

Future Planning at the Hancock School Public Library

The logo consists of a solid red square. Inside the square, the words "HANCOCK", "SCHOOL", "PUBLIC", and "LIBRARY" are stacked vertically in white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

Prepared by Katrina Linde-Moriarty, August 2022

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Hancock School Public Library - Progress & Improvements	2
November 2018 - October 2019	2
November 2019 - October 2020	2
November 2020 - October 2021	3
November 2021 - July 2022 (Present)	5
Summary of Library Use, 2018 - 2022	5
Options for Future Funding	6
Millage Revenue and Expanding the Library District	7
Millage Rates and Revenues	7
New Possibilities for School District Residents	8
Service and Meeting Center	9
Business Incubator	9
Tool Lending Library	9
Library Finances	9

Hancock School Public Library - Progress & Improvements

The Portage Lake District Library began overseeing all library operations at the Hancock School Public Library on November 1, 2018. Since that time, a small team of library staff in Hancock have worked tirelessly to reposition the library as a resource and hub for education, engagement, and student success.

November 2018 - October 2019

By November of 2019, the library already had many success stories to share. InterLibrary Loan was reinstated, and patrons participated in the service at a much higher rate than in the years prior. Open hours for the general public were resumed, resulting in much more foot traffic to the building and a surge in library card signups. Circulation of library materials saw a significant increase, and Hancock Library cardholders obtained access to a new catalog of free digital magazines and online language learning tools.

Library staff established new collections for Young Adults, Independent Readers, Graphic Novels, and Large Print materials. Dozens of Book Club Kits were created and made available for checkout. The library's first digital card catalog was made available, allowing library users to search for materials in-house and across the state. A well received Summer Reading Program was hosted with participant prizes from Hancock favorites K.C. Bonkers and Milly's. A storytime event was held for preschool aged children each month. Local historians used the library for presentations on the history of Hancock, and through a collaboration with PLDL, Hancock hosted a STAR LAB event for children over the summer.

During that first year of the contract, administrative support from PLDL helped Hancock Library staff secure over \$7,900 in donations and grants:

- \$1,000 from the PLDL Friends of the Library for a card catalog search station and new books
- \$2,000 from the Library of Michigan for the creation of a Book Club Kit collection
- \$250 from the Michigan Center of the Book for the purchase of children's picture books
- \$700 from the Hancock Schools Foundation for the purchase of American Lit books
- \$1,105 from the Hancock Schools Foundation for phase one of a new media lab
- \$2,600 from the Hancock Schools Foundation for Junior Library Guild books
- \$250 from the Superiorland Library Cooperative for Summer Reading Program materials

November 2019 - October 2020

The second year of the contract for library services saw a lot of challenges for the library, but many wins as well. In March of 2020, the Hancock School Public Library shutdown in-person services due to Michigan's stay-at-home order. Despite a three-month mandated closure,

Hancock Library staff remained active in their role supporting school students and teachers. Hancock Library staff immediately reached out to school administration and offered to catalog and prepare classroom chromebooks for checkout to help tackle access issues related to remote learning. 150 chromebooks were circulated by the library for students during that time. Also during the 3-month mandated closure, over 2,000 books were circulated to students via curbside services and at classroom packet pickup events.

In an effort to ensure public patrons retained access to library materials, an online library card sign-up option was made available. More than twice as many people signed up for membership compared to the 2019 year, despite lengthy mandated building closures in 2020.

Circulation of library materials more than doubled during year two. Three times as many holds were placed on library materials by patrons, and library staff added more items to the collection compared to the year prior. A new reading program for preschool aged children, *1000 Books Before Kindergarten*, was also established for young children and families.

Other notable accomplishments during the second year of the contract included local and statewide recognition for the exceptional service provided at the Hancock Library. The 2020 June B. Mendel Award for Excellence in Rural Library Services was awarded to PLDL, in large part due to the collaborative work at the Hancock Library. The Copper Country Association of School Board's 2020 Service Award was awarded to the Hancock Library in recognition of their quick pivot to serve students during mandated closures. Library staff also established a book group that continues to meet each month.

Year two was another successful year for grant projects in Hancock, with \$17,900 raised:

- In-kind grant support to start an after-school Code Club, valued at \$4,500
- \$3,100 From the Hancock Schools Foundation for phase two of a new media lab
- \$2,400 from the Hancock Schools Foundation for phase three of a new media lab
- \$2,000 from the Portage Health Auxiliary for the new "K12 to Career" collection
- \$500 from the Superiorland Library Cooperative for a button maker
- \$2,000 from the Library of Michigan for 4 new public/student use computers
- \$2,700 from the Hancock Schools Foundation for Junior Library Guild books
- \$700 in donations through a Used Book Sale Fundraiser

November 2020 - October 2021

By December of 2020, the Hancock School Public Library was returning to business as usual after state-wide epidemic orders were relaxed. In the coming months, library staff would unveil a new media lab for public patrons and students alike, funded with support from the Hancock Schools Foundation. The media lab created a designated space to house a 3D printer, podcast recording equipment, Windows and Mac desktop computers, Chromebooks, a green screen kit

and digital camcorder, analog conversion equipment and more. The learning space came equipped with new tables and chairs that can easily be moved around to accommodate groups of different sizes. A wall mounted flat-screen TV was installed for media lab users to connect laptops or tablets for presentations or collaborative projects.

In late 2020, the Hancock Library announced their participation in a statewide short story contest for students and adults called Write Michigan. The Hancock Library was selected as a regional partner, marking the first time the program collaborated with another library system in its 10+ year history. Hancock Library staff were tasked with encouraging Upper Peninsula school students and residents to submit their stories, and participated in the judging and selection of contest winners. In the fall of 2021, The Hancock library returned to support the program a second time.

In 2021, grant funds provided by the Library of Michigan allowed for the development of a new program, with a focus on serving their community of senior citizens. Senior Book Club Kits were made available to library users. Kits included up to eight copies of a single book and a popular film that relates to the book's themes, and were promoted to staff and residents at the Canal View senior living center in Hancock.

Grant funds from the Portage Health Auxiliary were used to develop a program of 35 different STEM Kits for checkout by families, home-schoolers, students and public patrons. Each kit is self-contained and includes everything needed to conduct experiments, make a project, study a field, or learn how to use a piece of equipment. For example, a student could build and test a wind turbine, study the moon and stars, learn to cook with a solar oven, solve a forensic-science mystery, make bath bombs, build mazes or learn binary code. From computer coding robot blocks to magnets to the human skeleton to rocks & minerals to math concepts to general thinking/ problem solving and much more, these STEM kits have something for everyone.

Also in September of 2021, storytime events returned in-person each week at the library (Fridays at 10am), with an additional monthly storytime event and craft hosted offsite in collaboration with CAPE at Hancock's downtown Tori Farmer's Market. The Hancock Library Lit Club, the monthly adult book club, resumed meeting in person and added new members. Button Fridays, a popular lunchtime program with students making pins and magnets, also happily returned.

Year three saw \$13,317 raised through grant and fundraising initiatives, which included:

- \$250 from the Michigan Center for the Book for new biographies for the youth section
- \$1,367 in donations through a Used Book Sale Fundraiser
- \$3,000 from CAREs funds for chromebooks to circulate to students during the pandemic for remote learning
- \$2,500 from LISTA grant funds to curate book club kits for seniors
- \$3,500 from Portage Health Auxiliary for STEM Kits
- \$2,700 from the HPL Foundation for new materials and to promote youth literacy

November 2021 - July 2022 (Present)

The fourth and current year of the contract for library services has seen a continuation of previous successes. The Summer Reading Program, now in its third year, has grown in popularity and has increased summer library traffic. The prizes, bingo games and self-guided crafts have all been well-received, with everyone who completes the program receiving two new books, in addition to other prizes.

The manner in which the grant funds annually received from the HPL Foundation are spent was modified, allowing the library to purchase almost twice as many books with the same amount of money, and resulting in an increase in circulation of those materials by 45%.

The Hancock library was chosen to be a coordinator site, one of 80 sites nationally, for the Children's Book Council (CBC) Favorite Lists program, a national resource for teachers, librarians, booksellers and parents. The library will receive 200-300 brand-new middle-grade fiction books directly from the publishers for students to vote on and report our results to the CBC. In compensation, the library gets to keep the books.

The Hancock library in partnership with the school district applied for and received an Innovative Community Library Grant through the Michigan Department of Education for a literacy program intended for the sixth- and seventh-graders. The grant will fund that program as well as many other much-needed improvements to the library over the next year- functional upgrades, increased staffing, new programming, new shelves and furnishings, and significant additions of books, audiobooks, maker-space equipment and technology. A complete overhaul of the three outdated non-fiction sections in the library and a re-located, re-designed early-childhood area are being planned as well.

Year four so far has seen \$218,900 raised through grant and fundraising initiatives, which include:

- \$2,700 from the HPL Foundation for new materials and to promote youth literacy
- \$4,200 in-kind donation of books from the Children's Book Council
- \$212,000 from Department of Education's Innovative Community Library Grant for school/library collaboration

Summary of Library Use, 2018 - 2022

	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
New Users	-	92	212	103	141
Check Outs	6,886	7,624	13,464	16,410	18,296

Holds Placed	467	516	1,825	2,977	2,762
Items Added	105	1,335	1,472	1,536	1,170
Library Visits	7,022	18,031	29,574	28,934	34,543

Options for Future Funding

Moving forward into the final months of the library services contract between the Portage Lake District Library and Hancock Public Schools, future funding options are available for the Hancock School Public Library.

According to District Library Law, school districts cannot join a library district. If the school seeks to continue a collaboration with the Portage Lake District Library, this means one of the following options must be selected:

1. Continue to contract for services, with funding provided by the school district.
2. Continue to contract for services, with an added contractual clause that requires the municipalities of the school district to levy a millage to support the library.
3. Pursue a PLDL millage with the municipalities that make up the school district.

Regarding option one: while PLDL is not opposed to a short extension of the current contract, PLDL is aware it may no longer be possible for the school district to commit funds to a contract for library services. It's also worth noting that a multi-year extension of the contract, with the same level of financial support for library operations, would not be able to provide the same level of service in the long run.

Option number two allows for a continued contract and ensures the library remains established and owned by the school district, but without the school district responsible for funding the library. This may seem ideal for the school district, but another funding issue complicates this option.

A district library can only levy up to 4 mills in total. PLDL already levies 1.96 mills in the PLDL district. If PLDL levies additional mills *outside* of their district, they cannot total more than 2.04 mills. This means PLDL could only levy up to .51 mills in each of the school district's municipalities. If we went this route, our libraries would still be unable to share resources and services, because they are not paying an equal millage rate. A levy in the amount of .51 mills is also not enough to support library operations in the long term considering variable expenses that will increase over time.

If the school district is unable to extend a version of the contract in which they pay for services, it is our intent to pursue option three, in which PLDL seeks millage revenue from the municipalities that make up the Hancock Public Schools district. This option allows the Hancock

Library to continue providing essential services to students and public patrons, and make significant improvements and additions to the resources and programs offered.

Millage Revenue and Expanding the Library District

Millage Rates and Revenues

The three-year contract tasks the school district with paying PLDL the equivalent of .3 mills each year. This year, the school district has committed an additional \$10,000 to the contract. Grants, state aid and penal fine revenues are also received for the library. In the previous year of the contract, this amounts to about \$92,000 in revenue for the operation of the Hancock School Public Library.

The following table details how much revenue the library would receive from a 1.96 millage levy. 1.96 mills are levied in the City of Houghton and Portage Township to support PLDL.

Millage Rate	1.96 mills	Average Annual Tax Paid by Residents	Monthly Tax Paid
Hancock City	\$246,812	\$139.36	\$11.61
Franklin Township	\$91,041	\$83.07	\$6.92
Hancock Township	\$53,945	\$108.11	\$9.01
Quincy Township	\$20,107	\$100.54	\$8.38
Totals or Averages	\$411,905	\$107.77	\$8.98

Under the current contractual agreement, funding for the Hancock School Public Library is used to employ a full-time Library Manager and a part-time Library Assistant; purchase books and other materials for circulation; and update and maintain technology at the library. Line items with very limited budgets are also included for programs and events, accounting, office supplies and promotional materials.

100% of all revenue received for Hancock goes directly into the operation of the Hancock library. It's a tight budget, and the success stories to date illustrate how effective the library has been in putting those funds to work for students, teachers and area residents.

With nearing the end of the three-year contract with two additional extensions, PLDL must reflect on their original aim in partnering with the school district. PLDL's intent in collaborating is twofold: To assist with developing more equal and adequate library services across the region; and to grow the library district in an effort to provide new and necessary educational and recreational services to area residents.

New Possibilities for School District Residents

The school district's commitment to funding library services in collaboration with PLDL has resulted in vast improvements and made the educational benefits of a functional library a part of everyday learning and engagement for students. The two-year summary of our improvements and successes proves that when public libraries see dedicated investments in time and funding, libraries can extend the success of public schools, students and area residents.

Funding raised through a dedicated tax levy will provide for substantial improvements to services and resources at the location in the Hancock High School. In part, the funding would ensure the Hancock School Public Library houses an exceptional collection of print and digital materials for students and public patrons. New furniture, shelving units and technology can be purchased to further modernize the library and make spaces more flexible for various day-to-day use. And the opportunities for service to school district residents reach far beyond the building itself.

Should the municipalities of the Hancock School District join the PLDL District, all of PLDL's 47,000+ physical items would be made available to students and residents of those municipalities. A single library card would allow for school district residents to check-out library materials at both locations.

1.2 million+ eBooks, digital audiobooks, TV shows, graphic novels, streaming films and music albums would become available to school district residents from the PLDL digital catalog. Library staff at PLDL will be able to lend their time and expertise to projects at the Hancock Library, allowing for collaborative opportunities and seamless sharing of resources.

Additionally, the library can use portions of this new funding to provide additional services in the downtown Hancock area. While the Hancock School Public Library's brick and mortar space will remain and with many improvements, joining the PLDL district provides funding support for new, in-person services in a more central Hancock location. In conversation with stakeholders from the school board, area municipal boards, local service organizations and residents, a new library millage can help meet identifiable and unmet needs in the community. Some examples may include:

Service and Meeting Center

Providing public access to computers, restrooms, and meeting and event space for groups large and small.

Houghton County has very limited availability for free, public meeting spaces. The Community Room available at PLDL is typically full year-round between non-profit boards that reserve the space and library sponsored events. With the loss of the Magnuson Square Inn meeting and conference space, a library-managed Service and Meeting Center could help ensure this vital community resource remains available to residents.

Business Incubator

Providing business and start-up training, online business development tools, maker equipment, and meeting space.

Services provided by the library district in downtown Hancock offer many opportunities for partnerships that can benefit district residents. A downtown business incubator, for example, would surely require the collaboration of other area institutions already doing important work in this direction. The Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance and the MTEC SmartZone, for example, may be in need of walk-in business accelerator services, and the library district would need their expertise to ensure its success.

Tool Lending Library

Providing a full-service tool lending library, including equipment for electrical, plumbing, gardening or carpentry projects; power tools and more.

A tool lending library could use assistance from Hancock school students pursuing internships or work studies related to trades. Using the tool lending library as an opportunity for collaboration with the CCISD to extend the success of their Career and Technical Education program is another option. For example, students may assist customers in locating and lending materials, or producing video tutorials on using specialized equipment and do-it-yourself repair projects.

The above mentioned possibilities for downtown library services are intended to inspire further ideas and discussion about how the library can make a difference in the Hancock community. Future discussions with the Hancock community will help better determine what sort of services the library district should offer in a central location.

Library Finances

Future library planning and initiatives need reliable and stable sources of funding. Currently the Hancock school district is covering the costs associated with the Hancock School Public Library. With costs for goods and services continuing to rise, reflecting on the current financial structures and considering possible new avenues is essential.

Legislation in 1994 barred school districts in Michigan from levying mills to support a library. As a district library, PLDL has the opportunity to pursue millage funds and absorb the Hancock Public School Library as a branch location. This would free up the current funds being allocated by the Hancock school district to be used in other areas. This shift would empower residents to voice their support at the polls through a millage with opportunities for direct involvement by serving on the library board. The next phase of the PLDL and Hancock school district partnership is full of possibilities and growth.