

**Spring Executive Committee Meeting
April 19th, 2011 via Conference Call**

Topic: ALSC Request for Mediated Discussion

Background: In February ALSC sent out a message to their members with an update regarding their ‘scope of attention’ issue. The message said that the ALSC Board was going to invite the YALSA Board to discuss the matter. On Feb. 9th, Kim Patton, Julie Corsaro, Aimee Strittmatter and Beth Yoke participated in a brief conference call to discuss ALSC’s request for a mediated discussion, which ALSC suggested having during the Fall Executive Committee Meeting in October. At the end of the call Kim said she would discuss the matter with the YALSA Executive Committee during their April conference call. The content of the ALSC message to the membership is provided below.

Action Required: Discussion

The Association for Library Service to Children
February 1, 2011

Dear ALSC Members,

On behalf of the ALSC Board of Directors, the following letter is being sent to you.

At the recent Midwinter meeting, the ALSC Board of Directors rescinded the motion recommending change to ALSC's scope of attention at the upper end (Motion Bylaw 11.1.17.20 part 2). Therefore, the motion to change the upper end of ALSC's scope of attention will not appear on the spring ballot.

The Board considered this action at the request of president Julie Corsaro. Prior to this Midwinter Conference, the Board reviewed the historical background on the issue (available at <http://ala.org/node/123418>, Doc #3b). Board members also reviewed the many member comments on ALSC-L and ALA Connect. At the January 8 board meeting where the issue was considered, the Board heard comments from all ALSC members who asked to speak.

In grappling with the sensitive and important issue before it, the Board considered several factors in addition to the age range itself: the degree of Board consensus necessary to bring an issue to member vote, and the corollary issue of voting statistics. For the past 3 ballot issues, the lowest percentage by which any of the measures passed was 92%. This suggests to the Board that ALSC members rely on the Board to bring to ballot only measures for which it has a consensus in the best interests of ALSC and its members.

One definition of a good board, according to ALA Parliamentarian Eli Mina, is that it's a learning board. The ALSC Board's judgment on the scope of attention issue is that flaws in the process that brought the issue to ballot were significant enough to merit a new decision-making process. Therefore, the Board has outlined the following steps to move forward:

The ALSC Board will invite the YALSA Board to participate in a mediated discussion about the issue of the age overlap in service between the two divisions. While details have yet to be determined, we hope that this discussion between the leadership of the two divisions can take place as soon as possible. The principal goal of this dialogue is a mutual understanding of each division's concerns.

At the Annual Conference, there will be opportunity for a face-to-face discussion among the membership about this and other issues. Details of where and when this discussion will occur will be provided in advance of Annual. The discussion of this issue on ALA-Connect will remain open.

As your board members we welcome your comments on this and any other issue. ALSC's leadership is informed, and our organization strengthened, when members thoughtfully and respectfully engage on issues of concern. Our new draft strategic plan identifies our vision as "creating a better future for children through libraries." Thank you for joining with us to realize that vision.

Respectfully,

The 2010-11 ALSC Board of Directors