

2016-2017 ALA CD#28.1_6517_INF.
2017 ALA Annual Conference

Division Report to ALA Council and ALA Executive Board American Association of School Librarians

To say that AASL was busy in 2016–2017 would be an understatement. This report, organized around the three critical issues in AASL’s Strategic Plan, highlights and summarizes AASL activities and accomplishments over the past year.

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 2016–2017:

Practice Committee

The AASL Board of Directors (BOD) approved the creation of a standing Practice Committee whose function is to review developments in educational technology, curriculum, accountability and assessment, literacy, national learning standards, and other current library and education issues. The committee will evaluate these developments and advise the BOD on issues of concern. In 2016–2017 the committee developed a rubric by which committee members will evaluate and vet potential issues. We view this committee as the crow’s-nesters of the field and look forward to their valued input.

Task Forces

The following task forces comprised of AASL members worked throughout the year, demonstrating association relevance and responsiveness:

- The AASL Vision for Implementing ESSA Task Force worked with AASL staff to operationalize and implement the “[AASL Vision for Implementing ESSA](#).” The task force presented information on ESSA to the AASL Affiliate Assembly at the 2017 ALA Midwinter Meeting and continues to monitor ESSA implementation at the state level and provide useful information for the [AASL ESSA website](#).
- The Induction Task Force, an [initiative stemming from AASL’s 65th Anniversary Campaign](#), has developed a systematic structure to assist future school library leaders in recognizing and developing their leadership abilities. Their plan will be launched at the AASL 2017 National Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix, AZ, in November.
- The K–12 Regional Accrediting Task Force, which was formed due to a [concern from AASL’s Affiliate Assembly](#), is examining the stance of K–12 regional accrediting agencies on school libraries and school librarians.
- The Transform and Crisis Toolkit Revision Task Force is working to revise and update AASL’s advocacy, health and wellness, and crisis toolkits which, when complete, will be available on the AASL website.
- The School and Public Library Cooperation Task Force is developing a position statement on school-public library cooperation while maintaining independent programs and facilities.

- Our newest task force, the Libraries in Public Charter Schools Task Force, is charged with conducting an environmental scan of public charter schools in the U.S., determining how many include school libraries, and recommending how AASL might advocate for libraries and school librarians within public charter schools.

Get Out the Vote Campaign

Recognizing that only 13.9 percent of AASL members voted in the 2016 ALA election (compared to 20 percent of YALSA members, 25.2 percent of ALSC members, 23.6 percent of PLA members, and 26.7 percent of ACRL members), AASL encouraged its members to participate in the 2017 ALA election through a Get Out the Vote campaign. AASL posted communications about the election through the [KQ website](#), the AASL webpage, the AASLForum listserv, and AASL's various social media platforms. As a result 19.2 percent of AASL members voted in 2017 (compared to 21.4 percent of YALSA members, 26.9 percent of ALSC, 21.3 percent of PLA members, and 26.7 percent of ACRL members). We anticipate a similar initiative next year to encourage even more robust participation in the ALA election process.

School Library Month

AASL has celebrated April as [School Library Month](#) since 1985. The theme for 2017, "Because School Libraries Empower Students," allowed for eye-catching graphics and an emphasis on how school libraries and school librarians empower and engage students in learning. Andy Weir, author of the best-selling novel *The Martian*, served as national spokesperson and provided a [PSA](#) that can be used year round to promote school libraries as spaces for inquiry, innovation, and learning.

#Leg2SchLibrary

At the suggestion of Emily Sheketoff, recently retired Executive Director of the ALA Washington Office, AASL encouraged its members to [invite their federal legislators](#) to visit their school libraries during the April spring congressional recess to see firsthand how strong school library programs and librarians impact student learning. Forty-four members in 17 states reported inviting their representatives, senators, or both for a visit, and [four members have shared](#) that their invitations were accepted: Cathy Evans from St. Mary's Episcopal School in Memphis, TN (Representatives Steven Cohen and David Kustoff); [Kimberly Johnson from South Carroll High School in Sykesville, MD](#) (Representative Jamie Raskin); Stacey Kern from Clark-Pleasant Middle School in Greenwood, IN (Representative Trey Hollingsworth); and Kathy Lester from East Middle School in Plymouth, MI (regional manager for Senator Debbie Stabenow).

National Library Legislative Day (NLLD)

AASL President-Elect Steven Yates, Executive Director Sylvia Knight Norton, and President Audrey Church represented AASL at NLLD17 in Washington, DC, in early May. Thanks to the efforts of the ALA Washington Office we were able to visit with staff members for key committees in both the Senate and the House, as well as the U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Jason Botel. Our consistent message was the importance of school libraries and school librarians to student learning, and our ask was to continue funding the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) as well as the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program (IAL) and other ESSA appropriations.

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#SchoolLibrariansTransformStudentLearning

The focus of Audrey Church's presidential initiative has been advocacy, particularly with school administrators. Members of the current Presidential Initiative Task Force curated key resources and created an infographic and annotated resource guide that can be shared with principals to inform them of the important role school librarians play in student learning. "School Librarians as Learning Leaders: An Administrator's Guide" and other related resources can be found at www.ala.org/aasl/learningleaders. Accordingly, the [President's Program at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference](#) features Dr. Scott Beck, Head Principal at Norman (OK) High School, who will address the important role school libraries and school librarians play in the instructional program of a school.

Causality: School Libraries and Student Success (CLASS)

Moving forward with the research agenda established in April 2014 by the CLASS Summit and reported in the [CLASS White Paper](#), [three teams of researchers](#) have completed the first phase of the proposed CLASS research project: foundational research consisting of meta-syntheses of theory, best practice research, and policy. Requests for proposals went out in early April for the [CLASS II Field Studies Grants](#). Announcement of awarded/funded teams will occur on June 30.

ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians

School librarianship preparation programs housed in colleges of education accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) can earn [National Recognition from CAEP/AASL](#) by demonstrating candidate mastery of the [ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians \(2010\)](#). The AASL CAEP Coordinating Committee has begun work on revising and updating the 2010 standards and will submit draft standards to CAEP in summer 2018 for one year out review and feedback.

New National School Library Standards

AASL's new *National School Library Standards* for K–12 learners, school librarians, and school libraries will be [launched](#) at the AASL 2017 National Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix, AZ, in November. For the first time in decades AASL used a multi-layered survey, data, and research approach to revise and remodel its learning standards and program guidelines for the profession. Members of the [Standards and Guidelines Editorial Board](#) and the [Standards and Guidelines Implementation Task Force](#) will present [preconferences](#), concurrent sessions, and the Friday General Session at the AASL National Conference to introduce the new standards to the field.

New AASL Logo

The AASL Board of Directors reviewed the current AASL logo, which has been in place for 15 years, as well as new designs in recognition that the association logo is part of the branding being developed for AASL's new standards publication. The AASL Board voted in early May to adopt a new logo for the association. The new logo will be unveiled in the fall.

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 2016–2017:

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ESSA State Workshops

In collaboration with ALA's Office for Library Advocacy and the ALA Washington Office, AASL offered [free comprehensive ESSA workshops to state association affiliates](#) in fall/winter 2016 and spring 2017. The workshops, presented by AASL leadership, focused on content directly related to ESSA; they provided participants instruction on how to identify stakeholders, build coalitions, craft messages, and develop elevator speeches. Participants gained advocacy skills and left better positioned to serve as leaders for teaching and learning in their states and localities. Workshops were conducted for 42 state affiliates.

Advocacy and Legislation Coalition Calls

Beginning in September 2016, AASL has held monthly Advocacy and Legislation Coalition Calls for its members. Staff from the ALA Washington Office and ALA's Office for Library Advocacy have participated on a regular basis, providing updates and critical information on legislation and advocacy efforts. State affiliate representatives have shared updates on their advocacy efforts and state legislative issues. [Calls are archived](#) for those not able to participate in real time.

Support for State and Local School Librarians

Over the course of the year, AASL received numerous requests for letters of support, most frequently for school librarian positions that were threatened due to budget issues but also for intellectual freedom challenges. The ALA Office for Library Advocacy has been invaluable in gathering relevant data, preparing letters for superintendents and school boards in Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia and coordinating the signing and distribution of these letters. Letters are currently in process for school districts in Maryland and Washington. ALA President Julie Todaro has been totally committed to the importance of certified school librarians and has co-signed each letter. As appropriate, the ALA Public Awareness Office and the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom have provided assistance whenever requested; for example, working with AASL, the Virginia Association of School Librarians, and the Virginia Library Association to stand against censorship and challenges to intellectual freedom.

Partnerships to Strengthen School Libraries

On Sunday afternoon, June 25, at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, AASL, the ALA Office for Library Advocacy, and the Chapter Relations Office will host a panel discussion, titled "Partnerships to Strengthen School Libraries." The three panelists, Cynthia Czesak, Director of the Paterson Public Library and Legislative Chair for the New Jersey Library Association; Kelly Miller, Librarian and School Library Coordinator at Virginia Beach City Public Schools and President of the Virginia Association of School Librarians; and Nora Wiltse, Librarian in Chicago Public Schools and Co-Chair of the Chicago School Librarians, will describe successful efforts and strategies for partnerships that support and strengthen school libraries.

State Affiliate Visits

On a rotating basis, the AASL President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President attend and present an "AASL Best Of" session at state affiliate conferences. During 2016–2017, AASL President Audrey Church visited conferences of the Indiana Library Federation, the Texas Association of School Librarians, the Vermont School Library Association, and the Georgia Library Media Association. AASL

President-Elect Steven Yates visited conferences of the Kentucky Association of School Librarians and the New York Library Association/Section of School Librarians. AASL Immediate Past President Leslie Preddy visited the Connecticut Association of School Librarians and the Arizona Library Association, Teacher Librarian Division conferences.

Social Media Superstar Recognitions

AASL [launched its Social Media Superstar recognitions program this past year](#). The program is an outgrowth of Leslie Preddy's 2015–2016 Presidential Initiative and is intended to increase AASL's visibility by recognizing those social media superstars within the profession. AASL members were recognized in seven categories: Sensational Student Voice, Advocacy Ambassador, Tech Troubadour, Program Pioneer, Curriculum Champion, Leadership Luminary and Social Justice Defender. Peer nominations, followed by peer endorsements, guided selection and naming of the [top recognitions for 2017](#):

- Sensational Student Voice: Andy Plemmons
- Advocacy Ambassador: Sara Kelly Johns
- Tech Troubadour: Krista Welz
- Program Pioneer: Naomi Bates
- Curriculum Champion: Michelle Luhtala
- Leadership Luminary: Joyce Valenza
- Social Justice Defender: Susan Polos

2017 Awards and Grants

[AASL awards and grants](#) recognize excellence and showcase best practices in the school library field.

This year's award winners are:

- [Crystal Apple Award](#)
Awarded to: Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director (retired), ALA Washington Office
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: Baltimore County Public Schools, Baltimore County, MD
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.
- [Distinguished Service Award](#)
Awarded to: Lesley Farmer, Professor of Library Media at California State University Long Beach
Sponsored by Follett, the \$3,000 award recognizes an individual member of the library profession who has, over a significant period of time, made an outstanding national contribution to school librarianship and school library development.
- [ABC-CLIO Leadership Grant](#)
Awarded to: The Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA)
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.

- [Collaborative School Library Award](#)
Awarded to: Mary Catherine Coleman, Sarah Beebe, Sarah Weitz, Bev Greenberg, and Tisha Johnson from Francis W. Parker School in Chicago, IL
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: Warren Drake, Superintendent of Schools, East Baton Rouge Parish (LA) School System
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: Julie Stivers, School Librarian, Mt. Vernon Middle School in Raleigh, NC
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: Alison Kirkpatrick, School Librarian, River Road High School, Amarillo, TX
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: El Camino High School, Oceanside, CA; George Washington High School, Danville, VA; Roosevelt Middle School, Cedar Rapids, IA; Highland School of Technology, Gastonia, NC; Kagman High School, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; Jane Addams Campus Library, New York, NY
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: Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School, Forest Hills, NY; Pine Grove Middle School, East Syracuse, NY; Highland School of Technology, Gastonia, NC; Wadleigh Campus Library, New York, NY; Classical Magnet School, Hartford, CT
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.
- [Intellectual Freedom Award](#)
Awarded to: Amy Bradley, School Librarian, Risley Middle School, Brunswick, GA
Sponsored by ProQuest, the Intellectual Freedom Award is given for upholding the principles of intellectual freedom as set forth by the American Association of School

Librarians and the American Library Association. The award includes \$2,000 to the recipient and \$1,000 to the school library program of the recipient's choice.

- [Roald Dahl's Miss Honey Social Justice Award](#)

Awarded to: Anne Mlod, School Librarian, and Cinda Gilmore, 4th-Grade Teacher, Genesee Elementary School, Auburn, NY

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: Dana Kepler, School Librarian, Park Hill High School, Kansas City, MO

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.

Student Bridge Scholarships

In an effort to help students transition from the reduced cost of ALA/AASL student membership to regular membership rates, funds from [AASL's 65th Anniversary Campaign](#) and the ALA Membership Development Office support AASL Student Bridge Scholarships. Recipients of the first three-year Student Bridge Scholarships are Jamie Becker, Heather Jennings, Kathryn Justus, Kate Rojas, and Kristin Unruh. In order to become more involved in AASL, these recipients serve as non-voting members of an AASL committee in their area of interest.

G.A.M.E. | Gaming as Meaningful Education

In fall 2016 AASL's non-conference year event, G.A.M.E. | Gaming as Meaningful Education, co-sponsored by the ALA Games and Gaming Roundtable, was held in Rochester, NY. Participants enjoyed an evening at the Strong National Museum of Play and were informed by keynote addresses by Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow, and Chris Harris, Director of the Genesee Valley (NY) School Library System. Sessions on topics as varied as video games, board games, role play, and escape rooms kept participants engaged and learning throughout the event.

Additional Collaborative Ventures

At the invitation of ALSC President Nina Lindsey, in March 2017 AASL participated in a [Community Forum](#) on digital literacy and digital citizenship for children in libraries. Topics included fake news, evaluation of information, privacy concerns, and unequal access to information.

Under chairperson Anna Brannin, the [Joint Committee on School/Public Library Cooperation \(AASL, ALSC, YALSA\)](#) has produced a toolkit on school-public library cooperation which will soon be available for use.

AASL 2017 National Conference and Exhibition

AASL will hold its 2017 [National Conference and Exhibition](#), themed “Beyond the Horizon,” November 9–11, in Phoenix, AZ. In addition to the launch of the new K–12 *National School Library Standards*, there will be preconferences, school and cultural tours, over 100 concurrent sessions, over 100 authors, general sessions each day, more than 165 exhibitors, and 42 hours of networking opportunities for the 4,000+ participants. Jaime Casap, Chief Education Evangelist at Google, Inc, will keynote the Opening General Session. Members of the [Standards and Guidelines Editorial Board](#) and the [Standards and Guidelines Implementation Task Force](#) will present the Friday General Session to introduce the new standards to the field. Jason Reynolds, recipient of the Coretta Scott King Honor, the Walter Dean Myers Award, the Kirkus Award, and nominee for the National Book Award, will keynote the Author General Session.

Critical Issue #3: Association Governance and Leadership

AASL is constantly working to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its internal governance and leadership.

Policy Review

The [AASL Policies & Procedures Manual](#) is currently under a comprehensive review and revision. The Policy Review Working Group will complete its review of current practice, policies, and procedures and send the final policy sections to the AASL Board of Directors for approval at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Operational Plan

During 2016–2017, the AASL Board of Directors, working with AASL staff, developed an operational plan for 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 to implement the final years of our current [Strategic Plan](#). This operational plan will go to the AASL Board of Directors for final approval at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Respectfully submitted,
Audrey Church
2016–2017 AASL President