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School Library Best Practice Requires Innovation

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These are exciting times for school librarians. This issue of *Knowledge Quest* coincides with an important AASL milestone; the new *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* will be unveiled in Phoenix only a few days after this issue is mailed to members. What an opportunity to look at best practice in school libraries!

We believe that we are extremely fortunate. We work with school librarians who use their wisdom and compassion to create paths that deepen student learning. Some of the school librarians featured in this issue are in our own districts, while others we have met through the network of library supervisors we know. Although they had NO sneak peek at the new standards, these practitioners are all dynamically shifting library practices that dovetail seamlessly with AASL's new *National School Library Standards*. As we prepared this important issue, we looked at best practices in school libraries and found many practitioners who, through various means, truly are preparing their students to be lifelong learners in the twenty-first century. Despite the variety of approaches taken by the school librarians featured in this issue, we found one consistent commonality among these authors: innovation.

This issue focuses on best practices, innovations if you will, in four areas—four areas that we believe are integral to the success of reimagining school libraries. In *preparing for librarian and library evaluation*, step back and consider which pieces of data truly are a catalyst for moving your practice forward. Consider how you can build support and advocacy for your library. As you think about your library configuration, take a look at factors to ponder as you assess your school library.

When *empowering learners and teachers*, identify what really matters and what works to develop inventive problem-solvers and creators. Think about what learners will carry with them long after they leave your school. What do they really need to shape, contribute to, and change our world?

In *building a culture of reading*, learn creative strategies that ignite all learners, young and old, to become voracious, thoughtful readers. How do you really make lifelong reading happen? What if ALL learners read every day? Would that be a game-changer?

To develop learners who are adept in *information and knowledge building*, revisit your own practice to determine when and how you help learners use information and

create knowledge. Take a look at how the ideas presented in this issue can easily be adapted for your practice and your learners. How do we continue to shape our practice to develop learning habits that encourage thinking and innovation?

Most of you are about half-way through the school year as you read this issue. You are just now learning about AASL's new *National School Library Standards*. The librarians whose articles are featured here provide unique perspectives that we hope you find intriguing, practical, and thought-provoking. Their ideas already fit readily with the new AASL Standards, as many of yours will as well. We hope that these ideas will inform your practice this school year and transform learning in your library for years to come.

Kathryn Roots Lewis is director of media services and instructional technology for Norman Public Schools in Oklahoma. She is AASL President-Elect and a member of the AASL Board of Directors, AASL Executive Committee, and the AASL Standards and Guidelines Editorial Board. She is also a member of the Oklahoma Technology Association Board and the University of Oklahoma School of Library and Information Studies Alumni Association Board of Directors. Kathryn is the project director for the IMLS National Leadership Grant for Libraries *Learning in Libraries: Guided Inquiry Making and Learning* and administrator of the multimillion-dollar *Intelligent Classroom* project for Norman Public Schools. She is available on Twitter @KathrynRLewis.

Jennifer Boudrye is the director of library programs for the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). Prior to joining DCPS, Jennifer was a school library media specialist and administrator in Montgomery County, MD, public schools and has experience working with students from PreK–12. Before earning her MLS from the University of MD, she worked as a web publisher, and radio talk show producer and host. Jennifer is committed to ensuring that all students have access to the best information resources and opportunities to develop expert information literacy skills for school and life.

“Implementing best practice is copying yesterday. Innovation is inventing tomorrow.”

— Paul Sloane (2017)

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Suzanna L. Panter is the new program manager for school libraries in Tacoma (WA) Public Schools. Suzanna was a Lilead Fellow, an ALA Emerging Leader, and active member of the Future Ready Libraries leadership team. She is a member of AASL.

Work Cited:

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