



*School librarians are leading learners into the uncharted waters of the boundary-less, limitless, and wall-less library.*

## School Libraries Go Beyond the Four Walls

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School libraries typically have four walls, a ceiling, a floor, and a door, but in reality school libraries should be wall-less! Our school libraries should serve our learners wherever our learners are physically, whenever they may need access, and however their inquiry leads them. School librarians are leading learners into the uncharted waters of the boundary-less, limitless, and wall-less library.

The six Common Beliefs the AASL *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* are grounded upon support a school library that is boundary-less and wall-less:

**1. The school library is a unique and essential part of a learning community** (AASL 2018). With a beyond-the-walls approach to our school libraries we can extend the learning community even further, and our learners can realize how essential our libraries are to their educational experience.

**2. Qualified school librarians lead effective school libraries** (AASL 2018). Qualified school librarians demand that our reach extend beyond the physical school library and continuously push the limits.

**3. Learners should be prepared for college, career, and life** (AASL 2018). Our wall-less school libraries model the global world connections.

**4. Reading is the core of personal and academic competency** (AASL 2018). Reading occurs every day outside the walls of our school libraries. We promote reading and encourage exploration of reading materials beyond the walls.

**5. Intellectual freedom is every learner's right** (AASL 2018). It is our duty to teach learners about intellectual freedom and ensure that they understand their impact throughout their community.

**6. Information technologies must be appropriately integrated and equitably available** (AASL 2018). Providing access to resources and activities beyond the walls of our school libraries allows for equity for every learner, everywhere.

Additionally, the *AASL Standards Framework for Learners* provides support for school libraries operating beyond the four walls. Some specific examples are:

**Inquire – Share:** “Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others” (AASL 2018). Our learners work outside our school libraries by sharing and connecting content with others around the globe. Students use a variety of platforms to share content such as Flipgrid, Skype, Padlet, among others.

**Inquire – Grow:** “Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process” (AASL 2018). Our learners can

formulate questions and add to those questions by experiencing lessons via virtual reality and other platforms.

**Include – Create:** “Learners adjust their awareness of the global learning community” (AASL 2018). Learners experience art from around the globe by connecting with art museums and having online interactions.

**Collaborate – Create:** “Learners participate in personal, social, and intellectual networks” (AASL 2018). Students use a variety of communication tools and resources that facilitate their experiences and education.

**Curate – Share:** “Learners exchange information resources within and beyond their learning community” (AASL 2018). Sharing resources from community partners in a summer program enriches our learners’ experience.

**Explore – Think:** “Learners develop and satisfy personal curiosity” (AASL 2018). The use of augmented reality will certainly pique and satisfy our students’ exploration of new ideas.

**Engage – Think:** “Learners follow ethical and legal guidelines for gathering and using information” (AASL 2018). Operating beyond the walls of our school libraries requires that we teach our learners about the ethical use of information in a connected global world.

Reaching beyond the four walls is fundamental in interacting with learners today and is critical in preparing them for the world beyond school. The articles in this issue demonstrate how school librarians are reaching beyond the school library space to interact with learners in the real world.

Kay Calvert, a literacy coach in Arkansas, recognized that her community’s students needed support to read during the summer. The solution: transform a retired school bus into a bookmobile to take the school library to the students. By working with other community partners, Calvert and her community provide students access to books, free lunch, art activities, and storytimes.

Kelly Klober, 2018 Sara Jaffarian Award winner, details her Tales of the Crypt program. The program takes research out of the school library and into the community. Her students investigate local historical figures and present their lives, in character, in the cemetery where they are buried. The whole community has become invested in the project.

Janine Johnson takes you on a tour through virtual reality and how it has affected her learners. She outlines the aspects of VR, gives pointers to start, and suggests resources to use in your school library.

Becky Calzada highlights the different beyond-the-walls aspects that are evident in her district by the many outstanding school librarians who practice there. The school libraries in Becky’s district are truly reaching beyond their school library spaces.

Christine van Hamersveld details her experience operating without a physical library due to the ravaging effects of Hurricane Harvey. Christine shares innovative approaches her school library used to service the learners and the community. Her article will deeply touch you and hopefully prompt you to incorporate some new approaches for your own school library.

Finally Cassandra Barnett details her work in launching the Arkansas Declaration of Learning program, which enables participants to learn about historic art, objects, and resources from various institutions and use them in their lessons.

By going beyond the walls of our school libraries, we expand the resources and experiences available to our students and teachers. We help our students see connections to their communities and the world. These articles highlight a few of the ways you can take your school library beyond the physical walls. We hope you will find at least one new technique, program, or idea that inspires you to think outside the box and lead you to try an innovative approach to reaching your patrons and community. Take your school library to the streets!

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**Cassandra Barnett** is program advisor for school libraries for the Arkansas Department of Education. She provides professional development, promotes best practices in school library programs, advocates for school libraries within the state, and looks for collaborative opportunities for school librarians. She is also a project leader for the Arkansas Declaration of Learning. She is a member of AASL.

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### Work Cited:

American Association of School Librarians. 2018. *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. Chicago: ALA.