Executive Board Conference Call Notes
November 17, 2015

Present for the call: President Sari Feldman; President-elect Julie Todaro; Immediate Past President Courtney Young; Treasurer Mario Gonzalez; Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels; Sr. Associate Executive Director Mary Ghikas. Board Members: Robert Banks, Loida Garcia-Febo, Peter Hepburn, Sara Kelly Johns, Mike Marlin, and Gina Persichini; and Executive Board Secretariat Kerri Price. Director of the Office of ALA Governance JoAnne Kempf and Board Members Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. and James Neal, were absent.

I. American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Conference
Julie Todaro and Sara Kelly Johns reported on the AASL 17th National Conference and Exhibition in Columbus, OH (November 5-8, 2015). Julie Todaro and Keith Michael Fiels participated in the opening session and gave a well-received presentation on the Libraries Transform initiative, focusing on how it can be tailored to meet the needs of younger patrons. The networking opportunities, including Hack the Association, gave members an opportunity to discuss important issues, such as the need for an urban school libraries special interest group and the need for more emphasis on urban literature.

II. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Update
Emily Sheketoff, Associate Executive Director of the ALA Washington Office, reported that the House of Representatives appointed ESEA conferees who will meet on November 18, 2015, to finalize the bill. The Senate is expected to appoint conferees on November 18. Once the House bill is released, the Washington Office will determine whether or not to support it and will release talking points. The House is expected to vote on the bill on December 2, and the Senate soon after that. Members will receive communication from President Sari Feldman and several ALA divisions, urging them to contact their senators and representatives, prior to the votes.

III. American Association of School Librarians (AASL) 2025 Site Recommendation – St. Louis, MO – EBD #12.14
Sylvia Norton presented the site recommendation of St. Louis, MO, for the 2025 AASL Conference. St. Louis offered to waive rental, grant a $10,000 signing bonus, and host the planning committee if AASL signed a contract on or before November 30, 2015. The Executive Board approved the site selection.

IV. Update on the 2016 Midwinter Meeting in Boston, MA
Mary Ghikas provided registration numbers for the upcoming 2016 Midwinter Meeting. Current total registration is 5,287 (2/3 paid and 1/3 exhibitor, staff, and comps), compared to 5,600 for Chicago. Winter weather concerns may be an issue for members. The top line registration estimate has been reduced by $250,000 out of a total budget of approximately $3 million.

V. Accessibility Issues at ALA Conferences
Mike Marlin outlined the key points in the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) Executive Board’s draft resolution, to be presented at the 2016 Midwinter Meeting. The resolution advocates for an official review process of accessibility problems, in order to devise a protocol for addressing complaints during, rather than after conferences. Issues include attendees with respiratory disabilities navigating through smoke-filled rooms, out of order elevators, meeting rooms that are difficult to find and lack clear signage, availability of
accessible vans not widely known nor publicized, social events held in inaccessible locations, and accessibility issues for disabled panelists. ALA is currently working on the issues and will report to ASCLA. In addition, the Conference Committee will ensure that the Accessibility Assembly Representative is appointed to the Conference Committee each year.

VI. Follow-Up to Information Technology and Telecommunication Services (ITTS) discussions at the 2015 Fall Executive Board Meeting
Keith Michael Fiels and Sherri Vanyek outlined the steps being taken to strengthen the ITTS department. Weekly meetings are scheduled between Fiels, Mary Ghikas, and ITTS Director Sherri Vanyek, with the aim of moving forcefully on a number of issues, including the following:

- Dramatically improve the ALA website search function, which had been using the Apache Solr search platform. Since recently switching to Google Search across ALA.org, results have improved. However, consultants will conduct a thorough investigation on December 16 and 17, 2015, and will report on how to improve the search results further. Known problems include lack of alt tags on images and a large number of PDFs that need to be converted to web pages.
- Incorporate Board suggestions into the new responsive website design.
- Move aggressively on the recommendations of the ALA Strategic Technology Directions Update: 2016-2017 report, released this past spring. The report focuses on moving many in-house services to a cloud environment to increase efficiency and reliability.
- Conduct the ITTS External Review and incorporate recommendations into the ITTS plan and budgets going forward. The review will be conducted by Brian Schottlaender, the Audrey Geisel University Librarian at the University of California, San Diego, and Margo Pecoulas, IT Director at the American Academy of Periodontology. The review team will report its findings to the Board at the 2016 Midwinter Meeting, and will soon after produce a comprehensive written report.
- Implement the recommendations of the ITTS security audit, which was conducted in August 2015.
- Make additional resources available to address priorities and ITTS capacity in the 2016 (current year), 2017, and 2018 budgets.
- Provide regular updates on ITTS progress and plans to the Board and membership.

VII. eCommerce System Roll Out
Sherri Vanyek reported on the eCommerce system, scheduled to launch in mid-January, following the 2016 Midwinter Meeting. The first phase of the launch covers membership dues and donations. The new web interface will have a responsive theme, making it possible for members to use the site from their phones and tablets. ITTS is currently conducting iterative testing of the system and urges Board members to test the user experience at the Midwinter Meeting. The second phase of the launch is scheduled for late 2016 and will incorporate an auto-renew option, membership group renewals, and possibly an installment payment plan.

VIII. Staffing Update
Keith Michael Fiels and Mary Ghikas reported on staffing updates, including the following:

- An offer has been made to a candidate for Director of the Public Awareness Office. An announcement will be made after the background check is complete, and the new candidate will start by the 2016 Midwinter Meeting.
• Jody Gray, Director of the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services, started on November 2.
• Twelve candidates for the Development Office Director are scheduled for telephone interviews in the coming weeks. Face-to-face interviews with the final candidates will be held on February 5 and 6, 2016.
• Face-to-face interviews with the candidates for the Director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom will be conducted next week, with a final decision to be made in December.