

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

September 14, 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 4:00 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
Aurora Public Library Eola Road Branch: Catherine Yanikoski
Cook Memorial Aspen Drive Library: Monica Caldicott
Lewis University: Alice Creason
Absent: Amy Walsh
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Joe Filapek (ex-officio), Karen Goyer (minute-taker), Monica Harris (ex-officio)
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 August 10, 2023
Creason moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Caldicott seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
6. New Business
 - 6.1. Library Service to People in Unserved Areas
Filapek gave an overview of the issue of library service to people in unserved areas and the improvements that have been made in expanding service. Approximately one million people reside in untaxed areas with no library service. Some students in unserved areas attend a school with no library service. There is a misconception that this issue is only in rural areas. Many areas in the suburban Chicago area are unserved. Libraries may offer a card to non-residents for a fee. Progress has been made toward expanding service with the Cards for Kids Act which eliminates the library fee for unserved students, work toward MLS real estate listings that make the library service area information transparent, the statewide database funding, and providing the framework for intergovernmental agreements between public libraries and schools. While these steps have been helpful, the goal should be to eliminate the problem altogether. RAILS has made universal service part of their strategic plan.

6.2. Cards for Kids Act

The Cards for Kids Act prohibits libraries from charging a fee to students in unincorporated areas whose family income falls under income eligibility guidelines. The expanded Cards for Kids Act (Public Act 101-632) allows a library board to adopt regulations waiving the non-resident fee for persons under 18, removing the requirement to prove income and the privacy issues associated with that process. The Cards for Kids Act provides an alternative to using an intergovernmental agreement as a solution to expand library service. Almost 1,300 students have been issued library cards at 66 libraries in 2022, a 56% increase over the previous year. Filapek stated that more advocacy and education is needed on this issue. Harris thanked members Creason and Yanikoski for their service on the RAILS Universal Service Committee.

7. Reports

7.1. Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris provided an update on the ILA PPC committee meeting which included discussions on the legislative meetups and legislative priorities. ILA Executive Board has voted on their priorities for this legislative session which include RAILS' proposal to reduce the acquisition of treasurer bonds to be in line with other government agencies, the Equitable Access to Electronic Resources Act, and raising the minimum threshold for competitive bids. They are continuing to look at the district cannabis tax proposal. The ILA annual conference will be held October 24-26 in Springfield. The Intellectual Freedom committee is working with ACLU and the new regional response task force. ALA is looking for support for the federal bill to protect public access to information bill.

7.2. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

Harris read the report of the AISLE Advocacy Committee meeting submitted by Walsh. The AISLE Conference will be held October 1-3. A poster session titled *Advocacy in Your Building* provides useful tips for school librarians to self-advocate within their school building and with other decision makers.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

There were no reports or updates on library issues.

8.2. Advocacy Committee Goals for FY2024

Members explored priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. The group suggested the following topics:

- Intellectual freedom and materials challenges
- Safety and security in libraries
- Support for broadband and digital equity
- Collaboration with academic and specialized libraries, incorporated with a My Library Is campaign

The group discussed whether it would be more appropriate to meet every other month instead of the current monthly schedule in order to provide more time to work on advocacy efforts between meetings. A consensus was reached to transition to meet every other month moving forward, with the option to reassess the schedule or add meetings if the need arises. The October 12th meeting is cancelled.

9. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting
The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be held on November 9, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. Janette Derucki, RAILS Data Research Specialist, will give an update on the School Library Data project dashboard.
10. Adjournment
Helenthal adjourned the meeting at 4:56 p.m.