

YALSA Board of Directors
Midwinter Meeting, Virtual
January 22-26, 2021

Topic: Virtual Meeting Dispensation for Award Committees

Background: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 ALA Midwinter Conference is scheduled to take place online. Because of this highly unusual course of events, special dispensation is requested to allow the YALSA award committees to meet virtually. YALSA President Amanda Barnhart has provided the following recommendations for immediate Board action.

Action Required: Action

Overview:

The ALA Midwinter conference provides space for each of the five (5) YALSA award committees [Alex, Morris, Nonfiction, Odyssey (co-administered with ALSC), and Printz] to discuss the final titles in-person that have been nominated. Because of the cancellation of the in-person 2021 Midwinter Conference these in-person meetings are not possible. However, committees can meet in virtual sessions.

Recommendations:

1. Despite individual award policy statements and presumed but unofficial guidelines that designate an in-person January meeting, the Board will allow all YALSA Award committees to meet virtually throughout the month of January and are not beholden to meeting during the dates of the original in-person meeting.
2. Online asynchronous discussions, including the use of Connect, should be considered in addition to virtual meetings, to assist in developing the list of final candidates for discussion (e.g. using a straw poll to winnow the field of titles that do not require a full virtual discussion).
3. Chairs of each committee should contact the YALSA office to discuss January dates that will not conflict with other committee times, due to a limited number of slots available using the meeting software. As these January meetings remain mandatory as if they were in-person, all members of a committee must agree on times to meet. Meetings can either be within a contiguous timeframe or can be spaced out throughout the month of January for the final selection for the YMAS.

4. Chairs are reminded to avoid excessively long virtual meetings, including breaks as necessary.
5. Accommodation and consideration should be given to the variety of time zones that will be present in each committee membership when selecting times to meet. Encourage each committee member to have viable virtual settings, including a space to concentrate and participate without interruption, for fairly long periods of time.

Board Action:

The Board directs the Alex, Morris, Nonfiction, Odyssey, and Printz Award committees to meet virtually in lieu of the expected in-person meetings in January.

Additional Resources:

Printz Award Policies and Procedures

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards/printzaward/aboutprintz/criteria>

Nonfiction Award Policies and Procedures

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/nonfiction-award>