

TO: THE ALA MEMBERSHIP

FROM: Mary W. Ghikas, ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the Council

DATE: March, 2018

RE: **PROPOSED CHANGE TO ALA POLICY A.4.1.1 – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

On November 20, 2017, ALA Council voted to adopt the following language for ALA Policy A.4.1.1:

The Executive Director shall be authorized to carry out the provisions of the budget including hiring and firing of staff without submitting matters previously authorized or individual appointments to the Executive Board except in the form of reports of action. Any action by the Executive Director shall be subject to review by the Executive Board upon request of any member of the Executive Board. An ALA - accredited Master's Degree or a CAEP - accredited Master's Degree with a specialty in school library media is a preferred, but not required, qualification for the ALA Executive Director.

In accordance with ALA Constitution, Article VI. Council, Section 4 (c):

*Any action of the Council may be set aside by a majority vote by mail in which one-fourth of the members of the Association have voted. Such vote by mail shall be held upon petition of one percent of the personal members as certified by the Executive Director of the Association.*

For purposes of decisions based on a percentage of members, ALA uses the membership numbers as of August 31. As of August 31, 2017, total ALA personal members stood at 47,918; one-percent of these members (479) would be needed to sign a petition. For purposes of calculating the one-fourth of members, ALA uses January 31 to determine members eligible to vote (members whose dues are paid in full as of January 31). On January 31, 2018, total members-in-good-standing was 50,036; thus 12,509 members will have to vote on this measure. A simple majority will then carry.

A petition has been filed and has received 563 signatures, well over the required 479. Therefore, membership is being asked to vote on the following action:

To Amend ALA Policy A.4.1.1 to state:

The Executive Director shall be authorized to carry out the provisions of the budget including hiring and firing of staff without submitting matters previously authorized or individual appointments to the Executive Board except in the form of reports of action. Any action by the Executive Director shall be subject to review by the Executive Board upon request of any member of the Executive Board. An ALA - accredited Master's Degree or a CAEP - accredited Master's Degree with a specialty in school library media is a required qualification for the ALA Executive Director.

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

The Executive Director shall be authorized to carry out the provisions of the budget including hiring and firing of staff without submitting matters previously authorized or individual appointments to the Executive Board except in the form of reports of action. Any action by the Executive Director shall be subject to review by the Executive Board upon request of any member of the Executive Board. An ALA - accredited Master's Degree or a CAEP - accredited Master's Degree with a specialty in school library media is a preferred, but not required, qualification for the ALA Executive Director.

PROPOSED LANGUAGE (language to be deleted in [brackets]):

The Executive Director shall be authorized to carry out the provisions of the budget including hiring and firing of staff without submitting matters previously authorized or individual appointments to the Executive Board except in the form of reports of action. Any action by the Executive Director shall be subject to review by the Executive Board upon request of any member of the Executive Board. An ALA - accredited Master's Degree or a CAEP - accredited Master's Degree with a specialty in school library media is a [preferred, but not] required[,] qualification for the ALA Executive Director.

PRO:

The ALA Executive Director serves an important role as the continuing face of the Association. While the President is a crucial spokesperson, he/she serves for one year. The ED provides the continuity of presence, image, and values. We fought to have a librarian lead the Library of Congress and to install a librarian as the Public Printer. We are dismayed when directors of major libraries are appointed without degrees.

Naysayers argue that ALA is "not a library." ALA is much more than a library, representing more than 60,000 libraries and librarians worldwide and accrediting library education programs. The ALA ED hires managers to oversee conference, publishing, financial services and other key areas. Divisions and offices each have their own Directors. But it is the ED who coordinates and ensures that library and librarian values inform all of ALA's work.

ALA has grown and prospered with librarians at its helm. Several former successful ALA Executive Directors, as well as past ALA Presidents and Executive Board members, have urged that the ED continue to have the library credential.

One failed search is not sufficient reason to overturn more than a century of growth and progress. We successfully and continually struggle for professional recognition, standards, funding, and educational excellence. Appointing a non-librarian could do great damage to these efforts.

Stop the devaluation of the library degree, our image, and our reality, by voting in favor of the accredited Master's degree requirement. Vote! Vote Librarian! Vote yes on the member initiative.

John DeSantis, Councilor-at-Large

CON:

Following the recent search for Executive Director, the Search Committee (representative of ALA governance, divisions, roundtables, and staff) requested that the Executive Board broaden the required credentials to attract a larger pool of exceptional candidates for the position. All Divisions endorsed the revised credentials, and it was approved by 77 percent of Council in a November 2017 vote.

The Executive Director must be an expert manager who is future-focused, committed to learning, an eloquent advocate, and politically intuitive. The recruitment of the next Executive Director should focus on knowledge of leading an association, skills of managing a member organization and the ability to be flexible and work with diverse staff, members and libraries.

While it is preferred that the next Executive Director possess an MLS, many members have concluded that an understanding of the profession and dedication to our professional values, and a passion for serving the needs of its practitioners are not exclusive to MLS holders.

ALA is not a library: it is a complex membership organization, which includes a large staff, significant financial assets, sizable publishing operations, unparalleled conference services, and an influential office in DC. Broadening the candidate pool does not demean our profession, but rather, recognizes the values, skills, and experiences of other library and association professionals.

However those qualifications were earned, the next Executive Director of the American Library Association will be an individual who understands and embraces our core values, and has strong, relevant expertise and experience. ALA membership expects and deserves nothing less.

Sara Dallas, Councilor-at-Large