

## Consult the Cat

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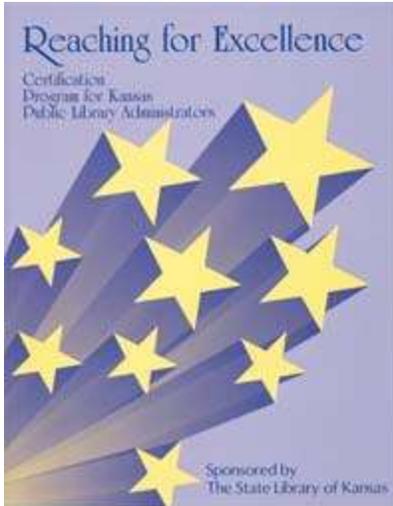
*The State Library staff is sometimes asked about the value of the Certification Program for Kansas Public Library Administrators. The Cat has been waiting for the question to come directly to her, which it finally did.*



Cats are so playful and so independent that it is sometimes not recognized that they have to have specialized skills in order to survive and that these skills must be adapted to every stage of life. The Cat relates to the human need for lifelong learning and career development unless the humans involved are not enjoying themselves. At that point, she inquires plaintively if something important isn't missing. The Cat has many friends who are fine librarians. They have agreed learning should be enjoyed. But they also point out that this is a rapidly changing world and an age of accountability. Without effective training and successful programs, their libraries will not flourish. And that would be no fun at all.

The *Reaching for Excellence Certification Program for Kansas Public Library Administrators* was launched in July of 2007. The Certification Program may be found at:

<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/KSL/development/certificationprogram.pdf>



This project grew out of recommendations from the Kansas library community that continuing education should be available to Kansas librarians when they need it, where they need it and in the format that best meets their needs. The certification program built upon a long-standing commitment to lifelong learning in the Kansas library community.

Because of that long tradition, some librarians have asked why the transition to certification was needed. LEEP awards and KPLACE certifications have meant something very significant to the Kansas library community but they are not readily recognizable anywhere else. Local government officials and even library trustees have a hard time explaining their significance.

Participation in a certification program clearly signifies a professional achievement. It means that the librarian has been publicly recognized as a library administrator who has made a specific commitment to career development.

Certification of the library director and other administrative staff members sends a signal to community leadership that they have a community library that is serious about excellent library service. Extensive participation in the program sends a signal to state government that Kansas librarians are committed to excellence and will be working to develop fine library services for Kansas citizens. It is a tool for advocacy that should not be underestimated.

Directors, department heads and library field specialists are all strongly encouraged to maintain their certification. They are free to design a training program that meets the needs of their present position and future goals.

To apply for certification, a librarian simply fills out a one-page application and attaches documentation for the appropriate education level. To apply for re-certification, the librarian must document 45 contact

hours of library training between the date on the certificate and the same date three years later. The request for re-certification may be sent to the State Library whenever the 45-hour training requirement can be confirmed by the attached documentation.

One of the significant things about this program is that the ongoing training requirement is exactly the same for all Kansas librarians, regardless of their level of formal education. The goal is that all Kansas public libraries, regardless of size, will have trained and competent library administrators.

Training accepted for certification renewal includes:

- Workshops sponsored by regional systems, library organizations or libraries
- College courses in librarianship, information science or major academic disciplines
- Leadership programs
- A statewide library conference or pre-conference
- A national library conference or pre-conference
- A commercial training seminar that is connected to professional skills
- A workshop sponsored by a unit of government, if related to needed job skills or area of knowledge covered in the core competencies
- Online or desktop training events with a confirmation of completion from the provider
- Training credit will also be given for teaching a workshop or online event but that credit will be limited to presentation time.

Activities that will not be accepted for library certificate training include:

- Programs that last for less than one hour
- Parts of programs
- Staff meetings, board meetings or committee meetings
- Individual on-the-job training sessions
- College courses designed for hobbies and personal skills rather than major academic disciplines.

It is the tremendous variety of Kansas programs and modern delivery formats that makes the training requirement feasible for every library staff member. Re-certification could be obtained without ever leaving the library, although very few librarians do it that way since networking and social pleasures are extremely important to them.

While the Cat often grumbles about humans in general, she has learned to respect the love that Kansas librarians have for Kansas libraries and she is delighted to see them recognized for their commitment. Kansas librarians who pursue serious career development certainly deserve a purr from the

Cat.