

RAILS BOARD ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

August 11, 2022

125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Robin Helenthal, Advocacy Committee chairperson, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
Helenthal read the following: In accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Proclamation, the RAILS Board of Directors finds an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent and believes it is in the best interest of RAILS to hold a virtual meeting to perform essential business.
2. Roll Call of Committee Members
Goyer called the roll of Committee members.
Zoom: Alice Creason, Juanita Harrell, Thomas Stagg, Kara Thorstenson, Amy Walsh
RAILS East Peoria: Robin Helenthal
Absent: Sarah McHone-Chase
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Monica Harris (*ex-officio*)
Guests in attendance via Zoom: Deirdre Brennan (*ex-officio*), Janette Derucki, Karen Goyer (minute taker), Stacy Palmisano, Mary Witt (*ex-officio*)
4. Public Comments
There were no public comments.
5. Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Minutes of June 9, 2022
Creason moved for the approval of the consent agenda. Harrell seconded and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Alice Creason, Juanita Harrell, Robin Helenthal, Thomas Stagg, Kara Thorstenson, Amy Walsh. Nays: none. Absent: Sarah McHone-Chase.
6. Unfinished Business
 - 6.1. Report on the Status of the School Library Data Project
Janette Derucki, RAILS Data Research Specialist, presented an update on the School Library Data project. Data on the level of formal library training of school library staff, building level staffing, correlations between school district size and staffing, school library collections, and school library budgets and grants were reviewed. Derucki noted that reporting shows less than half of school library staff have some type of formal library training, one-third of school library staff have an LIS (Library Information Science) endorsement, none of the small school districts have more than one certified library staff member with most employed less than full-time. The next steps in data collection will be to expand and refine questions to improve results in the areas of building level data, library collections, library budgets and funding resources. The project will focus on developing tools to support advocacy efforts. Stagg suggested it would be useful for data to be available on a county level.
 - 6.2. Legislative Update

Brennan updated the members on the ILA Public Policy Committee’s legislative proposals. One focus is on the statewide database legislation (now known as Statewide Access to Online Resources). The RAILS School Library Data project could help support this legislation by telling the story of how librarians and library resources have a positive impact on academic success. Brennan will investigate tools needed to support the Statewide Access to Online Resources legislation. The ILA Executive Board is in the process of reviewing proposals and determining legislative priorities. There is a legislative proposal to make permanent the ability to hold meetings in the hybrid format without a physical quorum.

6.3. Materials Challenges

No challenges to materials were reported.

6.4. School Librarian Standards

Brennan brought up the possibility for RAILS to launch an effort to have ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) enforce existing school librarian standards and noted how the RAILS data project can support the effort. Derucki is planning to work with AISLE to put targeted data into an easy-to-read format. Thorstenson pointed out that data would be most meaningful comparing districts to neighboring districts. Members discussed the difficulty of asking schools for library data and school library advocacy efforts in times when there are difficult decisions to be made by school districts experiencing budget cuts.

Saint Andrew Catholic School will be recommended for suspension from RAILS at the next board meeting due to the library no longer being staffed.

6.5. Media Literacy Curriculum Unit Requirement for Public High School Curriculum

There were no updates to report.

7. New Business

7.1 Committee Goals for the Year

Brennan and Harris will draft a list of possible goals for the committee members to discuss at the August meeting.

8. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be held on September 8, 2022 at 4:00 pm.

The topics for the next meeting agenda are:

- School Librarian Standards
- Advocacy Committee Goals for FY2023
- Update on Suspension of RAILS School Library Member
- Legislative Update
- Report on ILA Advocacy Committee Meeting

9. Adjournment

Helenthal adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.