



Dear Library Director,

As the Chair of the NELINET Board of Directors, I am writing to announce an exciting development in the future of NELINET. As you may know, SOLINET and PALINET recently merged to become Lyrasis combining their strengths to create programs and services for members that deliver the benefits of scale while maintaining a strong regional presence in each of the areas served by Lyrasis.

I am pleased to report that the NELINET and Lyrasis Boards of Directors have approved a resolution recommending that NELINET join Lyrasis. An affirmative vote by the members of each organization is required to complete the merger; voting will take place in early June. If approved, the goal would be for NELINET to join Lyrasis by Fall, 2009. The NELINET Board and its officers unanimously voted in favor of the merger and we strongly recommend ratification by our members.

This is an extraordinary opportunity for our member-focused organizations to come together to better serve the New England library community. This merger will not only accelerate the development of new and innovative programs and services for member libraries in New England, but also enable greater operating efficiencies. Here is just a sample of ways in which members will benefit:

- **National scope and a dedication to regional programming and services:** By joining together both organizations gain opportunities to expand education, promote leadership development, support technology initiatives, and create savings for members, while maintaining their commitment to local and regional services -- the hallmark of both groups.
- **A stronger library community:** Member libraries will have access to networking and advocacy opportunities with colleagues at more than 4,500 member institutions, while still retaining access to services and programs in New England. This will create a powerful voice for libraries on issues that matter most to the future of information services.
- **Expanded education curriculum:** Over 550 professional development opportunities will be available throughout the year, delivered in the New England region live, via the Web, and at locations throughout the other Lyrasis territory on topics covering every area of library service, including library leadership, workflow analysis, collection management, resource sharing, and digitization.
- **More consortial savings opportunities:** Member libraries in New England will have greater purchasing power on more than 900 products and services from over 150 vendor partners. This increases current NELINET offerings by more than 150%.
- **Expanded capacity for innovation:** Through Lyrasis in New England members can draw from the knowledge of over 80 library and technology experts on areas ranging from strategic planning to open source application development and digitization projects.

As a membership organization we value your thoughts on this proposed merger. To that end, we will conduct a series of live and online NELINET Town Meetings during the month of May to provide additional information about why the Board thinks this action is the right one at this time. We will also be available to answer your questions, and hear your ideas.

Additional information is attached to this email including the Town Meeting schedule and a press release. We also will continue to provide up-to-date information on our website at <http://www3.neline.net/Lyrasis>. Should you wish to speak to us about this, please contact any member of the NELINET Board of Directors [<http://www3.neline.net/about/board>] or Arnold Hirshon, Executive Director (508.597.1934 / hirshon@neline.net).

The NELINET Board of Directors is excited about the new opportunities this strategic change offers members for expanded collaboration, programs and member savings. The NELINET Board and its officers strongly recommend a vote in favor of joining with Lyrasis and we welcome any comments or questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

W. Lee Hisle, PH.D.

Chair, NELINET Board of Directors

and VP Information Services and Librarian of the College, Connecticut College