

COMMITTEE ON LITERACY: REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL/MIDWINTER CONFERENCE
COVERS THE PERIOD BETWEEN MIDWINTER MEETING 2019 AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

ROSTER

CHAIR

- Kevin Reynolds

MEMBERS

- Cynthia Czesak
- Hannah Evans
- Betsy Fraser
- Hilda H. Loh-Guan
- Kristin Lahurd (Primary Staff Liaison)
- Elizabeth Lovsin
- Julie A. Patterson
- Yiping Wang
- Gwendolyn N. Weaver

ASSOCIATES

- Caroline Bradley
- Jacquie R. Kociubuk

CHARGE

To develop and recommend the association's policies related to the promotion of multiple literacies;; to develop and encourage the development of programs, educational opportunities, and other resources that assist librarians and libraries in promoting literacy; to raise the awareness of literacy within the association; to work cooperatively with the Literacy Assembly, the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services and its advisory committee, and other ALA units, including the Washington Office, on efforts that have a literacy focus; to develop and maintain partnerships with national literacy organizations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since the 2019 Midwinter Meeting, the Committee has held monthly virtual meetings primarily focused on wrapping up our revision of the *Literacy for All: Adult Literacy through Libraries* toolkit, and planning and executing our work on updating the Literacy Clearinghouse (<https://literacy.ala.org>). The work on the Literacy Clearinghouse has included reorganizing the resource to make it easily navigable, as well as updating existing areas and adding entirely new areas in which we have collected and presented

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resources. Some examples of new areas added to the Clearinghouse include financial, health and digital literacy.

EVENTS OR PROGRAMS

Along with the Office of Diversity, Literacy and Outreach services (ODLOS), the Committee co-sponsored a “News You can Use” session at that 2019 Annual Conference. The session, titled “Literacy for All: Resources for Serving Learners across the Lifespan,” was presented by Kristin Lahurd, Jacquie Kociubuk, Gwenn Weaver, and Kevin Reynolds. Around 40 individuals attended the program, which included introductions to specific resources as well as guided group discussions designed to elicit feedback on how we can help library workers in their day-to-day work. By all accounts, the session was a success.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

As the Committee looks ahead at the next six months, we plan to work on the following items:

- Onboarding new members
- Continue our review, revisions, and additions to the ALA Literacy Clearinghouse
- Increase outreach and engagement in the Literacy Assembly; Chair will contact ALA unit leaders
- Develop a plan to launch a series of webinars over the 2019-20 year

INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER UNITS WITHIN ALA

Through the Literacy Assembly, the Committee has interactions with several ALA units. Most recently, the Committee has been collaborating with the Literacy Assembly on updating the Literacy Clearinghouse. In fact, the [Clearinghouse itself reflects significant collaboration across units by highlighting the resources and initiatives of a wide array of ALA offices and divisions](#). During the next 6 months, we will continue this work. In addition, as noted above, the Chair plans to directly contact ALA unit leaders to encourage representation on the Literacy Assembly.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE’S WORK TO THE ALA STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Arguably, the Committee could be seen as relevant to all of ALA’s key action areas, but it is, of course, most directly related to literacy, as well as to equitable access to information & library services and education & lifelong learning. Furthermore, the Committee’s charge and work fall squarely within ALA’s four strategic directions:

- **Advocacy:** Among other things, the committee has demonstrated the impact of libraries on literacy efforts, which directly addresses Advocacy Strategy #4, “Gather, develop, and disseminate research documenting the value, outcomes and impacts of libraries of all types.”
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):** With an expressed purpose of helping library workers “add, expand, and advocate for adult literacy services,” the recently revised *Literacy for All: Adult Literacy through Libraries* toolkit furthers the EDI goal to “establish resources and support so libraries and librarians can be effective advocates for the inclusion of all individuals in the life of their community.”

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- **Information Policy:** Naturally, this committee serves as the obvious hub for guidance on policy pertaining to literacy concerns. In addition, the Committee and the Literacy Assembly serve as vital fora about partnerships and coalitions pertaining to literacy. This touches on Information Policy Strategy #3, “Lead and participate in effective coalitions, with member participation, to take action in addressing information policy issues.”
- **Professional and Leadership Development:** The Committee provides ALA members opportunities to engage in important work of the association as well as to have opportunities for networking, leadership, and more. This addresses Professional and Leadership Development Strategy #2: “Develop pathways to support and guide networking, professional development, continuing education, and mentoring.”

COMMITTEE’S SELF-CHECK ON ITS VALUE AND VISIBILITY

Given the Committee’s alignment with key action areas and strategic directions, coupled with the work carried out by the committee, we believe there is unquestionable value in the Committee on Literacy. As we noted in our previous six-month report, we do question the visibility of the committee. This is something that we will be addressing directly and indirectly over the next several months through some of the efforts outlined above.

ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

We noted in our previous six-month report that the Committee’s monthly virtual meetings have been a productive and inclusive practice, and seem to be welcomed by the committee members. The meetings have been well-attended and effective in both increasing member engagement and facilitating the work of the Committee. The Chair would also like to thank the highly dedicated and tireless support from our staff liaison, Kristin Lahurd.