

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Annual Conference, Chicago
June 28 – July 2, 2013**

Topic: Getting Administrator Buy-in for YA Services

Background: As a follow-up to the board’s discussion in January around reaching library administrators in order to advance advocacy efforts, in March and April 2013 YALSA surveyed 316 members who indicated that they worked at the supervisory or management level in a library. 68 individuals responded, for a 22% response rate. The Executive Committee discussed the findings at their spring conference call. At this time the Board may want to explore some possible next steps.

Action Required: Discussion

Survey results

For a description of survey results, see [Executive Committee Item #10](#) from the Spring 2013 meeting. For the full survey results, see <http://ow.ly/k1ewS>.

The survey largely confirmed many of the assumptions that the Board has made in the past about library administration interest and support in YALSA and teen services. However, it was directed specifically at managers who are already YALSA members, so it may not be entirely applicable to managers in libraries where there is no YALSA presence at the administrative level. Still, it gives some ideas for places to begin.

The Executive Committee concluded that there were a few areas that we could focus on:

- Collecting and sharing case studies
- Helping members build skills that would enable them to better interact with administrators and articulate the needs of the teen services department
- Collaborating with other organizations in order to build stronger ties with administrators

Activities since the survey

- Sarah Flowers wrote a 6-part series for the YALSAblog on “What Your Manager Wishes You Knew.”
- YALSA and LLAMA collaborated on a webinar, “Increase Your Library’s Value by amping up Teen Services,” which was facilitated by Mary Hastler.
- LLAMA members received an e-blast in June about YALSA’s instructional kits

While these efforts are helping YALSA make progress to address this advocacy issue, the board may want to take a more formal and focused approach. Two core issues relate to the need to get increased buy-in from library administrators for teen services. The first is the need to provide targeted information and best practices to administrators to help them understand the value of teen services. The other issue involves helping librarians and library workers serving teens build soft skills that will help them increase their professionalism and be more effective at

communicating and engaging administrators. Soft skills include things such as teamwork, understanding generational and cultural differences, attitude, problem solving, ethics, integrity, communication styles, image/demeanor, accountability and boundaries.

Recommended next steps

In order to address these two different but interrelated issues, the board may want to consider the establishment of two taskforces:

Library Administrator Resources Taskforce

Coordinate the development of new content, including case studies that illustrate the value of teen services, aimed at library administrators and work with staff to disseminate the content. Use existing data to create new resources aimed at an administrator audience, which illustrate the value of teen services, including tip sheets, position papers, infographics, canned presentations, articles and blog posts. Identify and prioritize communication channels for distribution of messages and materials. Taskforce size: 5-7 virtual members. Term: September 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015. Taskforce members should be comprised of members who are managers or administrators.

Taskforce on Professionalism

Investigate best practices in associations and professionalism, then identify core professionalism values of a librarian or library worker serving teens, and use it for a basis for creating guidelines for professionalism for librarians and library workers who work with and for teens. Submit a draft of the values to the Board by Dec. 23, 2013. Incorporate feedback received from the board and present a refined draft to the YALSA Board by Mar. 1, 2014. Make further edits based on board feedback, then begin work on the guidelines, submitting an initial draft for board consideration by Aug. 1, 2014 and a final draft by Dec. 22, 2014. Taskforce size: 5-7 virtual members. Term: Sept. 1, 2013 through January 31, 2015.

Rationale for Library Administrator Resources Taskforce

- Survey results clearly indicated a need for case studies, data, etc. packaged and aimed at library administrators
- This taskforce fits with YALSA's strategic plan in the area of Goal #1 Advocacy and Activism, because better outreach and engagement of library administrators can lead to increased support for teen services
- YALSA has existing content that would help administrators understand the value of teen services, but it needs to be repackaged so that the message is aimed directly at administrators
- The latest statistics from the Public Library Association show that full-time staffing for teens has decreased dramatically between 2008 and 2012. While 51% of PLDS survey respondents reported in 2008 having at least one full time staff person dedicated to teen services, that number dropped sharply to 33% in 2012. Additionally, the number of school librarians in the U.S. shrank by 7% from 2004 to 2011.

Rationale for Taskforce on Professionalism

- Professional standards are lacking in the field of librarianship. The ALA has a Code of Ethics, but no standards on professionalism
- Creating guidelines and/or a values statement is the first step to helping members with career development—trainings, resources, etc. can be build around any core standards or values that are created and adopted. While YALSA could offer these trainings and resources without taking the step of creating values or guidelines, members would lack a compelling reason for participating the trainings, utilizing the materials, etc.
- Student members have indicated a desire for materials and services aimed at their particular needs.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that many members would benefit from career development efforts
- Professional standards fit with YALSA’s strategic plan, including Goal #3 Continuous Learning, because standards will lead to the creation of training. The effort can also fit with Goal #1 Advocacy and Activism, because a rise in professional behavior can help advance advocacy efforts, particularly with administrators
- YALSA’s Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth describe a set of concrete skills and a body of knowledge for librarians; however, they do not address topics such as values and soft skills
- Many associations set a national standard for professionalism for their particular profession, and provide resources to help their members strive for and uphold the standards, examples include:
 - American Physical Therapy Association, www.apta.org/Professionalism/ (make note of the Values Based Behaviors document and its accompanying self-assessment)
 - Definition of Medical Professionalism, <http://ow.ly/m56Vw> (via the ABIM Foundation)
 - Harry Latimer Center for Professionalism, <http://ow.ly/m572g> (via the Florida Bar)
 - Standing Committee on Professionalism, <http://ow.ly/m5788> (via the American Bar Association’s Center for Professional Responsibility)
 - Teaching and Assessing Professionalism, <http://ow.ly/m56Pj> (via the American Board of Pediatrics)

Additional Resources

- Press release about LLAMA/YALSA webinar, <http://ow.ly/m5546>
- Reaching Library Administrators, Midwinter 2013 document #38, <http://ow.ly/m58bI>
- What Do US College Graduates Lack? Professionalism, <http://ow.ly/m56Gz> (Bloomberg View, 5/8/13)