

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
via Conference Call
June 3, 2014**

Topic: Request for Board Action: Alex Award Seals

Background: Danielle Dreger-Babbitt has submitted a request for board action regarding the Alex Award.

Action Required: Action

Proposal

create and sell Alex Award seals for the winning titles

Rationale

I feel like that in the last 12 years, the Alex Awards have grown in popularity and importance. Librarians and library workers use the award as a selection tool and as a way to help readers bridge the gap from teen to adult books. Even though the award is for adult books with teen appeal and is a YALSA award, it does not have a seal for sale to distinguish that a book is a winner. At the recent 2014 ALA Midwinter Meeting, publishing reps with HarperCollins, Random House, and W.W. Norton all expressed interest to me in having seals for their books. HarperCollins and Random House put post-it notes on their Alex Award winners on the Monday morning after announcements to distinguish them as winners along with their other books that had won awards. I witnessed another publisher approach the ALA Store and ask for Alex Award seals. Based on these interactions, I believe it is time to revisit the idea of having seals for the Alex Awards. It is another way to promote YALSA awards and booklists.

If this request requires funding or other resources, please state how those will be obtained:

From the funding that provides seals for Printz, Nonfiction, Morris Awards, etc.

Areas of the Strategic Plan the proposal directly supports:

- Advocacy and Activism
- Continuous Learning and Professional Development

How the request benefits YALSA and its members: Having seals for the Alex Awards would help signify the importance of the award. They would serve as a reminder to librarians and library workers (YALSA members) that this list a tool they can use for readers' advisory and collection development like they can do with the Morris, Excellence in Nonfiction, Printz, and Edwards Awards. The apparent increased popularity of the list and award could mean even more YALSA members want to serve on the committee (or other selection committees). Award seals promote advocacy and activism.

--respectfully submitted, Danielle Dreger-Babbitt

Additional Information

- A digital image of the Alex Award seal is available for publishers to purchase
- History has shown that just because a few publisher representatives tell members that they are interested in purchasing the seal, reality does not bear that out. When the Odyssey award was established in 2008, the planning taskforce took the step of surveying publishers to determine interest in an award seal. The survey results showed there was a healthy interest in the seal; however, to date, not a single publisher has bought the seal. Part of this disconnect could be that the marketing reps that YALSA and ALSC surveyed do not have the decision making authority when it comes to bulk seal purchases. Additionally, publishers have indicated that there is currently a 'glut' of seals and that they are not willing to purchase every award seal. Rather, they prioritize which awards are the most important to them, and then purchase only those seals.
- Bulk seal sales are meant to be a revenue stream for YALSA that helps support member services and resources. At the beginning of FY14, ALA switched to a new seal printer and distributor. Expenses for producing them are up significantly this year. It is as yet unclear if these expenses are due to initial start-up costs, or if producing seals from this point forward will be more costly for YALSA.