When the school bell rings, will you be prepared to promote your school library program’s impact on student learning? A chance meeting with a faculty opinion leader or the PTA board president is an opportunity to inform him or her about how students benefit from your school library. In many professions, particularly in sales, people develop “elevator speeches” to prepare for such unplanned encounters (Fontichiaro and Mardis 2009). Although you want your speech to appear spontaneous, it should be carefully crafted to entice your listener to engage in conversation with you (O’Leary 2009) to learn more about your program.

According to Wikipedia (2009) an elevator speech is a short persuasive statement—about 30 seconds or 100–150 words in length—that describes one’s project or product, the benefits for the listener, and how your skills will make the project successful.

O’Leary (2009) suggests nine “C’s” for elevator speeches. First, they must be concise, as stated above. Next, the “speech” should be conceptual: focused on a relevant learning concept or objective. The message must be clear and concrete. That means that rather than thinking on one’s feet, the school library media specialist has a focused “elevator speech” prepared and mentally stored away until the situation arises. The speeches must be compelling and customized, telling the story in a way that will resonate for that particular listener. School board members may need to hear a speech with a different focus than parents might, for example. Elevator speeches must be credible and consistent, with achievable goals. Finally, the tone must be conversational, with non-confrontational language that keeps the listener engaged, comfortable, and curious to know more.

Judi Moreillon, a member of the AASL Standards and Guidelines Implementation Task Force, created a series of sample elevator speeches, including those below, for the Learning4Life (L4L) implementation training at ALA Annual Conference in July 2009 to support the “Building Collaborative Partnerships” guideline under the Teaching and Learning role in Empowering Learners (AASL 2009, 20–21). Consider how these elevator speeches can be customized to fit your program’s needs.

To Classroom Teachers and Other Specialists:

I know. I know. You’ve heard it before. “Two heads are better than one.” But think about how we can involve twice as many students in discussions if we divide the class in half. Working together, we can do twice as many writing conferences in forty-five minutes. When we teach together, we can support students’ inquiry projects much more effectively. We can also show the kids what we want them to do in their cooperative groups. By asking each other the kinds of questions we want the kids to ask each other, we can model turn taking and developing questions. We can show them how to work together, to discuss, and to debate their topics. I just learned about this exciting new technology tool that will help motivate the kids. What do you say? Do you want to meet after school tomorrow or Wednesday to plan your next inquiry unit?
To Administrators:
I realize that being an administrator is difficult in these times of short budgets and high expectations for student achievement. I am here to help you achieve your goals and position the library program at the center of our school’s academic program. When I co-plan lessons and team-teach with our teachers, I keep school goals foremost in my mind. After an in-service day, I follow up by talking about curriculum and instruction with our classroom teachers. I make sure that in our collaborations we model and practice the strategies we’re learning to improve student performance. This kind of job-embedded professional development works; it ensures that we are making progress toward reaching our school goals. You can count on me to work for what’s best for students—to get them actively engaged in learning that matters. I’m on your team. How can I help you this week/month/year?

To Parents:
I am your child’s/student’s teacher, too. I have the privilege of serving your family through our school library media program as part of the teaching team that will impact your child’s/student’s learning. The library’s books and technology resources help your child explore ideas and information, and my job is to serve as his/her guide. I work with classroom teachers to provide them with the best resources. I teach alongside other teachers to make sure that every child/student in our school has greater opportunities for individualized attention and to use library resources and technology in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and more. I teach 21st-century lifelong-learning skills and strategies that your son/daughter will need in order to continue his/her education beyond K–12 and to be a productive member of society. Please visit our library the next time you’re here at school. I would enjoy showing you our program in action.

To Colleagues:
We have the best jobs in education. We have the most exciting resources, the best technology access, and the largest room in our schools. Sure we have many responsibilities different from our classroom teacher colleagues—but you know, classroom teaching is really stressful these days. If we want to make ourselves indispensable to our faculty (and to our administrators), we can score big points by teaching in collaboration with our classroom colleagues. Our library programs should be the hubs of learning in our schools. Whatever instructional reform efforts are underway in our buildings, we must be out front and leading alongside our administrators to help teachers integrate new methods into their teaching practices. Each SLMS has the opportunity to save our profession by being the most exceptional collaborator any teacher or principal has ever had. Let’s teach together and show our learning community we are invaluable!
Learning 4 Life is sponsoring a number of outstanding sessions at AASL Charlotte. Here’s hoping we’ll see at one or all!

**Reading 4 Life @ Your Library®: The Library Media Specialist’s Role in Reading**

Rev up for leadership in reading! Guided by AASL’s Position Statement on the Library Media Specialist’s Role in Reading and the Standards for the 21st-Century Learner, participants will acquire tools for taking a leadership role in reading in their schools. This interactive session offers concepts, resources, and research to use to develop your library’s reading program, strategies for working with other literacy educators, real-world examples and testimonials from the field, and ideas to implement on Monday morning. Join Reading 4 Life @ YourLibrary to rev up your impact on reading!

(Judi Moreillon, Lead)

**Teaching the New Standards and Guidelines to Pre-Service and In-Service LMS**

What new and renewing librarians need to know about the guidelines and standards.

(Gail Dickinson, Lead)

**Empowering Learners: Unpacking the Guidelines**

The new learning standards address the information-to-knowledge connection. What does this mean for the way school library media specialists teach? This presentation will discuss the recently published Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs to examine the role that the SLMS can play in helping students become information literate as they learn curriculum content.

(Carol Gordon)
School Library Space for the 21st-Century Learner

Virtual libraries are a high school experiment, not a foregone conclusion. Space planning for school libraries is changing, but it is not time to panic. It is a time to understand concepts and models, to participate in the discussion, and to create new, inviting, library spaces that support 21st-century learners. This session will look at floor plans and furnishings that provide for flexibility, collaboration, and integration.

(Peg Sullivan)

Retrofitting School Library Spaces for the 21st-Century Learner

If the library room doesn't work, retro-fit it! You do not have to have a new building to establish spaces that complement new learning models; you just have to be creative. This session will look at how moving a wall, or changing floor plans and furnishings can provide for flexibility, collaboration, and integration, and we’ll discuss how you can bring an existing school library into the twenty-first century.

(Peg Sullivan)

Designing Your Library Curriculum with I-SAIL

Learn to use the document Illinois Standards Aligned Instruction for Libraries (I-SAIL) as a guide for your K–12 curriculum development.

(Becky Robinson, Lead)

Nudging Toward Inquiry: Evolving Instructional Design One Step at a Time

How do you move closer toward achieving the inquiry goals of the AASL’s Standards for the 21st-Century Learner if the school culture doesn’t already embrace inquiry? Seeking evolution—with one small change at a time—can be a way to move slowly toward inquiry with reluctant or inexperienced teachers. We’ll examine an inquiry model for learning, and then look at how to tweak a lesson in several ways to move the students closer to an inquiry-oriented experience.

(Kristin Fontichiaro)

Model the Model: Four-Step Lesson Design from Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action

How can school librarians help teachers enhance learning and increase student achievement? Learn how to develop students’ 21st-century skills, strategies, and attitudes, as well as their commitment to learning, using the four-step lesson design and template presented in Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action. During this hands-on session, participants will develop lessons that incorporate the standards into elementary, middle, and high school classroom curricula. This is a two-part session.

(Kathy Lowe)

Where the Money Is: IMLS Support of School Library Media

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Numerous school districts and university graduate programs around the country have been able to provide full scholarships for school library media certification and/or the Master’s in Library Science to those wishing to work in school libraries, thanks to the 21st-Century Librarian Grant Program. This federal grant program funds scholarships for school library media certification, Master’s, and PhD degrees, research by tenure-track professors of school library media, and programs that introduce high school and college undergraduates to careers in librarianship. Following a brief overview of the program (the application and review process), a panel of past recipients will describe their projects.

(Kevin Cherry, Lead)

L4L – A Give and Take Opportunity

Join the members of AASL’s Standards and Guidelines Implementation Task Force for an update on Learning 4 Life activities and an opportunity to share what you, your school or organization, region, or state are doing to help roll out the new standards and guidelines. The task force also wants to hear from you about what additional tools and resources you may need to assist in implementation, as well as any additional input you have about Learning 4 Life efforts. To get the discussion started, colleagues involved in the standards process and in the development in the state of Colorado will provide an overview of their work to date and what that has involved.

(Susan Ballard, Lead)