

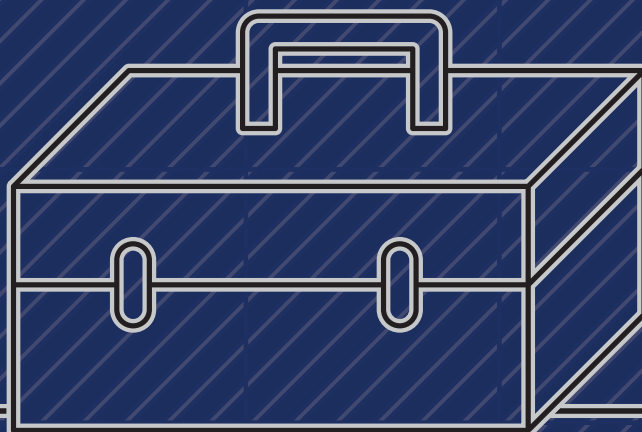


TRANSFORMING LEARNING  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

# TOOLKIT

FOR PROMOTING SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS

*Messages, ideas, and strategies for communicating the value of school library programs and school librarians in the 21st century*



Membership in the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) helps fund advocacy, leadership, professional development, and standards and guidelines initiatives for school librarians nationally. To join AASL and support your profession, visit [www.ala.org/aasl/join](http://www.ala.org/aasl/join).

Published by:

**American Association of School Librarians**

a division of the American Library Association

50 E. Huron St.

Chicago, Illinois 60611-2795

Download a PDF version of this toolkit at [www.ala.org/aasl/toolkits/promoting](http://www.ala.org/aasl/toolkits/promoting).

Copyright ©2015 by the American Library Association. All rights reserved except those that may be granted by Sections 107 and 108 of the Copyright Revision Act of 1976. Printed in the United States of America.

# Contents

*Preface* v

*Acknowledgments* vii

*Introduction* ix

## **Leadership 1**

*Practical Suggestions* 2

*What Works* 5

*What Hinders* 6

*Success Stories* 7

*Videos* 10

## **Advocacy 11**

*Practical Suggestions* 13

*Advocacy Planning* 15

*Success Stories* 17

*Tough Questions* 22

## **Communication 25**

*Practical Suggestions* 27

*Success Stories* 30

*Key Messages* 32

## **Learning4Life 35**

*Introduction* 35

*Background* 36

*Implementation Plan* 37

*Practical Suggestions* 38

*L4L Tools* 39

***Tools and Resources* 41**

***Delving Deeper* 51**

***Calendar of Opportunities* 59**

***Too Good Not to Share* 67**

# Preface

**EVERY ONE OF** us knows the important role that advocacy plays in the world. Successful advocates for organizations and programs can turn stakeholders into partners who act for and with the advocates. In the process, stakeholders' passive support is transformed into educated action, and these stakeholders become advocates, too.

Two organizations local to me in Paducah, Kentucky, come to mind. I know exactly what services they provide and what they want from me as a citizen and a partner. To support their work with children and women who are survivors of abuse, the Child Watch Counseling & Advocacy Center and the Merryman House Domestic Crisis Center need volunteer assistance and monetary donations to help provide safe places and comprehensive support for victims. Theirs are simple and clear messages promoting vital services. So why is it that we as school librarians have such a hard time advocating for the vital service that we provide students and turning our passive stakeholders into active partners?

One reason that advocacy is difficult for some is that it can feel self-serving to advocate for our programs because we fear we'll be seen as advocating for our jobs. Advocacy is an ongoing process, and not something you engage in only when your job is threatened. An effective advocate is always observing the community and responding by designing and promoting programs and services that will meet its needs. Focus your advocacy on the unique benefits you offer students and teachers, and the rest will come along naturally.

The development of this toolkit aligns perfectly with AASL's [Strategic Plan](#), approved by the Board of Directors in June 2014, and helps to meet our goal of becoming a stronger voice for school librarians and the profession. That voice is strengthened when school library professionals across the country can present to stakeholders a consistent message about how school librarians and school library programs transform learning.

This toolkit will help you get started effectively promoting what you and your program offer students and your community. Published as a web-based toolkit, many of the tools and resources referenced within are hyperlinked and freely accessible online. In addition, this toolkit includes an [interactive component](#), and we hope you will contribute your own resources, tools, templates, and samples. Use this venue to share your advocacy success stories with your peers and help inspire and strengthen one another.

We know that we provide a vital service to our students, teaching them lifelong skills that propel them into their futures as successful adults, but we have to reach out and demonstrate that fact! We have to stop sitting back, hoping that someone will notice! I know promoting our work and our school library programs is a stretch for some of us, but if we don't stand up for those kids, who will?

Terri Grief  
AASL President, 2014–2015

# Acknowledgments

**AASL ACKNOWLEDGES AND** wishes to thank the following groups for their contribution to this promotional toolkit.

## **Toolkit for School Library Programs Revision Task Force, 2012–2013**

Jami L. Jones, Chair  
Ellen Gustafson  
Sally Mays  
Kathleen R. Roberts  
Jill B. Whitson  
Board Liaison: Sara Kelly Johns  
Staff Liaison: Stephanie Book

## **Toolkit for School Library Programs Revision Task Force, 2013–2014**

Sally Mays, Chair  
Ellen Gustafson  
Charles Leckenby  
Christine Schein  
Jill B. Whitson  
Board Liaison: Susan M. Nickel  
Staff Liaison: Stephanie Book

## **Standards and Guidelines Implementation Committee, 2013–2014**

Nina M. Kemps, Chair

JoAnn Conlon

Mary Fran Daley

Judy Anne Deichman

Fran Glick

Jennifer Helfrich

Susan Kowalski

Michelle Marhefka

Linda McSweeney

Dayna Jill Mellberg

Amy Rominiecki

Board Liaison: Catherine Marriott

Staff Liaison: Jennifer Habley

## **2015 Emerging Leaders–Team A**

Christina Cucci

Holly Van Puymbroeck

Johana Orellana

Melissa Iamónico

Shannon Harris

AASL Member Guide: Kathleen R. Roberts

Staff Liaison: Stephanie Book



# Introduction

**WHETHER YOU ARE** a department of one, or part of a department of many, now is a tough time to be a school librarian. Budgets are being cut; from one year to the next, many school librarians feel as though their positions may be on the chopping block, and standards are constantly changing. At this time, more than ever, advocating for yourself and your program is critically important.

The sections of this toolkit are organized similarly and may be read in any order using the top-level navigation or embedded hyperlinks to other sections of the toolkit. There are three main sections to this toolkit, supported by webliographies of further tools and information. Let's take a look at some of the things you will find.

The “Tools & Resources” section of this toolkit will provide a list of web-based presentation tools. Among these resources are AASL's annual lists of the [Best Websites and Apps for Teaching & Learning](#). Incorporating these into your program—into your teaching or into your advocacy for the program—can benefit your students and show stakeholders that you are current with the ever-changing world of technology. Both benefits will have a positive impact on your role as a technology leader.

When selecting communication tools to help you promote your program, consult the chart under “Communication and Presentations” in the “Tools & Resources” section as you choose your medium. Keeping in mind your audience size and stakeholder needs will help you deliver your message in an efficient and effective manner. The chart was adapted from Ann M. Martin's book [Empowering Leadership: Developing Behaviors for Success](#); read it to learn more ways to grow as a leader. For more tips on promoting your program through written and oral communications, visit the “Communication” section of this toolkit.

The “Delving Deeper” section of the toolkit contains links to important research reports, articles, books, videos, and podcasts that will help you keep current

*Written by the 2015 ALA  
Emerging Leaders–Team A*

with trends and hot topics in school librarianship and expand your resource toolbox. As a bonus, you can use your new knowledge to guide other school librarians as they also develop their leadership skills and advocacy strategies.

Looking through the stories and videos throughout the toolkit will no doubt inspire and guide you as you enhance your advocacy efforts and your school library program. You may find an idea you are willing to try, a quote to use in your elevator speech, or simply validation that you are on the right track, and are (or are becoming) a leader in your own building/district/community.

Read on for tips and tools you can use with various stakeholders. These practical suggestions will help you take the next steps as you cement your role as a leader in your school, turn stakeholders into advocates, and help students prepare for their futures as lifelong learners!

Explore. Choose your own adventure, and discover the leader and advocate within you!

# Leadership

- ⇒ Practical Suggestions
- ⇒ What Works
- ⇒ What Hinders
- ⇒ Success Stories
- ⇒ Videos

**MANY OF US** are natural leaders. We may take for granted skills and dispositions that led us to become librarians—or not even realize that we have these strengths. This section will help you recognize and utilize your existing skill set as a leader to better promote your school library program and to increase student engagement by increasing your presence in the school community.

When working in a team environment such as a school, promoting ourselves can be uncomfortable because of concerns we won't be viewed as team players. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Advocating for yourself and your program can make you more of a team player by ensuring that all of your stakeholders know exactly what you and the library can do and all of the services you offer.

When thinking about leadership and advocacy, it is important to recognize and identify the various stakeholders who have a vested interest in the school library program. These obviously include students, school staff, administrators, and parents, but thinking deeper is essential. Do student teachers work frequently in your school? Do substitutes float in your building? The more people you can reach with your promotion the better off (and stronger) your program will be. For more on reaching your stakeholders, visit the “Advocacy” section of this toolkit.

*Written by the 2015 ALA  
Emerging Leaders–Team A*

Does being a leader seem scary or overwhelming or too much responsibility? If you are just beginning to develop your leadership abilities, try to move forward in small steps that highlight and promote your school library program. These small steps will add up and allow you as a professional to move into a leadership role that is comfortable for you. Nothing is one size fits all, and what works for one librarian or school may not be appropriate for you or your environment. But good ideas can often be tailored to fit your needs, and small steps can lead to a big change. Making even one enhancement to the promotion of your library program can have a big impact.

As you read this section, you will be provided with stories that may inspire you, and tips and tools to help you in your leadership growth.

## **Practical Suggestions**

Taking stock of your stakeholders at the building, district, community, and state levels can help you develop a toolkit of strategies and activities, enabling you to promote your program and positively impact student learning while developing your role as a leader in your school and community. These practical suggestions help you quickly and efficiently communicate the highlights or, more importantly, the day-to-day strengths of your program. Suggestions can be adapted to be appropriate for your individual library and school environment. Making sure your school library program is visible and relevant to your school and the larger community is a surefire way to support your leadership status, and can lead to increased involvement in school and district decision-making that positively affects students.

***Building Level:*** Interactions in your own building can have the greatest impact. This is the community in which you most frequently interact with other educators and most directly affect individual students. The colleagues you see each day are your closest allies, and they can help you to immediately enhance your program.

- Foster relationships with your colleagues (listen and respond).
- Attend grade-level or department meetings monthly.
- Present new trends at faculty meetings.
- Collaborate with classroom teachers on inquiry projects.
- Be an active member on committees that make a difference in students' learning (technology, curriculum, intellectual freedom, and intellectual property rights).
- Become a first-responder for technology questions and lead professional development in technology for teachers and other staff.
- Offer to hold professional development meetings, staff meetings, and other meetings in the school library so that materials and tools are visible.
- Share examples of your program's direct impact on student achievement—ideally, through monthly meetings with your principal and e-mail blasts to teachers and other staff.

- Develop goals and action plans, and show them to administrators.
- Host lunch, brunch, or breakfast browsing sessions for teachers and staff before new books are shelved for student access.
- Create a presence for your school library on social media. Post regularly for parents, students (if applicable), and staff members to update them on developments and acquisitions.

***District Level:*** Your district includes stakeholders with whom you may not interact frequently. However, your library “brand” must be evident to them at all times. These stakeholders typically ration funding from the district reserve. To continue to support your school library, they must be aware of your program’s importance to students’ learning.

- Present at Board of Education Meetings.
- Introduce yourself to district public-relations staff and ask what you can do at a district level to help promote school libraries to parents.
- Publish an article for the district website or blog.
- Maintain a visible website for your school library and promote it frequently.
- Present new trends and services at Parent Teacher Organization meetings.
- Meet quarterly with district school librarians to share ideas, issues, strategies, and tools—and make sure the meetings and accomplishments are visible at the district level.
- Mentor new school librarians in your district.
- Invite school board members to your library events (with supervisor permission).
- Be present and participate in district-level activities, even if they are not strictly library related. (Examples include attending curriculum writing meetings, sitting on district-wide committees, presenting at Board of Education meetings, and attending or presenting at parent forums.)
- Find district-level committees you can be a part of (literacy, curriculum, technology, policy, etc.)

***Community Level:*** The community in which you work may be considerably different from the community where you reside. Remember that your aim is to reach the taxpayers and business leaders or future employers in your school’s community and effect change there. Garnering support from your school’s community members helps you extend your reach.

- Introduce yourself to the public librarians and library director; establish a rapport and partnership.
- Plan quarterly meetings with the local public librarians to cross-promote both your programs and theirs, and to coordinate curriculum-based collaborations.

- Invite the public librarians into your school for summer reading or other literary and literacy events.
- Consider hosting a One Book One Community event for students, staff, parents, and other community members.
- Invite community members and local leaders to come to the school library and read to students.
- Identify community organizations and businesses in your local area that share some of your program's goals; partner with these organizations and businesses for programs, projects, and cross-promotion.
- Write articles for your local newspaper or local magazine to publicize your school library program's impact on student achievement.
- Use social-media tools to keep abreast of school library trends and to network with your community.
- Commit to memory a one-minute prepared elevator speech about school library programs' importance for academic achievement in every school and look for opportunities to deliver the speech.
- Reach out to the local affiliate chapter of your state professional organization. If one doesn't exist, then consider establishing a chapter.
- Connect with other school libraries or districts in your area to expand professional learning communities. Consider partnering for shared professional development opportunities.

**State Level:** The state level is deeply important because this is where library policies and budgets are developed. Many state representatives are slashing school library funding, a situation that is a tragedy for students. You can help enact change by ensuring your state-level stakeholders know the positive impact that school libraries have on teaching and learning.

- With your local public librarian, schedule a visit to your [state legislator](#). Your partnership will illustrate and emphasize the unique values and services each program brings to the community.
- Become an active member in your statewide professional school librarian association. Attend board meetings and offer to serve on committees, and connect with your AASL [Affiliate Assembly](#) representative.
- Attend your state school librarian conference and consider submitting a proposal to present a session at a future conference.
- Present on AASL tools and resources to stakeholders at a state or national education conference. Non-school library audiences may include administrators, classroom teachers, educational technology specialists, reading specialists, or public and academic librarians, etc.)
- Write an article for your state library association's print or electronic publication.

- Mentor school library students from your state university or your alma mater for a semester.
- Attend a national library conference to gain a broader perspective of nationwide library developments. The [AASL National Conference](#) or the American Library Association (ALA) [Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference](#) are good places to start.
- Invite local officials into your library (with supervisor permission) to participate in a school-wide literacy event, such as reading to students, or to watch a program you are hosting.

## What Works?

When we think of leadership and school librarians, a myriad of words come to mind. We asked several school librarians from around the country, “What three words would you use to describe effective leaders?” The most repeated words were: innovative, visionary and dedicated. Other words that emerged, in no particular order, were: visible, thoughtful, positive, adaptable, patient, perseverance, purpose, drive, cooperative, flexible, organized, and consistent.

These characteristics are applicable to leaders in all fields. However, the qualities these words represent definitely pertain to school librarians because the characteristics are needed to see the path forward and to organize people and resources to move along that path.

We also asked school librarians: “What is the best strategy you use to promote the school library program?” A few of the responses are bulleted below, and in them you will see that innovation, vision, and dedication are evident.

- “Approach teachers or collaborative teams directly with an idea they can use immediately. Once that works, have the conversation with them about what else the library can do for them.”
- “Communicate to the parents through the website, PTO events, and library-sponsored events.”
- “Strive to offer an engaging, current collection, and welcome students as fellow readers. Aspire to follow [S. R.] Ranganathan’s Five Laws of Library Science.”
- “Collaboration with teachers, students, and parents.”
- “I connect with our learning community through our weekly communications by linking directly to posts on my blog that promote upcoming events, highlight instruction, and provide valuable resources to cultivate multiple literacies.” <<https://sites.google.com/site/kaechelelibrary>>
- “Twitter and displays.”
- “Visual proof of finished projects, student engagement, [improved] test scores, etc. Seeing is believing.”

- “The morning announcements! Teachers often overlook e-mails, but when their students hear about fun things on the announcements, [teachers] respond!”
- “Need to ensure you are at the table at school leadership team meetings even if not a formal member.”
- “Effective leadership requires the support of others. Find teachers and parents who buy into the program and have them spread the word about the importance and success of library programs.”
- “In order to be a successful leader, I believe it is important for the school librarian to align his/her program (AASL standards as infrastructure) with the school’s mission and vision. I strongly believe that our role as leaders is to build capacity and maximize impact within all those we serve: students, teachers, staff, administration, parents, and colleagues. The scope of our job is HUGE, and the reality of our daily schedule is a packed instructional schedule, a tsunami of circulating books to be processed, a massive to-do list, and an e-mail box filled with questions or ideas that need to be addressed NOW. Combine that with the constant hum of open access, and it becomes abundantly clear the most effective model of school library leadership is one that models exemplary techniques and lessons with the intention of empowering others to integrate them in their own settings.”
- “Collaboration, communication, and staying positive are the keys to effective leadership.”
- “The more visible we can be in our buildings and county the better!”
- “I have lots of open media time and lots of clubs of interest to kids during the lunch hour. I send e-mails often to staff about what students are working on in the school library. I am the sponsor of the Student Government Association and am with all students each week. I think diversity and fun things bring kids into the school library for leisure. A welcoming staff is also key in getting kids to feel welcome coming to the school library.”
- “I go to all weekly grade-level planning meetings and am a member of the Leadership Team.”

### **What Hinders?**

It is not always easy to implement innovation and share your vision. Dedication is necessary when encountering challenges that are widely felt by school library staff. Below is a sampling of nationwide responses regarding leadership challenges.

- “Being seen as a leader is a challenge. I’m in a school where the librarian for ten years prior did not do anything in the school, so it’s a culture shift for the staff here to see the library as a collaborative teaching environment.”



- “Misunderstanding of our role, and the importance of our contributions.”
- “Shrinking budgets and staff; I have lost my assistants in two buildings.”
- “Competing interests for time and funds.”
- “My greatest challenges are time, and managing all the moving parts that must correlate in an elementary school culture.”
- “Time. Students are so busy through the day, and the current schedules don’t allow for regular library time.”
- “Ignorance. If someone has never worked in our position they really have no idea what we do every day. We need to educate everyone!”
- “Time and ability to utilize funds for technology.”
- “Since I am the only one in the school running this whole school program, I am often pulled in many, many directions—but I do love that!”
- “Not enough time for all of the fun things that I’d like to do!”

## Success Stories

Being a school librarian is challenging and fun, and requires several leadership qualities. Below are written narratives and videos from school librarians telling their leadership stories as they relate to promoting the school library program at the librarians’ schools. Enjoy!



*Stephanie Rosalia  
Library Media Specialist  
PS/MS 105Q  
The Bay School, Queens, New York*

### First Impressions

“My favorite [anecdote] is how I introduced myself to the staff in my first job. After not ever having a certified [school librarian] in the building, I was keenly aware that no one knew what it was that I did, why, or how I did it. I also wanted to head off the inevitable stereotype of the librarian as the warehouse of books and duster of shelves. So I didn’t introduce myself as the new librarian. I told them I was the new Information Literacy teacher, which, quite naturally, led to many questions about what that was. When, in confusion, they would ask me how, then, could the kids use the library, I explained that they had to bring the kids and work with me on a lesson relevant to the content they were teaching. I told them it would be great—TWO teachers instead of one—and I taught the process so they didn’t have to! Framed in the language of being helpful and not just ‘something else’ to do within their overburdened schedules, my program was welcomed and utilized.”



*Sue Kowalski, School Librarian  
East Syracuse Minoa School District  
New York*

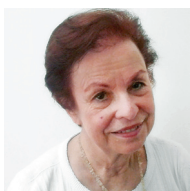
### Tips Worth Their Weight in Gold

“An effective school library must balance instruction, programming, and service. With limited staff and the logistics of scheduling and budgets that don’t always support our wish lists, it’s tempting to go to the dark side and focus on what we can’t get done given our current state of affairs. Focusing on the negative like this will

drive away customers and negate any PR we are doing. We must instead take the current state of affairs as a way to showcase our role as instructional and program leaders who can and will maximize the opportunities we've been given.

I found some of these to be 'worth their weight in gold' as I ruthlessly advocate for our program:

- Provide monthly (or anything more than just yearly) reports to the Board of Ed and your administrators. The reports should be simple, one page, and/or multimedia. Archive the reports on the school library website and in your e-mail signature include a link to the page. In the report be sure to give a shout-out to your teaching partners and send them a copy. Some say this might be viewed as bragging or tooting my own horn. I know if I don't get the info out, no one else will, so I go for it!
- Apply for grants—big ones, little ones, partial ones, fully funded ones. Yes, it takes a little time, and you won't always be successful, but go for it and keep all of your materials stored electronically. Save yourself from duplicating the work on your next application. Share your victories and your losses.
- Take on leadership positions related to libraries and share what you are doing, where you've been, and what impact you are having. In your monthly reports, share your involvement in these leadership roles.
- Empower student leadership—at ANY age students can help, and want to, and bring a range of talents to the table. Find formal and informal ways to have them provide the leadership and input your program needs. We have a student work force called the 'iStaff,' and 60+ members of this team work during study halls to provide instructional support, manage facility issues, coordinate programs, and play a key role in distribution and set up of our shared mobile technology.
- LET IT GO... kids won't care about your MARC records, perfectly organized shelves, award-winning displays, or meticulous files. Prioritize! Do the job you were hired for and let go of what doesn't align."



*Hilda Weisburg*  
school library author/editor/speaker,  
Aberdeen, NJ

### ***Elevator Talks with Strangers***

"I never miss an opportunity to share with people—very often perfect strangers—the value of school librarians. The opening depends on whatever the other person has said, such as the 'Internet makes everything easy,' or 'It's so dangerous for kids when they are online,' or 'Kids don't read as much as they used to.' I respond to the statement, pointing out the connection to school librarians and their role. I then follow the format of an 'elevator speech' by making a big statement: 'No one in the school system does for kids what a school librarian does.' Also, 'eliminating



*Ann M. Martin  
Educational Specialist (Retired)  
Library Services  
Henrico County Public Schools, Virginia*

a teacher unfortunately leads to larger class sizes, but eliminating a school librarian usually means eliminating a whole program, which has disastrous effects on student learning and achievement.’ Does it work? I have no idea. I know I have engaged interest and raised awareness. It’s the way trees [proliferate]. If you scatter enough seeds, some of them will germinate.”

### **Foster Beneficial Relationships**

“Several years ago I left a position at the building level to become a district supervisor of a library program that has grown to seventy schools. One Saturday I was at the car wash when I saw my former superintendent of schools. As we talked, he gave me some extremely valuable advice. I was trying to figure out a way to get more money for library resources. He told me to ‘follow the money.’ We had a conversation about recent legislation that provided funds to assist districts to create a mandated pre-K program. Following our conversation, I reached out to my counterpart in Federal Programs with data proving that school library programs raise student literacy skills. A mutually beneficial relationship evolved from this partnership. The librarians developed a literacy-rich program based on a core collection of pre-K titles funded by Federal Programs. Each year the librarians receive funding to replace all lost books. In addition, this partnership resulted in close to \$1,000,000 to refurbish and update the school library collections. Building relationships continues to benefit my school libraries. This year over \$40,000 was provided to twenty-one elementary libraries to replenish collections.”



*Sandy Brand  
Library Media Specialist  
Liberty Middle School  
Madison, Alabama*

### **Lead and Be Led**

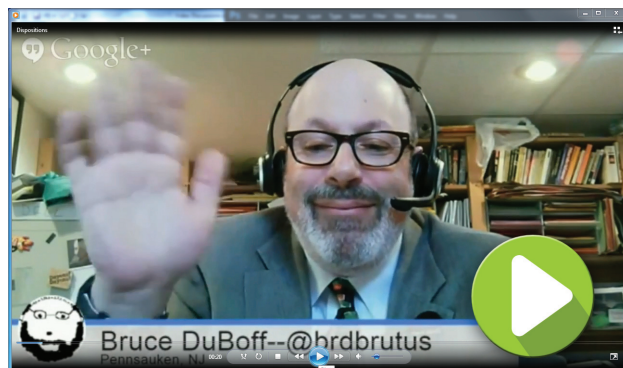
“For me, leadership as a [school librarian] also means being involved outside of the walls of my school. Among other things, I currently serve on the board of our state school library association, and am a co-founder of our local Edcamp. These activities allow me to represent my school, share my knowledge, and sharpen my own professional saw. When I am faced with struggles or issues, chances are that I can find another [school librarian] who has already walked that same path and is willing to provide guidance. In other situations, I can be the one who helps a fellow [school librarian] as they search to find solutions to a particular problem. I am thankful for my opportunities to step up to leadership, and also for my colleagues who do the same.”

## Video Discussions on Leadership

Consider your perspective on leadership as participants discuss characteristics and issues for school libraries through video interviews. Leadership topics include Dispositions, Communication, and Visions of the Future.

### *Dispositions*

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/promo/dispositions>



### *Communication*

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/promo/coms>



### *Visions of the Future*

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/promo/visions>



# Advocacy

- ⇒ Practical Suggestions
- ⇒ Advocay Planning
- ⇒ Success Stories
- ⇒ Tough Questions

AASL [defines advocacy](#) as the:

on-going process of building partnerships so that others will act for and with you, turning passive support into educated action for the library program.

[Advocacy] begins with a vision and a plan for the library program that is then matched to the agenda and priorities of stakeholders.

Advocacy is a slow but steady course of action largely determined by the quality of the relationships you create with students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. The goal? To improve the school library program's perceived value and ability to serve its constituent groups. Your advocacy efforts should be guided by a carefully crafted advocacy plan based on an evaluation of your program and of your stakeholders' needs and wants. However, your everyday interactions are the foundation for your advocacy plan. Start each day with this in mind.

Advocacy is an ongoing process of building partnerships so that others will act for and with you. Communications that are focused on gaining support for the school library's vision and goals are considered advocacy. Marketing is a planned

*Toolkit for School Library  
Programs Revision Task Force,  
2012–2013*

and sustained communications process that involves listening to and assessing the customer's needs, and then selecting and promoting resources and services to meet those needs. In contrast, public relations efforts consist of one-way communications intended to get your message across to a selected audience. Both marketing and public relations are important forms of communication that will be effective as you advocate for your program. Plan on using both types of communication.

An effective advocacy campaign requires planning, identifying target groups, strategizing, and assessing the final outcome of the campaign, but the first step of this process begins with building partnerships by reaching out to members of key constituency groups.

### **Advocacy Begins with Reaching Out**

Promoting your library program means making a conscious proactive effort to reach out and show that the school library is a changing and dynamic place that is truly boosting student achievement and creating 21st-century learners and effective users of information. You, the school librarian, bring special expertise to the school library program, strengthening the learning environment through technology, instruction, and a well-selected collection. Promoting your library program also means staying visible and keeping in touch. It means reaching out with special programs that motivate students to read and become better researchers. Students who are welcomed into the school library and are successful in their quest for information or who find a good book to read will begin to see the school library as their place—a place where they are successful! As a result, students will have a sense of ownership and become allies and advocates for your school library program.

Work to build your reputation as an instructional partner with your teachers. Many school librarians reach out by making special efforts to visit every teacher at least once during the school year to discuss curricular and professional development needs. Review the calendar and circulation data. Do your teachers do certain projects at certain times every year? Leverage the timeliness of your offer. When a teacher's project is on the horizon would be a great time to offer your professional expertise and experience with all of the print and electronic resources in your school library collection. Relationships become more solid when school librarians turn curriculum discussions into ongoing collaborations and when professional development is designed to meet expressed needs and delivered at convenient times.

Whenever possible, do the unexpected! Try to bust stereotypes with programs and activities that let students, teachers, administrators, and parents know the library is a welcoming and “with it” place. Described below are ideas for reaching out to build the partnerships that are the foundation for advocacy.

## **Practical Suggestions for Reaching Out**

### ***Reaching Out to Students***

- Form a student group to advise and assist in the development of programming and promotions directed at students. Students are your target audience—your customers. Students who feel their ideas are important to you and the program are likely to develop a sense of ownership for their school library!
- Consider students an important part of your advocacy team. Invite one or two students to join the school library advisory group. (Johnson 2013, 41–43).

### ***Reaching Out to Faculty and Administrators***

- Make it clear to your principal that you are there to help achieve the school's mission. Demonstrate that the principal's priorities and concerns are your concerns, too. Share the program resources you have to help address those concerns.
- Reach out to new administrators, faculty, and staff. If your district provides induction seminars for new teachers, volunteer to present at the seminars.
- Invite participation. Make it evident to faculty and administrators that you want feedback and suggestions, and you welcome partnerships that improve the learning environment of the school.
- Volunteer to serve on a variety of committees.
- Insert the library program into all school-wide activities.
- Review the yearly circulation data and develop a calendar for reaching out to teachers based on their standard project cycles. Leverage the timeliness of your offer of help and be prepared with resources and ideas for collaboration.
- Make it a goal to reach out individually to every teacher in the school at least once each semester.
- Give teachers their own space. Provide a professional-reading corner or space to encourage idea-sharing and collaboration. Designate two computers in this area for *staff use only*.
- Others should see you as a teacher. Volunteer to be a writing-assessment judge or to teach reading in summer school. Offer faculty and staff tech training on your school's e-mail platform and other district-mandated software programs (e.g., payroll or student grade reporting).
- Develop a professional collection that supports teachers' continuing education.
- Offer professional development on navigating the electronic databases available through your school, district, or state, and review proper citation of scholarly articles.



### ***Reaching Out to Parents and Caregivers***

- Visit your school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Tell members about programs and events at your library and invite parents to stop by.
- Partner with PTO members for fundraisers and get a share of the proceeds for library resources and student programs.
- Host a special reception with library tours for parents during parent-teacher night or School Library Month. Focus on the resources that make their child's school library experience so different from their own.
- Create and manage a school-wide tech night. Invite parents to the library and have your tech director address parents' questions and explain your district's Acceptable Use Policy.
- Sponsor regular family nights with storytelling, movies, and other educational games and tools that turn learning into a family activity.
- Invite parents to participate as library aids or presenters in special programs on careers, hobbies, cultural diversity, and the arts.
- Start a Friends of the School Library group to assist with advocacy, fundraising, and other special projects. Forming a Friends group can be a key strategy in raising awareness of the school library program's contributions and needs by engaging parents, school staff, and others in its support. Starting a Friends group is an effective way to find and nurture a core group of advocates in good times, as well as bad. To learn more, visit the United for Libraries website <[www.ala.org/united](http://www.ala.org/united)>.

### ***Reaching Out to the Community***

- Introduce yourself to the librarians at the public libraries in your area. Make certain you know who they are. Develop a Homework Alert Form to help you partner with local public libraries to provide outside resources when needed. The form can be completed and sent to local libraries when students begin a research project.
- Collaborate with community relations/education staff at local museums to develop research projects, school library programming, and displays in connection with special exhibits the museums are hosting.
- Learn about the community and create opportunities for its members, public officials, and business leaders to visit the school library and use their expertise to build students' knowledge on topics being researched and studied.
- Support authentic problem-based learning and inquiry by partnering with local government and businesses to include students in solving local problems.
- Invite local journalists to participate in discussions about the First Amendment.



- Make presentations to businesses and service groups about the changing role of today’s school libraries.
- Ask a service group to adopt your library as a fundraising project or to provide volunteer assistance.
- Ask local businesses for sponsorships to replace lost books or expand existing resources. Call it the YES Read Fund (Yes Everyone Should Read Fund). Spanish speaking schools could call it the LEER fund (Let Everyone Experience Reading). “Leer” is the Spanish verb “to read.” Be sure to promote the businesses that contribute to the fund.
- Collaborate with the children’s or young adult public librarian to develop summer reading and other programs.
- Partner with your public library to get public library cards in the hands of 100 percent of your students. In the spring invite the public librarian to speak with students about summer programs available at the public library and help students sign up online for a public library card.

## **Advocacy Planning**

Others can’t advocate for the school library program if they don’t know about what you do! You will need to educate and inform your stakeholders about what you do every day to impact student achievement. Advocacy begins with reaching out to understand constituent needs and form partnerships, but an advocacy plan goes far beyond building relationships.

### ***Five Step Planning Model***

Outlined as an Action Plan in AASL’s [\*A Planning Guide for Empowering Learners\*](#), Audrey Church, a professor of library science at Longwood University in Virginia (and 2015–2016 AASL President-Elect), applied a five-step planning model to two goals: (1) encourage greater use of databases; and (2) inform K–12 educators of the importance of strong school library programs and the contributions of school librarians. To see Audrey’s example Action Plans, [click here](#).

### **AASL’s Five Step Planning Model begins with a goal.**

Once the goal is identified the five steps are:

1. Determine your objectives.
2. Determine your target groups.
3. Determine your strategies.
4. Determine your communication tools.
5. Evaluate.

Often school librarians are asked, “What is it you do?” or “Why do we need school libraries when everything is on the Internet?” When these questions come up, it is important to be prepared to address them using short “elevator” speeches, as well as to engage in an ongoing advocacy process to raise awareness about the school librarian’s role and contributions.

Let’s apply AASL’s Five Step Planning Model to the question, “What is it you do?” The goal of this advocacy effort is to raise awareness about the important role of the school librarian and contributions of the school library program.

The **objective** of this advocacy effort is to inform teachers about the varied roles of the school librarian and how these contributions improve students’ academic achievements.

The **target group** is teachers at your school. By reaching out to teachers you’ll gain a greater understanding of their curricular needs and how the school library program can address these needs.

The **strategies** used to raise awareness could be one-on-one meetings with teachers, attending grade-level meetings, speaking at faculty meetings about school library resources, or developing a workshop series on school library resources.

The **communication tools** might include individual personal conversations or e-mails, staff newsletters or memos, videos or webinars about the library resources, or PowerPoint presentations at faculty meetings.

**Evaluating** the effectiveness of the advocacy plan could entail comparing the number of teachers who used the library this year to the previous year, the increase in collaborative projects, or other varied ways the school librarian is used as a resource.

## **Audience**

After identifying your goal and objective, identifying the target groups for your message is essential to the development of your plan. Without understanding your target audience, it is impossible to develop a focused strategy, or a clear and targeted message. The primary audiences for your advocacy efforts will depend on the issue being addressed. Reaching out to promote library use is one thing, but asking for money or changes to policy is another.

*The key is to focus on student impact.* Demonstrate how increased funding or curriculum changes will improve students’ academic life. Things you might advocate for include a bigger budget (or avoiding a cut), a new or improved facility, or a flexible schedule to include student-centered inquiry in the curriculum. For instance, the primary audiences for advocacy efforts to maintain school library positions will be key decision-makers—school and district administrators, board of education members, state or federal legislators.

However, parents who support your efforts will be critical. The voice of a parent in support of your request can be more powerful than your own voice. When a

group of parents (i.e., taxpayers) approach a principal or school board asking for additional funding for their students, the effect can be huge. Secondary audiences might be state Department of Education officials, community leaders and other local elected officials (the mayor, city council members, or county commissioners), members of the media, and others who wield influence with these groups.

While you can and must take a leadership role, the best advocates are those who directly benefit from your work and are willing to speak on your behalf. A “Friends of the School Library” group often is the nucleus of your advocacy networks. Parent and teacher councils, including PTOs and other groups, are important to advocacy efforts too. Relationships with these groups can and should be nurtured and developed.

### **Message**

For more strategies for crafting your message and promoting your program through written and verbal communications, visit the “Communication” section of this toolkit. See also “Key Messages” and “Tough Questions,” and “Talking Points” in the “Tools and Resources” section of this toolkit.

### **Works Cited**

- Church, Audrey. 2002. *Going Beyond PR—Library Advocacy Begins with You!*
- Johnson, Doug. 2013. *The Indispensable Librarian*, 2nd ed. Santa Barbara, CA: Linworth.

### **Success Stories**

Stories of real student experiences bring your message to life in a way that numbers alone cannot. Although you will want to make strategic use of statistics, numbers aren’t the whole story when it comes to telling your story.

Everyone loves a story, especially one with a happy ending. Most people don’t remember statistics unless they are surprisingly good or bad or translated into a story. Be sure your message is memorable! Whether you’re speaking with the school board, a parent, or a teacher you should always be prepared with stories or examples that illustrate how your school library program makes a difference.

In the same way, we’ve tried to bring our message of advocacy to life through a collection of stories from school librarians advocating for their programs.

### **Professional Paradox**

Being a school librarian is paradoxical: I am a part of so many things going on at the school, while simultaneously isolated as a department of one. In the same way I love to share a good book with a student, I have found it to be both helpful

Sara Oremland  
Teacher-Librarian  
Albany High School  
California

and enjoyable to give regular, enthusiastic updates to my school administration about curricular projects, teacher collaborations, and leadership opportunities. I have shared library and research standards [with] my administration to reinforce my status as teacher and show how the library program supports curriculum. I have also explained to my administration the importance of some of the more librarian-specific work that I do. When it is time to be evaluated, I am sure to demonstrate competencies for both the teaching and the librarianship sides of the profession.

I am fortunate to work with great librarians in my district who also care about advocacy. We try to give a “State of the Libraries” presentation every year at a school board meeting so that the superintendent, board, and community understand that we are putting taxpayers’ money to good use and to remind all that our work goes far beyond checking out books. Finally, during Back to School Night I open up the library and stand in the hallway to help confused parents navigate the school, all the while handing out fliers that have a list of library resources and my contact information with a link to my annual online fundraiser. I think the easiest part about advocating for my library is that I love my job; sharing what goes on there is fun and easy!



Stephanie Rosalia  
Library Media Specialist  
PS/MS 105Q  
The Bay School, Queens, New York

### ***It Takes a Village***

It was important to me to show my largely immigrant population of students a [glimpse of American life] outside of their immediate surroundings and to show them success stories of people who, like them, had begun life with difficult circumstances. I invited local politicians and successful people from many walks of life to come and read to the students during Children’s Book Week, Teen Read Week, and Banned Books Week. Most of those who visited had ties to the Brighton Beach/Coney Island community. The students met executives of the Brooklyn Cyclones, the New York Mets minor league affiliate, whose stadium is in Coney Island; the execs read *Teammates: The Story of Jackie Robinson and Pee Wee Reese* and talked about Brooklyn Dodgers history and that team’s role in the civil rights movement. Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, who [as a teen lived in public housing], read *Duck for President* and talked about elections. Judges, politicians, authors, and even the former football coach from the local high school also read and shared their own stories. The students learned from the oral histories of real success stories of people who had at one time been just like them. But the learning went both ways: those local politicians, judges, business people, and community activists learned what we were doing in our school and went out of their way to help us do it better. It takes a village...



Shannon Hyman  
School Librarian and Information Specialist David A.  
Kaechele Elementary School  
Glen Allen, Virginia  
<<https://sites.google.com/site/kaechelelibrary>>

## When Students Are the Voice

The goal of advocacy is to build the capacity and maximize the impact of your school library program within the four walls of your building and beyond. I believe that advocacy is all about identifying, and, in some cases, creating stakeholders who partner with you to achieve this goal. Let's face it; no lone librarian can handle the [scope of our mission](#): "to empower students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information." It takes a team! While there is no doubt your local community and business leaders are essential partners to accomplish this vision, I believe some of the best, most valuable advocates are homegrown. If you set the tone for a welcoming, flexible, safe, and vibrant library learning commons (LLC), students will want to be there. Before you know it, the place is popping because their friends know it is the place to be, too. In the LLC, our students are empowered instructionally, as well as through authentic learning experiences as assistants, tech pros, collection developers, book reviewers, and as members of the street team for producing physical and virtual promotional material for upcoming events.

We keep an eye on trends and on the interests of our students through consistent opportunities for feedback using simple Google Forms or face-to-face focus groups. Using this feedback we find ways to integrate student thinking into our program and instruction. Why do we so highly value students as team players for library advocacy? Because a student who feels valued is a happy student, and that makes for happy parents, which makes for happy teachers, happy administrators, happy school board members... well, you get the picture. When student advocates are the voice of the library program, their influence is felt by teachers who are intrigued by the opportunity for 21st-century collaborative learning experiences, and this, my friends, builds capacity and maximizes the school library's impact.



Ann M. Martin  
Educational Specialist (Retired)  
Library Services  
Henrico County Public Schools, Virginia

## Personalizing Your Connections

School board members like to know about good things that are happening, and the library program is a perfect opportunity to bring positive recognition to the school and the district. I encourage school librarians to invite their school board representative to events they plan in their library—with approval from their principal before issuing an invitation. The value of this communication is that school board members become acquainted with the school librarian and library program on a personal level. Each visit is an opportunity to provide evidence that the school library program is integral to the students' development as literate 21st-century learners.

For example, a school board member in my district raises butterflies. Each spring the school librarian invites this board member into the library to assist with a butterfly lesson. Before her visit, second-grade students research butterflies based



*Ann M. Martin*  
*Educational Specialist (Retired)*  
*Library Services*  
*Henrico County Public Schools, Virginia*



*Elizabeth Kahn*  
*Library Media Specialist*  
*Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy*  
*Avondale, Louisiana*

on questions they personally develop and collect evidence from library resources to answer those questions. During her visit, the school board member shares her passion for butterflies with the students. She demonstrates the importance of butterflies to the ecological environment and shows students different butterflies. After her visit, students create a product such as a [digital museum box](#) that explains the answers to their questions. The school board member is invited back when the students share their work.

### **Many Levels of Decision-Makers**

A one-community one-book event involved the entire school district community and built support from every level of decision-makers. By reaching out to the superintendent of schools and his leadership team, I obtained funding for the project. The financial commitment from these decision-makers was validated by the overwhelming and positive response to the various project events from building-level administration, teachers, and students. The instructional input and creative contributions from each participating school changed the program into a literacy event with broad curriculum benefits and made me aware that these are important decision-makers too. At a metro-area event, my superintendent recognized me for building understanding in the school community through reading. This recognition started a metro one-city one-book program that lasted five years. By including multiple levels of decision-makers in the buy-in for this event, the success of the program skyrocketed and the value of school libraries extended beyond the school community into the greater community.

### **Grassroots Advocacy**

In 2012–2013 Louisiana school librarians motivated local communities and waged a battle against the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to save school librarians across the state from possible elimination. In the fall of 2012 BESE had decided that, to achieve school reform, Bulletin 741, the handbook for school administrators, needed to be revised, giving more flexibility to district and school administrators. Section 1705 about school librarians was slashed from seven guidelines to two, and staffing according to student population at the secondary level became a recommendation not a requirement. There were no policies for staffing at the elementary and middle school levels and never had been. In December 2012 I learned about these changes from a colleague through the state library association discussion list.

In support of school libraries the Louisiana Library Association (LLA) and the Louisiana Association of School Librarians (LASL) spearheaded a letter-writing campaign to the BESE and to the editors of the local newspapers around the state. Many Louisiana school librarians and teachers asked students and community

members to write about what they felt the educational benefits are of having a school library staffed with a certified school librarian. A parent sent me a copy of a beautiful letter that she composed to BESE about school libraries. Students in the seventh- and tenth-grade English classes at my school wrote persuasive letters in preparation for standardized tests. I explained to the students that librarians were not being eliminated, but the revisions allowed administrators a choice to staff or not to staff the library. We sent the best of these letters on to BESE. Letters were sent from all across Louisiana, illustrating that all districts were concerned about the implications of the proposed changes.

Due to the outpouring of public comments, the revisions were re-revised to include a third guideline allowing building principals “the authority to determine how (library) resources and assistance are provided to students.” Unfortunately, with this change principals still had the option to replace a librarian with a nonprofessional and offer assistance at a much cheaper rate. However, at least with these changes, staffing at the secondary level would again be required.

The letter-writing campaign continued. In April 2013 the Academic Goals and Instructional Improvement Committee of BESE met to discuss the proposed changes to Bulletin 741 regarding counselors and librarians. Members of LLA and LASL were present at this meeting to voice the problems with the proposed revisions. One BESE member spoke up; he did not understand why changes to the language concerning counselors and school librarians needed to be made with so many members of the public opposed to the changes. The state superintendent finally agreed to have the original language of the document reinstated. The outpouring of support in this grassroots effort moved elected officials, and the BESE chose to listen to the people.

Counselors and librarians compose a very small number of the total teaching force within the state. Even with those small numbers, we were able to rally forces to speak up about our role in student learning. Apathetic is not what you want to be when an issue that is important to you comes before lawmakers. School librarians across the country need to continue to be advocates for all library programs so stakeholders understand the critical role that we play in students’ academic lives. When I wrote my letter to BESE, it was not about my small school and the students that I teach, but about all the students who attend public schools in Louisiana. Every single student deserves an excellent education. You can read more about this fight with BESE and letters written by the students in support of libraries on my blog at <[talesfromaloudlibrarian.com](http://talesfromaloudlibrarian.com)>.



## **Tough Questions**

### ***Be prepared, positive, and proactive.***

As our stakeholders begin to realize the importance of school librarians as leaders and instructional partners, they will begin to formulate questions on sensitive topics. We all have “hot-button” topics that come up over and over. Having a repertoire of short and positive answers ready to go is important. Remember to keep answers short but sweet—and said sincerely and with conviction.

Below are some questions that might come up in conversation.

#### ***1. Google seems to have everything I need. How can a school librarian help me?***

School librarians can support students in the ethical use of information as well as share strategies for accessing, evaluating, and synthesizing information resources for use in their work. We can help students navigate the sometimes overwhelming—and not always accurate—amount of information available through Google, online databases, e-books, and the Internet. We can also help students find information available in the library from periodicals, DVDs, books, and other materials. School librarians can help narrow down the six million hits that may come up on a Google search.

#### ***2. We could save the school lots of money if we use volunteers in the library instead of a school librarian.***

Our school library is the “hub” of the school, where students can find a certified school librarian who is an expert at facilitating student use of information. Volunteers can help children find books using the online catalog, but a school librarian can assist students with finding information in many different formats and places. Librarians are very familiar with all of the materials available in the library, as well as learning standards and the school’s curriculum, and can help students make real-world connections for using independent learning skills in their own life. However, volunteer assistance is appreciated and welcomed for special events and on advisory groups.

#### ***3. How do students really use the library? Don’t they really go just to hang out?***

Our students use the school library in a wide variety of ways! It is busy all day with students checking out books for independent reading, classes doing research and collaborative projects, students playing games like chess and Scrabble during lunch, reading on an e-reader, recording podcasts, socializing, or asking questions. Our school library website can be accessed 24–7 and includes lots of information for students to use independently. We have a “warm, stimulating, and safe environment” (AASL n.d.). I invite you to come in and check us out!

#### ***4. How rewarding is a career as a school librarian?***

A very multifaceted position, a career as a school librarian is the most rewarding and enriching career in the education field! As a school librarian I am able to share in the growth of every student in the building as students learn information-literacy and problem-solving skills. I also work on several different levels with other teach-



ers, both in professional development settings and collaborative classroom situations. I have built relationships with students who have rediscovered their lost love of reading because I have spent time finding the perfect books for them. When a student recently ran into the library, clutching a book, grinning from ear to ear, saying “Thank you, thank you! I haven’t read a book this good since third grade!” I know I have encouraged one more lifelong reader.

**5. Can you explain why we should fund the library budget?**

Many studies indicate a strong correlation between strong, well-funded school library programs and increased student achievement. These libraries are composed of more than just books. Funds are needed to find and make accessible the best resources in all kinds of media that relate to the school and district curriculum and meet national and state standards.

**6. It seems like more information is available online now. Couldn’t we budget fewer dollars for the school library program?**

Without a decent budget we cannot provide the quality or quantity of resources that our students and teaching staff deserve access to both on and off campus. “The school library is the school’s physical and virtual learning commons where inquiry, thinking, imagination, discovery, and creativity are central to students’ information-to-knowledge journey, and to their personal, social and cultural growth” (Todd 2009). Learning does not end with the school day, and neither should access to quality school library resources and services. Students are always exploring and engaging with new information, and not always with good information resources. In addition to curating quality resources for the library, the school librarian *teaches* learners *how* to learn so that they can navigate and evaluate information inside and outside of school.

**7. Explain information literacy to me, please.**

Information literacy includes multiple literacies: digital, visual, textual, and technological. These skills are crucial for all learners in the 21st century (AASL 2007). It means knowing how to find, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources. It means knowing when a book may be more helpful than a website. It means knowing what questions to ask. Is the information complete? Accurate? Is someone trying to sell something? Good decisions depend on good information. School librarians know that the best source of information isn’t always Google. They teach the newest research skills that students will use to become lifelong learners.

**8. Since the Internet has millions of resources, can’t we buy fewer books?**

Our school library program strives to create an environment where independent reading is valued, promoted, and encouraged (AASL 2007). The best resources are not always available online. Students need to be able to read and research high quality resources that meet district curriculum goals and state learning standards. “Shouldn’t schools be the place where students interact with interesting books? Shouldn’t the faculty have an ongoing laser-like commitment to put good books in our students’ hands? Shouldn’t this be a front-burner issue at all times?” (Gallagher 2009)

**9. I have heard that school libraries are being closed. Is that true?**

A lot of school districts across the United States have cut library programs, budgets, and school librarians. Some librarians are split between two or more schools; some districts have let the certified school librarian go and have hired an assistant or recruited a local volunteer to run the facility. This trend is particularly damaging to students given the current data on the impact of school libraries on student achievement (NYSL 2011).

**10. My kids love to read! Would they make good school librarians?**

Not only do school librarians have to have a love of reading, they must possess a multitude of other traits. First and foremost, a school librarian is a teacher who is a leader in the school community. School librarians are information specialists, quick thinkers, planners, technologists, and flexible resourceful collaborators. If your child is a motivated self-starter who is organized, a “people person,” and has a love of reading, I’d say, yes, that child could become a great school librarian!

**Works Cited**

- American Association of School Librarians. n.d. “[Learning4Life Message Box](#).”
- . 2007. *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*.
- Gallagher, Kelly. 2009. *Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- New York State Library. 2011. *Informational Brief: Impact of School Libraries on Student Achievement*. New York Comprehensive Center.
- Todd, Ross J. 2009. “There is Knowledge to Be Gained.” *School Library Media Activities Monthly* 25 (10): 55–58.

# Communication

- ⇒ Practical Suggestions
- ⇒ Success Stories
- ⇒ Key Messages

**WHEN IT COMES** to getting your message across, how you share information can be as important as what you say. Even the best advocacy plan still requires a vision for marketing and communicating your ideas to the people who need to hear them. In marketing, delivering the right programs and services is as important as communicating about them. Listening to your user community is critical, and their wants are as important as their needs as they perceive them. Developing a marketing plan is an essential step in getting the word out about your school library program. This plan should support the overall mission and goals of your program, contain both one-way communications and engagement strategies, and be tailored to the audience you serve. Additionally, your plan should be reviewed and updated regularly. Most importantly, it should be practical and doable.

Some things to consider when planning your marketing communication approach include:

- **Needs**—What does your school or community need? What programs or services could be developed to meet these needs? How do the services or materials that you already offer meet these needs? What people or groups would be likely to use your services or resources if they only knew about them?

- **Goals**—What do you hope your message will accomplish? If everything goes exactly as you hope, what will the outcome be? Are you willing to compromise?
- **Audience**—Who are you trying to reach with your message(s) to accomplish your goals? Users or potential users? Administrators or colleagues? Community members? Some combination of the above?
- **Media**—What communication or marketing tools are at your disposal? Which of these would be most effective in reaching your target audience? Would a single, focused approach be best? Or should you employ a wide array of media to reach your audience? Is the same medium appropriate for all members of your target audience?

Each of these factors plays an important part in your marketing plan. As you think through each of these elements, consider how you can maximize impact through the wording or approach of your message. Always consider your goals, audience, and media—but also consider how they interact with one another. Let your goals dictate the target audience for your message, and let both your goals and the audience influence your choice of media.

For example, one of your advocacy *goals* is to help your students understand that the school library program can support their learning even outside of school hours. Perhaps your library is a peer tutoring hub before and after school, so one of your specific advocacy goals is to entice more students to visit the library during those times to take advantage of this service.

In this situation, the target *audience* is students because they will be the ones actually visiting the library for tutoring. Other possible target audiences might include teachers (who could encourage students to take advantage of the tutoring) and parents (who might encourage their children to visit or serve as a tutor).

The next step is to identify the best *media* for the task. If you know your students are active on Twitter, try tweeting a message from the library's Twitter account. Or, if they visit the library website regularly, a banner on the homepage might be effective. If you're collaborating with their teachers on a lesson, consider including the tutoring information on a class handout.

Overall, think consciously and intentionally about how your students take in information. Media preferred by students, regardless of your own preferences, will be the best vehicles for your message and prove to be effective additions to your marketing plan. Remember that the media you use to reach your students need not be the same tools employed to reach teachers or parents, even if the goal for the communication is the same. Finally, spend time wordsmithing your message for maximum impact with each audience and strive to make the message appropriate to the medium.

Although creating a marketing plan for your school library program may seem daunting, it's important because a plan of action is needed to achieve any goal. You

already know your program, your goals, and your audience. Take a few moments to think intentionally about matching your objectives to the appropriate vehicles. See the chart listed under “Communication” in the “Tools and Resources” section of this toolkit to help with this exercise.

## **Working with Others**

Other people can also help share your message with those who need to hear it. Marketing communication involves assessing the needs of your community and describing through words or actions how your school library program meets those needs—working with others is the key to making this happen. Whether by word of mouth, presentations at meetings, through relationships, or via social media, your interactions count.

The relationships you’ve built with other people in your school and community—as discussed in the “Advocacy” section—are a good place to start. Your students, parents, colleagues, and district and community leaders can all deliver your message and be vocal proponents of your library program. However, this kind of teamwork requires sustained investment and a commitment to hearing the input and serving the needs of your constituent groups.

## **Practical Suggestions for Working with Others**

### ***Marketing Your Program Inside of Your School***

- Form a Library Advisory Committee composed of representatives from various stakeholder groups in your community (i.e., students, teachers, administrators, staff, parents, community business leaders). Seek their input and perspective on goals, objectives, and major initiatives of the school library program.
- Create a mission statement for the school library program that is aligned with the school’s mission and display it proudly—and prominently—in the school library, on your website, and throughout the school.
- Share powerful but brief success stories—in staff meetings, publications, on the website, whenever and wherever possible. Keep success stories brief but make sure they are powerful. Spontaneous opportunities to share success stories, when you have only a “minute to win it,” are often referred to as “elevator speeches.”
- Send welcome packets to new administrators, faculty, and staff at the beginning of the school year. Include a library brochure of services, a bookmark, and a survey of needs. One school librarian in North Carolina offered treats in exchange for completed surveys that helped her plan for the upcoming year.

- Develop a monthly “what’s happening in the school library” e-newsletter for faculty and staff to showcase the ways you and your program impact student learning. Highlight your expertise, creativity, and workload. Provide curriculum and collection updates about both electronic and print resources. Include circulation statistics and a preview of next month’s activities.
- Aim to communicate on a regular basis. On your website provide archived copies of your newsletter, annual report, promotional flyers, and other items of special interest. Ask teachers and administrators in what format they prefer to receive updates. Don’t rely solely on e-mail.
- Create an archive of “tech tips” on your website and add tips frequently. Teachers and students can access the archive throughout the year. Provide a Tech Tip of the Week/Month. Create a “There’s an app for that” tip sheet with great apps for educators or fun ones for everyone. Post links to really great TED talks, especially motivational ones! Create (or ask students to create) “how to” screencasts for both staff and students on any program or action that you have had to explain more than once.
- Keep a portfolio of student projects that provide evidence of the valued role of the school library in supporting student success and alignment with standards. Work with classroom teachers to create physical displays of student projects, as well as an online gallery that can include links to a variety of technology-based student projects.
- Listen—don’t just talk. Ask students what they like about the school library and what they don’t like. What would they like to see changed? Some students who have never been asked may not realize how much their suggestions can influence and improve the school library program. Conduct an annual online student survey and share the results with students, parents, and staff.
- Have a conversation with your administrator about your marketing and communication plans. Listen to his or her suggestions and provide frequent updates.
- Offer coding classes or makerspace afterschool programs in the library. Some students may not frequent the library to check out books, but they might get excited about and feel connected to the program if it offers them an opportunity to develop programming skills, tinker with low-cost—but fun!—electronic equipment, and make connections with like-minded peers.
- Contribute articles on a regular basis to the school’s student-run media outlets (e.g., student newspaper, television station, morning announcements) about resources on a variety of topics that interest students.
- Have a clipboard at the checkout desk, titled “books we need/want to

read.” Require a contact name and e-mail. If you have the book already, you can advise students/faculty you have it.

- Do you allow students/faculty to put a reserve on a book that is checked out? Most circulation software allows you to do this. Accepting reserves can turn casual users into ardent fans and increase circulation.
- Taking part in major school activities is a great way to increase awareness of the school library program. For example, at homecoming or prom create a display about the history of the school with prominent credit to the school library.
- Volunteering provides an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to student learning and growth, while forging new relationships with community members in the process. A successful volunteer project working with that student, teacher, parent, or community member can turn that positive collaborative experience into a word-of-mouth marketing and advocacy for the school library.

### ***Marketing Your Program Outside of Your School***

- Before you begin any communications outside of your building, always discuss your plans with your administrator. No administrator wants to be blindsided. You and your principal are a team. Invite the principal’s input and provide regular updates on the project.
- Share photos on your school library website and Facebook. Always check with your school’s secretary to find out which students and parents have given permission to publish students’ photos. Never publish online photos of students with their names—even publishing first names can be dangerous! Always check with your principal before posting anything.
- Learn about the community and create opportunities for its members to use their expertise to build students’ knowledge on topics being researched and studied.
- Every week send photos to the district—creative classroom projects, special events, or students just using library resources. Remember, school and district communications staff constantly need photos to update the district webpage or slideshows. They want to show district parents and perspective parents that your district does cool things for kids. Learn in advance what file types and sizes are needed, as well as to whom pictures and captions should be sent. Of course, always check with your principal before sending anything.
- Make connections with education journalists for your local newspaper or television station. Be sure to send notifications or flyers via e-mail about events at your school, or work with your school district communications staff to send a press release.

- Contribute regular articles to the school or district newsletter for parents about exciting student projects, technology tips, new books and resources, and suggested reading lists. Highlight upcoming programs and events.
- Create and promote a special Parent’s Page on your website with tips and resources for helping their children learn and improve their reading. Discuss topics of current interest such as social media and its benefits and pitfalls. Use screencast software to illustrate “how to” ideas. Post summer reading lists, as well as suggestions for family activities and educational games.
- Have students send home an e-mail about the technology and inquiry-based projects they are working on in the school library. Take pictures that the students can attach to their messages home.
- Start a readers’ theater for students. Schedule performances at senior centers, public libraries, and other venues.
- Make your school’s reading lists available to the local public library for librarians to reference and distribute to students and parents. Ideally, send the lists of required reading far enough in advance that the public librarians have time to purchase and process copies of titles on the list.
- Work with other libraries—school, public, academic, and special—to develop broad-based programs such as the popular “One Book, One Community.” ALA [provides resources](#) to support these community-wide reading initiatives.

For more tips and strategies on targeting your audience, getting your message out, and creating advocates visit the “Advocacy” and “Leadership” sections of this toolkit. See also “Learning4Life,” “Key Messages,” and “Tough Questions.”

## Success Stories

The following are stories and insights from school librarians who have marketed their library programs successfully.

### **Social Media to Promote Reading**

*Amy Jo Southworth  
School Librarian  
Bay Shore Senior High School  
New York*

I have created a VIP Readers Club as part of our school library program to promote reading and enhance student communication. VIPs can check out five books at a time, including most reference books. They have a special library card and can receive prizes after reading books. These readers may take a tote filled with books and magazines home with them to read over the summer! Additionally, the VIP Readers Club has an annual party; readers can bring a friend (a potential reader) and receive certificates and other awards. All VIPs join our Edmodo group to stay abreast of new book arrivals, and to recommend and discuss books with each other. This real-world community marketing strategy celebrates and encourages avid readers.



## Partnering For Families

Andrea Sporre, School Librarian  
Wiley H. Bates Middle School  
Annapolis, Maryland

The support of the Bates Middle School PTA is incredible. This is my second year as the school librarian at Bates, and I have never seen a more supportive parent team. This year we held our 2nd Annual Family Book Club and partnered with the PTA to get the word out and to get families reading together. In our first year we chose *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio, and this year we chose *Glory Be* by Augusta Scattergood. The PTA helped to purchase additional copies for our students and families. In addition to supporting our family book club, the PTA funded our Read Across Bates incentive prizes (over \$200) and purchased thirty-two interactive e-books (valued at over \$700). Members of the PTA truly care about the school library program.

## Students Get the Word Out

Michele L. Kuhar  
School Librarian (Retired)  
Edwards Middle School  
Brunswick, Ohio

Joseph belongs to our award-winning educational-access program, *Brunswick School News*. He elected to feature the Edwards Middle School Book Club in written articles and a live recorded interview. The article was published in our [local newspaper](#).

## Holistic Collaboration

Our school, built in the 70s, is centered around the library, which was genius on the part of the architect back then, whether he realized it or not. Our students meet in the library in the morning, and many teachers pass through on their way to classes, in the process checking out what's new.

Annually, our library works with the entire school staff to create a literacy theme that spans the curriculum, encourages reading, and fosters social responsibility. This year's theme is "Read for Peace—Work for Justice." Industrial arts students are building wooden chairs that students are painting with peace themes. The chairs will be auctioned off, with the proceeds going to the Child Abuse and Neglect Council. Students are reading *Radioactive Boy Scout* in chemistry, *Touching Spirit Bear* in Freshmen Transition (supplemented by videoconferences with the author), *Annie's Ghosts* in psychology (Steve Luxenberg was here last week to talk to students), and working with author/artist Wendy Halperin on peace themes. Other classes are also reading related books, such as *How Do You Kill 11 Million People* in world history and *Crazy Love* in family relations, and learning about peacemakers in the world. A year ago, we dealt with racial issues. We read *Arc of Justice*, among other books, and spent the spring working on Habitat for Humanity houses in Saginaw.



Kay Wejrowski  
Library Media Specialist  
Swan Valley High School  
Saginaw, Michigan

## Key Messages

Having a consistent message is key to a successful advocacy plan or awareness campaign. Think about the messages that resonate with your different stakeholder groups. Avoid technical language and professional jargon that may not be easily understood. Adapt these sample talking points and key messages as needed for *your* school library program. Once you have identified the language, use your messaging as often and consistently as possible in presentations, print, electronic, and other communications. And share the message with your advocates so that they can help reinforce it in the minds of decision-makers.

### **School library programs are critical to teaching and learning.**

- School library programs are integral to achieving the mission of the school and meeting curriculum standards across subjects and grade levels.
- School librarians systematically evaluate their programs as well as themselves to ensure continuing relevance to the learning community.
- School librarians initiate collaborations with individual classroom teachers or with groups of teachers across content areas to develop engaging and motivating student-centered learning opportunities.
- School librarians teach students the information skills, responsibilities, and self-assessment strategies to learn and achieve.
- School librarians provide instruction that addresses multiple literacies, including information literacy, media literacy, visual literacy, and technology literacy.

### **School librarians are crucial to learning and inquiry.**

- Many studies document very close associations between AASL's *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* and the *Common Core State Standards*. In particular, the evidence indicates that inquiry-based learning provides students with a strong foundation of learning skills that will serve them well throughout their lives (Lance and Schwarz 2012).
- School librarians work with classroom teachers on cooperative and collaborative projects to help students use a variety of resources, conduct inquiry-based research, and present their findings.
- School librarians model an inquiry-based approach to learning and the information-search process.
- School librarians model dispositions essential to inquiry such as curiosity, initiative, flexibility, perseverance, and openness to new ideas.

### **School library programs improve student achievement.**

- Researchers have correlated fourth-grade reading scores to the number of school librarians in the school or district over a five-year span. The data shows that where states cut their school librarians, reading scores declined.

The decline is even greater among students labeled at risk, thus increasing the achievement gap (Lance and Hofschire 2013).

**School libraries are places of opportunity.**

- School libraries are safe zones supportive of students' efforts to explore, create, and confidently present their findings in various formats such as debates, written reports, oral presentations, and exhibits.
- School libraries are respectful places that provide students equitable access to quality resources, information, and ideas.
- School librarians encourage students to pursue and develop interests, and promote reading by providing strong collections in various formats and organizing activities such as book clubs.

**School librarians are leaders.**

- School librarians are technology leaders who understand students, curriculum, and technology, and blend new technologies with curriculum to create truly transformative lessons.
- School librarians provide training for both staff and students in the latest technology (Kuon and Weimer 2012).
- School librarians initiate collaborations with teachers to meet various standards.
- School librarians seek feedback from members of the school community to develop school library programs that support teaching and learning.
- School librarians connect with students to understand their interests and motivations that are crucial to inquiry-based projects and skills.
- School librarians regularly attend and present at conferences and professional development workshops. This involvement helps them to continually develop the library program and its services.

**School librarians are instructional partners.**

- School librarians collaborate with classroom teachers to develop assignments that are matched to academic standards and include key critical-thinking skills, technology and information-literacy skills, and core social skills and cultural competences.
- School librarians guide instructional design by working with the classroom teacher to establish learning objectives and goals, and by implementing assessment strategies before, during, and after assigned units of study.

**Works Cited**

Kuon, Tricia, and Holly Weimar. 2012. "[How Does Your Boss See You? Proof That Principals Value Librarians.](#)" *School Library Journal* 58 (9): 36–39.

Lance, Keith Curry, and Linda Hofschire. 2012. "[Change in School Librarian Staffing Linked with Change in CSAP Reading Performance, 2005 to 2011.](#)"

Lance, Keith Curry, and Bill Schwarz. 2012. "[How Pennsylvania School Libraries Pay Off: Investments in Student Achievement and Academic Standards.](#)" PA School Library Project. HSLC.

A National Plan for Implementation of AASL's  
*Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*  
and *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for*  
*School Library Programs*

# Learning4Life

- ⇒ Introduction
- ⇒ Background
- ⇒ Implementation Plan
- ⇒ Practical Suggestions
- ⇒ L4L Tools

Written by the 2013–2014  
AASL Standards and  
Guidelines Committee

## Introduction

The Learning4Life (L4L) implementation plan, freely available for [download](#), was created to support states, school systems, and individual schools preparing to implement AASL's *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* and *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs*.

If school librarians are going to be successful advocates, they must understand the AASL learning standards and program guidelines, and allow them to guide their practice. If you are going to advocate for your program, be sure you have a program that is a good example of the profession.

### ***How can school librarians use the L4L brand to enhance marketing of their own programs?***

School librarians can use the L4L brand to help enhance the marketing of their own programs and their own brands. The strong message of lifelong learning skills needed to think, create, share, and grow—combined with the visually branded tools, logos, and templates designed by AASL for school librarians—provides a



An initiative of the American Association of School Librarians

unified approach to communicating with stakeholders about what school librarians and library programs bring to education. Definitely show your uniqueness and personality in your brand for your program. However, know that you share your brand with all school librarians. The more aspects of the school librarian brand that we can share and repeat, the stronger and more embedded that brand becomes across our nationally shared audience.

## Background

Responding to the dynamic twenty-first century in which students have unprecedented access to diverse and independent information resources and communication tools, the American Association of School Librarians introduced the [\*Standards for the 21st-Century Learner\*](#). Published in 2007, AASL's learning standards identify four key standards and under each four teaching strands—skills, dispositions, responsibilities, and self-assessment.

The learning standards place the learner firmly in an inquiry-based learning environment and place school librarians in a key position to guide students as they:

- **think** to make sense of information and gain knowledge,
- draw their own conclusions to **create** new knowledge,
- **share** their knowledge by communicating in ethical and productive ways, and
- use this learning process to **grow** aesthetically and personally.

Among all the components of AASL's L4L materials, it is these four learning standards that have most deeply penetrated the profession and the brand marketing. They have been defined in the L4L brand simply with the words: Think, Create, Share, and Grow.

[\*Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs\*](#) (2009), the program-guidelines companion book to AASL's *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*, offers vision for developing the school library program to enable students to meet the learning standards. The roles of a school librarian are clearly defined and include **leader, instructional partner, information specialist, teacher, and program administrator**. Seen as essential to the future of the profession, the newest role, the leadership role, is strongly stressed.

Two additional planning resources were developed to help support school librarians as they enable their students to meet AASL's learning standards. [\*Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action\*](#) (2009) provides the vision for instruction using the learning standards, and [\*A Planning Guide for Empowering Learners\*](#) (2010) is an online, interactive program-planning module that incorporates the *School Library Program Assessment Rubric*. These four resources, along with the [L4L implementation plan](#), are the heart of the [Learning4Life](#) (L4L) initiative.

## **Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan for *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* and *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs* will assist all those responsible for student learning as they work toward the vision and goals of the learning standards and program guidelines. The plan leverages past success and current efforts as well as proposing new ventures that take advantage of the current climate in education and society.

### **Brand Positioning**

The brand “Learning4Life” or “L4L” is designed to help people remember that school library programs and school librarians contribute to formal school-based learning *and* to learning throughout a lifetime. Use of the number four echoes and reinforces the four standards and the four strands under each standard (the skills, dispositions in action, responsibilities, and self-assessment strategies) in AASL’s *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*. The branding also reinforces to the target audiences how school librarians are in a unique position to assist teachers and teach students essential 21st-century skills and literacies that will prepare learners for a lifetime of success.

### **Goals and Key Components**

The goal of the implementation plan is to first build awareness of the AASL learning standards and program guidelines, and then develop an understanding and commitment to them. Ultimately, the goal is to create a shared vision with stakeholders and constituents—a vision in which priority is given to aligning the AASL learning standards to the curriculum and providing the necessary resources and conditions for full integration. And Learning4Life is the brand that symbolizes this vision and the awareness, understanding, and commitment that will make the vision reality.

Guiding principles include building a common vocabulary and message and realizing that “one size does not fit all.” Target audiences (internal and external) are identified. Included are: a communication plan; a plan for continuous feedback, evaluation, and sustainability; a plan for endorsements and support; and supporting documents. The plan includes eighteen objectives that, for each objective, define the role and responsibilities of AASL, state affiliates, educators of school librarians, district supervisors, and building-level school librarians.

### **Stakeholder Responsibilities**

Building awareness and support for the new learning standards and program guidelines must be developed incrementally over time. Our efforts to advocate for the learning standards are not self-promoting; these efforts are about reaching our target audiences and addressing their needs for educational success. We will communicate our plan with respect for audience members’ passion, point of view, interests,

motivations, authority, and time. We must assure our audiences that implementation will assist their agendas. The plan ascribes primary responsibility for these efforts to a variety of stakeholders; responsible parties and their audience members are summarized below.

#### STATE AFFILIATES

Audiences: Building-level school librarians; state library associations; state departments of education; various state professional, parent and community organizations; state-level legislators; departments and agencies; and state media outlets.

#### EDUCATORS OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS (ESLS SECTION OF AASL)

Audiences: Administration and faculty at library and education preparation programs; school library students; pre-service educators; and building-level school librarians (through presentations and publications).

#### DISTRICT SUPERVISORS (SPVS SECTION OF AASL)

Audiences: Building-level school librarians; school district administration; and other district-level departments and administrators, such as information technology departments and curriculum coordinators; internal communications vehicles; and local media outlets.

#### BUILDING-LEVEL SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

Audiences: Classroom teachers and specialists, students, parents and families, site-level administrators, internal communication vehicles, and local media outlets.

## **Practical Suggestions**

### ***Get Involved***

As school librarians, we must model Learning4Life (L4L) by thinking, creating, sharing, and growing as the education environment constantly continues to change.

#### THINK

- Join other school librarians in AASL professional development opportunities: [AASL National Conference](#), [national events](#), [online courses](#), [webinars](#), and with [AASL at ALA conferences](#).
- Keep informed about important educational matters by reading [KQ Express](#), [Knowledge Quest](#), and [School Library Research](#).
- Explore AASL's [Best Apps](#) and [Best Websites for Teaching & Learning](#) for innovative and collaborative lesson-planning ideas to share with your grade-level and subject-area teachers.



## CREATE

- Create new materials for professional practice and advocacy. [Get Involved](#) in the work of the association. AASL has many opportunities for members to volunteer through short-term projects and committees.
- Create an action plan to improve one aspect of your school library program to meet one or more of the *Empowering Learners* guidelines.



## SHARE

- Discuss issues with your colleagues on AASL [social media](#) channels, including the [Knowledge Quest website](#), [AASLForum](#), and [ALA Connect](#).
- Work with your [state school library association](#) on advocacy efforts.
- Sign and share the “I Support Learning4Life” [petition!](#)

## GROW

- Join AASL, the only national association focused solely on the interests of school librarians, and your state affiliate association.

## **Learner4Life Organizations**

Organizations across the country have signed on as [AASL Learner4Life organizations](#) in support of the Learning4Life implementation plan. These organizations see the plan and its components as essential to building a strong K–12 education system. If your organization would like to sign on as an L4L Organization, please fill out the [endorsement form](#)  and return to [Jennifer Habley](#). 

## **L4L Tools**

The *Learning Standards & Program Guidelines Implementation Toolkit* guides school librarians through [Getting Started](#), [Who is the 21st-Century School Librarian?](#), [Inquiry](#), [Correlating to Your Curricula](#), [Gaining Support](#), [Transforming the Physical Space of the Library](#), and [Implementation Challenges](#). This toolkit is designed to help practitioners learn more about the key ideas of the learning standards and provide guidelines for sharing those ideas with others. It includes official AASL materials as well as materials created by L4L coordinators, practicing school librarians, library school faculty members, and experts in the field of education. This toolkit was developed by Kristin Fontichiaro and Melissa Johnston and includes an introduction by Nancy Everhart, AASL President 2010–2011.

**Learning4Life Resources page:** [www.ala.org/aasl/learning4life/resources](http://www.ala.org/aasl/learning4life/resources)

Check this resource page often for updates to these areas:

- Listing of your current [L4L State Coordinators](#)

- Descriptions and ordering information for new publications in the L4L series including books such as:
  - [\*A 21st-Century Approach to School Librarian Evaluation\*](#)
  - [\*Developing Collections to Empower Learners\*](#)
  - [\*Empowering Leadership: Developing Behaviors for Success\*](#)
  - [\*Library Spaces for 21st-Century Learners: A Planning Guide for Creating New School Library Concepts\*](#)
- [Free marketing document templates](#) including: brochures, letterhead, postcards, PowerPoint slides, bumper stickers, buttons, Web banners, and a lesson plan template.
- [E-Resources](#) including materials developed by the Standards and Guidelines Committee and Emerging Leader Teams, related *Knowledge Quest* articles, and guidelines for use of the L4L logo.

Portions of this section of the toolkit are excerpted from AASL's Learning4Life (L4L) implementation plan, freely available for [download](#).

# Tools and Resources

## Brochures

[\*Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q&A\*](#). AASL

This brochure answers school librarians' common questions on these important topics and suggests online and print resources providing more information.

[\*School Library Programs Create Lifelong Learners: A Student's and Parent's Guide to Evaluating Independent School Libraries\*](#). AASL Independent School Section

Parents choosing an independent school face an important decision. This guide presents learning standards and critical questions to help families identify the important characteristics of a strong school library program. The included information will interest anyone evaluating a school library program.

[\*School Library Programs Improve Student Learning\*](#). AASL

Designed to help school librarians generate and guide discussion with stakeholder groups in the school community, each brochure in this set outlines goals and key questions specific to each audience—administrators, policymakers, parents, and teachers—helping school librarians lead unique conversations, set goals and expectations for the program and stakeholders, and maximize the potential of the school library program. These brochures can also be customized for your particular school library.

[\*School Libraries Transform Learning\*](#). AASL and *American Libraries*

This free digital magazine is focused entirely on school libraries and designed to be shared with parents, colleagues, administrators, and policymakers. It can open the door to discussion on the multiple ways school library programs transform learning.

## Communication and Presentations

### Selecting a Medium

The table below is an aid to selecting communication tools based on audience and content. It is adapted from Ann Martin's book *Empowering Leadership: Developing Behaviors for Success*.

| Tool                     | Audience Size | Recipient           | Time/Priority        | Content          |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Memo</i>              | Large Group   | Internal            | Important            | Policy / Process |
| <i>Letter</i>            | Large Group   | External            | Important            | Information      |
| <i>Phone Call</i>        | Individual    | Internal / External | Urgent and Important | Information      |
| <i>Face-to-Face</i>      | Large Group   | Internal            | Urgent               | Policy / Process |
| <i>E-mail</i>            | Individual    | Internal            | Urgent and Important | Information      |
| <i>E-mail</i>            | Large Group   | Internal / External | Urgent               | Policy / Process |
| <i>Blog</i>              | Large Group   | Internal            | Not Time-Sensitive   | Need Feedback    |
| <i>Video</i>             | Large Group   | Internal            | Important            | Information      |
| <i>Social Networking</i> | Large Group   | External            | Immediate            | Need Feedback    |

### Free Presentation Tools

Below are presentation tools that can be used to share information with your administrators, school, and parents. All of these are web-based and free to use. Some will require you to set up an account. Many more tools are available, and this is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Tools are listed in alphabetical order.

[\*Canva \(AASL Best Websites for Teaching & Learning 2014\)\*](#): Create slideshows, posters, infographics, and other visual presentations using Canva's many templates and customizable font/image options. Canva works particularly well with social media.

[\*emaze\*](#): Touted as the "next generation" of presentation software, emaze is easy to use and has numerous professional templates to choose from.

[\*Google Presentation / Google Slides\*](#): Sharing and collaboration are easy with these Google tools that are similar to PowerPoint, but web-based.

[Haiku Deck](#) (*AASL Best Websites for Teaching & Learning 2014*): Easily create fun presentations that are primarily image-based with minimal text. Select from thousands of Haiku Deck images or provide your own.

[PowToon](#) (*AASL Best Websites for Teaching & Learning 2014*): With PowToon you can create fun, animated videos or slideshow presentations for free. Add photos, video, music, and/or your own voice.

[Prezi](#) (*AASL Best Websites for Teaching & Learning 2010*): Prezi is cloud-based software that allows you to zoom in and out to make your presentations interactive and visually interesting.

[Slideshare](#): Share what you know and love through presentations, infographics, documents, and more. Search for “school libraries” at the Slideshare site to see the wealth of presentations other librarians have already created and to be inspired!

[Smore](#) (*AASL Best Websites for Teaching & Learning 2013*): Design and publish online flyers in as little as five minutes with Smore. Select from and modify ready-made templates or create your own.

## **Data Reporting—Samples & Templates**

[Annual Summary Prezi Sample \(High School\)](#) by Shannon Harris

This sample library annual summary report was created with Prezi and is reusable. Data includes circulation, website visits, collaborations, student interactions, budget, and collection-development items.

[Annual Report Summary Chart](#) Sample by Debra E. Kachel

A similar chart created with your own information on objectives, data collection tools, and examples of evidence that objectives were met can be an important advocacy tool that helps succinctly communicate what is being accomplished through the school library program.

[Annual Report Key Points and Samples](#) by Jennifer LeGarde

In a posting to her *Adventures of Library Girl* blog, LeGarde shares her experiences with creating annual reports for her school. She summarizes key points for creating effective reports and shares several samples that helped her to design her own.

[Monthly Newsletter Sample](#) (Elementary School) by Kathryn Cole

This sample monthly newsletter aimed at teachers shares celebrations, ideas for thematic teacher-librarian collaboration, and availability of generic lessons for library instruction.

[Quarterly Report Prezi Sample](#) (High School) by Shannon Harris

“Library Snapshots,” a sample school library quarterly report, was created with Prezi. As with Harris’s annual report sample, you can copy this presentation and customize it with your own data.

[Quarterly Report Template](#) for Use with PowerPoint by Shannon Harris

This downloadable POTX (PowerPoint Template) file was based on the information in the sample Prezi report above. Sections provide ideas for what to include in reports to administrators, colleagues, teachers, or the community.

## Graphics

[ALA Graphics for School Libraries](#)

ALA Graphics provides posters, bookmarks, gifts and incentives that support libraries, literacy, and reading. Check out the [ALA Graphics Catalog](#). To order, visit the [ALA Store](#) or call 800-545-2433, press 7.

## Infographics and Posters

[100 Things Kids Will Miss If They Don't Have a School Librarian in Their School](#) by Nancy Everhart and Susan Ballard

This downloadable free poster is a startling list that every school librarian should know and share with parents, students, staff, and especially administration. A [video introduction](#) to the list is available on YouTube.

[School Librarians Transform Learning Infographic](#) by AASL

Created for the digital supplement magazine *School Libraries Transform Learning*, this infographic (a free PDF file) includes statistics and quotes on school librarians’ impact on digital literacy, student learning, and leadership within the school.

[School Libraries & Student Achievement](#) by Library Research Service

This one-page infographic (a free PDF file) presents highlights from all of LRS’s school library impact studies.

[Strong School Libraries Build Strong Students](#) by AASL Legislation Committee

This free multi-page PDF file contains an infographic and quotations about the positive impacts of school librarians.

## Legislation Action

[ALA’s Legislative Action Center](#)

Who can be a library advocate? Anyone who cares about America’s libraries! While the American Library Association Washington Office advocates at the

federal level for school libraries, grassroots advocacy efforts and your voice help to determine the success or failure of legislation.

## National Campaigns and Promotions

[llovelibraries.org](http://llovelibraries.org)

llovelibraries.org is an ALA initiative designed to keep America informed about what's happening in today's libraries. llovelibraries.org promotes the value of libraries and librarians to the public, explains key issues affecting libraries, and urges readers to support and take action for their libraries. Parents who want to get involved can get info and ideas at the [School Libraries page](#).

## Partnerships

[School/Public Library Cooperative Programs](#). Association for Library Service to Children.

The AASL/ALSC/YALSA Interdivisional Committee on School/Public Library Cooperation aims to design and conduct a project of mutual interest and benefit to the three participating ALA divisions. Get ideas by reading what other librarians have done. Share your cooperative program by filling out the interactive form.

## Planning—Collaborative Instruction

[Collaborative Planning](#). New York City Department of Education

This document provides resources, definitions, and samples of collaborative planning for school librarians and teachers.

[Media Specialist Templates](#). Georgia Department of Education

This site provides downloadable templates and forms for collaborative planning, instructional planning, marketing, and more.

[“A Matrix for School Librarians: Aligning Standards, Inquiry, Reading, and Instruction”](#) by Judi Moreillon

Within this *School Library Monthly* article (January 2013, 29–32) is a matrix that can guide school librarians when co-planning with colleagues. It serves to pull the pieces of the puzzle together to align library programs with standards initiatives (Common Core State Standards and AASL learning standards), the inquiry processes, reading comprehension strategies, and applications that guide teaching and learning in schools.

[Standards for the 21st-Century Learner Lesson Plan Database](#). AASL

This database contains archived lesson plans and supplementary materials that can be used for collaborating with teachers or planning lessons.

[Understanding by Design Collaborative Template](#). Adapted from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's *Understanding by Design Professional Workbook*

This template can be used when planning collaboratively with teachers. The template is designed to specify student, teacher, and librarian activities.

[Understanding by Design Professional Development Workbook](#) by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins

This workbook provides explanations, templates, and samples for lesson planning using understanding by design principles. [The Introduction is available online](#).

[Understanding by Design—Backwards Design Process](#) developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

This template can be used when planning collaboratively with teachers. This document follows the backwards design philosophy of lesson planning.

[Working Together is Working Smarter Infographic](#). AASL

This AASL infographic details school librarian findings from [Remodeling Literacy Learning: Making Room for What Works](#), a report released by the National Center for Literacy Education. The report outlines key findings from a nationwide survey and investigates the connection between professional learning, educator collaboration, and student learning.

## **Planning—Program Development**

[A 21st-Century Approach to School Librarian Evaluation](#). AASL

*A 21st-Century Approach to School Librarian Evaluation* uses the AASL *Empowering Learners* program guidelines as a basis for a school librarian evaluation rubric—one that can be adapted or duplicated by school librarians and shared with school administrators. Workbook-style prompts walk school librarians through suggested readings, action tips, and evidence collection to help gauge their current levels of achievement, set goals for progress, and form plans for future professional development. This book provides school librarians an opportunity to engage in rigorous self-evaluation and to shape evaluations by school administrators'.

[A Planning Guide for Empowering Learners with School Library Program Assessment Rubric](#). AASL

This subscription-based interactive online tool assists school librarians in the tasks of assessing and planning for their programs. The tool helps users evaluate their program and its mission, develop attainable goals for the program's future, and enlist the help of a variety of stakeholders.



[\*Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs\*](#). AASL

*Empowering Learners* builds on a strong history of guidelines published to ensure that school library program planners meet the needs of the changing environment and go beyond the basics to provide goals, priorities, criteria, and general principles for establishing effective school library programs. This publication is an essential resource for any school library program.

[\*SWOT Worksheet\*](#). ALA

This worksheet can help organize your thoughts during planning as you consider your school library program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

## Talking Points

Below are sources of talking points you may want to use to support and advocate for your school library program.

[\*AASL Position Statements\*](#)

These position statements reflect the official position of the American Association of School Librarians on matters related to the school library profession and provide a foundation for developing an advocacy campaign.

[\*Ask Me How – Message Cards \(Business Card Templates\)\*](#) [Zip file]

[\*Ask Me How – Button Art\*](#) [PDF file]

First distributed at the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Chicago, these awareness buttons and message cards, which read, “Ask Me How School Librarians Transform Learning,” are intended to stimulate dialogue about how school libraries and librarians are leaders in education and the ways they are transforming learning for students. The message cards contain five key message points appropriate for educator and parent audiences.

[\*ALA Resolution: School Libraries and Librarians are Critical to Educational Success\*](#)

At its June 2012 meeting, the Council of the American Library Association passed this resolution in support of school libraries and librarians.

ALA Talking Points:

[@Your Library Talking Points](#)

[School Library Program Talking Points \(Preschool, ages 0–5\)](#)

[School Library Program Talking Points \(Kindergarten–Middle School, ages 6–12\)](#)

[School Library Program Talking Points \(Teens, ages 13–18\)](#)

[“6 Ways Leaders Can Get Better Results by Not Talking”](#) by Erika Anderson  
[Learning4Life Message Box](#)

Many people instinctively use a sheet of bulleted “talking points” to form and remember their messages. We are all taught to read and even write in linear fashion, but in oral communication that foundation can break down. The message box strategy can provide consistency with flexibility. Use this school library message box and tip sheet to deliver flexible yet focused and compelling messages that resonate with your stakeholders.

## **Toolkits**

[Parent Advocate Toolkit](#). AASL

Parents can be a school librarian’s strongest and most vocal advocates. This toolkit is designed to help school librarians build parent support for their programs.

[Pre-Service Toolkit for Principals and Teachers](#). AASL

The resources listed in the toolkit, developed by the AASL Educators of School Librarians Section (ESLS), can help to educate future principals and teachers about the significant role that quality library programs can play in student learning. The resources can also be shared with practicing principals and teachers, who would benefit from learning more about the impact that a quality school library program can have on their schools.

[School Library Crisis Toolkit](#). AASL

This toolkit is designed to assist school librarians who have encountered immediate threats to their positions and/or programs. The toolkit guides school librarians through building meaningful and effective stakeholder support.

[School Library Program Health and Wellness Toolkit](#). AASL

This toolkit provides a full range of resources to help school librarians build or update plans for stakeholder support and true advocacy, ideally, preventing a future crisis.

[Media Relations Handbook for Libraries](#). ALA Public Awareness Office

The [ALA Public Awareness Office](#) has compiled resources to help you prepare and discuss key library messages and hot topics such as information literacy, Children’s Internet Protection Act, and better salaries. Links to media relations strategies, crisis communications plans, library advocacy materials, and more are also provided.

*Where School is Cool! Frontline Advocacy for School Libraries Toolkit*. ALA Advocacy University

“Frontline advocates” are members of the advocacy team who take the message further than the school librarian could alone. This toolkit provides simple tools and strategies for anyone who works for or is passionate about their school library.

## **Videos**

*Libraries Transform Campaign*. ALA

The “Libraries Transform” campaign is designed to increase public awareness of the value, impact, and services provided by libraries and library professionals. The [campaign website](#) hosts a variety of videos, trends, stories and resources that showcase the transformative nature of today’s libraries, elevating the critical role libraries play in the digital age.

*School Librarians are Teachers: Teacher Librarians: An Essential Component in Creating College Ready Graduates* by Sudi Stodola, Denver Public Schools

This 3:50 minute video aimed at administrators, school board members, parents, and community members shows the benefits of the school librarian for students by citing several studies. This video highlights service and the power of collaboration.



# Delving Deeper

## **AASL / ALA Resources**

### [AASL Publications – Books and Products for School Librarians](#)

AASL offers a rich variety of publications on topics essential to school librarians everywhere. Look for full descriptions of each publication at [www.ala.org/aasl/booksproducts](http://www.ala.org/aasl/booksproducts). Order online at [www.alastore.ala.org/aasl](http://www.alastore.ala.org/aasl).

### [ALA Books for School Librarians](#)

ALA Editions and ALA Neal-Schuman publish professional development resources for school librarians to help improve programs, build on best practices, and develop leadership skills. Check out the [ALA Editions Catalog](#) for new and bestselling resources.

#### 4 Easy Ways to Order

1. **Order Online:** [alastore.ala.org](http://alastore.ala.org) or e-mail [alastore@ala.org](mailto:alastore@ala.org)
2. **Fax:** 312-280-5860
3. **Call Toll Free:** 1-866-SHOP-ALA
4. **Mail:** American Library Association, 28281 Network Place, Chicago, IL 60673-1282

American Association of School Librarians. 2009. *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs*. Chicago: AASL.

*Empowering Learners* advances school library programs to meet the needs of the changing school library environment and is guided by the *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* and *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action*. It builds on a strong history of guidelines published to ensure that school library program planners go beyond the basics to provide goals, priorities, criteria, and general principles for establishing effective school library programs. This publication is an essential resource for any school library program. (AASL abstract)

Andrews, Sandra. 2012. *The Power of Data: An Introduction to Using Local, State, and National Data to Support School Library Programs*. Chicago: AASL.

This book discusses the use of data sets to establish benchmarking goals for school library programs, focusing on both the data available from the national level and how that data can influence decisions at the local level. Most importantly this book will help school librarians increase their ability to effectively use existing data and to articulate the analysis of that data to the people who need the information, including principals, superintendents, school boards, parents, teachers, and students. (AASL abstract) [eCOLLAB webinar available](#)

Carr, Jo Ann. 2008. *Leadership for Excellence*. Chicago: AASL.

How do the most successful school librarians play a leading role in student achievement in their schools? Jo Ann Carr and AASL share behind-the-scenes details and best practices, including how and why top programs succeed, get funding, and become integral contributors in their school communities. (AASL abstract)

Donham, Jean. 2013. *Enhancing Teaching and Learning: A Leadership Guide for School Librarians*. Chicago: ALA.

This new edition of a classic shows how to take a proactive role in shaping instruction by learning how to develop and implement a school library program and integrate it into the total educational experience. Revised and updated, Donham's third edition covers all aspects of the school system: students, curriculum and instruction, principals, district administration, and the community. It demonstrates how to interact and collaborate in order to integrate the school library program throughout these environments. (ALA abstract)

Martin, Ann. 2013. *Empowering Leadership: Developing Behaviors for Success*. Chicago: AASL.

This book takes the mystery out of leadership by illustrating the visible and invisible components of leadership. Essential questions, reflective strategies, and practical tips within each chapter will bring school librarians to their next level in leadership while they recognize the hidden leadership opportunities in daily tasks that are already central to the profession. *Empowering Leadership* offers lessons and examples to improve the leader within and encourage development of each librarian's unique leadership style. (AASL abstract) [eCOLLAB webinar available](#)

Moreillon, Judi, and Susan Ballard. 2013. *Instructional Partnerships: A Pathway to Leadership (Best of KQ)*. Chicago: AASL.

Valuable for novices and seasoned school librarians, this *Best of Knowledge Quest* monograph is a collection of seminal articles to support pre-service and

in-service school librarians in developing and strengthening the instructional partner role. *Instructional Partnerships: A Pathway to Leadership* provides readers with background knowledge, research-based evidence, and examples of instructional partnerships in action. Serving in this role positions school librarians as key faculty in improving student learning outcomes through building collaborative partnerships for instruction. (AASL abstract)

## Articles

Ammons-Stephens, Shorlette, et al. "[Developing Core Leadership Competencies for the Library Profession.](#)" *Library Leadership & Management* 23 (2): 63–74.

The success of libraries as organizations is determined by the actions of the individuals who work in those libraries; the success of those individuals in carrying out the missions of those libraries is in large measure a reflection of the type and quality of leadership. Successful library leaders demonstrate certain skills that are instrumental in the delivery of desired outcomes. We usually think of the demonstration of these skills as competencies. (LLAMA abstract)

Dees, Diane. C., et al. 2007. "[Today's School Library Media Specialist Leader.](#)" *Library Media Connection* 25 (4): 10–14.

The article discusses how school librarians can display leadership in reading through several functions. The author offers leadership ideas and notes that accomplished school librarians are instructional leaders who forge opportunities for learners and hone their administrative skills. The article also discusses how the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the United States defines library media leadership.

Everhart, Nancy. 2007. "[Leadership: School Library Media Specialists as Effective School Leaders.](#)" *Knowledge Quest* 35 (4): 54–57.

According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the accomplished school librarians are instructional leaders who make greater opportunities for learners. This article discusses how a school librarian can become an effective leader through providing staff development and modeling ethical and important application of technology.

Kaland, Christie. 2011. "[Creating a Districtwide Advocacy Plan, Part 1: Vision and Voice.](#)" *School Library Monthly* 24 (3).

Kaland, Christie. 2012. "[Creating a Districtwide Advocacy Plan, Part 2: Visibility and Vigilance](#)" *School Library Monthly* 24 (4).

This set of articles outlines a systematic plan for creating a districtwide school library advocacy plan and the components and characteristics necessary to ensure continued district and community support for a strong school library program.

Kuon, Tricia, and Holly Weimar. 2012. "[How Does Your Boss See You? Proof That Principals Value Librarians.](#)" *School Library Journal* 58 (9): 36–39.

This article introduces and summarizes research on how principals view the role of the school librarian. The article provides a blueprint of what school librarians need to do every day to be perceived as making a difference.

Lance, Keith Curry, and Linda Hofschire. 2011. "[Something to Shout About.](#)" *School Library Journal* 57 (9): 28–33.

This article summarizes a study conducted using data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to document the impact of librarian layoffs on fourth-grade reading scores between 2004 to 2009. The results are what you'd expect: in many cases, fewer librarians translated to lower performance—or a slower rise in scores—on standardized tests. (Excerpted from article)

Moreillon, Judi. 2015. "[Collaborative Relationships with Principals.](#)" *School Library Monthly* 31 (3): 27–28.

This column offers practical and positive suggestions for examining and building the collaborative partnership with your school principal, which is an ongoing goal for many school librarians. From observing your school's readiness to foster a collaborative culture to aligning the library program to the school goals, school librarians have numerous opportunities to connect with principals, and demonstrate how the school library program helps all students (and teachers, and principals) attain learning success. (*SLM* abstract)

Ray, Mark. 2013. "[Make the Principal Connection.](#)" *School Library Journal* (January 31).

In this article, Ray describes ways that school librarians and principals can work together to make waves. Working well with others to accomplish mutual goals is a key to strong advocacy and a strong program.

Shannon, Donna. 2009. "[Principals' Perspectives of School Librarians.](#)" *School Libraries Worldwide* 15 (2): 1–22.

This article summarizes research done to determine the criteria principals in South Carolina used in hiring, evaluating, and assessing the success of a school librarian. It may provide school librarians with an idea of how to better meet the needs and wishes of their school administrator.

## **Books**

Coatney, Sharon. 2010. *The Many Faces of School Library Leadership*. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited.

This book looks at all the aspects of leadership in school libraries, e.g., information literacy instruction, advocacy, technology, and more. It speaks to



the fact that school librarians cannot be leaders in only one area, but rather must demonstrate leadership in many facets of school librarianship.

Johnson, Doug. 2013. *The Indispensable Librarian: Surviving (and Thriving) in School Libraries in the Information Age*, 2nd ed. Santa Barbara, CA: Linworth.

Johnson's text continues to provide school librarians with valuable and practical advice on building a strong school library program. The book also offers a variety of worksheets, samples, and checklists.

Lankford, Mary D. 2006. *Leadership and the School Librarian: Essays from Leaders in the Field*. Worthington, OH: Linworth.

Practicing school librarians offer advice through stories that demonstrate use of leadership skills in literacy instruction, curriculum development, advocacy, and more. This is a book dedicated to broadening leadership skills in essential areas so school librarians can be strong advocates for their programs.

Luecke, Richard, and James G. Patterson. 2008. *How to Become a Better Negotiator*, 2nd ed. New York: AMACOM.

Whether it's at home or at work, so much of our lives involves negotiating to get what we want. From negotiating a higher salary, to lowering costs from suppliers, to hammering out a new contract with a major customer, or even deciding where to go on vacation, the only way to consistently arrive at successful conclusions is to master the art of negotiation. Updated with completely new tactics and strategies, *How to Become a Better Negotiator* lets readers in on the same high-level skills that experienced negotiators use. Packed with fill-in-the-blank sections, tips, quizzes, and chapter reviews, the book covers important topics such as listening, assertiveness, and how to deal with hostile opponents. In addition, the book now features new chapters on preparation, including: identifying issues and interests, determining alternatives to a deal and reserve price, the five basic steps of negotiation and "doing the deal," and typical negotiating pitfalls and how to avoid them." (AMA abstract)

## Research

Everhart, Nancy, and Marcia Mardis. "[What Do Stakeholders Know about School Library Programs? Results of a Focus Group Evaluation.](#)" *School Library Research* 17.

Supporting the Infrastructure Needs of 21st Century School Library Programs... was a one-year project conducted in Pennsylvania to better identify and understand what stakeholders... expect from school library programs to educate tomorrow's citizens. The project team gave presentations to four focus groups throughout the Commonwealth; during the focus group sessions stakeholders engaged with research and data about the impact of school library programs

in Pennsylvania....A formal external evaluation of the focus groups found that reaching out to stakeholders in an organized, purposeful way, and not in a crisis mode, garnered substantial support for school libraries and school librarians.” (from authors’ abstract)

Johnston, Melissa P. 2012. “[School Librarians as Technology Integration Leaders: Enablers and Barriers to Leadership Enactment.](#)” *School Library Research* 15.

Despite the abundance of literature that has suggested the need for and the importance of school librarians to be a proactive leaders in technology integration, this role is one that has been ignored in the research arena and left undefined for school administrators, teachers, and the school librarians themselves, leading to uncertainty concerning how school librarians enact this role in practice. This research, based on distributed-leadership theory, investigates current practice of accomplished school librarians to identify what factors are enabling some to thrive as technology integration leaders and what factors are hindering others. This report of the results includes the initial identification and categorization of the enablers and barriers experienced by school librarians in enacting a leadership role in technology integration, a discussion of implications for the profession, and areas of future research.” (from author’s abstract)

Lance, Keith Curry, and Bill Schwarz. 2012. “[How Pennsylvania School Libraries Pay Off: Investments in Student Achievement and Academic Standards.](#)” PA School Library Project. HSLC.

School librarians teach 21st-century skills and create lifelong learners. The 2011 Pennsylvania study documents empirically, for the first time, the very close associations between the *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* and the *Common Core State Standards*, and strong school library programs. In particular, the evidence indicates that inquiry-based learning, which school library programs support, provides students with a strong foundation of learning skills that will serve them well throughout their lives.

Library Research Service. 2013. “[National Statistics.](#)”

Statistics on school libraries are collected by the National Center for Education Statistics approximately every five years through the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). Results of this survey are summarized in SASS reports. Occasionally, there is a special report on school libraries. This is an excellent resource with many studies and statistics. See also their [School Library Impact Studies](#).

Scholastic Research Foundation, 2008. *School Libraries Work!* 3rd ed.

Studies in nineteen states and one Canadian province conducted over nineteen years have demonstrated how school libraries have positive impacts on student achievement whether the measure is reading scores, literacy, or just more learning.

## Online Sources: Podcasts, Videos, Blogs, etc.

“[The 21st Century Media Center Program](#).” Library of Michigan and the Michigan Association of Media Education

This eight-minute video was created in 2009 to document the value of a certified school librarian. The video provides good perspectives from many different members of a school community. The messages that librarians are teachers and information literacy is a key skill set are emphasized.

“[30 Second Thought Leadership Archive](#).” AASL

AASL presents *30 Second Thought Leadership: Insights from Leaders in the School Library Community*, a video podcast series delivering brief and practical advice from respected school library leaders on important questions about school libraries today and in the future. Questions are based on the themes of *Knowledge Quest* issues. (AASL abstract)

“[Advocacy University](#).” ALA Office for Library Advocacy

Advocacy University is a comprehensive clearinghouse of advocacy tools and resources for all types of libraries. The resources are useful for school librarians and other advocates for school library programs.

[The District Dispatch](#). ALA Washington Office

[Subscribe to The District Dispatch](#) for up-to-date information about key legislative and policy issues that concern libraries. The ALA Washington Office includes the Office of Government Relations and the Office for Information Technology Policy.

“[Lead the Change: Professional Development for Today’s Librarian](#).” *Library Journal*

*Library Journal’s* “Lead the Change” offers timely resources and tools to stay ahead of the innovations and changes impacting the library profession. Library staff at all levels can participate in hands-on live events, access insightful on-demand webcasts, and new this year is [LTC Leadership Academy – Online](#), a new online learning program that will help staff learn essential skills, solve problems unique to their libraries, and put strategic plans into action. (*LJ* summary)

Matthews, Steve. 2012. “[Top Ten Traits of Great Library Leaders](#).” *21st Century Library Blog* (December 18).

According to Matthews, “In order to be a great leader, a person must possess and demonstrate certain characteristics, or traits of leadership. Here are 10 that should be at the top of anyone’s list who is striving to become a great library leader.” (Introduction)

Sinek, Simon. 2009 “[How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#).” TEDxPugetSound

In this videoed lecture, leadership expert and author Simon Sinek “explores how leaders can inspire cooperation, trust and change.” (online bio of author)

## **Professional Development**

[AASL eCOLLAB](#) | Your eLearning Laboratory: Content, Collaboration, Community.

AASL eCOLLAB is a repository of webcasts, podcasts, and other digital resources from AASL, including the latest issue of *Knowledge Quest*. eCOLLAB is accessible to AASL members and subscribers to eCOLLAB, and provides a central location to collect and manage your e-learning on your time and at your pace. A select group of webinars listed are available to the public for free.

- [Advocacy](#) (AASL members and eCOLLAB subscribers will need to log in)
- [Upcoming](#)
- [Complimentary](#)

“[Library Leadership Training Resources](#).” ALA

This resource list represents leadership development training opportunities for library professionals at all levels and specialties within the library community. (ALA abstract)

# Calendar of Events

Taking advantage of special observances to plan school-wide promotions is one way to put your library in the spotlight. If you're clever, you might end up on the six o'clock news. Some events, like National Library Week or School Library Month, are the equivalent of our national holidays. Many other literacy and literary events are naturals for school libraries, plus thousands more that lend themselves to showing how school library programs support learning on almost any topic—everything from Chemistry Month to Be Kind to Pets Week. Many of these observances come “ready-made” with publicity materials and ideas for activities.

Sources:

[www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/events](http://www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/events)

[www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks](http://www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks)

## February

### *Library Lovers' Month*

This is a time for everyone, especially Friends of the Library and other library fans, to express their feelings. A list of lively activities for libraries and their lovers includes visits from costumed book characters and fundraising ideas. In addition to suggestions for activities, online postcards and downloadable art for bookmarks, banners, and buttons are provided at [www.librarysupport.net/librarylovers](http://www.librarysupport.net/librarylovers).

## March

### *Digital Learning Day*

Presented by the Alliance for Excellent Education and other national educational associations and organizations, with AASL as a core partner, Digital Learning Day (DLD) calls on teachers, schools, principals, community leaders, parents and stu-

dents to submit videos in February. The March event celebrates innovative teaching practices that make learning more personalized and engaging. DLD is also intended to encourage exploration of how digital learning can provide more students with more opportunities to get the skills they need to succeed in college, career, and life. During DLD AASL celebrates innovative teaching. For more, visit <[www.digitallearningday.org](http://www.digitallearningday.org)>.

### ***Freedom of Information Day***

This annual event is observed on or near the birthday of James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution” and the foremost advocate for openness in government. Follow the ALA Washington Office Blog *District Dispatch* at <[www.districtdispatch.org](http://www.districtdispatch.org)> for upcoming events.

### ***Read Across America***

Started in 1998 as a way to get kids excited about reading, the National Education Association’s Read Across America has become the nation’s largest reading event. The year-round program culminates each year on or near Dr. Seuss’s birthday. Promotion ideas and links to free resources and files of posters and other promotional materials can be found at <[www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross)>.

### ***Teen Tech Week***

Teen Tech Week is a national initiative sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services Association and is aimed at teens, their parents, educators, and other concerned adults. The purpose is to ensure that teens are competent and ethical users of technologies, especially those that are offered through libraries, such as DVDs, databases, audiobooks, and videogames. Teen Tech Week encourages teens to use libraries’ non-print resources for education and recreation, and to recognize that librarians are qualified, trusted professionals in the field of information technology. Teen Tech Week began in 2007 and has a general theme of Get Connected @ your library. For more information, visit <<http://teentechweek.ning.com>>.

## **April**

### ***El día de los niños/El día de los libros***

This annual celebration of children, families, and reading focuses on the importance of advocating literacy for every child regardless of linguistic and cultural background. It is sponsored by ALA and Association for Library Service to Children, along with REFORMA National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking. Free resources for planning a celebration are at <<http://dia.ala.org>>.

### ***National Library Week***

First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is a national observance sponsored by ALA and libraries across the country each April. It is a time to celebrate the contributions of our nation's libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support. Tips for organizing and promoting can be found at <<http://www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek>>.

### ***National Library Workers Day***

The American Library Association-Allied Professional Association, the organization for the advancement of library employees, annually sponsors National Library Workers Day, which falls on the Tuesday of National Library Week. First celebrated in 2004, the purpose is to recognize all library workers, including librarians, support staff, and others who make library service possible every day. Learn more at <<http://ala-apa.org/nlwd>>.

### ***National Poetry Month***

Launched in 1996, National Poetry Month brings together libraries, schools, literary organizations, and others to celebrate the role of poetry in American culture with readings, festivals, book displays, workshops, and other events. The Academy of American Poets sponsors the event. For more information, see <[www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/home](http://www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/home)>.

### ***National Volunteer Week***

The purpose of this week, established by Points of Light Foundation in 1974, is to recognize and celebrate the efforts of volunteers at the local, state, and national levels. If you have volunteer helpers and supporters, there's no better time to salute them for what they do. More at <[www.pointsoflight.org/signature-events/national-volunteer-week](http://www.pointsoflight.org/signature-events/national-volunteer-week)>.

### ***School Library Month***

School Library Month is the American Association of School Librarians' celebration of school librarians and their programs. Every April school librarians are encouraged to create activities to help their school and local community celebrate the essential role that strong school library programs play in transforming learning. For tips and suggested activities, visit <[www.ala.org/aasl/slm](http://www.ala.org/aasl/slm)>.

### ***World Book and Copyright Day***

World Book and Copyright Day is an ideal opportunity to talk about copyright, plagiarism, and other issues related to intellectual property. Sponsored internationally by UNESCO, this day is a symbolic one for world literature. On this date and

in the same year of 1616, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega died. It is also the date of the birth or death of several other prominent authors. See [www.unesco.org/culture/bookday](http://www.unesco.org/culture/bookday).

## **May**

### ***Children's Book Week***

Observed since 1919, Children's Book Week encourages children and the adults who care for them to spend some time with a book each day. Tips for organizing and publicizing are available from the Children's Book Council at [www.cbcbbooks.org/about/ecar-cbw](http://www.cbcbbooks.org/about/ecar-cbw).

### ***Choose Privacy Week***

Choose Privacy Week, first observed by the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom in 2010, is an initiative that invites library users into a national conversation about privacy rights in a digital age. The campaign gives libraries the tools they need to educate and engage users, and gives citizens the resources to think critically and make more informed choices about their privacy. Visit [www.privacyrevolution.org](http://www.privacyrevolution.org).

### ***Get Caught Reading Month***

This nationwide campaign aims to remind people of all ages how much fun it is to read. The observance is sponsored by the Association of American Publishers. Check out the suggestions for activities and support materials at [www.getcaughtreading.com](http://www.getcaughtreading.com).

### ***National Library Legislative Day***

National Library Legislative Day, co-sponsored by the District of Columbia Library Association and ALA, is held each year in May to bring librarians, library trustees, board members, and other library friends to Washington, DC, to talk with their representatives and senators about issues of concern. These include funding for school libraries. Be there if you can. For information, visit the ALA Washington Office's site at [www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/nlld](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/nlld).

### ***National PTA Teacher Appreciation Week***

Since 1984 this week offers an opportunity to let teachers know how much you appreciate their hard work. Learn more at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org). On the "For Families" menu, click "Teacher Appreciation Week."



## **September**

### ***Banned Books Week***

Sponsored by over a dozen organizations—including ALA—Banned Books Week is observed during the last week of September each year. This event is an opportunity to educate about one of our most precious freedoms in a democracy and the role of libraries. A Banned Books Week Press Kit, list of “The 100 Most Challenged Books,” and other materials are available from the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom at <[www.ala.org/bbooks/bannedbooksweek](http://www.ala.org/bbooks/bannedbooksweek)>.

### ***Banned Websites Awareness Day***

To raise awareness of the overly restrictive blocking of legitimate educational websites and academically useful social-networking tools in schools and school libraries, AASL has designated one day during Banned Books Week as Banned Websites Awareness Day. AASL is asking school librarians and other educators to promote an awareness of how overly restrictive filtering adversely affects student learning. For more, visit <[www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/bwad](http://www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/bwad)>.

### ***Library Card Sign-Up Month***

A time when ALA and libraries across the country remind parents that the most important school supply of all is @ your library\*—it’s your library card. Thousands of public and school libraries join together each fall in this national effort. Posters and other promotional materials are available for free download. For links to the graphic files and to share your ideas on how to organize, go to <[www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks/card](http://www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks/card)>.

### ***International Literacy Day***

A time to ask: What would your life be like if you couldn’t read? This annual event, sponsored by the International Literacy Association and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an opportunity to focus on the 875 million adults worldwide who do not know how to read or write. Nearly two-thirds are women. For more information, see <[www.literacyworldwide.org/about-us/news-events/international-literacy-day](http://www.literacyworldwide.org/about-us/news-events/international-literacy-day)>.

## **October**

### ***Connected Educator Month***

The U.S. Department of Education has declared October Connected Educator Month (CEM), and AASL has signed on as a participating organization.

CEM will be celebrated with four-plus weeks of online events and activities, including forums, webinars, guided tours, open houses, contests, badges, and more. Visit the Connected Educator website for more information and a complete schedule at <http://connectededucators.org/cem>.

### ***International School Library Day***

Observed the third Monday in October, this day is sponsored by the International Association of School Librarianship to focus on the richness and variety of school library services in different countries, and the contribution that they make to their schools and communities. For activity and publicity ideas, see [www.iasl-online.org/advocacy/islm/index.html](http://www.iasl-online.org/advocacy/islm/index.html).

### ***Jumpstart's Read for the Record***

The Read for the Record Campaign mobilizes millions of children and adults to celebrate literacy by participating in the largest shared reading experience. Each year the campaign has shone a national spotlight on America's early education achievement gap and highlighted Jumpstart's mission—to work toward the day every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed—and programs to address this crisis. For more, visit [www.jstart.org/campaigns/read-record](http://www.jstart.org/campaigns/read-record).

### ***National Friends of Libraries Week***

Friends of Libraries groups now have their very own national week of celebration, courtesy of United for Libraries (Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, a division of ALA). The celebration offers a twofold opportunity to celebrate Friends. Use the time to creatively promote your group in the community, to raise awareness, and to promote membership. This is also an excellent opportunity for your library and district administrators to recognize the Friends for their help and support of the library. Visit United for Libraries at [www.ala.org/united/events\\_conferences/folweek](http://www.ala.org/united/events_conferences/folweek).

### ***National Storytelling Festival***

The International Storytelling Center celebrates the power of storytelling each year in October by showcasing the world's stories, storytellers, and storytelling traditions at the National Storytelling Festival—the world's premier storytelling event—in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Why not hold your own festival and get students and teachers involved in this ancient and fun tradition? Learn more at [www.storytellingcenter.net/festival](http://www.storytellingcenter.net/festival).

## ***Teen Read Week***

Observed the third week of October, this annual celebration is sponsored by ALA and its Young Adult Library Services Association to encourage teens to “read for the fun of it.” The ALA Graphics Catalog offers a wealth of promotional materials. Ideas for celebrating and sample publicity materials are provided online. Go to <http://teenreadweek.ning.com>.

## **November**

### ***American Education Week***

Sponsored by the National Education Association, this annual event celebrates the educators and school staff who keep children safe, healthy, and help them achieve. That includes you! Tools, including downloadable artwork, are provided at [www.nea.org/aew](http://www.nea.org/aew).

### ***International Games Day***

ALA’s National Gaming Day, first celebrated in 2008, focuses on the social and recreational side of gaming. Gaming at the library encourages patrons of all ages to interact with diverse peers, share their expertise, and develop new strategies for gaming and learning. At the library, kids can socialize with their friends and play board and video games while surrounded by books, librarians, and a real world of knowledge. Visit <http://igd.ala.org>.

## **December**

### ***Hour of Code***

Hour of Code is intended to expose as many K–12 students as possible to computer coding. Free online tutorials and projects are available for students of all ages. Try Hour of Code with a few classes or the whole school! Go to <https://hourofcode.com/us> and <http://code.org> to learn how to give your students this experience, even if you know nothing about coding. Many Hour of Code events are held in December, but any time of year is a good time to open all students’ eyes to the possibilities of playing or working in computer science.



# Too Good Not to Share

Keep this idea exchange going and share your stories, tools, literature, events, or other resources with your colleagues. Visit the AASL website and use the comment area at the bottom of the toolkit landing page to leave your tips—[www.ala.org/aasl/toolkits/promoting](http://www.ala.org/aasl/toolkits/promoting).