

**American Association of School Librarians
Affiliate Assembly Caucus
January 21, 2007**

Welcome and Introductions

The Affiliate Assembly of the American Association of School Librarians met Sunday, January 21, 2007 at the Red Lion Hotel in Seattle, WA, from 8:00 to 12:00noon. There were 84 members in attendance (see attached roster). Chair Carl Harvey welcomed everyone and thanked Linworth Publishing for providing breakfast and door prizes.

Announcements and Information Sharing

- **Keith Curry Lance** announced the AASL Longitudinal Study. This survey is being done online through 20 questions to 1200 schools. He stressed the need for every school to participate. Private schools will be included in the survey. Letters to sample schools are being mailed. Keith encouraged library media specialists to go home and promote this survey. www.AASLSurvey.org This is not only for AASL member schools. AASL will use the results of this survey for advocacy, planning and addition purposes. Responses to the survey must be submitted by mid March. This survey will be done every year.
- **Allison Kaplan** distributed AASL Conference brochures and shared highlights regarding the upcoming conference in Reno. AASL will launch the Advocacy Institute in Reno. The Opening session will feature Daniel Pink and the closing session keynote speaker will be Omar Wasa. Opportunities to have dinner with local librarians will be offered again as well as a closing night gala.
- **Alice Yucht and Laura Pearl** announced AASL's newest publishing and communication tool, the AASL Blog. They are looking for regional directors and state representatives to share news from each region/state on a regular basis. Alice shared instructions and encouraged members to share the news. The blog address is: Aasblog.org. Pearl added that this is an important means of sharing information and ideas without waiting for a printed publication. Information on how to blog can be found at Aasblog/pbwiki.com/newbloggers.
- **Nance Nassar and Jody Howard** announced a States Requirements Survey that they are conducting to see if each state has to have certified library media specialists in schools. They are looking to see what endorsements are required and how are they enforced. They've pre-tested the survey and passed out brochures which included their contact information. This information will help determine if they will need to go to state legislatures as well as sharing the data with AASL. Results will be published.
- **Jo Ann Proctor**, Chair of the AASL Awards Committee announced that there are 10 days left to apply for the National School Library Media Program of Year.

Award winners will be honored at a luncheon June 25 in Washington, D.C. Author Carmen Agrodini will be the luncheon speaker.

- **Cassandra Barnett** provided an update on progress of the AASL Learning Standards Task Force in developing new standards for students. The second draft of their proposal can be found on the AASL web site. Cassandra encouraged all to take this information back home and share with their affiliates. The task force is looking for feedback. This can be submitted on the AASL website. Beverly Becker will also receive feedback on drafts of the standards. A separate task force is working on new guidelines.
- **Diane Chen** reported that the AASL Legislative Committee is working to show a presence on Capitol Hill Tuesday, June 26 during ALA Annual. Buses of librarians will go to Capitol Hill and displays of libraries will in the Raburn building. There will be many opportunities to work with ALA Washington office members. Diane encouraged members to participate in ALA National Library Legislative Day, May 1-2. If this is not possible to do so in person, participate virtually. NCLB legislation is coming up. AASL has formed a task force to work towards including us in the language of this legislation. Information regarding Interactive web application will be one of the topics this year.

ALA President Candidates

- **Nancy Davenport**, candidate for ALA President spoke to Affiliate Assembly members. Recruitment and diversity and how to bring these two together was her focus.
- **Jim Rettig**, candidate for ALA President could not be in attendance due to other commitments, but information can be found at www.rettigforala.org.

Nominations Process

- **Carl Harvey** reminded Affiliate Assembly members that the petition form those interested in leadership position in Affiliate Assembly is on page 53 of the Affiliate Assembly Handbook. Nominations are now open for Affiliate Assembly Chair. Carl encouraged members to submit nominations today. The timeline changed in order to allow more time to gather information on candidates. This will allow for a much more informed election at Annual. Nominations are open until Feb 1, but must have signatures submitted. Carl announced this year as Affiliate Assembly's 30th Anniversary.

Announcements by AASL Officers

- **AASL President Elect, Sara Kelly Johns** encouraged participation in serving on committees. There will be a new revised volunteer committee form soon. Many committees are changing. Please go back and check on web site for professional learning committees. FLAN is a network through the ALA Washington Office that provides quick dissemination of information to members in a state. There is a need for one member from each state to be a member of FLAN from Affiliate Assembly. Look at volunteers committee form, look at AASL restructuring

format, fill out a form and send it in. Take a look at ALA committees. See if there is one you're interested in and if so, please join that committee.

- **AASL President, Cyndi Phillip** encouraged members to look at the volunteer form and join. Cyndi announced that the Emerging Leaders Program is going to continue. There will be a second round. Affiliates were asked to sponsor someone as a member of the program. AASL has two \$1,000 sponsorships available. (\$500 for each ALA conference.) One must be new to the field, and have received their degree within the past 5 years.

Commendations and Concerns

- **Cyndi Phillip** announced commendations for the following programs
 - Institute for Information and Literacy
 - Children Library and Literacy
- An AASL task force has been assigned to pursue data with regard to qualitative and quantitative measures involving the funding of library positions and libraries. Nancy Dickenson (Kentucky) is chair of this task force.
- AASL has created a task force to create a tool kit to advocate for district level and state department level library supervisors or liaisons. Merlyn Miller (Vermont) is the chair of this task force.
- **Carl Harvey** reminded members that a timeline for concerns and commendations is on page 27 of the Affiliate Assembly Handbook. A new process for concerns and commendations will begin this spring

Mega Issue: How Can AASL/ALA enhance its value to prospective members in order to significantly increase membership?

Paul D. Meyer, Principal Partner with Tecker Consultants, LLC and Dawn Vaughn, facilitator addressed the group with the following:

What changes in our structure do we need to make in order to make our strategic plan effective? Affiliate Assembly is a benefit to AASL. We are looking at making Affiliate Assembly more effective. A Mega issue is a process for planning and thinking strategically. This will allow us to get issues on the table and plan for how we will deal with and implement those plans. Focusing efforts on 2-3 things makes an organization much more efficient and effective. Mega issues will be discussed at the Board of Directors meeting as well as Affiliate Assembly. These issues are ones that will be asked and answered in 5-10 years. Affiliate Assembly will be used as a link to what is going on in schools and what is needed to help shape and address this issue.

Paul asked groups to look at the Mega Issue document and decide if something needed added/changed on given questions. In addition, the group was charged with the task of identifying key choices in addressing this issue. The information gathered is listed on the following page.

**Discussion and responses to
Mega Issue: How can AASL/ALA enhance its value to prospective members in
order to significantly increase membership?
January 21, 2007**

Question 1: What do we know about our stakeholders' needs, wants, and preferences relevant to this decision?

- Some potential members do not have a state organization that can provide support or be a link to AASL
- Some potential members may choose to be seen as a teacher and not a librarian and base their professional association on this identity
- Potential members need day-to-day professional assistance and may not see the relevance of AASL to these practical needs
- Librarians spend their funds where they can see immediate benefits. The value of membership must be strongly conveyed.
- An emerging entry point and professional need of members is technology. AASL is seen as a book based organization.
- Membership varies between Midwinter and Annual. Members join by combining conference registration with membership.

Question 2: What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of our environment that is relevant to this decision?

- Many school library media specialists deal locally, but not globally.
- Sometimes members are not given the opportunity or encouraged to extend their participation.
- There is a "they don't need me" attitude especially since a great deal of support is available online.
- Will the return be worth the cost of membership?
- Idea of joining AASL/ALA as an extension of professionalism.
- We need to improve communication with affiliate leaders who will in turn help to attract prospective members.
- Many administrators (principals) do not value or understand the role of the school librarian.
- Many administrators do not see that conference attendance is tied to school improvement.

Question 3: What do we know about the "capacity" and "strategic position" of our organization that is relevant to this decision?

- AASL is made up of primarily working library media specialists who volunteer their time.
- AASL does not pay a stipend for work that is paid for in some other divisions

- The independent school section has already collected detailed data about their membership.
- AASL hosted online resources are not user friendly.
- The new format of Knowledge Quest is added value to membership.
- More practical information on a regular basis through blogs is needed.
- Regions in Affiliate Assembly are not equally strong.

Question 4: What are the ethical implications of our choices?

- Create a new project to target different participants
- Is it right to spend money to bring in new members when there is a growing demographic of long-term members who have served the organization well for many years?
- Addressing the ethnic diversity of our organization/profession as leaders is needed. The profession may not represent the ethnic diversity of the population we serve.

Possible choices identified in responding to Mega Issue

1. Stay the same
2. Expand what we're doing – more direct contact and interaction with state affiliates
3. Increase collaboration with organizations with regard to shared programs
4. Compare benefits of this organization with other such organizations
5. Expand the format of communication and improve the existing forms
6. Increase networking opportunities to identify best practices
7. Pinpoint our relevancy
8. Greater opportunity for active involvement in organization
9. Provide some services to prospective members (Website, blog, etc.)
10. Increase partnership in area of dues
11. Target active recruitment while in prep programs

Advantages and disadvantages of the seven most significant issues

I. More direct contact and interaction with state affiliates

- **Advantages:** A visit by an AASL officer usually will percolate interest in group, shows interest in affiliate, increases the visibility to perspective members, increases communication between state affiliate and AASL, provides personal connection, provides time for AASL to hear affiliate's needs, and helps strengthen affiliates
- **Disadvantages:** Time, money, travel and it is difficult to measure the impact on membership

II. Increase collaboration with other professional organizations with regards to shared programs

- **Advantages:** Mutual discounts, cross marketing, shared standards aligned and promoted, builds relationships across professions, draws new members from other organizations and broaden mind sets
- **Disadvantages:** Could neutralize some funding, lose focus on our own memberships' needs, could lose members to other organizations and there could be difficulty in dealing with established rules and regulations

III. Expand the format of communication and improve the existing forms

- **Advantages:** Establish name recognition, provides members with another method of talking back, target specific audience, find gaps, many channels to pick from, get message out and hit hard
- **Disadvantages:** Too much information may cause members to ignore/delete it, difficulty in measuring effectiveness of communication, identifying audience, cost and time

IV. Increase networking opportunities to identify best practices

- **Advantages:** Increases knowledge base, recognizes good programs, support of peers, a blog could be established, increased opportunities for networking
- **Disadvantages:** If sharing online isn't utilized this could be reflected negatively, who should decide what best practices are, would need monitoring and poses a high risk if potential members don't see relevance in shared information

V. Relevancy

- **Potential Advantages:** creates vibrant organization, directly connects to membership, common message, opportunity for growth, talking points established, creates proactive and reflective organization and allows for potential to streamline services
- **Potential Disadvantages:** risky, hard, money and manpower, need to define target market, could alienate the entrenched and could reaffirm our irrelevancy

VI. Increase partnership with other organizations (both in and outside of ALA)

- **Advantages:** Coordinate conference calendars, prevents information duplication on website, increases AASL advocacy in ALA, attractive to new members

- **Disadvantages:** publication costs still exists, may pull volunteer hours from AASL, working w/other divisions within ALA may be more difficult than working with other organizations outside of ALA

VII. Target active recruitment while in prep programs

- **Advantages:** Get them early – target audience, fairly easy to identify SLIS faculty working with pre-service SLMS members, membership discount as a student member
- **Disadvantages:** time and disproportionate, potentially a disconnect to AASL because of need to join ALA **and** AASL. May join ALA, but not realize need to join AASL and therefore not receive benefits

Paul stressed the need for us to focus in on how we can all get involved in the process of change and what can we focus on to make the biggest impact. The report will be available at conference and also on Affiliate Assembly Listserv.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Griffith, Recording Secretary
AASL Affiliate Assembly, 2006-2007