**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** Family Engagement

**DATE:** February 23, 2021

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Action Requested

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Ashley Brown and Jo Giudice, co-chairs, Family Engagement Task Force

**DRAFTS OF MOTIONS:**

It is hereby resolved that:

1. the PLA Board of Directors dissolves the PLA Family Engagement Task Force and replaces it with the PLA Committee on Family Engagement; and
2. the charge, work, composition, and origin of the Committee be revised as follows (see mark-up page 3), including the addition of 3 new liaison positions to represent ALA’s youth divisions; and
3. the membership and terms of the current Task Force be transitioned without change to the new Committee.

**BACKGROUND**

The PLA Family Engagement Task Force was established in 2015, with the charge of exploring partnerships and considering resources to be developed to help public libraries learn about and implement successful family engagement practices. Inspiration for the committee came from the Every Child Ready to Read initiative, which teaches parent/caregiver engagement in early literacy, and movements in the educational and early childhood systems to increase parent involvement and create effective partnerships with parents and community organizations to support student success. The potential for public libraries to be valuable partners in the family engagement ecosystem and to focus on lifelong learning motivated PLA to establish the Task Force and develop new products and programs.

During the first two cycles of the Task Force (2015-2017 and 2017-2019), it was chaired by Clara Bohrer, chair of the PLA advisory committee to our IMLS early literacy research grant, and Kathleen Reif, past chair of the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) committee. Since 2019, the Task Force has been chaired by Ashley Brown, Engagement and Outreach Librarian at the Auburn (Ala.) Public Library, and Jo Giudice, Director of the Dallas (Tex.) Public Library.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

During its six-year tenure, the Task Force has been very productive. Accomplishments include:

* producing [*Public Libraries: A Vital Space for Family Engagement*](http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/initiatives/familyengagement/Public-Libraries-A-Vital-Space-for-Family-Engagement_HFRP-PLA_August-2-2016.pdf)(August 2016) and [*Ideabook: Libraries for Families*](https://globalfrp.org/content/download/73/436/file/IdeaBook.pdf) (December 2016)
* developing the [Libraries Transform Family Engagement toolkit](http://www.ilovelibraries.org/librariestransform/family-engagement-toolkit-intro)
* creating a customizable [bookmark](https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/family-engagement-bookmark-file) and [poster](https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/family-engagement-poster) to remind parents of the important role they play in their children’s education, currently available for sale through the ALA store
* presenting webinars and conference programs over 30 times to audiences of public librarians, educators, advocates and others (see presentation history, attached)
* developing and executing the [Advancing Family Engagement in Public Libraries](http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/feseries) professional development series in 2020, PLA’s first virtual classroom series, which engaged 60 librarians from 30 libraries and will be repeated with two more cohorts in 2021 and 2022
* leading library efforts to understand and offer programming on [computational thinking](http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/familyengagement/compthinking) via webinars, conference programs and the white paper [Making the Connection: Computational Thinking and Early Learning for Young Children and Their Families](http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/initiatives/familyengagement/compthinking/MakingTheConnection_PLMag_JulAug2020.pdf) published in Public Libraries magazine
* securing a 2020-2021 IMLS National Leadership planning grant to conduct the project [Exploring a Program Co-Design Approach to Better Serve and Engage Low-income, Latinx Communities](https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/lg-246412-ols-20)
* managing partnerships, including responding to inquiries and proactively reaching out, with many parent and education groups. Over the life span of the Task Force, PLA connected with groups such as the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Center for Families Learning, the National Head Start Association, the National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement, the Institute for Educational Leadership, the New England Museum Association, WGBH Boston, PBS Kids, the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Zero to Three, the AT&T ScreenReady program, and others

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOARD ACTION**

Task Force co-chairs and members believe there is substantial work needed to continue to promote family engagement to public librarians. There is potential to continue and expand our educational programs, such as the Advancing Family Engagement series, which will both educate the field and generate revenue for PLA. We have started to more deeply explore specific issues and angles in family engagement (such as computational thinking, engaging Latinx community members, and digital citizenship) and can continue to explore these and others for potential products and programs. We are developing a reputation for PLA and public libraries with partners such as the National Center for Families Learning and Zero to Three and need to continue to connect with and educate partners in the education, early childhood, and social services fields.

In discussing this request, the Task Force noted that issues related to child and youth services have been routinely directed to its members and staff, regardless of whether they relate to family engagement or family literacy. With the dissolution of the joint PLA/ALSC Every Child Ready to Read Committee in 2019, PLA has no other home or initiative for youth services. Many issues can be referred to the ALA youth divisions, but sometimes they lack interest or time to engage with a promising opportunity. In other instances, the Task Force and staff feel compelled to engage because the issues have come directly from PLA members to PLA as their organizational home. The Task Force does not want to pass on promising opportunities for PLA/ALA and wants to be responsive to PLA members working in youth services, however they need to focus on their family engagement charge and lack capacity to do more. As a step toward addressing the situation, the Task Force is asking the board to expand its composition to include three liaisons from the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). These members will serve as direct links to the youth divisions, with the charge of representing them and bringing information back and forth. This formalized, member-to-member communication will improve coordination and information sharing without creating a new entity or initiative.

Therefore, we are recommending the PLA Board of Directors dissolve the PLA Family Engagement Task Force and replaces it with a standing PLA committee; retain the existing charge (with minor updates); expand the composition such that the three youth divisions will be asked to appoint liaisons; and retain the current membership, with the expectation that current members will complete their terms (through June 30, 2021) and the new committee would be included in PLA’s routine committee appointment process when it begins in the spring of 2021.

## PLA Committee on Family Engagement

## Charge and Work

To explore partnerships and consider resources to be developed to help public libraries learn about and implement successful family engagement practices. The Committee will report to the PLA Board of Directors at least twice per year..

### Deliverables and outcomes:

* Promote and continue to expand on PLA’s family engagement framework and program models as published in the 2016 *[Ideabook: Libraries for Families](https://globalfrp.org/Articles/Ideabook-download-form" \o "Ideabook: Libraries for Families (opens in new window/tab)" \t "_blank)*
* Provide tools to public libraries to promote their family engagement vision and services to educators, families, and government leaders such as the [Libraries Transform Family Engagement Toolkit](http://www.ilovelibraries.org/librariestransform/family-engagement-toolkit-intro)
* Create an assessment process for public libraries to evaluate family engagement at the public library strategy, funding, partnerships and programming levels and develop action plans
* Educate the public library field about family engagement via ALA conference presentations and development of a library in-service toolkit and potential speakers bureau
* Identify and/or develop model programming for public libraries for families with children of all ages
* Connect with professionals in the government, education, early childhood, social service and other sectors about the potential of public libraries
* Positively impact the number of U.S. libraries that incorporate family engagement into their strategic vision, leverage partnerships and funding at the community level to support family engagement, and improve youth and adult programs to better promote parental involvement in children’s education

### Expected time commitment:

* Attend ALA national conferences (4 hours/year plus travel time)
* Attend virtual meetings scheduled every 1–2 months (6–10 hours/year)
* Participate on project subcommittees as assigned (variable)
* Review and respond to emails and ALA Connect messages (2–3 hours/year)
* Provide subject matter expertise on priority projects (12 hours/year)
* (Optional) Attend national meetings of education/early childhood/family-serving professionals to present about partnering with public libraries for family success (variable)

### Desired skills, knowledge, or experience:

* Familiarity with the family engagement movement in the early childhood and education sectors and knowledge of how caregiver involvement in children’s education leads to better educational and economic success
* Ability to advise PLA about public library family engagement strategies, from the library director, children’s or youth services, and/or adult services perspectives (expertise at all levels is needed)
* Skills in writing and program development in order to help take the Task Force’s vision from idea to product stage

## Composition

Up to fifteen (15) members, which includes:

* One (1) chairperson or two (2) co-chairpersons with one-year terms
* Up to ten (10) members, and no fewer than five (5), with two-year terms
* Up to three (3) liaisons, one each appointed by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

## Origin

Created as a Task Force by the Board of Directors at its May 2015 meeting and approved as a standing committee at its March 2021 meeting.

**PLA Family Engagement Task Force**

**Presentation History**

*Updated December 2020*

**2016**

PLA 2016 Conference, Denver, CO

* Library Leadership for Family Engagement, April 8, 2016 (Margaret Caspe, Lorette McWilliams)

ALA 2016 Annual Conference, Orlando, FL

* Family Engagement in Public Libraries Is Valued, But There Is Work To Be Done, June 26, 2016 (Clara Bohrer, Margaret Caspe, Carolina Buitrago, Scott Allen)

2016 National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) conference, Detroit, MI

* Promoting Family Engagement in Anywhere, Anytime Learning, October 2016 (Clara Bohrer, Margaret Caspe, Barb Macikas)

PLA webinar

* A New Approach to Building Family Engagement Pathways: The 5Rs Framework, December 2016 (Margaret Caspe, Lesley Graham, Michelle Jeske)

**2017**

ALA 2017 Midwinter Meeting, Atlanta, GA

* Enhancing Public Library Programs Through a Family Engagement Framework, January 21, 2017 (Margaret Caspe, Jo Giudice, Judy Nelson, Maren Ostergard)
* Improving Federal and State Policy to Support Family Engagement in Libraries, January 21, 2017 (Scott Allen, Margaret Caspe, Larra Clark, Johanna Pringle)

IMLS-funded symposium at USS Constitution Museum, Boston, MA

* Engaging Families in Museums and Libraries, September 22, 2017 (Kathleen Reif)

2017 National Center for Families Learning Conference, October 9-11, 2017, Tucson, AZ

* Every Child Ready to Read’s Impact on Communities (Judy Nelson, Maren Ostergard),
* Engaging Families: STEM Learning Through Libraries (Scott Allen, Margaret Caspe, Toni Garvey, Angela Hubbard)
* Public Libraries: Vital Family Engagement Partners (Scott Allen, Margaret Caspe, Jo Giudice)

**2018**

PLA 2018 Conference, Philadelphia, PA

* ECRR and Family Engagement: Positive Impacts for Libraries and Communities, March 24, 2018 (Clara Bohrer, Susan Neuman, Donna Celano)

National Convening on Partnerships between School Districts and Public Libraries organized by Library Journal/School Library Journal, Omaha, NE

* Stronger Together: Building Literacy-Rich Communities, May 11, 2018 (Larra Clark)

ALA 2018 Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA

* Public Libraries: Leading Communities in Family Engagement, June 24, 2018 (Scott Allen, Jo Giudice, Amanda Courie)
* Family Engagement Initiative: Resources for Encouraging Families to be Active in their Children’s Learning and Development (News You Can Use), June 25, 2018 (Scott Allen, Judy Nelson, Maren Ostergard)

5th Annual National Community and Family Engagement Conference, Institute for Educational Leadership, Cleveland, OH

* Public Libraries: Vital Partners In Family Engagement, July 12, 2018 (Felton Thomas, Scott Allen)
* Early Learning and Literacy in Public Libraries, July 13, 2018 (Pamela Jankowski, Emily Stupica)

2018 National Center for Families Learning Conference, Fort Lauderdale, FL

* Innovative Programming Beyond Library Walls, September 25, 2018 (Liz Atack, Klem-Mari Cajigas, Jo Giudice, Pam Jankowski, Ellin Klor, Kelvin Watson, Emily Sedgwick, Scott Allen)

National Head Start Association’s 2018 Parent and Family Engagement Conference, Orlando, FL

* Public Libraries: Vital Partners in Family Engagement, December 19, 2018 (Clara Bohrer, Scott Allen)

**2019**

Illinois Library Association’s Illinois Youth Services Institute, Bloomington, IL

* Leadership, Support Services and the 5 R’s: A Family Engagement Framework for Public Libraries, March 19, 2019 (Amber Creger, Scott Allen)

Reach Out and Read National Forum, November 2019 (Clara Boher)

**2020**

PLA 2020 Conference, Nashville, TN

* Family Engagement Starts at the Top: Library Leadership for Family Engagement, February 25, 2020 (Scott Allen, Liz Atack, Caleb Gainey, Jo Giudice, Randy Heath)

Zero to Three Webinar

* Public Libraries: Vital Partners in Family Engagement, March 4, 2020 (Liz Atack, Marie Pyko, Scott Allen)

National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement Webinar

* Engaging Families Through the Coronavirus Pandemic: National Organizations Share Their Plans, March 28, 2020 (Scott Allen)

Advancing Family Engagement in Libraries Professional Development Series

* What is Family Engagement? And the Case for Family Engagement in Libraries, Tuesday, April 14, 2020 (Ashley Brown, Emily Sedgwick)
* Reach Out and Raise Up, Tuesday, May 12, 2020 (Ashley Brown, Amber Creger)
* Reinforcing Family Actions to Support Learning: The Early Years and School-Age Children, Tuesday, June 16, 2020 (Ashley Brown, Claudia Haines)
* Reinforcing Family Actions to Support Lifelong Learning and Relating, Tuesday, July 14, 2020 (Ashley Brown, Alison Barney)
* Promoting Your Family Engagement Vision to the Community and Reimagining Partnerships, Tuesday, August 11, 2020 (Ashley Brown, Marie Pyko)
* Leadership and Support Services, Tuesday, September 15, 2020 (Ashley Brown, Mary Ellen Icaza)
* Applying What You’ve Learned, October 20, 2020 (Ashley Brown, Jo Giudice)
* Wrap Up and Assessment Session, December 15, 2020 (Ashley Brown, Marie Pyko, Sara Goek)