



MINUTES

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, August 20, 2026 | 3:30 PM

RAILS Burr Ridge and Videoconference Sites

125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 630.734.5000

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Porter welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.
2. Roll Call of Members
Grabowski called the roll of the committee members.
RAILS Burr Ridge: Emily Porter, Joanna Marek (arrived at 3:43 pm), Karen Voitik
RAILS East Peoria: Ron Holohan
Rockford University: Stephanie Nissen
Waukegan Public Library: Victor Hinojosa
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Alice Grabowski (designated notetaker), Liana Hirner
Guests via Zoom: Dan Bostrom, Janette Derucki, Gretchen Neidhardt
4. Public comments
Harris announced Carolyn Sennett will be stepping down from the committee and expressed gratitude for her service since May of 2025.
A warm welcome was given to the two new committee members Victor Hinojosa and Joanna Marek.
5. Adoption of the Consent Agenda (action requested)
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Minutes of May 14, 2026
Voitik moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Holohan seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
6. New Business
 - 6.1. Chicago Area Archivists on NARA Chicago/Great Lakes Closure



Gretchen Neidhardt, representing the Chicago Area Archivists Programming Subcommittee and a consulting archivist for National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), provided an overview of the closure of NARA's Chicago/Great Lakes branch. As part of Chicago Area Archivists ad hoc committee, she announced a formal opposition to the closure and a request for greater transparency regarding the decision-making process. The regional facility maintains federal records (including thousands of legal documents) for Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Minnesota. Concerns were expressed that the closure may impede timely access to these records for individuals and institutions throughout the region. NARA requested assistance in increasing awareness of the issue, and the committee discussed potential outreach strategies.

6.2. Review of RAILS Statement on School Library Programs Staffed by Licensed School Librarians

Janette Derucki, representing The Illinois Partnership for School Libraries working group, presented the RAILS statement on *School Library Programs Staffed by Licensed School Librarians* for review. The Illinois Partnership for School Libraries is creating a school library advocacy toolkit and will ask Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), and RAILS to reaffirm or update their statements of support. The committee discussed potential updates, including language supporting both school libraries and AISLE. Harris stated that RAILS continues to support the statement and that the need for it remains. Marek affirmed the statement's importance, shared feedback on possible revisions, and described challenges facing schools.

6.3. FY2027 Advocacy Committee Meeting Schedule (action requested)

Nissen moved for the approval of the FY 2027 RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting Schedule, Voitik seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

6.4. Review of Committee Charge

Harris reviewed the Committee charge, including membership, voting procedures, and related responsibilities. Also discussed was the continuation of its collective advocacy efforts and identifying opportunities to engage additional organizations.

7. Reports

7.1. Federal Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris reported that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has published a new proposal regarding the E-rate program in the Federal Register. An overview of the proposal included the American Library Association (ALA)'s response along with related advocacy efforts and encouraged libraries to make their voices heard. Additionally, Senate Bill 4925,



legislation related to book banning, continues to gain momentum and urged library workers to contact their senators.

7.2. ALA Annual Reports on Legislation and Intellectual Freedom Overview

Harris provided an overview of the ALA Annual Reports on legislation and intellectual freedom; noting the return of ALA's 2026 National Library Legislative Day, as well as Take Action for Libraries Day during National Library Week, the E-rate program, IMLS funding, prison libraries, and library facility operations.

7.3. Illinois Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris stated two updates related to legislation moved into law; Public Act 104-0683 Illinois Jury Act & the Jury Commission Act, and Public Act 104-0808 the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Both will be in effect as of January 1, 2027.

ILA PPC next meet on August 24, 2026, to hear proposals for the upcoming year.

7.4. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

Marek shared on AISLE advocacy and announced both herself and Gail Meyer will host a session at the upcoming AISLE conference in November called "Advocacy for Introverts."

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 October 15, 2026

The next Advocacy Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. The topic will be determined by the Illinois Library Association's Public Policy Committee (PPC) decision on priorities for the next year. The RAILS statement on School Library Programs Staffed by Licensed School Librarians will be presented with revisions.

10. Adjournment

Porter adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.