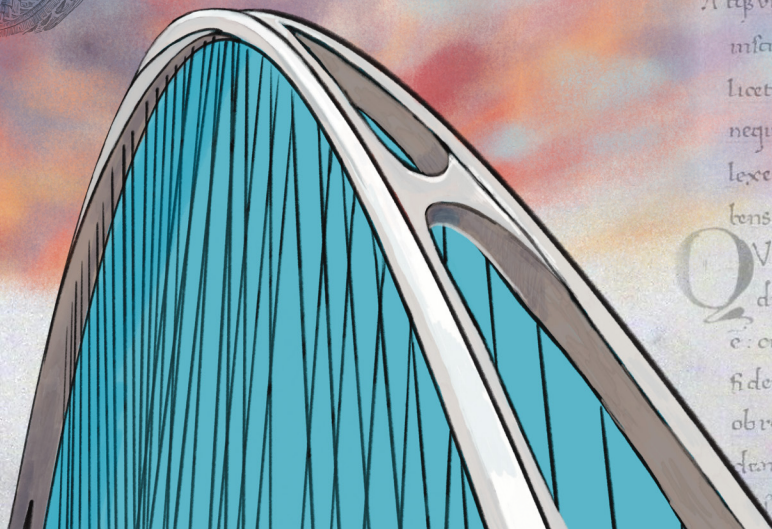
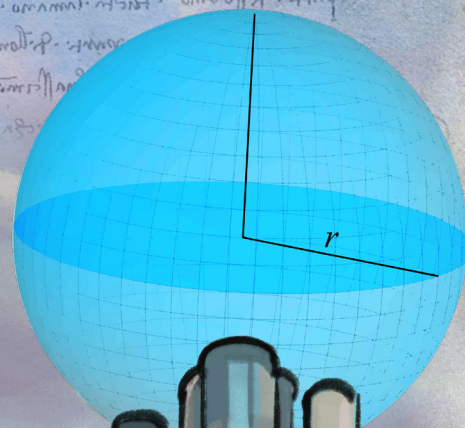


TEXAS LIBRARY JOURNAL

Volume 101, Number 1, Spring 2025

TLA 2025 Exhibits Directory



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Communities Through
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Why School Librarians
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Membership in TLA is open to any individual or institution interested in Texas libraries.

For editorial and advertising information, contact Wendy Woodland, TLA Director, Advocacy & Communications at: wendyw@txla.org

Opinions expressed in *Texas Library Journal* are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by TLA.

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Texas Library Journal (ISSN 0040-4446) is published quarterly in spring, summer, fall, and winter by the Texas Library Association, 3420 Executive Center Drive, Suite 301, Austin, Texas 78731.

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2025 RECIPIENT OF ASHLEY BRYAN AWARD

Kwame Alexander

Presented by the Texas Library Association Black Caucus Round Table



The Texas Library Association Black Caucus Round Table (BCRT) is excited to announce the 2025 winner of the Ashley Bryan Award, Kwame Alexander. Alexander is the acclaimed author of *The Crossover*, a novel that follows twin brothers navigating life on and off the basketball court. *The Crossover* has captured the imaginations of readers worldwide and earned the Newbery Medal in 2015.

The Ashley Bryan Award honors an established Black author for their body of work and a Black author debut work in alternating years. The award recognizes an author's contribution to highlighting and promoting humanity, diversity, culture, and community in children's literature.

An Emmy-winning executive producer, showrunner, and writer, Kwame's production company is dedicated to creating innovative, highly original children's and family entertainment. His mission is to change the world, one word at a time.

The award will be presented at the Texas Library Association 2025 Annual Conference in Dallas in April.

ABOUT THE ASHLEY BRYAN AWARD

The Ashley Bryan Award was established in 2023 by the TLA Black Caucus Round Table to honor established and new Black authors for promoting humanity, diversity, culture and community in children's literature. The award is named for Ashley Bryan, a renown author and illustrator of children's books. His stories and paintings centered on African and African American experiences, to which he devoted his career spanning more than six decades. Bryan's writing and vibrant colored collage paper-cut illustrations have adorned the pages of more than 50 books, ranging from folklore, poetry collections and experiences that celebrate community and individuality.

ABOUT THE BLACK CAUCUS ROUND TABLE

The Black Caucus Round Table seeks to contribute to library service by promoting services to African Americans and opening channels of communication among African American librarians across the entire Texas Library Association membership.

ABOUT THE TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The Texas Library Association's mission is to unite and amplify the voices of the library community. With more than 5,000 librarian members from academic, K-12 schools, public and special libraries, the association provides professional development opportunities, advocates for libraries, and demonstrates their value to our communities. www.txla.org



Ashley Bryan Award Sponsor



President's Perspective

By Elizabeth A.M. Howard

Hail fellows and well met.

The Renaissance is coming to our annual conference, and it aims to be fulfilling in both mind and spirit. I want to express many thanks to the Conference Planning Committee for working diligently not only to bring the amazing programming to library workers across Texas, but to also build the fulfilling conference experience. Erica Richardson and Zinnia Bayardo, the Co-Chairs of the 2025 Conference Planning Committee, have done a brilliant job to create a conference that will guide you on your quest for renewal.

Not only will the many educational opportunities at the conference be amazing, but we also have literal quests for you to complete in your journey, and of course the exhibit hall full of vendors to visit. The exhibit hall is always a feast for both mind and soul. The excitement of picking up an arm load of ARC books and visiting with vendors to see what new services are available for our users is a heady affair. The multitude of opportunities to meet authors can be overwhelming even for the veteran conference-goer. To achieve the enduring value of the conference, some things to remember are volunteering, networking with others in the profession, and being open to learning.

Volunteering at the TLA annual conference is the perfect way to build your network. There is tremendous value in getting to know other library workers across Texas. Volunteering allows you to get an inside look at how the conference is run. Producing and running the conference takes a village: we need people helping in the Authors area moving books and assisting authors, aiding with meeting rooms, counting attendees and alerting tech when needed, assisting in convening sessions and registration. Of course, one of the things we as library workers do best is to provide information assistance to others, and the attendees of this conference are no exception!

Volunteering opportunities do not end at the annual conference. Being a part of TLA can help you get the leadership and experience you need for your next job. Leading a roundtable or committee does more than simply introduce you to people who do what you do. It also builds your skills and gives you experience to land that next step in your career. This year we have a career center at the conference where you can maximize this potential.



Amidst changes in our political landscape both statewide and nationally, the current legislative session, and ongoing conflict among library policymakers, the future laid before us is full of unknowns. Many facets of what we do have become not only confusing but also intimidating and even downright scary. TLA is here to help you navigate the quagmire of state and local policy changes, provide you with the tools needed to continue supporting your communities in every way they need, and empower your library users with the inalienable human right to have free access to information. We are not here to present

any political views, nor to compel you to change yours. Our mission is, has always been, and will always be YOU: your libraries and your communities.

What can we do? Encourage other people to join the Texas Library Association. Our numbers make us stronger. Not only is TLA better able to represent you because our numbers are greater, but it allows us more access to grants that we can use to help library workers across Texas. This year the H-E-B grants have supported small and rural libraries, collection development, and stipends for conference attendance. The Tocker Foundation has also supported conference registration for staff at rural libraries, and the annual Texas Book Festival grants support collection development at public libraries. If you are in a position to do so, please encourage and provide backing for your employees' membership in TLA.

Please also support [Texans for the Right to Read](#), a grass-roots organization separate from TLA that lends a community voice to advocate for your needs. No one wants someone from another city or region of Texas to come in and influence your policies. Texans for the Right to Read helps your community know what is going on in your area and empowers them to be a voice for their local libraries.

We are fortunate our jobs are full of boundless quests for knowledge. Gramercy to you all. I have enjoyed my year fostering and caring for Texas library workers, and I will forever be here to assist you when needed. Fare thee well!

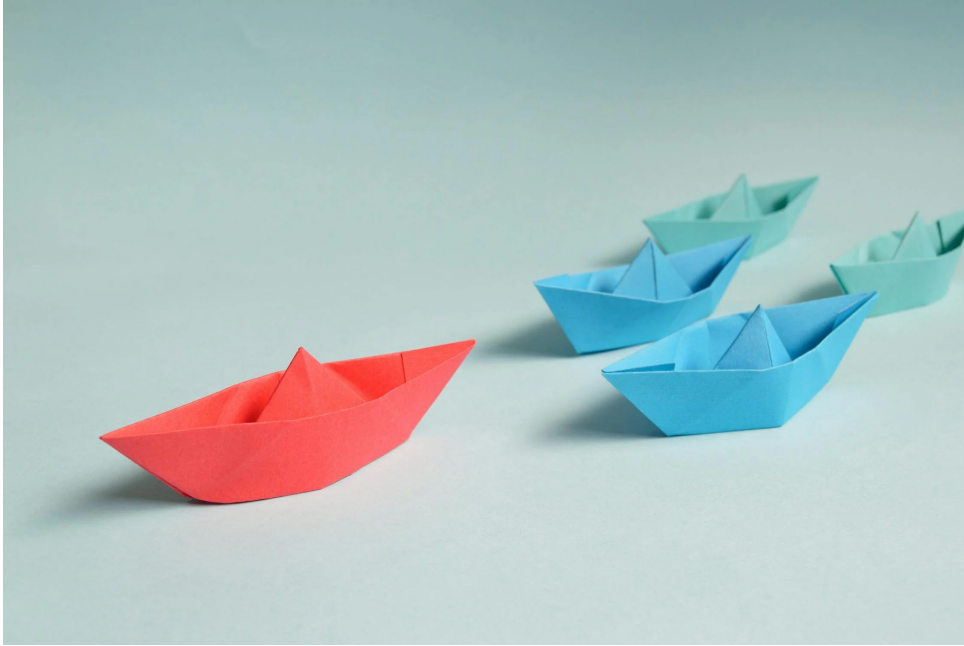
Elizabeth A.M. Howard

Elizabeth A.M. Howard
2024-25 TLA President

Charting Our Future Together

TLA's Strategic Plan for 2026–2029

By Shirley Robinson, CAE



Over the past few years, the Texas Library Association has navigated challenges and embraced opportunities that have redefined our role in the library community. In much the same way that our 2022–2025 Strategic Plan guided us through unprecedented change, we are now poised to embark on the next chapter of our journey with a strategic plan that will shape TLA for the next three-year period. This new plan not only builds on our past successes but also introduces fresh priorities designed to ensure TLA remains a leader in advocacy, professional development, and community engagement.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of our previous plan, several key elements stand out. We have successfully supported our members in tackling intellectual freedom challenges and positioned TLA as a trusted policy resource at both state and national levels. Our significant expansion of professional development offerings has empowered library professionals to excel, while our work on diversifying funding sources and enhancing volunteer leader training has strengthened our organizational foundation. Yet, we recognize that there is still work to be done. In particular, we must address our complex organizational structure by continuing to evolve our governance model to streamline operations, improve agility, and adapt to what the future

of our members needs from TLA.

Our new strategic vision is built around five dynamic pillars:

1. Championing Intellectual Freedom and Legislative Impact

We aim to continue being a beacon of expertise for members facing legislative and intellectual freedom challenges, ensuring our collective voice resonates powerfully in policy discussions.

2. Empowering Professional Growth and Inclusive Engagement

By broadening and diversifying our professional development programs, including innovative initiatives like micro-credentials as well as a full certification program, we will equip our members with the tools they need to lead in their communities.

3. Transforming Governance and Operational Agility

Recognizing the need for a more responsive and efficient organizational structure, we are committed to a comprehensive governance evolution that simplifies our internal processes and enhances decision-making.

4. Ensuring Resilient Financial and Resource Management

Our financial sustainability is paramount. We will continue to diversify our revenue streams and strategically

allocate resources to support both current operations and future growth.

5. Fostering Dynamic Community Engagement and Collaboration

In an era defined by rapid change, building a vibrant and interconnected community is more important than ever. We will cultivate robust networking opportunities and innovative channels for member involvement.

This strategic plan is not just a roadmap for internal operations, it's a call to action for every member of the association. We are inviting you to join us in shaping the future of TLA. To that end, we are hosting two virtual town halls, on March 26th and 27th, where you will have the opportunity to engage directly with our current President, Elizabeth Howard, and our President-Elect, Valerie Prilop. These sessions are designed to foster open dialogue, gather your valuable insights, and ensure that your voices are included in our path forward.

Your feedback is vital as we refine our goals, develop measurable indicators of success, and build a robust operational plan that cascades throughout every level of our association—from districts and divisions to roundtables and committees. We view this strategic planning process as an ongoing conversation rather than a fixed destination. It is our collective responsibility to define the value and resources that will support generations of librarians and library workers in Texas.

In the coming months, we will share more detailed communications and website updates that outline our progress, invite further collaboration, and provide additional opportunities for input. Together, we will navigate the complexities of our evolving political, economic, and cultural landscape, ensuring that TLA continues to thrive as a trusted advocate, a leader in professional development, and a model of organizational excellence.

We look forward to your participation and feedback as we embark on this exciting new chapter. Thank you for being a crucial part of our journey toward a brighter, more connected future.

Shirley Robinson, CAE is the Executive Director of the Texas Library Association



TLA Strategic Plan Townhall Sessions

Share your insights and help shape the association's strategic future for 2026-2029. Meet TLA President Elizabeth Howard and President-Elect Valerie Prilop during this virtual, interactive session. Your voice is essential – be a part of the conversation and help us build a brighter future for TLA.

Wednesday, March 26 4 p.m. CST

[**REGISTER**](#)

Thursday, March 27 10 a.m. CST

[**REGISTER**](#)



THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

I'm a TLA Member Because

"I am a TLA member because professionals should belong to professional organizations that support your growth and networking goals."

– Becky C.

Coordinator of Libraries
Ysleta Independent School District

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Members collaborate to develop innovative solutions, brainstorm ideas, and share best practices.
- 02 Build professional connections**
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- 03 Gain a confidence boost**
Grow your career with TLA's professional development programs tailored to the library industry.

Join TLA

Be a part of the TLA Community
txla.org/join

Update from the Capitol

By Wendy Woodland

March 14 marked the 60th day of the 89th Texas Legislative Session and was the last day that bills could be filed. 8,607 bills were filed this session and TLA is tracking more than 50 that could impact libraries. Here are highlights of bills that have started to move through the process. To learn more about these bills, and see the other bills that TLA is tracking, please visit the [Texas Bill Tracker page on txla.org](https://www.txla.org/texas-bill-tracker).



SB13 by Sen. Paxton requires school districts to establish Local School Library Advisory Councils to assist districts in ensuring local community values are reflected in school library collections. The majority of council members must be parents appointed by school board members. The council's responsibilities are to recommend to the school board:

- Policies and procedures for purchasing library materials
- Library materials appropriate for each grade
- Removal of any library materials that are determined to be harmful or inconsistent with local community values
- Actions to be taken by district in response to challenges to library materials

SB 13 also:

- Adds definitions of indecent content and profane content and prohibits the purchase of materials meeting those definitions.
- Requires districts to notify parents each time their child checks out something from the school library
- Requires the school board, with input from the Local School Library Advisory Council, to approve all library materials to be purchased, prior to ordering
- Requires the list of library materials to be purchased be posted for 30 days for public comment
- Establishes reconsideration policies and procedures for all districts to follow and centralizes the reconsideration process at the district level

Passed by the Senate Education K-16 committee March 3.

SB18 by Sen. Hughes prohibits municipal libraries that host an event where a man presenting as a woman, or a woman presenting as a man reads a book or story to a minor for

entertainment, and the person dressed as the opposite gender is a primary component of the entertainment from receiving state or other public funding. *Passed by the Senate State Affairs Committee March 3.*

SB 412 by Sen. Middleton amends the section of the Texas Penal Code governing the sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to minors. Specifically, it removes the language that states it is an affirmative defense to prosecution that the sale, distribution or display was by a person with a scientific or educational justification.

The bill threatens librarians and educators with criminal prosecution for the selection of materials that have been chosen pursuant to approved

policies and in compliance with state and federal laws. *Passed by the Senate Criminal Justice Committee March 4.* In addition to SB 412, there have been 12 more bills filed that would remove the affirmative defense language.

HB 183 by Rep. Patterson establishes a process for complaints about library materials to go directly to the State Board of Education (SBOE) for review, and SBOE makes decision which all districts must abide by. It essentially centralizes the reconsideration process at the state level. *House Public Education Committee*

HB 2572 by Rep. Harrison prohibits public libraries and public school libraries from using public funds to join the American Library Association, attend or participate in training, conference or other ALA event; or financially support the association either directly or indirectly. *Filed*

TLA staff and members have been meeting with key members of the House and Senate leadership, and with committee members to share our concerns about these and other issues.

Thank you to all TLA members who are responding to calls for action, contacting elected officials, testifying in support of libraries, providing supporting resources and information, and sharing insights into how specific bills could affect Texas libraries. If you haven't done so yet, please find out [who represents you](#) and reach out to your elected officials. [Resources can be found here.](#) Together we make a difference!



Libraries Benefit Communities Through Partnerships

TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION'S COMMUNITY PARTNER PROGRAM

By Warren Davis

Public libraries have always played a key role in connecting their patrons to crucial, life-saving services and resources to improve their lives, and they can do this by making partnerships with local, state, and national organizations. A partnership program offered by the Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) is a great opportunity to enhance library services and better address community needs.

THE TEXAS STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMISSION LIBRARY

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE team recently spoke with Kelli Williams, Community Engagement Director for Access and Eligibility Services, and Marisela Saldana, Program Manager of Community Partner Program (CPP). Their agency is continually looking for local partners, including libraries, to help organize benefits enrollment and educational events or serve as a site for their [Community Partner Program](#), where community members can get help applying for or managing benefits online from trusted local organizations they regularly visit.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY PARTNER PROGRAM?

Established in 2012, [Community Partner Program](#) is a statewide network of community-based organizations that are helping Texans apply for or renew HHSC benefits online. Through the program, Texas Health and Human Services provides support to their network partners to help Texans apply for and manage their food, financial, and health care assistance online.

With the CPP network in place, Texans can get help applying for or managing their state benefits from familiar local organizations they know and trust. Hundreds of Community Partners make up the statewide network which grows each day.

Williams said, "We have 252 Texas counties (out of 254) currently participating with over 500 community partners."

Community Partners can save time for members of the community. Families who visit local organizations, such as food banks or community health clinics, can also apply for health care, food and cash assistance benefits at the same place they receive other services.

WHO CAN BE A COMMUNITY PARTNER?

Community organizations that join CPP are called Community Partners. Community Partners offer resources and information that people can use to apply for and manage their benefits on [YourTexasBenefits.com](https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com). HHSC trains and certifies Community Partners to provide application assistance and case management services.

Public libraries make great Community Partners, but other examples can include school districts, food banks, health providers, churches, or colleges. The partners must have non-profit organization status.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

“The process is facilitated through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), a non-binding agreement that outlines the intentions and expectations of parties involved, between HHSC and the partner organization. CPP trains and certifies Community Partners and provides assistance and case management services using the YourTexasBenefits website,” Williams said.

There are three different levels for the partnerships:

Level 1 – the Partner has information and provides a computer to the client to apply for benefits

Level 2 – the Partner assists with submitting documents and applications

Level 3 – the Partner provides all of the services in Level 2 but also has an understanding of HHSC benefits and will offer limited case research. For example, they can find out the status of an application, whether it is pending or denied. They can have password reset privileges.

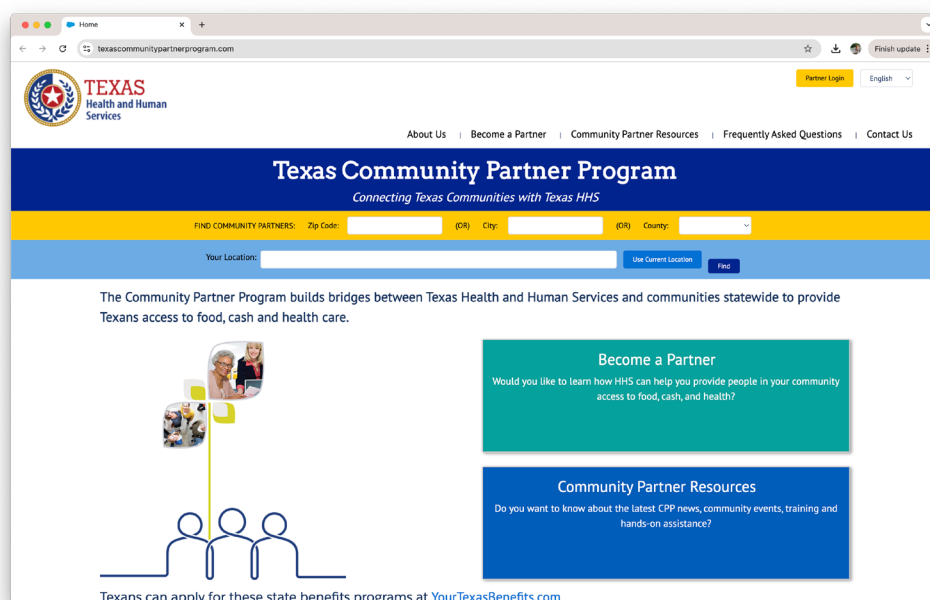
Williams added, “Most libraries involved in the program are Level 1 Partners.”

The CPP has two branches, a state office and a regional team. All Community Partners are assigned to a specialist who answers questions and gives support. The specialist also provides one-on-one training that can be remote or in person. The state office conducts a thorough review of YourTexasBenefits and related systems to identify opportunities for improvement. This ultimately ensures that clients and community partners have more straightforward and efficient access to these systems.

For more information on the Community Partner Program, visit their website, texascommunitypartnerprogram.com or email CCP@hhs.texas.gov.

Warren Davis is the Community Engagement and Outreach Coordinator, Library Digital Opportunities at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC).

This article was first published on January 28, 2025 by the [TSLAC Library Developments blog](#). Reprinted with permission.





Beyond the Veil

Library Recommendations for Books that Help Children Learn About Death and Grief

By Anondah Saide, PhD and Daphne Lynd • Illustration by Kathryn Lavin

Books can be used as an important therapeutic tool by providing information, guidance, and comfort during difficult life events such as grieving the loss of a loved one. By sharing books on death and grief with their children, parents may effectively use bibliotherapy to facilitate discussions about an emotionally salient topic that the parent may not know how to approach or may feel anxious to talk about. In this article, we will discuss children's understanding of death and the important role that books play in that understanding. We will also share the recommendations offered by librarians for high-quality children's books.

Children begin asking questions about death as early as 3-years-of-age. Many parents report that their 3- to 10-year-old children ask questions about death after being exposed to it via media (e.g., television programming and books). Death is a pervasive topic in the media that both children and parents come across in their daily lives. Though many parents and educators believe young children are not ready to understand death; research indicates that during early childhood (~ 3 to 7 years of age), children increasingly develop a mature conception of the biological nature of death. A mature biological conception of death includes the understanding that death is (1) irreversible, (2) inevitable, (3) applicable to all living things, (4) results in the cessation of bodily functions, and (5) caused by a breakdown of bodily functions. Studies show that children's biological understanding of death develops in the order just listed. Despite the desire to protect children from the topic of death; children are curious about it, experience loss, are exposed to it by media, and can understand more than popular opinion implies.

Parents report being less comfortable talking about death with their children, relative to discussing other kinds of biological topics (e.g., aging, illness). As a result, children's books can help mitigate discomfort by facilitating parent-child discussions, and by serving as another resource of knowledge about death. Research with children suggests that they are most likely to transfer information from books when they can relate to the characters and context, and when direct information about death is provided (i.e., euphemisms are not used). Concerningly, content analyses on children's books about death have found that overall, books tend to contain limited information about what death is and often do not represent diverse family cultures and experiences.

Though children's literature about death is abundant, it can be difficult for parents to figure out the most developmentally appropriate, contextually relevant, and accessible book options for their children. The hundreds of book options may be overwhelming. Contacting your local library's staff can be an effective way for parents to source children's books about death and coping with the difficult emotions that accompany loss. Libraries can provide recommendations that best fit the family's needs by considering features such as the marketing age of the book, the appropriateness of the material covered in it, the target of loss (e.g., grandparent, pet), accessibility (e.g., language diversity, format), and more.

To source literature that librarians tend to recommend to parents, we contacted 251 libraries across the country. These libraries were identified by using data from the United States Census to locate the five most populous cities in each state (along with D.C.) to gain information from a diverse regional constituency. The libraries were contacted up to three times via email or via online form to request recommendations for children's literature on death and grief. Overall, 58% of libraries provided recommendations for at least one piece of literature, 40% never replied, and 2% refused to recommend books because we were outside of their region. In total, 2,476 recommendations were collected, and after duplicates were removed, 662 of those were unique.

Several notable trends were apparent among the 662 books. The most common type of books recommended were picture books, followed by storybooks, and then other materials such as workbooks, textbooks, or magazines. Books marketed for those in early childhood were the most recommended, accounting for 53%. The rest were either for a mix of early-to-

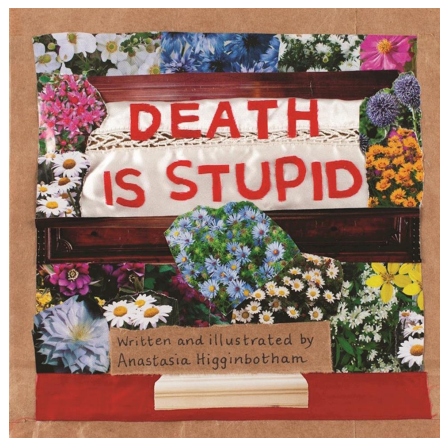
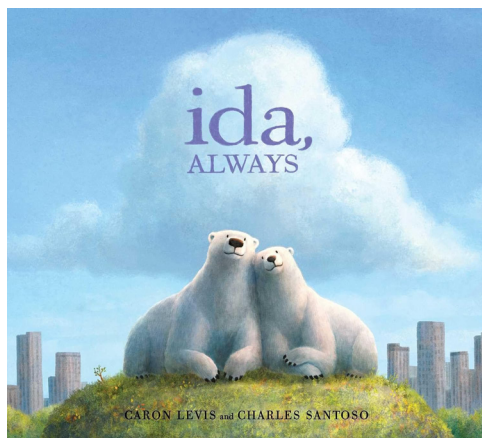
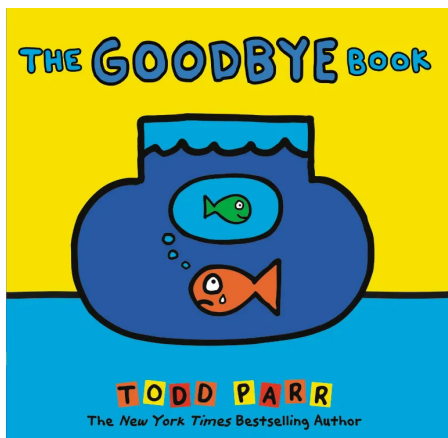
middle childhood (16%), middle childhood only (18%), middle childhood through adolescence (4%), adolescence only (2%), or did not specify an appropriate age range (2%). Only 2% of the books recommended in total were explicitly in a language other than English (i.e., Spanish). Though some books may be sourced in a different language, most were only readily available in English.

What can we take, practically speaking, from our search for library recommendations across the country? First, the number of books available may be overwhelming to parents, and second, there is an encouraging amount of diversity in book options. But among those diverse recommendations, 24 books (and 3 in particular) stand out among the rest. We have created a [publicly available resource](#) where we have listed the top 24 recommended books along with a list of suggested further readings on this topic. In that list, we included book titles, author names, year published, information about the death context, character demographics, age appropriateness, accessibility (language and format), and a qualitative overview of each book's qualities.

The most frequently recommended books were *"The Goodbye Book"* by Todd Parr (an early childhood picturebook available in English and Spanish published in 2021), *"Ida, Always"* by Caron Levis (an early/middle childhood storybook published in 2016), and *"Death is Stupid"* by Anastasia Higginbotham (an early/middle childhood picturebook available in English and Spanish published in 2020). These books are available electronically and in print. When recommending children's books on death and grief, it is important to think about their educational value (i.e., do they share direct information about what death is and do they provide concrete strategies for coping with difficult emotions?) and their situational context (i.e., are the characters and story relevant to that child?). We hope these resources will be helpful when working with grieving families.

Anondah Saide, PhD, is a professor of Educational Psychology at University of North Texas

Daphne Lynd is a Master's student in Library Science in the Department of Information Science; University of North Texas.



A background image showing a hand reaching into a library shelf filled with books. The books are of various colors and sizes, and the hand is positioned as if selecting a book. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular area in the center of the image.

Selecting Stories That Inspire

INSIDE TLA'S READING LIST COMMITTEES

By Priscilla Takyi

“One of the most fulfilling aspects is the opportunity to collaborate and build relationships with a dedicated group of librarians and educators who are passionate about children’s literature. Witnessing the enthusiasm and excitement of students as they explore the selected books and participate in the voting process is incredibly gratifying.”

— Terri Harkey, Texas Bluebonnet Award Coordinator



“We all come from different backgrounds and serve different populations. It’s fun and interesting to hear various perspectives, and everyone contributes in a professional manner.”

— Diane Sikkenga, Little Maverick Reading List Chair

Each year, the Texas Library Association (TLA) releases ten [reading lists](#) for individuals aged 2 to 102. These lists encompass a wide range of literature, including fiction, nonfiction, graphic novels, and multicultural selections. They provide guidance for educators and readers looking for new and engaging stories. What is the process behind creating these lists? Chairs of several of the TLA reading list committees share their insights into curating these highly anticipated selections.

1. HOW DO READING LIST COMMITTEES GATHER BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS, AND WHAT SOURCES DO THEY RELY ON?

Committee members rely on professional reviews from publications like the *School Library Journal* and *Kirkus*, along with feedback from librarians, educators, and readers, to make their recommendations. Many committees consider public submissions, award lists, social media trends, and insights from publishers,

who often provide early copies of books for review. By utilizing these sources, committees can identify widely recognized titles and emerging books that address readers’ needs and interests.

2. HOW MANY BOOKS DOES EACH COMMITTEE READ DURING THE SELECTION PROCESS?

The number of books reviewed by each committee varies significantly. The Texas Topaz Nonfiction Youth

subcommittee evaluates up to 100 books, while the Topaz Adult subcommittee examines up to 45 titles. The 2x2 Reading List committee members read an impressive 800 titles, ranging from board books to early chapter books and graphic novels to select their final number.

The Little Maverick Reading List committee members review up to 350 books annually, while the Lariat Fiction for Adults committee assesses around 90. Each Maverick committee member nominates 9 to 10 titles and reads at least 100 books. The TAYSHAS committee typically reviews over 150 young adult titles, and the Lone Star committee aims to review 138 titles before this year’s nominations close.

One of the largest committees, the Texas Bluebonnet Award Committee, reviewed an impressive 1,006 books to select the final 20 titles for the 2024-2025 list.

“Getting to know school librarians across Texas, the differences in what they can consider for a book for their readers as opposed to a public library that currently has a little more freedom, and hearing about their connections to their readers is amazing.”

— Jamie Henry, Lone Star, Reading List Chair

3. WHAT KEY FACTORS DO COMMITTEES CONSIDER WHEN EVALUATING A BOOK FOR INCLUSION?

Each committee follows specific criteria to ensure its selections are high-quality, relevant, and engaging for their audiences. Committees dedicated to younger readers, such as the 2x2, Texas Bluebonnet, and Little Maverick lists, prioritize literary and visual excellence. For older readers, committees look for books that offer strong thematic appeal across various genres, including fiction, nonfiction, and graphic novels.

The committees also follow Reading List Selection Guidelines approved by the Texas Library Association’s Executive Board. The guidelines require that all books selected comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, have at least one professional review, and that the target audience identified in the review aligns with the ages or grade levels for whom the list is curated.

4. HOW LONG DOES THE ENTIRE PROCESS TAKE, FROM INITIAL NOMINATIONS TO FINALIZING THE LIST?

The selection process for reading lists spans several months of reading, discussion, and voting. The Texas Topaz and Little Maverick committees begin their work in the spring, spending six months evaluating titles before finalizing the list in November. The 2x2 Committee operates year-round, reading and debating for 10 months before completing their list by the end of the year. The Lariat selection spans 11 months, from February to December.

Nominations for the Maverick, TAYSHAS, and Lone Star Reading Lists

begin in January, with final voting in early fall. The Texas Bluebonnet Award Committee reviews books over six rounds, narrowing selections through summer discussions before announcing the list in November.

5. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY MEMORABLE REACTIONS FROM AUTHORS WHOSE BOOKS WERE SELECTED?

For many authors, being chosen for a Texas Library Association reading list is a career highlight. Many writers celebrate their inclusion with reading list committees at the TLA Annual Conference to share their gratitude and enthusiasm in person.

Authors James Ponti and Susan Stevens Crummel have both expressed how being included on the Texas Bluebonnet Award list significantly impacted their careers. Rex Ogle was moved by seeing his books on the TAYSHAS list and shared an emotional moment when connecting with a committee member who nominated his work. These reactions highlight the lasting impact of TLA’s reading lists and the meaningful connection between authors, readers, and the literary community.

CONCLUSION

Our reading list committees pour hours into carefully selecting titles each year. Whether they are making nonfiction texts more accessible, promoting diversity in children’s literature, or ensuring young readers have access to engaging new books, a shared love of books and community drives their work.

Priscilla Takyi is the Communications Coordinator at the Texas Library Association.

“It has been an absolute delight and honor to work with so many thoughtful and considerate librarians across the state and to create something better together than we ever could have made on our own. Hearing each member’s perspective, reading books aloud to each other, and collaborating on extension activities is an experience that remains unmatched.”

— Montana Rindahl,
2x2 Reading List Chair

Why School Librarians Should Still Care About STEM

By Amanda Chacon



STEM GEMS
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using acorns,
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Amanda Chacon
with parental
permission

The year was 1998. Titanic dominated the movie box office, boy bands ruled the airwaves, and the internet was the Wild West of innovation. Four years earlier, my family had acquired our first computer, and I was instantly hooked. At just 14 years old, I fell in love with tinkering —upgrading hardware, teaching myself to code, and learning how software worked. By the time I graduated high school, I was confident: computer science was my future.

But college quickly introduced me to a harsh reality. Computer science in the late 1990s was very much a boys' club. I was often the only woman in my classes, and both professors and classmates treated me differently—like I wasn't capable of understanding the material. One moment stands out vividly: I visited a local store to buy parts to build my own computer. The young man helping me repeatedly suggested I purchase a pre-built system because "building computers is really hard." Despite my enthusiasm and aptitude, the constant gatekeeping and microaggressions wore me down.

I changed my major to biology and then to English, searching for a space where I felt more supported. But I never stopped wondering what might have been if I had felt welcome in computer science. Today, as a school librarian, I've found a way to rewrite that narrative — not for myself, but for the next generation of girls.

STEM GEMS: CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR GIRLS IN STEM

As an educator, I dedicate myself to ensuring no girl experiences the self-doubt I faced. That's why I created STEM GEMS, an all-girls STEM club at the elementary level. In this club, we explore STEM through a variety of challenges, from no-tech and low-tech projects to high-tech experiments.



However, STEM GEMS isn't just about science and technology; it's about creating a safe, supportive environment where girls can see themselves as capable problem-solvers and innovators. We invite female STEM professionals to share their stories, showing our students what is possible for them. One of our guest speakers, Angie, is a jewelry business owner who overcame her own math insecurities to run a successful company. After Angie's visit, the girls beam with newfound confidence, seeing themselves reflected in her journey. Another notable visit was from Kara Branch, the creator and CEO of Black Girls Do Code. Kara encouraged the girls to continue their work with grit and be not afraid to FAIL, as failing is First Attempt in Learning.

The impact of STEM GEMS is profound. Several students initially joined the club because a friend dragged them along or because they enjoyed spending time with me. By the end of the year, many of those same students applied to our district's STEM academy. One standout example is Renata, a student from one of my first cohorts. She's now a senior in high school, still in the STEM academy, and plans to major in computer science. Knowing I helped

Black Girls Do Engineer CEO and Founder Kara Branch speaks with STEM GEMS about her experiences working in a STEM field; photo credit Amanda Chacon with parental permission



STEM GEMS post with local Houston business leader Angie del Angel; photo credit Amanda Chacon with parental permission

spark that interest is one of my proudest achievements.

EXPANDING STEM INTO PROGRAMMING

Integrating STEM into programming doesn't involve elaborate or complex projects. Librarians can start small, weaving STEM concepts into everyday activities and building students' confidence step by step. For example, Storybook STEM combines literature and STEM challenges, allowing students to engage with both critical thinking and creative problem-solving. After reading a story, students tackle hands-on challenges that tie directly into the book's themes. This approach reinforces literacy skills and introduces STEM in a way that feels approachable and fun.

Another accessible way to bring STEM into the library is through passive programming stations. These simple, self-guided activities set up in common areas encourage students to engage at their own pace. A station might include building challenges with LEGO bricks, simple coding exercises with tools like Scratch, an origami challenge, or design challenges using recycled materials. These activities require minimal setup but significantly spark curiosity and interest in STEM.

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION

The theme that emerges from my work is clear: empowering girls, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and girls of color, to become comfortable and confident leaders in STEM. These young women develop critical thinking, collaboration, and perseverance skills that will serve them in any career they choose.

As school librarians, we are uniquely positioned to lead this charge. We're not just custodians of books; we're cultivators of curiosity and innovation. By integrating STEM into our programming, we inspire students and create holistic impacts on the broader computer science and STEM communities within our schools.

CALL TO ACTION

I'm a proud graduate of Sam Houston State University's school librarian program, and I firmly believe that librarians have the power to shape the future of STEM education. Let's build spaces where young girls explore, experiment, and excel in STEM fields without fear of judgment or exclusion. Together, we can ensure that all girls feel like they belong.

The next Renata might just be waiting for you to open the door to her future.

Amanda Chacon is the librarian at C.E. King High School in Sheldon ISD.



Amanda Chacon, STEM GEMS founder; photo credit Xenia Torres Photography

Advocating for the Staff, and Delegating for Growth

By Lori Welch

I am a new Library Director. Though I've been in the job for a year, I am not sure when I get to stop calling myself new; it may be when people stop asking for the former director.

I was lucky because the former director and I knew familiar with each other. I had been a patron at this library for years before I took the job. When I interviewed for the job, I had a very short list of things I would like to change if I was hired, but I also knew that there could be reasons why those changes could not manifest. The City Council won't approve. The community won't support. The budget won't allow. I believe that because I had something of a plan, the city government hired me. I also made it clear that I had no intention of changing everything. I had noticed that there were several items that could benefit the patrons, because I had been a patron. The truth was then as now that I simply love this small-town library, and I know it is a good one.

The former director was an exceptional leader. She had been there for ten years and had retired. She trained me herself when I took the contract, and I was grateful to have that time with her. It became clear almost immediately that my plan to make signage more uniform was overshadowed by the news that the library hourly employees had been paid \$9.00 per hour for years. She confided, "I don't ask them to do too much. They just don't get paid enough and I hate to run them off." That is a very kind sentiment, and something any employee would be lucky to experience in an hourly job. However, that meant that she took on most of the day-to-day operations of the library herself while the staff read books at the circulation desk. This meant that the plans and those changes I had in mind couldn't happen because I'd be doing daily tasks that could have easily been the responsibility of the employees. Several, in fact, were in their job descriptions.

My first order of business was to ask the city for a raise for all hourly



employees to \$11.00 per hour. This would change the dynamic of the workday in several ways. Don't get me wrong, \$11.00 per hour is still not a sustainable wage for anyone having to pay for rent and groceries, but luckily our hourly employees were high school and college students who still lived at home. They appreciated the effort when I was able to tell them that they were all getting raises immediately.

The salary increase came with increased expectations of staff. There would not be as much downtime for reading and doing homework at the desk as there had been. I started to delegate tasks that they should be comfortable and capable of doing morning scans of display items for in-house use, setting up our displays, designing programs for children that they would be in charge of completing. It was hard for them at first to get used to having a list of tasks to do before reading or doing homework.

I didn't think that eliminating every minute of homework time was necessary, but I did think that delegating tasks such as decorating (and un-decorating) the library for holidays

and events was something they could do.

There was pushback at almost every turn, though. I heard things like, "I don't know how to wrap presents," when asked to stage our Christmas tree in the lobby. "I can't stand balloons!" "I hate taking out the trash." Even worse, there were times when I had to ask for something to be completed multiple times, and I was pretty sure there had been a willful ignoring of the things I was asking of them once or twice.

We had meetings. We discussed the reasons for these new job requirements. We discussed that to stay relevant and be here ten years from now, we need to grow and to keep adding interesting and beneficial programs to what we were already doing. Once or twice, my disappointment showed. "You can see I am running around here trying to get things done, and there are three of you here not doing anything productive..." I simply told them that I don't get paid that much, either, but that I cannot do everything myself.

The good news is that we are moving in the right direction. I rarely must ask

them to do something twice, and when I do, I make sure to drive it home that this is the expectation. We have experienced a few growing pains, namely that our current rate of growth has outpaced our budget-a good problem to have!

We have signed 63% more new patrons than the year before I arrived. Our total circulation is 47% higher than last year. Our attendance at events is maxing us out so much that our charitable arm bought new furniture for the children's section. We hear all the time that we are doing a great job.

Our City Council gave us every budget item we asked for in the new year. Last month, we were one of the libraries awarded an Achievement of Excellence by the Texas Municipal League Library Director's Association. I am proud of the staff for sticking it out. Now, I do truly think that they are dedicated and want to be here, which means that no one thinks of this as just a job: they view what they are doing as a calling, and that is how to best serve our community.

Lori Welch is the Library Director at Burkburnett Library.

TLA 2025 Election Results

The Texas Library Association is pleased to announce the results of our 2025-2026 elections. These individuals will take office at the close of the 2025 TLA Annual Conference in April in Dallas. Thank you to everyone that ran for office, and to all members that voted.

TLA EXECUTIVE BOARD

- President-Elect: Melissa Rippy, Director of Libraries & Instructional Materials, Pasadena I.S.D
- Representative-at-Large, School: Brooke King, Library Media Specialist, Humble ISD

TLA UNIT ELECTION RESULTS

The following units had contested offices and chose to participate in the TLA 2025-2026 online elections.

- Children's Round Table Councilor: Abby Moore, Director of Libraries, Breckenridge I.S.D
- TASL Chair-Elect: Joni Harris, Library Instructional Specialist, Plano I.S.D
- TASL Councilor: Lauren Jones, Library Systems Coordinator, Mesquite I.S.D
- PLD Chair-Elect: Robert Zapata, Library Director, Waco-McLennan County Library
- YART Secretary: Lauren Scott, Library Media Specialist, McKinney I.S.D
- District 8 Secretary: Nyla Vela, Jacinto City Branch Manager, Harris County Public Library
- District 8 Web Administrator: Andrea Mion, Librarian, Katy I.S.D
- BCRT Secretary/Treasurer: Kenya Johnson, Library Director, Pasadena I.S.D

TLA BYLAWS REVISIONS

- Article IV, Section 2: Passed.
- Article VI Section 3: Passed.
- Article V, Section 2.1: Passed.
- Article VI, Section 4: Passed.
- Article XI, Section 6.1: Passed.
- Article XI, Section 8.3: Passed.
- Article III, Section 4: Passed.

Thank you to the members of the nominating committees for your time and hard work.

2025 LAUNCH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

LAUNCH is a TLA leadership program designed for library professionals with less than five years of experience. Through group work, self-directed learning, and internal reflection, participants will learn and expand leadership skills that will serve them throughout their careers. Learn more and apply [here](#).

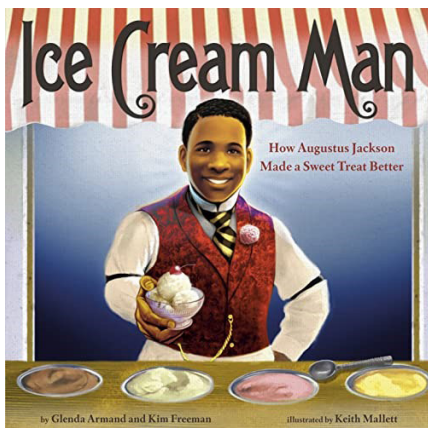
TALL TEXANS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The TALL Texans Leadership Development Institute (TALL Texans) is a transformational program that helps participants learn and embrace their potential to take new initiatives for their institutions, professions, and stakeholders. The program will be held in person on November 20-22 at the [Sheraton Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center](#), north of Austin, Texas. Learn more and apply [here](#).

Application deadline is June 9.

2X2, TEXAS TOPAZ, LARIAT AND TEJAS STAR READING LISTS ANNOUNCED

The 2025 [2x2](#), [Texas Topaz](#), [Lariat](#) and [Tejas Star](#) reading lists have been announced! These curated lists offer an incredible selection of books for readers of all ages. Thank you to our dedicated members and committees for their hard work in making this possible.



2025 Texas Bluebonnet Award Winner

Thousands of students across Texas voted, and the results are in! The [2025 Texas Bluebonnet Award winner](#) is *Ice Cream Man: How Augustus Jackson Made a Sweet Treat Better*, written by Glenda Armand and Kim Freeman and illustrated by Keith Mallett. In this buoyant and colorful book, readers are introduced to Augustus Jackson: a pioneering ice cream maker who created an eggless version of the dessert. His innovative techniques helped him turn his passion into a successful business. Students will present the award to Armand and Freeman at the Texas Bluebonnet Award Author Session during the TLA 2025 Annual Conference in Dallas.



APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL COLLECTION ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Applications are now open for one of the Texas Book Festival's signature programs, Texas Library Grants. Every year, the Texas Book Festival awards these collections enhancement grants to public libraries to ensure that reading is accessible and available to all Texans. In 2024, \$112,500 in grants were awarded to 45 public libraries, with our cumulative impact totaling more than \$3.6 million since our founding in 1997. The application deadline is Friday, April 18. [Apply today!](#)

Sukrit Goswami appointed to lead San Antonio Public Library

Following a nationwide search, The San Antonio Public Library Board of Trustees, in coordination with San Antonio City Manager Erik Walsh, appointed Sukrit Goswami as the next Library Director of the San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) where he will lead the Library's advancement of strategic initiatives and foster continued growth as a vital asset in the community.



Since 2018, Goswami has served as the Library Director of Haverford Township Free Library in Havertown, Pennsylvania, where he led a multi-million-dollar library building renovation and expansion project. Prior to assuming this role, Goswami served as Executive Director for the Montgomery County Libraries and Information Network Consortium (MCLINC) in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. He holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and a Master of Science in Information/Library Science (MSIS) from University at Albany.

Goswami is the immediate past President and currently serves as a Trustee for the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF), a non-profit organization affiliated with the American Library Association. FTRF protects and defends the First Amendment to the Constitution and supports the right of libraries to collect and for individuals to access information. In May 2022, the San Antonio City Council adopted a resolution supporting the freedom to read and access information in public libraries.

2025 FAMILY PLACE LIBRARIES™ PROJECT GRANT RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to the recipients of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) 2025 [Family Place Libraries™ Project](#) grant recipients.

- Burnet County Library System
- Irving Public Library
- Laredo Public Library
- McAllen Public Library
- Navasota Public Library
- Lubbock Public Library
- Schertz Public Library
- Sergeant Fernando de la Rosa Memorial Library
- Sherman Public Library

TSLAC initiated this project in 2015 to help public libraries address early learning with a goal of ensuring that all children enter school ready and able to learn. The purpose is to create a welcoming, family-centered environment that empowers caregivers of young children as they become their child's first teachers. The grant covers tuition for up to two library staff members to attend the in-state Family Place Libraries™ Training Institute and three years of follow-up and support. Qualifying attendees also receive assistance with travel costs to attend the training and each library receives up to \$6,000 to assist with the development of their Family Place program.

51 TLA Members Receive H-E-B Strong Texas Libraries Annual Conference Stipend

Thanks to the generous support of H-E-B, the Texas Library Association was able to offer 51 stipends to cover conference registration and help defray the cost of travel to attend the TLA 2025 Annual Conference in Dallas, Texas

These funds support TLA members from all types of libraries working in small institutions with very limited budgets, and those that have been impacted by budget cuts, downsizing and layoffs. Congratulations to this year’s recipients!



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| • Maria Aguilar-Munoz | • Megan Firestone | • Cathryne Nivin |
| • Leticia Almaguer | • Dominique Flores | • Ashley Pach |
| • Rosalyn Antoine | • Iris Garcia | • Renae Phillips |
| • Barbara Suzette Baker | • Marilou Garcia | • Nicky Pownall |
| • Laurie Bogner | • Leigh Gardner | • Alexandra Quintero Deleon |
| • Haley Bradley | • April Gonzales | • Celeste Rainey |
| • Elizabeth Bradshaw | • Jose Arturo Gonzalez | • Rebecca Saenz |
| • Amanda Brown | • Olivia Gonzalez | • Kristin Scott |
| • Brett Carter | • Karla Helton | • Stephanie Shedd |
| • Amanda Chacon | • Amy Hernandez-Serrata | • Barbara Jean Thompson |
| • Maria Laura Chavez | • Esther Herrera Martinez | • Emily Thorpe |
| • Melanie Claybar | • Becky Isbell | • Jennifer Thrasher |
| • Abigail Cline | • Nicki Ittner | • Kourtney Warner |
| • Lori Curry | • Katie Jensen | • Sara Wheeler |
| • Margaret Dawson | • Brandy Kerr | • Ryan Nichole Zucha |
| • Sarah Del Toro | • Laura Larregui | |
| • Riley Dunlap | • Cynthia Matheson | |
| • Maria Del Pilar Esparza | • Crystal Mendoza | |



TLA Engage, the online member community, is a member benefit that provides access to a vibrant and dynamic space.

It's a hub for TLA members to connect with and learn from library professionals from all library types.



CONNECT

Develop meaningful connections



LEARN

Engage in discussions around current topics



SHARE

Collaborate on projects or share best practices



TLA Engage

**Your Hub for
Networking,
Collaboration,
and Sharing**

Access Engage:
engage.txla.org/

Questions? Email:
txla@txla.org

**Meet Kat
TLA booth
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Conference Information

LIBRARY RENAISSANCE
OUR QUEST FOR RENEWAL

TLA★ **2025**

TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

DALLAS ★ APRIL 1 – 4



2025 Keynote Speakers

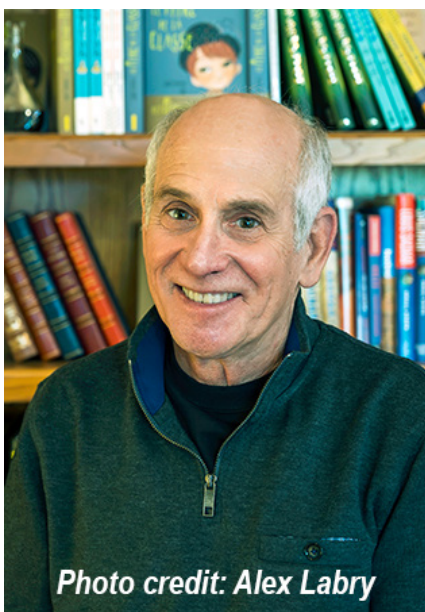


GENERAL SESSION I

Taylor Jenkins Reid

Wednesday, April 2 | 8:15 – 9:45am

Taylor Jenkins Reid is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of eight novels, including *Carrie Soto Is Back*, *Malibu Rising*, *Daisy Jones & The Six*, and *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and their daughter.

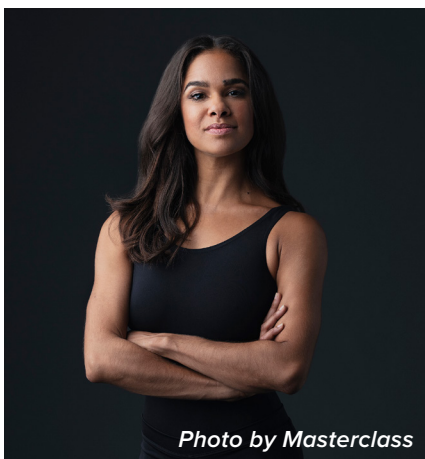


GENERAL SESSION II

Louis Sachar

Thursday, April 3 | 3:30 – 4:30 pm

Louis Sachar is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Holes*, which won the Newbery Medal and the National Book Award. He's also written the *Wayside School* series, *Fuzzy Mud*, *The Cardturner*, and many other books for young people. *The Magician of Tiger Castle* will be his first book specifically for adults.



GENERAL SESSION III

Misty Copeland

Friday, April 4 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Misty Copeland is a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre, and in 2015, she became the first Black woman to be promoted to the position in the company's seventy-five-year history. She is the *New York Times* bestselling author of several books, including *Life in Motion*, *Ballerina Body*, *Black Ballerinas*, *The Wind at My Back*, and the picture books *Bunheads* and *Firebird*. Copeland has been named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People and was named one of Glamour's Women of the Year.

Conference Program Highlights

Check out the complete [TLA 2025 conference program available online](#). You can search by audience type and topic to find the education sessions and events of interest to you. With more than 200 education sessions, a vibrant exhibit hall, hundreds of authors signing their latest books, and fun social and networking opportunities, there is something for everyone. These are topics of interest to various library types, led by presenters from those libraries. But all sessions are open to all attendees!

ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

Artificial Intelligence in Libraries: Reinventing Educational Experiences

Tuesday, April 1, 9:00 – 10:00 AM

In libraries, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI is still being explored. Is it a friend or foe to the learning process? To address the debate of AI-based assignments, librarians can provide information literacy instruction to merge the human element of scholarship with the advent of new technology. Learn how teaching students to embrace AI can increase productivity, boost engagement, and enhance creativity.

Strategizing for the Future: A look at OER in Texas

Wednesday, April 2, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Join us to strategize for the future of Open Educational Resources (OER) in Texas. Recent research reveals growing adoption in higher education, with shifts in drivers emphasizing affordability and student learning impact. Discover how the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Division of Digital Learning supports institutions and librarians through targeted services, resources, and programs. Gain insights to navigate growth, ensure sustainability, and shape the future of open education initiatives statewide.

SPECIAL LIBRARIES

De-escalation: Communicate Safely During Challenging Interactions

Should be Wednesday, April 2, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Librarians may be called upon to interact with agitated individuals, patrons in a mental health or emotional crisis. This presentation provides an overview of several key de-escalation techniques to help librarians confidently and successfully interact with individuals in difficult or high-stress circumstances.

Investigative AI: Understand Generative AI and How To Use It

Thursday, April 3, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Discover how Generative AI is integrated into traditional library skills such as investigative resources, citation of sources, digital citizenship and equity, and user interface abilities. Learn innovative ways to embed Gen-AI into your literary ecosystem with confidence.

Dual Credit Populations in Community Colleges

Thursday, April 3, 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Dual Credit has expanded rapidly throughout the state of Texas in the last 20 years from 325,000 to 1.5 million enrolled students, or an estimated 1 in 4 students currently enrolled in a community college. In this panel Librarians serving dual credit students will share the challenges and successes in serving this population as well as the impact of recently passed legislation.

Incentives for Embedding Academic Librarians into Student Organizations

Friday, April 4, 9:30 – 10:30 AM

Discussion of theoretical frameworks and experiential lessons of what can be achieved, for student and librarian, when librarians embed into student organizations. Methods and strategies for working within student organizations will be discussed with opportunities for audience feedback via interactive methods.

From Stacks to Stethoscopes: Pathways to Medical Librarianship

Thursday, April 3, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Join a former public and academic librarian to discover how the expertise you've cultivated can translate into the specialized field of medical librarianship. Whether you're considering a career shift or simply curious about new possibilities, this presentation will explore the how to enter and thrive in this dynamic field.

Retaining Quality Staff in the Library

Friday, April 4, 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Low morale, quiet quitting, and burnout in libraries have become a major concern in the post-pandemic workplace. Presenters will share information on current trends related to these concepts and results from recent studies. Discover ways to improve library worker morale and employee engagement, and techniques for cultivating mindfulness and resilience when dealing with challenging and stressful situations in the workplace.

Conference Program Highlights

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Pro Tips for Public Library Career Success

Tuesday, April 1, 10:30 – 11:30 AM

Are you looking for ways to set yourself apart from your peers and take your public library career to the next level? Experienced library directors will share their insights about successful interviewing, standing out as an employee, networking best practices, and moving up the ladder.

Imagining the Impossible: Sci-Fi & Fantasy Authors in Conversation

Wednesday, April 2, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Join acclaimed authors Martha Wells, Amal El-Mohtar, and Michelle Jabès Corpora for a fascinating discussion on the power of storytelling in science fiction and fantasy. From intricate world-building to compelling characters, they'll explore how they craft unforgettable narratives, push genre boundaries, and imagine futures both wondrous and terrifying.

Welcome Neurodiverse Users with Adapted Programming and Outreach

Wednesday, April 2, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Public libraries celebrate their availability for all users, but how well is your library serving users with intellectual and developmental disabilities or sensory needs? Presenters will discuss how to connect with community organizations, prepare staff to provide responsive adapted services, and assess the effectiveness of your initiatives. Examples will include in-library programs and outreach services that highlight the value of the library to often underserved groups.

Helping Adults Find Community in a Lonely World

Friday, April 4, 8:00 – 9:00 AM

Loneliness and social isolation are increasingly becoming problems for adults of all ages, and public libraries have a unique opportunity to bring communities together. Learn from the experience of librarians and community organizers about building recurring and unique programs that attract adults of different ages, backgrounds, and interests to help build relationships in and with your community.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Show Me the Money: Budgeting, Fundraising and Financial Mastery for School Librarians

Tuesday, April 1, 9:00 – 10:00 AM

Join us for a session to empower school librarians in financial management. Learn how to craft effective budgets tailored to school library needs, utilize data-driven strategies for impactful meetings with principals regarding funding, and explore innovative fundraising techniques to enhance library resources. Gain practical skills to ensure your library thrives and meets the diverse needs of your community through strategic financial planning and advocacy.

Harnessing Children's Literature to Build Emotional Strength in Tough

Wednesday, April 2, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

In an ever-changing world, children face an array of challenges that can impact their emotional well-being. Join an award-winning author in an engaging exploration of the power of children's literature to nurture emotional resilience. Using captivating stories and characters, we will delve into the art of using literature as a tool to foster emotional strength, empathy, gratitude, and coping skills in students.

Creating Fun, Passive Programs on a Budget

Wednesday, April 2, 1:30 – 2:30 PM

Budget cuts and lack of a library budget shouldn't eliminate fun passive programs that students love! School librarians will learn how to incorporate inexpensive passive programming activities to their library program with items that can be found around the home or purchased for little to nothing. This will be a crowd share so participants are encouraged to bring their cheap passive programming idea.

Bridging College and High School Libraries - College Readiness Collaboration

Thursday, April 3, 8:00 – 9:00 AM

Learn how an academic library collaborates with dual credit English programs at rural, suburban, and urban high schools to instruct students on available library and learning commons services. Integrating online meeting platforms and learning management systems, librarians connected with high school dual credit students to orient them and their embedded teachers with college resources and services. This program bridges academic libraries with College and Career Readiness (CCR) School Models.

Conference Program Highlights

Quest for Renewal: Sessions to Reignite Your Passion and Well-Being

Feeling the weight of burnout or looking to rediscover your professional spark? The Quest for Renewal event series is your guide to refreshing your spirit and recharging your career. Join us for inspiring sessions designed to help library professionals find joy, resilience, and balance in their personal and professional lives. Take a break, embrace renewal, and leave feeling recharged and ready to tackle whatever comes next!



Mychal Threats: Might You Be Ready For Library Joy?

Tuesday, April 1, 12:30-1:30 pm

Discover the power of library joy with the award-winning Mychal Threats. Dive into an open conversation about mental health, finding joy in your work, and staying inspired.

Mental Health Matters: Libraries as Healing Hubs and Safe Places

Wednesday, April 2, 3:00-4:00 pm

Explore how school libraries can become sanctuaries for student mental health, evolving into hubs of healing and support. Learn practical strategies, discover innovative initiatives and gain insights into transforming libraries into safe, empowering spaces that help students thrive emotionally and mentally.

Feel, Connect, Act to Heal: Integrating Mindfulness and Movement into Library Programming to Support Mental Health

Friday, April 4, 8:00-9:00 am

Incorporate mindfulness and movement into your programming to build confident, compassionate communities while supporting your mental health.

Bust the Burnout: Cultivate Powerful and Playful Self-Care Strategies

Friday, April 4, 9:30-10:30 am

Learn playful, science-backed self-care techniques to refresh your mind, body, and spirit. Create habits that help you connect and thrive, wherever you are.

TLA 2025 Leadership Series

2025 Leadership Series: Connections, Challenges, and Conversations

Leadership Challenges Unpacked: What Keeps You Up at Night?

Thursday, April 3, 9:15 - 10:15 am

This session is designed for current leaders and aspiring administrators seeking practical solutions to leadership challenges. You won't want to miss this solution-oriented discussion, aimed at delivering actionable takeaways. Learn about TLA's forthcoming certification initiative, offering a glimpse into future opportunities for professional growth and development.

Leadership Perspectives: Insights from the Director's Chair

Thursday, April 3, 10:30-11:30 am

Join this insightful panel discussion where public library directors will address key challenges raised in the previous session, Leadership Challenges Unpacked: What Keeps You Up at Night? and provide guidance on critical areas for leadership development. Gain valuable perspectives on the skills and training directors believe are essential for new administrators to succeed in today's evolving library landscape.



Charles Heasley



Erica Richardson

LEADERSHIP SERIES PRESENTERS

Charles Heasley spent a decade in law enforcement, where he developed and led a mental health unit to better serve the community. Charles was responsible for training sworn officers, recruit officers, and other city employees in crisis recognition and de-escalation skills. He has trained well over 1,000 municipal employees in these skills. After serving as a police sergeant, Charles started what is now Blue Lion Leadership, an organization specializing in group leadership development. Each year, Charles helps hundreds of leaders become even better versions of themselves. Additionally, Charles helps libraries throughout Texas (and beyond) with de-escalation training.

Erica Richardson is the current Library Director at Benbrook Public Library, which is one of 15 library districts in Texas. She has worked as a librarian since she graduated from UNT with her MLS in 2006. Her specialty is outreach and community engagement. Erica has also served many different positions in TLA, including Chair of PART (programming for Adults Roundtable), District 7 Chair, District Planning Committee Chair (twice), and is currently the Chair-Elect of PLD (Public Library Division).

First-Time Attendees & Networking

Calling All First-Time Attendees! Embark on Your First TLA Conference Adventure

This exciting 3-part event series is designed to help you connect, network, and make the most of your conference experience. Join us for one, two, or all three sessions—you don't want to miss this chance to make your first TLA Conference unforgettable.

First Timers: Your Quest Begins Here Meet and Greet

**Tuesday, April 1,
12:30 – 1:30 PM**

Start your TLA journey by mingling with fellow newbies and seasoned pros from across the library world. Meet members of the New Members Round Table and the Conference Planning Committee and form connections to guide you through the week

Newbies Brewing Connections Coffee Hour

**Wednesday, April 2,
7:00 – 8:00 AM**

Sip, chat, and renew! Network with first time conference attendees and new TLA members. Plan your day with New Members Round Table and Conference Planning Committee members.

Newbie Renaissance Feast Brown Bag Lunch

**Wednesday, April 2,
12:30 – 1:30 PM**

Grab your lunch (available for purchase in the nearby Exhibit Hall) and join us for a laid-back gathering. Reflect on your conference experience, connect with peers, and recharge with the support of NMRT and CPC members.

Career Connections: Networking for Growth

Thursday, April 3, 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Reach your full potential by joining us for this free, networking event to discover how TLA can elevate your career development. Connect with colleagues, engage with CPC members, and learn tips to increase your professional circle and maximize your membership benefits. Make meaningful connections and take the next step in your professional journey.

Plan Your Conference Journey

[TLA Conference journey maps](#) are like having a personal guide to help you navigate the conference and make the most of your time there. Journey Maps are created by TLA units to share their recommendations for educational sessions based on topics of interest and library type. Curate your conference experience by browsing session suggestions for Advocacy, Innovation and Technology, Leadership, New Members, and more! [Find your journey!](#)



STAY CONNECTED AT TLA 2025

Navigate the TLA conference with ease using the official TLA Mobile App! Access everything you need in one place—session schedules, speaker details, exhibit hall information, interactive maps, event updates, and more. Plan your experience, build your personal agenda, and receive real-time notifications so you never miss a moment. The app will be available for download about a week before the conference, and you'll receive an email with simple instructions on how to get started. Don't miss out! Make the most of your conference with the TLA Mobile App.

New this year! Embark on the **TLA Renaissance Quest**, an exciting new mobile scavenger hunt that you can play on your phone. Complete with other TLA attendees by completing quests, earning points, and climbing the leaderboard for bragging rights and a chance to win prizes. We'll share more information soon about how to download the game app, log in to the TLA Renaissance Quest, and experience the TLA conference in a whole new way.

TRANSPORTATION AT TLA 2025

TLA is going green and offering a more flexible transportation option for attendees staying at official TLA conference hotels more than 0.1 miles from the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center. All registered attendees staying at specified hotels booked via onPeak will receive

\$30 in Lyft credits to use during the conference. Credits are valid April 1 – 4 and are to be used only in downtown Dallas for transportation to and from your hotel and official conference events. [Learn more.](#)

2025 Exhibits Grand Opening

TUESDAY, APRIL 1 – 2:00 P.M.

Kick off TLA 2025 with a ribbon cutting, entertainment, and complimentary snacks. With multiple entrances to Halls D & E on the second floor of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, you'll have easy access to explore over 275 exhibitors—featuring your annual favorites as well as exciting new vendors you won't want to miss. The exhibit hall is packed with fantastic exhibitors ready to connect with you at TLA 2025!

TUESDAY, APRIL 1
2:00 – 5:00 PM
Exhibit Hall Grand Opening

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2
10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Exhibits Open

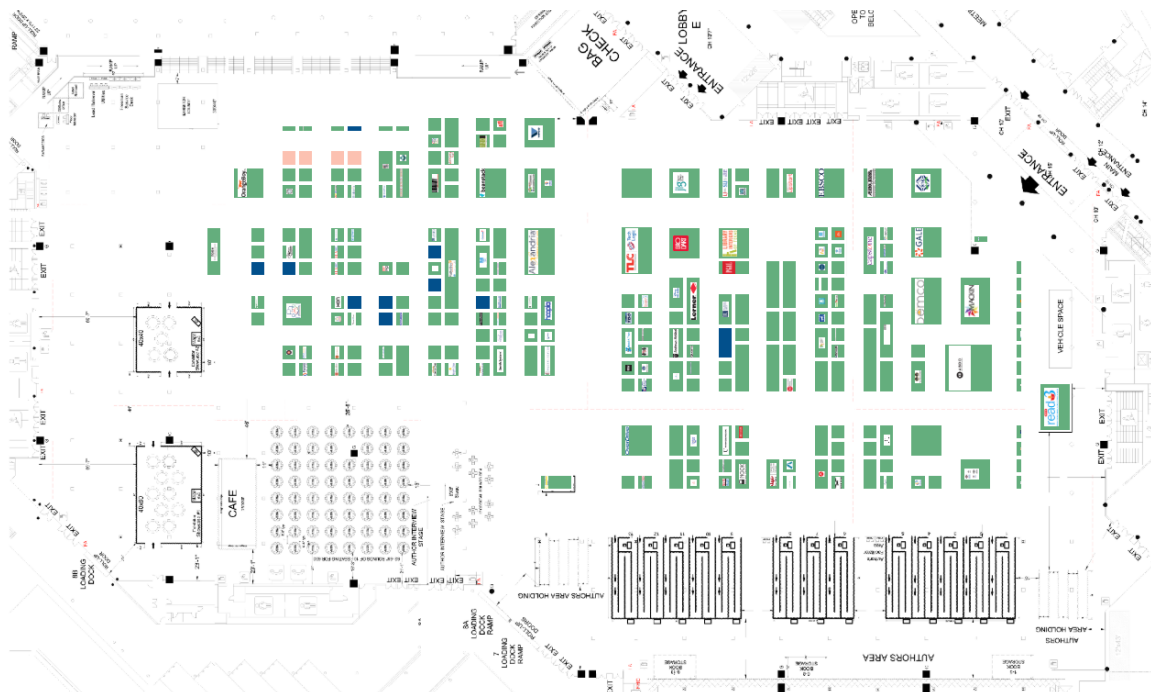
THURSDAY, APRIL 3
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Last Day for Exhibits

The Exhibits Grand Opening will kick off the show on Tuesday, April 1, from 2:00 – 5:00 pm.

The exhibit hall is where connections spark, ideas flourish, and the excitement never stops. With over 220 exhibitors and 200+ author signings, there's something for everyone—exclusive giveaways, hands-on showcases, and can't-miss book signings in the Authors Area and beyond.

Need a break? Recharge in the HEB Recharge Lounge, grab a snack or lunch at the Hall Café, or unwind in the cozy Orangeboy Kitten Lounge. Up for a challenge? Complete game missions for a chance to win prizes while exploring.

The adventure continues Wednesday, April 2nd (10 AM – 5 PM) and Thursday, April 3rd (9 AM – 3 PM), so don't miss out on the networking, discovery, and fun. Check out the [floor plan](#) and plan your visit.



Exhibiting Companies

As of March 12, 2025

720 design 2104	Bibliotheca2003	Clarivate..... 1225
NEW A.M. Designs 2231	Black Caucus Round Table.....2409	CoLibri System 1319
ABC-CLIO an Imprint of Bloomsbury 2103	Blackstone Audio Inc. dba Blackstone Publishing1726	College and University Library Division - TLA Unit2530
ABDO 1029	NEW Bloomerang2403	NEW Commons Press 1034
ABRAMS..... 1444	Bloomsbury Children's Books 1431	NEW Core Displays2220
Adobe 1323	NEW Blue Manatee Press 2421	NEW Cosworth Publishing2517
NEW Age of Learning..... 2410	Book Nook by Superior Text.....2204	Cover One, Inc.....2232
NEW Aldrin Family Foundation 2416	book repair express..... 1846	Craft & Hobby.....2026
Alexandria 1917	Book Systems, Inc 2111	Cultural Surroundings 1508
American Library Association 2418	BookBreak 2126	Dallas Independent School District2532
American Library Association2420	NEW Bookbridge 2132	Data Axle..... 1329
Andrews McMeel Publishing.....1728	NEW KITABOO 2227	Delaney Educational Enterprises, Inc. 1340
NEW Angela Henderson Smith [Author, Speaker, & Writing Coach] 1046	Bound to Stay Bound Books1109	Demco..... 1123
Annick Press..... 1632	Brainfuse..... 1246	Demco Upstart 1411
Arte Publico Press1735	NEW Bridget Heos2302	Dexterity Books 1028
Astra Books for Young Readers..... 1445	Britannica Education 1416	Digital Libraries Round Table2408
Aurora Storage Products 2319	Broadcast Made Easy 1343	NEW Discovery Maker2426
Authors and More..... 1834	Brodart Co..... 1617	Disney Publishing Worldwide1722
AWE Learning 2519	Brown Books Publishing Group 1731	DK 1526
Baker & Taylor 1931	BRW 1832	Dynamic Authors Group.....1742
NEW Batfish Books..... 1026	bywater solutions..... 1929	NEW East West Discovery Press LLC 2128
BattleQuestions.com1327	Candlewick/Holiday House/Peachtree 1328	EBSCO Information Services..... 1309
Beanstack2009	Capstone..... 1220	EnvisionWare..... 2021
Bearport Publishing..... 2117	Carpe Librum.....2417	NEW Excaliber Publishing 1022
Beech Street Books 1422	Charlesbridge..... 1633	FE Technologies..... 2102
Bellwether Media 2117	Cherry Lake Publishing.....2118	Flutterbee Education Group..... 2117
Benbrook Library District..... 1511	Child's Play 1342	Follett Content Solutions 1909
Biblionix 2311	Chronicle Books1732	

Exhibiting Companies

As of March 12, 2025

Follett Software.....	2433	Kodansha	2202	Midwest Tape / hoopla Digital.....	1925
Gale.....	1117	Komatsu Architecture	2024	NEW Millonex LLC.....	1321
Garrett Book Company	1221	NEW La Canastita Books.....	1418	Mitinet Library Services	1341
NEW Bookvending.com by Global Vending Group	2010	Lectorum Publications, Inc	1541	National Museum of the Pacific War	2516
NEW Gloo Book	1317	NEW Lego.....	2432	NEW Native Plant Society of Texas	1044
NEW Golden Cross Ranch LLC.....	1040	Lerner Publishing Group	1623	NEW Nook Wellness Pods	1545
Greystone Books and Owlkids	1635	NEW Lesro.....	2216	North Star Editions	2131
Groundwood	1634	Libraria.....	1141	NEW NorthSouth Books	1646
Gumdrop Books.....	1324	Library Comic	1345	Novel Effect.....	1424
Hachette Book Group	1233	Library Interiors of Texas	1517	OCLC	1217
Half Price Books	2309	NEW Library of Congress	2210	Orangeboy	2610
HarperCollins Children's Books	1333	Library Support Services Round Table	2508	OverDrive	1741
H-E-B Read Three Recharge Lounge	1000	LibraryPass	2023	Partners for Rural Impact Rural Library Network	2411
Indeco	1709	Lightbox Learning.....	2332	Penguin Adult.....	1525
Independent Publishers Group	1428	Literati Book Fairs	1227	Penguin Random House - Grupo Editorial USA	1529
Infobase	1644	Little, Brown Books for Young Readers	1232	Penguin Young Readers.....	1531
Ingram Content Group.....	1219	NEW Lone Star Furnishings.....	2028	Penworthy Company	2017
Insignia Software Corporation.....	1727	NEW LOTE4Kids.....	1325	NEW Pequeño Books	1024
Interabang	TLA Bookstore	NEW Lyanna's Closet	2226	Perma-Bound Books.....	1209
InterVarsity Press	2320	Lyngsoe Systems.....	2030	PGAL	1519
Jump! Library	2117	Mackin Educational Resources	1021	NEW PLAN, Inc. (Partners Library Action Network).....	2527
Junior Library Guild/Media Source	1609	Macmillan Adult	1435	Playaway Products LLC	2130
NEW Kai's Education.....	2005	Macmillan Children's Publishing Group	1432	Publisher Spotlight	1641
Kanopy.....	1741	Mad Cave Studios.....	1245	Quarto.....	1631
NEW Kat Kronenberg.....	2133	Magik Theatre	2402	Quest for Renewal Corner	2425
Kay Davis Associates, LLC	2230	NEW Marble Press	1426	NEW Quill	2224
NEW Kay Davis In The Community	1032	Media Flex - OPALS.....	2207	Rainbow Book Company	1147
		NEW Midwest Library Service	1509		

Exhibiting Companies

As of March 12, 2025

Random House Children's Books ... 1530	Springshare..... 2027	Today's Business Solutions..... 1826
NEW Read-A-Thon 1828	StackMap 2310	NEW Touch2Play 2327
NEW Reader Zone..... 1543	Steinberg Hart..... 2107	Transparent Language, Inc. 2029
Reycraft Books 2209	NEW STEMfinity, LLC..... 2218	Tundra Books 1544
NEW Ristech Company Inc..... 2025	Swank K-12..... 1729	Tyndale House Publishers 1427
Romeo Music..... 1420	NEW Take Care of Texas..... 2518	Union Square & Company..... 1640
Rosen Publishing..... 1624	TeachingBooks 1741	UNT Department of Information Science 2525
Salem Press..... 1629	Tech Logic 1717	Virco Inc. 1903
San Jose State University - School of Information 2431	TechOps Specialty Vehicles 2716	Vista Higher Learning 1647
ScannX..... 1725	Texas Book Festival 2122	W. W. Norton & Company 1347
Scholastic..... 1421	Texas Freedom to Read Project..... 1020	World Book..... 1645
School Library Journal/Library Journal 1608	NEW Texas Municipal Library Director Association 2206	WT Cox Information Services 1331
School Life..... 1747	Texas SmartBuy Membership Program - Texas CPA..... 1230	Xist Publishing 1447
Sebco Books..... 1440	Texas State Library and Archives Commission 1045	
NEW Second To None Wellness..... 2331	NEW Texas Technology Access Program 2510	
NEW Self-Education Equipment & Methods..... 2502	Texas Wildlife Association..... 1042	
Shadow Mountain Publishing 1344	Texas Woman's University - SLIS.... 1824	
Shushbooth..... 2109	TexQuest Support Center..... 1247	
Simon & Schuster 1520	NEW The Abstract Books 2203	
SirsiDynix 1733	The Child's World..... 2116	
NEW Sister Mac's..... 2127	The Creative Company 1241	
NEW SkyTree Book Fairs..... 1030	NEW The HON Company..... 2424	
NEW Smith System 2031	The letterLounge 2333	
Sora 1741	NEW The University of Texas at Austin - WeTeach_CS 2430	
Sourcebooks 1740	TLA Friendship Bracelet Pop Up..... 2306	
Southwest Solutions Group 2330	TLA Membership 1017	
Spanish Publishers, LLC..... 2221	TLC/Tech Logic 1717	
Sphero, Inc. 2317		

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LIBRARY RENAISSANCE
OUR QUEST FOR RENEWAL

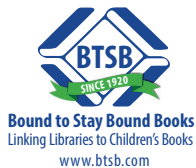
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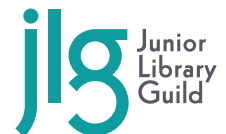
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