2017-2018 ALA CD#28.1

2018 ALA Annual Conference

**Division Report to ALA Council and ALA Executive Board**

American Association of School Librarians

The following report, organized around the three critical issues in AASL’s strategic plan, provides a snapshot of AASL’s many activities and accomplishments.

**Critical Issue #1: Association Relevance**

In order to remain at the forefront of educational and technology trends within the changing societal context and to be a stronger voice for school librarians and the profession, AASL completed the following initiatives and activities in 2017–2018:

*National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*

The publication of AASL’s *National School Library Standards* (#AASLStandards) marked the culmination of over two years of meticulous, research-based work from the Standards Editorial Board (chaired by Marcia Mardis) and along with the Standards Implementation Task Force (chaired by Mary Keeling). The publication process, in partnership with ALA Publishing, marks a new collaborative model for work across ALA.

AASL’s *National School Library Standards* are based upon the Common Beliefs:

1. The school library is a unique and essential part of a learning community.

2. Qualified school librarians lead effective school libraries.

3. Learners should be prepared for college, career, and life.

4. Reading is the core of personal and academic competency.

5. Intellectual freedom is every learner’s right.

6. Information technologies must be appropriately integrated and equitably available.

The AASL Past-Presidents Planning Grant for National School Library Standards were established to help AASL affiliates plan and execute an event, initiative, or activity focused on the implementation of the new AASL National School Library Standards. The two 2018 grants sponsored by Roger and Susan D. Ballard were awarded to the Tennessee Association of School Librarians in honor of AASL Past President Judy King and the Ohio Educational Library Media Association in honor of AASL Past President Ruth Toor. Future grants will honor E. Blanche Woolls, David Loertscher, Carl Harvey II, and Gail K. Dickinson. The 2018 grant sponsored by Cassandra Barnett was awarded to the North Carolina School Library Media Association in honor of AASL Past President Barbara Stripling. Future grants will honor Helen R. Adams and Retta Patrick.

To learn more about #AASLStandards, please visit the robust home for Standards-related learning at <http://standards.aasl.org>.

18th National Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix, AZ

In November 2017 over 2,000 school librarians gathered to go “Beyond the Horizon” for AASL’s national conference. Conference general session speakers included Jaime Casap, chief education evangelist for Google, *New York Times* bestselling author Jason Reynolds, Standards Editorial Board chair Marcia Mardis, and Standards Implementation Task Force chair Mary Keeling. Over 100 concurrent sessions highlighted research and innovative practices for school libraries. Please search #AASL17 for highlights from participants and more.

School Library Month

AASL’s 33rd annual celebration of School Library Month was centered on the theme of “Making Connections at Your School Library.” *New York Times* bestselling author Jason Reynolds served as our 2018 spokesperson, providing a [PSA](http://www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/slm/2018/psa) and promoting school libraries to his social media following. The School Library Month committee, chaired by Jillian Ehlers, worked with AASL staff to provide a treasure trove of shareable resources, webinars, and graphics for anyone wanting to celebrate #aaslslm.

Task Forces

Along with our hard-working standing committees, the following task forces are helping AASL to meet a number of specific needs:

* + The AASL Vision for Implementing ESSA task force chaired by Eileen Kern continues to monitor developments across the United States while providing critical professional development on federal education topics to AASL members.
  + The Crosswalk Task Force chaired by Jay Bansbach is developing crosswalks between the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*, the Future Ready Librarian framework, and ISTE standards.
  + The Induction Task Force chaired by Robyn Young is developing a systematic structure to assist future school library leaders in recognizing and developing their leadership abilities.
  + The Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) Task Force chaired by Judi Moreillon monitors the federal IAL program and works to partner with eligible school districts to develop grant applications.
  + The K-12 Regional Accrediting Agency Task Force chaired by Lisa Brakel is examining the stance of K-12 regional accrediting agencies on school librarians and school libraries.
  + The Libraries in Public Charter Schools Task Force chaired by Kathy Lester is conducting an environmental scan of public charter schools in the United States in relation to school libraries.
  + The National School Library of the Year (NSLY) Guidelines Revision Task Force, also chaired by Eileen Kern, is revising the NSLY Award application and criteria to reflect the new AASL Standards.
  + The Open Educational Resources Task Force chaired by Lori Donovan is working to position school librarians in OER efforts that will help to extend school librarians’ roles as leaders within their schools, align to our new standards, and provide professional development. This task force was created after the AASL Practice Committee articulated the need for more information for our members on this topic.
  + The Position on School and Public Library Cooperation Task Force chaired by Sedley Abercrombie is developing a statement of best practice or position statement on school/public library cooperation while maintaining independent programs and facilities.
  + The Presidential Initiative Task Force chaired by Terri Grief is thanking our fellow ALA members for supporting school libraries, introducing our new AASL Standards across ALA, and also making sure our librarian colleagues know what school librarians accomplish in today’s school libraries.
  + The School Librarians as Leaders Position Statement Task Force chaired by Michelle Wilson is developing a statement of best practice or position statement on leadership responsibilities of school librarians in K-12 education. This task force was created after the AASL Vision for Implementing ESSA Task Force identified a need for a strong statement in this area as part of local and state-level advocacy work for ESSA and using federal funds for school libraries.
  + The State Standards Workshop Task Force chaired by Cassandra Barnett is working to ensure state level professional development opportunities for the current *National School Library Standards* are supported by AASL content (webinars, presentation, printed materials).  The task force is assessing state needs and will make recommendations for additional content after identifying any gaps.

National Library Legislative Day (#NLLD18)

AASL President-elect Kathryn Lewis, Executive Director Sylvia Norton, and President Steven Yates represented AASL at NLLD 2018 in Washington, DC, in early May. ALA’s Washington Office arranged a joint meeting of AASL, ALSC, and YALSA leadership with key U.S. Department of Education officials including Sara Trettin, Policy Advisor, Office of Educational Technology; Sylvia Lyles, Director of Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs; Jean Morrow from the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development; and Norris Dickard, Academic Improvement Group Leader. Kathryn (Oklahoma) and Steven (Alabama) were also able to join their home state delegations to visit with their senators to share more about the importance of supporting the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL), the Museum and Library Services Act, as well as equitable access for broadband.

**Critical Issue #2: Membership Development**

In order to strengthen relationships with state affiliates and other ALA communities and to build a stronger professional community for its members, AASL completed the following initiatives and activities in 2017–2018:

Support for State and Local School Librarians

AASL works closely with ALA’s Office for Library Advocacy, the Public Awareness Office, and the Office for Intellectual Freedom to provide letters of support and assistance when school librarians face budgetary or intellectual freedom challenges. ALA President Jim Neal enthusiastically co-signs each letter with AASL President Steven Yates. In 2017-2018, letters were sent to districts in Washington, Ohio, California, and Illinois, as well as two letters to Maryland districts and three to Pennsylvania districts. This list is just a sampling of the numerous ways that AASL, working with our ALA colleagues, provide support for school librarians and library funding throughout the year.

Fight for School Libraries Summit, May 22-23

ALA President Jim Neal announced in his March *American Libraries* [column](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2018/03/01/fight-for-school-libraries/) that he would be convening a small think tank to develop strategies for ALA to more systematically advocate for school librarians and school libraries. In May, a group of 19 school, academic, and public librarians met in Chicago to develop a strategies for ALA to support school librarians and school libraries as foundational for all librarians and libraries.

State Ecosystem Initiative

AASL, ALA's Office for Library Advocacy and Chapter Relations Office have embarked on a yearlong initiative to strengthen state library ecosystems through unified messaging and identification of shared priorities for action. The [State Ecosystem Initiative](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/state-ecosystem-initiative) was launched at ALA Annual in 2017 with a panel on state level “Partnerships to Strengthen School Libraries” and continued in September with a CRO-AASL-OLA webinar “Back to School: School Library Legislation in the Statehouses” from a panel of members about their work in New Jersey, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. During ALA's Midwinter meeting, more than 100 representatives from state library associations, school library associations, and state libraries and department of educations from across the country gathered for "Enhancing Communications and Strengthening Library Ecosystems," a facilitated dialogue to identify common priorities for action.  In May, members from Kentucky, Colorado, and Maryland shared what they bring to the table during a webinar, “Get It Together: Building Blocks of Thriving State Ecosystems.” A culminating luncheon with a panel discussion will be held on Friday, June 22, during ALA Annual.

Student Memberships

To assist students in school library programs AASL, in partnership with ALA, has offered any program in which the *National School Library Standards* are adopted as a required text a one-year complimentary student membership to those enrolled in the course.  This complimentary membership ensures that those responsible for the future of the school library profession will have access to the valuable resources offered through an AASL/ALA membership as well as instant member pricing on the *National School Library Standards*.  To date over 60 courses have adopted the text and over 325 students have joined AASL.

State Affiliate Visits

The AASL President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President attend state affiliate conferences on a scheduled rotation and present informational sessions about AASL. In 2017-2018, AASL President Steven Yates visited the Wyoming Library Association—School Library Interest Group, the Ohio Educational Library Media Association, the Maryland School Library Association, the Kansas Association of School Librarians, and the Alaska Association of School Librarians. AASL President-Elect Kathryn Lewis visited the Tennessee Association of School Librarians and the North Dakota Library Association. AASL Immediate Past President Audrey Church visited the Information and Technology Educators of Minnesota and the California School Library Association.

AASL Connection (#aaslcxn)

The AASL Board repurposed the monthly Advocacy and Legislation Action Coalition and started #aaslcxn in March 2018 as a new conversation point for the school library profession. Highlighted by quarterly live webinars, #aaslcxn is a hashtag with a social life. The hashtag will be integrated into AASL board member social media conversation and will be monitored for questions and content requests for future live webinars, Twitter chats, upcoming conference content requests, and more. Live webinars will continue to be archived at <http://www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/AASLcxn>.

Social Media Superstar Recognitions

AASL recognized its second group of Social Media Superstars in 2018. These school library professionals enrich the profession and its work on behalf of students by sharing information, expertise, ideas, encouragement, dialog, and inspiration widely via a variety of social media channels. After reviewing all of the endorsements left by peers and the original nominations, the Social Media Recognition Committee, chaired by Cathy Jo Nelson, named the following [2018 Social Media Superstars](https://knowledgequest.aasl.org/2018-superstars/):

* + Advocacy Ambassador: Ashley Cooksey
  + Leadership Luminary: Shannon McClintock Miller
  + Program Pioneer: Nikki Robertson
  + Sensational Student Voice: Chelsea Sims
  + Social Justice Defender: Jennifer LaGarde
  + Tech Troubadour: Heather Moorefield-Lang

2018 Awards and Grants

AASL awards and grants recognize excellence and showcase best practices in the school library field. This year’s award and grant recipients are:

* + Crystal Apple Award

Awarded to: Denine Torr, Senior Director, Community Initiatives at the Dollar General Corporation

The Crystal Apple is given at the discretion of the AASL President to an individual or group who has had significant impact on school libraries and students.

* + National School Library Program of the Year Award

Awarded to:[Robert E. Lee High School](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/04/robert-e-lee-high-school-named-national-school-library-program-year), Springfield, VA

*Sponsored by Follett*, the award annually recognizes a school library program that meets the needs of the changing school and library environment and is fully integrated into the school’s curriculum. The recipient receives a crystal obelisk and $10,000.

* + ABC-CLIO Leadership Grant

Awarded to: [Alabama School Library Association](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/03/alabama-school-library-association-awarded-aasl-abc-clio-leadership-grant)

*Sponsored by ABC-CLIO*, the up to $1,750 grant is awarded to school library associations that are AASL affiliates for planning and implementing leadership programs at the state, regional, or local levels.

* + Affiliate of the Year Award

Awarded to: [Ohio Educational Library Media Association](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/05/ohio-educational-library-media-association-named-2018-aasl-affiliate-year) (inaugural recipient)

The award recognizes the AASL Affiliate most active and dynamic in achieving the goals of AASL at the state and local level. The recipient organization receives a $1,000 stipend.

* + Collaborative School Library Award

Awarded to: [Janine Johnson, Emily Shiller, Kim Moran, Charlsie Vanderrest, and Kelly Hall](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/03/scotts-ridge-middle-school-project-receives-aasl-collaborative-school-library) from Scotts Ridge Middle School in Ridgefield, CT

*Sponsored by Upstart*, the $2,500 award recognizes and encourages collaboration and partnerships between school librarians and teachers in meeting goals outlined in AASL’s program guidelines through joint planning of a program, unit, or event in support of the curriculum and using school library resources.

* + Distinguished School Administrator Award

Awarded to: [Michael Daria](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/03/michael-daria-receives-aasl-distinguished-school-administrator-award), Tuscaloosa (AL) City Schools Superintendent

*Sponsored by ProQuest*, the $2,000 award is presented to a school administrator who has made worthy contributions to the operations of an exemplary school library and to advancing the role of the school library in the educational program.

* + Frances Henne Award

Awarded to: [Deb Sondall Seatveit](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/03/deb-sondall-saetveit-receives-aasl-frances-henne-award), School Librarian, Westside Middle School in Omaha, NE

*Sponsored by ABC-CLIO*, the $1,250 award enables a school librarian with five or fewer years in the field to attend an ALA Annual Conference or AASL National Conference for the first time.

* + Innovative Reading Grant

Awarded to: [Judy Deichman](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/04/judy-deichman-receives-aasl-innovative-reading-grant), School Librarian, Nottaway Middle School in Crewe, VA

*Sponsored by Capstone*, the $2,500 award supports the planning and implementation of a unique and innovative program for children that motivates and encourages reading, especially with struggling readers.

* + Inspire Collection Development Grants

Awarded to: [I.C. Norcom High School (Portsmouth, VA); Kingsbury Middle School (Memphis, TN); Longleaf Middle School (Columbia, SC); Poplar Middle School (Poplar, MT); Samuel M. Ridgway Middle School (Edgewater Park, NJ); Olympia High School (Olympia, WA)](http://www.ala.org/aasl/awards/inspire/collection)

*Sponsored by Marina “Marney” Welmers*, the grant assists an existing public middle or high school to extend, update, and diversify the book, online, subscription, and/or software collection in their library in order to realize sustainable improvement in student achievement at their school. The fund is $20,000 per year. The direct assistance grant shall be capped at $5,000.

* + Inspire Special Event Grants

Awarded to: [Sussex Central High School (Georgetown, DE); Greece Arcadia High School (Rochester, NY); Cherry Creek High School (Greenwood Village, CO); Benjamin Franklin Intermediate School (Daly City, CA); Denny International Middle School (Seattle, WA)](http://www.ala.org/aasl/awards/inspire/event)

*Sponsored by Marina “Marney” Welmers*, the grant supports a special event so that an existing public middle or high school library can create new or enhance its extracurricular activities in order to increase student academic achievement at their school. The fund is $10,000 per annum. The direct assistance is capped at $2,000 per grant.

* + Roald Dahl’s Miss Honey Social Justice Award

Awarded to: [The “kindness team” at Dr. Michael Conti School – PS5 in Jersey City, NJ; Keungsuk Sexton, School Librarian and literacy support teacher, Louis DeCarlo, early intervention counselor, Omar Alvarez, 7th and 8th grade English and language arts teacher, and Janice Alvarez, reading specialist.](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/03/kindness-team-dr-michael-conti-school-ps-5-receives-aasl-roald-dahl-miss)

*Sponsored by Penguin Random House*, the award recognizes and encourages collaboration and partnerships between school librarians and teachers in teaching social justice through joint planning of a program, unit, or event in support of social justice using school library resources. The award includes $2,000 to the librarian, up to $1,000 in reimbursement towards travel and housing to attend the AASL awards presentation at the ALA Annual Conference, and a $5,000 book donation by Penguin Random House.

* + The Ruth Toor Grant for Strong Public School Libraries

Awarded to: [Mike Havener, School Librarian, Springfield (IL) High School](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/03/mike-havener-receives-aasl-ruth-toor-grant-strong-public-school-libraries)

*Sponsored by Jay Toor*, the award provides funding support on a competitive basis to public school libraries for the creation and implementation of a local public awareness/marketing campaign that promotes and positions their school library as a necessary resource in the community. The grant includes $3,000 to create and implement a project and $2,000 for both the school librarian and school official to attend the AASL National Conference or the ALA Annual Conference.

* + Beyond Words: Dollar General School Library Relief Fund donated a total of $315,000 in 2017-2018 to public schools whose school libraries have been impacted by a disaster. Grants are to replace or supplement books, media and/or library equipment in the school library setting.
  + Inspire Disaster Recovery Grants are also available to help support pre-existing public middle or high school libraries—led by a certified school librarian—that have incurred damage or hardship due to a natural disaster (tornado, earthquake, hurricane, flood, avalanche, mudslide), fire, or an act recognized by the federal government as terrorism or provides funding to public middle or high schools that have been impacted through an increase in enrollment due to displaced/evacuee students. Inspire grants are supported through the generous *donation of Marina “Marney” Welmers*, an AASL member and retired middle school librarian.

**Critical Issue #3: Association Governance and Leadership**

AASL is constantly working to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its internal governance and leadership. In 2017-2018, AASL worked in the following areas:

Strategic Planning Process

The AASL Board is reviewing proposals from a number of strategic planning consultants as we look to begin our strategic planning process in the coming months.

Discontinuance of Non-conference Year Event

The AASL Board looked at the performance of past non-conference year events and decided to discontinue the non-conference year event beginning in 2018. This decision was made as we look at all of our professional development offerings and how to provide the greatest impact for the investment we make in providing continuing education for school librarians.

We look forward to the ALA Organization Review and other initiatives designed to position librarians and libraries at the center of all communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Yates

2017-2018 President, American Association of School Librarians