dayton Metro Library Branches

Ranking by Number of Cardholders		Operating Costs
Germantown Public Library	12,500	\$648,886
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Trotwood (11 th)	13,300	\$834,659
Ft. McKinley (12 th)	10,350	\$639,133

Ranking by Size (Sq. Ft.)		Operating Costs
Germantown Public Library	11,521	\$648,886
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Northmont (4 th)	11,450	\$1,322,203
Trotwood (5 th)	10,267	\$ 834,659

Ranking by Number of Items Loaned		Operating Costs
Germantown Public Library	205,551	\$648,886
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
New Lebanon (14 th)	221,783	\$600,574
Ft. McKinley (15 th)	176,484	\$639,133

Ranking by Number of Computer Sessions		Operating Costs
Germantown Public Library	21,372	\$648,886
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Belmont (18 th)	24,993	\$736,301
Brookville (19 th)	19,464	\$797,321

Ranking by Number of Visitors		Operating Costs
Germantown Public Library	196,872	\$648,886
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Vandalia (4 th)	200,856	\$1,113,687
Miamisburg (5 th)	184,012	\$960,411

While there are several other points of comparison that might assist in identifying the cost of operating a branch of the Dayton Metro Library in Germantown, the above comparisons give ample evidence that staffing levels and expenditures for this hypothetical branch of the Dayton Metro Library would align most closely to that of DML's Brookville Branch even though that branch, as measured in square feet, is less than 50% the size of the Germantown Public Library.

The Brookville Branch ranks 11th out of 20 branches when ranked by total expenses.

Despite the size differences, the Brookville Branch is a good branch to use as a peer of the Germantown Public Library as it is one of the two rural branches operated by the Dayton Metro Library and should have a similar profile of patrons and kinds of library usage. In 2009 Brookville Branch had 9.65 FTE managerial and bargaining unit positions plus 2.25 FTE in hourly and substitute employees for a total of 11.9 FTE employees; greater than the 10 FTE reported by the Germantown Public Library. It should be noted that since 2009, both libraries have significantly reduced staffing in response to reduced state funding.

Operating Cost of the Brookville Branch

In 2009, direct expenditures for staffing, benefits, collections and public service support for the Brookville Branch totaled \$797,321, including \$519,532 for salaries and benefits for the staff that work at the Brookville Branch. This is well above the \$648,886 spent by the Germantown Public Library although the \$511,088 in expenditures for salaries and benefits is almost identical to that of the Brookville Branch.

Much of the higher expenditures for the Brookville Branch can be attributed to significantly higher expenditures for materials. The Germantown Public Library expended \$48,000 for new books and media in 2009. By comparison over \$155,000 was spent for collections at the Brookville Branch. If the GPL had spent as much for materials as was spent for the Brookville Branch total expenses would be nearly identical.

Apples and Oranges

As noted above general administrative costs of the Dayton Metro Library system are not included in the above totals. These overhead costs include facilities maintenance, finance and payroll management, human resources administration, IT staff support, training and other costs that could not be directly attributed to the Brookville Branch. In contrast, similar administrative costs are already included in the Germantown Public Library expense totals.

This case study is able to adjust for those costs by attributing a proportion of the Dayton Metro Library's overhead costs to each branch and public service department. The Brookville Branch's fair share of these additional expenses totaled \$126,516 in 2009, bringing total Brookville Branch expenses up to \$923,837. The bottom line conclusion that is that in 2009 the Dayton Metro Library spent \$274,951 or 42.3% more to operate the branch that most closely compares to the Germantown Public Library.. **It is an easy logical assumption to conclude that if the Dayton Metro Library were to operate a**

Germantown Branch it would spend \$274,951 more than what the Germantown Public Library Board spent during 2009.

To be fair, if a merger were to occur, Dayton Metro Library's estimated administrative overhead for supporting the Germantown Branch would be less than what is currently attributed to the comparable Brookville Branch as some of the Dayton Metro Library's expenses would not increase after a merger. For instance, the cost for advertisements promoting events in the Dayton Daily News would not increase and administrative staff and related salaries would not increase.

However, it also needs to be recognized that the cost of operating a significantly larger facility in Germantown when compared to the Brookville Branch means that the above cost comparison might understate the costs to operate the Germantown Branch. The additional cost of operating the additional sq. ft. in Germantown is the easiest difference to identify. What isn't as readily apparent is that the design of public spaces at the Germantown Public Library – with public areas on two floors – automatically drives up costs. Supervision of a two floor plan increases cost for staffing, service and security. Maintenance of elevators and other physical plant costs are introduced as well. No attempt has been made in this case study to adjust for either of the above differences.

Finally, comparing salaries, benefits, materials and other costs doesn't tell the whole story. Hours of operation have a significant impact on library public service costs and on total costs. In 2009, the Germantown Public Library reported an average of only 46.6 hours per week of public service operation. The Dayton Metro Library locations were open 25% more hours. This is a significant difference; a difference that more than any other factor explains the higher costs to the Dayton Metro Library if the library districts were to merge.

No windfalls

One of the assumptions suggested at the beginning of this study was that there would be savings from merging the systems. One of those assumptions is that the positions of Director and Clerk Treasurer could be eliminated. The Director's salary of the Germantown Public Library is actually at the lower end of the pay range for a Dayton Metro Library branch manager – a position that would have to exist in a merged system and a position that requires the manager to spend much of the day providing customer service.

The beginning salary of an entry level librarian at the Germantown Public Library is a full 25% less than that of the Dayton Metro Library. Looking at the pay scales of the two libraries, it is quite evident that merely moving most of the existing library staff from the Germantown Public Library to positions at the Dayton Metro Library would actually cost more than the saving from eliminating the finance officer position through merger.

It seems quite likely that the roles for individual employees might change and one benefit of a merger could be that additional staff time might be devoted to public service.

However, in a merged library system, salary increases for existing Germantown Public Library staff will likely mean that no significant salary savings would be achieved.

Case Study 2

Costs for Operating the “Oakwood Branch” of the Dayton Metro Library

Similar to the analysis of the Germantown Public Library, this case study uses internal direct and indirect costs and performance metrics at Dayton Metro Library comparing similar data for each of its branches to the Wright Memorial Public Library.

Below are several measurements to illustrate how the service programs of the Wright Memorial Public Library compares to individual Dayton Metro Library branches. Remember, costs for the operation of the Wright Memorial Public Library are inclusive of all operating costs while costs for operating Dayton Metro Library branches are exclusive of system-wide overhead costs. These apples to oranges differences are addressed below.

Table 8.

Ranking of Wright Memorial Public Library against Dayton Metro Library Branches

Ranking by Number of Cardholders		Operating Costs
Wright Memorial Public Library	22,000	\$1,526,315
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Northmont (3 rd)	26,762	\$1,322,204
Vandalia (4 th)	20,613	\$1,113,687
Ranking by Size (Sq. Ft.)		Operating Costs
Wright Memorial Public Library	23,000	\$1,526,315
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Huber Heights (1 st)	21,750	\$2,017,700
Kettering-Moraine (2 nd)	15,474	\$1,064,744
Ranking by Number of Items Loaned		Operating Costs
Wright Memorial Public Library	425,629	\$1,526,315
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Kettering-Moraine (6 th)	455,753	\$1,064,744
West Carrollton (5 th)	398,843	\$ 922,190
Ranking by Number of Computer Sessions		Operating Costs
Wright Memorial Public Library	12,272	\$1,526,315
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Brookville (19 th)	19,464	\$797,321
New Lebanon (20 th)	15,071	\$600,575
Ranking by Number of Visitors		Operating Costs
Wright Memorial Public Library	167,492	\$1,526,315
DML Branch (rank among all branches)		Operating Costs (less admin)
Burkhardt (10 th)	171,770	\$861,672
Trotwood (11 th)	158,465	\$834,659

Wright Memorial Public Library doesn't readily match up to any of the Dayton Metro Library branches based on size alone since its building (23,000 sq. ft.) is larger than any of the Dayton Metro Library branches and only the Huber Heights Branch (21,750 sq. ft.) comes close. But more than the relative size of the buildings, it is the age and layout of

the Wright Memorial Public Library building that makes comparison to any DML branch so difficult. The WMPL operates on two floors. While it closed one of its two entrances and circulation desks a number of years ago, the two story floor plan introduces new service and operational costs. The age and historic nature of the library makes it a significantly greater challenge for staff to operate and supervise. Mechanical and maintenance challenges also make this a difficult building to support. In contrast, all of the Dayton Metro Library branches are single floor facilities and none of the largest DML branches are as old as the WMPL facility.

The Wright Memorial Public Library can be more readily compared to DML branches by looking at standard output measures. By total circulation, the Wright Memorial Public Library would constitute the seventh largest branch in the Dayton Metro system, just below the total circulation of the Kettering-Moraine Branch.

The Kettering-Moraine Branch metrics are higher than the Wright Memorial Public Library by other measures. The branch had almost 10% more visitors in 2009 at 181,793 compared to 167,492 for the Wright Memorial Public Library. The number of computers (14) and the number of computer sessions (27,500) were higher for the Kettering-Moraine Branch than the number of computers (10) and sessions (12,272) reported for the Wright Memorial Public Library.

Despite its smaller size and differing output counts, the Kettering-Moraine Branch is probably the best branch to use as a peer of the Wright Library. In addition to the numbers cited above, the Kettering-Moraine Branch is one of the closest branches geographically to the Wright Memorial Public Library and it has a similar profile of patrons and kinds of library usage. Anecdotally, it has been suggested that crossover of patrons between the Kettering-Moraine Branch and the Wright Memorial Public Library is far greater than between any other branch of the DML system and the WMPL.

Cost of Operating the Kettering-Moraine Branch

The Kettering-Moraine Branch ranked 5th out of the 20 DML branches when ranked by total expenditures for 2009, with direct expenses for staffing, collections and public service support totaling \$1,064,744. That is 30% less than the \$1,526,315 spent by the Wright Memorial Public Library.

This difference cannot be explained by spending for books and other materials. The Wright Memorial Public Library expended \$206,000 for new books and media in 2009 which is nearly identical to the \$210,042 spent for collections at the Kettering-Moraine Branch.

Much of the higher expenditures for the Wright Memorial Public Library can be attributed to significantly higher labor expenditures. In 2009, direct expenditures for salaries and benefits of staff that provide direct public service at the Kettering-Moraine Branch totaled \$690,957 while the Wright Memorial Public Library spent \$1,140,618.

Staffing levels rather than salaries explain the differences in human resource expenditures. In 2009 the Kettering-Moraine Branch had 9.4 FTE in managerial and bargaining unit positions. 4.1 additional FTE were employed in hourly positions for a total of 13.5 staff members. This is far below the 23.5 FTE staffing reported by the Wright Memorial Public Library.

It should be noted that since 2009, both libraries have significantly reduced staffing in response to reduced state funding.

More Apples and Oranges

As in the first case study, general administrative costs of the Dayton Metro Library branches are not included in the above mentioned financial analysis. In contrast, similar administrative costs are already included in the Wright Memorial Public Library expense totals.

To eliminate this discrepancy, it is necessary to attribute a total of \$168,949 in overhead cost to the expenses of the Kettering-Moraine Branch bringing total 2009 expenses up to \$1,233,693 or \$292,622 less than spent to operate the Wright Memorial Public Library.

Unlike the Germantown Public Library, hours of operation and spending on materials is not much different between Dayton Metro Library branches and the Wright Memorial Public Library so there is not much of a quantitative difference between the two libraries. However, there may be differences in the quality of the service programs. For instance, the Wright Memorial Public Library reports eight professional librarians with the Master of Library Science degree. In contrast, the Dayton Metro Library has only three FTE professional staff members on site at its Kettering-Moraine Branch. This higher staffing number might be explained partially due to the differences in programming. The Dayton Metro Library does not have program counts and program attendance figures by branch for 2009 so a direct comparison to the Wright Memorial Public Library is not possible; however, Dayton Metro Library's 2010 counts of programs and attendance were significantly less than those reported by WMPL for 2009. Other qualitative comparisons are beyond the scope of this study but may explain the additional staffing needs of the Wright Memorial Public Library.

The additional cost of operating the additional sq. ft. at the Wright Memorial Public Library means that if operated as a branch of the Dayton Metro Library, the potential savings may be over estimated. Further, as in the case of the Germantown Public Library, the Wright Memorial Public Library operates with public areas on two floors. This too would eat into any projected savings as a two floor plan increases cost for staffing, service and security. Maintenance of elevators and other physical plant costs are introduced as well. The added costs of operating a larger, older and more complex floor plan are not factored into this analysis.

Conclusions

In order for the Dayton Metro Library to operate the Germantown Public Library as a branch of its system it would need to spend approximately \$275,000 above what the Germantown Public Library Board spent in 2009. These added costs would represent more than a 42% increase in spending for library service for the residents of the Valley View School District. In return, the Dayton Metro Library would increase services at the Germantown Public Library to match services found at other DML branches, this merger would also result in substantially longer hours, additional programming and a significantly greater choice of library materials.

The Wright Memorial Public Library has some unique challenges due to the age and arrangement of its building that make it more expensive to operate than the comparable Kettering-Moraine Branch of the Dayton Metro Library. Considering those challenges the total cost savings from a merged system is likely to be less than the difference of \$293,000 in expenditures. To realize a 19% reduction in spending would undoubtedly mean a reduction in staffing at the "Oakwood Branch" of the Dayton Metro Library. Reduced staffing would have an impact on the quality of library services that would certainly be noticed by the residents of the Oakwood School District.

Implications for Future Taxes

A merger of the Germantown Public Library and the Dayton Metro Library would likely result in residents of the Valley View School District receiving improved services. However, they would not be asked to pay property taxes to support those additional services -- at least initially. It is possible the Dayton Metro Library could operate the Germantown Branch with fewer hours, but that scenario does not seem likely. More likely is the consequence that the Dayton Metro Library would absorb those costs until it could return to the ballot box and ask all voters, including the residents of the Valley View School District, to approve an increased levy.

A merger of the Wright Memorial Public Library and Dayton Metro Library could result in some modest cost savings but only if the merged library districts were to eliminate staffing and reduce the quality of services at the Oakwood Branch. The Wright Memorial Public Library has less than 1.5 mils of effective millage. This is 0.25 mils less than the Dayton Metro Library. One of the consequences of a merger would be that at some point the Dayton Metro Library would have to seek additional funding at the ballot box, and the Oakwood School District property owners would be asked to approve a tax increase to a minimum of 1.75 mils.

If both independent libraries were operated as Dayton Metro Library branches the potential net savings would amount to approximately \$18,000 annually. Those theoretical savings would not come immediately as the cost of consolidating the three library systems is not included in this analysis.

From the perspective of state policy makers, there would be very little direct savings or reduced dependence on state funding if these mergers were to occur. With only a

projected savings of \$18,000 annually from combined budgets of nearly \$29 million, the financial impact of a merger will be insignificant even in the long term.

Additional Information On Collaboration and Consolidation

The suggestion to consolidate public libraries in Ohio has been made several times over the years. It will continue to be made in the years ahead. It is impossible for this Task Force to address the concerns and recommendations in the future. This Task Force, however, did reach the following conclusions:

1. In 2011, public libraries have the necessary legislative tools to merge or consolidate if either their finances or their communities impel them in that direction. Libraries in the past have successfully consolidated, although there is no evidence that either supports or refutes the position that these consolidations actually provided savings to the library.
2. If a library system is considering merging or consolidating, improved service delivery should be the primary consideration.
3. The Task Force includes in the Appendix several additional documents that the State Library of Ohio may find of interest.
 - a. Appendix D – Ohio Library Survey Commission – January 1947
 - b. Appendix E – Fiscal Management: A Case Study of Selected Public Libraries – December 2010
 - c. Appendix F– Legal Memo on Consolidation and Mergers
 - d. Appendix G – The Impact of City-County Consolidation on Local Government Finance – Spring 2009