School librarians have a lot to manage. They are fending off or coping with budget cuts, demonstrating the value of their positions, following debates about the Common Core and testing, and often working in multiple schools, frequently as the only school librarian in the district. Many are working with an increasing number of students living in poverty, more English language learners, and students on both sides of a persistent digital divide.

In spite of the shifting K–12 education landscape and changes in school libraries, however, minors’ First Amendment rights and the library profession’s intellectual freedom principles remain unchanged. That’s why we have chosen “Intellectual Freedom—Enduring Values in a Changing World” as the theme for this issue. Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to seek and receive information from various points of view. It is a core value of our profession.

Knowledge Quest has published two intellectual freedom–themed issues in the past: “Intellectual Freedom 101” in November/December 2007 and “Intellectual Freedom Online” in September/October 2010. School librarians continue to grapple with the major intellectual freedom concerns: challenges to school library resources of all kinds, restrictive filtering of websites, questions about labeling and rating systems, maintaining confidentiality of students’ library records, and ensuring equity of access by students to resources and technology.

This Knowledge Quest issue addresses all of these topics and more, with articles that discuss the enduring principles of intellectual freedom and explain how those principles play out in real-life situations. The articles are presented in three clusters.

First, you’ll read about how to create a culture of intellectual freedom based on the legal framework of minors’ rights in school libraries. Here you’ll find answers to these questions:

• Does the First Amendment apply to minors in schools?
• What case law established minors’ right to read and receive information in the school library?
• Without being in positions of authority over others, how can school librarians be leaders and advocates in their schools?
• How can librarians design or shape curricula to help students understand the rights and responsibilities associated with their intellectual freedom?

Second, you’ll read about people and resources that can help you, including the staff at the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, ALA’s newly published Intellectual Freedom Manual, and statements like the ALA Code of Ethics. You’ll find answers to these questions:

• Who can you call if you’re faced with a challenge or with privacy or filtering questions and need some advice?
• Who works at the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, what do they do, and how can they help you?

• What’s relevant to school librarians in the new edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, and why should it be your go-to guide for writing policy, handling challenges, ensuring access, and protecting privacy?

• Is the ALA Code of Ethics still relevant for school librarians?

The third and largest cluster of articles covers specific intellectual freedom concerns including challenges, labeling, filtering, and privacy. Experts and practitioners share advice, reports, and personal stories that address the following:

• What is it like to defend library resources against a challenge?

• How does the challenge process look through the eyes of a school administrator and school board member?

• Are labeling and rating systems helpful or harmful to intellectual freedom?

• How are schools implementing CIPA (Children’s Internet Protection Act), and what are the educational and social consequences of Internet filtering?

• What should you do if you get a request for information about a student’s use of the library and its resources?

There’s more! The CBC Column looks at censorship, and the Technology Quest Column analyzes the benefits and challenges of the 1:1 and BYOD technology trends and details how school librarians’ involvement has made such programs successful in the author’s school district. AASL President Leslie Preddy also weighs in with her thoughts about intellectual freedom (and the upcoming national conference in November) in her first President’s Column.

Wait, we’re not done yet! This issue features three important and inspiring exclusively online articles about top intellectual freedom print and online resources, intellectual freedom in international schools, and how school libraries help bridge the divisions in our society and change lives.

We hope this special issue will inspire, inform, and instill confidence in your work as you seek to promote and defend the intellectual freedom of your students. By advocating for the freedom to read, you will improve your students’ education and increase their understanding of their responsibilities in a democratic society. You will enrich their lives and empower them to think, to evaluate information, and to make smart decisions. Nothing could be more central to the role of the school librarian.

Happy 45th Birthday to the Freedom to Read Foundation

The FTRF was founded in 1969 to protect the First Amendment rights of library users to read and exchange ideas and to assist librarians whose jobs were in jeopardy because of their defense of free speech. Originally, FTRF defended First Amendment free speech rights in libraries through litigation and helped establish important legal precedents. However, in recent years, its role is gradually shifting to educating the library profession and the public about the strong connection between the First Amendment and libraries and the need to combat censorship. Learn more about FTRF at <www.ftrf.org>.