

## YALSA Board of Directors Meeting

**Topic:** Teen Read Week and Teen Tech Week

**Background:** This document came out of a discussion held in the March 2017 Board chat, that focused on evaluating YALSA’s portfolio of programs and services to better align them to YALSA’s Organizational Plan goals. This document explores ways that Teen Tech Week™ and Teen Read Week™ can be changed to better meet teen, member, and YALSA needs. This document was submitted by Crystle Martin, Melissa McBride, Jessica Snow, and Mega Subramaniam for the Board’s consideration

**Action Required:** Discussion

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### Challenge:

Based on participant surveys, TRW and TTW are not fully meeting the needs or expectations of members and library staff. Additionally, these activities are time consuming to plan and implement, and they are suffering from a lack of purpose/focus. They seem to be trying to fill multiple roles, including but not limited to library staff continuing education, programmatic support for teen services, public awareness raising, fundraising, member engagement, and partner engagement.

To hone in on what the best path forward is for TRW and TTW, the Board will want to answer the question: what is the primary goal of these activities? What are we trying to accomplish with TRW and TTW, especially in the context of the Organizational Plan?

- If the main goal is to raise awareness about the importance of effective teen services, then a public awareness campaign would be the optimal direction to take. A public awareness campaign is an organized, systematic effort implemented through various communications channels to alert an audience or audiences to a significant interest or concern. It includes multiple components (messaging, grassroots outreach, media relations, government affairs, fundraising, etc.) to help reach a specific goal.
- If the goal is to support members around a particular need, such as continuing education, designing effective programming, engaging teens who need the most support, building capacity at the local level, etc., then once the most pressing need(s) is identified, then a member service or initiative can be designed to support it.
- If the goal is something else, then what is it?

### Proposal:

Address both the issue of public awareness as well as TRW/TTW participants’ need for support in creating and implementing effective teen programs and services

1. Re-envision and more narrowly focus TRW and TTW as a single, monthlong public awareness campaign to raise awareness about the value of teen services, and move it to an optimal time of year for advocacy efforts.
2. Create a means to help members and the library implement teen services and programs year-round.

**Rationale:**

1. To better align with YALSA’s vision for 21<sup>st</sup> century teen services, as outlined in the Futures Report. Refocusing our efforts around a public awareness campaign that promotes a holistic view of teen services and teen learning, as opposed to focusing just on the stuff (e.g. books for TRW and digital tools for TTW) will better meet teen, member and YALSA needs
2. To free up member and staff time to be shifted to the strategic priority areas in the Organizational Plan
  - a. Running just one event would cut the volunteer and staff time in half. Even if TRW and TTW were evolved into a single monthlong event, it would take less work, because only one taskforce will be needed and the workload would be cut in half—see below

<b>Activities conducted annually</b>	<b>Done for TRW</b>	<b>Done for TTW</b>
Seek national spokespersons, sponsors & nonprofit supporters	X	X
Create theme-specific logo, web site & content each year	X	X
Implement a grants-to-members program	X	X
Provide eLearning for the library community	X	X
Provide sample program ideas	X	X
Create theme-specific products	X (sold)	X (given-away)
Create Marketing/PR materials for libraries	X	X
Conduct national press/media outreach	X	X
Recruit, appoint & support a member group to help with planning & implementation	X	X

3. To advance the advocacy goals in the Organizational Plan, strategically embed advocacy into the effort to raise awareness both within and without the library community about the importance of effective teen services

- a. Moving the event to a time of year that is more strategic for advocacy efforts can help support a key part of YALSA's Organizational Plan. June, July and Aug. are out of consideration since we want to include our school library members. April is out because that's School Library Month. May and Sept. are not optimal because schools are too busy w/ year-end and year-beginning work. That leaves Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan., and Feb. In terms of embedding advocacy activities into this event, the fall is bad because Congress is winding down for the year, and most state legislatures are not in session then. This leaves Jan. and Feb. Since Midwinter is typically in Jan., Feb. is the better month for YALSA and ALA (as there are also no national ALA events or celebrations in Feb.)
4. To increase opportunity for participation of members and libraries by doubling the celebration time from two separate weeks to four weeks. Re-focusing the event can attract new sponsors, nonprofit supporters and donors, especially those not specifically focused on traditional or digital literacy, but function in a broader space (e.g. Brodart or Boys & Girls Clubs of America).
  - a. Evidence suggests members would appreciate a longer event rather than a shorter one because 1) it gives them more flexibility with planning, and 2) for libraries who don't currently have a robust teen services program, a national celebration gives them both a justification as well as motivation for focusing on teens.

**Potential Options:**

To re-envision TRW and TTW as a public awareness campaign

1. Keep TRW and TTW as-is and find another way to free up member and staff time to work on Organizational Plan priorities
2. Create a taskforce, to combine TRW and TTW into either a one week event, or a monthlong event that is focused on raising public awareness as to the importance of teen services
  - a. Model it in part on the Lights on Afterschool celebration, of which advocacy is a primary goal. [www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm) (based on the idea by Jennifer Korn  
[www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/NationalEvent\\_AN14.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/NationalEvent_AN14.pdf))
  - b. Continue to design the event so it is celebrated at public and school libraries of all sizes across the country to ensure community and national impact.
  - c. Continue to structure the event so participating libraries can celebrate in a way that best meets the needs of the teens in their community
  - d. Partner with a national organization(s) to increase the event's profile and provide needed resources.
3. Sunset TRW/TTW completely in 2018 and from 2019 forward partner with other organizations to celebrate events throughout the year, like Digital Learning Day and National Library Week
4. Other?

To provide programmatic support for year-round teen programs and services

1. Create a short-term member taskforce to explore the issue and come up with recommendations for the board's consideration
2. Direct staff to explore the issue and come up with recommendations
3. Direct the Standing Board Committee on Leading the Transformation of Teen Services to explore the issue and come up with recommendations
4. Other?

**Fiscal Impacts:**

1. Combining TRW and TTW into one public awareness campaign, whether a week or a month would cut staff and volunteer time in half and decrease other financial expenses, such as marketing and product development. However, initially significant member and staff time will be needed to flesh out the new vision and format.
2. There is potential to attract new sponsors and funders. However, existing sponsors and funders would be given right of first refusal.
3. A month-long campaign creates potential to boost product sales, since currently products are only being sold for TRW.

**Evaluation:**

- An evaluation should take place one year after any change to TRW & TTW to measure member satisfaction and progress toward YALSA's advocacy goal. The evaluation should be carried out by a taskforce established by the Board and appointed by the President.

**Possible Next Steps**

The Board could direct the Board's LTTS Standing Committee to investigate how YALSA could best leverage existing resources, or develop new, to support members in year-round teen services efforts, and to submit recommendations to the Board by no later than Jan. 9, 2018 for consideration at their Midwinter Meeting.

The Board can opt to accept this document's proposal in concept to evolve TRW & TTW into a single monthlong public awareness campaign, and directs the Board's Advocacy Standing Committee to work with the Executive Director flesh out a vision for a monthlong teen services public awareness campaign and to submit the document to the Board by no later than Jan. 9, 2018 for consideration at their Midwinter Meeting.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Raw Data:**

2017 TTW Participant feedback survey - 251 Respondents

- YALSA celebrates both Teen Tech Week and Teen Read Week. Would combining these separate events into one big event make a significant difference in your ability to promote teen services and programs?

- 49% say it would be helpful or make no difference
- Why did you participate in Teen Tech Week?
  - 73% said “To help teens build digital literacy skills”
  - 85% said “to encourage more teens to use the library”
  - 68% said “to raise awareness in my community about what the library offers teens”
  - 14% said “My library doesn’t do much for teens & this is an easy way to offer something for this age group”
- Only 56% said the theme “Be the Source of Change” applied to their teens
- 90% did not participate in the Twitter Take-over
- 57% agreed or strongly agreed that more teens accessed their libraries during TTW
- What One thing can YALSA do to make TTW better for next year? (Most common answers)
  - Program ideas, step-by-step instructions, toolkits
  - Calls for more “small community” options

2016 TRW Participant Feedback Survey - 173 Respondents

- Why did you participate in TRW?
  - 95% say “To encourage more teens to read for fun”
  - 89% say “To encourage more teens to use the library”
  - 53% say “To raise awareness in my community about what the library offers teens”
  - 14% say “My library doesn’t do much for teens & this is an easy way to offer something for this age group”
  - 22% say “To provide resources to underserved teens in my community”
- Which advocacy-related activities did you incorporate into your TRW efforts?
  - 3% say “Invited a policy maker, elected official or VIP to a TRW event”
  - 6% say “Invited the media to an event”
  - 5% say “Wrote or had a library advocate write a letter to the editor about the important role libraries play in helping teens build critical literacy skills”
  - 1% say “Asked my town council or school board to officially declare Oct. 9-15, 2016 Teen Read Week”
  - 31% say “Collected data and/or stories about the library’s TRW efforts to share with my supervisor, library board or other stakeholders”
  - 62% say “None”
- 60% agreed or strongly agreed that more teens accessed their libraries during TRW
- What One thing can YALSA do to make TRW better for next year? (Most common responses) -
  - More programming materials
  - More free/higher quality themed promotional materials
  - More grants/grants accessible in a wider geographic area

- More options for schools

**Teen Read Week™ and Teen Tech Week™ Revenues/Expenses by Fiscal Year**

TRW and TTW are largely pass-through programs. In other words, sponsorship, grant and product revenue are passed on to members in the form of grants for members, and free training and resources, like the Making in the Library Toolkit and annual TRW and TTW planning webinars. This means that the amount of financial support to members fluctuates based on the amount of financial support YALSA receives. However, 12 – 15% of sponsor dollars are earmarked for administration costs.

**Teen Read Week**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Expenses (excluding staff time)</b>	<b>Product Royalties</b>	<b>Sponsorships</b>	<b>Grant Support</b>	<b>**Estimated Staff Costs</b>
FY16	\$1,860	\$1,288	\$0	\$10,000	\$23,000
FY15	-\$1,172	\$3,712	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$22,540
FY14	\$15,370	\$5,058	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$22,315
FY13	\$44,733	\$4,786	\$48,000	\$10,000	\$21,869
FY12	\$26,226	\$6,427	\$30,300	\$10,000	\$21,432
FY11	\$26,174	\$5,187	\$43,000	\$0	\$21,432
FY10	\$53,671	\$8,574	\$55,500	\$0	\$21,432
FY09	\$51,411	\$5,645	\$35,000	\$0	\$21,432

**Teen Tech Week**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Expenses (excluding staff time)</b>	<b>*Product Royalties</b>	<b>Sponsorships</b>	<b>**Estimated Staff Costs</b>
FY17	\$7,296	N/A	\$33,000	\$23,000

**Board of Directors – Annual 2017**  
**Topic: Teen Read Week & Teen Tech Week**

FY16	\$24,984	N/A	\$60,000	\$22,540
FY15	\$31,329	N/A	\$60,000	\$22,315
FY14	\$23,025	\$3,241	\$60,000	\$21,869
FY13	\$1,002	\$1,125	\$0	\$21,432
FY12	\$1,752	\$2,270	\$1,000	\$21,432
FY11	\$6,090	\$2,272	\$2,500	\$21,432
FY10	\$1,000	\$214	\$8,500	\$21,432
FY09	-\$1,223	\$3,614	\$10,000	\$21,432

\*ALA Graphics stopped selling TTW products in 2015, due to low sales. Posters and bookmarks are now funded through sponsor money and distributed for free to members and libraries.

\*\*Staff time was not tracked by project until FY17, so these are estimates. For TTW this includes time from the Executive Director and the Communications Specialist. For TRW this includes time from the Executive Director, Communications Specialist and 40% of time from the Communications Assistant.

**Teen Tech Week Evaluation Taskforce 2014**

Opportunities for improvement:

1. According to the survey results, a minority of TTW programs offered by responding libraries featured hands-on technology education and experimentation. The task force recommends that YALSA help library staff planning TTW programs focus more on active tech-oriented programs, and less of passive programs such as book displays. For library staff who lack tech knowledge, collaborations and partnerships with local community members can make up for the lack.
  
2. The Task Force recommends that the TTW Committee create a list of best programs and best practices to feature on online, including reports of past program successes and failures, and tips for replicating successful programs. This list could highlight successful programs done with little money.
  
3. The Task Force recommends the TTW Committee take a forward-thinking approach to keep up with evolving technologies and technological approaches. Examples of forward

thinking might include the supporting library staff in the development of digital learning labs and makerspaces to provide programs and services that promote the use of technology to teens. Other examples that promote technology use will change over time, as the technology itself changes.

### **Teen Read Week Evaluation Taskforce 2014**

What opportunities, if any, exist to improve the program:

- **Programming resources:** The number one comment on the 2013 TRW survey was about low-cost/no-cost programming ideas and planning/marketing resources. This request has also been frequently echoed in the 2007-2012 surveys, but it is evident that this request is a growing trend.
- **Free resources:** In the 2013 survey, question #9, the largest percentage of respondents (36%) indicated that they only spent between \$1 and \$50 on Teen Read Week. The second largest percentage (21%) indicated that they spent no money on TRW, and at least 19 library staff or youth advocates spent personal money to fund their programs and/or spaces (for a total of 62.7% of respondents indicating that they have \$50 or less available). Even in past surveys, the majority of respondents have indicated that they have \$50 or less to spend on programming, and the trend over the years has shown that programming funds are only shrinking: in 2007, 46.5% of respondents spent \$50 or less, and in 2012 this percentage rose to 58%. Even in survey categories that did not specifically ask about spending, respondents commented extensively on the need for low-cost/no-cost resources. TRW sales may also be an indication for this need. Since 2009 product sales have steadily dropped each year with a steep plummet in 2011 and a near recovery in 2012, only for sales to continue dropping in 2013. Each year the drop is about \$13-20,000 less than the previous year (with the exception of the 2012 rise to 2010 rates). While the economic recession and state of library funding is most likely to blame for low sales and decreasing program funds, YALSA still needs to address the financial concerns of libraries in order to keep TRW participants inspired, dedicated, and driven to deliver services and materials that get teens reading and using their library/media centers.
- **Length:** Lastly, survey participants have requested yearly that YALSA change Teen Read Week into a month-long celebration. YALSA does indicate on the TRW Ning site that a week is just a suggested timeframe and that many organizations celebrate TRW all October. Many users even indicated that they stretch activities for the entire month, but clearly there are still some participants who are either unaware that it TRW is encouraged to become a month-long event or find some benefit in YALSA advertising it as a month-long event. The committee finds benefit in the option of a week or a month for each individual organization and therefore does not suggest YALSA change the intended timeframe. The committee does, however, recommend that YALSA be more vocal about the option of celebrating TRW for longer than a week as numerous participants find the name Teen Read Week to be constrictive.

**Additional Resources:**

- Creating Public Awareness Campaigns that Work,  
<http://coas.howard.edu/centeronraceandwealth/news&events/06122013-creating-public-awareness-campaigns-slides.pdf>
- Critical Components for Public Awareness Campaigns,  
<https://advocacyunleashed.kontribune.com/articles/1371>  
How to Create a Campaign: a Step by Step Guide, <https://www.sreb.org/how-create-campaign-step-step-guide>
- Teen Read Week Evaluation Taskforce Findings Document #30  
[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/TRWeval\\_MW14.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/TRWeval_MW14.pdf)
- Teen Tech Week Evaluation Taskforce Findings Document #40 :  
[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/TTWtaskforce\\_MW14.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/TTWtaskforce_MW14.pdf)
- National Celebration Event Document #16:  
[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/NationalEvent\\_AN14.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/NationalEvent_AN14.pdf)