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March 16, 2024

Agenda item 7.2

RAILS Board Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee Report - Chair Monica Caldicott

The committee met on March 14, 2024. The next meeting is May 9, 2024.

Harris gave an overview of the status of intellectual freedom and materials challenges. An [ALA report](#) explains public libraries saw a 92 percent increase in the number of titles targeted for censorship, there are more pathways for challenges, and the trend is for organized groups to drive the challenges to a large number of titles. 2023 had the highest number of challenged book titles ever. Nearly half of the challenged titles target LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals. Among the results from the EveryLibrary Institute and Book Riot Parent Perception Survey, 58 percent think public librarians should be responsible for selecting materials, 75 percent do not believe their libraries are experiencing book bans, 57 percent say banning books in school is appropriate, 80 percent agree that school libraries should have content rating systems. Efforts in Illinois around support for book bans include the volunteer network, [Unite Against Book Bans in Illinois](#) and Public Act 103-0100. Harris shared a list of Illinois bills to watch and reported that RAILS is working with AISLE on the issue of certified librarians in every school. RAILS will work with school library focused state partners to create a list of talking points using SLATE project data that is directed to parents, community members, and library staff to provide support for this issue. The next meeting topic is Safety and Security at Libraries.

Consortia Committee Report - Chair Thomas Staa

The committee met on Monday, February 26, 2024. The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 15, 2024.

Slaughter reported the reopening of the RAILS Burr Ridge office after a major re-cabling project. Filapek announced the hiring of Kate Niehoff as the new Director of Consulting and Continuing Education, highlighted RAILS' acquisition of new transit vans, and noted the Resource Sharing Committee's review of the RAILS Resource Sharing Plan. Halter presented advancements in the RAILCAR project, including prospective dashboards tailored for library and LLSAP comparisons. Harris discussed the recent release of the RFP for a statewide e-resources project by the Illinois State Library. ISL is working on how to provide a library card to all Illinois residents, including the unserved. Member libraries are encouraged to continue with normal budgeting processes until further details are solidified. Slaughter provided insights into broadband expansion initiatives in Illinois, emphasizing collaboration and available resources for libraries. The committee discussed delivery count efficiencies, including potential automation and standardization efforts to enhance accuracy and streamline processes; a working group on delivery count efficiencies may be developed.

EDI Committee Report - Chair Dianne Hollister

The committee met on March 12, 2024. The next meeting is June 18, 2024.

Joe Filapek shared that RAILS awarded a total of five grants which included two events focused on EDI-centered topics; BIPOC Library Workers Networking Group: “Navigating White Spaces as a BIPOC Library Worker”, presented by Tracie D. Hall and Stickney-Forest View Public Library District: “Actively Anti-Racist Service to Readers”, presented by Becky Spratford. Committee member Lucas McKeever from Downers Grove Public Library shared that his library established a glossary of core EDI terms that has proven to be a useful tool. Michelle Mistalski shared that Northbrook Public Library has a similar list of core EDI terminology that is shared in their weekly staff email. After reviewing potential changes to the EDI Committee charge, the changes were unanimously approved and will be included on the agenda for the March 22, 2024 RAILS Board meeting for final approval. A survey was completed by the EDI Committee members that focused on input regarding the RAILS EDI Pulse Page on the RAILS website. Several valuable suggestions were submitted with ways to enhance and add to the current data published. Filapek highlighted one survey response that recommended adding a document that lists tangible things that a library can put into practice such as update policies and procedures that address systemic issues. The discussion included the possible creation of a list of libraries that have active staff EDI committees that are willing to assist other libraries that have less experience in running a staff EDI committee. Lastly, a disclaimer added to the web page was agreed as a good idea.

Executive Committee Report - Chair Alex Vancina

There is no upcoming meeting scheduled.

Policy Committee Report – Gwen Gregory

The committee met on March 11, 2024. The next meeting is April 22, 2024.

The Policy Committee Met on March 11th. They reviewed and approved the Smoke-Free Workplace Policy and Use of Electronic and Telephone Equipment Policy for presenting to the Board at a later date, as part of the Employee Handbook package. They continued to work on the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy and Membership Appeal Policy and began reviewing RAILS’ Inclement Weather Policy and Public Comment Policy. The next meeting is scheduled for April 22nd, 2024.

Resource Sharing Committee Report - Chair Becky Spratford

The committee met on February 12, 2024. The next meeting is May 6, 2024.

Universal Service Committee Report - Chair Alice Creason

The committee met on March 7, 2024. The next meeting is June 6, 2024.

The Universal Service Committee met on March 7th. They received an ISLAC update as well as updates on the Illinois Broadband Project and Statewide Database from Monica Harris. They also reviewed RAILS' 2019 Revised Unserved Plan and RAILS' Universal Service Plan (last updated in February 2020). The committee also discussed new instances of IGA agreements. The next meeting is scheduled for June 6th, 2024.

Nominating Committee Report - Chair Thomas Stagg

The Nominating Committee met on March 6, 2024. The next meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2024.

Committee members:

Tom Stagg, Chair-RAILS Board member, Trustee Alpha Park Public Library

Jennifer Hovanec-RAILS Board member, Trustee Villa Park Public Library

Ashley Huffines- Executive Director, Freeport Public Library

Karen Lonergan-Library Director, Cordova District Library

Michelle Holschuh Simmons, Outreach and Engagement Librarian, Western Illinois University

The committee reviewed the responsibilities of the committee members and the timeline of meetings and the election. RAILS staff went over the election process and recruitment strategies. The Committee approved the nomination form. A promotional video featuring current board members discussing their experiences will be added to the process.