

11 January 2019

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Advocacy

This memo provides some general information about library advocacy efforts in Illinois as we prepare to launch our new board advocacy committee. I am sure that many of you already have some of this information so I apologize in advance if it is duplicative.

The Illinois Library Association is the primary advocacy source for libraries in Illinois. ILA has some committees and divisions that focus on different areas of advocacy and education on library issues. For example:

Public Policy Committee – meets monthly to develop and monitor legislation. I am an ex-officio member.

Advocacy Committee – meets monthly to develop and implement advocacy efforts across Illinois. They are the prime movers behind the legislative meetups.

Trustee Forum – provides educational programs and support of legislative advocacy programs at local, state, and national levels. As RAILS board members, you are considered trustees so this forum might be helpful for you although it is public library oriented.

IACRL Forum – works to enhance the capabilities of Illinois academic libraries to serve the needs of their users and to promote and speak for the interests of academic libraries.

If you visit the [ILA website](#), you can find detailed information about these groups and about the ILA legislative agenda and policy priorities.

The Public Policy Committee and the Advocacy Committee both meet at our Burr Ridge office and via our polycom sites, generally on the first Monday of the month. Anyone is welcome and I suggest that you attend one or more of these meetings to get a sense of the issues. Perhaps our initial board advocacy committee meeting could occur in conjunction with these ILA meetings.

Of course, the American Library Association is our major advocacy force nationally. Visit their [website](#) to find information on national and international issues.

The Association of Illinois School Library Educators ([AISLE](#)) is the advocacy organization specifically oriented to school libraries. I think one way our new advocacy committee can be helpful is to better understand the needs of school libraries in Illinois and speak on their behalf.

Since RAILS serves libraries of all types, we have a special opportunity and even responsibility to advocate for all types of libraries. The benefits we bring to Illinois residents and library users, because we support libraries working together and sharing resources, demonstrates the importance of library systems. Basically, we all serve the same users just in different ways and at different times in their lives.