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February 28, 2025

RAILS Board Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee Report - Chair Monica Caldicott

The Advocacy Committee met on January 9. The next meeting is March 13, 2025.

Megan Gove, Director of Talcott Free Library District, shared her experience and tips related to contentious reactions to library programming. Suggestions to improve support for libraries included developing a more effective communications system to increase awareness among libraries, addressing trustee training requirements and policies, and advertising the resources available to libraries. Harris reported on the highlights of the ILA Intellectual Freedom, Public Policy, and Advocacy Committee meetings. ILA will consider this committee's suggestion to create talking points for members to distribute to legislators attending the annual legislative meetups. The ILA Committee Interest Form is open for those interested in serving on ILA committees. The ACLU has weighed in on the meeting room policies of Northbrook and Highland Park public libraries related to the topic of the November RAILS Advocacy meeting. The topics for the March meeting will be Speaking with Legislators and the ALA annual reports on Legislation and Intellectual Freedom.

Consortia Committee Report - Chair Alex Vancina

The Consortia Committee met on January 27, 2025. The next meeting will be on Monday, April 21, 2025.

In addition to the RAILS report, Slaughter noted that L2 feature developments for FY2026 need to be sent to the developer soon for cost estimates and encouraged members to submit any requests they have for new functionality. Heath reported that Find More Illinois is working with CARLI and a focus group of academic libraries to test the viability of a lender-only program for academic libraries. Suzanna Jones of the Illinois State Library stated that some libraries now have access to the statewide EBSCO database package and training is expected to be held in the Spring. The Secretary of State's office is working on a website for information related to the database package; the office has still not released an official announcement about the program. Slaughter stated that NOFO for round four of the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD) funding is out now, and the Digital Equity Capacity Grant has an anticipated release date of February 3, 2025. In the effort to automate the quarterly delivery count, Halter described some challenges in the data reporting from LLSAPs. For the February, May, and August Delivery counts, Halter will request LLSAP data from all the consortia's member libraries to be compared to the physical counts. Harris reported that the Illinois State Library is expected to receive 5.75 million dollars in federal funding. Money has not been received by any State Libraries across the country yet, and it is not abnormal for this funding to arrive late. Library advocacy programs by ILA and ALA are working to speak directly to federal legislators about the importance of libraries.

Executive Committee Report - Chair Rene Leyva

The Executive Committee will meet in March. The next meeting is not yet scheduled.

Nominating Committee Report - Chair Alex Vancina

The Committee will meet in March.

President Rene Leyva is working on appointments to the Nominating Committee.

Policy Committee Report – Chair Gwen Gregory

The Policy Committee met on January 27, 2025, and on February 20, 2025. The next meeting is on March 20, 2025.

On January 27, Monica Harris reported that Anupam Goal and Jean Carroll will no longer be members of the Policy Committee. After discussion, the committee agreed to keep the number of members at four for the rest of the fiscal year 2025. A new meeting schedule will be determined through a poll, as the current meeting times are not ideal for some members. The committee reviewed eight policies, of which three policies were approved, and five will be edited or researched before being returned to the committee for approval.

Resource Sharing Committee Report - Chair Julie Milavec

The Resource Sharing Committee met on February 10, 2025. The next meeting is April 28, 2025.

Filapek reported on the media kit that now accompanies the Illinois Libraries Agencies of Impact Report, the new RAILS Learning Labs CE initiative, and a revised memo on immigration enforcement for libraires released by Ancel Glink. Miller stated that Find More Illinois is currently working to develop a lender-only program for academic libraries, with input from CARLI and based on feedback from the Academics focus group meeting. The team is also developing new pricing tiers to be more equitable for all library types. Jones reported that with most libraries having access to EBSCO resources, ISL is expecting to offer training in the Spring. A website is in development at the Secretary of State's office that will have all the information about the EBSCO package available in one place. Filapek noted that, in February, all seven consortia within RAILS will submit ILS data from all their member libraries to the RAILS data team to compile, analyze, and compare to the Delivery physical count with the goal of identifying outliers that are consistently missed by ILS data. Heath, Thomann, and Rubel gave an overview of the RAILS Deals and Discounts program including supplements to the EBSCO database package offered by RAILS, a pilot program for accessing the Chicago Tribune online, and SWANK movie licensing access for schools. The committee discussed how Public Act 103-0100, the 2024 "Ban on Book Bans" legislation, has impacted libraries, especially schools.

Universal Service Committee Report - Chair Catherine Yanikoski

The Universal Service Committee met on December 13th, 2024. The next meeting is on March 21, 2025

The group received the Illinois State Library Advisory Committee update. Ryan Franklin from the Illinois State Library gave a presentation about the progress of the statewide databases and online educational resources program. The members reviewed and approved revisions to the 2024 Universal Services plan. Committee members weighed in on priorities and potential actions to be taken based on the plan.