



### Personnel

*Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*  
(<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/index.html>)

### Post-Session Tool Kit for Boardroom Discussions

#### Book Club Reading:

*Handbook for Library Trustees of NYS, Personnel* (Page 43 - 49)  
Co-Authors Jerry Nichols & Rebekkah Smith Aldrich  
[nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/chapter10.htm](http://nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/chapter10.htm)

#### Additional Resources:

- Webinar: The Critical Partnership: Public Library Trustees and Directors <https://vimeo.com/98339288>
- Webinar: Hiring Your CEO (Helping All Trustees Succeed Mini-Webinar Series)  
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/webinars.htm>
- Webinar: Director Evaluation (Helping All Trustees Succeed Mini-Webinar Series)  
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/webinars.htm>
- “Evaluating the State of the Library – Director Evaluation” [Mid-Hudson Library System]  
<http://midhudson.org/topics/trustees/atb-evaluating-the-library-1/>
- “Evaluating the State of the Library – Board Effectiveness” [Mid-Hudson Library System]  
<http://midhudson.org/topics/trustees/atb-evaluating-the-library-2/>
- Organizational Tools for Trustees [United for Libraries] <http://www.ala.org/united/trustees/orgtools>

**Recording from Live Handbook Discussion:** Tuesday, December 14, 2021 – Personnel

<https://youtu.be/zJYnBsy3QHA>

## Post-Session Questions & Activities for the Boardroom

The questions in this section are intended for trustees and their directors to discuss before or after a board meeting once they have read *Personnel of the Handbook*, or watched the *Live Event Recording*.

1. The *Critical Partnership* between library director and board is literal because it impacts how library culture is curated for library staff, volunteers and patrons. Please take time as a board to define positive forms of communication between director and trustees as well as pitfalls trustees should avoid when communicating with their library director.
2. Library trustees are encouraged to *govern by walking around*. For example, visiting the library, checking out materials, attending programs or thanking library staff for their service. What are some things trustees should not do or say in the presence of library staff that might undermine the library director's authority?
3. What is the process at your library for staff to file grievances or complaints? A *Whistleblower Policy* is legally required of all libraries to detail how staff can safely disclose unethical or illegal practices within their work environment. At what point in this policy's procedures does the board involve itself? And, what is your role as trustees in making certain the library director is implementing this policy?
4. [Duty of Loyalty](https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/chapter03.htm) (<https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/chapter03.htm>) and [Conflict of Interest](https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/chapter09.htm) (<https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/chapter09.htm>) are discussed in multiple chapters of the Trustee Handbook. It is important trustees are mindful of their conflicts, particularly in a library where an anti-nepotism policy does not exist. Use this as an opportunity to identify any possible conflicts current trustees might have with library staff or volunteers. How will the board work together with the director to avoid conflicts in the future (perhaps through an anti-nepotism policy), and discuss how current conflicts should be addressed to alleviate awkward situations.
5. [Education Law § 226 \(7\)](https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/226) (<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/226>) specifies all personnel actions must be approved by the board of trustees at a legal meeting. This includes the creation of positions, appointment of staff and establishing salaries. Remember, the library director selects, the board appoints. Discuss with your director items or talking points that are most important for the director to share, so trustees can support personnel recommendations. Is there a uniform resolution passed each time these decisions are made so there is consistency from one action to the next?
6. Hiring the library director is one of nine board responsibilities. And, arguably the most important as the library director leads the library and possesses significant institutional influence. While libraries can be blessed with a highly qualified and well-performing director, it is always good to plan for the future. Discuss together ways the library board will plan for the

library director's departure, and the steps trustees will take so the new director is equally talented. For example, who is responsible for notifying the library system, and asking for search assistance? What committee should review the director's job description and advertisement? Is there somebody on staff or the board charged with consulting with Civil Service?

7. Performance evaluations are necessary to ensure the library director is maintaining essential functions to their position as well as carrying out board-approved mission and plan of service. Take this time to read and review your library's *Director Evaluation Policy*. Is the board working with the director to implement this policy? Are evaluations being done on an annual-basis? And, are there elements of the policy or evaluation process that need updating?
8. How does your board determine the library director's compensation? Remember, your director *leads the organization and possesses life-changing influence*, while serving as your library's public face. Discuss and identify sources you should consult for competitive compensation packages. It is good to include your director in this conversation. One good starting point is [BiblioStat Connect](https://nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/index.html#Statistics) ([nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/index.html#Statistics](https://nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/index.html#Statistics)). Trustees can use this resource to benchmark salaries with similar libraries across New York State. Your public library system can help with this exercise.
9. Library staff are less of a community asset when their library does not invest in their professional education. Take a moment to review your current library budget and assess how much you spend on professional development. Ask your library director how much time is allocated per week for each employee to learn new skills, ideas or practices. Do you believe this allocation is enough to support staff and library success? Does your library have a *professional development policy* or clause written into your *personnel policy* that explains how staff can access training and support?