



MLA Executive Board Meeting

Agenda

Friday, April 10, 2020, 10:00am – 12:00pm

Virtual meeting via Gotomeeting

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1. Call to order and vote to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2020 meeting
2. Treasurer's Report
3. FY21 Budget changes due to projected impact of coronavirus
4. Conference Update
 - a. Plans as a result of cancelation
 - b. Annual business meeting
5. Nominating committee report on elections
6. Membership letter
7. New Business
8. Old Business
9. Adjournment

*Next meeting: Friday, May 8 , 2020



ALA Chapter Councilor's Report

April 2020

- First of all, there are no updates on Forward Together or SCOE. Webinars set for March and forward were cancelled.
- I had registered for my last conference, ALA Annual in Chicago, June 25-30 and requested reimbursement for airfare and registration. Now that the ALA Annual Conference is cancelled, I will submit the airfare and registration costs back to MLA once I have received them. ALA gave the option of transferring the registration and Chapter Leaders Forum fees to another conference, donating the for the good of ALA, or requesting reimbursement. As this was my last conference, I requested reimbursement. I also cancelled my hotel reservations through OnPeak.
- With the cancellation of the conference, ALA has sent out two rather vague financial updates.
- I attended the Chapter Leaders Check-In on March 26 on Zoom and will attend another on April 14.
- ALA/PLA are conducting surveys to measure the public library field's response to COVID-19. I'm so excited to share that we released our findings this morning. I encourage you to check out what we reported here: <http://www.ala.org/pla/issues/covid-19/surveyoverview> and, more specifically, check out the [detailed findings from the results](#).
- CHICAGO, Wednesday, April 8 results of ALA election - Patricia "Patty" M. Wong, city librarian at Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library, has been elected 2021-22 president-elect of the American Library Association (ALA). Wong received 6,718 votes, while her opponent, Steven Yates, assistant director, University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies, received 2,448 votes. As ALA president, Wong will be the chief elected officer for the oldest and largest library association in the world. She will serve as president-elect for one year before stepping into her role as president at the close of the 2021 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.
- The three existing divisions' members all voted to approve the bylaws change that will unite the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS), the Library Information Technology Association (LITA), and the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA), all divisions of the American Library Association (ALA), are thrilled to announce that division members have voted to approve the proposed bylaws of a new ALA division - Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures. This vote does not end the process. Our divisions will now work with the ALA Committee on Organization and the ALA Council to officially establish Core as a new division on September 1, and to discontinue ALCTS, LITA, and LLAMA. Because the 2020 ALA Annual Conference has been cancelled, we'll be working with ALA leadership to ensure this process moves forward virtually.
- It's obvious that One thing that has become very clear is that the digital divide still exists, and perhaps is greater than we ever imagined. There are library staff who can't work from home because either they do not have a device (or one capable of video, or with the most recent software), or because they do not have internet access.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Canelli
ALA Chapter Councilor



Archives Report April 10, 2020

Records at BPL: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I suspect the upcoming meeting Esme and I were to have onsite at BPL in May will be rescheduled farther out. I will be in touch with our BPL contact and update the board when we have a new meeting date.

Records at Amesbury Public Library: Like other libraries in the state, my library has been closed to the public since March 16 and closed to staff other than the Director and I since March 18. The records are stored in a secure location and per the BPL's request, I will not be reviewing them, leaving that work to the BPL.

Electronic Records: Once my job has calmed down a bit, I am hoping to have time to do some review of the Dropbox files and assist the MLA manager in moving files into the Google Drive.

Respectfully submitted,
Aimie Westphal
MLA Archivist 2018-



Association Manager Monthly Activity Report

Submitted by Rebecca Beckley

Date: March 2020

Meetings Attended

- Attended 3/13/20 Admin Board Meeting.

Membership/ Customer Service

- Created 2020-2021 Board election ballot in Survey Monkey, emailed to membership along with reminders.

Conference

- Sent conference cancellation to allregions listserv.
- Edited front page with updated info about conference and library legislative day cancellations.
- Discussed with Conference Director their idea of possibly adding a donate option to membership form as a way to increase revenue after conference cancellation.
- Discussed with Conference Director their idea of creating field requirements on membership form in order to collect data consistently (address format, etc.)

IT

- Member contacts in Wild Apricot was getting close to the 2,000 limit, archived 1970 contacts down to 1912.
- Communicated with West Host as it turns out we were using an older platform that needed to be migrated to their newer platform. An outstanding balance of less than \$20 was due on the old platform, but that was voided once we migrated. This action circumvented a potential shutdown of our website hosting. Communicated with treasurer to gather the information on our accounts needed.

Outside Agencies

- 10 new/renewal ALA joint members added.
- 21 new/renewal NELA joint members list sent to NELA.

Financial

- Looked up process of issuing refunds via Affinity for Conference refunds.
- Continued to make bank deposits, record in Quickbooks and save records for Treasurer.

Goals Met:

- Continue to archive files from Wild Apricot for storage on Google Drive, this month focused on old treasurer files.

Goals for Next Month:

- Update list of institutional members on membership form page. (ongoing)
- Design different website template options on Wild Apricot clone testing site.
- Create COVID19 section of website and share with ALA for national list.
- Verify legality of language with Admin board for Donate button language.
- Look into creating field requirements on membership form for consistent data.



Conference Committee Report April 2020

Meetings:

The Conference Co-Chairs, MLA President and Conference Director spoke in early March and canceled the MLA Conference for 2020.

Conference Director Report:

2020 CONFERENCE AND COVID-19 RESPONSE

Hotel contract cancelled without financial penalty

Other service providers were also cancelled without financial penalty

Some minor expenses were unavoidable (trifold printing/ mailing)

Deployed cancellation messaging to board, members, conference committee, speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, public along with a FAQ and messaging posted online and on social channels

In process of refunding some exhibitors/sponsors as necessary (see below for details)

Discussed virtual conferencing options; professional production is cost-prohibitive

Recommendation for MLA leadership to host a session for members in collaboration with MBLC or perhaps a session in the fall regarding career which may help drive membership renewals

Would Simmons consider offering some online learning solutions to members for CE credit?

Exhibitor/sponsor reimbursement requests as of 4/2	
Unpaid - no need to reimburse	\$ 5,006.90
Reimburse	\$15,229.00
Apply to 2021 conference	\$ 6,026.00
No response yet	\$ 6,085.00
	\$32,346.90

2021 PLANNING

Conference committee will convene in June to discuss relevancy of speakers/sessions from 2020 to 2021

Speaker proposal window will open in the fall

Repurpose graphic design from 2020

Career resources will be especially relevant

Plan is to book the conference at the Cape Cod Resort and Conference Center though may need to adjust room block

Expectation is that attendance might be lower than in year's past

2022 PLANNING

Sourcing venues for 2022 though many hotel sales teams have been laid off/furloughed

Right now, Sheraton Framingham and Cape Cod Resort and Conference Center have some May dates on hold

OTHER

Kristen continuing to source other event registration software solutions

Kristen preparing a proposal for MLA sponsorship (unrelated to conference)

Consider putting a donation button on the website or ability to add a donation to a membership renewal

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Filleul, Conference Co-chair



Intellectual Freedom/Social Responsibilities Committee MLA Executive Board Report — April 2020

Past Activities:

- Met Monday, March 2, 2020 10:30-12:30 p.m. Springfield City Library - East Park Branch
- Formed subcommittee for planned 2020 symposium, chances are it will be postponed due to Covid-19
- Offering support for a school librarian, Jordan Funke, in Ludlow, MA about a challenge to the book, *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silverberg. Committee members showed up for two school committee meetings. Our Intellectual Freedom Champions subcommittee Karen Tobin, Susan Caulfield and Matt Amory formulated a response. Matt wrote two powerful letters in support of the librarian, the merit of the book, and the need to follow their own school policy of keeping a challenged item in the collection until a committee can make a decision rather than pull it as soon as the challenge came in-which is what they did. There were personal attacks against Jordan Funke throughout this protracted challenge. Matt visited them in person to offer support. Michelle Spinney, our ALA OIF Liaison, attended school committee meetings in support and kept OIF informed of our response to the challenge. OIF requested that our letters of support be posted so that they could link to them as exemplary in material challenges. We posted them on the MLA website. The School Committee decided (with the help of their attorney) to follow their own policy and add the book back to school collections until a decision was made by the Request For Reconsideration Committee. The final decision was to move it in the elementary school library from the student collection to the professional development collection. Matt's timeline of the challenge is added to the end of this report.
- Helped circulate an ALA-IFC Facial Recognition Survey to MLA membership
- Matt Berube, of the Jones Library in Amherst, reached out to IFSRC to ask if we are interested in being involved with a new MLS Digital Privacy Task Force to explore possible trainings/resources for the Massachusetts library community and the wider

public on the topic of digital privacy. Michelle Spinney expressed interest in joining the task force on behalf of IFSRC.

- Supported a letter of support for the CASE Act bill, Small-Claims Enforcement Act of 2019.
- Matt Amory requested showing up in support of the Drag Queen Story Hour event at Boston Public Library March 8th and 15th.

Upcoming and Ongoing Work:

- Anna Gooding-Call, IF/SRC Conference Committee Member MLA Conference 2020 reached out to cancel our sessions after the decision was made to postpone or cancel the conference.
- Climate Resilience hubs: 10 official hubs; 20 inquiries to become a hub.
- Discussion of TERF groups, LGBT alliances, “coffee with a cop”, programs and groups that exclude patrons explicitly or implicitly are topics the committee will discuss at future meetings

Our next business meeting was scheduled during the May MLA conference, but will be rescheduled remotely.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Fiorillo and Carol Witt
Co-Chairs, IF/SRC

Intellectual Freedom Champions Subcommittee: Ludlow, MA Case Timeline

This is the approximate timeline of events in the town of Ludlow, MA leading up to material challenges to the physical and electronic copies of the book "Sex is a Funny Word" in the collection of the Library of the Baird Middle School and the timeline of the responses of the School Committee, the Request for Reconsideration Committee convened to determine whether the book and e-book should be retained in the collection, American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom ("ALA OIF") and the Massachusetts Library Association Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibilities Committee ("MLA IFSRC")

May 23rd, 2017: Ludlow School Committee adopts their Policy Statement IJLAA - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, among other policies.

Note that it was reported approvingly in the School Committee meeting on January 28th, 2020 that the Principal(s) of the Baird Middle School had been in the practice of removing items from the library collection prior to review of a formal request for reconsideration. It's unclear whether this had been the practice a generation ago or if this practice continued into the recent past.

Early Fall 2019: A book (likely "Sacred Heart", by Liz Suburbia) that had been donated to a classroom book collection or the library was objected to by a parent over concerns about sexual content. The book was judged inappropriate and removed from the classroom collection immediately (either by the classroom teacher or the librarian in consultation with the principal).

Later in the Fall 2019: A second book (likely "A Court of Wings and Ruin", by Sarah Maas) that had been in the library collection was objected to by a second parent over concerns about sexual content. The book had been pre-ordered because it was part of a series of books which had been age appropriate up to that point in the series. The book was judged to contain inappropriate content and was removed from the library collection immediately (presumably by the school librarian in consultation with the principal).

The exact sequence of the following events is unclear:

Fall 2019: An incident occurred in the school library that was somehow related to the copy of "Sex is a Funny Word". The incident was reported to the school principal and some undisclosed disciplinary action was taken regarding the student.

In the School Committee meeting on February 11th, 2020, a parent reported the rumor that the student was masturbating with the book. However Librarian Jordan Funke, who was present at the time of the incident, flatly denies that that was the case, and insists that another parent began that rumor, deliberately mischaracterizing the incident to magnify its significance among members of the community. The superintendent pointedly did not confirm the parent's report of the nature of the incident, citing student privacy, so the exact nature and timing of the incident remains unknown to us.

Fall 2019: A group, reported to be associated with the open Facebook group “Massachusetts Informed Parents” and the Massachusetts Family Institute organizes and reportedly begins to communicate through a closed or secret Facebook group. Anti-vaccination and anti-sex education messages abound, as well as messages about persecution of people of faith.

Fall 2019: Baird parents protest against sexual content in the library collection and disparage the professional and personal conduct of librarian Jordan Funke. Accusations of “indoctrination” proliferate.

Fall 2019: Baird teachers protest against sexual content in the library collection and disparage the professional and personal conduct of the librarian Jordan Funke, creating a hostile work environment.

Fall 2019: Baird teachers circulate a “letter of concern” about library collection development practices among the staff, demonizing librarian Jordan Funke and continuing their pattern of creating a hostile work environment.

Fall 2019: Baird teachers and parents feign ignorance of the process for requesting reconsideration of materials, and intensify their disparagement of the professional and personal conduct of librarian Jordan Funke.

Winter 2019: Baird parents and teachers eventually file a proper request for reconsideration of “Sex is a Funny Word”. Librarian Jordan Funke judges the book and its content to be appropriate for the Middle School Library collection and refers the request for reconsideration to the Baird Middle School Principal and the School Committee.

Winter 2019: Librarian Jordan Funke contacts ALA OIF about the challenge.

Winter 2019: Librarian Jordan Funke contacts the Massachusetts School Librarians Association (“MSLA”) about the challenge.

Winter 2019: The School Committee and the Superintendent plan to convene a Request For Reconsideration Committee to judge the merit of the book and its appropriateness in the collection.

January 28th, 2020: At the School Committee meeting, parents and teachers express their desire to shield their children from sexual content in general and particularly the content of “Sex is a Funny Word”. The parents and teachers seem to conflate the different content of the two books that were removed and “Sex is a Funny Word”. While the Superintendent attempts to properly differentiate the separate issues with the content of the three different books and the appropriateness of the district’s response to each book, the parents and teachers are not satisfied.

Parents and teachers express separate objections to e-book version of “Sex is a Funny Word” available through SORA and the very catalog record for the book, as well as to another copy of the book which is in the Veterans Park Elementary School, although it is not clear that that book was ever intended for circulation or was even part of the school library collection.

Parents and teachers further disparage librarian Jordan Funke, questioning and disapproving of Funke's book recommendations to students, collection development practices and personal conduct. Several parents mention that they are no longer allowing their children to visit the library, most of whom also say that they are also not allowing their children to take part in health classes which are part of the regular state-mandated curriculum.

The Superintendent mentions the upcoming meeting of the Request For Reconsideration Committee, which is to be convened for the first time in the Superintendent's tenure. Parents and teachers are neither satisfied with the process nor the schedule, even though they are exactly in accordance with district policy.

The School Committee discusses the provision in their Policy Statement IJLAA - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS which requires challenged material to remain in circulation until a formal request for reconsideration has been reviewed.

The School Committee proposes to temporarily waive the provision in their Policy Statement IJLAA - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS which requires challenged materials to remain in circulation until their request for reconsideration has been reviewed for the express purpose of allowing "Sex is a Funny Word" to be removed from the collection before it has received a review by the Request For Reconsideration Committee.

The representative of School District Counsel offers an opinion that the change is not improper under MA Open Meeting Law, and the School Committee votes to waive the provision of the policy statement.

A school principal expresses confusion over the implications of the change in policy, but most parents and teachers leave the room satisfied and the School Committee turns to other business.

February 2020: ALA OIF contacts the MLA IFSRC.

MLA IFSRC writes a letter to the School Committee objecting to their waiver of the provision of Policy Statement IJLAA - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS which allows challenged materials to remain in circulation until a formal request for reconsideration has been reviewed.

MLA IFSRC writes a letter to the Request For Reconsideration Committee supporting the retention of "Sex is a Funny Word" in the Middle School Library collection.

February 11th, 2020: A smaller crowd gathers at the School Committee meeting, and a letter written by Ludlow Public Library Youth Services Librarian July Siebecker is read. The letter strongly objects to the suspension of the provision of Policy Statement IJLAA - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS which allows challenged materials to remain available until their reconsideration is complete.

Ludlow High School Librarian Jameson Hedin and an Elementary School Librarian enthusiastically agree.

The Superintendent also reads portions of a substantial letter from School District Counsel unequivocally supporting Policy Statement IJLAA - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS in its entirety.

The School Committee vote to rescind their waiver of the provision of Policy Statement IJLAA - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS which allows challenged materials to remain available until their reconsideration is complete.

Parents continue to make statements objecting to the book, but largely remain respectful of Librarian Jordan Funke, who is present. One parent insinuates that although the physical copy of the book has been marked “checked out” since the previous School Committee meeting, the e-book has remained available through SORA. Librarian Jordan Funke states that this is not the case, and further states that this has been confirmed not to be the case by logging in with credentials that have the same level of permission that a student would have. Parents seem neither to understand SORA’s technology nor its non-concurrent use license model, and remain suspicious of the presence of the SORA app on their childrens’ devices even after the Superintendent states that all e-book access through SORA has been suspended until “all issues” can be resolved. It is unknown whether SORA access has been restored.

The Superintendent mentions the upcoming meeting of the Request For Reconsideration Committee, and members of the School Committee seem to anticipate and dread a number of additional challenges (though none have actually been made).

February 13th, 2020: The seven members of the Request For Reconsideration Committee review “Sex is a Funny Word” and unanimously recommend that the district retain the book and e-book in the Middle School library collection. They recommend that the copy in the Elementary School not be placed in the library collection but be restricted to a professional collection for use by counselors and nurses.

February 19th, 2020: The Superintendent confirms the recommendation of the Request For Reconsideration Committee and releases the decision of the school district.

February 25th, 2020: Nothing relating to the Baird Middle School Library collection is on the School Committee meeting agenda, but that does not stop a crowd from gathering to rail against sexual content in the public comments section of the meeting. Comments denigrate the professionalism of librarians and teachers and insinuate that they are not doing their jobs. Excerpts of summaries of several books which are alleged to be in the middle school collection are read and objected to for subject matter and profanities.

Parents make comments demanding that the School Committee waive the provision of Policy Statement IJLAA - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS which allows challenged materials to remain available until their reconsideration is complete seemingly unaware that that policy has been affirmed at the previous meeting. They demand inclusion of parents on Request for Reconsideration Committees in the future and demand that the entire collection be reviewed by some “hard-working people” so that the collection excludes all references to topics like sex, drug use, violence, and eating disorders. They also advocate classification of books that contain references to such topics, and creation of a special section of books that can be checked out only with parents’ permission. Distressingly, a member of the

school committee expresses dismay over the content of the middle school collection and support for the general idea of restriction of access by age and/or parental consent.

Parents continue to feign confusion over the process of challenging materials even after the process is explained once again by the school committee and the Superintendent.

No specific titles are mentioned, except for the two books removed from the library in the fall and Sex is a Funny Word.

March 2nd, 2020: Librarian Jordan Funke reports in a face to face meeting that assistance is coming from some colleagues and from the union. Some teachers and the union are helping to prepare a formal complaint against the teacher who was most instrumental in creating the hostile work environment in the school. Funke also sent thanks to the ALA OIF on behalf of Jameson Hedin, the chair of the Request for Reconsideration Committee for providing excellent guidance on how to conduct the Request for Reconsideration Committee and how to proceed. Finally, Funke sends thanks to her friends at the Massachusetts School Library Association for their steadfast support and to the MLA IFSRC for writing the letter defending the book. Funke also reports that the parent/teacher group have a list of several books to which they strenuously object, but for which they have yet to submit requests for reconsideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Amory, MLA IFSRC



**Jordan Miller Committee
April 2020**

I am delighted to report that Amy Dorsheimer of Nevins Public library will join the Jordan Miller Committee.

This is great news. Thank you Krista for recommending Amy.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam McCuen
Jordan Miller Committee Chair



Leadership and Management Section April 2020

Meetings:

The section had a meeting on March 5, 2020 at the Massachusetts Library System's new location. Kim was unable to attend. Jen Ingles prepared for and ran the meeting. There was a presentation from Theresa Maturevich on managing in a crisis.

The next meeting was scheduled for May 7, but the in-person meeting has been canceled. We are discussing whether to have a virtual meeting in April instead. That would be our last meeting of the year.

Respectfully submitted, Kim Hewitt, Leadership Chair



Legislative Committee Report April 2020

Due to the COVID19 closures of all State Buildings and ensuing closures – MLA/MSLA Library Legislative Day at the State House was cancelled. The MLA Legislative Committee cancelled the 2.21.20 meeting as all activities halted. We are due to meet on Friday, April 17th remotely to discuss what options the committee has available to continue our advocacy and how that would be put into action.

Meanwhile, the Legislative Breakfasts, Coffees and Receptions all took place as planned so we are fortunate for our early efforts. 17 events take place. Note: next year the Committee will be tracking data to compile a report that will reflect the number of attendees, etc.

Census 2020 is still actively happening; Libraries across the Commonwealth are posting to remind their patrons to submit their census. The deadline has been extended and the enumerator plans have changed. Please see Census2020 website <https://2020census.gov/en> for updates.

The MLA Legislative Committee's next meeting is Friday, April 17, 2020, 10 a.m. – 12 noon, remotely.

Respectfully submitted
Jennifer Harris, Chair



Membership Committee April 2020 Report

The Massachusetts Library Association has 540 members. 65 members lapsed between March 1st and April 1st. There are 4 new members and 68 new or renewed since Feb. 1st, the last e-board meeting.

Esme recommended we send a letter to members, requesting they renew their memberships. Based on a similar one from ALA, we are planning on sending this to members by the end of April. Click [MLA letter](#) We want to coordinate with the conference committee or anyone else sending communications to the membership.

A spreadsheet of the contact information for the members having joined since Feb. was sent to appropriate committee/section chairs. Also, if you have people on your committee who need their membership status verified, please let Laurie (llessner@sailsinc.org) know.

WildApricot has an app that offers some options to members. I set it up and it can be downloaded from your app store. It will show our events, membership directory, event registration, etc.

Apple store - <https://itunes.apple.com/app/wild-apricot/id1220348450>

Android - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.wildapricot.appformembers>

So take a look and let us know what you think.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Melissa Campbell, Co-Chair
Laurie Lessner, Co-Chair
Kim Hewitt
Patrick Marshall

Membership Letter

Dear ,

The Massachusetts Library Association is still here, fighting for the rights of libraries and library staff. While MLA urged Governor Baker to close libraries as part of the non-essential businesses order, the MLA in no way believes libraries are non-essential. Our members are vibrant and present in these trying times, searching for ways to meet the needs of our customers online. We want you to continue being able to keep your communities healthy. By pushing for libraries to close to the public and advocating staff continue to get paid to engage library customers online, is the best way to stay healthy.

We are also working to protect the rights of patrons, whether we're advocating for privacy rights, as protesting Lyndia.com's move to LinkedIn and their requirement for library users to create accounts, or banding with other library organizations to pressure Macmillian to revoke their embargo and ebook limitations on libraries. Both of these proved to have very positive results and by adding Massachusetts representation to the national scene we can make a difference.

Now is the time to renew your membership so that we can continue our fight for better services and protections for our members and the public. Please visit www.Masslib.org to renew your membership. The attached dues invoice includes your complete renewal information. During these challenging times, if your employment situation has changed, be sure to update your membership level when renewing. Your membership dues are tax deductible. MLA is a 501c3 organization. (TAXID #_____)

You take the service aspect of your job seriously as you promote online resources, perform online programming and create neighborhood scavenger hunts in your communities to help get through this pandemic. MLA can help by getting you in touch with other professionals in your area going through the same thing within our committees.

MLA thanks you for being the librarian superstar you are.



Paralibrarian Section Report April 2020

☐ Our last meeting was a virtual meeting attended via GoToMeeting on March 12, 2020.

☐ Since we made this a virtual meeting due to COVID – 19 pandemic statewide changes our review of the most recent PARA certification portfolio was postponed. We have instituted a new plan to review those portfolios because of these changes. Please see the attached letter from the Chair of both the Career Development Committee and the PARA Review Board.

☐ We would like to have nominations for our Awards (MLA Paralibrarian Section Award for Outstanding Library Support Staff and MLA Paralibrarian Section Award for Library Support Staff Advocate) to move forward. We will discuss logistics at our next meeting.

☐ Our next meeting on April 16, 2020 will be a virtual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna McGrath
Chair Paralibrarian Section

Letter from ParaLibrarian Review Board

March 11, 2020

RE: PARA Review Board and the Coronavirus

Communications coming from the MBLC and the MLA regarding the Coronavirus and what is being done to mitigate its spread prompted a discussion between Anna McGrath, Chair of the Paralibrarian Section and Karen Horn, Chair of both the Career Development Committee and the PARA Review Board. This discussion centered around devising an alternate plan for the scheduled meeting of the PARA Review Board on the afternoon of March 12th, 2020 at the Middleboro Public Library. Normally a group of between 3 and 5 members of the Review Board meets to evaluate recent Certification applications to determine eligibility of each applicant's portfolio for Certification approval. This is in accord and with the Guidelines, which state that the Review Board must include at least 3 members.

In light of current recommendations to cancel, reschedule or hold virtual meetings, we needed to come up with a plan for reviewing the 7 portfolios currently in our possession. After much discussion, Anna and I propose the following:

☐ Karen, as Chair of the PARA Review Board, will initially go through each portfolio and approve requests for points that are "cut and dry"; those that are obviously within the parameters of the Guidelines, those that require no discussion or need further documentation.

☐ Any that she deems questionable will be flagged and set aside until at least two other members of the Review Board are able to meet either virtually or in person to make a decision.

☐ As an alternative, Karen will scan those items which are questionable and send to the other Review Board members for their consideration, followed by a conference call to make a final decision on eligibility for points.

With this new procedure in place, our normal timeline will need to be extended. Karen will notify all applicants of this change and assure them that the Review Board will proceed in as timely a fashion as possible in order to get all signatures on Certificates in time for the May Conference. In the event that this conference is canceled by the MLA due to a continued moratorium on meetings and large gatherings, we will mail all Certificates as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Horn
Chair, Career Development Committee
Chair, PARA Review Board
MLA Paralibrarian Section



Public Relations Committee Report

April 8, 2020

The PR Committee received three candidates for nominations to the Hall of Fame. The committee began work on creating a way for the committee to review and vote for the candidates online to begin the evaluation process and begin the discussions of the Class of 2020. Unfortunately, the process was interrupted by the COVID-19 crisis.

The MLA Social Media accounts are continuing to disseminate information, especially the Association's Updated Recommendation of the Closure of All Massachusetts Libraries and other COVID related topics. Special thanks to the Readers Advisory Section for contributing content on books during this time.

Andrea is hoping to schedule an Association-wide Virtual Quarantini Hour while we are in this crisis, and the PR Committee is hoping to meet as well to figure out how we want to celebrate our Hall of Fame class

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Puglisi & Jocelyn Tavares, Co-Chairs



Readers' Advisory Section Report April 2020

The Readers' Advisory Section is scheduled to meet April 16, 2020.

With the cancellation of the MLA 2020 conference, the section will miss out on some in person recruiting and promotional activities to build membership.

We are holding our next meeting entirely virtually, and sending out invitations and reminders to various state distribution lists. We anticipate increased attendance, and may continue this format beyond the requirements of pandemic practices.

We are planning implementation of a suite of resources for Readers' Advisors on masslib.org, and intend our forthcoming survey to inform its expansion.

We continue to work on creating a sustainable plan for the future of the section.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Aghababian and Alene Moroni, co-chairs



Reference User Services Section

April 2020

- The Reference User Services Section (RUSS) held its third meeting of the year on February 7th at the Massachusetts Library System's office in Marlborough. Following our business meeting we had Carly Bari from the US Census speak about how libraries can help ensure a complete count for 2020.
- RUSS was to hold its fourth meeting of the year on May 1st at the Plymouth Public Library. This meeting was canceled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The topic to be discussed was senior in libraries.
- RUSS may meet virtually in May to make up for the missed physical meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah Breen and Rebecca Lemos
MLA RUSS Co-Chairs



Youth Services Section Report April 10, 2020

The Youth Services Section had a scheduled meeting for Thursday, March 19 which was not held due to the venue, Duxbury Free Library, closing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics were going to include finalizing conference needs, pulling together a call for nominations since all our offices are up for re-election, and checking in about our fundraising efforts.

Although a date for a virtual meeting has not been set, Marissa will be in touch with the YSS Board this week to set something up. We will still be pulling together nominations and elections for April/May.

After an initial positive response, orders for our perpetual monthly planner have halted for the time being (understandably). Since they are also stored in the Duxbury Free Library and we were sending them out through MLS delivery, they are not currently available. However, the convenience of ordering the planners and magnets directly through the MLA website is awesome. We sold 9 planners to date at \$25.00.

Respectfully submitted,

MarissaAntosh
Chair

MBLC Director's Report to MLA Executive Board April 2020

COVID-19: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board held an emergency meeting by conference line on Thursday, March 19, at which it agreed to support a statement from Chair Roland Ochsenbein regarding the temporary closure of libraries:

<https://mblc.state.ma.us/covid19.php#ochsenbein-statement-0320>

The MBLC has issued multiple statements and updates from the Board and staff to the library community relating to the current crisis: <https://mblc.state.ma.us/covid19.php>. Staff has been fielding questions related to materials handling, library closings, remote services, staffing closed libraries, and the impact of staff layoffs, amongst other topics.

FY2021 Budget: The House typically debates its version of the budget in April, and the Senate in May. However, given the current State of Emergency, House Ways and Means Chair Aaron Michlewitz recently said it would be highly unlikely that the House will have a budget in April. Options being considered by the legislature include collectively settling a new revenue estimate, pre-conferencing the budget so that leaders in both branches are in broad agreement before it goes to the floor of either branch, or having the Governor file a one-month spending extension now to keep government running through July to give legislators more time to adjust and plan. Legislative and administration leaders will also convene a hearing soon to discuss the budgeting impacts of the outbreak. According to a recent *State House News Service* article, one policy analysis group estimated COVID-19 may cause state tax revenues to plummet \$1.8 billion to \$3 billion in the next 15 months.

H.4154, *An Act Financing the General Governmental Infrastructure of the Commonwealth*, which includes \$150 million for the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP), is still in the House Ways and Means Committee. We continue to monitor the bill's status.

The **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)** has announced that the President has signed the CARES Act, which designates \$50 million in coronavirus response funding for IMLS. Following passage in the House of Representatives, both chambers of Congress approved of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, a \$2 trillion response to the growing pandemic. The emergency investment allocated to IMLS will enable libraries and museums to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus, including "by expanding digital network access, purchasing Internet accessible devices, and providing technical support services to their communities." The MBLC anticipates further guidance on how much funding Massachusetts will receive and how these funds may be used.

Strategic Plan 2021-2025: Our strategic planning process is moving along; Abby Straus and her colleague Jane Darling held a focus group with the Ecosystem Committee on March 18 and they are currently scheduling a focus group with the Automated Network directors/administrators and board representatives. They have completed most of the individual interviews and held a virtual workshop with MBLC staff earlier this week.

Trustee Orientations: Trustee orientations scheduled for April 2020 have been cancelled. We are currently working on creating virtual events to take their place. We will wait to make calls on orientations scheduled for May and June. All will depend on social distancing guidance from the state and the availability of venues.

State Aid to Public Libraries: In an effort to support libraries participating in the State Aid to Public Libraries Program as they cope with the COVID-19 emergency, the Board of Library Commissioners approved changes to the State Aid Program Standards Policies at their monthly Board meeting on April 2, 2020. Rather than address the changes individually in each of the ten policies for both 2020 and 2021, the modifications are reflected and were approved through an Emergency Preamble to the State Aid to Public Libraries Program Policies which has been added to the State Aid Policies section of the MBLC website and as a preface to the printed versions of the policy documents going forward.

The Emergency Preamble addresses:

- Hours Open Requirement
- Materials Expenditure Requirement
- Accommodation Policies for the Hours Open and Materials Expenditure Requirement
- The Closure of a Public Library Policy
- Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) Chapter 78, Section 19A
- The FY 2021 Five Year Waiver Plan Policy
- Disproportionate Cuts

Mass Library Trustee and Friends Associations: Both the MLTA and the MFOL have suspended their board meetings. The MFOL cancelled their Spring Friends Sharing with Friends meeting that was scheduled for April 25, 2020.

Small Library ARSL Scholarship: Lyndsay Forbes along with Kristi Chadwick and Michel Eberle of the MLS announced this year's funding for up to six Massachusetts public librarians to attend the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) annual conference in Wichita, Kansas, September 30-October 3, 2020. Scholarship recipients will use their experience at the conference to help plan future Small Library Forums.

MBLC Preservation Specialist Evan Knight, in collaboration with COSTEP MA board members and subscribers ("Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness in Massachusetts"), has developed guidelines for response from the perspective of collections preservation. The page, "**Public Health Emergencies: COVID-19,**" was published March 13, and recently updated March 26 to reflect the dynamic situation. Two national organizations have recently cited the page for wider distribution: the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services, a division of the American Library Association, at "Handling Library Materials and Collections During a Pandemic," and the American Institute for Conservation, at "Collections Care Amid COVID-19." Thanks to Evan for this resource, which will be continuously updated. Please feel free to reach out to him with questions and concerns regarding your collections.

Evan was also interviewed for *American Libraries* magazine's blog : *How to Sanitize Collections in a Pandemic: Conservators weigh in on the mysteries of materials handling during COVID*
-19 <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/how-to-sanitize-collections-covid-19/>

Our **Communications Team** has been working to increase ease of access to digital resources. The consumer portal (mass.gov/libraries) has been updated and expanded to include free-for-now resources as well as unique opportunities from authors, illustrators and educators. The resources can be seen at <https://libraries.state.ma.us/pages/free-resources> Always free statewide resources are also included. This one-stop place makes it easy for residents to find library resources and other free

resources. The team also continues to develop the Lauren Baker video library.

The team is using MBLC social media channels to connect users and librarians to digital resources.

The team has also created promotional posts for libraries to use on their social media channels:

<https://awarehouse.mblc.state.ma.us/collateral/campaigns/digital-library/>

Database promotion

The MBLC has developed database promotion for social media that takes users directly into the databases and gives the local library the usage statistic:

Databases Dogs: <https://awarehouse.mblc.state.ma.us/collateral/programs/databases-dogs/>

Databases Healthy

Aging: <https://awarehouse.mblc.state.ma.us/collateral/programs/databases-healthy-aging>

Databases Wellness: <https://awarehouse.mblc.state.ma.us/collateral/programs/databases-wellness/>

Databases Kids: <https://awarehouse.mblc.state.ma.us/collateral/programs/databases-kids/>

Databases: Home

Improvement: <https://awarehouse.mblc.state.ma.us/collateral/programs/databases-home-improvement>

In terms of **summer reading**, the communications team has been in touch with our partners at the Boston Bruins. Many Bruins staff have been furloughed, including the staffer who works with us on the summer program. Right now, it is unclear whether Blades visits will occur this summer. Bruins summer materials have all been developed but the MBLC is holding off on orders for now. MBLC staff is working to confirm if the First Lady and Blades Summer Reading Challenge can still move forward. Libraries may have a difficult time launching any summer programs and this challenge could help fill the gap in that it is mainly online. The team has taken orders for the national CSLP poster but getting them out to the libraries is an issue due to closures.

Office Lease: The lease for our new office space on the fifth floor at 90 Canal Street has been officially executed. We are now scheduled to move in September, however given all that is going on, that could change.

The Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA) Update to MSLA Executive Board – April 2020



MSLA has been involved in many activities surrounding the COVID-19 crisis because of all schools closing until May.

The [Virtual School Librarian](#) LibGuide was launched by the MSLA Advocacy Team, in collaboration with MBLC, MLS, and BPL. It provides links to statewide online content, BPL e-card info, and a new **Ask a School Librarian** online form designed to serve schools that lack a school librarian.

Virtual “**Work Alike**” meetings are scheduled weekly for middle school and high school librarians to network.

We postponed and now, plan to reschedule our **2020 Conference, “We can do it: School libraries build strong communities,”** which was planned for March 29-30 at the Sheraton in Framingham.

Weekly updates began this week and are planned for the duration of the crisis. See the first update, below.

About MSLA - The MSLA is an association of school librarians, supporters of school libraries, and other stakeholders. We host professional development events and an annual conference to support our 700 members.

Next Board virtual meeting is April 15, 2020.

Contacts:

- Laura Luker, President, luker.laura@gmail.com
- Emily Kristofek, Office Manager/Event Planner - emilykristo@gmail.com
- Greg Pronevitz, Director of Outreach - greg@pronevitzconsulting.com, 978-760-4767

Massachusetts School Library Association

PO Box 336, Wayland, MA 01778

<https://www.maschoollibraries.org/>

MSLA Update from President, Laura Luker - April 8, 2020

Dear MSLA Members,

The lifeblood of libraries is information - this is a constant upon which we can rely. Our evolution over time has simply been in how we deliver and organize that information, and our current situation highlights this more than ever. As we try to navigate these uncharted waters of pandemic-related closures and chaos, libraries and library professionals are being asked to stretch their skills, to find new ways of connecting our communities and helping patrons make sense of all the extraordinary time we are experiencing.

During these uncertain times, we at MSLA know how important it is that we keep our professional communities strong, too. As a special project of the MSLA leadership and the Advocacy Committee, we will begin to bring weekly updates to you, our members. We plan to use these updates to let you know what is happening behind the scenes at MSLA to support you professionally, to share ideas for ways that we can use our skills to help our patrons, and to simply offer moral support. In turn, we'd like to hear from you. Do you have an idea? Something you're doing that works well in your community? Something MSLA can do to make your job a little easier? A great brownie recipe that is low-fat but doesn't taste like it? (I'm mostly joking with that last one. Mostly.) Please send it our way. You can reach out to one of your area directors or any other executive board member using the [contact information found on our web page](#).

Take care of yourselves, your families, and each other. We're all in this together and that's how we will get through it!

Virtual School Librarian Launch

MSLA launched the [VSL website](#) on Friday, April 3rd. The VSL was completed in collaboration with MLS and MBLC. The site will be monitored on a daily basis by MSLA members, who will strive to reply to all questions within 24 hours and sooner upon request.

Note that the Virtual School Librarian site is not meant to replace the connection with a district's school librarian. During this crisis, all Massachusetts students are gallantly trying to manage online and remote work. The intention of VSL is to support all of these students - and their educators - but especially those who do not have the direct benefit of a certified school library professional. When information is needed, MSLA encourages students and families to first reach out to their individual school librarians, but when an MA certified school librarian is unavailable, the Virtual School Librarian can help

District or School Virtual School Librarian Help Template

Seeking a template that allows a single district to offer virtual support? Knowing the school library teacher within the district is the first place students will usually connect, we wanted to offer our MSLA members a basic copy of the Virtual School Librarian form. The copy can be adjusted with a district's artwork and link directly to their school library teachers. To use the template email gtrebbe@gmail.com. You will be added as a collaborator. Once a collaborator,

make a new copy of the form and set collaborators to only reflect your school's librarian(s). Preview it here: [District /School Virtual School Librarian Template Link](#).

BPL ecards

Did you know that all Massachusetts residents are considered patrons of the Boston Public Library and as such can receive a BPL eCard account? The BPL offers a rich set of resources to enhance what you may already have. [Click here for more information](#). Spread the word among your patrons and feel free to use it for yourself, too!

Middle and High School Zoom Groups

There are two groups meeting on Zoom Sunday nights to discuss ideas, solutions, and strategies for school librarians to better help students, teachers and families during this challenging time. Want to learn from your MSLA colleagues about what they are doing? Have something to share that is working well in your school? Join the Zoom meet-ups for middle school organized by Laura Gardner or for high school librarians organized by Alida Hanson.

Stay Connected Through the Listserv

Stay connected with your school librarian community through the MSLA listserv. Any MSLA member can join the listserv to post ideas, ask for feedback, and share successes. You can send a message to the list by addressing it to mislamembers@groups.io. If you'd like to search the archive of past topics, you may set up your login information by following the steps on [this page](#).

MLS Report

April, 2020

MLS Director and Small Library Discussion Groups

Working with member libraries, I planned a series of Director and Small Library Discussion Groups. These sessions are designed to get groups of members together to discuss a topic of interest. Select sessions are open topic. This Spring, we will be hosting groups in:

- *S. White Dickinson Library, Whately- 3.13.2020
- Norton Public Library- 3.19.2020
- *Southborough Public Library- 3.23.2020
- *Yarmouth Town Library- 3.25.2020
- Newburyport Public Library- 4.3.2020

MLS Strategic Planning Update

I've contacted three Strategic Planning Consultants, and conducted ongoing discussions with two of them. I expected proposals from them by the end of February, however one came in later than expected. A decision will be announced soon.

**COVID-19 Update.

MLS has suspended all in person CE offerings, Statewide Delivery, and BiblioTemps. Offices are closed as well; all staff are working from home. We are sending regular updates to the membership, and conducting meetings with partners, members, and each other during this time. News is posted on the MLS and MBLC COVID-19 Resource Guide.

Respectfully Submitted;

Sarah Sogigian
April 6, 2020