MD Summer Reading Advisory Council Summary

To provide more services to family and youth services programming around the state, starting in 2015 the Division of Library Development and Services (now the Maryland State Library) began managing the Summer Reading LSTA grant in-house, rather than running it through the excellent Baltimore County Public Library’s youth services division. This shift led to fiscal savings directly impacting youth services opportunities. The national Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) orders are now managed by the Youth Services Coordinator at DLDS/Maryland State Library.

As always, summer reading continues to be at the top of our priority list of statewide projects. Summer Reading is a program which transforms lives for thousands of children and families each year. Unfortunately, in recent years, many library administrators, youth service and summer reading coordinators, and on-the-floor library staff have expressed their increasing frustrations with summer reading. Many feel that awarding numerous small prizes has become more of a burden than a benefit, but they struggle with successfully convincing their customers (internal and external) that it’s time for a change. Others continue to struggle with how to measure the actual reading – should it be number of books? Number of hours? Does it need to be a physical book? Should program participation or other learning activities count? Should we look at a state-wide online registration system, or does each county or Region prefer to have complete control over their own software?

Much discussion about these and other Summer Reading topics occurs at the bi-annual Youth Service Coordinator meetings, but there are too many people there and not enough time to really get into the issues. Due to this, as well as logistical and other concerns, the regional library systems began holding their own Summer Reading meetings in 2015 with the hope that smaller group conversation would lead to more direct discussion and decision-making. Decisions made in these regional meetings illuminate trends and preferences, statewide, regarding these Summer Reading recurring issues.

In 2015, DLDS/Maryland State Library launched a pilot statewide **Summer Reading Advisory Council** (SRAC). The council is comprised of library staff from the three regions of the state: Eastern Shore, Western MD, and Southern MD, as well as representatives from the “central corridor” counties. The representatives of the SRAC will talk with customers and library staff in their regions, participate in their regional meetings if they have them, and investigate national and other states’ solutions.

* The SRAC will make an annual report to MAPLA and to the Youth Service Coordinators.
* The SRAC will hold online meetings quarterly via Blackboard, unless the council decides that this is ineffective.
* The chair of the SRAC will be Janet Vogel from Frederick County. She will run the meetings and keep track of proposed ideas.
* The Youth Services Coordinator from the Maryland State Library will attend all meetings and take all discussions as advisement when making decisions regarding summer reading in Maryland.

**Guidelines for Appointment**

--The YSC from the libraries systems of each region nominate two representatives. At least one of the two representatives from each region should be able to travel to the Youth Service Coordinators’ meetings, which are held centrally in the state in late fall and mid-spring.

--The individuals nominated from each region can be from any level or pay-grade of staff, from administrator to library associate.

--Desired requirements for SRAC reps:

1.) They demonstrate understanding of the crucial role public libraries play in helping to reverse summer learning loss.

2.) They show potential to be leaders in the field of youth services.

--In order to ensure that the libraries lacking a regional office are equally represented, those youth service coordinators will convene in an annual **Summer Reading Summit** for all who would like to participate. At this summit, participants will nominate two individuals to represent them on the Summer Reading Advisory Council.

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