LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
October 15, 2018
At the Department of Administration,
2nd Floor, Conference Room B,
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908

Members Attending: Heidi Blais, John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Louise Herrington, Rosita Hopper, Marcus Mitchell, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, Kenneth Findlay, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Joan Ress Reeves (Emeritus)

Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS): Karen Andrews, Donna DiMichele, Karen Mellor (ex officio)

Guests: Walter Dzialo

Materials Distributed: None

I. WELCOME
The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the September 17, 2018 meeting

Moved by: Dr. Hopper
Seconded by: Ms. Blais

The meeting minutes were approved with edits.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

A. Welcome/Introductory Remarks

Ms. Drnach welcomed the Board and stated that she is honored to serve as Board Chair and encouraged feedback from Board members.

The Chair offered her compliments to Ms. Mellor, and the OLIS team, for their work on this summer’s Futures conference and series. Ms. Drnach attended some of the Futures events and found them to be interesting, creative, and informative. Congratulations were also extended to OLIS for the positive feedback received from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) from the August site visit.

B. Future LBRI Meeting Venues

Ms. Drnach proposed that the LBRI hold at least a third of their meetings at various libraries.

C. New England Library Association Conference (NELA), October 21-23
NELA will hold their annual conference in conjunction with the RI Library Association (RILA) on October 22-23 at the Warwick Crowne Plaza.

A reception honoring LBRI Member Emeritus Joan Ress Reeves will be held at the Crowne Plaza on October 21 from 6-7 pm. Senator Jack Reed will present an award from the American Library Association (ALA) to Ms. Reeves for her 35-years of dedicated library advocacy work. Former LBRI Chairs, Mark McKenney and Tom Viall, will attend, as will the current LBRI Chair. Members of the Board are invited to attend.

D. Chair for Legislation Committee

Ms. Drnach appointed Aaron Coutu as the Chair for the LBRI Legislation Committee. Board members were invited to join the committee. The Committee’s work is primarily from January to June when the Legislature is in session.

Ms. Mellor noted that the LBRI Chair is an ex officio member of each LBRI committee.

E. Election of Vice-Chair

The LBRI was asked to consider candidates for the position of LBRI Vice-Chair, and to contact Ms. Drnach or Ms. Mellor by October 31 with their recommendations. The Board will vote to fill the position at the November 19 meeting.

Ms. Mellor advised that the main responsibility of a vice-chair is to conduct LBRI meetings when the chair is unable to attend the meeting.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. Ongoing

i. Staffing

Lauren Plews, the State Data Coordinator, resigned her position due to her family’s relocation, and will leave OLIS in mid-November. Ms. Plews improved and advanced the processes of OLIS’ data collection, research, and analysis. She also served as the OLIS Continuing Education Coordinator.

OLIS staffing was reduced by one FTE in the 2020 budget process; the eliminated position is currently vacant due to an internal promotion and had been redefined as the Digital Services Coordinator. OLIS previously had 13 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, with two vacancies.

OLIS will focus on filling the State Data Coordinator immediately because of federal requirements for reporting data.

ii. State Budget

The proposed 2020 budget funds OLIS services at the current service level, including full funding for statewide delivery, which was achieved through savings from staff vacancies.
B. Summer Reading Statistics

Preliminary statistics for Summer Reading show an increase in participation in 2018. Slightly under 16,000 participated in 2017 and almost 17,000 in 2018. OLIS is waiting for data from the Providence Community Library, which partnered with the Providence School Department. The OLIS’ Youth Services Coordinator attributes some increases in summer reading participation to school partnerships and the ongoing transition to a greater focus on summer learning. In Providence, benchmarks were created to measure the impact of summer reading program on summer learning; project data is forthcoming.

Several libraries served as summer meal sites and others worked with their local recreation departments to provide summer meals, more than doubling participation in the Summer Meals program from 2017. The summer reading program is shifting its focus to program outcomes to benefit as many children as possible and stabilize or increase their reading abilities.

C. Annual Survey

The Annual Public Library Survey process is concluding, and Ms. Plews will focus on its completion before her departure. Once completed, OLIS can project Grant-in-Aid (GIA) for 2020.

There were a few issues this year with reporting on local tax-based expenditures; these issues are being reviewed to determine if the problem is systemic or isolated cases. OLIS will review Annual Survey training and report instructions as accurate data is critical for GIA funding determination.

D. Library Directors’ Meeting

A Public Library Directors’ Meeting was held on September 27 at Cranston Public Library with over half of public libraries represented. Outside speakers who want to partner with libraries gave presentations on diverse topics.

A speaker from the RI Holocaust-Genocide Education Committee, established by the RI General Assembly in 2016, presented their collaboration with the RI Department of Education (RIDE) to develop school curriculum about the Holocaust and genocides in Armenia, Cambodia, and Africa. A unit on the genocide of Native Americans is in process. Generating holocaust and genocide curriculum is the first stage in implementing bills passed by the General Assembly in 2016 mandating that RI middle and high school students complete coursework on the subject.

Denali Tiller, a filmmaker from the RI School of Design (RISD), spoke about her documentary, *Tre Maison Dasan*, that tells the story of three young boys with incarcerated parents. The film focuses on how the children respond to their parent’s imprisonment; some filming took place at the RI Department of Corrections (DOC). The film has been screened in several public libraries.

A representative from the RI Computer Museum discussed technology available for loan to libraries. 3D printers, subtractive printers, and other technology may be borrowed, and
qualified instructional staff can be on hand to assist. RI Computer Museum is a regular
participant in the Summer Reading Program.

E. 2019 Work Plan
The OLIS 2019 Work Plan is in progress; Ms. Mellor will present the plan at the November
LBRI meeting.

F. Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA)
Ms. Mellor attended the COSLA meeting in Bismarck, ND in early October; 44 states and one
territory were represented. The group discussed its initiative to increase the Institute of
Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Grants to States funding to equal $1 per capita.

The COSLA eBooks working group is reviewing the escalating costs and increasingly
restrictive licensing of eBooks for libraries. A survey conducted with state libraries
determined that Overdrive is the primary provider of eBooks nationally. The Digital Public
Library of America (DPLA) is creating an eBooks marketplace to supplement current
providers and COSLA, along with other interested parties, is exploring how states can come
together to work with publishers and aggregators to reduce costs and provide more
availability.

The Director of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped gave an
extensive report about service changes. They conducted a recent national survey about the
need for the service, patrons served, and how to improve services. They have developed a
refreshable Braille reader for patrons and are investigating ways to use voice-user interfaces
in future iterations of Talking Books machine.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Federal & State Legislative Updates
   i. Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA)

The MLSA, introduced into the Senate by Senator Reed on September 28, includes the
new provision to increase the base allotment for the Grants to States program. Currently
the base allotment to each state is $680,000, and the balance of the grant is determined
based on state population. Rhode Island receives approximately $1,082,000 for this fiscal
year. Two years ago, the IMLS received $4 million in additional funding for the Grants to
States program, and RI received $12,000 of that funding. The base allotment has not
been increased since 2007; the MLSA language was updated to increase the base
allotment to one million dollars for each state. There is good support from COSLA
members for this initiative.

The proposed MLSA also includes a provision to allow funds to be used for disaster
recovery for libraries, a provision to enable more Native American tribes to participate in
IMLS funding, and support for greater use of data-driven tools.

   ii. Rhode Island Library Association Advocacy
Mr. Coutu reported that RILA is creating issue briefs for elected officials to showcase RILA positions on issues relevant to libraries.

Ms. Mellor added that RILA’s Legislative Action Committee issue briefs outline four key issues including funding state grant-in-aid (GIA) at 25%, full funding for the AskRI databases, school library support in the Basic Education Plan, and Net Neutrality.

VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

A. Mr. Bucci

The RI State Archives is offering a pop-up exhibit series that explores RI’s history. Archive staff will deliver and set up the exhibits for libraries.

B. Ms. Blais

Recent opportunities for librarians were the RI Festival of Children’s Books at Lincoln School, on Saturday, October 13, and the RI Latino Arts author dinner, held the night before.

The School Librarians of RI (SLRI) have been working on a documentary, funded through a Kickstarter campaign, to be used as an advocacy tool. The documentary, It’s on Us, spotlights five school librarians in RI. There will be a screening next week at the Connecticut School Library Association conference on Monday, October 21, and a screening at the NELA conference on Tuesday, October 22.

The President of the American Library Association (ALA), Loida Garcia-Febo, will be visiting Cranston High School East Library in conjunction with her attendance at the NELA conference.

C. Ms. Richman

The New England Region of the National Network of Library of Medicine is offering funding up to $15,000 to support public libraries and outreach programs that involve information and education about the “All of Us” program.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Minimum Standards for Institutional Libraries

Ms. DiMichele reported that the draft regulations were posted on the Secretary of State’s website and one question and one comment were received. Neither impacted the regulations as proposed. The final regulations are ready to be submitted to the Secretary of State and will be effective 20 days after posting. The regulations govern eligibility for state aid for state institutions with libraries, which currently includes the Adult Correction Institution and the RI School for the Deaf.

B. Board Strategy for Support of School Libraries

Ms. Blais reported that the Feinstein Middle School, and both Cumberland middle schools do not have librarians. In addition, three of the Cumberland elementary school libraries are being covered by teachers and not by certified school librarians. Davies Vocational School has eliminated their librarian position. In Cranston, an elementary school librarian position
was eliminated, and Hope Highland Elementary School’s librarian is only available three days per week. At Cranston East, Ms. Blais is required to cover classrooms when a substitute teacher is not available.

SLRI is joining forces with RILA to form an advocacy task force about the issues, and their three priorities are the adoption by RIDE of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) School Library Standards, drafting school library legislation, and identifying library advocates in communities.

Ms. Drnach requested volunteers for a LBRI School Support Committee to identify school library issues. Ms. Blais, Ms. Page, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Sloan, and Mr. Coutu volunteered to be on the Committee. Ms. Blais will structure the committee’s charge and goals.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Library of Rhode Island (LORI) Standards Revision

The Chair called for a committee to review and recommend revisions to the LORI Standards. Dr. Hopper, Ms. Blais, Mr. Bucci, Mr. Coutu, and Ms. Feldman volunteered to be on the LORI Standards Committee with Ms. DiMichele serving as staff to the Committee.

Ms. Mellor noted that an outline will be available at the LBRI November meeting to define the structure of LBRI committees. LBRI committees are given an official charge, the LBRI Chair appoints committee members, and the committee holds meetings and reports to the Board.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

X. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2018, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m. at the Department of Administration, Conference Room B, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI, 02908.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Mr. Norris

Seconded by: Mr. Coutu

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.