

# ALSC Matters

August 2022, Vol. 20, no. 3

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## Officially Speaking

### Cheers to Our Work Together

Two years ago, then-president Kirby McCurtis noted in her first president's column that all signs pointed toward "a year of adjustment ahead." While the ongoing pandemic means that now, at the time of my first president's column, we still find ourselves in a state of perpetual adjustment and change, I am heartened by all of the ways I have seen ALSC members and other library folks serving children—doing their best to support children, their communities, and one another throughout challenging circumstances. I hope, as your president for this service year, I can be a bolster and a booster to ALSC members, leaders, and staff as we do the important work of this association. I invite each of you to get involved in whatever capacity makes sense for you now—there's something in ALSC for everyone!

**Committees and Appointments.** July 1 marked the official start of the committee year for ALSC's process committees—those are the many committees whose work in advocacy, professional awards and scholarships, organizational support, and professional development make up the beating heart of ALSC. Every process committee began their year with a full roster of members from across the continent who were ready to dive into ALSC work. While all of these committees currently have all member slots filled, it is inevitable over the course of the year that mid-term vacancies will appear—which is to say, if you're most interested in ALSC's process work, it's never a bad time to [submit a volunteer form](#), as we have rolling need for volunteers!

For award and notables committees, however, now is the exact right time to [submit a volunteer form](#) to be considered for the appointments happening this autumn. As the ALSC appointing officer, I am working with a team of ALSC members with broad experience with ALSC's award and notables programs to make the appointments for these committees. Together, this working group will be reviewing volunteer forms from members who have expressed interest in the 2024 award and notables committees, advising the appointments process. This awards and notables appointments advisory working group is a newly-established practice to ensure checks and balances in the appointments process following the [member vote this past spring to remove the awards positions from the annual ALSC ballot](#).

**Strategic Planning.** This fall, the ALSC Board will begin the process of [updating our current plan](#). ALSC's strategic plan is incredibly important as one of the core guiding documents of our work. It is imperative that we hear from members of ALSC and libraries serving children as we embark on this strategic plan update. While anyone is welcome to [share their thoughts with me at any time](#), you can also look for information about some strategic planning community conversations this autumn to share your input. I'm joined by other ALSC member leaders to facilitate and synthesize notes from

these upcoming conversations, with the intention to ensure that a diversity of member voices is at the heart of our strategic plan.

**ALSC National Institute.** I hope others are as excited as I am for the [2022 ALSC National Institute](#) that will take place in Kansas City, Missouri, from September 29 to October 1! I'm so grateful to the task force members who have been hard at work planning the Institute—it's going to be a meaningful and engaging in-person learning experience for attendees, and I cannot wait to learn alongside so many of you. For the first time, the Institute will be preceded by the [Bill Morris Seminar: Book Evaluation Training](#). Throughout this year, ALSC was able to extend the invitation to affiliates and round tables who confer youth media awards to have some of their members join our seminars. Members from the Coretta Scott King Book Awards participated in the virtual cohort last February, and members from the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), American Indian Library Association (AILA), Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL), and Rainbow Round Table were all invited to join in Kansas City.

For ALSC members who are trying to decide between attending ALSC National Institute and the National Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, which begins October 5, please know that we support you in attending whichever conference is best aligned to your work, goals, and schedule. Library workers are fortunate to have so many opportunities to learn together and from one another, even though we're not able to attend every convening.

**Upholding Intellectual Freedom.** Unfortunately, many libraries and communities have been affected by the recent increases in calls for censorship and challenges to reading materials for children. Whether you're currently experiencing challenges or looking to make sure you and your colleagues know what to do should one arise, the [Unite Against Book Bans](#) initiative is a great resource and support. Several ALSC and interdivisional committees continue to do important work around intellectual freedom as well, with more resources and supports forthcoming.

**Looking Ahead.** This information is just the tip of the iceberg of all that is happening now and upcoming with ALSC, as well as what is in store for the year ahead. If you'd like to see more about me and my approach to my term as president, you can peruse [my president's page](#). I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to connect with, learn from, and support so many ALSC members from my current vantage—it is an honor and a privilege to get to serve alongside you as we work together to build healthy, successful futures for all children. Cheers to the months ahead!—*Amy Koester, ALSC President, 2022-23*

## Thank You to Our Friends!

Many thanks to the following generous contributors to Friends of ALSC. To learn how you can support ALSC, [visit our website](#).

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## **ALSC Voices**

### **ALSC Profile**

*Celebrating colleagues with 25 years or more years of ALSC membership*

**Lucinda Whitehurst**  
**Learning Commons Coordinator and Librarian**  
**St. Christopher's School**  
**Richmond, Virginia**

**ALSC Membership: 26 years**

#### **Where did you attend library school?**

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

#### **What was your very first library position?**

In high school, I jumped at the chance to leave the mandatory study hall in the hot, smelly cafeteria to volunteer in the library instead. I worked in the College of William & Mary and University of Illinois libraries while I was in school. My first professional position was as a children's librarian at the District of Columbia Public Library, where I was lucky enough to have the guidance of the inimitable Maria Salvadore, children's coordinator at the time.

#### **What do you love most about your current job?**

I work in an all-boys school where reading is valued. The thing I love most is listening to the students recommend books to each other. Their conversations are heartfelt and hilarious.

### **What's your favorite fairy tale?**

*The Twelve Dancing Princesses.* I always loved the idea that those sisters were staying out all night together, having so much fun dancing that they wore out their shoes. It sounded magical and exciting when I was a child, and it still does!

### **Who is your favorite superhero?**

Thor - He has a complicated life.

### **What would you do if you won the lottery?**

After taking my family on a trip, it would be amazing to have the ability to fund something significant in the local community to directly benefit children and literacy.

## **Bright Ideas**

### **A New Way to Bring Families Back to the Library: A Podcast for Kids!**

Last year, we at Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) heard about a call from PRX, one of the leading public radio creators and distributors in the nation. They were joining forces with [Ready To Learn](#), an initiative from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), PBS, and the U.S. Department of Education that aims to develop content to help young children and their families succeed in school and life, and had put out a call for kids podcasts that introduced young listeners to the world of careers. That might not immediately strike you as a call that library professionals would respond to, but we accepted the challenge!

A group of children's specialists and I put our heads together. During the pandemic, we've seen the growing need for virtual programming for children—and we've responded mostly with story times and other video-based programs. But kids podcasting is a growing industry; during the first six months of the pandemic, kids podcasts saw a 20% increase in listenership, with one in four kids in America tuning into shows, according to the media data firm Ipsos. Since we at BPL were already looking for ways to encourage kids and families to return to the library, we thought that creating a fun, educational podcast would be a unique way to remind our community that we are here for them in more ways than one! We developed our pitch and were surprised and honored to be one of six teams across the nation selected for PRX's sixteen-week training course, and a recipient of \$10,000 to make our idea a reality.

After months of writing, recording, and editing, *Page Flippers Take on the World* was born, a wacky library show for kids ages four to ten. Each episode follows a different Brooklyn kid as they explore their interests, discover new books, and interview real experts working in the field they're interested in. We were lucky to have a children's librarian with musical talent on our team, and she composed original songs for the show. We also brought in more children's specialists from across the library to create book lists, story time programs, and school-age activities so that educators and librarians can use our show in their classrooms and libraries.

We're so excited to be able to bring the magic of the library to our young patrons in this new way. We hope you listen and enjoy the show, too! And write to us with ideas and questions at podcasts [at] bklynlibrary [dot] org. As we say at the end of every episode: Page Flippers, Unite!—*Virginia Marshall, podcast associate, Brooklyn (NY) Public Library*

## Our Kids Read and New York Public Library Partner

[Our Kids Read](#) (OKR), a newly established foundation that donates diverse books to children, and [The New York Public Library](#) (NYPL) recently announced a new joint venture to donate more than 125,000 books to diverse groups of New York City public school students in grades K-12. A child's enjoyment of reading is the single biggest predictor of their future academic success, besting reading ability and external factors like socioeconomic status.

This book giveaway is part of a larger initiative by the library to donate 500,000 books to city residents, which is the centerpiece of its "[Summer at the Library](#)" program designed to engage young people throughout the summer break and help families build home libraries of their own.

Our Kids Read (OKR) has partnered with the NYPL to expand the reach of the giveaway program with plans to donate books to children at community events, public parks, and community centers. The first three OKR – NYPL book giveaway events were scheduled for the week of July 17 in Harlem at the DREAM Charter School, the Madison Square Boys and Girls Club, and Thomas Jefferson Park. Three thousand (3,000) books were expected to be distributed during these events. In addition to the giveaway, each event also featured storytellers, authors, performers, artists, and other entertainers to stimulate the attendees' excitement about books and reading.

Our Kids Read has begun to schedule additional book giveaways and celebrations for the 2022-2023 school year, beginning with a free book festival at PS 140 in the Bronx in September and an additional 40-50 giveaways over the course of the school year.

## An Audio-Enhanced StoryWalk®

Corona (CA) Public Library has been offering StoryWalks® since June 2021, merging literacy, physical activity, and family fun in a permanent outdoor installation. They recently partnered with LibraryCall to add a user-friendly, listen-along component of their StoryWalks® program. LibraryCall's SoundTrack is a service that allows libraries, museums, and other institutions to offer a low-cost audio component to existing self-paced exhibits.

Corona's StoryWalk®, a permanent installation at Mountain Gate Park with bilingual panels that separate a storybook by pages along a park trail, features interactive elements and audio narration for listening to a story in both English and Spanish.

According to librarian Jennifer Bauserman, "Users can now listen to each monthly StoryWalk® by calling our StoryWalk® phone number and easily hearing each panel read aloud using their phone's keypad. Our StoryWalk® installation encourages families to get outdoors and enjoy their local park and provides important educational and early literacy opportunities that will be enhanced using the StoryWalk® phone number."

Corona Public Library's August StoryWalk® features *Are You Ready to Play Outside?* by Mo Willems and will kick off with a guided StoryWalk® led by a Park Ranger.

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## Competencies in Action

First created in 1999 by the ALSC Education committee, the [ALSC Competencies](#) highlight the critical skills and aptitudes required for providing exemplary library service to children. The Core Competencies are recommended to all children's librarians and other library staff whose primary duties include delivering library service to and advocating library service for children birth to age 14.

Listed under "Competency III. Programming Skills" in ALSC's Competencies is: Acknowledges the importance of the caregiver-child bond to early learning and **establishes appropriate and effective environments for programs that respond to the social and emotional needs of children** and create opportunities for families to engage in programming together.

In this installment of **Competencies in Action**, author Corinthia Price, Librarian, The Green Vale School, Old Brookville, NY addresses five, core competencies essential to social and emotional learning.

## Social-Emotional Concepts for Librarians Serving Children

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has evolved within library science over the past few years. It has recently gained more attention as children adapt to a changing world and, thus, a new learning environment post-COVID-19.

Now more than ever, social-emotional learning plays a critical role in children's long-term wellness and academic success. After the toll the pandemic has had on students' mental health, librarians are wise to emphasize social and emotional learning in the library.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020).

### Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness is the ability to identify feelings, thoughts, and emotions. I like to start my library classes with a question that allows each student to share a bit of information about themselves. Children benefit from identifying and expressing themselves in a safe space.

### Self-Management

Self-Management is the ability to motivate and control oneself and regulate emotions. Mindfulness or calming exercises are beneficial to children. Where is one of the best places for children to learn and practice mindfulness? The library, of course! What kinds of things can librarians do in the library to practice mindfulness? Well, you can turn off the lights and play some calming sounds for a few minutes or allow children to move to an area to self-regulate when they are struggling with their emotions.

### Social Awareness

Social Awareness is the ability to embrace diversity, offer compassion, and empathize with individuals from different backgrounds or cultures. Read-aloud exercises are an excellent way to teach the critical SEL concepts of community and diversity. Read-aloud exercises expose children to different people and their various circumstances. They teach that communities are made up of all different people and that diversity is something to celebrate.

### Relationship Skills

What better way to teach relationship skills than through books? Teaching relationship skills gives children crucial abilities and strategies they will use throughout their lives. Developing effective relationship skills allows children to establish and maintain positive relationships with individuals of all backgrounds. Library lessons and programs that include project-based learning give opportunities for growth in developing effective relationship skills.

### **Responsible Decision-Making**

Helping children understand how to make responsible decisions is an important SEL skill. Using read-alouds, librarians can help children understand how to do this. Reading books like *The Paperboy* by Dav Pilkey or *My Magical Choices (The Magic of Me Series)* by Becky Cummings can be very beneficial in teaching children this skill. The message that these books portray is that greatness comes by making positive choices toward completing a goal.

SEL picture books are another great way to teach social and emotional skills and to invite children to reflect on their feelings. In our current education climate, emotional intelligence is at the forefront of all our minds. Providing children with the tools to become empathetic, resilient, and thoughtful members of society will require quality instruction and resources to support it.

CASEL (2020). *Safe and sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) including the five core SEL competencies*. Chicago, IL

## **Hear Ye! Hear Ye!**

### **Member News**

**Virginia A. Walter**, professor emerita, University of California, Los Angeles, and ALSC past president, co-authored *Five Steps of Outcome-Based Planning and Evaluation for Youth Services* with Melissa Gross and Cindy Mediavilla. The publication was released this year by ALA Editions and focuses on the organizational context specific to youth services in public libraries, walking readers through concrete steps to use outcome-based planning and evaluation to achieve their goals while effectively promoting the library. Congratulations, Virginia!

## **Don't Miss Out on the Savings -- Register Today for the ALSC National Institute**

[Register by August 24 and save up to \\$50!](#) Join us at the [ALSC National Institute](#), September 29 through October 1, in Kansas City. The Institute is everything you need in one place--programming, keynotes, networking, and much more. This intimate, intensive learning opportunity with a youth services focus is designed for front-line youth library staff, children's literature experts, education and library school faculty members, and other interested adults. It is one of the only conferences devoted solely to children's librarianship, literature, and technology.

The Institute's [general sessions](#) feature: Christina Soontornvat, Dr. Nicole A. Cooke, Adam Gidwitz and Hena Khan, and B.B. Alston, Julian Randall, and Young Vo. The power-packed, wide-ranging lineup of [education programs](#) includes: Applying Improvisational Skills in Public Librarianship; Beyond Storytime: Dynamic Library Literacy Programs that Snap, Crackle, and Pop!; Black Kids Camp Too, Don't They?; Imagine That! Rethinking Play at the Library; Overwhelmed by Underserved Communities; Pivot! Adapting Programming for School-Aged Children in a Changing



World; and much more. And it wouldn't be an ALSC Institute without a host of networking opportunities, book signings, exhibits, and more!

[Complete details are on the Institute website.](#) We hope to see you there.

## Fall Courses from ALSC

Registration is open for two fall online courses from ALSC.

### **The Library in the Middle: Serving Tweens through Change and Self Discovery**

October 3 - 29

Instructor: Kylie Peters

4-week, synchronous course

The tween years are a time of rapid growth and transition for young people. The challenges of puberty are often accompanied by big questions about personal identity like "who am I" and "where do I fit in the world." For library workers, it can be challenging to determine where and how this age group best fits into public library service. This class will address preadolescent development and common experiences, and how to apply those concepts to create effective library collection development and programming for tweens.

ALSC Personal Member: \$156.75

ALA Personal Member: \$188.10

Nonmember: \$209

[Register for Library in the Middle here](#)

### **The Newbery Medal: Past, Present and Future**

October 3

Instructor: Kathleen T. Horning

6-week asynchronous course

What does it mean when we recommend Newbery Award winners to the children in our communities? Should the ALA seal of approval stand for 100 years? How can we help parents and teachers understand what the Newbery Medal is – and isn't? This online course will give participants a solid grounding in the history of the Medal and how it's changed over time; an opportunity to read, discuss, and consider past and present Newbery winners with colleagues from across the nation; a chance to talk to former Newbery Committee members and a Newbery author, and suggestions for programming using Newbery-winning books.

ALSC Personal Member: \$216.75

ALA Personal Member: \$260.10

Nonmember: \$289

[Register for Newbery Medal here](#)

For further details on courses, [please visit ALSC's online courses webpage.](#)

## Bechtel Fellowship Applications Open

The Professional Recognition and Scholarships committee currently is accepting applications for the [2023 Louise Seaman Bechtel Fellowship](#), which provides a grant up to \$7,500 to a qualified children's librarian to spend up to four weeks reading and studying at the Baldwin Library of



Historical Children's Literature of the George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville. The Baldwin Library contains a special collection of 130,000 volumes of children's literature published mostly before 1950.

**The fellowship application and all supporting materials are due October 15.** Please [visit the Bechtel webpage](#) for complete details. If you have additional questions, please contact the co-chairs of the Professional Recognition and Scholarships Committee Rachel Fryd (frydr at freelibrary dot org) and Elizabeth Burns (eburns at njstatelib dot org).

Looking for some inspiration? Read about the [2022 Bechtel Fellowship recipient](#) or check out [articles written by past Bechtel fellows](#).

## Updated Graphic Novels Reading Lists

Compiled and annotated by ALSC's Quicklists Consulting committee and filled with engaging reads, the Graphic Novels Reading Lists are a great give-away for your library or school. Released this summer, these three new lists cover age ranges from kindergarten to eighth grade and include classics as well as new titles that have been widely recommended and well-reviewed, plus books that have popular appeal as well as critical acclaim. [The lists are available to download from the ALSC website](#).

## Sing the Praises of Libraries during Library Card Sign-Up Month

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month! Tony Award-winning performer, actress, and philanthropist Idina Menzel and her sister author and educator Cara Mentzel are serving as honorary chairs of this year's campaign and are reminding everyone that the library is a great place to find your voice! As honorary chairs, Idina and Cara are encouraging individuals to explore all the library has to offer, like new children's books, access to technology, and educational programming.

Also in September, the sisters' debut picture book, *Loud Mouse*, about a little mouse named Dee who loves to sing very loudly, will be released by Disney Hyperion. [Visit the Library Card Sign-Up Month site](#) for free graphics, featuring Idina, Cara, and Dee (aka Loud Mouse), and media tools such as press release templates, sample proclamation and social media posts, a ready-to-air audio public service announcement (PSA), and sample PSA scripts. Many graphics and tools are also available in Spanish.

In addition, [posters featuring Dee](#) are available for purchase in the ALA Store.

## Volunteer for ALA, Council, and Joint Committees

Emily Drabinski, ALA President-elect, calls on members to volunteer to serve on ALA, Council, and Joint committees for the 2023-2025 term (beginning July 1, 2023). Serving with colleagues on committees is an opportunity to shape the future of ALA and the important work the association does on behalf of libraries and library workers everywhere.

Members can volunteer via the [online ALA volunteer form](#). Please complete and submit the form electronically (be sure to select "ALA" in the drop-down menu on the main form). To be considered for the 2023-2025 term, forms must be submitted no later than September 30, 2022. Any forms received after this date will be considered for the next term (2024-2026).

President-Elect Drabinski will make committee appointments in consultation with both the Committee on Appointments (for ALA and Joint committee appointments) and the Committee on Committees (for Council committee appointments). Initial proposed committee appointments will be approved by the ALA Executive Board in January 2023, with notifications sent to appointed individuals throughout Spring 2023.

For more details, check out the [Volunteer to Serve press release](#).

## Applications Open: I Love My Librarian Award

ALA invites library users across America to submit nominations for the [I Love My Librarian Award](#) through September 30, 2022! Ten outstanding librarians will receive \$5,000 and the honor of a lifetime, including being celebrated on stage at ALA's LibLearnX Conference in New Orleans in January 2023. Honorees will also receive complimentary LibLearnX registration as part of their award package as well as a \$750 travel stipend. We know librarians of all kinds go above and beyond to serve and educate their patrons every day, so please spread the word in your community about this life-changing opportunity! Promotional tools including graphics, social media copy, printable materials, and a sample press release are all [available on the award website](#).

## Comic-Con Announces 2022 Eisner Winners

The 2022 Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards were presented at an awards ceremony during Comic-Con in July. Named for the pioneering comics creator and graphic novelist Will Eisner, The Eisner Awards, a prominent prize in the comic book industry, are given annually in 32 categories. Winning titles were chosen from nominated works published between January 1 and December 31, 2021. The winners in various categories for young readers were:

### Best Publication for Early Readers (up to age 8)

*Chibi Usagi: Attack of the Heebie Chibis*, by Julie and Stan Sakai (IDW)

Other nominees in this category:

*Arlo & Pips #2: Join the Crow Crowd!*, by Elise Gravel (HarperAlley)

*I Am Oprah Winfrey*, by Brad Meltzer and Christopher Eliopoulos (Dial Books for Young Readers)

*Monster Friends*, by Kaeti Vandorn (Random House Graphic)

*Tiny Tales: Shell Quest*, by Steph Waldo (HarperAlley)

### Best Publication for Kids (ages 9-12)

*Salt Magic*, by Hope Larson and Rebecca Mock (Margaret Ferguson Books/Holiday House)

Other nominees in this category:

*Allergic*, by Megan Wagner Lloyd and Michelle Mee Nutter (Scholastic)

*Four-Fisted Tales: Animals in Combat*, by Ben Towle (Dead Reckoning)

*Rainbow Bridge*, by Steve Orlando, Steve Foxe, and Valentina Brancati (AfterShock)

*Saving Sorya: Chang and the Sun Bear*, by Trang Nguyen and Jeet Zdung (Dial Books for Young Readers)

*The Science of Surfing: A Surfside Girls Guide to the Ocean*, by Kim Dwinell (Top Shelf)

## **Best Publication for Teens (ages 13-17)**

*The Legend of Auntie Po*, by Shing Yin Khor (Kokila/Penguin Random House)

Other nominees in this category included:

*Adora and the Distance*, by Marc Bernardin and Ariela Kristantina (Comixology Originals)  
*Clockwork Curandera, vol. 1: The Witch Owl Parliament*, by David Bowles and Raul the Third (Tu Books/Lee & Low Books)  
*Strange Academy*, by Skottie Young and Humberto Ramos (Marvel)  
*Wynd*, by James Tynion IV and Michael Dialynas (BOOM! Box)

## **U.S. DOE Announces Engage Every Student Initiative**

In conjunction with National Summer Learning Week in July, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) announced the [Engage Every Student Initiative](#), which will help communities utilize American Rescue Plan funds alongside other state and local funds to ensure that every child who wants a spot in a high-quality out-of-school time (OST) program has one.

The DOE announced a public-private partnership with five coordinating organizations: the Afterschool Alliance, The National Comprehensive Center, the National League of Cities, The National Summer Learning Association, and AASA, the School Superintendents Association who will work with allied organizations to ensure that students have access to critical learning and development opportunities year-round.

The initiative will encourage and support schools, districts, elected officials, government agencies, community organizations, and others connected to out-of-school time efforts to take up the department's call to action on universal access, and to encourage the utilization of American Rescue Plan and other resources to support access to out-of-school time to support student recovery from lost instructional time during the pandemic.

The department also announced new resources to support out-of-school time including:

- A \$3-4 million dollar contract that will be awarded in FY2023 to provide best practices in program implementation for summer and out-of-school time.
- A [new tool from the Institute of Education Sciences](#) (IES) to support states, districts, or programs in building and using evidence to implement afterschool and summer learning programs.

For additional information on the Department of Education's out-of-school time work, visit [www.ed.gov/ost](http://www.ed.gov/ost).

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