

COMMITTEE ON LITERACY: REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL/MIDWINTER CONFERENCE
COVERS THE PERIOD BETWEEN ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018 AND MIDWINTER MEETING 2019

ROSTER

CHAIR

- Kevin Reynolds

MEMBERS

- Cynthia Czesak
- Hannah Evans
- Betsy Fraser
- Hilda H. Loh-Guan
- Amber Hayes (Staff Liaison)
- 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 literacy; 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 2018 Annual Conference, the Committee has held monthly virtual meetings primarily focused on a thorough revision of the *Literacy for All: Adult Literacy through Libraries* toolkit. With only a few minor additions remaining as of this writing, we anticipate that this project will be fully complete by the 2019 Midwinter Meeting. We are proud of this achievement, and are enormously indebted to Kristin Lahurd for the success of this project.

TEMPLATE FOR COMMITTEE REPORTS

In addition, we have shepherded to the Committee on Organization updated charges for the Committee and the Literacy Assembly. We anticipate these changes, which address the reality that we now focus on multiple literacies, will serve us well for the future because the language is sufficiently general and avoids a listing of various types of literacies that might warrant later adjustment as both the landscape and terminology inevitably change.

EVENTS OR PROGRAMS

The Committee is not formally sponsoring or hosting any programs or events at the 2019 Midwinter Meeting.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

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

- Release and promote the revised Adult Literacy Toolkit
- Conduct a review and make revisions/additions to the ALA Literacy Clearinghouse (<https://literacy.ala.org/>)
- Increase outreach and engagement in the Literacy Assembly
- Develop a broader understanding of partnerships surrounding literacy in which various ALA units are involved

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 the toolkit revision project. During the next 6 months, it is our intention to work closely with Literacy Assembly members to review and explore revisions to the ALA Literacy Clearinghouse, which was noted just above.

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 *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."

TEMPLATE FOR COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **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. We do, however, 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

The Committee’s monthly virtual meetings are a new and productive practice. The meetings have been well-attended and effective in both increasing member engagement and facilitating the work of the Committee, particularly around the toolkit.