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RAILS Board Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee Report - Chair Jean Carroll

The committee met on November 13, 2025, and January 8, 2026. The next meeting is on March 12, 2026

1. The committee met on November 13, 2025. Anne Craig, Senior Director at CARLI, reported on the current state of academic libraries, advocacy for the future, and the statement “Free Speech Needs Free Libraries: A Joint Statement of CARLI, Orbis Cascade Alliance, and the Partnership for Academic Library Collaboration and Innovation.” Craig presented on the current and expected future challenges that higher education is facing. Advocacy using data to amplify intellectual freedom, along with a series of programs, is essential. Harris spoke on the IMLS status, along with the need for advocacy at the upcoming ILA Meetups. The Illinois Legislative update covered public library trustee training, funding, and the rising cost of eBooks. Caldicott summarized the issues the AISLE advocacy committee is facing regarding its work with ILA and ISBE, including the requirement that every school have a licensed librarian. The committee will meet on January 8, 2026. The topic will be special libraries.
2. The committee met on January 8, 2026. Dan Bostrom, Director of Marketing and Communications at Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS), presented on the status of special libraries, including a discussion of the recent merger of Special Libraries Association (SLA) to Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T). The overview of special libraries included a highlight of their unique characteristics and challenges, along with the value RAILS membership provides for them. Advocacy must occur at the local level. Harris reported on IMLS developments, which included funding status, recent legal activity, eBook legislation efforts, and the introduction of House Bill 4261. Caldicott shared AISLE is continuing to advocate with ILA, RAILS, and ISBE to push for licensed school librarians in every school building. The committee will meet on March 12, 2026. The topic will be RAILS Data Resources for Advocacy.

Consortia Committee Report - Chair Alex Vancina

The next meeting is on January 26, 2026

Executive Committee Report – Chair Gwen Gregory

The next meeting is on March 5, 2026

Nominating Committee Report - Chair Alex Vancina

No meeting scheduled at this time

Policy Committee Report – Chair Catherine Yanikoski

The next meeting is on January 28, 2026

Resource Sharing Committee Report – Chair Jennifer Hovanec

The committee met on December 8, 2025. The next meeting is on March 9, 2026

Anna Behm, E-Content Specialist, reported on the status of the eRead Illinois collection following the closure of Baker & Taylor this fall. Behm provided information on the migration of the collection to the Palace Project by Lyrasis. Library Resource Specialists, Maggie Thomann and Kortni Springer, presented an overview of current Deals & Discounts programs, which included information on several new print vendor relationships. The Deals team has begun conducting pilot programs to test new vendor products on a trial basis. Blinkist and the Chicago Tribune Digital Pilot are examples of these programs. Grant Halter, Data Analysis Manager, presented an overview of the new Resource Sharing map and its functionalities relating to resource sharing. The committee's meeting on March 9, 2025, will include a summary of data from the Community College Library Survey and additional updates on the eRead Illinois collection.

Universal Service Committee Report - Chair Catherine Yanikoski

Universal Service Committee met on December 5th, 2025. The next meeting is on March 13.

The committee members received an update on the community college survey sent to community college libraries in the RAILS service area, and on the ILA conference panel session on the topic of the Unserved in Illinois, hosted by RAILS staff and featuring some committee members. They also received a legislative update and viewed a presentation on the new interactive RAILS resource-sharing map.