
Draft Minutes

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

September 11, 2025 | 4:00 p.m.
RAILS Burr Ridge Service Center
125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Harris welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.
2. Roll Call of Members [Agenda Advocacy Committee 11 13 2025](#)
Goyer called the roll of the committee members.
Present:
RAILS Burr Ridge: Ron Holohan
Cook Memorial Public Library District (Aspen Drive Library): Monica Caldicott, Carolyn Sennett
Evanston Public Library: Yolande Wilburn (4:03)
Rockford University: Emily Porter, Stephanie Nissen
Shorewood-Troy Public Library District: Karen Voitik (4:01)
Absent: Jean Carroll
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Gwen Gemmell, Karen Goyer (minute-taker), Monica Harris (ex-officio)
Guests via Zoom: Dan Bostrom (ex-officio), Janette Derucki, Joe Filapek (ex-officio), Carolyn Kinsella, Renya Krempf, Catherine Yanikoski
Harris announced Amy Walsh has stepped down from the committee. She thanked Walsh for her service to this committee since December 2021. New committee members, Holohan and Porter were introduced and welcomed.
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 10, 2025
Holohan moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Nissen seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

6. New Business

6.1. School Libraries

Carolyn Kinsella, Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) Executive Secretary, spoke on the topic of the current state of school libraries, the decrease in licensed school librarians in Illinois, and advocacy efforts AISLE has spearheaded. Illinois does not require a certified librarian in every school, which impacts students' media literacy and research skills. While school libraries are funded in school district budgets, there are no guardrails to keep school districts from using those funds in other ways. AISLE's focus is to work on legislation to create change to benefit student welfare. Local advocacy is an important tool. The recent effort to form a task force with the Illinois State Board of Education to educate school boards and legislators about the issue has not been able to move forward.

Derucki gave an overview of the school library data available in the SLATE (School Library Advocacy Through Education) online dashboard: <https://railslibraries.org/data-analysis/school-dashboard>. The project continues to collect data, an important tool for advocacy efforts.

6.2. Future Meeting Topics

The members of the committee proposed several future meeting topics:

- School libraries
- A dedicated project to tell stories that libraries can use to advocate and reach out to the community, legislators, and their library board and school board members.
- Compile data resources, in addition to the SLATE dashboard resource, to help with our advocacy work. Share resources the committee members use.
- Learn what the committee can do with the data that has been collected. Learn what we can do to advocate for the issues that the SLATE project and the Rapid Response Team address.
- Advocating for Academic and Special Libraries

Harris will review the suggestions to determine the topic for the next committee meeting. Members are encouraged to submit additional suggestions.

7. Reports

7.1. Institute of Museum and Library Services Update

Harris gave an update on the status of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). A bipartisan group of senators rejected cuts to education and library funding, asking for nearly full funding for IMLS and the Department of Education. A House subcommittee also recommended funding for IMLS and a modest increase for LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act). Congress is allowed to fund IMLS even if the reauthorization is not approved in September.

7.2. Illinois Legislative and Advocacy Update

The ILA Legislative Meetups are an important opportunity to directly interact with legislators. The dates for the 2025 Legislative Meetups can be found at: <https://www.ila.org/events/legislative-meetups>. The Illinois Library Association (ILA) Public Policy Committee August meeting featured a

discussion of submitted legislative proposals. One of the proposals was written by Filapek. It would establish a statewide annual training requirement for public library trustees in Illinois. The proposals will be prioritized and brought to the ILA Executive Board.

7.3. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

Caldicott explained that the AISLE (Association of Illinois School Library Educators) Advocacy Committee sends a letter to the school board when a report is received of a school librarian position that is cut. AISLE is requesting the RAILS Advocacy committee members help to compose a form letter in support of certified school librarian positions for public libraries, library trustees, or other stakeholders to send to the school leaders.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

There were no updates for discussion.

9. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting on November 13, 2025

The next Advocacy Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. The topic is to be determined.

10. Adjournment

Harris adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.