

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Dallas
January 20 – 24, 2012**

Topic: Junior Board Concept

Background: One way organizations that serve those serving youth provide opportunities for youth participation is through a junior board. These boards are usually made up of young adults, in their early to late 20s, who help the organization plan and test projects and activities. They also serve as advocates for their organizations, providing voices of support from unexpected venues.

The YALSA Board may find that an association Junior Board is a way to bring in ideas of the young people that members serve, a good way to inform teens about the work that librarians do within a community, and provide teens with opportunities for meaningful youth participation. As YALSA serves librarians serving young people between the ages of 12 and 18, a junior board of the association would need to be made up of teens within that age range in order to get directly to those that members serve. The proposal for the YALSA Junior Board provides information on the goals of this type of Board, who would be involved, and options for how this Board might be organized.

Action Required: Discussion

Rationale

Frequently YALSA members, including Board members, ask if there are ways to involve teens in the work of the association. Typically, Junior Boards are local or regional in nature and are made up of those in their early to late 20s that are interested in supporting the work of a particular organization. This includes taking part in planning for programs and activities of an organization as well as participating in fundraising work. While a YALSA Junior Board would be national and would focus primarily on older teens, not those in their 20s, the work of the group could provide the association with strong opportunities for learning about the needs of teens, in order to better support members, while at the same time giving teens the chance to help YALSA make decisions in a variety of areas related to publishing, marketing, and trends in libraries. This youth participation component can help increase both the effectiveness and impact of YALSA's work in teen services. This interaction with teens will support YALSA's capacity building goal of its new strategic plan.

Through their work on the YALSA Junior Board, teens will have the chance to gain experience in leading a national organization. They will be asked to actively participate in face-to-face and virtual meetings, plan meeting agendas, work with leaders in the field, work collaboratively with their peers from across the country, and keep to timelines and deadlines. All of these activities will help them as they move out of high school and into

educational and work opportunities. Work on the Junior Board will also support acquisition of a number of developmental assets including support, social competence, positive identity, personal values, and empowerment.

YALSA members will benefit from the YALSA Junior Board in a number of ways including being able to see how to successfully build youth participation into planning and development activities. Members will be asked to be actively engaged in nominating and supporting Junior Board members and will also have the chance to improve their programs and services through the ideas suggested by Junior Board members and implemented by YALSA. These member connections support the YALSA strategic plan goal of member engagement.

Helping YALSA to meet the advocacy goal of its strategic plan, Junior Board members will also serve as advocates for YALSA and young adult library services on a local and national level, complimenting the work done by YALSA members. Specifically, Junior Board members will act as advocates for teen librarianship and YALSA by:

- Speaking up about the work they do with YALSA and their library at the local, regional, state, and national level.
- Demonstrating to various communities that libraries and YALSA support teen growth and development through engagement in meaningful activities.

Specific activities in which Jr. Board members may engage in order to support YALSA and it's members include:

- Develop proposals for the Board to consider and/or work with the Board on proposals on a case by case basis.
- Provide feedback to the YALSA Board on current trends and how YALSA can support members in understanding and integrating those trends into their services
- Post on social media about libraries, YALSA, and the value of library services to teens.
- Participate in national and state library legislative days as a part of a YALSA/teen librarian contingent.

Proposal

The implementation of a Junior Board is presented as a two-phase process. The first phase would integrate a trial implementation in which five to seven 15 to 18 year-olds are involved in YALSA governance activities in an entirely virtual capacity. (These activities would make use of pre-existing YALSA technologies such as Adobe Connect, ALA Connect, and wikis.) Teens would be assisted in their virtual work by an appointed liaison, a YALSA member with proven leadership skills and experience with youth engagement.

At the end of year one of phase 1, the Junior Board, the Liaison, and the YALSA Executive Committee would complete an evaluation to rate effectiveness of the Junior Board, including participation, virtual effectiveness, and how well YALSA's strategic

goals were enhanced via the work of the Junior Board. While the evaluation takes place, phase 1 Junior Board activities will continue.

In phase 2 the YALSA Board will implement a plan for development of a fuller Junior Board that will move beyond virtual participation. The full Junior Board will be made up of seven to ten 15-18 year olds from around the United States.

Implementation

All Junior Board members, in phase 1 and phase 2, will have to be nominated by librarians, educators, or community members. Once nominated, a potential Junior Board member will be asked to fill out an application. Applications will be vetted by a task force made up of at least one current YALSA Board member and at least two YALSA members at large with experience in organizing and managing teen advisory groups. Preferably, the task force will include a member of the YALSA Teen Advisory Group Interest Group.

The timeline for the nomination, application, and selection process for both phase 1 and phase 2 would be:

Nominations/application process announced	July 1
Applications and nominations submitted	November 30
Selection of junior board members	January 1
Junior board members begin work	February 1

Junior Board Member Terms - Phases 1 and 2

In order to provide consistency in the membership of the Junior Board, members will serve for 12 months, with terms beginning in February and ending in January of the following year. Two members, selected by both the Liaison and the Junior Board, will be appointed to an additional two month term to provide peer mentorship and guidance for the incoming Board members. All Junior Board members will have the option to apply to serve a second term.

Liaison - Phases 1 and 2

A YALSA past president, or member leader with proven ability to work with youth, will work as the liaison to the Junior Board. These YALSA leaders are well suited to mentoring and supporting the work of this group. As the liaison to the Junior Board, the liaison will work with YALSA staff and the current president to orient the board to the work of their group, help them plan projects and meetings, and act as the connector between the YALSA Board and staff to Junior Board members.

Conference Liaison - Phase 2

As many Junior Board members may be under 18, each member will have to travel to conference with a designated chaperone (perhaps a librarian) or parent. A Liaison will be appointed to help Junior Board members and the adult that accompanies them to Conference navigate various aspects of Conference attendance including finding meeting locations, and so on. The Conference Liaison may be a member of the Local Arrangements Committee, a Past President, or another YALSA member who is able to take on this role.

Evaluation - Phases 1 and 2

Each member of the YALSA Junior Board will be required to participate in a Board assessment at the end of their term. In addition, any YALSA member group members who work with the Junior Board will be surveyed as to the effectiveness and engagement of the Junior Board on projects developed and tasks assigned.

After the first year of the program, an evaluation of phase one will be initiated. This evaluation will look at the success of the Junior Board in meeting specific goals related to YALSA governance and youth participation. The evaluation will also consider the age of the teens participating as Junior Board members and assess the ability to open up that age range to younger teens. Finally, the phase 1 evaluation will examine the success of virtual participation and examine the merit of a transition to a Junior Board that includes face-to-face meetings.

Next Steps/Action

The Board approve this proposal in concept and approve the formation of a task force that will, by Annual 2012:

- Develop a Junior Board application process and form.
- With YALSA staff develop a marketing plan for getting the word out to librarians and youth service organizations about the Junior Board.
- Develop a job description for the Junior Board Liaison.
- Work with the YALSA Office staff to determine the best way to use the association's existing technology infrastructure for virtual Junior Board activities.
- Work with the YALSA Office staff to develop a budget for phase 1 and begin seeking out possible sponsors for both phase 1 and phase 2.

Additional Resources

Junior Boards

- <http://www.mercyhome.org/juniorboard>
- <http://fotp.org/about/junior-board>
- <http://www.catholiccharitiesny.org/get-involved/junior-board/>

Junior Advisory Boards

- State Farm Youth Advisory Board <http://www.statefarmyab.com/>
- YPulse Advisory Board <http://tinyurl.com/2csgjk5>

Youth Participation & Leadership

- 15 Points: Successfully Involving Youth in Decision Making: <http://bit.ly/xi8eFa>

- The Benefits of Serving on the Board of a Non-Profit Organization
<http://tinyurl.com/3s6f88h>