
MINUTES

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 14, 2026 | 4:00 PM

RAILS Burr Ridge and Videoconference Sites

125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 630.734.5000

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Carroll welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call of Members
Grabowski called the roll of the committee members.
RAILS Burr Ridge: Jean Carroll
Cook Memorial Public Library District (Aspen Drive Library): Monica Caldicott, Carolyn Sennett
RAILS East Peoria: Ron Holohan
Rockford University: Stephanie Nissen, Emily Porter
Shorewood-Troy Public Library District: Karen Voitik
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Alice Grabowski (designated notetaker)
Guests via Zoom: Janette Derucki, Ryan Hebel, Grant Halter, Gail Meyer, Sara Murray, Jessica Silva, Aaron Skog
4. Public comments
There were no public comments.
5. Adoption of the Consent Agenda (action requested)
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Minutes of March 12, 2026
Sennett moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Nissen seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
6. New Business

6.1. eBooks Advocacy

Aaron Skog and Sara Murray presented on the Illinois Library Association (ILA) eBook legislation advocacy efforts. They explained how the Public Policy Committee (PPC) develops a legislative agenda each year and how library professionals across Illinois support the selected priorities. This work includes creating advocacy tools, connecting with legislators, building relationships, and promoting library communities.

The eBook advocacy campaign followed steps to promote success. The eBook concerns were presented at several legislative meetups throughout the state which resulted in two legislators filing bills, one of which was advanced. Along with Derek Blaida, legislative consult for ILA, who provided essential support and outlined legislative strategy, several teams were formed to get the word out to libraries, legislators, and the press. A team was sent to Springfield, with Monica Harris providing a witness statement for this bill. Outreach scripts were created resulting in 2,792 completed supportive witness slips. ILA noon network webinars were utilized to get the message out. A second hearing included testimony from Kyle Courtney, attorney and copyright expert.

6.2. School Librarian Staffing and District 65

Derucki discussed the recent advocacy efforts for School District 65. The outreach provided by the community, from students, from staff members, RAILS, and other organizations was impactful. The need for RAILS to address these types of situations and be ready to respond quickly was emphasized. Illinois Partnership for School Libraries will be launching a working group to compile a school advocacy toolkit to include position statements and support resources. The toolkit would benefit the many districts facing different types of challenges.

6.3. Advocacy Committee Meeting Date for July 9, 2026 (action requested)

Porter moved for the approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting date for July 9, 2026, at 3:30 p.m., Nissen seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Reports

7.1. Federal Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris reported the Trump administration has requested that Congress eliminate all federal funding for libraries. Dear appropriator letters have been received in Congress and the Senate. A Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decision was made to impose new E-rate restrictions, including a bidding portal. American Library Association (ALA) has come out against this and has a June 3rd webinar scheduled. HR7661 made it through committee, therefore advocacy efforts are needed with legislators on the federal level.

7.2. Illinois Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris stated the eBook bill is now in legal review in the Senate. HB 4261, the bill to increase annual grants for public libraries in the state, the school library grants, and the library system grants has passed in the House unanimously, is assigned to an appropriation committee in the Senate, and has yet to move forward.

7.3. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

Caldicott said she will be stepping down as she is the President elect of AISLE.

7.3.1 AISLE Advocacy and Partnership

Meyer explained the ways AISLE advocates for the school libraires including sending letters to ALA, ILA, ASL, RAILS, Heartland, local media, PTA, and others to create awareness. A request for a statement for public library directors to send when schools in their service area are eliminating school librarian positions. A reaffirmation of the 2023 statement is needed along with potential template language.

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 July 9, 2026

The next Advocacy Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, July 9, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. The topic will be determined.

Harris thanked Monica Calidott for her advocacy efforts throughout her tenure at RAILS. A thank you was expressed to Jean Carroll for her leadership on the committee, her service, and genuine interest in improving the lives of library workers and patrons.

10. Adjournment

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