

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

March 14, 2024 | 4:00 p.m.

RAILS Burr Ridge and Videoconference Sites
125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 630.734.5000

Draft Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Caldicott welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call of Members
Goyer called the roll of the committee members:
Present:
Cook Memorial Aspen Drive Library: Monica Caldicott
RAILS Burr Ridge: Jean Carroll (4:02)
Lewis University: Alice Creason
Rockford University: Stephanie Nissen
Engineering Systems, Inc: Catherine Yanikoski
Absent: Amy Walsh
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Dan Bostrom (ex-officio), Monica Harris (ex-officio), Karen Goyer (minute-taker)
Guests in attendance via Zoom: Mary Kate Murray, Yolande Wilburn
4. Public Comments – Monica Caldicott
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 February 8, 2024
Creason moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Yanikoski seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
6. New Business
 - 6.1. Intellectual Freedom and Materials Challenges
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 [Unite Against Book Bans in Illinois](#) which is coalition of ILA, AISLE, RAILS, and IHLS seeking to create a volunteer network, and Illinois Public Act 103-0100. Examples of library policies on material challenges or reconsideration/statements of concern are collected on the [RAILS website](#). The group discussed the responsibility and difficulty around defining age appropriateness and rating materials.

Caldicott recommended an [MSNBC feature](#) about MTV documentary "The ABCs of Book Banning" which has been nominated for an Oscar. Nissen recommended a ["60 Minutes" segment](#) on book banning.

7. Reports

7.1. Legislative and Advocacy Update

Governor Pritzker's budget address included five million dollars for the statewide database. Harris reviewed a list of Illinois bills to watch:

- HB 4567 - puts library employees in separate class for assaults. School and academic libraries are not included in this bill, instead they are covered through their institutions.
- HB 4224 – related to treasurer bonds and will reduce insurance costs for libraries. The bill has been referred to the revenue and finance committee.
- HB 2787 – raises the bid threshold and is in committee.
- HB 4258 – electronic resources proposal for reasonable terms for eBook pricing. In committee and is a big win. Publishing companies have responded with statements.
- HB 2401 - School Diversity in Literature bill was intended to amend school code to include diverse material in curriculum. However, it gives the school board control over the books that are chosen. There are 2 amendments being considered that would address the concerns.

7.2. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

RAILS, along with ILA, IHLS, EveryLibrary, and Derek Blaida (ILA lobbyist), attended an AISLE meeting on February 15th on the issue of having a certified librarian in every school and a potential legal solution. The group identified steps toward achieving this goal: engaging with teacher unions, work toward making sure there are enough people with a library certification to fill the positions, and making sure the path toward library certification is known. RAILS will produce a list of talking points using the SLATE project data. The talking points will be directed toward parents and community members to advocate for a well-funded library and certified librarians, and for library staff of all types to provide local support. Future meetings will explore the legislative path to achieving this goal.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

Nissen shared that in her recent role as Director of Oregon Public Library, she was involved in a project with the Ogle County Health Department to look at social determinants of health as they relate to nutrition in rural areas. The project was recently awarded a grant to install a free food pantry outside the library. Nissen offered to share the pantry plans upon request. Creason noted that she looked at resources from the area libraries and did not find any related to unhoused populations. This might be due to the assistance provided by Cook County and other structures already in place.

9. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting on May 9, 2024

The topics for the next meeting will be Safety and Security at Libraries and the FY2025 meeting schedule.

10. Adjournment

Caldicott adjourned the meeting at 4:51 p.m.