

**Spring Executive Committee Meeting
April 17, 2013, via Conference Call**

Topic: YALSA Member Managers’ Survey Results

Background: As a follow up to the board’s discussion in January around reaching library administrators, in March and April 2013 YALSA surveyed 316 members who indicated that they worked at the management level in a library. 68 individuals responded, for a 22% response rate. Sarah Flowers has provided a summary of findings below. The Executive Committee may want to review the results and determine, what if any, further areas of action they have to recommend to the board.

Action Required: Discussion

Summary of Results

1. When asked about the primary concerns of upper-level decision makers, respondents most often indicated budget (71%), demonstrating the library’s value to the community (65%), and keeping up with technology (60%).
2. Asked how upper-level decision makers perceive teens, responses were very positive, with 45.6% noting a “whole-hearted interest in engaging teens via the library” and an equal number “generally supportive of teen patrons.” Respondents could indicate more than one answer, and 26.5% thought their upper-level managers had “an outdated view of teens and their needs” while 13.2% thought that the managers saw teens “mostly as problems.” Only one respondent felt that management was openly hostile toward teen patrons.
3. Asked what level of support upper management displayed, the most common response (53%) was that they “ensure some library staff are successful in serving teens and that some resources are allocated to this demographic.”
4. Asked about existing services and programs supported by management, the respondents overwhelmingly cited teen collection development (94%), summer reading programs (79%), and dedicated teen spaces (79%).
5. When asked what services and programs they would like to see supported at a higher level by their management, the most common responses were dedicated staffing for teen services (51.5%), after school programs/homework help (44%), and professional development about teen services for library staff (41%).
6. Respondents were asked what level of awareness upper level management had about YALSA documents and resources. The item with the highest level of **awareness and use** was continuing education for staff, with 41.8% citing this. Respondents noted that management was aware of,

but did not use, other resources, including the competencies, the teen space guidelines, and the evaluation tool. Resources that ranked lowest in awareness were the position papers and issue briefs.

7. Asked what kinds of information their library's upper-level decision makers needed to better understand the value of teen services, respondents equally chose "research about the impact of teen services," "demographic data about teens," and "case studies that demonstrate the value of teen services."

8. 38 people responded to the optional short-answer question, "what would make upper-level decision makers more supportive of teen services." The most common responses were to have a better overall budget, so that teen services could also increase; to have more "return on investment" data about teen services; and to show how teen services fits into the overall community.

9. 25 people answered the optional question, "What ideas or tactics can you share about how YALSA can increase upper-level decision-makers' buy-in for teen services." Several people mentioned working with other organizations—both other youth-focused organizations in the community and other management-focused organizations, in ALA and otherwise. Others talked about sharing information with managers about teens, about successful programs, and about community engagement and advocacy.

10. 20 respondents shared success stories/best practices. These mostly focused on successful teen programs that brought positive notice to the community and the administration.

11. 18 respondents answered the question about what "buzz words," lingo, etc. that managers were using. Common responses included ROI and community engagement.

12. 13 answered the question about additional comments/suggestions. One suggested a "think tank of YALSA directors," another mentioned YALSA's grants, two mentioned the survey's focus on public (not school) libraries, and others mentioned the "future taxpayer" argument.

General Summary:

This survey confirmed many of the assumptions that we have made about library administration interest/support in YALSA and teen services. However, it was directed specifically at managers who are already YALSA members, so it may not be applicable to managers in libraries where there is no YALSA presence at the administrative level. Still, it gives some ideas for places to begin.

The Executive Committee may want to consider recommending board action in the following areas:

- Continue to focus on the research agenda, and on disseminating research to library managers.

- Look at ways to collaborate with other organizations, either within ALA or within the larger community to approach and share information about teens with managers.
- Continue to focus on our continuing education offerings, including webinars, and the instructional kits, and get more information about them out to library managers.
- Helping our members learn how to demonstrate the value of their teen services to their libraries and their communities.

Additional Resources

- Complete survey results are at <http://ow.ly/k1ewS>
- “Reaching Library Administrators” Midwinter 2013 board document, <http://ow.ly/k1eGM>