YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Annual Conference, Orlando
June 24 – June 28, 2016

Topic: **Confirmation of Organizational Plan Adoption**

Background: **After the board's facilitated discussions at the 2016 Midwinter Meeting, the group spent the next three months developing and refining a new organizational plan for YALSA. On March 22nd the board finalized and voted to adopt three portions of the plan: the introduction, priorities and intended impact statement. Over the next few weeks, the board discussed, refined and finalized the remaining portions of the plan. On April 27th YALSA's Board voted to adopt the full plan, 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**

3-Year Organizational Plan, 2016 – 2018

Preface
This organizational plan is intended to be a guiding document to provide overall direction for YALSA for three years. A companion document, the implementation plan, lays out specific activities to be carried out over the three years, and outlines the necessary resources and metrics needed for implementation and evaluation. The implementation plan will be a flexible, living document that evolves over time as work progresses toward the three priority areas outlined in the organizational plan.

I.   Introduction: A Legacy of Success Since 1957

YALSA has a long and proud history dating back to 1957 of strengthening library services for young adults and supporting the library staff who provide these services. YALSA has strived to change with the times, and in many ways it has been *ahead* of its time, consistently launching initiatives to integrate new services and technologies into young adult library services and to address the needs of disadvantaged youth.

YALSA now recognizes that the current and emerging needs of society call for the organization to enter a new stage in its journey. These issues prompting this shift are documented in YALSA's report, *The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action*[1] (referred to herein as the "futures report"), which was adopted by the YALSA

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[1] Available at www.ala.org/yaforum/future-library-services-and-teens-project-report

Board in December 2013 as the organization's foundational planning document. The issues listed in the report include:

- The need for greater cultural competency on the part of those working for and with teens, based on the growing diversity of the U.S. population
- The increase in the number of teens who are living in poverty, unemployed, and/or homeless
- The existence of significant and negative societal pressures teens are faced with including bullying, homophobia, and violence, which can lead to depression, eating disorders, and mental health issues
- A stark "achievement gap" between Caucasians/Asians and African-Americans/Hispanics
- High levels of teen unpreparedness for the 21st century workforce
- Socioeconomic disparities in ownership of the technologies that play an ever increasing role in teens' social, personal, and academic lives

In short, teens need libraries and library staff in a way they may never have needed them before. Today's adolescents face an expanding array of social issues that place them at physical and psychological risk, and libraries can help. Libraries can contribute to solving and alleviating the issues and problems that negatively impact teens, and can put more teens on the path to a successful and fulfilling life.

To play this role, library staff working for and with teens will need to take on roles and responsibilities that were not part of their job description in the past. Further, they will need to adopt an evolving orientation that shifts some focus away from traditional aspects of the job like collection development to allow for greater innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking. What is needed is no less than a transformation of the teen library services profession.

II. A Theory of Change

Through the strategic planning process, the YALSA Board has updated its mission and vision. The vision is the overarching purpose that YALSA will serve with everything it does, now and for years to come.

<div align="center">*Mission*</div>

Our mission is to support library staff in alleviating the challenges teens face, and in putting all teens – especially those with the greatest needs – on the path to successful and fulfilling lives.

Our vision is that all teens have access to quality library programs and services – no matter where they occur – that link them to resources, connected learning opportunities, coaching, and mentoring that are tailored to the unique circumstances of the community and that create new opportunities for all teens' personal growth, academic success, and career development.

This vision could be advanced in many ways. It is no surprise, then, that YALSA has often tried to be "all things to all people," and as a result YALSA has sometimes struggled to achieve all of its ambitious goals. The Board has articulated the need for YALSA to have a clearer strategic focus that all people doing the work of YALSA—and ideally all YALSA members—will be able to articulate. Further, addressing the challenges identified above implies that some of YALSA's activities that made sense in the past may not make sense to pursue in the future, and will need to evolve or be sunsetted.

One framework that can provide this strategic focus is a "theory of change" that links YALSA's activities to the outcomes it wants to produce. A theory of change sheds light on an organization's unstated assumptions about its work, and supports outcome-based planning. The core elements of a theory of change include:

- An intended impact statement (the goal the organization wants to accomplish)
- The theory of change itself (a depiction of the causal links between activities and outcomes)
- A learning agenda (the areas in which research is needed to fill in any gaps in the theory of change)

Using the Theory of Change model, the YALSA Board engaged in a strategic process that built upon the futures report noted previously and produced the following intended impact statement:

III. Intended Impact Statement

To meaningfully address the challenges teens face today and to put more teens on the path to a successful and fulfilling life, YALSA will support library staff who work for and with teens in the transformation of teen library services so that:

- Libraries reach out to and serve ALL teens in the community no matter what their backgrounds, interests, needs, or abilities, and whether or not they frequent the library space.
- The library "space" is at once both physical and virtual. It connects teens to other people, printed materials, technology, and digital content, not limiting teens to a designated teen area but rather inviting them into the full scope of the library's assets and offerings.
- Teens co-create, co-evaluate, and co-evolve library programs and activities with library staff and skilled volunteers (including mentors and coaches) based on their passions and interests. These programs and activities are connected to teens' personal, work, or academic interests across multiple literacies; generate measurable outcomes for teens' skills and knowledge; and are tailored to the unique circumstances of the community.

It will be essential for the YALSA Board, staff, and members to use this intended impact statement to determine whether or not proposed initiatives are appropriate for YALSA to pursue with its time, energy, and financial resources. If YALSA is not thoughtful about what it will and will not do, then it may continue to see its efforts spread so thin as to dilute its actual impact on the issues that matter most.

IV. Priorities

To achieve this impact, the YALSA Board identified the following priority areas:

Leading the transformation of teen library services

Strategy	3-Year Outcomes
Leverage YALSA programs, activities, and communications to promote the transformation of teen library services.	*75% of members' libraries have applied at least one aspect of the envisioned future with respect to their teen services.*
Leverage relationships with state and regional associations to promote the transformation of teen library services.	*By 2018, there is a YALSA presence at a minimum of 10 state or regional conferences per year.*
	By 2018, YALSA membership has grown by at least 15%.
Implement ongoing curricula to build knowledge and skills required to bring about the transformation of teen library services.	*75% of members demonstrate familiarity with transformation-related concepts.*
Institute a three-track leadership development curriculum for (1) front-line library staff, (2) managers, and (3) senior leadership for YALSA and the profession.	*30% of YALSA members have used YALSA's leadership development offerings in some form.*
	90% of those who have used YALSA's leadership development offerings self-assess as having increased or improved their leadership skills.
Develop a program of training and assessment for cultural competency.	*At least 100 YALSA members are qualified to provide cultural competency training in their own region.*
Model diversity for the field through YALSA's recruitment, membership, and governance.	*The number of YALSA members with diverse backgrounds, as defined by ALA, has increased by 20%.*

Advocacy to policy makers at all levels to increase support for teen library services

Strategy	3-Year Outcomes

Train, empower, and support YALSA members to conduct advocacy at all levels.	*100% of YALSA members conduct advocacy at some level and recognize that they are doing so. Activities include but not limited to participating in local youth development boards and groups.*
	At least five governor's advisory boards/councils have YALSA members on them by end of 2018.
	Library funding at the state level increases by 10%.
Conduct quarterly briefings on Capitol Hill for legislators, policymakers, and their staffs.	*20% of congressional members have staff who have attended at least one YALSA briefing on Capitol Hill.*

Funder and partner development

Strategy	3-Year Outcomes
Develop and implement an entrepreneurial funder and partner development strategy.	*All libraries for which teens are a potential audience, including but not limited to public and school libraries, have access to sufficient funding to apply to at least one aspect of the envisioned future with respect to their teen services.*
	YALSA funding to support members and their libraries exceeds $5 million per year.
Ensure members are capable of engaging current and potential funders and partners at the local level.	*All members' libraries will have established at least one community partnership that helps them achieve a future-focused transformation of teen services.*

The Board drafted a list of activities, resources, and metrics associated with these strategies and 3-year outcomes, which together comprises the implementation plan. This list is presented in **Appendix A**. These activities, resources, and metrics will evolve over time as YALSA learns how best to pursue the strategies presented above. This implementation plan is a living document, and its success will depend on YALSA's ability to learn and adapt as it moves forward.

V. Learning Agenda

The activities described are a "heavy lift," and in some cases represent ventures into areas that are new and unfamiliar for YALSA. For this reason, to achieve its intended impact, YALSA leaders and staff will need to learn on an ongoing basis. The learning agenda itself will evolve over time, as YALSA gains mastery of some areas and identifies new areas that require attention. This learning could take place in several ways:

- Learning "on the job" as staff, board, and volunteers seek out the information to do what they've been tasked to do

- Tapping into the existing knowledge of YALSA members and library staff working for and with teens

- Identifying continuing education topics to focus on and obtaining training from other entities, such as ALA, ASAE, and external consultants

Learning is required in the following areas related to leading the transformation of teen library services:
- Techniques for collecting data about members, people in the profession, and libraries consistently and unobtrusively in order to measure progress toward the transformation

- How to create and sustain a "movement" within the field of teen library services, since that is essentially what YALSA has committed to do. This will require YALSA to learn new ways of identifying, inspiring, motivating, and collaborating with other entities that are relevant to teens

- Innovative staffing and member/volunteer models for driving significant change that move from bureaucratic to entrepreneurial management styles

- Current and emerging best practices for delivering high-quality continuing education content—e.g., leadership development, and cultural competency

- Mapping the teen services "system" or "neighborhood" as a means to identifying potential funders, partners, programs, activities, etc. that would reach beyond libraries. With this transformation, YALSA is expanding its scope of interest, and it will need to learn about the larger environment in which it now seeks to operate

- The use of prizes, rewards, and other incentives to drive change. This is an area of rapid growth in the social sector, so there are many emerging best practices that YALSA can adopt

- Monitor relevant trend research on an ongoing basis and conduct new research as needed to ensure YALSA's futures-focused thinking does not get stale or outdated

- Mapping the ideas, tools, materials, and assessments related to cultural competency to identify the key components necessary for YALSA and for library staff working for and with teens. YALSA will need to determine what its specific needs are, identify which needs can be met by materials that already exist, and then create anything else that is required

- Training for YALSA board and staff on cultural competency to ensure that YALSA is able to model this competency for the rest of the field

Learning is required in the following areas related to advocacy:
- How to assess YALSA's advocacy effectiveness among policymakers, legislators, and their staffs. Surveys may not be feasible to capture this information, so YALSA will have to find other ways to assess its efforts in order to make necessary improvements to its advocacy strategy

- How to plan and execute congressional briefings, in particular by drawing on the expertise of ALA, ASAE, other associations in general, and YALSA's current and future advocacy partners

- Mapping out existing elected leaders' (e.g. mayors' and governors') advisory councils and boards and finding out how they can best be used as vehicles for YALSA's advocacy efforts

- How the legislative process works at the state level, best practices for advocacy efforts at the state level, and how best to advocate for teen services within that process

Learning is required in the following areas related to funder and partner development:
- Identifying and prioritizing types of funding opportunities both for YALSA and for libraries (e.g. grants, capacity capital, unrestricted support, etc.)

- Creation and management of a rigorous funder and partner development function. For partners, this includes how to identify potential partners and how to structure the partnerships themselves, drawing from best practices used in other settings. YALSA will also need to pass this funder and partner development learning on to the profession

- Identifying and using systems that monitor and evaluate impact so that YALSA can demonstrate its fulfillment of grant or partner terms, and that funders and partners can assess the success of their investments

Adopted by the YALSA Board of Directors, April 27, 2016