



AASL Member and Stakeholder Consultation Process on the Learning Standards and Program Guidelines

Executive Summary | October 2016

AASL Standards & Guidelines Editorial Board

Marcia A. Mardis, Chair

Associate Professor, Florida State University

Susan D. Ballard

Program Director, School Librarian Certification, Granite State College/USNH, NH

Elizabeth Burns

Assistant Professor, Old Dominion University, VA

Kathryn Roots Lewis

Director of Media Services and Instructional Technology, Norman Public Schools, OK

Kathy Mansfield

Library Media Consultant, Kentucky Department of Education

Deborah Rinio

School Librarian, Hutchison High School, AK

Kathleen Riopelle Roberts

School Librarian, Henrico County Public Schools, VA

AASL Staff

Sylvia Knight Norton

Executive Director

Stephanie Book

Manager, Communications

AASL Board Liaison

Ken Stewart

School Librarian
Blue Valley High School, KS

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Research conducted by KRC Research, 700 13th Street, 8th Floor, Washington, DC 20005.

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Situation Analysis & Objectives



For the first time in decades the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), embarked on a multi-layered survey, data, and research approach to evaluate, revise and remodel learning standards for students and program guidelines for school librarians.

AASL's standards and guidelines help school librarians establish effective school library programs, and provide goals to advance programs and prepare students (K-12) for college, careers, and citizenship. AASL is updating its standards and guidelines to meet current and future needs.

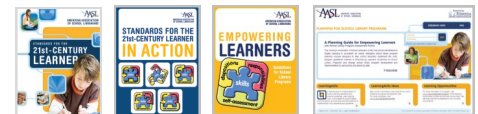
A seven-member AASL Standards and Guidelines Editorial Board is leading this update. The Editorial Board began work in March 2015 and will conclude work in November 2017.

To facilitate the consultation process, AASL commissioned KRC Research to work with AASL and its Editorial Board to develop and implement a member and stakeholder consultation process to widely involve and engage members and stakeholders in assessing current needs and visioning the ideal standards and guidelines for the years ahead.

This report summarizes the research findings.

The current series of learning standards and program guidelines documents under evaluation include:

- *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* (@2007)
- *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner In Action* (@2009)
- *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs* (@2009)
- *A Planning Guide for Empowering Learners* (@2010)



Research Process & Methods

Member and stakeholder research to inform the AASL
Editorial Board update of the association's learning
standards and program guidelines documents:

1. **Development**
2. **Consultation**
3. **Results Reporting**

Consultation Process

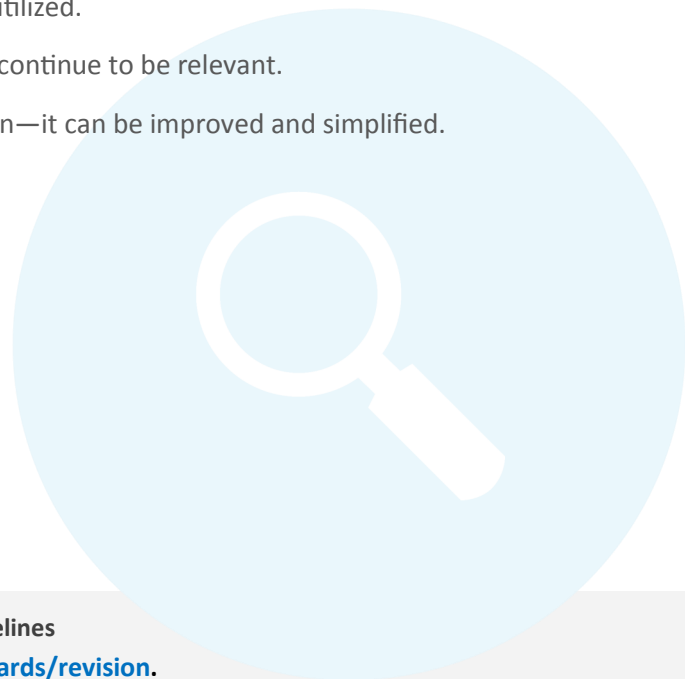
GOAL: to assess attitudes and perceptions about the current products, including **content, usability**, and how AASL might improve **implementation assistance**.



Executive Summary Overview

As the quantitative and qualitative research evolved, four primary threads of discovery emerged.

1. Standards and guidelines are valued, but underutilized.
2. With refinement, many of the current concepts continue to be relevant.
3. The current presentation is a barrier to utilization—it can be improved and simplified.
4. There are opportunities to facilitate utilization.

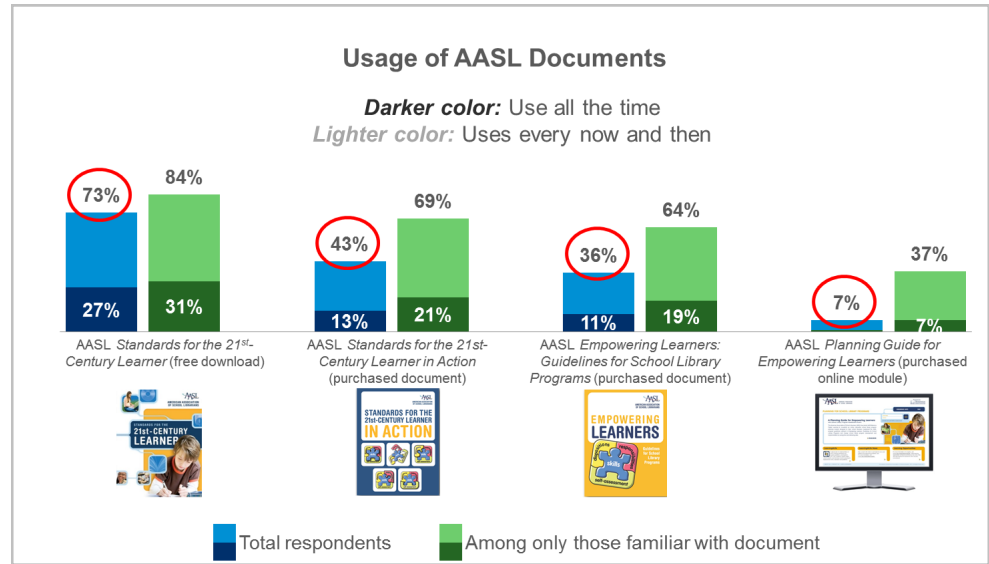


For more information on the standards & guidelines revision project visit www.ala.org/aasl/standards/revision.

1. Standards and guidelines are valued, but underutilized.

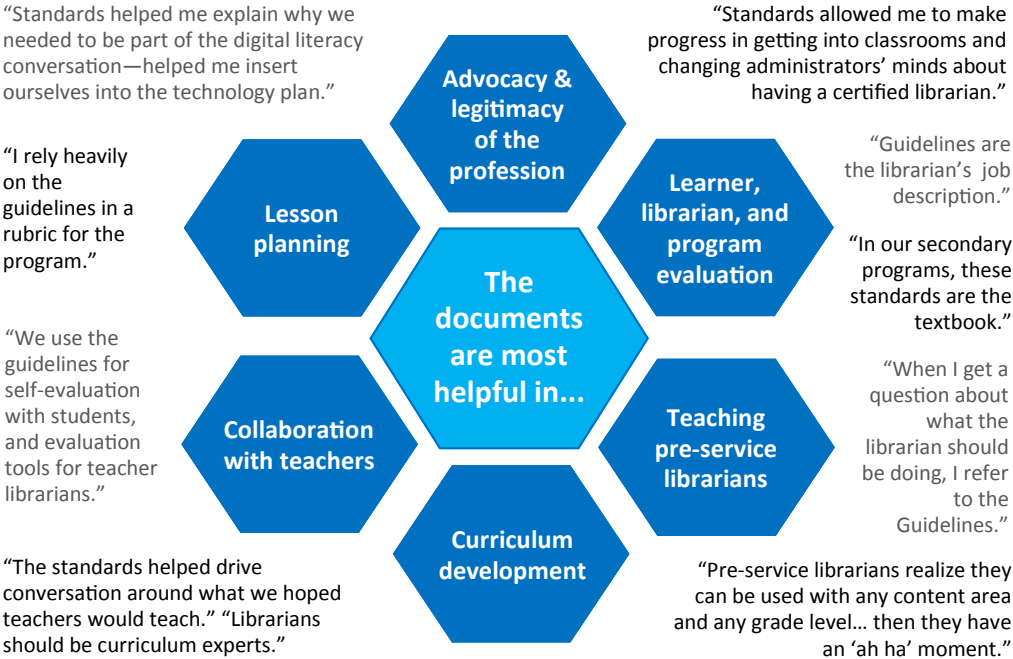
For school librarians, the standards and guidelines articulate a vision, bring legitimacy, credibility, and authority to the profession, and provide a conversation tool outside the library. They establish a mission, metrics for measuring a program, and serve as a recruitment and training tool.

- School librarians are at least somewhat familiar with and value AASL standards and guidelines. They are most familiar with the standards document available as a free download.
- Of those familiar with AASL standards and guidelines, few use the documents “all the time.” A majority say they use them at least “now and then.” In particular, *Empowering Learners* appears to be underutilized.



Utilization Success Stories

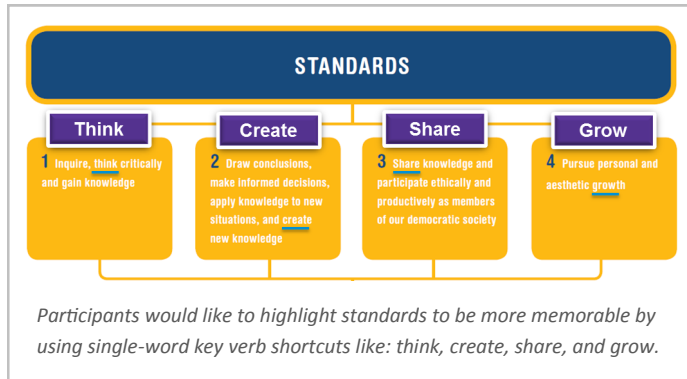
School librarians use the AASL standards and guidelines to shape school library programs and to make sure their programs meet national standards. They also use them for:



2. With refinement, many of the current concepts continue to be relevant.

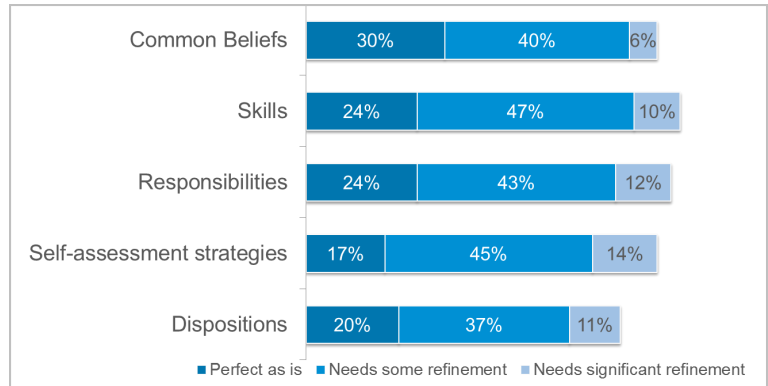
Most agree that the concepts within the current standards and guidelines are relevant, and without need for major revision.

- Majorities believe the Common Beliefs, the Standards, and the Framework (skills, responsibilities, dispositions, and self-assessment strategies) continue to be relevant.
- There are opportunities for improvement. For example, some school librarians point out that the standards need to be measurable.
- The biggest demand from school librarians is to refine and simplify the language to make the content more accessible and current.
 - Readers want to “see themselves” in materials.
 - Align standards and use parallel language with the education and teaching community (companion crosswalk or mapping) to make it more accessible.
 - Eliminate dated terminology, buzzwords, and library jargon in favor of language that will stand the test of time.
 - School librarians think of “standards” as requirements or goals. They think of “guidelines” more as suggestions. Although school librarians know that standards and guidelines work in tandem, they aren’t necessarily using them in this way.



Satisfaction With Key Elements

Majorities familiar with the standards document believe the Common Beliefs and Framework would be nearly perfect with a bit of refinement. Few think it needs significant revision:



Participants in AASL focus groups tended to agree on the following core values as it pertains to school librarians and their programs:

3. The current presentation is a barrier to utilization—it can be improved and simplified.

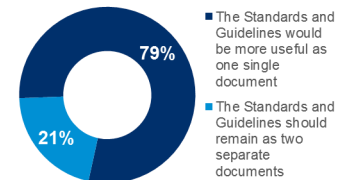
Many also feel the current presentation, organization, and format are barriers to wider access and utilization. Recommendations include:

- Reorganize structure to be simple, easy to use, and consistent across documents;
- Provide a conceptual diagram of the learning ecosystem to illustrate how school libraries fit in;
- Provide a roadmap for a range of stakeholders, with how each audience can use S&Gs;
- Provide a better holistic or non-linear visual representation of the learning process;
- Incorporate more visual elements and a more visual presentation;
- Make standards more memorable by using single-word key verb shortcuts like: think, create, share, grow.
- Make the documents reflective of the professionalism of librarianship; and
- Make content digital and searchable.

Key Themes

The following themes emerged for how the refreshed documents should look:

- + Simple
- + Easy to use
- + Clear to read
- + Practical
- + Attractive
- + Professional



Reasons For Not Using Documents

LEARNING STANDARDS

The majority of participants are referring to the standards documents. Those who are not, often say the standards are not relevant to their current position, or they are operating on their own and without qualified staff. However, even those who use the documents say:

Layout is difficult to read, search, and find information

Length and language can be intimidating

Unsure how to use the standards

Inaccessible for non-librarians

Participants are using the standards pamphlet far more often than the printed book version—especially with stakeholders—because it is easy to use, looks professional, and addresses many of their needs:

Digitally available

Succinct and easily digestible

Easily relatable to other educators and administrators

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Focus group participants said they are less likely to use the guidelines than the standards documents. Reasons why librarians are not using the guidelines include:

Lack of awareness: unclear what it is and what it is for

Resources: many believe they can only afford one book

Organization: difficult to navigate and find information

Good as reference or textbook, but not for day to day use

To promote use of the guidelines, participants say the document should:

Be retitled to clearly articulate the content

Include a rubric

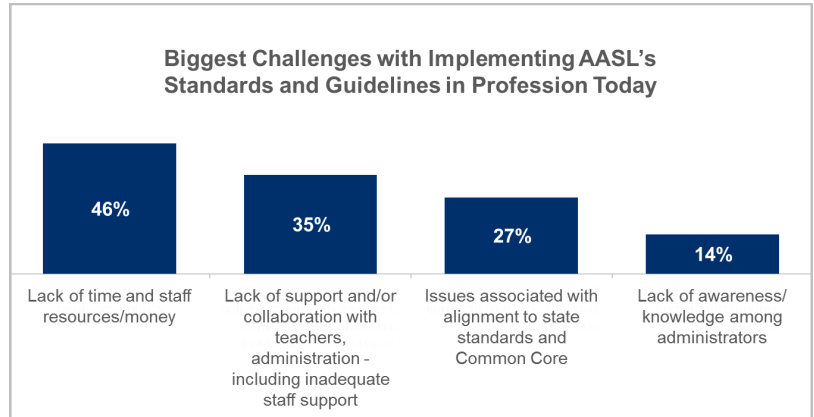
Have a more intuitive organization

Be digitally available

4. There are opportunities to facilitate utilization.

School librarians face challenges implementing standards and guidelines because there is no institutional imperative to measure these standards. Some of the biggest challenges are:

- Lack of support from and collaboration with school administration officials and teachers;
- Lack of time and staff resources; and
- Difficulty aligning school library standards with state standards and Common Core.

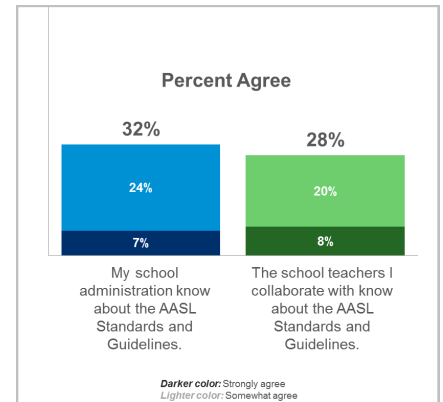


These challenges present opportunities to better facilitate utilization.

School librarians report that many school administrators and teachers are not aware of school library standards and do not recognize the value and resources librarians bring to the learning ecosystem, as partners, collaborators, and curriculum experts.

- There is a need for a brief “advocacy” component for the documents.

Furthermore, because many school librarians work in isolation, the documents can gain more traction if they are written to be used by librarians on their own, without the benefit of guidance provided at annual conferences and in other settings.



Project Timeline & Milestones

Data collected during the research phase is already being considered and reflected in the work of the editorial board rewriting the standards and guidelines. A task force working in parallel to the editorial board is responsible for developing an implementation plan that builds awareness, understanding, and commitment within the school library profession and stakeholder communities. The intent is for resources and assistance to be available simultaneously with the launch of the new standards documents in the fall of 2017.

✓	Project Kick-off	March 2015
✓	Online Survey	August - September 2015
✓	Focus Groups (AASL National Conference)	November 2015
✓	Focus Groups (Affiliates & Stakeholders)	February - May 2016
✓	Analysis of Findings	June - August 2016
✓	Research Summary	September 2016
	Drafting Standards/Implementation Plan	July 2016 - December 2017
	Production (editing / layout / printing)	January - September 2017
	Developing Implementation Tools	January - September 2017
	Launch New Standards/Implementation	Fall 2017

Appendices: Online Demographics

	Total respondents	Members	Non-members
<i>Base size:</i>	(N=1191)	(N=659)	(N=532)
Job title:			
School librarian	80%	77%	83%
School library educator	10%	10%	11%
School library supervisor	6%	10%	2%
School library student	1%	*	1%
State/DOE employee	1%	2%	1%
School library consultant	1%	2%	*
Public librarian	*	*	*
Work environment:			
Elementary school	44%	38%	52%
Middle school or junior high school	28%	28%	28%
High school	31%	31%	31%
University or college	4%	7%	1%
Public library	1%	*	1%
District office	5%	9%	1%
Local, state, or federal government office	1%	2	1%
Museum	-	-	4%
Other	5%	4%	4%

	Total respondents	Members	Non-members
<i>Base size:</i>	(N=1191)	(N=659)	(N=532)
Gender:			
Male	5%	6%	4%
Female	95%	94%	96%
Age/Generation:			
18-34 (Millennials)	12%	11%	12%
35-44 (Younger Gen X)	21%	21%	22%
45-54 (Older Gen X)	30%	29%	32%
55+ (Boomers, Silent)	37%	39%	34%
Education level:			
Trade, vocational or technical school	*	*	*
Some college or 2-year degree	*	*	*
Graduated 4-year college	6%	3%	9%
Post-graduate degree	94%	96%	90%
Degrees/certifications:			
State school librarian certification	73%	74%	72%
Masters of Library Science from an ALA-accredited program	56%	63%	48%
Masters of Library Science from an AASL-CAEP (formerly NCATE) accredited program	12%	13%	10%
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards	9%	10%	8%

	Total respondents	Members	Non-members
Base size:	(N=1191)	(N=659)	(N=532)
Race/Ethnicity:			
White	87%	88%	87%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	2%	3%
Black or African American	2%	3%	2%
American Indian or Alaskan native	1%	1%	1%
Asian	1%	1%	1%
Prefer not to answer	5%	5%	5%
Employment Status:			
Employed full-time	92%	92%	92%
Employed part-time	4%	4%	5%
Retired	2%	3%	1%
Income:			
\$50,000 or less	12%	10%	14%
\$50,000 - \$100,00	43%	41%	46%
\$100,000+	32%	34%	29%
Work location:			
Northeast	21%	26%	14%
South	51%	46%	57%
Midwest	17%	16%	19%
West	9%	10%	8%
Outside of U.S.	1%	1%	1%

Questions?



Mark David Richards, PhD
Senior Vice President, Management
Supervisor

KRC Research
733 10th St. NW, Suite 500
202-585-2913 (direct)
mrichards@krcresearch.com
www.krcresearch.com
@krcresearch | #krcfindings

Our insight. Your breakthrough.



Karin Cantrell
Research Director

KRC Research
733 10th St. NW, Suite 500
202-585-2910 (direct)
kcantrell@krcresearch.com
www.krcresearch.com
@krcresearch | #krcfindings

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Beth Eagleton
Research Analyst

KRC Research
733 10th St. NW, Suite 500
202-585-2958 (direct)
beagleton@krcresearch.com
www.krcresearch.com
@krcresearch | #krcfindings

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