

Date: July 29, 2018
To: ALSC Board of Directors
From: Batchelder Award Evolution Task Force
Subject: Final Report and Recommendations

Batchelder Award Evolution Task Force Summary Report

Task Force Charge:

To consider the award's stated purpose, Mildred Batchelder's intent in promoting translated books for children, the impact of the award to date, and current realities and trends in the publishing market (as related to publishing translated children's literature); and to recommend a current framework for the award's purpose.

The task force may additionally recommend to the board any specific changes to terms, definitions and criteria deemed necessary for the award to fulfill this purpose. Any such recommended changes must include thorough exploration of potential impacts to budget and organizational capacity.

Among questions to explore and address, the task force should include (but is not limited to) questions raised by the 2017 Batchelder Award Committee regarding the terms, definitions, and criteria of the award (AC 2017 Board Doc 22).

Overview of Task Force Work Plan:

After task force members introduced ourselves by email, we all read and reread the manual and made online comments as to our initial thoughts on the charge of the task force, the purpose of the award, the criteria and its evolution with time. The task force members then met in the first of many conference calls to discuss issues at greater length.

We relied on Google docs to collate our work. We began to list stakeholders (publishers, translators, authors, educators, readers, etc.) in the outcome of this process so that we would make sure we could consider all opinions in our quest for an accurate evaluation of the award.

Simultaneously, we began to suggest questions for a general survey to librarians, educators, publishers, translators, and children's book specialists to ascertain their knowledge of and thoughts on the Batchelder Award, and their feelings on where it should be headed. The task force wrote and reframed questions which were then sent to the ALSC office staff to be transformed into a link to be sent to interested

members of the children's book community. The survey went live in January and stayed open until after the Midwinter Conference in order to give people time to respond.

To advertise the survey, task force members posted the link on national, international, state and regional listservs in order to give it the greatest amount of exposure. Members also distributed flyers about it at the Conference. We posted on the ALSC Blog a note about the survey to generate even more readership. In total, 529 people completed the initial survey.

A separate email went to publishers who had been identified as major stakeholders with a link to the survey. Another email was sent to approximately 50 persons who were identified by respondents in the initial survey as important people in the field. Though many (it was hoped) may have already completed the survey, we invited them again. We had 11 additional responses. Percentages for responses to the questions in the second survey were the same for the additional respondents as for those in the initial survey. Interesting! (The **BATCHELDER EVOLUTION SURVEY SUMMARIES** document with the questions and their analysis, is available in a separate file.)

Invitations were extended to select stakeholders, particularly publishers, to participate in focus groups to discuss the issues. Dates were set for two afternoon meetings using a conferencing phone line which would record the conversations for later study.

Task Force members worked to formulate the appropriate questions for the focus groups, taking into consideration the survey responses. The actual conference calls took place in April. Eleven persons took part in the calls, including eight publishers, two academics, and one translator. (The **BATCHELDER FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY** is also available in a separate document.)

The last task for the group was to review all the work we had done, all the information that had been compiled, the opinions expressed, the ideas generated, finish the debate among ourselves, and come up with recommendations for the ALSC Board.

After the Annual Conference, we communicated with Courtney Jones in the ALSC office and Paula Holmes, the Financial Officer, to outline more details about staffing and cost considerations of the task force's recommendations. They are included here.

Many phone chats and emails later, this is what we have. This report, which outlines recommendations for next steps, concludes the work of the task force.

Summary of Task Force Findings:

The impact of the Batchelder award to date is not tremendously significant if measured quantitatively. The number of books considered by the committee each year continues to be modest. Translating books continues to be a financial risk for publishers, and a process that is anything but straightforward. Every translated book is a unique case. Qualitatively, there continues to be a passionate commitment by publishers to invest in translated books as well as a commitment by practitioners to read and promote these books. One of the key findings from our work was the lack of awareness of the translation and publication process by many practitioners, and the challenges faced by publishers in increasing awareness and appreciation of translated books. Many of the issues stem from the award structure and criteria. As an award given to publishers, the Batchelder continues to be considered a vital and noteworthy recognition, and one for which publishers strive.

Recommendation #1A: The task force recommends that the Batchelder Award be maintained as part of the suite of ALSC awards, and that the winner continues to be announced as part of the ALA Midwinter youth media awards announcements.

Recommendation #2A: The task force recommends that the structure of the award be changed from a winner/honor book model to a shortlist/winner model. We feel strongly that this will bring more positive attention to translated books in general and will draw more readership to the potential winner by the time of the announcement. (The 2019 Committee is on standby and ready to revise their reading/meeting/voting calendar, and can recalibrate their schedule this fall for this to take immediate effect.) **Please see detailed information and fiscal considerations outlined below.*****

Recommendation #3A: The task force recommends that the committee be given the option to award winners in two distinct categories for different ages of readers, up to age 14, (with the categories further defined as ages 0-9 and ages 9-14.)

Recommendation #4A: Regarding the current award criteria, the task force recommends that the term “substantial” in regard to text should remain, but the definition be revised to acknowledge that text should be the most prominent aspect of the book.
(This meaning can be implied now, with the wording changes made when the manual is revised.)

Recommendation #5A: The task force recommends that folk literature be eligible. Folklore, which has highs and lows of popularity over the decades, is a core vehicle in communicating cultural heritage. Inclusion of folklore speaks to the original intent of the award. The expectation is that publishers and their editors are responsible for the cultural authenticity of folklore selected for translation.

Recommendation #6A: The task force recommends that the “Diversity and ALSC Media Award Evaluation” text included in other award manuals be added to the “Committee Work” section of the Batchelder manual. To speak further to the attention of diversity and cultural sensitivity, the criteria concerning “Relationship to the original work” should be amended to account for readership in the United States. The current criterion states: “The book should not be unduly “Americanized.” The book’s reader should be able to sense that the book came from another country.”
(This meaning can be implied now, with the wording changes made when the manual is revised.)

Recommendation #7A: Regarding the current trends and realities in the publishing market, the task force recommends relaxing the terms of the award to include traditionally translated books (originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States and subsequently published in English the United States) as well as non-traditionally translated books. This would include, but be not limited to, books translated first in other countries, books written originally in another language but previously unpublished, and books originally published in a different format and language; e.g. a selection from an anthology. Broader terms might read as follows, “The Mildred L. Batchelder Award shall be made to an American publisher for a children’s book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originating in a country other than the United States and in a language other than English.”

At a later date, the Task Force suggests that the Board consider the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1B: The task force suggests that the manual be revised to substitute “language other than English” or “non-English language” for the term “foreign language” throughout. The term “foreign” is problematic and can create otherness or convey exoticism.
(This can be done when the manual is revised.)

Recommendation #2B: The task force recommends the inclusion of one or more publishers to review any changes to the award and manual.

Recommendation #3B: The task force recommends that the board consider additional means of promoting translated books for children, such as conference and institute programming, professional development (webinars, online courses, etc.), and other incentives such as grants for library/school programming related to translated books for children and the Batchelder Award.

Recommendation #4B: Due to the changing nature of publishing and global communications, the task force advises that the Batchelder Award structure and criteria be revisited every five years.

*****Recommendation 2A: Shortlist/Winner Model: Detailed Information and Fiscal Considerations**

The Batchelder Award Evolution Task Force has recommended that the award model for Batchelder be changed from the winner/honor book model which is currently in use to a shortlist/winner model with two age categories, ages 0-9 years, and ages 9-14 years.

There will be administrative and budget changes needed to make this happen.

ALSC would need to:

- Purchase two plaques and two citations for winners. (Current Batchelder Winner seals and certificates will be used for winners in two categories. There will be an additional \$95 cost for second plaque.)
- Change the 'Batchelder Honor' sticker to a 'Batchelder Shortlist' sticker. (Redesign cost of \$2,500 for die cut and digital image for 'Batchelder Shortlist' sticker, plus \$150 to design and print a supply of shortlist certificates on archival paper.
- Plan for 10 more minutes at ALA Annual for acceptance of plaques by two publishers (versus one.)
- Consider lengthening ALA Annual meeting times for the Batchelder Committee beyond two meetings of two hours each, as future committees will have more books to discuss face to face.
- Consider making both ALA Midwinter meetings mandatory for the Batchelder Committee because of the shortlist timeline.
- Dedicate additional office staff time to advertise the shortlist winners in advance of the YMA winner announcement.

The Batchelder timeline will also change.

Since it is still time in the judging process for the 2019 committee, the change can be accomplished by using these parameters:

- Deadline to submit titles would be October 31, 2018.
 - Publishers will need to be notified ASAP. The recommendation is to issue a memo to be released immediately to let publishers know of the change. The online submission form should be updated, also, if possible.
- Books published after the date of October 31 will roll over to next year's committee.
- Committee will vote online for the shortlist in late November. A maximum of five titles per shortlist could be selected.
 - With enough notice, this year's committee will plan for reading and virtual meeting time in November 2018.
- ALSC will announce the shortlist in early December.
 - There will be online announcements via social media and press releases from ALA (similar to the [Morris Award finalists](#).)

- Committee will select up to one winner per category at ALA Midwinter if they deem titles are worthy.
 - The Task Force does not recommend that ALSC host events with the shortlist candidates at Midwinter, especially since it is more of a team effort (publisher, editor, author, illustrator, and translator.) The official celebration will continue to be held at Annual.
- Winners in two categories will be announced at the YMA at Midwinter.

Below is an outline of work needed to be done to accomplish this goal:

- Short term
 - Draft a message to publishers about the changes.
 - Re-do the online submission form.
 - Update the Batchelder website.
 - Plan for more support between the Batchelder 2019 Chair, PGC, and ALSC.
- Middle term
 - Revise the manual for the 2020 committee (We suggest that Caitlin, Carol, and Tessa try to tackle this in December 2018, possibly by keeping crib notes between now and then with needed changes.)
- Long term
 - Potentially approach YALSA about adding a category for Young Adults (ages 14-18) to the Batchelder Award in the future.

Action to Be Taken: The Task Force asks the ALSC Board to adopt the seven initial recommendations listed here (1A through 7A), which include changes to the structure of the award process and the criteria of eligibility for the award, at this time so that they can be implemented for the 2019 Award Committee.

The Task Force also encourages the Board to consider Recommendations 1B through 4B at a later date.

We strongly believe that the Award will be strengthened with these changes and more in line with Mildred Batchelder’s original philosophy, utilizing the changes we are suggesting. If more books are eligible for the award and more books are awarded some recognition, there will be greater visibility of the award, greater attention to translated books, more seals will be purchased, and our child readers will reap the benefit.

The Batchelder is not a new award; it is an established, respected award given by ALSC. The changes we are recommending are supported by the ALSC community and publishers. They will strengthen the award’s focus, expand the number of books considered, and help this award to thrive.

Since the chair of the 2019 Mildred L. Batchelder Award Committee is also on this task force, and we have been working closely with the same Priority Consultant, we believe many of these changes can be implemented readily for this year's committee.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carol K. Phillips, chair

Task Force Members: Monica Edinger, Tessa Michaelson Schmidt, Kay M. Weisman, Dr. Junko Yokota.