



MLA Executive Committee Agenda

Friday, February 9, 10 – 12

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82832523996>

Meeting ID: 828 3252 3996

1. Call to order
 - a. Vote to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2023 meeting
2. President's Report
3. ALA Presidential Candidate Ray Pun Meet and Greet
4. Treasurer's Report (Sarah)
5. Director of Operation's Report (Kristen)
6. Conference Update (Conference Committee Co-Chairs)
7. Committee Reports
8. ALA Presidential Candidate [Sam Helmick](#) Meet and Greet (11 am)
9. Update
 - a. MBLC
 - b. MLS
 - c. NELA
 - d. MSLA
 - e. Others
10. New Business
 - A. Vote on the Slate of Officers for 2024-2025
 - B. Vote to become a [Unite Against Book Bans State Partner](#)
 - C. MLA Membership reminders
11. Old Business
 - [SLI / Massachusetts Library Association Partnership](#)
12. Adjournment

**Next meeting: Friday, April 12*



President's Executive Board Report — February 2024

Meetings attended:

- ALA Chapter Advocacy Academy Workshop, December 8-10, Chicago, IL
- Legislative Hearing Regarding School Librarians and Libraries Bill, January 10
- MLA Admin Board Meeting, January 12, virtual
- MLA PR Meeting, January 18 virtual
- MLA Legislative Meeting, January 19, virtual
- MLA Membership meeting, February 1 virtual
- MLA/MSLA meeting, February 2, virtual

Upcoming Events:

- Legislative Breakfasts:
Wilmington Public Library, February 9
Cambridge Public Library, February 23

Personnel/Chair Updates:

Carol Gafford has offered to be a co-chair for the Public Relations Committee. Sara Slymon is creating a sub-group for the Leadership Committee called Managing Moms.

Advocacy:

I am working to add both BillTrack50 and One Click Politics to the MLA website. I am working in partnership with MSLA to provide Bill information to both organizations using these tools.

Horizons:

Both Noelle Boc and I met with Barb Fecteau and Jen Varney about how MSLA and MLA can partner and be a force together to support public, academic and school libraries.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Filleul, President

February 5, 2024



MBLC Director's Report to MLA Executive Board February 2024

New Commissioner: Governor Healey has appointed Kate Chang to the Board of Library Commissioners. Ms. Chang is replacing Commissioner DeBole, whose term expired in January.

Ms. Chang is currently the Vice President of Government and Community Relations at the Pine Street Inn in Boston. She has worked as an independent consultant advising on legislative and advocacy strategies and as a district representative for former Congressman Michael Capuano. Ms. Chang holds a B.A. from Grinnell College, and an M.A. in Asian Studies and an M.A. in Public Policy, both from the University of Texas at Austin.

FY2025 Budget: Governor Healey's FY2025 budget proposal was released on January 24th. Except for a slight increase of \$20,014 to our agency's administration line (7000-9101), our budget lines are level-funded. This is just the first step in the budget process and will be followed by budget proposals from House Ways and Means, then the full House, Senate Ways and Means then the full Senate, and Conference Committee for line items that aren't in agreement, then votes by both the House and Senate and the Governor's signature (with the option to veto line items, which may be overridden). We will be included in one of the eight upcoming budget hearings to be held across the Commonwealth by the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

BLC-Board of Library Commissioners	FY24 GAA	FY24 Approved Spending	FY25 H.2	vs. FY24 Approved Spending	%
7000-9101 - Board of Library Commissioners(1CS)	1,904,745	2,001,431	2,021,445	20,014	1%
7000-9401 - Regional Libraries Local Aid (1CS)	16,717,600	16,717,600	16,717,600	-	0%
7000-9402 - Talking Book Program Worcester(1CS)	678,040	678,040	678,040	-	0%
7000-9406 - Talking Book Program Watertown(1CS)	3,860,420	3,860,420	3,860,420	-	0%
7000-9501 - Public Libraries Local Aid (1CS)	17,600,000	17,600,000	17,600,000	-	0%
7000-9506 - Library Technology and Automated Resource-Sharing	6,167,581	6,169,480	6,169,480	-	0%
7000-9508 - Center for the Book (1CS)	420,000	420,000	420,000	-	0%

This year **ALA** is again supporting advocates from key states/Congressional Districts to go to Washington, DC for a "Fly-in" event on March 6-7 to meet with members of their federal delegations. ALA contacted us looking for someone from the Worcester area and we recommended Jason Homer, the Worcester Public Library Director. Jason will be going to DC with Maria McCauley, the Cambridge Public Library Director (Maria and I participated in "virtual Fly-ins" during the early pandemic years). We will be updating our [website](#) on how we use our Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds (both statewide and by Congressional district) from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for use in conjunction with their meetings.

I testified at the **Joint Committee on Education** hearing on Wednesday, January 10th that included **S.2528, An Act Regarding Free Expression**, Senator Julian Cyr's anti-book banning bill. We worked with Sen. Cyr's staff on the language for the sections focused on Chapter 78. Rep John Moran's similar bill, H.4229, was also included in the hearing that day. A recording of the hearing is available at: <https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/4815> (please note: Sen. Cyr and Rep. Moran started speaking on their bills at around 8:20, then other bills were discussed until the in-person speakers for the two anti-book ban bills started around 2:47:19. Virtual testimony on the anti-book ban bills starts at 3:45:54.)

On January 31, 2024, the Library Legislative Caucus and the Massachusetts Library Association sponsored a legislative briefing on **S.2447/H.4235 An Act protecting against attempts to ban, remove, or restrict library access to materials** sponsored respectively by Senator Oliveira and Representative Saunders. This was the second of three scheduled briefings at the State House. The first, on January 23rd, focused on Rep. Balser's e-book bill (**H.3239**). The third briefing will be focused on the MBLC's [FY2025 Legislative Agenda](#) and is tentatively



scheduled for March 6th. These briefings are both in person and livestreamed and are for members of the state legislature and staff.

Governor Healey released an **Executive Order** titled [Instituting Skills-Based Hiring Practices](#) on January 25th. Executive department offices and agencies “are directed to utilize skills-based employment practices in their efforts to attract, recruit, hire, retain, and develop the careers of talented employees.” In addition, job classifications issued or updated after the date of this Executive Order “shall not specify a minimum level of education as an entrance requirement unless the Human Resources Division (HRD) determines that a particular level of education is necessary to perform the job after completing a job analysis. Job postings issued or updated after the date of this Executive Order may include preferred education requirements in excess of minimum entrance requirements only with approval of the agency’s cabinet secretary and the Human Resources Division.”

We will be awaiting further guidance from HRD on skills-based hiring practices policy and training. While we are an independent agency, we generally follow Executive Orders when applicable. A further question will be how this new Order may impact the [Director Personnel Requirements](#) in our State Aid to Public Libraries program.

ERate update: Our ongoing training webinar series continued on January 25, 2024, with the fourth installment in our E-rate Training series led by MBLC’s E-Rate consultant Aleck Johnson. *Contracting and Applying for Funds* covered bid evaluation, awarding of contracts, and filing the Form 471. The session covered these topics in detail, using examples, and included a walkthrough of how a library would complete and file the E-rate Form 471. A recording of the session will be posted on the [MBLC’s E-rate trainings page](#).

Digital Equity Update: In January the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [announced](#) that the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) will wind down by April of 2024 if Congress does not appropriate more funding. As part of the ACP over [364,304 households in Massachusetts](#) are enrolled receiving monthly benefits that significantly reduce the cost of high-speed internet connectivity.

On January 10, 2024 Rob Favini and Kate Butler met with Liv Homestead from the **Western Mass Digital Equity Library Network** to discuss how the network could reach out to more libraries to participate in their education and technology programs.

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) State Program Report (SPR): In our annual SPR the MBLC reported on 35 projects documenting the spending of our Federal FY2022 IMLS funding. Reporting included projects from the MBLC Direct Grant program. Every year the MBLC can designate specific Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) projects as exemplary to highlight impactful and innovative programming. This year the following three projects were identified as exemplary:

Ashfield and Colrain: Rural libraries, Rural jails: Outreach to Incarcerated Community:

Lending, reading, and discussing books is such a basic standard of service for libraries that its importance is often overshadowed by the latest trends. Yet this project demonstrated that those services remain deeply meaningful. The success of this project lies with the personal connections established and the supportive environment that was created around providing those basic services. The impact can ultimately be linked to the care taken by the project to put the community being served at the center of the work, adapting to their needs, and being a true resource to them – now and in the future. The project has established the foundation of a long-term relationship that can outlast individual commitments. It can serve as a model for public libraries on how to develop services for incarcerated individuals and incorporate a transitional library experience for them. This project also reinforced the critical need of policies and procedures designed with the community in mind, something every library should prioritize for those they serve.



Go Local: Watertown Collective Memory Project:

This project consistently adapted its plans and approach to best suit the needs of the community. Multiple methods were used throughout to broaden the scope of who contributed and shared with the project. The project incorporated suggestions and the result was both a robust inclusive community collection as well as sustainable workflows the library can continue to use in future years.

Sawyer Free Library's Anytime STEM Learning:

Sawyer Free Library's Young Gloucester Scientists Club demonstrated an effective model for meaningful out of school learning. This project emphasized an exploratory approach and encouraged youth to actively think like scientists by observing, questioning, and experimenting with the world around them. It introduced participants to Gloucester community members with careers across a variety of STEM fields, offering another level of depth to what STEM can look like as an adult. This project also provided an excellent example of connected learning.

Ally Dowds has had an immediate impact in her role as our new Consultant to Special Populations as she was interviewed by WBUR for a story on Cape Cod prisoners' access to books in jail libraries.

<https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/01/23/barnstable-county-jail-library-cape-cod-falmouth>

On January 17, 2024, Maura Deedy hosted her final **Friends Coffee Hour**. It was fitting that her last event held for the MBLC was with a group that she has supported and helped to create a strong community of library friends with her innovative coffee hours.

The **Communications Team** developed the materials and webpage used for the Mass. Municipal Association annual meeting and trade show on January 19-20 and set up the booth. A new "MBLC at a Glance" was created with brief program descriptions and staff contact information. Other print materials that were available included: the legislative agenda, the library ecosystem chart, and a new construction information sheet. A bookmark with a QR code that leads to a webpage on the agency site with more detailed program information was available for staff and commissioners to hand to visitors.

The new **State Aid to Public Libraries website** is live: <https://mblcstateaid.com/> The team worked with Uechi Ng and the State Programs unit to develop the new State Aid online brochure/microsite for municipal officials. The site explains the benefits of the State Aid to Public Libraries program, offers a search so municipal officials can see how much their community saved by being certified in the State Aid Program, and includes information on how much State Aid awards have increased for individual communities over the decade (for most it's been a 50% increase or more).

The Team also coordinated with the Massachusetts Library Association to provide the data and design for the Freedom to Read briefing sheet. The following data was included and will be developed into a press release:

The impact of attempts to restrict access in Massachusetts

According to the American Library Association (<https://public.flourish.studio/story/1882667/>), there were 45 book challenges in Massachusetts in 2022 affecting 57 titles. That's more than the past 9 years (2013-2021) combined which totaled 38 challenges.

In *2023, attempts to ban books in the Commonwealth continued with **more than 2,000 complaints and informal challenges and 135 formal challenges in public libraries.**

Types of formal challenges:

38 formal challenges to library materials



64 formal challenges to library services like exhibits and displays

33 formal challenges to library programs

******Nearly 25% of school and public librarian respondents combined reported being harassed on social media; 22% reported being harassed via email; 18% report being harassed in person related to book challenges or program challenges.

***Public libraries that reported a challenge in 2023:**

Agawam, Amherst, Ashfield, Athol, Belmont, Billerica, Boston, Bridgewater, Brookline, Canton, Chilmack, Clinton, Dedham, Dracut, Fitchburg, Foxborough, Hamilton – Wenham, Harwich Brooks, Lancaster, Medford, Natick (Morse) Newton, Norfolk, Pembroke, Pepperell, Quincy, Reading, Rehoboth, Southborough, Southampton, Sturbridge, Sunderland, Swansea, Taunton, Watertown, Westborough, Wilbraham, Wilmington, Winchester

Data from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners State Aid ARIS report.** A formal challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group using the library's policy. An informal complaint is when a patron expresses concern about the appropriateness of a library program, service, or material. It does not trigger the reconsideration procedure. * Data from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners informal survey of library directors who were asked to report on activity from June 30, 2022 to July 1, 2023**

Staff news:

We are very happy to announce that Allyson (Ally) Dowds joined the MBLC as our new Consultant to Special Populations in early January. Ally brings a great deal of related experience including having worked in a corrections library and as an outreach librarian at the Boston Public Library. Most recently she served as the Head of Public Services at the Reading Public Library. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Loyola University in Chicago and an MLIS from Simmons.

Maura Deedy resigned at the end of January. She and her family are relocating to New Jersey. Maura has set high standards in her outreach work to library trustees, friends, directors, and foundations. She introduced many programming and support initiatives that we will continue moving forward. In addition, her willingness to jump in to take a leadership role to support libraries facing COVID 19, EDI issues, and most recently intellectual freedom challenges represents the MBLC at its best. Please join me in thanking Maura for her dedicated service to the MBLC and to the Commonwealth's libraries and in extending our best wishes to her for the future!

We recently advertised Maura's position as well as our open Preservation Specialist position. Both positions are responsible for key outreach activities at the MBLC. We hope to have both positions filled over the next few months.



Director of Operations Monthly Activity Report

Name: Kristen Collins

Date: February, 2024

Member Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managed incoming emails/inquiries/phone calls• Archived contacts
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Met with MC Trade contact to kick off project
External Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepared NELA report and sent to NELA rep• Created new members via ALA• Fielded inquiries from media and/or outside agencies
Conference Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24 exhibitors registered, 5 sponsors• Fielded inquiries re: potential exhibitors• Attended committee meeting• Scheduled meeting with a member to assist with PR
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forwarded invoices for 2024 and 2025 conferences
Next steps	<p>Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Featured speakers on website - need to fine tune who is sponsoring what session/program- Redeploy exhibitor/sponsor info- Open conference registration <p>MLA Survey</p>
LINKS	<p>MC Trade 13-Min Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53IVjcvq4UM&themeRefresh=1</p> <p>MC Trade Website Templates : https://memberclicks.com/mc-trade-portfolio/</p>



MLA Legislative Committee Report February 2024

The Legislative Committee continues to work on several pieces of legislation affecting libraries filed at the statehouse.

Hearings on Library-Related Legislation

January 10, 2024 the Joint Committee on Education held a hearing on two bills related to protecting the freedom to read in public schools in the Commonwealth (S.2528, H.4229)

The Legislative Committee worked with Andrea Fiorillo from IFSRC and MSLA to recruit people to testify on the need for the bills. Legislative Committee also made broad appeals to the library community to recruit written testimony in support of the bills.

Legislative Briefings

The Legislative Committee hosted two briefings to continue to make the case in support of proposed legislation that benefits libraries.

On January 23 the Legislative Committee hosted a briefing for H.3239 -- an act empowering library access to electronic books and digital audiobooks. This is legislation sponsored by Representative Ruth Balser. House Library Caucus co-chairs, Representative Natalie Higgins and Representative Brian Murray, introduced the session and Rep. Balser spoke about the development and reasoning for filing the bill.

The Legislative Committee recruited David Leonard from the Boston Public Library, Emily Alling from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Kyle Courtney from Library Futures all delivered remarks explaining the problem of high prices and restrictions on use of digital books and audiobooks for libraries. Kathy Lussier closed the session out with compelling information detailing the escalated spending public libraries in the state have committed toward digital books and audiobooks and the number of checkouts typical print items have in public library settings.

On January 31 the Legislative Committee hosted a briefing for bills S.2447 and H.4235 – an act protecting against attempts to ban, remove or restrict library access to materials. These bills are sponsored by Senator Jacob Oliveira and Representative Aaron Saunders respectively.

Andrea Fiorillo from IFSRC, Will Adamczyk from Legislative Committee and John Chrastka from EveryLibrary institute delivered remarks the explained the problem of challenges and harassment libraries have been experiencing in recent years as well as the logic of centering the



MLA Legislative Committee Report February 2024 – continued

language of the bill in public accommodation and civil rights laws that exist within the state and moving away from reliance on the American Library Association Bill of Rights.

The Legislative Committee worked extensively with staff from Senator Oliveira's office to revise the language in the bill and to change some areas of state statute that the bill targets.

A briefing to support the MBLC budget requests has been scheduled for March 6. The Legislative Committee will be working with staff from the MBLC to develop an agenda and speakers for that briefing.

The Legislative Committee been working with staff from Senator Cyr and Representative Saunders' offices to explore scheduling a briefing in support of their bills. Senator Cyr's office has been experiencing some staffing transitions and once the transitions have stabilized, the Legislative Committee will support MSLA in developing an agenda for the briefing.

Legislative Breakfasts

The Legislative Breakfast subcommittee has been working hard. 13 breakfasts have been scheduled around the state during breakfast season. To date, attendance at breakfasts has been strong and a strong message is being delivered to Senators, Representatives and their staffs.

EveryLibrary

The legislative advocacy/collaboration subcommittee continues to work with John Chrastka of EveryLibrary to help us strengthen our legislative activities. John spoke at the briefing for Senator Oliveira & Representative Saunders' bills. John provided information that illustrated how the bills would be strengthened by centering language in public accommodation and civil rights laws.

Publicity

The Legislative Committee has been making an effort to regularly post legislative updates on the MLA Facebook page (pictures and information about the briefings and from legislative breakfasts) so membership can be informed on how MLA is working on their behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

Will Adamczyk, Kathy Lussier, Nora Blake
Cochairs, MLA Legislative Committee



Intellectual Freedom/Social Responsibility Committee MLA Executive Board Report — February 2024

Past Activities:

- Testified at the statehouse hearing on Education Committee freedom to read bills S.2528 & H.4229, wear every hopeful these bills will go up for a vote and pass
- Consulting with MSLA on Education Committee freedom to read bills: S.2528 & H.4229 as they prepare for the next stage of briefing lawmakers
- Strategy session on proposed bills with Legislative Committee, and EveryLibrary Institute
- Briefing lawmakers at the statehouse to revise and support H4005 and S2447
- Guest lecture for Simmons University LIS Intellectual Freedom course- a rewarding experience with an engaged class. Reinforcements are coming.
- Presentation to the Friends of Bellingham Public Library on censorship
- Meeting of the Intellectual Freedom Task Force
- Completed reporting to ALA OIF for 2023 harassment, material and service challenges- forty incidents reported by our committee about a 35% increase from 2022. MSLA had about half a dozen reports from school libraries in 2023. We also are aware of many more challenges from FOIA requests from a Boston Globe reporter who queried all MA school districts as well as an individual who queried both school and public libraries. We look forward to MBLC's data from this year's ARIS report which will be more definitive.
- Updating committee membership
- Attending Conference Committee meetings

Upcoming and Ongoing Work:

- MLA Conference 2024
- Presentation on censorship at Regis College
- Intellectual Freedom Task Force work
- Consulting on cases of challenges to programs and collections
- Speaking with the media
- Recruiting new members
- Next meeting 2/29/2024, 10-11:00 a.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Fiorillo and Susan Caulfield, Co-Chairs, IF/SRC



Paralibrarian Section Report for February 2024

Our last meeting was at January 16th via Zoom The following was discussed:

MLA Conference:

- Our program **Will be titled Beyond Circulation: Maximizing the Talent of Your Paralibrarians.** Our program will consist of Hands-on demonstrations of some tasks that paralibrarians do at their libraries and our PARA certifications and Awards.

PARA Certification and Awards:

- To date we have one application for a level two.
- We have an applicant who is willing to make our forms fillable PDFs
- Gerry will be handing Awards for the next few months

2023 – 2024 Meeting Dates :

- 3/12/24, 4/9/24 (5/6/24 5/7/24 Conference) 6/11/24

Respectfully submitted,

Anna McGrath
Chair Paralibrarian Section