

YOUTH ADVOCACY ALLIANCE REPORT

A Report to the Joint Youth Divisions Executive Committee
by the Allerton/Alliance Joint Youth Divisions Task Force

ALA Conference: New Orleans -- July 7, 1988

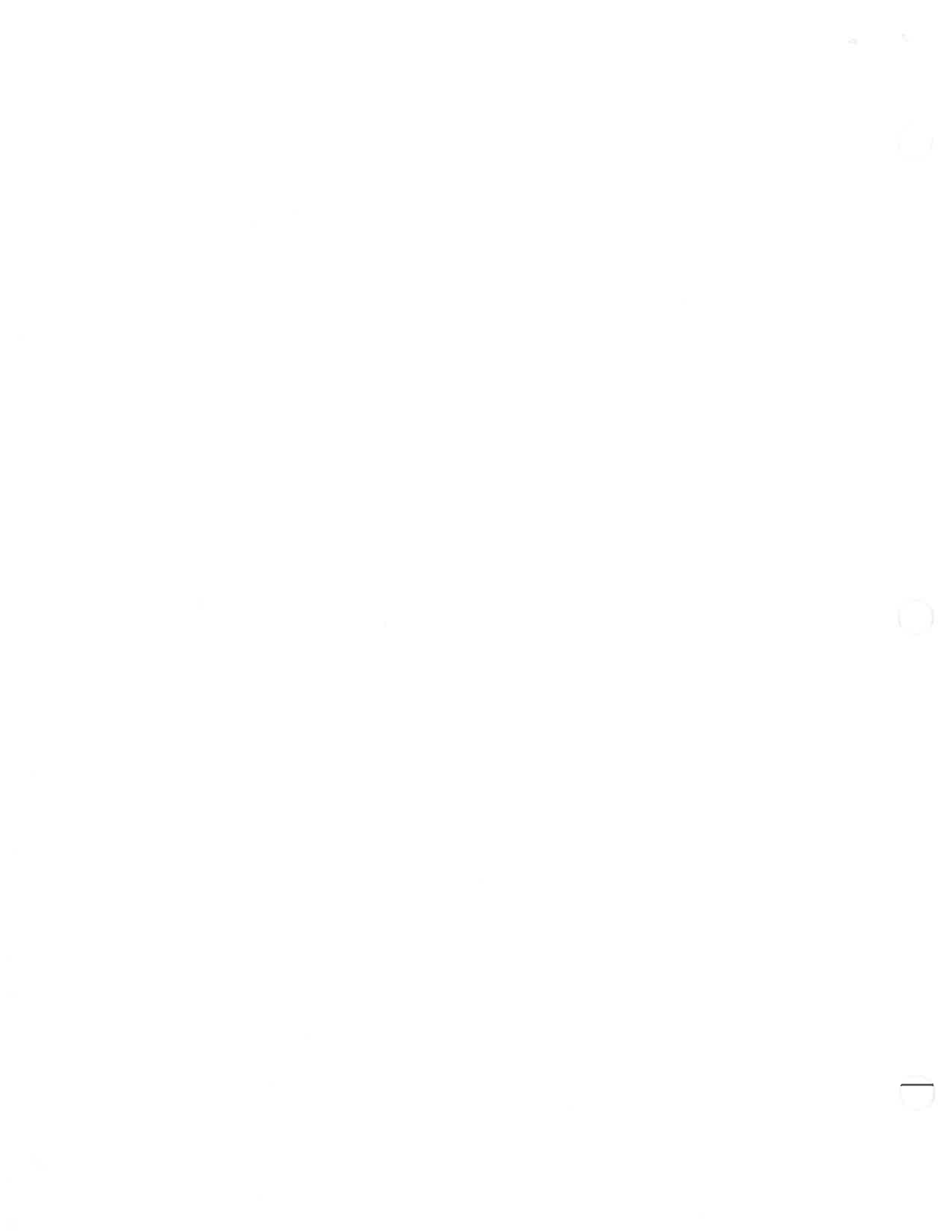
Having examined the American Library Association Organization Goals, the Alliance for Excellence Task Force Report, and the Allerton Institute Goals Statement, the Task Force has formulated the attached Youth Advocacy Alliance Report, a mission statement for the ALA youth divisions to effect ALA's stated goals.

The Task Force recommends:

1. The Youth Advocacy Alliance Report be adopted by the AASL, ALSC and YASD Boards.
2. The Youth Advocacy Alliance Report be adopted by ALA Council.
3. An ALA task force be appointed to draft an implementation plan.

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PRIORITY AREA I: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

A. Legal Access / Intellectual Freedom

ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, regional and state organizations, and local institutions and organizations will promote the protection of library materials from censorship; will promote the defense of library personnel and trustees in support of the principles of intellectual freedom for youth as set forth in the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN THE SCHOOL MEDIA PROGRAM, the AECT's STATEMENT ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, and the FREEDOM TO READ statement; and will promote the education of library personnel, trustees and the general public to the importance of intellectual freedom for youth.

GOALS:

1. First Amendment rights are secure.
2. Persons whose First Amendment rights are challenged have adequate support

B. Intellectual Access

ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, regional and state organizations, and local institutions and organizations will promote efforts to ensure that every young person has intellectual access to needed information, at the time needed and in a format the individual can utilize, through provision of library and information services.

GOALS:

1. Youth services librarians and school library media specialists make available to youth the widest possible universe of information resources through the use of online searching of electronic databases, union catalogs and participation in local and broader-based networks.
2. ALA and the youth divisions promote a tripartite mode of study -- i.e. research, model development and evaluation -- of the ways in which young people of varying developmental levels intellectually access information. Findings of these studies are disseminated in a timely manner to youth services librarians and school library media specialists.
3. ALA and the youth divisions provide and promote national and regional continuing education programs to improve understanding of the ways in which the developmental levels of young people may affect their intellectual access to information.
4. ALA and the youth divisions study cataloging rules and practices to ensure that they facilitate young patrons' intellectual access to information.

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5. Local catalogers work with youth services librarians and school library media specialists to facilitate young patrons' intellectual access to information.

6. ALA and the youth divisions evaluate technologically sophisticated access tools in light of the varying abilities of young patrons.

7. Library and school administrators consider the degree of ease or difficulty which young users may encounter when purchasing any technologically sophisticated access tool.

8. Youth services librarians and school library media specialists provide developmentally appropriate instruction -- i.e., instruction that is appropriate to the level of physical, cognitive and social development -- which will facilitate the use of specific access tools and which will develop general strategies for accessing information, whether found within or outside of the immediate library or school library media program.

9. Locally produced bibliographic aids are available to facilitate young patrons' intellectual access to information.

10. At all times, a sufficient number of librarians or school library media specialists are present to provide the human intervention necessary to facilitate young patrons' intellectual access to information.

C. Physical Access

ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, regional and state organizations, and local institutions and organizations will promote efforts to ensure that every young person has physical access to needed information, at the time needed and in a format the individual can utilize, through provision of library and information services.

GOALS:

1. Youth services librarians and school library media specialists develop and maintain carefully selected collections which are adequate to meet local needs, which include a diversity of materials available in a variety of formats and which encompass a wide range of subjects and levels of difficulty.

2. Collections are arranged in a logical, systematic, well-labelled and easy-to-understand fashion that allows for physical access to materials by both normal and handicapped youth.

3. Access to materials within the library or school media center is ensured through the abolition of age-restricted collections.

4. Access to materials outside of the library or school media center is ensured through participation in resource sharing networks.

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5. All efforts are made to provide access to needed information and materials to those youths who may be confined to their homes or otherwise incapable of visiting the library or school library media center.

6. The economic status of youth is considered when establishing or evaluating policies involving fees for materials or services.

7. Librarians and school library media specialists adhere to and promote the legal and ethical use of copyrighted material.

8. At all times, a sufficient number of knowledgeable staff is present to aid in the physical retrieval of material.

PRIORITY AREA II: PERSONNEL RESOURCES

To develop the information skills of future generations, ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, regional and state organizations and local institutions and organizations will promote high quality youth services in all public libraries and school media centers. To provide users with assistance at time of need, a well educated and highly motivated staff of professionals, adequately supported by technical and clerical staff, is critical to the endeavor.

GOALS:

1. Library and information science education meets the changing library and information science needs of society. ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, and other youth advocates will promote youth service training programs to provide an adequate number of youth services professionals attuned to future patterns of information needs as well as trained to handle the challenges presented by an increasingly diverse racial and ethnic clientele within an increasingly complex technological society.
2. Librarianship recruits a racially and ethnically diverse group of high caliber persons. Effective recruitment programs are targeted to a broader and more diverse population to promote the library profession; and youth services in particular, to individuals interested in public service. ALA, the youth divisions of ALA and regional and state organizations enlist the aid of high school guidance counselors, college and university career counselors, educators in the fields of social services, computer technology, education, et cetera in identifying potential students to form the next generation of youth services professionals. Support staff in public libraries and school media centers are encouraged to seek additional coursework and attain the professional degree.
3. Master's level programs are effectively accredited. Youth services and library media specialists require Master's level education with preparation in library and information science, modern technology, education and communication theory in addition to specialized courses in the literature and services of children and youth. ALA takes an active role in encouraging the various schools of library and information science and departments of education which will prepare the next generation of youth services personnel to offer a full range of youth service training in their curricula. The ALA must be vigilant to insure that Master's programs offering high quality, broad range instruction in youth services specialties are geographically available.
4. ALA and its youth divisions promote and facilitate cooperation between the ALA Accreditation Committee, the National Committee on Accreditation and Teacher Education, and other related groups to encourage schools of library and information science and departments of education to promote Ph.D. and Certificate of Advanced Study opportunities in youth services and education research.

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5. Librarians have a variety of opportunities for professional development and continuing education. Workshops and conferences for librarians, trustees, and others interested in libraries are conducted by ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, state and regional organizations, and local institutions and organizations. Model programs of inservice training and continuing education for practicing youth services staff are developed and supported to assist working professionals and support staff in ensuring their programs reflect the most recent developments in education, technology and information science.

6. Information, advisory services and research findings about youth services are promoted to youth librarians and school media specialists as well as librarians in general and are evaluated on a regular basis. Job information, placement and career services are made readily available to librarians.

7. Librarians are paid attractive salaries. The valuable contribution made by youth services and media center staff members is recognized with salary rates, fringe benefits, and working conditions comparable to other professionals with comparable qualifications and responsibilities. The heads of youth services departments and library media programs are accorded pay, responsibilities and administrative standing comparable with other leadership positions in their institutions and serve on the library administrative team or school instructional body.

8. Effective library personnel policies are established and used. In addition to equitable salary rates, fringe benefits, working conditions, responsibilities and administrative ranking, youth service staff deserve an evaluation procedure that encompasses the unique competencies necessary to youth service work and recognizes the diversity required of youth service workers. ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, and youth advocates establish competencies and promote their use in personnel evaluation. Local school or library policies and procedures are established and a policy manual made available to guide staff in their work.

9. ALA expands the Code of Ethics to reflect an advocacy role toward young people assuring respect for child rights and flexibility toward children's developmental abilities. Librarians uphold this expanded ALA Code of Ethics.

10. Librarians are proactive professionals who ensure the free flow of information and ideas. ALA promotes freedom of access without age restrictions and works against repressive policies and practices within the library and school communities. The ALA youth divisions, regional and state organizations, and local institutions and organizations advocate full access to information for their patrons.

PRIORITY AREA III: LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY

ALA will promote the development of appropriate information technologies for youth services librarians and media specialists as well as for the young patron directly. The availability of these technologies will assist in providing services responsive to the needs of children and youth.

Goals:

1. Guidelines, standards, competencies for service to youth in both public libraries and schools are formulated and regularly reviewed to define and facilitate effective library service to youth.

2. Formal planning, budgeting and measurement procedures for service to youth are developed. This may include adapting the public library planning process and output measures specifically for youth services or adapting or revising school codes and personnel evaluation practices in schools as well as the creation of new procedures specifically oriented to youth services.

3. Statistics related to library service to youth are collected, compiled and disseminated on a regular basis. Standard definitions of statistical categories including age and institutional distinctions are created and used nationally.

4. Research related to youth, youth issues, youth and libraries and youth librarianship are developed, funded and reported in a timely fashion. Research findings are disseminated through professional resources in a variety of formats produced by both ALA and the youth divisions of ALA. A plan of publication among ALA and its divisions is created to provide cohesion and coordination.

6. ALA promotes cooperation among divisions, practitioners, library educators and other professionals, institutions and organizations serving youth.

7. Youth librarians have equal access to the use of all information technologies. Librarians and school media specialists have appropriate training to use technology. Youth have access to the use of technology and are provided with appropriately skilled adult mediation to the technology as necessary.

8. Youth librarians practice effective public relations with both young audiences and with appropriate adult populations.

PRIORITY AREA IV: PUBLIC AWARENESS

ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, regional and state organizations, and local institutions and organizations will promote the importance of public library youth services departments and school media programs and the role of youth services librarians and school library media specialists.

GOALS:

1. Public library youth services departments and school library media programs are recognized as proactive agencies essential not only to the educational and cultural growth to youth, but to the future economic well-being of society as well.

2. Youth services librarians and school library media specialists are recognized as proactive professionals responsible for ensuring the free flow of information and ideas, as advocates for youth, as educators, and as instructional consultants.

3. The importance of public library youth services departments and school library media programs, and the role of youth services librarians and school library media specialists are recognized especially by young people themselves, by parents and care-givers, and by other professionals such as teachers, other librarians, library and school administrators, social service agents and private therapists and counselors.

4. Information about libraries, school library media programs and young people themselves is disseminated through varied means -- e.g. to the general public through popular print and non-print media and to professionals through journals, conferences, teleconferences, etc.

5. When information about programs for youth is disseminated, the focus is on content as well as on context -- on the underlying purposes and goals as well as on the activities through which these goals are met.

PRIORITY AREA V: LEGISLATION/FUNDING

ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, regional and state organizations, and local institutions and organizations promote adequate funding for youth services information and programs and advocate appropriate legislation to promote the welfare of youth.

A. Public Funding

Libraries have adequate funding from public sources on the local, state and federal levels.

GOALS:

1. Youth services successes are held at the forefront of positive PR campaigns to increase funding. Statistical information regarding childhood library use and literacy, childhood library use, the economic health of the community and the integral role of the school library media program in the successful and economical education of youth needs to be utilized at every level.

2. Youth services have equal access to new or expanded funding. Local budgets reflect institutional priorities that recognize the value of services to youth.

3. ALA and its youth divisions assist youth services librarians in becoming politically astute. Librarians who serve children and young adults must build coalitions among themselves and with other professionals who serve youth.

B. Grantsmanship

ALA members are well informed about opportunities for raising funds from private sources.

GOALS:

1. The ALA youth divisions form a task force to inform ALA members about opportunities for raising funds by identifying private sources oriented toward youth and publishing a guide to them. ALSC, YASD, and AASL have the responsibility for periodically reviewing and updating this guide.

2. ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, regional and state organizations promote education in grant writing for youth services personnel by encouraging library schools, departments of education, school and library systems and administrators to conduct continuing education programs for professionals in the field.

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C. Funding Research

Reliable and timely statistics and information about all sources of library funding are available.

GOALS:

1. ALA, the youth divisions of ALA, state and regional organizations are responsible for gathering data for state, regional and national comparison of funding and service levels by encouraging local public and school media librarians to report statistics on the uses and products of funds. Library administrators need to mandate the gathering of data, library schools need to encourage the development of qualitative and quantitative measurement tools and youth services librarians need to be educated in the use and exploitation of statistical information.
2. ALA serves as a national clearinghouse for demographics and statistical information. Such a clearinghouse serves as a model for state and local efforts to increase funding through legislation and community support.

D. Legislation

NATIONAL LEVEL

ALA and its youth divisions monitors congressional activity, forms coalitions with organizations and effectively disseminates information to ensure Congress consistently approves legislation favorable to libraries.

GOALS:

1. Information about legislation with potential impact on libraries and library services is easily available. As the role of the youth services librarian has necessarily expanded to include that of child advocate, the need for information on legislation that will have potential impact on education, day care, child welfare, and family programs is essential to librarians and school media specialists. With the changes in the past two decades, a new generation of taxpaying adults may force reexamination of traditional library services to youth. Monitoring legislation relating to these areas is crucial.
2. ALA monitors and reports to the membership the potential impact of tax laws upon library acquisitions and purchasing power.

LOCAL LEVEL

Regional and state organizations work with local librarians, media specialists and youth advocates to ensure local governing authorities and state legislatures consistently approve ordinances and legislation favorable to libraries.

GOALS:

1. Youth services librarians are educated about the political process through the library schools, administrators and systems responsible for continuing education programs. Library associations, systems and

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administrators involve youth services personnel in the political process to bring youth services and statistics to the forefront of lobbying strategies.

2. ALA-wide guidelines are developed to aid librarians at the state and local levels to increase their political effectiveness.

3. ALA encourages research regarding the potential impact of proposed legislation and societal trends upon library service to youth.