I consider myself to be a library advocate. Don’t we all? However, advocating for school libraries and school librarians requires more than just putting “Save Libraries” on your Twitter profile pic. To truly advocate for the school library profession and for the students and teachers we serve we must belong to groups and organizations that are advocating through the larger work they are doing.

I myself have served on the American Library Association (ALA) Committee on Library Advocacy, and I am an advocate for the Transform Your School Library (TYSL) movement. In addition to these roles, I am the incoming chair of the Texas Association of School Librarians (TASL) and will work closely with the TASL Legislative Advocacy Committee. It is through these organizations that I have had the opportunity to learn from and serve with others who want to advocate at the organizational level. I have learned so much about legislative advocacy and the power of social media campaigns.

We must choose to belong to groups who exert the organizational effort to have a larger impact. While many of us do a wonderful job of reaching our students, staff, and communities with news and information about our specific library programs, we need to make sure that we belong to larger efforts too. Often it is by means of coalition advocacy that real change is enacted through legislation, social media, and press.

In this issue you will hear how Dorcas Hand and Deborah Hall saw librarians in Houston ISD being cut out of their libraries, and how through coalition advocacy they fought those cuts. You will also hear from Shannon McClintock Miller and Mark Ray who are leading the charge for Future Ready Librarians in their home states and throughout the nation. Jane Lofton shares how the California School Library Association worked with CUE (Computer-Using Educators), the West Coast affiliate of ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education), to combine their organizations and streamline their advocacy efforts. Allan Davenport and Kristen Mattson address how they used collaborative leadership in one district to empower their school librarians as instructional leaders to create a catalyst for change. And finally, Allison Cline, Sylvia Knight Norton, Marci Merola, Jane Lofton, Sue Heraper, Katie Williams, Teresa Lai, and the AASL Vision for Implementing ESSA Task Force explore the creation of AASL’s ESSA State Workshops, how the

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Coalition Advocacy Needs You!

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California School Library Association leveraged the takeaways from the workshop into advocacy work at the state level, and the next steps for states’ ESSA plans and school librarians.

It is my hope that after reading through the articles in this issue, school librarians will target their activism efforts by finding a group, organization, or committee to be a part of or serve on. Only by banding together and working toward specific goals can we have the kind of impact that affects real change. Perhaps you will band together with others who are like-minded and have the same goal as you to enact change at a district or regional level. It might be that you will join a larger group or organization with a vision for a change that you want to be part of. Whatever you decide to do, sometimes that first step is recognizing that there is something you want to do! I encourage you to identify what it is about our profession that drives you and find an outlet for that passion through coalition advocacy.

Nancy Jo Lambert is school librarian at Reedy High School in Frisco, Texas. An AASL member, she serves on the AASL Social Media Editorial Board and AASL Publication Advisory Group. Nancy Jo is the chair-elect of the Texas Association of School Librarians and is also active in ALA, the Texas Library Association, and the Texas Computer Education Association. She serves on the advisory board for the Mackin Transform Your School Library movement. Among her recent publications is “Creating Genuine Readers with Flexible Scheduling,” published in the March/April 2017 issue of Knowledge Quest.