

Committee on Literacy Report, 2013-14

Committee Roster

Sara Kelly Johns, Chair

Clara Nalli Bohrer

Jill A. Bourne

Cynthia Czesak

Blane K. Dessy

Elizabeth Friese

Alys Jordan

Dr. Allison G. Kaplan

Dr. Rebecca Jane Morris

Hilda K. Weisburg

Hadi S. Dudley

Megan Threats

Staff:

John Amundsen

Michelle Harrell Washington

Committee activities at ALA Annual 2014, Las Vegas

Friday, June 27th

1:00-4:00pm - Committee on Literacy and Literacy Assembly Meeting, Caesar's Palace, Trevi room

Saturday, June 28th

10:30-11:30am - Committee on Literacy, All Subcommittee Planning Meeting, LVCC N228

3:00-4:00pm - Time to Reskill, An Action Plan for Literacy, LVCC N236

Sunday, June 29th

8:30-10:00am - USCIS: Citizenship Programs and Resources at the Library, LVCC N236

1:00-2:30pm - Stories from the Field: The American Dream Starts @ your library, LVCC N235

Committee on Literacy Report

New Literacy Officer: The interviewing for the position of Literacy Officer has been active and that ALA hopes to fill that position soon which will make the work of the committee move faster.

Committee Work

At ALA MW 2013 in Seattle, the Committee on Literacy discussed the importance of reading and writing skills to be successful in our society. While other literacies – information, digital, health, financial, etc. – are recognized as vitally important, basic literacy is a building block for these other literacies and is essential. Committee members brainstormed opportunities to highlight basic literacy within the American Library Association. One idea was to present a resolution to ALA Council in order to get administrative support. Other ideas revolved around creating content (success stories) for *American Libraries*, a prominence for literacy information on the ALA website and producing content for other media outlets.

At ALA 2013 in Chicago, the “Resolution Reaffirming ALA’s Commitment to Basic Literacy” was presented at the Council I meeting on June 30, 2013. The content was primarily drafted by Hadi Dudley, with input from committee members; Dudley was the “mover” and Terri Grief was the “seconder.” Dudley spoke to the resolution and many councilors responded – both in opposition and in favor – of the document. Generally, the councilors who “questioned” the resolution were asking if it was a necessary or appropriate council action item. The resolution was adopted by the ALA Council by a high majority of votes.

The resolution as passed is at the end of this report.

Work to be accomplished:

ALA President Barbara Stripling feels that literacy needs to belong to libraries and thus ALA in the public eye and that we as a committee, with the able assistance of OLOS staff, can make great strides to make ALA a portal, a go-to place online, for literacy, all literacies. There are already a lot of resources that are not visible to members and the public.

After discussion with Michelle Washington and John Amundsen from the OLOS office, below is the focus of the Literacy Committee this year:

1. Michelle and John will work on gathering links to existing resources and coordinating with the Web Advisory Committee to get more visibility for the Literacy page on the ALA site. <http://ala.org/advocacy/literacy>
2. John will post what he finds on ALA Connect as our workspace.
3. The Committee will scrutinize what he lists and suggest what is missing and how to emphasize what is already available, with the lens of both ALA members and the public. We will look at how a portal approach might be arranged.
4. The agenda of the Literacy Assembly will be to look at the Committee's work and collectively make recommendations of resources and areas to develop.

5. We (Committee and staff together) will promote our work via such ALA initiatives as <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/> and <http://atyourlibrary.org/> as well as social media channels, press releases and, hopefully, more visibility on the ALA front web page.

An example from Barbara Stripling that is our focus is to navigate the literacy stakes that different divisions have planted. Our work will highlight what is going on throughout the organization on literacy, not perceived as a threat to divisions or other units who might think big ALA is intruding on their turf. Michelle, John and the new literacy officer can be the connection with the staffs of those units once we have identified everything that's going on throughout the organization. We can develop a portal that pops the ALSC awards, AASL awards, YALSA awards, for example without the public having to know who "owns" these awards, what "ALSC" means, for instance This should be a win-win, a very positive situation.

6. At Midwinter 2014, the Literacy Committee discussed a "companion" resolution reaffirming ALA's commitment to multiple literacy but did not come to consensus. This will be revisited at Annual 2014.

2012-2013 ALA CD#37 (rev. 6/30/13)

2013 ALA Annual Conference

This resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on June 30, 2013

RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING ALA'S COMMITMENT TO BASIC LITERACY

Whereas the American Library Association's (ALA) mission is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all(ALA Policy A. 1.2);

Whereas the ALA Policy Manual recognizes that Literacy is a core service and responsibility of all libraries, The American Library Association reaffirms and supports the principle that lifelong literacy is a basic right for all individuals in our society and is essential to the welfare of the nation(ALA Policy B 8.1.2);

Whereas ALA advocates the achievement of national literacy through educational activities utilizing the historical and cultural experiences of libraries and librarians(ALA Policy B 8.1.2);

Whereas ALA confirms that libraries of all types, as appropriate to their mission, have the

responsibility to make literacy a high priority in planning and budgeting for library services(ALA Policy B 8.1.2);

Whereas ALA believes as pioneer and equal partners in the national literacy movement, libraries will continue to take a strong leadership role and must join with other literacy providers to urge local, state, federal, and private agencies to promote active development of literacy on a policy level and to support funding of the literacy services in libraries(ALA Policy B 8.1.2);

Whereas the ALA 2015 Strategic Plan recognizes Literacy as a Key Action Area as one of seven guiding principles for investment of energies and resources (ALA 2015 Strategic Plan);

Whereas basic literacy is defined as the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve ones goals and to develop ones knowledge and potential(Adopted by the Committee on Literacy June 24, 2005 from the United States Department of Education, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy);

Whereas ALA recognizes many forms of literacies, the core value of basic literacy must be reaffirmed as foundational for people of all ages and is the building block for developing other literacies;

Whereas ALA supports the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services initiatives such as the *American Dream Starts @ your library*; and

Whereas ALA recognizes the important work, resource lists and toolkits supporting a professional commitment to literacy, such as *Literacy for All: Adult Literacy @ your library*: now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. reaffirms and supports the principle that lifelong literacy is a basic right for all individuals in our society and is essential to the welfare of the nation;
2. reaffirms the core value of basic literacy as foundational for people of all ages and is the building block for developing other literacies;
3. encourages appropriate ALA units and Divisions to actively participate in the Association's Literacy Assembly; and
4. urges appropriate ALA units and libraries of all types to make basic literacy a high priority by incorporating literacy initiatives into programs and services for all users.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association Sunday, June 30, 2013 in Chicago, Illinois

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Kelly Johns, Chair

