For the past year and a half, members of the school library community across the country—and even the world—have been learning about and beginning to implement the 2018 National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries. We feel the urgency to support students in developing the competencies, knowledge, and understandings they need to navigate the flood of information in their lives, and with this urgency comes the need for us, as professional school librarians and related stakeholders, to quickly analyze and apply the new ideas and approaches that come into our field. However, we cannot look at the AASL Standards as a one-and-done professional learning opportunity—or a top-down mandate. Implementing the AASL Standards is certainly more of a journey, with starts, stops, construction, deconstruction, and detours along the way.

In this issue, we are excited to share features written by your colleagues about their own journeys with the standards. Even if you have not quite begun your journey yet, what you read in this issue of Knowledge Quest may inspire you to get in, get your engine revved, and get on the road. If you have begun, read the issue for new ideas, places to visit, and people to let you know you are not on this journey alone.

Planning for Learners

In any journey, we have to consider the needs of the travelers. Several writers in this issue focus on our central travelers: the learners in our schools, classrooms, and libraries. First, middle school librarian Jennifer Freedman and middle/high school librarian Alice Robinson share their ideas for developing activities related to the Explore Shared Foundation, and in doing so, they offer several valuable strategies and activities to inspire work with learners of all ages.

Next, Mary Lou O’Connor reminds us that every journey involves choices along the way. She describes how using menus of activities empowers her elementary learners to make choices and use their voices in engaging literacy and technology-infused lessons.

And finally, Deborah Ehler-Hansen and Casey O’Meara provide information on what their Vermont school district has done to incorporate information skills and our Shared Foundations into their portrait of a graduate. In K–12 schools, the focus is often on graduation as the ultimate goal, but as school librarians, we know that we are really preparing students for the beginning of their own journeys into careers, college, and civic life in which they will continue to apply information-literacy skills and explore the personal interests they have developed in and through libraries.

Connecting with Fellow Travelers

In addition to the travelers, the contributors in this issue also consider the new people we meet and the communities we visit along the way. Middle school librarian Calypso Gilstrap shares her integration of the learner standards with the International Baccalaureate Approaches to Learning, showing several comparisons and integration points along the way.
Likewise, Courtney L. Lewis, director of library services and innovative research at an independent school, provides insight from that perspective as she shares how she fostered reading groups for independent school librarians in her region. These two articles reflect the valuable connections between the AASL Standards and the work happening in other organizations that share our goals for student inquiry and critical education.

And finally, professor and librarian educator Jenna Spiering shares important insights about the connections between recent adolescent literacies research and the AASL Standards. Her article is a call to remain connected with research in the field of literacy in order to support multimodal literacy instruction and student choice.

**Venturing Further Afield**

Continuing the journey beyond individual travelers and those we meet and connect with along the way, our final group of features focuses on how school librarians connect with various stakeholders to share the journey. First, district library supervisor Sarah Searles describes her journey of sharing the AASL Standards with school librarians in her district, and how she and her colleagues developed new communication pathways and updated their approaches to professional development as they explored the standards together.

Some of our contributors also consider stakeholders beyond the school librarian. Kathryn Roots Lewis shares her adventures in introducing the AASL Standards to administrators, and along this same path. Jeffrey DiScala shares insights into the unique roles played by district library supervisors. These two pieces highlight the importance of connecting with educators in supervisory roles.

Laura Hicks describes how the state of Maryland was able to adapt the National School Library Standards for adoption of their state standards for school libraries, modeling the steps that other states may follow if state-level standards adoption is part of their plan.

In the online features, high school librarian Misti Jenkins provides us with a specific bite-sized strategy to introducing the AASL Standards with colleagues who may be at the beginning of the journey.

Some of us are in positions in which we can invite more people to join us on the path. Librarians educators Jenny Spisak, Carl Harvey, Karla Collins, and Audrey Church share information about their grant-funded professional development initiative for rural school librarians, bringing several districts together to gain new resources and share perspectives. These professors also helped the school librarians in their region establish a community of practice.

Similarly, school librarians LaDawna Harrington and Christina Cucci describe their GPS or “Going Places with the Standards” plan. Their journey for offering professional development to teachers in New Jersey inspired our journey metaphor in this introduction as well, and we think you’ll find these professional development endeavors inspiring to your own adult learning work with schools, regions, and states across the country.

**The Journey Continues**

We are very excited to be able to share this issue with you. It represents the thoughtful, inventive work that many committed school librarians, library supervisors, and librarian educators and researchers have already begun, and we have learned so much throughout our own journey with this issue. We are excited to see how the journey continues in more schools, districts, and states, inspired in part by the brave adventurers who have chronicled their travels here.

Kate Lechtenberg is a doctoral candidate at the University of Iowa. She wrote the chapter “Curating against the Canon: Collaborative Curation for Critical Inquiry” in Teaching the Canon in 21st Century Classrooms: Challenging Genres (Brill 2018), and coauthored (with Elizabeth Burns, Marcia Mardis, and Mary Keeling) the chapter “The New National School Library Standards: Integrated Learning and Growth for Innovative School Librarian Positions” in Global Action on School Library Education and Training (De Gruyter 2018). She coauthored (with Jeannie Phillips) the article “Speaking up for Equity Takes Courage—But the Standards Have Your Back” in the May/June 2018 issue of Knowledge Quest. She was a member of the Standards Implementation Task Force and is a member of AASL.

Jennissen Lucas is the district librarian for Park County School District 6 in Cody, Wyoming. As a member of AASL, she chairs the Standards Committee and serves on AASL’s Beyond Words Grant Jury. She is also the past chair of the Wyoming Library Association’s School Library Interest Group. She achieved National Board Certification in 2006 and renewed in 2016.