

YALSA Board of Directors
ALA Annual Conference
June 25-30, 2020

Topic: **Status Report:**
EDJ Task Force 4: Addressing Institutional Bias and Racism in Libraries

Background: **Task Force chair Eric Schoenbaechler reports on its current activities to the YALSA Board.**

Action Required: Information

Overview:

While progress has been made, the Task Force has run into a few hurdles along the way. The initial meeting was held in early January, followed by all members researching relevant studies, articles and other links to help guide the group in the right direction. This also served to provide some ideas as to the look of the final product. This brought the group into early spring. At this point, unexpected changes began to unfold.

The initial Task Force chair stepped down in late February. The new chair was appointed in early March. A new member was also appointed to the Task Force. Shortly thereafter, COVID-19 brought most library operations to a standstill. Because of a change in her workload, this resulted in a second member of the Task Force stepping down. The group met in late March to regroup and discuss a plan to move forward.

A discussion of the timeframe and possible ideas for the final product were put forward. The closure of libraries and the need to adjust working habits from in-person to remote seemed to put a strain on the time available for group members to meet; hence, little progress has been made in the past two months. A meeting was scheduled for late May with all remaining members scheduled to attend; however, only two were present. Efforts to reschedule the meeting have been challenging, due to conflicting schedules.

As chair, my plan for progress is to bring the group members together to discuss how the current events surrounding race relations in the country are impacting libraries, and specifically, Young Adult services. I would like to gather ideas and insights gained from the national conversation, and determine ways libraries can use these insights to address institutional bias and racism. After identifying the key problems libraries face, I see the group also identifying possible solutions and building a roadmap for addressing the problems.

While the format of the final product is yet to be determined, I see this as a resource that could be shared with all YALSA members, as well as libraries throughout the country. I am cautiously optimistic that the October deadline is within reason; however, this depends on how much time committee members are able to dedicate to Task Force activities due to changing work responsibilities during these uncertain times.

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That said, with phased-in returns to slightly more normal library operations, I do believe the Task Force's work will be able to return to the pace necessary to complete our mandate.

Submitted by EDI Task Force 4: Addressing Institutional Bias and Racism in Libraries
chair Eric Schoenbaechler.