

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Philadelphia  
January 24-28, 2020**

**Topic:** Align Alex Awards with Other YALSA Book Awards

**Background:** The Alex Awards seem to exist in a middle ground between a book award and a book selection list. Sponsored by YALSA, The Margaret A. Edwards Trust, and Booklist, the Alex Awards are presented at the annual Youth Media Awards but have different criteria than the other awards--ten award winners instead of one winner, no honor titles, and a published vetted list of nominations and/or recommendations from the committee. As a result, reaction to the award is mixed and it is unclear whether the Alex is a true book award or a curated list of recommendations.

**Action Required:** Action

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**Background**

The Alex Awards currently honor ten books published for adult audiences with special appeal to teen readers ages twelve to eighteen. In addition to the ten winners, a vetted list of nominations is also released. All other YALSA book awards name one winner and up to four honor titles or finalists. Only the Nonfiction and Alex Award release a vetted list of nominations. The nature of the Alex Awards (the fact that the award is given to books written for adult audiences while the rest of the awards focus on publications for children and young adults) has caused confusion at the Youth Media Awards. The Alex Awards were once announced prior to the Youth Media Awards. Beginning in 2018 they were announced during the Youth Media Awards along with other YALSA awards, but they still do not follow the same format as the other awards announced.

**Rationale**

In order to be consistent, YALSA should align the Alex Awards with other book awards. This would also help with the flow of the Youth Media Awards at Midwinter meetings.

**Recommended Action**

- Direct the President to form a task force, including interested former Alex Awards chairs and members and at least one member of the Awards Oversight Committee, to investigate ways to

align the Alex Awards with the other book awards by March 15, 2020. Considerations of this task force should include:

- Determining how to manage the vast quantity of adult titles and consider how to continue to include both fiction and nonfiction titles, including various genres and formats. Given the depth and breadth of the scope of the field (technically every book published for the adult market is eligible), a more precise set of guidelines will help the committee in its work.
- Clarifying the purpose of the vetted list. The Alex Policies and Procedures should clearly state that the vetted list is intended to be a list of additionally recommended books curated from the titles nominated over the course of the year.
- Updating the award criteria in the Alex Policies and Procedures. The criteria should be clear, specific, and detailed.

### **Evaluation**

An initial report to the YALSA Board on the task force's findings will be expected by September 15, 2020.

### **Additional Resources**

Alex Award Committee Policies and Procedures:

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards/alexawards/alexawardpolicies>