AASL has a long history of developing, implementing and articulating a vision for the profession through standards and guidelines. Schools and school districts in the U.S. are very diverse, ranging from extremely small districts with very few students and one school building K-12, to very large districts with over a million students and 1200+ buildings. This diversity presents many challenges and opportunities when creating and implementing guidelines, which will affect all students in all states.

The Guidelines

*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, published in 1998 builds on the well-received guidelines, *Information Power* published in 1989. The current publication, which is commonly referred to as *IP2*, reiterates the central mission and goals of a school library media program, “to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information”. In addition, *IP2* establishes a set of nine information literacy standards designed to guide and support school library media specialists’ efforts in the three major areas of:

- Teaching & Learning
- Information Access and Delivery
- Program Administration

*IP2* also shows how skills and strategies in collaboration, leadership, and technology support these efforts. It stresses the importance of making connections to the learning community of the twenty-first century as the school library media program develops the fundamentals of lifelong learning in students. These ideas are easiest to express as a graphic, (shown at right).

As the essential link who connects students, teachers, and others with the information resources they need, the school library media specialist (teacher-librarian) plays a unique and pivotal role in the learning community. To fulfill this role, the effective school library media specialist draws upon a vision for the student-centered library media program that is based on the three ideas of collaboration, leadership, and technology. *IP2* defines four roles and responsibilities for the school library media specialist which are needed to produce an effective program that is integral to the school. These roles are:

- teacher
- instructional partner
- information specialist
- program administrator

These guidelines are a bold step in reiterating the central role the school library media program and school library media specialist play in increasing student achievement and achieving State and District standards.

Planning

The AASL Board of Directors believes that advocacy is a top priority for the Association and that the introduction of the new guidelines and standards provided an exceptional opportunity for focusing advocacy efforts across the country. The definition of advocacy used here is “a planned, deliberate, sustained effort to gain awareness and understanding of an issue or issues incrementally.” The AASL Board recognized that advocacy required a long-term commitment. It also required “content”, in this case the implementation of new national guidelines and standards, and “context”, in this case the Association’s commitment to leadership and quality continuing education programs for members and the field.

AASL as have many organizations has had a variety of committees and taskforces which focused on advocacy. It was understood that when *IP2* was published, if it was to meet its advocacy potential, a single taskforce was needed to work of
previous taskforces and including the chairs of these taskforces, a Presidential Taskforce for Coordinating the Implementation of Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning was formed in 1997, eighteen months prior to publication. Carolyn Giambra, who is from the Buffalo, New York area, chaired the Taskforce. This Implementation Taskforce was charged with developing a plan to implement the new guidelines for the Association.

The taskforce took a broad, long-term view while it focused on a coordinated approach to implementing the guidelines and standards in each school, state, and national venue. It worked to ensure a planned, deliberate, sustained effort over time to advance common agendas with the school library media profession and educational decision-makers. It also worked to avoid the following classic communication pitfalls:

- concentrating on “getting the message out”, rather than assisting in advancing the agenda of the target audiences to be reached;
- focusing efforts on telling decision-makers how important school libraries are and about the critical role of school library media specialists, not realizing how self-serving that sounds to decision-makers;
- spending the Association’s limited resources on expensive communication tools without assessing the needs of the target group, or providing measures for evaluating if the tools actually contributed to awareness, understanding, and action;
- “dusting off” some of the promotional activities from the previous standards without a clear understanding of how the current political and economic environment may require different tools and approaches.

AASL, through the efforts of this overarching taskforce, created a structure that allowed all implementation and related advocacy activities to be strategic, accountable, consistent, and carefully measured. Only one planning model was employed to provide focus and to assure the greatest possibility for success. The implementation of this plan has been a major focus of AASL for five years. Resources were identified and appropriately assigned to this plan.

Planning – AASL State Affiliates Critical

The AASL Affiliate Assembly, composed of two representatives from each state library media association, is the grassroots arm of AASL. The Affiliate Assembly was actively involved in the development of the IP2 Implementation Plan; from the first invitation to attend a “national summit” on advocacy in February 1997, to a refinement of needs, requirements and directions in July 1997, to response to a draft IP2 Implementation Plan in January 1998; all before the release of IP2. The thirty-one objectives contained in the plan came directly from the Affiliate Assembly, which, during the course of these meetings over eighteen months discussed, and refined the issues, put them in priority order, and created the objectives. The Affiliate Assembly affirmed that this plan met their needs and responded to their requests. The Affiliate Assembly’s role in implementation will be covered later in this article.

Planning – the Model

The thirty-one objectives in the IP2 Implementation Plan are strategic, accountable, consistent, and carefully measured. The IP2 Plan used an advocacy-planning model developed by two Canadians, Pat Cavill and Ken Haycock. Ken was also the AASL president during the final writing and release of IP2. This Advocacy Plan was used to ensure that we:

- created a common agenda with school and education decision-makers,
- delivered the right message to the right person,
- lobbied effectively in a different political and economic environment,
- developed community partnerships and collaboration.

The 5-step Advocacy Plan used is available as a planning tool on the AASL website. It consists of the following steps:

1. Objective – have a clear, measurable objective.
2. Target Group(s) – know who is important in achieving your objective.
3. Strategies
   - What? the obstacles
   - When?
   - Where?
   - Who?
   - How? the message
4. Communication Tools – never start your planning with the communication tool.
5. Evaluation – make it integral to the planning process from the outset.

These steps were used to define the thirty-one objectives for the IP2 Implementation Plan. It is very important to remember that the message always stayed the same: Information Power: Because Student Achievement Is The Bottom Line. The objectives followed a timeline continuum; some were simple to achieve, some were very complex. Pat Cavill led the Taskforce and Affiliate Assembly through a process to ensure that all our objectives were SMART – Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, with Responsibilities stated and Timed. Particular attention was paid to the target groups – who do we need to influence to achieve change? Many times we look at broadcasting information rather than at identifying a small influential group to hear our message. Each target group had to have decision-makers identified and the following questions answered:

- What is the environment in which the decision-maker is working?
- What is the decision-maker’s position on our issue?
- Why is it what it is?
- How does our issue look from the decision-maker’s perspective?
- What other priorities and pressures are having an impact on the decision-maker right now?

As stated above, too often we jump immediately to step 4 – the communication tools. The Taskforce worked very hard to start at step 1, the objective, for each target group.

Implementation

The clearest way to explain the multifaceted IP2 Implementation Plan, including its target groups and activities, is to look at the thirty-one objectives and how and by whom they have been implemented. The AASL Board, Affiliate Assembly, committees, and staff were critical to the successful implementation. They set the direction, provided the
workforce, allocated the funds, and incorporated the implementation into the work of every aspect of the organization. This congruence in planning, coordination of effort and focused assignment of resources by the Association, provided consistent and effective leadership in advocating excellence, facilitating change and building leaders.

Implementation – AASL State Affiliates Critical

Much of the critical work of the implementation was completed by the state affiliates. The state affiliates are the direct link to the building-level school library media specialist. Each state was asked to appoint a State Coordinator to be trained and to coordinate a State Plan for implementation. Training sessions were held for State Coordinators and state school library organization presidents at the American Library Association (ALA) annual conferences and midwinter meetings. In addition, an AASL State Coordinator Institute in a retreat setting was held for three consecutive summers to train the coordinators in the advocacy model further.

State affiliates had the primary responsibility for the following groups: building-level school library media specialists, state departments of education, state governments, state education associations, state library associations, and state technology associations. The importance of all school library media specialists belonging to state and national school library organizations during this critical implementation period was emphasized. The importance of having all school library media specialists informed and helping to reach all target groups was critical. The success of this implementation depended on the State Plans.

The Information Power Implementation Plan – Objectives & Implementation

All of the thirty-one objectives are important, and most were achieved. Below are some of the objectives, which were critical to the success of the IP2 implementation. The objectives have been shortened and combined and are listed with clarifications and results,

• To work with ALA in promoting the interests of school library media specialists.

  Insuring that the larger library community within ALA with similar interests and activities were aware of IP2 and its basic principals and standards.

• To ensure that AASL members are aware of the new Information Power through Knowledge Quest: the Journal of the American Association of School Librarians

As the most effective communication tool for AASL members, Knowledge Quest has been used extensively and effectively as a vehicle for conveying information to members and subscribers. Readers were made aware of the importance of the new national guidelines, the initial launch of IP2, and the variety of tools available for implementation. A QK regular issue, an ongoing column, and feature articles were devoted to the implementation of IP2.

• To create promotional items for sale and to give away.

Various items were created including banners, bookmarks, folders, buttons (Ask me about the Bottom Line), etc. Anecdotally, members would have liked to have had more promotional items available for sale. The message “Because Student Achievement is the Bottom Line” has been used on buttons and folders, and has also been used to describe conference programs in individual states. The slogan seems to contain a compelling message that is being frequently and consistently used in advocacy training programs and introductions to IP2.

This particular message was selected because of its appeal to many of the different education stakeholder groups. No one can argue the importance of student achievement. The message unites school library media specialists and educators in a common goal. “The bottom line” is AASL’s acknowledgment that education decision-makers have a complex agenda and that school library media programs are part of the solution.

A vendor donation allowed the production and mailing of a brochure, “The Principal’s Manual for your School Library Media Program” to 84,000 principals in May 2000 as well as to 9,000 plus AASL members. It was also made available via PDF file on the AASL website. The brochure was a popular item.

• To create a visual identity and easily recognizable and symbolic logo. To create transferable visual products for AASL members to assist them in implementing and advocating for Information Power.

A number of objectives dealt with visual products for school library media specialists. Having a visual identity that clearly represented the tenets in IP2 was considered paramount. School library media specialists needed to be informed and have the tools necessary to effectively implement IP2. Tools which were promoted and made available included videos demonstrating exemplary programs for specific target audiences, a resource guide for state coordinators, and a free teleconference.

Using teleconferencing technology to bring IP2 to school library media specialists across the country, a teleconference on implementing and advocating for IP2 was held shortly after the launch in November 1998. The teleconference was a huge success with over 700 participants.

The teleconference was a live, interactive presentation with opportunities for questions and answers. The content included the process leading to the new guidelines and standards, what they said, what the implications were for school library media programs and school library media specialists, and what the long term plans were for implementing them into schools and curricula.

An emphasis was placed on the evolving role of the school library media specialist and their role in being a catalyst for applying all media and technology to facilitate learning. Books and reading, information technologies and problem solving, high tech and high touch, are woven throughout the revised Information Power. This was a major theme of the teleconference along with how the building-level school library media specialist can use the document to make a difference in her or his school.

• To develop a basic implementation kit for the building-level school library media specialist.

This basic implementation kit Power Point presentation was designed for use by the building-level school library media specialist to introduce the standards and principles of IP2 to an audience of parents, teachers, and/or building administrators. Placing the standards and principles in the context of building-level programming helped to create advocates for the school library media program. An initial presentation was created by the Implementation Taskforce, followed by a new licensed presentation on the AASL website.

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To stage a high profile launch of *Information Power* at the ALA annual conference in Washington, DC in June 1998.

There was a “high profile” launch of *IP2* at the ALA Conference in Washington, DC. The celebration opened with a video with students explaining “Why I love the library!” There were students in attendance to share in the celebration and bring in banners representing the nine *IP2* learning standards. The book *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* was “unveiled” at the launch. The process of producing the new standards was explained. And the Task Force and writers of *IP2* were honored. The audience seated at round tables then discussed the nine new learning standards and how they would begin implementing them at the building level.

To provide orientation/training and support to *Information Power* coordinators.

To provide as much information and support for state coordinators as possible, for each of the first three years of *IP2* Implementation, a pre-conference day was held for new (or changing) state coordinators. The program outline remained essentially the same, with annual updates and some change of presenters. In addition three intensive training retreat opportunities were provided for state coordinators. Most of the state affiliates attended one or more of these training sessions. Also, a State Planning Guide, modeled on the National Implementation Plan, was created. Thirty-six states attended training and twenty-two states filed State Plans with AASL.

To profile major teacher and library associations to enable productive collaboration and encounters and to develop an action plan with specific, measurable, active, relevant and timed [S.M.A.R.T.] objectives to enable work with each teacher and library association.

This extremely important objective moved the focus to the wider educational community. Much time and effort was devoted to these objectives with targeted key stakeholders. The objective was to get information on a wide variety of associations in order to assess the potential for collaboration and their influence in implementing *IP2*. In order to do this, a template was created to collect the information, and members of the Task Force were assigned various associations to profile. The template, which is in the *National Plan*, was an efficient and effective way to record information. Most of the information was gathered from web sites.

Over 75 associations were identified and researched. 25 associations representing school principals, curriculum, school boards, teachers, technology, evaluation, higher education, reading, and teacher unions were deemed the most influential regarding the successful implementation of *IP2*.

For each of these associations, it was determined whether collaboration would be a primary target and what form that collaboration would take: a program on *IP2* (targeted to their theme) at their national conference, or a journal article, customized to their subject area or interest. AASL members who were also members of these associations were identified as the critical, credible link to them. Journal articles were written for the majority of these organizations.

The top six Associations on whom the most effort was concentrated, with both a conference presentation proposal, a journal article, and or other identified needs, were:

- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) – a principal’s brochure was produced with this audience in mind.
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) – a March 1999 issue of their *Bulletin* was devoted to *IP2* issues with guest editor Ken Haycock.
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- National School Boards Association (NSBA)
- International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) – Successful Joint Conference in Birmingham, AL in November 1999
- International Reading Association (IRA)
- To ensure that AASL members who attend conferences are aware of *IP2* by 12/2000.

Recognizing that most of the leadership for implementation comes from those who attend the national conferences, programs explaining and promoting *IP2* were held at ALA and AASL conferences for the five years of implementation.

To review, revise and develop AASL policy statements based on the principles outlined in *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*.

The AASL policies reflect best practices and are used by school library media specialists in a variety of ways. Therefore ensuring alignment was vital to the implementation of *IP2*.

To have 25% of each state’s library media specialists attend an *Information Power* session (national, regional, state, local) in the first two years that it is offered.

Though it is tempting to say 100% of school library media specialist, both members and non-members, will be at the awareness level; 25% was more realistic as a national target. Reports filed indicated that this target was surpassed in the first two years. The intent of this objective was to provide individual states with a target for their own school library media specialists’ attendance at state and local level *IP2* sessions.

To gather and disseminate research to support *Information Power*. To develop a template, both print and electronic, for affiliates to report research data.

Insuring that research based on *Information Power* is made available in a consistent way and easily accessible to the field, the AASL Information Power Action Research Project, was developed and sponsored by the AASL Research and Statistics Committee and funded by a grant. The purpose of the project is to assist the building-level school library media specialist to collect data supporting the premise that school library media programs contribute to academic achievement. The web-based project consists of student Power Reader and Power Learner surveys, an electronic data collection instrument and individual survey results. This project is available on the AASL website.
State Affiliate Plans

One of the major keys to the implementation of IP2 was the role of the state affiliate organizations and their state coordinators. As can be seen from the national objectives and implementation the state coordinators were instrumental to the success of the Implementation Plan. Creating awareness by all building level school library media specialists, both members and non-members in such a large and diversified country, was a monumental task. Modeling the advocacy training the state coordinators received, each state affiliate organization was asked to create their own State Plan. Most state affiliate organizations, led by their state coordinators, held retreat-type-planning sessions to develop this plan. The plans were modeled on the AASL National Plan. Following are excerpts from one state’s plan.

A State Plan

The New York State Library Association/School Library Media Section (NYLA/SLMS) following the launch of IP2 in the summer of 1998 held a two-day retreat to create a state plan. This retreat included NYLA/SLMS leaders, school library system directors, and local school library association leaders. Considering local and state educational requirements in New York State, it was decided to incorporate the implementation of IP2 with the New York State Learning Standards, which all students must achieve. Therefore the title and emphasis of the state plan was “Achieving the NYS Learning Standards by implementing Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning.”

The following goals were established for the New York State plan:

• To provide an awareness of IP2 Information Literacy Skills to 100% of the NYS school library media specialists by December 1999.
• To provide opportunities to learn about practical applications of IP2 to 100% of school library media specialist by June 2000.
• To reach and involve key target groups (teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, community organizations, pre-service library media specialists and pre-service teachers) over a multyear period in collaborative learning opportunities relating to the role and function of school library media programs in the achievement of information literacy by all New York State students.

• To plan activities using technology to deliver staff development and advocacy activities at the national, state, regional and local level.
• To provide ongoing, quality continuing education opportunities for practicing school library media specialists through a variety of channels, and to encourage coursework for future SLMS that encompasses the elements in IP2.
• To continually promote involvement of school library media specialists at the district and building level in the development of curriculum, course units, assessment planning, testing, and staff development on the use of information literacy skills in teaching and learning activities.

This plan was able to have as a goal a 100% awareness level due to the cooperative efforts of the State Coordinator, chair of the AASL Implementation Committee (a New Yorker), the statewide School Library System Directors, and local affiliate leaders. Through a turnkey training model and materials developed for this implementation, all school library media specialists received awareness training.

Conclusion:

The implementation of Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning was very successful and is ongoing. The use of an advocacy-training model with designated State Coordinators is very powerful. In most schools there is only one school library media specialist. Therefore members look to the national association to provide quality materials, including PowerPoint slide shows, handouts, promotional materials, and training manuals to implement national programs. Given these tools, members are willing to go forward to promote common ideals. Of course, one of the keys, is a viable message - either contain in a new standards document, ie IP2 or a promotional campaign, such as @your library™.

Bibliography

Much of the information in this article are direct statements from the following AASL documents and articles. AASL is a division of the American Library Association.

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American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, A Planning Guide for Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning, with School Library Media Program Assessment Rubric for the 21st Century (Chicago; AASL, 1999)


“Mid-Course Evaluation of the National Implementation Plan for Information Power” presented by Carolyn Giambra, chair of the Information Power Taskforce (AASL Board of Directors, 2000)

Resources listed below and additional resources are available on the AASL official website. <http://www.ala.org/AASL>


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