AASL’s 17th National Conference and Exhibition
AASL’s 17th National Conference and Exhibition in Columbus, Ohio, came to a close November 8, 2015. Attended by more than 2,600 school librarians, administrators, and exhibitors, the conference empowered school librarians to continue their roles as education leaders within a technology-driven academic landscape. Themed “Experience Education Evolution,” the event brought together school librarians, educators, authors, and exhibitors at the only national conference dedicated solely to the needs of school librarians. Attendees participated in preconference workshops, author events, and more than 100 concurrent sessions; they also took advantage of exhibits featuring companies relevant to school libraries and their users.

Presidential Think Tank
A dozen of AASL’s great digital librarians, social media mavens, and out-of-the-box thinkers came together under the leadership of AASL Past Presidents Ann Martin and Carl Harvey for the Meeting of the Minds Think Tank. Through virtual work and an intensive two-day workshop and engagement at AASL’s 17th National Conference and Exhibition, the group came up with a comprehensive report of recommendations for how the work and efforts of AASL can be more nimble, transparent, and visible. The Executive Committee spent months analyzing every recommendation in this report for feasibility in a volunteer organization, financial impact, and staffing impact. Based on their analysis, there are some changes already in motion being rolled out over the next year, while other, more complex concepts are going to the board as action items during ALA Annual in Orlando.

Learning Standards and Program Guidelines Revision
AASL is currently in the process of evaluating and revising its learning standards and program guidelines. The evaluation, revision, and remodeling of AASL’s learning standards and program guidelines is critically important for the association and the profession as these publications define the direction for school library programs and offer a vision for teaching and learning to guide school library professionals.

Built on a strong history of standards and guidelines, the next iteration should be transformative and re-imagine the roles of school library programs and school librarians. The revision of the learning standards and program guidelines are set for release during AASL’s 18th National Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix, Arizona, in November 2017

- More information about the standards revision and remodeling process can be found online at http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards/revision.
- AASL released an infographic on the preliminary findings from the standards and guidelines online survey, which is available on the KQ website at http://knowledgequest.aasl.org/editorial-board-releases-infographic-standards-guidelines-research-date/.
- AASL has also established a task force to develop a plan to support states, school systems, and individual schools preparing to implement the association’s new learning standards and program guidelines. To read more about the members of this task force, visit http://knowledgequest.aasl.org/aasl-names-members-of-standards-
CLASS Summit 2016

In 2014 AASL received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to fund a research forum to explore shifting the school library research agenda to more causal research. The Causality: School Libraries and Student Success (CLASS) Summit was held in Chicago in April 2014. A copy of the final white paper from the summit is available on the AASL website. At present, three teams of researchers are working on the first phase of the proposed CLASS research project: foundational research consisting of meta-syntheses of theory, best practice research, and policy.

On April 7, 2016, a second forum, CLASS Summit II, was held in Washington, DC. Forty-four doctoral students and professors attended the 2016 AASL CLASS Summit. This community of school library scholars spent the day working in small groups, sharing their vexations, and discussing their ventures, possible approaches, and answers to critical and concerning research questions.

New Toolkits

AASL released two new toolkits over the past year:

- **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**

  This toolkit includes strategies, practical tips and tools, key messages, inspirational stories, and much more to help school librarians promote the many ways they transform teaching and learning within schools, districts, and communities through their library programs.

- **Pre-Service Toolkit for Principals and Teachers**

  This toolkit, developed by AASL’s Educators of School Librarians Section (ESLS), outlines resources to help educate future principals and teachers about the significant role that quality school library programs play in student learning. It provides guidance and crucial resources necessary to start the conversation and continue administrator and teacher education on the importance of an effective school library in a young person’s education. The toolkit includes a plethora of annotated resources, including links to articles, blogs, books, brochures, infographics, posters, reports, videos, and school library impact studies.

ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act)

With the bipartisan passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, school librarians started 2016 with the knowledge that school library programs were once again included in federal education legislation. It was a long road to get here and involved many years of hard work and many people acting as agents of change and advocating for students and their right to a school library program. More than 10,000 individuals used the ALA Legislative Action Center to make their voices heard on the need to support school libraries in ESSA during the legislative process. ESSA now includes provisions that enable federal funding to be used for effective school libraries.

- **AASL ESSA Landing Page**

  AASL’s ESSA landing page includes links to important ESSA information and documents. Additions are continually added to the landing page. Current resources on the page include links to AASL position statements, information on the 2017 release of AASL’s learning and professional standards, AASL toolkits, KQ blog posts on
ESSA, rulemaking comments, and other resources already available for describing school library programs.

- **Rulemaking and Guidance**
  AASL and the ALA Washington Office are closely monitoring the rulemaking process at the federal level. Throughout the feedback process we have, and will continue to be, active. We provided [recommendations on Title I](#) and non-regulatory guidance, and we will continue to provide comments during proposed regulations. AASL and the ALA Washington Office are strategically proactive and ready to engage stakeholders and comment as rulemaking proceeds.

- **School Library Snapshot**
  School librarians are infamous for their collaboration skills. AASL put those skills to work during School Library Month (#slm16), partnering with the ALA Office of Library Advocacy and I Love Libraries, to develop a simple [infographic](#) for sharing data with us in order to continue and extend our school library advocacy efforts on the national level. School librarians were asked to provide a [snapshot](#) of what happened in a library during an average week by answering eight simple questions and sending the completed infographic back to ALA. There were more than 4,000 downloads of the infographic.

- **ESSA Education Vocabulary**
  The ALA Washington Office has been engaged in the Department of Education’s ESSA listening sessions on the behalf of AASL and school libraries. As part of this engagement and transparency, the Department of Education sought library-specific, general, and real-world examples related to specific education terms found in ESSA. AASL reached out to membership through the Affiliate Assembly and the Board of Directors for assistance on providing examples for the Department of Education. Through an easy online form, these groups provided brief examples of one, some, or all of the ESSA education vocabulary. In just one week, AASL received more than 200 responses.

- **NLLD (National Library Legislative Day)**
  During ALA’s National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) in Washington, DC, AASL and YALSA leadership met with Dr. Monique Chism, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, to discuss school librarians and the Every Student Succeeds Act. The conversation was very informative and valuable for all parties. We discussed school librarians, “effective school library programs,” educational equity, and the impact an effective school library and librarian has on students’ college, career, and community readiness.

- **US Department of Education School Library Listening Session**
  Dr. Chism engaged in a school library-specific Department of Education ESSA listening sessions. During the listening session we had speakers and listeners taking comprehensive notes, and Tweeters using the hashtag #essalibraries for a live feed of the discussion. Nine AASL members representing the various regions and school environments spoke on the following topics: school librarian impact on effective teaching, technology integration, staff development and teacher training, preparing students for college and career, digital literacy, new technology training for teachers, developing curriculum, coding, and student data privacy. There were many powerful moments during the conversation and as our conversation with Dr. Chism wrapped up, she noted that AASL had set a new “gold standard for listening sessions.” She expressed an appreciation for the diverse topics we brought forward and the broad regional representation of the attendees. We found our time...
together informative, constructive, and enlightening. AASL thanks Dr. Chism for her time and welcomes opportunities for future engagement and conversation.

http://knowledgequest.aasl.org/gold-standard-school-libraries-essa/

● “Effective School Library Programs”
In looking at ESSA, AASL found three position statements related to ESSA that could be more effective if revised (Appropriate Staffing, Preparation of School Librarians, Role of the School Librarian). A task force was established to update those statements in light of ESSA. Another task force began work on a position statement to define an “effective school library” for ESSA. And, finally, due to an Affiliate Assembly concern, the AASL Technology Role Working Group was created. Part of group’s work was to review the “Instructional Classification Position Statement.” Based on the group’s findings and with the authorization of ESSA, this position statement is also being updated. All five position statements will be brought to the AASL Board of Directors for review at ALA Annual Conference in Orlando. Until then, all of the current AASL Position Statements can be found online at http://www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/resources/statements.

Laura Bush 21st-Century Librarian Program Grant
AASL recently received a Laura Bush 21st-Century Librarian Program Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The purpose of the grant is to discover what works at the intersection of formal and informal learning in the school library learning space so as to provide reliable information by which to assess the impact of specific actions in library programs and by certified school library staffing.

School Library Month (#slm16)
  ● Theme: School Libraries Transform Learning
  ● Spokesperson: Author Megan McDonald

School Library Month (SLM) went through a rejuvenating overhaul for the April 2016 event. Programming and resources were developed to help schools and libraries celebrate all month, a day, or a week—whatever their schedule allowed. The SLM committee developed a calendar of activity ideas and daily blog posts, solicited author and ambassador quotes, and coordinated complimentary webinars. The committee also encouraged social media engagement with graphics and an online “wall” to share how school librarians are transforming learning. Working with the ALA Office for Library Advocacy a snapshot “infographic” was developed giving school librarians an easy way to share library information with school administrators and other stakeholders.

65th Anniversary Campaign
AASL is celebrating 65 years of service to school librarians with a giving campaign to help ensure the future of the school library profession. AASL members and school library supporters are transforming the future by donating to the 65th Anniversary Campaign. Donors at the $65–$649 level receive a 65th anniversary lapel pin with a simulated sapphire; donors at the $650 and above level receive the 65th anniversary lapel pin with a simulated diamond.

AASL Inspire Grants
AASL invited school librarians to apply for two new grants made possible by the generosity of AASL member Marina “Marney” Welmers. The new additions to the organization’s prestigious awards program provide funds for public middle or high school libraries to update their existing collection or plan a special event in order to enhance student learning.
The *Inspire Special Event Grant* provides up to $2,000 in funding to a school library looking to engage students with school library resources and promote reading, books, literacy, and authors. The funds can be used to create a new or enhance an existing extracurricular activity which will increase student achievement. A total of $10,000 will be distributed to schools annually.

Up to $20,000 per year will be awarded as part of the *Inspire Collection Development Grant*. To improve student achievement, public school libraries may apply for up to $5,000 in funds to extend, update, and diversify their book, online, subscription, and/or software collections.

**Bridge Scholarships**

AASL student members can now apply for a scholarship to “bridge” the increase between student and regular membership dues. Co-sponsored by the ALA Membership Development Office, the bridge scholarship program offers up to twenty scholarships annually to student members no longer eligible for student dues pricing. The scholarship will bridge the cost difference between student and regular membership dues for three years, allowing recipients to establish themselves in their careers and financially.

**Advocacy Packs**

School library advocacy packs containing tools to spread the word about the many ways school librarians are transforming teaching and learning are now freely available through the [ALA online store](http://www.alaworld.org). Generously sponsored by Bound to Stay Bound Books (BTSB), these specially created packs are available while supplies last. School library advocates pay only for shipping. The advocacy pack includes 25 copies of a limited print edition of the digital supplement AASL produced in collaboration with *American Libraries*, “School Libraries Transform Learning,” and assorted brochures from the “School Library Programs Improve Student Learning” advocacy series.

**AASL Awards & Recognition**

The AASL award winners will be honored at the AASL Awards Ceremony during the 2016 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando. The ceremony will be held Saturday morning, June 25 in conjunction with the AASL President’s Program.

- **National School Library Program of the Year Award**
  
  **Awarded to:** Veterans Memorial Elementary School, Naples, Florida
  
  *Sponsored by Follett*, the award annually recognizes a school library program that meets the needs of the changing school and library environment and is fully integrated into the school’s curriculum. Recipient receives a crystal obelisk and $10,000.

- **Distinguished Service Award**
  
  **Awarded to:** Hilda Weisburg, retired school librarian and editor of “School Librarian’s Workshop”
  
  *Sponsored by Baker & Taylor*, the $3,000 award recognizes an individual member of the library profession who has, over a significant period of time, made an outstanding national contribution to school librarianship and school library development.

- **Collaborative School Library Award**
  
  **Awarded to:** School librarians Deborah Floyd and Stephanie Stargardt and Language Arts Teacher Joshua Forbes from G. W. Carver Middle School in Chester, Virginia
  
  *Sponsored by Upstart*, the $2,500 award recognizes and encourages collaboration and partnerships between
school librarians and teachers in meeting goals outlined in AASL’s program guidelines through joint planning of a program, unit or event in support of the curriculum and using school library resources.

- **Distinguished School Administrator Award**
  **Awarded to:** Kathleen Procopio, Principal, Millville (N.J.) High School
  *Sponsored by ProQuest,* the $2,000 award is presented to a school administrator who has made worthy contributions to the operations of an exemplary school library and to advancing the role of the school library in the educational program.

- **Frances Henne Award**
  **Awarded to:** Kate Lechtenberg, School Librarian, Ankeny Community Schools, Des Moines, Iowa
  *Sponsored by ABC-CLIO,* the $1,250 award enables a school librarian with five or fewer years in the field to attend an ALA Annual Conference or AASL National Conference for the first time.

- **Innovative Reading Grant**
  **Awarded to:** Andrea Catania-Stephenson, School Librarian, El Camino Fundamental High School, Sacramento, California
  *Sponsored by Capstone,* the $2,500 award supports the planning and implementation of a unique and innovative program for children that motivates and encourages reading, especially with struggling readers.

- **Roald Dahl’s Miss Honey Social Justice Award**
  **Awarded to:** Ann Yawornitsky, school librarian, and 6th grade reading teachers Jennifer Sarnes and Melissa Zawaski from Wilson Southern Middle School, Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania
  *Sponsored by Penguin Random House,* the award recognizes and encourages collaboration and partnerships between school librarians and teachers in teaching social justice through joint planning of a program, unit or event in support of social justice using school library resources. The award includes $2,000 to the librarian, up to $1,000 in reimbursement towards travel and housing to attend the AASL awards presentation at the ALA Annual Conference, and a $5,000 book donation by Penguin Random House.

- **The Ruth Toor Grant for Strong Public School Libraries**
  **Awarded to:** Stephanie Hewett Rous, School Librarian, Corinth Holders High School, Wendell, N.C.
  *Sponsored by Jay Toor,* the award provides funding support on a competitive basis to public school libraries for the creation and implementation of a local public awareness/marketing campaign that promotes and positions their school library as a necessary resource in the community. The grant includes $3,000 to create and implement a project, and $2,000 for both the school librarian and school official to attend the AASL national conference or the ALA Annual Conference.

- **AASL President’s Crystal Apple**
  **Awarded to:** author James Patterson
  Best-selling author James Patterson has been selected by AASL President Leslie Preddy as the 2016 Crystal Apple recipient. The honor is awarded to an individual or group that has made a significant impact on school library programs and students. A staunch school library advocate, Patterson has dedicated both time and funds to promote the ways school libraries transform a child’s educational career. “My aim in supporting school libraries is simple,” said Patterson. “I want to make books available to all kids, in every neighborhood across the country.
And once we get kids reading, my hope is that we’ll turn them into lifelong readers. Supporting libraries, which are the heart of every school, is a great place to start.”

- **AASL President’s Program**
  Award winning author Avi will headline the AASL President’s Program taking place at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 25, as part of the 2016 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. During his presentation, Avi will speak of his work and his connection to readers and librarians. Having been born into a literary family, Avi knew at a young age he would become a writer. He started his career as a playwright and worked for many years as a librarian at the New York Public Library. His first book, “Things That Sometimes Happen,” was published in 1970 when he was inspired to write books for young people after the birth of his first child. Since then, Avi has published over seventy books spanning different age levels and encompassing several different genres.

.Looking Ahead
- **GAME | Gaming as Meaningful Education**
  A new two-day event from AASL will focus on how games encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and creative activities. Co-sponsored by the ALA Games and Gaming Round Table, **GAME | Gaming As Meaningful Education** will be held September 23-24 in Rochester, New York. Attendees will explore how to implement interactive learning opportunities in their library program through all types of games. They will also discover how these strategies connect communities – students, parents, and educators – through the educational, recreational, and social value of games.

- **Resource Guide for Underserved Populations**
  The [Emerging Leaders 2016](#) class developed a toolkit outlining resources and information related to five underserved student populations. This toolkit, created in response to an Affiliate Assembly concern, will be launched at the ALA Annual Conference during the [Emerging Leaders poster session](#).

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie B. Preddy
2015-2016 AASL President