

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

August 10, 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 4:09 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Members

Goyer called the roll of the committee members:

RAILS Burr Ridge: Jean Carroll, Juanita Harrell

RAILS East Peoria: Robin Helenthal

Cook Memorial Aspen Drive Library: Monica Caldicott

Lewis University: Alice Creason, Amy Walsh

Zoom: Catherine Yanikoski

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Karen Goyer (designated minute taker), Joe Filapek (ex-officio), Barb Miller

Guests in attendance via Zoom: Ryan Hebel, Renya Krempf, Ashley S.

Filapek stated that long-time committee member, Thomas Stagg, has stepped down from the committee. Filapek thanked Stagg for his dedication and contributions to the RAILS Advocacy Committee. New members, Jean Carroll and Catherine Yanikoski were welcomed and introduced to the group.

It was announced the Library Paraprofessional Statement of Support addressing appropriate staffing for school libraries was approved at the RAILS Board meeting on July 28, 2023.

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 July 13, 2023

Harrell moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Creason seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

6. New Business

6.1. Find More Illinois Support and Promotion

Barb Miller, RAILS Consortial Services Supervisor, gave an overview of Find More Illinois (FMI). FMI helps fulfill RAILS' strategic plan goal to provide leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing for all member libraries. [Find More Illinois](#) can greatly improve resource sharing options for nonautomated, standalone, or consortium members of all library types. To promote Find More Illinois, encourage library directors, trustees, and colleagues at all library types to investigate the value of [FMI](#). Encourage patrons with access to use it.

Recent improvements to FMI include better display of search results and the ability for libraries to decide which items they will not lend. FMI is currently piloting enhanced borrowing. Future improvements being considered are to provide non-automated libraries with full cataloging software and to connect FMI with catalogs from other states.

Caldicott stated that as a member of FMI, it has been a great resource to obtain materials their budget doesn't allow them to purchase. She feels FMI would be more valuable to high schools if high level articles from academic sources were available. Miller stated that due to the complexities, RAILS is waiting to see how the newly approved statewide database will work with FMI to provide the articles.

Set up fees for new FMI member libraries will be waived through December 2023. Find More Illinois fees are subsidized by RAILS to make participation affordable for all libraries. Filapek acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the previous leadership of Jane Plass and Deirdre Brennan, as well as the current leadership of Anne Slaughter, Eric Bain, and Barb Miller in developing and expanding Find More Illinois to the valuable resource it is today.

7. Reports

7.1. Legislative and Advocacy Update

Filapek delivered the legislative and advocacy update. RAILS board member, Tom Stagg, is now a voting member of the ILA PPC committee. The following legislative proposals were received by the ILA PPC committee: District Tax Cannabis Proposal, Competitive Bidding Raised, Acquisition of Treasurer Bonds for Libraries in Illinois, Equitable Access to Electronic Literacy Materials Act, Amend the Local Records Act to Streamline Disposal of Records, General fund flexibility. The committee will vote on the priorities for the next legislative session and then send their recommendations to the Executive Board.

On the federal level, the Right to Read act has the potential to impact students across the country by providing funding for school libraries and provide some protection from censorship efforts. ALA (American Library Association) is asking the public to [take action](#) to support the Right to Read Act. There has been a movement in many states by the Freedom Caucus asking state associations to withdraw from ALA in part as a response to a message construed as controversial that was posted on Twitter by the President of ALA, Emily Drabinski. Montana's state library commission was the first to withdraw. ALA has issued a [response](#).

On the state level, RAILS is working with CARLI and Illinois Heartland Library System determine action to take on the [broadband legislation](#) as well as the literacy bill and the evidence based culturally inclusive curriculum that must be added.

ILA has changed the meeting schedule so that PPC will meet in the morning followed by ILA Advocacy Committee in the afternoon. The AISLE annual conference will be held in October.

7.2. State School Literacy Plan

Ms. Walsh presented a slideshow discussing the Illinois Literacy Plan, which was developed in response to [Illinois Senate Bill 2243](#). This bill amended the portion of the school code related to literacy and tasked the Illinois State Board of Education with developing a comprehensive literacy plan, a rubric for evaluating curriculum, and training opportunities for educators.

The draft plan was developed, listening tours took place in June and July. The plan has five sections: Vision and Purpose; Framework for Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction; Educator Professional Learning and Development; Framework for Effective Leadership, Systems of Support, and Implementation Considerations; Tool and Resources.

The only section that currently mentions libraries is the Framework for Effective Leadership. Walsh encouraged attendees to provide feedback on the draft plan and to advocate for the inclusion of school libraries in all sections of the document. She noted that the feedback opportunity can be accessed through [feedback form](#) or in the chat during a listening tour session.

Walsh clarified that this initiative is a response to the declining literacy rates in Illinois following the COVID-19 pandemic. She added that a second draft of the plan will be produced in the fall, and there will be another opportunity for listening tours and public comment.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

There were no reports or updates on library issues.

9. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting on September 14, 2023

The topics for the next meeting will be the Unserved, Universal Service, Cards for Kids and a discussion and possible vote to amend the Advocacy Committee FY2024 meeting schedule.

10. Adjournment

Helenthal adjourned the meeting at 4:54 p.m.