

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

Topic: Bylaws Language Change for Board Meetings

Background:

YALSA’s current Bylaws contain specific language about Board Meetings being held at ALA’s Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting. With onset of the pandemic and the cancellation of in-person meetings, this document proposes making the language of Article VII of YALSA’s Bylaws more flexible and well as incorporating YALSA EDI into the update. As Chair of the Organization & Bylaws committee, Franklin Escobedo and YALSA Board Member Kate Denier presents the following for the Board’s consideration.

Action Required: Action

Proposal:

Change the language of Article VII of YALSA’s Bylaws to allow flexibility in scheduling formal Board Meetings when warranted. Should the Board decide to move forward with one of these options, it would then go to a membership vote on the Spring 2021 ballot.

Rationale:

The current language of Article VII Section 2 of YALSA’s Bylaws:

“Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held in conjunction with the Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting of the ALA. Additional meetings may be called by the President or by written request of a majority of the members of the Board. Two weeks written notice of special meetings shall be given. A simple majority of the voting directors shall constitute a quorum to transact business. Vacant positions on the Board shall not be included in establishing a quorum.”

The Article as written does not account for an event cancellation contingency plan and should be updated to reflect YALSA’s commitment to EDI, transparency and fiscal responsibility.

Proposed Changes:

“Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held ~~in conjunction with the Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting of the ALA~~ **twice a year in person or virtually in conjunction with the Annual Conference and one meeting during the winter.** Additional meetings may be called by the President or by written request of a majority of the members of the Board. Two weeks written notice of special meetings shall be given. A simple majority of the voting directors shall constitute a quorum to transact business. Vacant positions on the Board shall not be included in establishing a quorum.”

The removal of the term Midwinter will align the Division with the new changes coming to the Winter meeting of ALA as well as leaving it vague enough to allow the Board to pick a time that would be most convenient to meet.

In YALSA’s Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion the Board of Directors affirmed,

“[a]ttending to issues of equity and inclusion are important because they help move the organization away from mere platitudes about diversity and demand measurable actions to redress the systemic power asymmetries that have kept certain groups of people on the periphery of the organization.” Amending the bylaws to allow for more flexible Board of Directors meeting structures and platforms would demonstrate YALSA’s commitment to action by:

- Allowing more members access to observe and participate in the governance of YALSA.
- Remove the financial burden of members to attend or participate in these meetings.
- Remove barriers for more members to join the Board of Directors. Such barriers include but are not limited to the financial support of an institution to attend ALA conferences for Board meetings, and the professional and personal schedule to allow for travel to ALA conference locations.
- These barriers disproportionately impact BiPOC YALSA members, and those serving teens in rural and school libraries. Removing these barriers will increase equity and accessibility for all members, allowing more members to participate fully in the association and is in accordance with/in keeping with the YALSA Equity Diversity Plan.

Fiscal Impact

1. Amending the Bylaws to allow for more flexible meetings would also save YALSA valuable financial resources.
2. Potential to grow the membership with more members being able to become part of the governing body virtually.

Lastly, in an uncertain future beyond the Midwinter meeting in January 2021, YALSA would be best positioned to update the bylaws to be more inclusive, transparent and flexible.

Proposed Options for Meetings:

1. The meetings of the Board of Directors will be held in-person twice a year. [Location and dates meetings occur will be unspecified]
2. The meetings of the Board of Directors will be held **in-person** once a year at the Annual Conference of ALA and virtually once a year. [Date of virtual meeting is unspecified]
3. The meetings of the Board of Directors will be held at the Annual Conference and at the winter event of the ALA. [Location of meetings will be unspecified]
4. The meetings of the Board of Directors will be held at the Annual Conference of the ALA and at the YALSA Symposium. [Location of meetings will be unspecified]

Proposed Additional Language to be added to Article VII:

- Should an event be cancelled, the meetings of the Board of Directors will be held virtually.
 - We would specify the event(s) depending on the option the Board selects.

Recommendation:

The YALSA Board adopt the changes to the language of Article VII Section 2 of YALSA’s

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[Item #17]**

Bylaws and direct the YALSA Executive Director to place the proposed by-law changes on the 2021 ballot for members to approve.

Additional Resources:

YALSA Bylaws:

http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/BYLAWS_2017approvedchanges.pdf

YALSA's statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/statement-equity-diversity-inclusion>