



Mitten Award Workgroup

Approved September 2021

General Workgroup Description

The MLA Mitten Award Workgroup considers hundreds of children's books published in the calendar year, each year, to determine the very best picture books for youth. The Mitten Award recognizes and promotes quality literature for youth in picture book format. First given in 1999 by the Children's Services Division of the Michigan Library Association, the award is given annually to one children's book originally published in the United States during the calendar year that has captured the attention of youth librarians throughout the State of Michigan for its ability to communicate through literature to an intended audience.

Workgroup Membership and Meetings

The award selection workgroup is comprised of up to 14 Michigan librarians who consider hundreds of children's books annually to determine a winner. Workgroup members will utilize their critical skills to choose the award and will improve their reader's advisory skills. The MLA Membership and Communications Director will serve as staff liaison.

All volunteers are required to attend a virtual MLA volunteer development training. The first workgroup meeting will be in July, either in-person or virtually. Workgroup meetings are typically scheduled every other month from July through June and range from 1 – 3 hours long each. Meetings may take place at the MLA office, at a member's library, or virtually as determined by the group members. Reading, reviewing and other assigned duties beyond the workgroup meetings vary and will require extra time.

Authority and Responsibilities

The Mitten Award Workgroup is responsible for reading, reviewing and evaluating eligible titles and voting to determine the group's Top Ten Titles, honor books and winner.

Workgroup Member Responsibilities:

Active participation in reading and reviewing books on the reading list assembled by the chair; participate in meetings as scheduled; provide top title choices to workgroup chair as requested; participate in final vote to determine the winning and honor books; actively promote the award within your own library and related networks.

- The workgroup will read all suggested titles throughout the volunteer year and communicate with each other through means established and agreed upon by MLA and the workgroup Chair
- Beginning in January the vice Chairperson will compile titles receiving at least two starred reviews in library journals.
- The workgroup will hold its first meeting by July 31

- A second mandatory meeting must take place by October 31. This may be done in person, by conference call or by videoconferencing.
- Outside of the mandatory October meeting, the workgroup will meet as needed July through February after each Top 10 list.
- The final meeting to select the Top Ten Titles, winner and honor books must be held by February 15.

Workgroup Chair Responsibilities:

Assemble and maintain a reading list based on ratings from selected sources; identify promotional opportunities with MLA staff to raise awareness of the award; distribute nominations to workgroup members; schedule meetings; develop meeting agendas; encourage productive communication and opportunities to participate; coordinate workgroup vote; notify MLA staff of the winning and honor books; present the award at Spring Institute

The Chair of the Mitten Award Workgroup is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining the workgroup reading list and distributing nominations to workgroup members
- Planning, coordinating and presiding over meetings
- Developing an agenda for each meeting
- Taking meeting notes or appointing a workgroup member to take notes
- Keeping track of the number of books read and approximate number of hours read
- Coordinating voting for the winner and honor books and ensuring guidelines are followed
- Notifying MLA office of the winner and honor books
- Work with the MLA office to publicize the winner on the MLA website, in the MLA Update and on MLA's Facebook and Twitter and other press releases. No separate Facebook page should be used to promote the award.

Committee Terms

One year.

Chair and Vice Chair Selection

The committee will have a Chair and Vice-Chair as selected and approved by MLA, who serve a one-year leadership term within a two-year committee membership. A Vice-Chair may be appointed for a two-year term and will serve the first year as Vice-Chair and the second year as Chair.

Qualifications

This is an opportunity for an individual who is passionate about children's books with an interest in or desire to read children's literature in picture book format, critical literature evaluation skills, ability to plan and meet deadlines, decision-making ability and clear communication.

Service Without Remuneration

Service on Michigan Library Association's Workgroups are without remuneration or additional discounts for event attendance.

Mitten Award Qualifications

- Children’s work of fiction or nonfiction with illustrations
- Published during the calendar year
- Originally published in the United States
- Should fall under the guidelines as noted for the Association for Library Service to Children’s (ALSC) Notable Books. The guidelines include books of especially commendable quality, books that exhibit venturesome creativity, and books of fiction, information, poetry, and pictures for all age levels that reflect and encourage children’s interest in a unique or innovative fashion.

Eligibility: Any picture book that is originally published in the United States during the calendar year for children may be nominated for the award.

Book Selection Process:

- Titles for the first list of nominations are pulled from starred reviews in library journals (ex. Horn Book, Kirkus, School Library Journal).
- Michigan Librarians may freely submit nominations. Publishers may submit nominations of books that meet the criteria, but they will be required to provide copies of the book for the workgroup to review.
- Nominations may be submitted from January 1 through December 31.

Mitten Award Timeline

January 1	If a Vice Chair was appointed, the Workgroup Vice Chair will start collecting titles from starred reviews Call for nominations goes out
April/May	Select workgroup members through MLA Call for Volunteers
By June 30	Chair receives list of workgroup members
By July 31	Chair distributes initial reading list and workgroup guidelines
By July 31	Mandatory meeting of Mitten Award Workgroup
July - February	Meet as needed (virtually or in-person).
February 15	Final meeting held by this date Notify the MLA office of the winner and honor books
February 28	Announce “High Five” or “Top Ten” books at Spring Institute
March/April	Announce Mitten Award winner and honor books at Spring Institute
Spring Institute	Mitten Award presented by workgroup Chair