

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

July 13, 2023 | 4:00 p.m.

RAILS Burr Ridge and Videoconference Sites, 125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

Draft Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Helenthal, Advocacy Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.
2. Roll Call of Members
Goyer called the roll of the committee members:
RAILS East Peoria: Robin Helenthal
Cook Memorial Aspen Drive Library: Monica Caldicott
Lewis University: Alice Creason, Amy Walsh
Absent: Juanita Harrell, Thomas Stagg
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Karen Goyer (designated minute taker), Monica Harris (ex-officio)
Guests in attendance via Zoom: Dan Bostrom, Renya Krempf, Lynn Stainbrook

Harris announced that Sarah McHone-Chase and Kara Thorstenson have resigned from the committee. Harris thanked them for the time, effort, and expertise they contributed to the committee.
4. Public Comments
There were no public comments.
5. Adoption of the Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Minutes of June 8, 2023
Creason moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Walsh seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
6. New Business
 - 6.1. ALA Federal Advocacy Efforts
Lynn Stainbrook, the executive director of Rockford Public Library, provided an update on the American Library Association's (ALA) federal advocacy efforts. This was her second time participating in a Congressional Fly-in, which took place in March 2023. After an all-day session with professional lobbyists to formulate a strategy, the delegation met with the offices of Senator Dick Durbin and Representative Darin LaHood from Illinois. The purpose of the meetings was to advocate for more funding for libraries, especially for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and Innovative Approaches to Literacy Act (IALA) programs, and for funding library infrastructure. Congressional staff expressed interest in issues of eBook pricing and the increasing book-banning attempts. Stainbrook stressed the importance of continuing to advocate to our legislators for public, school, academic libraries in order to keep libraries in the forefront for funding.

6.2. Library Paraprofessional Statement of Support

Dan Bostrom presented the Library Paraprofessional Statement of Support from AISLE. In addition to AISLE's efforts to support hiring certified library staff members for vacancies by school districts, this statement addresses situations where schools are eliminating paraprofessional library staff.

Caldicott expressed her appreciation for RAILS' support in this issue and added that this issue is widespread and not only limited to small, underfunded school districts.

Walsh moved for the recommendation to the RAILS Board to approve the Library Paraprofessional Statement of Support, Caldicott seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

6.3. ALA Annual Reports on Legislation and Intellectual Freedom Overview

Harris announced that she finished her 3rd term on the ALA council and gave an overview of the ALA Annual reports on legislation and intellectual freedom on the federal level. She highlighted the United Against Book Bans effort, which is meant to support intellectual freedom and offer support to libraries and bookstores experiencing censorship challenges. She recommended that organizations consider signing on to support those efforts. Several upcoming pieces of legislation might affect libraries, such as the H.R.5 - Parents Bill of Rights Act, which had passed the House vote, but will not be considered in the Senate. The School Library Right to Read Act was being reintroduced. The report suggested to sign up for ALA advocacy alerts or follow Act Library Policy on Twitter for library policy updates and news. The Intellectual Freedom Report included a list of the most challenged books and included a new tool kit for libraries, primarily school and academic, titled Challenges to CRT and Diversity Training Toolkit, to help address challenges libraries face around Critical Race Theory or other types of diversity training. Harris requested feedback about the usefulness of receiving the set of reports on a semi-annual basis, which committee members requested.

6.4. Advocacy Committee Goals

Harris reviewed a list of suggested advocacy topics to prioritize, keeping in mind the committee charge. The following schedule of meeting topics was agreed upon.

- 8/10/23 Meeting: Find More Illinois support and promotion. Caldicott emphasized it is important to tell the story of how FMI works for schools since many have limited experience with interlibrary loan.
- 9/14/23 Meeting: The Unserved, Universal Service and Cards for Kids, including tips for school librarians to serve students unserved/underserved by a public library as well as tips for public librarians to serve students without a school librarian. The FY2024 meeting schedule will also be discussed.
- 10/12/23 Meeting: Update of the RAILS school library data project dashboard if it is completed.
- Remainder of FY2024: Topics will be decided on after the anticipated new members join the committee to allow for their participation in selecting advocacy topics.

7. Reports

7.1. Legislative and Advocacy Update

The Illinois Library Association Public Policy committee does not hold a regular meeting in July. As ex-officio, Harris will attend the orientation for new ILA PPC members on July 19. The ISLAC

committee meets July 27 and anticipates reviewing a draft of the administrative rules for HB2789 and will discuss open educational resources included in the Secretary of State's budget.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

Walsh reported on the AISLE Advocacy committee meeting. Due to a shortage of school librarians, their next project is to advocate for more teachers or educators to become school librarians. One option is to look at how Illinois could accept certification from other states with AISLE as a resource for those looking to work in Illinois. Caldicott explained that as we push to advocate for librarians in every school, it is important to help with the supply of qualified school librarians. Walsh noted the Illinois literacy bill is a topic of interest. This bill is not mandated and if the bill is signed, the impact on school libraries is not known.

Harris requested that RAILS Advocacy Committee meeting agenda include a monthly report on the AISLE Advocacy meetings by Walsh.

9. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting on August 10, 2023

The topics for the next meeting will be Find More Illinois support and promotion, the Aisle Advocacy Committee report, and the Illinois literacy bill.

10. Adjournment

Helenthal adjourned the meeting at 5:02 p.m.