

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Chicago  
January 30 – February 2, 2015**

**Topic:** Confirmation of Morris Committee Policy Change

**Background:** In December the YALSA Board, via its ALA Connect space, reviewed a request for Board action from the Morris Award Committee Chair, Robin Kurz. The Board voted to adopt the proposed change, as presented below. Including the item as a part of this meeting simply ensures it will be entered into the official record of the association.

**Action Required:** Consent

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**Request:** Change the Morris Award eligibility calendar, currently 1/1 to 12/31, to the 11/1 to 10/31 calendar used by the Nonfiction and Odyssey Committees.

**Rationale:**

- The current eligibility calendar for the Morris Award puts late year titles at a distinct disadvantage, given the extremely tight deadline for the announcement of the Morris shortlist. For example, a few eligible titles release in late December. If we are able to find ARCs for those titles and should one of those warrant a committee nomination, all of the committee must read the final published version of that title. More than one publisher has told us that the earliest they could have those published versions to us would be mid-December, which is after the finalists are announced.
- This is something that previous Morris committees have struggled with, as indicated by previous chairs.
- Since Morris and Nonfiction share many other similarities (timing of the announcement, shortlists, the Morris/Nonfiction Reading Challenge, a mutual program at Midwinter), it would make more sense for the two to be using the same publication eligibility calendar.
- The change would help the committee function more efficiently. Members would be able to spread their reading out over more of the year, rather than having a massive surge of reading in October and November. For the chair and the administrative assistant, communications and relationships with publishers would be more conducive to productivity. Morris already has very strict author eligibility requirements, which the condensed timeline just heightens.
- For the organization as a whole and all of its members, the Morris committee would be able to build a stronger list of titles, one that actually reflects all of the eligible YA debuts, rather than just the ones published before or near the current shortlist deadline.

**Requested Action:** the board vote to change the eligibility calendar for the Morris Award to 11/1 to 10/31, to go into effect with the committee that begins work Feb. 1, 2015, and to direct the Executive Director to work with staff to update the committee's policy to reflect this change.

**Additional Resources**

- Morris Policies and Procedures,  
[www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards/morris/morrispolicy](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards/morris/morrispolicy)
- Nonfiction Policies and Procedures,  
[www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards/nonfiction/policies](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards/nonfiction/policies)