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"As librarians, we can’t share our passion and stories enough. We have the ability to empower others with this energy so they know how to share their voices, creativity, and passions too.”

Two Future Ready Librarians Explore Advocacy — pg 22
School librarians have a genetic predisposition to certain success strategies, and this issue further explores one of our most important skills—collaboration.

Collaborations, by definition, do not occur in silos. We partner with teachers for rich instructional events both in and out of our library spaces. We empower families to be effective and thoughtful contributors to learning environments across our communities. We work with vendors to provide a robust collection of materials to empower our students and teachers to learn and flourish. These collaborations are only a small sample of the multitude of partners that school librarians join forces with each day. The relationships that are built through these lasting interactions are the foundation of what attracted me to school librarianship and why I remain so proud to be a part of our profession as we work to meet and anticipate the needs of the youth we serve.

I like to think of coalitions as collaborations with dreams of world domination. Much like the Brain in Pinky and the Brain, these partnerships are built on the belief that we can change the world every day. Looking at the features in this issue, I see that the contributors share effective strategies for world domination. Their willingness to share their strategies demonstrates another genetic predisposition in school librarians—we could turn sharing into an Olympic sport.

Strengthening AASL’s Coalitions

My presidential initiative, chaired by the incomparable former AASL President Terri Grief, seeks to strengthen, build, and explore coalitions across ALA by using precious time at the February 2018 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver and June 2018 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans to meet with ALA divisions, roundtables, and other groups. What better time to visit with our colleagues across the profession than when we can share our new National School Library Standards! Please follow the Knowledge Quest blog <knowledgequest.aasl.org> for more details of our plans and accomplishments.

AASL already enjoys working relationships with the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) through joint executive committee meetings at each ALA Midwinter Meeting and ALA Annual Conference. These meetings are open to anyone interested in library services to youth. At our most recent meeting at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, this group of volunteers committed to taking our work a step further with a virtual meeting that occurred in October to allow for time to brainstorm and explore opportunities for future initiatives and coalition building. I would like to thank ALSC President Nina Lindsay and YALSA President Sandra Hughes-Hassell, along with their executive committees, for their commitment to the future of our professional associations as we work to meet and anticipate the needs of the youth we serve.
ALA's Office for Library Advocacy and Public Awareness Office routinely support the mission of AASL by providing support to members and affiliates who need assistance from their national association with school library-related issues and fielding interview requests on topics related to school librarianship. These staff members work with local AASL affiliate groups on what approaches work best to make a difference across the country on decisions about staffing and intellectual freedom. As president of AASL, I see the wonderful work of these professionals week in and week out. The valuable work of these two offices is one of the biggest reasons why I made the decision to become a life member of ALA. I want to support our profession’s advocacy efforts long after I retire to a lakeside retreat. The work of these offices solidifies our profession’s position in ways most of us do not realize. They are wonderful advocates who provide a highly skilled army of support for us.

The final coalition within ALA that I want to spotlight is the ALA Washington Office. The political landscape has always been a turbulent mix of heart-warming support and shocking times that require immediate action. The ALA Washington Office provides the skill and cunning needed to keep libraries on the minds of decision-makers across Capitol Hill. Support for ESSA along with more recent good news on funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services work and for Innovative Approaches to Literacy programs can be traced to the hard work and thoughtful initiatives of the ALA Washington Office. I challenge each AASL affiliate to send at least one school library voice to National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) scheduled for May 7–8, 2018. AASL President-Elect Kathryn Roots Lewis and I will be there representing you on national policy issues, but we need your voice to amplify the school library message in the offices of your state’s Congressional delegation as well. Last year’s NLLD was my first, and I am committed to making the trip as often as possible in the future to lend my voice wherever it is needed for library advocacy efforts. Won’t you join me as we exercise our collaboration genes across our nation’s capital?

Steven Yates is an assistant professor at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. In 2017 he received the Lois Henderson Presidential Award from the Alabama School Library Association. With Karen Chapman, he coauthored the article “The Impact of Monographs Crisis on the Field of Communication” in the May 2017 issue of the Journal of Academic Librarianship.
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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Only by banding together and working toward specific goals can we have the kind of impact that affects real change.

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.
Students NEED Libraries in HISD and Every School District

Dorcas Hand with Debbie Hall
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Catalyst: Another newspaper article (“Ranks of School Librarians Dwindle in HISD, Statewide” in the October 7, 2013, Houston Chronicle) detailing another decision by a Houston Independent School District (HISD) campus principal to eliminate the librarian (Mellon 2013).

Reader: Me, an experienced school librarian not employed by the district.

Reaction: These librarians are strong practitioners who are losing their jobs because a new principal has been told this will be the easiest way to balance the budget. This principal needs a better understanding! We learned from other sources within the community that she had previously staffed a library with a clerk. However, we know those particular librarians to be strong practitioners who deserve to remain working with students. There is no reason to eliminate their positions. Time to rabble-rouse!

My Plan: Find like-minded folks to work with.

Timeline: Eight to ten months before any visible progress. It took that long to find the right people to move forward. In August 2014, I finally met Debbie Hall, and we went to work.

SNL (Students Need Libraries) Leadership:

Debbie is a retired HISD librarian who also worked at the district level in the HISD Department of Library Services. She understands the workings of HISD, the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest district in the U.S. (Niche 2017). She still knows people across the district, as well as in the neighborhoods. She remains active in the Texas Library Association (TLA), Texas Association of School Librarians (TASL), American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and American Library Association (ALA), and volunteers in local schools.

I am also a retired school librarian, but not in HISD. I, too, remain active in TLA, TASL, AASL, and ALA, and focus on advocacy for the profession.

Our Plan: Identify the root causes of the elimination of so many school librarians in HISD, and work for change.

Beginning:

To begin our work we:

• invited HISD librarians Debbie knew to gather and brainstorm several times over the 2014–2015 school year;

• attended school board meetings, introducing ourselves to board members, and providing them with information about school libraries’ impact on student achievement;

• set up a comprehensive website <www.studentsneedlibrariesinhisd.org> to make available to the public all the information we provided to the school board <www.studentsneedlibrariesinhisd.org/hisd-board-representatives.html>, and to feature advocacy resources for all school library stakeholders <www.studentsneedlibrariesinhisd.org/advocacy.html>;

• started a Facebook page for SNL <www.facebook.com/groups/studentsneedlibraries>;

• talked to parents and community members, as well as administrators and HISD Department of Library Services staffers to understand the full situation, and begin to see how to move forward; and

• worked to build positive relationships with HISD Department of Library Services staff members to ensure we could support and magnify their work to the benefit of students, district campus librarians, and nonprofessional staff.

The L-word was never even mentioned before we began...
Progress

Our conversational research method yielded general indications of root causes of the library staffing problems; these causes include high-stakes testing, funding shortfalls, site-based decision-making, lack of vision/understanding within district and campus leadership about the role of school librarians. Additionally, the perceived lack of librarians’ job security makes recruitment and retention difficult. This list matches commonly cited reasons for school library concerns in other districts, but we are working to buck the trend going forward. Additionally, there is significant pushback from principals who do not want to be told what positions to staff; HISD’s site-based management policies are deeply held at all levels.

Our first indication of traction was the new conversation at school board meetings about libraries. The L-word was never even mentioned before we began, but we noted that members began to raise school libraries as a point of equity, and questions came up about how school libraries might be affected by new policies. And that is a change we can directly trace to our discussion of equity in materials and staffing sent to school board members.

In fall 2016 HISD welcomed a new superintendent, Richard A. Carranza. On arrival, he set up a series of listen-and-learn meetings around the district to which the community was invited. SNL made a concerted effort to have library spokespersons present at several sessions—different faces asking different questions—to be sure he understood the state of HISD libraries and to demonstrate that it was a broad-based concern. While he did not immediately change course, he did take notice as has been indicated in subtle policy changes and statements since.

Strategic Directions

Data and Equity

As we realized the beginnings of impact, we began to look at data. How many school librarians are still working in the district? How many school libraries have been closed? How many are staffed with paraprofessionals? What data might we already have that could support our further impact? Here, our relationship with district personnel became important; we requested staffing information and circulation data for each campus. Debbie compiled the circulation statistics and overlaid them onto the nine school board district maps, a set of images that makes it very clear where there are, in effect, “book deserts” (www.studentsneedlibrariesinhisd.org/hisd-board-representatives.html). The equity card came into full play here and inspired some internal board politics that located specific funding and staff for three schools in challenged neighborhoods. These two middle schools and one high school had small, dated book collections and minimal staffing but now have dramatically improved collections and staffing for which the district “found” money (George 2017). We fully recognize that equity is a very complicated topic affected by funding, failing test scores, high-stakes testing, and politics (local and broader). There can be no easy solutions, but we use the concept to raise awareness of school library contributions to improved literacy and academic achievement as consistently demonstrated in research (Falkenberg et al. 2017).

In collaboration with district library services leadership, we look to the future in hopes of better educating principals on what a strong school librarian should do to support best student progress—and this despite a climate that allows minimal direct communication to principals from library services staff. It will always remain true that school librarians who don’t measure up are our profession’s own worst enemy. Campus principals know librarianship only from the librarians they have worked with. Showing your A-game every day is how principals will know what they should expect in all future certified librarians and not to accept less. In addition to having strong librarian examples within the district, we hope to find ways to support library services in providing a consistent information stream to principals about:

• state library standards that, as we write this in August 2017, are working their way through the approval process (School Library Programs 2017),

• how to hire well (e.g., Texas Association of School Library Administrators n.d.), and

• other useful information that points to better support of student literacy and research needs.

Houston ISD is the seventh-largest district in the country with 76 percent of students eligible for free/reduced lunch—even before Hurricane Harvey hit (Houston ISD 2016). We are currently caught in a financial maelstrom caused largely by state funding practices. The school board and superintendent are trying to implement better library staffing at the same time that the district faces a dramatic budget shortfall. In January 2016 the school board got as far as a motion to mandate a librarian, a nurse, and a counselor for every campus—but that motion could get no further because of inadequate funding. However, the motion itself has stimulated conversation among principals at every level about why and how this provision of a librarian, nurse, and counselor might be possible. The motion...
inspired SNL to request a letter from ALA/AASL, which was published in the Houston Chronicle March 7, 2016 (Feldman and Preddy 2016).

As we write this in September, a major focus of SNL is the local election. In a highly unusual situation, we have six of nine school district leadership (both elected and in district headquarters)

Unfortunately, HISD is facing state censure over thirty-three so-called “failing schools,” which means HISD has only one year to solve a problem that has been many years in the making or the state could take over those schools. Our new superintendent established the Achieve 180 program to address this crisis, and announced that staffing at these thirty-three schools must include a librarian, a nurse, and a counselor. SNL believes that school librarians are included in this turnaround strategy as a direct result of our presence at those listen-and-learn meetings in fall 2016 and our contact with the school board. Neither campus principals nor library services staffers know if district funds are available for the additional staff. Of the thirty-three campuses, only four had not advertised the librarian’s position as of August 2017. SNL fully recognizes we have far to go, but our efforts have certainly begun to catalyze change.

Broad-Based Support

To get our message out, we continue to actively seek partners like Community Voices for Public Education <www.houstonvpe.org> and Houstonians for Great Public Schools <www.houstongps.org>, which are both groups that recognize the importance of school libraries for all students.

In further support for advocacy coalition building, for several years the TLA/TASL alliance with the TPTA (Texas PTA) has been an important collaboration. As part of that effort, I have attended two state PTA conferences to staff a TASL booth. Standing in a booth means talking to attendees. We noticed that active PTA members who attend the state conference generally work at schools that have good or even great school libraries with strong PTA support. When I mention to these folks the high percentage of Texas schools without any library, they are shocked. How can a school not offer its students a strong library with a great librarian?

We bring up this point only to remind readers that school librarians’ efforts to raise awareness of school library impact on student learning must be broadly focused on all stakeholders, including the general public. This would be a parallel effort to building parent interest on specific campuses and advocating to principals and district leadership and elected officials. Every school librarian should be closely involved with the campus parent-teacher group. If none exists, work to start one. Volunteer energy is only one benefit; the bigger potential effect is a choir of supportive voices to the principal and beyond to ensure the strongest possible support for the library.
The Future

As we look at 2017–2018 and beyond, we hope to:

• continue building support with and for current HISD librarians amongst all stakeholders;

• continue raising awareness with school board members and candidates, as well as other local elected officials and their staff; we have a strong connection with the City of Houston’s Director of Education, a recent HISD School Board member, who is charged to “work... with parents, administrators, business, law enforcement and neighborhoods [to] help achieve [the mayor’s] goal of moving this city forward and reducing the income inequality that is so often the result of deficiencies in the education system”;

• push forward our efforts to provide useful, frequently updated data in support of library needs and progress;

• maintain our website to be easily useful to school board members and also to all interested advocates and stakeholders; and

• participate actively in state and national awareness campaigns that can magnify our work and support other communities as well.

Dorcas Hand is a retired school librarian who worked most recently at Annunciation Orthodox School in Houston, Texas. An AASL member, she is 2018 chair of the AASL Awards Committee. She serves as editor of the TxAASL Talk blog for the Texas Association of School Librarians. Dorcas also cochaired (with Susan Ballard and Sara Kelly Johns) the school committee for ALA President Julie Todaro’s presidential initiative “Libraries Transform: The Expert in the Library.” She is the author of “School Librarians Are Professional School Educational Leaders,” published in the November 2017 issue of Teacher Librarian. She served as chair of the professionalism subcommittee of the 2017 Texas Standards effort.

Debbie Hall is retired from the Houston Independent School District where she worked most recently in the HISD Department of Library Services. Prior to joining the Department of Library Services, she was a school librarian in HISD and was named by the Houston Association of School Librarians as Librarian of the Year in 1988. In addition to advocating for school libraries as cofounder of Students Need Libraries in HISD, she serves on the board of the Friends of the Houston Public Library and is organizing a history of HISD for the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, an archival branch of the Houston Public Library.

Works Cited:


COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP
as a CATALYST FOR Change

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In the spring of 2015 Dr. Karen Sullivan, superintendent of Indian Prairie School District 204 in Aurora, Illinois, signed the Alliance for Excellent Education’s Future Ready Pledge, “making a firm commitment to implementing meaningful changes toward a digital learning transition that supports teachers, and addresses the district’s vision for student learning” (Alliance for Excellent Education n.d.). The work that followed put school librarians in the spotlight as agents of innovation, professional development, and community support. In this piece we—Kristen Mattson, school librarian at Waubonsie Valley High School, and Allan Davenport, Director of Instructional Leadership and Innovation for Indian Prairie School District 204—share our story of how shared leadership and a coalition of support became the catalysts for both school and organizational change.

Future Ready Librarians Serve Future Ready Schools

Future Ready Schools is the work of the Alliance for Excellent Education in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education. This initiative, launched in 2015, aims to help school districts “develop comprehensive plans to achieve successful student learning outcomes by transforming instructional pedagogy and practice while simultaneously leveraging technology to personalize learning in the classroom” (Alliance for Excellent Education 2015).

The work of the Alliance is nonprofit and nonpartisan and supports school districts through research and white papers, a digital hub of professional development resources, video interviews and virtual site visits with leading districts, and digital self-assessment and goal-setting tools, as well as professional development institutes and other in-person events (Alliance for Excellent Education 2015).

In June of 2016 Future Ready Schools announced an expansion of their initiative that recognized the value of school librarians and the part they play in Future Ready education. With the support of both Follett and AASL, the Future Ready Librarians initiative is sparking a renewed conversation around the value of school librarianship (Alliance for Excellent Education 2016).

By developing the Future Ready Librarians Framework to mirror the language of the Future Ready Framework, the Alliance is helping administrators, school boards, teachers, and community members make explicit connections between the work of school librarians and the changing landscape of education.

Collaborative Leadership and Leading beyond the Library

The Future Ready Schools Framework is wrapped in an outer ring that emphasizes the importance of clear direction and support systems. Allan realized that if he and other district leaders provided a clear direction and a myriad of support systems, the school librarians would become instructional leaders—and that is exactly what happened.

Allan realized that if he and other district leaders provided a clear direction and a myriad of support systems, the school librarians would become instructional leaders—and that is exactly what happened.
of collaborative leadership. Research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology in partnership with the American Institutes for Research found that districts that were most successfully tackling the transition to digital-age learning were doing so through “a shared vision for teaching, leading and learning [and] a culture of trust and innovation” (U.S. Dept. of Ed. n.d.). These characteristics, coupled with others like transparent communication and modeled use of technology, encompass the idea of collaborative leadership.

In a similar vein, the Future Ready Librarians Framework acknowledges the work practitioners can do to “lead beyond the library” and support the work of Future Ready Schools and districts. While the American Library Association has been charting a steady decrease in school library positions over the last ten years, districts that are tapping into the expertise of the school librarian while allowing the role of the librarian to evolve over time are having more successful transitions into digital-age teaching and learning (Wolf, Jones, and Gilbert 2014).

During the 2015–2016 school year, Allan, who, among his many other duties, oversees and supports librarians, described his vision for shared leadership and began the purposeful work of building community and camaraderie among the thirty-two librarians who serve District 204’s thirty-four campuses. To empower librarians as collaborative leaders, Allan recognized that the work would need to be both intentional and systemic. He understood that his vision would challenge the librarians, both instructionally and in the area of educational leadership, and knew that it was up to him to help the librarians see their potential as agents of change. Allan realized that if he and other district leaders provided a clear direction and a myriad of support systems, the school librarians would become instructional leaders—and that is exactly what happened.

Changing Focus, Changing Mindsets

Because of the size of the district, a librarian leadership team with members from elementary, middle, and high schools meets quarterly with Allan. This leadership team existed prior to the 2015–2016 school year and was often used as a vehicle for disseminating information to all thirty-two librarians. In 2015, however, Allan made a conscious decision to spend less time in the quarterly meetings on logistics and management and more on training this team of librarians to be leaders. The Future Ready Librarians Framework was a natural choice to help frame the vision and the work.

After the leadership team dissected the Future Ready Librarians Framework, team members led a session empowering the rest of the thirty-two librarians in the district to do the same. Each person identified personal successes and struggles within the context of the framework. Then they did the same within grade-level groups. Within the whole group, the components of the framework that came up again and again as areas of importance and opportunities for growth were Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Collaborative Leadership; and Community Partnerships. These areas of the framework became the intentional focus of everyone’s attention and efforts during the 2015–2016 school year.

As a former principal, Allan knew that the first step in creating agency was to build trust and community within the librarian group. When the thirty-two librarians came together as a whole group each quarter, they were accustomed to receiving instructions, information, and some professional development from Allan or members of the librarian leadership team. They were not as accustomed to working in teams toward a common goal. Allan knew if he needed school librarians to support their buildings as instructional leaders, they would first need to feel comfortable digging into, taking ownership of, and even modeling components of the framework with their fellow librarians.

Creating a Local Coalition of Support

Future Ready and the Alliance for Excellent Education were a fabulous coalition of support and resources, but Allan wanted to help the thirty-two librarians in his district also see one another as their own local coalition of support. To begin building the collective efficacy of the group and breaking down the silos that had naturally developed over time, Allan planned various activities that would get the district librarians collaborating and supporting each other on their journey toward Future Ready.

Allan challenged each of the school librarians to share their personal story in a speech similar to a TED Talk. Many of the thirty-two librarians did not know much about one another aside from their names and building assignments. To foster the librarians’ trust in each other and their working together, Allan looked for opportunities to help them know one another on a more-personal level. Librarians like Kristen volunteered to present their stories when they were ready, and each quarterly meeting usually began with two or three talks from members of the group. Librarians shared about their families, their journey toward librarianship, their secret talents or favorite hobbies,
and the life lessons they have learned and apply to their work every day. During these talks, people came together. They found out what they had in common with their colleagues; they discovered new topics to talk about with one another and dove deeper into one another’s experiences. They felt vulnerable but also safe to share thoughts and feelings.

Allan encouraged librarians to not only share their stories but also to share their spaces as well. Because of the size of the district and limited release time, it was a rare occurrence for librarians to be in one another’s schools. For one of the quarterly meetings during the 2015–2016 school year, Allan asked for volunteer carpool drivers and sent minivans and SUVs full of eager librarians out on field trips to view one another’s spaces.

Kristen felt that those library field trips were one of the most-powerful professional development and bonding opportunities for their library team. Her car-full of colleagues took silly selfies before pulling out of the parking lot, made bets about whose children made the biggest messes in the family car, and generally shared life stories as they drove around town. This opportunity to just be together, without a strict agenda or a task bigger than getting to their destination, allowed this car-full of people to further secure their relationships and levels of trust.

Kristen also noted a stark difference between the library field trips she attended that day with her colleagues and site visits she had done on her own. When librarians visit schools outside of their district, they typically do so with the intention of gathering great ideas to bring back to their own space. When Kristen and her colleagues traveled together, though, the experience was so much richer. Sure, great ideas were still recognized and replicated, but the best part of the visit was when the hosting librarians felt comfortable enough to point out the flaws of their spaces and ask for advice from a coalition of support that they had come to know and trust.

Allan and Kristen agree that the year spent building trust, relationships, and collective efficacy was well worth it. The level of growth within individuals, but also within the group as a whole, was remarkable. Amazing things like the incorporation of makerspaces and STEM programs into the elementary schools, the incorporation of inquiry-based lesson design, and more-purposeful, productive collaboration with teachers that used to happen only in pockets began to spread like wildfire as the thirty-two librarians were empowered to lead, challenge, question, and support one another. A Future Ready Librarian community was being built in and through the collective efforts of Allan and the librarians.

As the 2015–2016 school year came to a close, the intentional focus on a few components of the Future Ready Librarians Framework was carried into the 2016–2017 school year. During that second year of deliberate work, the vision of collaborative leadership began.

Superintendent Dr. Karen Sullivan, school board member Mark Rising, and Director of Instructional Technology Allan Davenport listening to ideas Kristen Mattson and the other high school librarians have for the upcoming school year.
to become reality! Educators both in and outside of District 204 were noticing evidence of this collaborative, focused work, and Indian Prairie school librarians were quickly becoming the face of Future Ready—not only in their buildings and in their communities, but also on a national level. This recognition was thanks to the commitment of District 204 librarians to blog about their experiences and present at conferences. The work of the District 204 librarians was also highlighted by Superintendent Dr. Karen Sullivan through her appearance at the School Library Journal Leadership Summit in 2016 as well as through an article she wrote for AASA’s journal, School Administrator.

A Future Ready School, District, Community

Shared leadership within the team of librarians and also within relationships between librarians and administrators has resulted in many “wins” for students, teachers, and the larger community that District 204 serves. By partnering with parent-teacher organizations, the local education foundation, public libraries, classroom teachers, building and district administrators, and members of the school board, school librarians have had a significant impact. Here are just a few of those accomplishments:

- A revitalized job description and evaluation process for district librarians that better reflects the Future Ready Librarians Framework.
- Greater partnerships with the public library. Allan himself has provided Chromebook training to the public library staff so they may better support our students who may bring in a 1:1 device. Also, the director has committed some of the public library budget to purchasing WiFi hotspots for our students to check out and take home.
- Greater access to coding, robotics, and STEM education at the elementary schools thanks to generous funding from various sources for makerspace materials and after-school clubs.
- A redesign and revitalization of physical libraries across the district, allowing teachers and school librarians to facilitate far more student collaboration and creation than was previously possible.
- An increase in parent education around digital citizenship, educational technology, and STEM as school librarians lead parent forums and Q&A sessions and bring their makerspace sessions out to community clubhouses. Librarians have also been intentional about developing relationships with parent volunteers and parent-teacher organizations, relationships that are mutually beneficial to both the school library and the parent community.
- School librarians are now sitting on various curriculum-writing teams, allowing them to embed Future Ready skills alongside content-area goals as curriculum is being collaboratively developed with teacher teams.
- Librarians have been increasingly seen as instructional partners in their buildings; they are co-planning, co-teaching, providing on-the-spot professional development, and also volunteering to lead large groups not only on school-improvement days, but also on much larger district-wide Institute Days.

Coalitions Support One Another

Allan’s goal back in 2015 was to equip the thirty-two school librarians in District 204 with the skills and confidence to lead beyond the library by going out into their buildings as instructional partners and advocates of Future Ready Learning. He watched in awe as many of the librarians on the team stepped into leadership roles above and beyond their own schools as well.

The high school librarians formed a Future Ready Libraries blog at <https://futureready204librarians.wordpress.com> and encouraged every one of their colleagues to contribute stories that aligned with the areas of the Future Ready Librarians Framework. These stories helped parents, community and board members, and librarians outside of the district recognize the vital role school librarians were playing as leaders in and catalysts of school change.

The biggest honor for Kristen and other librarians in the district was when the Alliance for Excellent Education and Follett Learning asked...
to feature some of their work in educational materials for other districts and librarians. To date, Follett has written Project Connect case studies on two of the District 204 libraries, featured Kristen in one of Follett’s Project Connect Leadership Spotlight pieces, and filmed an interview with Kristen, which will be shown at Future Ready Summits around the country.

The hard work of the District 204 librarian team seemed to come full circle, at least for Kristen, during the opening Institute Day of the 2017–2018 school year. Kristen sat in an auditorium full of educators as Tom Murray, Director of Innovation for Future Ready Schools, took the stage to give a keynote address. His message about innovation in schools and personalized student learning was peppered with compliments about the important work school librarians are doing in District 204 to lead that charge.

When school librarians work in silos, it is easy for them to become discouraged, stop growing, and even be considered irrelevant in this increasingly digital age. When librarians are part of the vital work of the school and district, however, it is difficult to imagine making changes in schools without them.

Practical Takeaways for Your Own Coalition

Maybe you have your own coalition that needs some reinvigorating. Maybe your first step in this work will be to find a tribe of local librarians who will support and push one another. No matter where you are starting, we suggest adopting some of what we learned during our district’s journey:

Left to right: Dawn Vieira, Kristen Mattson, Allan Davenport, and Laura Nylen, all members of the District 204 library team, at the University of Illinois to share their journey with other practitioners.
• Take time to get to know one another, build trust, and acknowledge that all members of the group are at different points in their journey and bring different strengths and weaknesses to the table. Share your stories with one another. Share a meal together. The time it takes to build this foundation will pay off exponentially in the long run.

• Choose a document like AASL’s Standards or the Future Ready Librarians Framework as your guide. Use it to guide reflection, set goals, and monitor progress. Do so as individuals and as the collective coalition.

• Recognize that change is a slow process and a journey that never really ends. Prioritize your work. Celebrate incremental success.

• Try something. Fail. Share your failures, and then try again.

• Don’t force change. Recognize where you can make an impact, and work with those who are willing to partner with you. As you build positive experiences and trust with those first followers, word will spread.

• Visit one another’s spaces—not just for great ideas, but also for opportunities to get feedback from a safe group of critical but supportive friends.

• Share your story. Success in your coalition should be celebrated, not just by you, but by your community too! Sharing your story also helps support other librarian groups who are just beginning their journey.

Final Thoughts

When school librarians work in silos, it is easy for them to become discouraged, stop growing, and even be considered irrelevant in this increasingly digital age. When librarians are part of the vital work of the school and district, however, it is difficult to imagine making changes in schools without them. District and school leaders should not miss the opportunity to empower their librarians as catalysts for change.

As a district leader, Allan has seen countless examples of instructional growth throughout the district that can be directly attributed to the instructional leadership of a librarian. This growth and leadership would not have happened if district leadership had not made a purposeful investment in the continued professional development of librarians.

As a school librarian, please remember that what you do matters. The librarian is one of the few people in a school who can collaborate with everyone. Use that unique position to develop relationships with students, teachers, and parents. Share your story; demonstrate your love for reading, making, research, and student learning; and invest in one another. Learning and growing from working with other librarians are part of the vital work of the school and district, however, it is difficult to imagine making changes in schools without them. District and school leaders should not miss the opportunity to empower their librarians as catalysts for change.

Dr. Kristen Mattson is a high school librarian in Indian Prairie School District 204. She is currently serving on the conference planning committee of the Illinois School Library Media Association and is a leader for the International Society for Technology in Education Digital Citizenship personal learning network. Kristen is the author of Digital Citizenship in Action: Empowering Students to Engage in Online Communities (ISTE 2017) and winner of the 2017 American Association for Teaching and Curriculum’s John Laika Dissertation of the Year Award in the curriculum category.

Allan Davenport is Director of Instructional Leadership and Innovation for the Indian Prairie School District 204. He is currently serving as a board member for the Association of Illinois Middle–Grade Schools. In addition, Allan consults with other districts in the areas of leadership, digital citizenship, and school culture.

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Two Future Ready Librarians

EXPLORE

ADVOCACY

In and Outside of the Library

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As librarians, we can’t share our passion and stories enough. We have the ability to empower others with this energy so they know how to share their voices, creativity, and passions too.

Editor’s Note: As part of the national Future Ready Librarians initiative at the Alliance for Excellent Education, Mark Ray and Shannon McClintock Miller serve as national advocates for school library programs and librarians. Mark and Shannon began their library advocacy careers in school libraries. For eight years Shannon was the district librarian in Van Meter (IA) Community School District, working with all grades K–12. For twenty years Mark was a school librarian in Vancouver (WA) Public Schools, working in elementary, middle school, and high school libraries. For the last five years, he has been a district administrator serving in a variety of roles. In this exchange between Shannon McClintock Miller and Mark Ray, they explore the topic of advocacy and lessons learned both in and outside the library.

Mark Ray: Shannon, you developed a strong library program in Van Meter. How was advocacy part of that success?

Shannon McClintock Miller: Advocacy was such an important and special part of our successful library program. To start, I was very lucky to have an extremely supportive superintendent and principal. Over the years, I had a lot of crazy and big ideas on how we could build and cultivate the best library and school we could for our students and community. I had a vision for what we wanted to do and how we could create this change. [My] hanging out with my superintendent at the coffee shop on a Saturday, sharing a fun Friday night with teacher friends at our house, or chaperoning school dances and events were all common occurrences in my life. The relationships and friendships I had with my administrators, teachers, families, and others in our community were key to the success of the library program and in my role as the [school] librarian. I wanted to make a difference.

MR: I also developed strong friendships and partnerships with administrators. I think advocacy is DOA if you don’t have an authentic relationship with your principal or colleagues. In my second year as a librarian, a planning principal came to me out of the blue to help solve a problem for a new middle school that was being built. Terry and I became good friends, literally working side by side designing not only the library, but the entire school. I remember a meeting when he and I had to convince our then-superintendent of a proposal we had. Together, we managed to convince our superintendent that our idea was his all along. Talk about Jedi mind tricks! We prepped for days for this one meeting.

SMM: Being prepared is very important. Every time I went to talk to my administrators, I was armed with the information and tools I would need so they just couldn’t say no. I made a seat for myself at the table and made sure I was involved in every meeting and conversation that I could. By doing this, they knew that I cared and had an interest in everything that was going on within our school district.

MR: I have a dear colleague who uses that seat analogy. He always says that for most educational conversations, there should always be a librarian at the table. Nod to you, Steve Coker! I think some librarians see advocacy as passive. I believe you need to seek out the opportunities.

SMM: Advocacy to me means the process of always sharing our message and vision with our students, teachers, parents, community, and the world. We need to build these
partnerships and invite all stakeholders to be involved in building a plan for the school library program. As librarians, we can’t share our passion and stories enough. We have the ability to empower others with this energy so they know how to share their voices, creativity, and passions too.

**MR:** I’ve spilled a lot of pixels writing about advocacy. I think advocacy comes down to simply operationalizing your strategic plans. You define what you want the future to look like and then seek ways to make it happen. The AASL Advocacy Committee describes advocacy as “[beginning] with a vision and a plan for the library program that is then matched to the agenda and priorities of stakeholders” (AASL 2017). A clear and aligned vision must be defined before the ask.

**SMM:** Mark, as an administrator, how have your perspectives on advocacy changed?

**MR:** I think many of my previous assumptions about advocacy have proven themselves to be on the mark. I’ve been a district administrator for a while now. I spend a lot of time with both building and district leaders across the U.S. I think it’s important that librarian advocates let go of the “us versus them” mindset. At the 2015 AASL National Conference, I sat on the same panel as my superintendent Dr. Steve Webb and two other nationally recognized superintendents. I cowrote an article with Dr. Webb for *School Administrator* magazine. There is no dark side. Everybody wants what’s best for kids. Admins don’t hate libraries. In some cases, they simply prioritize other areas of educational need.

**SMM:** I remember that presentation at the AASL conference and thought to myself... “We sure do have a lot in common when it comes to our superintendents being such amazing advocates to us as librarians and for our school libraries.” When I first started presenting and working with other school districts around the country, it was with my superintendent and principal. My very first speaking gig was actually in Nashville, and the three of us drove there in a school van to speak to a large group of educators, including several [school] librarians. I knew at that time we all had the same goal...to make a difference for students and advocate for education everywhere. In fact, that next year we were a featured presentation at the School Administrators of Iowa National Conference, and three years later I keynoted, along with five students, the Iowa Association of School Boards Annual Convention. Can you imagine what all of the administrators, educators, and school board members took back to their districts and communities after hearing a librarian speak with her administrators and students about the importance of libraries and education? It was awesome! We made a difference.

**MR:** Having gone from a librarian to a district administrator, I think there are some key secrets to success. Librarians need to learn to manage up. That means [school] librarians must do their homework and understand what educational leaders dream about. It means listening and empathizing with their principal or district leaders. It means building rapport both interpersonally and professionally. And you need to align library goals with school and district priorities.

**SMM:** That’s why I’m so excited about Future Ready Librarians! As school districts around the country become Future Ready, librarians are...
the ones who are taking the role to lead, teach, and support the school and district Future Ready goals in a variety of ways. The Future Ready Librarians Framework and the "gears" within the framework open up a conversation that we can have with our administrators and others within the district. As the framework states, we can talk about empowering our students as creators, cultivating community partnerships, facilitating professional learning, leading beyond the library, and so much more. We can provide the connections, strategies, and resources our school and district need to create innovative learning opportunities for our students (Alliance for Excellent Education n.d.). As librarians, we are the ones who can lead our schools as we become more Future Ready every day.

**MR:** In Vancouver strategic partnerships and alignments have changed the conversation about libraries and librarians. I trace the library renaissance in VPS to an unlikely partnership more than a decade ago. Our chief technology officer wanted to implement a new textbook-management solution. Out of the blue, she reached out to me for help. We worked together and went from being antagonists to partners. At the same time, librarians became part of the solution to a district-wide challenge. This successful partnership changed perceptions and assumptions on both sides of the aisle, and we never really looked back. Now, our [school] librarians are supporting our tablet deployment, leading students’ toward better digital citizenship, promoting coding and making—their successes build legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of both building and district leaders. Most importantly, the conversation is less about what’s best for the library and more about what’s best for kids.

**SMM:** Absolutely! Our conversation should always focus on what is best for kids! Through my library advocacy, I was always thinking and working to make a difference for our students, teachers, and community in so many ways. Just as your [school] librarians did, I was one of the key players in our 1:1 laptop initiative, integrated and led coding efforts, created makerspaces, supported project-based learning, modeled and taught digital citizenship, and worked at connecting our students globally through experiences, digital tools and projects, and literacy. As Future Ready Librarians, this is what we do. We do anything we can to move our schools and education to where they need to be. We change the way we have done things and make a difference for our community, schools, libraries, and—most of all—our students.

**MR:** As library advocates, I think we are always extending a metaphorical hand. I often tell librarians to be mindful about the way they orient that hand. Is it extended palm up as if asking for a handout? Or is it extended like a handshake? I think the Future Ready Librarians Framework helps school librarians make strategic connections and find meaningful ways to extend a helping hand.

So Shannon…as a library advocate, how do you feel about the future of school libraries?

**SMM:** I am so excited and optimistic about the future of school libraries! [School] librarians are the ones who can lead, foster, and create the change that is needed throughout libraries, schools, and education. We, as Future Ready Librarians, will be
the ones who do this. And we must empower others around us to do the same—administrators, teachers, families, and, most important of all, our students. They are counting on us. Together, we can be the best advocates for school libraries, education, and for our young people as they embrace the future too. Mark, what about you?

MR: I’ve never been more optimistic about the future of school libraries. Kids, teachers, and principals need Future Ready Librarians. We’ll keep telling that story at the national level. It’s up to librarians to make that case in their schools!

Mark Ray is the Director of Innovation and Library Services in the Vancouver (WA) Public Schools and a long-time advocate for strong school libraries and innovation in education. In 2011 the Washington State ASCD affiliate gave him the Washington State Individual Award for Influencing Instructional Leadership and Professional Growth of Educators. In 2012 the State of Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction named him Teacher of the Year. In the April 2012 issue of Teacher Librarian he was among those recognized as visionary leaders of the learning commons concept. In 2015 he was included in the National School Boards Association’s list of “20 to Watch” as emerging technology leaders.

Shannon McClintock Miller is a spokesperson for Future Ready Librarians. She is also an author, speaker, and teacher librarian consultant. She is a member of AASL and AASL’s Best Apps for Teaching and Learning Committee. She is the author of the award-winning The Library Voice blog and enjoys writing for various blogs, journals, and other forums, including ISTE, School Library Journal, and Publishers’ Weekly. She recently published her first four children’s books about library skills with Cantata Learning.

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CSLA’s INFORMATION LITERACY SUMMITS AT Cue CONFERENCES
Why CSLA Partners with CUE

Cultivating partnerships is a crucial advocacy strategy for school library associations building support for the work we do. School librarians can’t do their work in isolation, so it makes sense for our associations to reach out to other associations whose members work with or could potentially support school libraries and school library staff.

In California partnership-building is especially important, since we have a dire shortage of school librarians. With just 859 credentialed school librarians reported as working in school libraries in 2014–2015, California is consistently last in the nation in the ratio of school librarians to students (California Dept. of Ed. 2017). In the majority of schools—and even in whole districts—teachers, administrators, and other staff have no experience working with a trained librarian. Indeed, with losses in school librarian jobs over many years, most school principals do not even remember having someone in that role while they themselves were students. These principals do not know what services a school librarian provides and have no concept of what they and their students are missing. Through state, regional, and district-level partnerships, we have a chance to make school librarians and the value of our work visible to educators who would otherwise not know what we do. We also have the opportunity to cultivate relationships so that others may speak up for us when we are absent at a policy-making table.

The California School Library Association (CSLA) is fortunate to have a strong, long-standing partnership with CUE (formerly Computer-Using Educators). CUE is the West Coast affiliate of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). CUE’s membership is in the high thousands, and its annual conferences attract approximately 7,000 attendees from all segments of education. It is the largest organization of its type in the western United States and one of the largest in the nation. It serves primarily California, as well as surrounding states. CUE’s reach is, therefore, on a scale about ten times that of CSLA’s, with our 700 members and conference attendance of approximately 625 each year.

As part of the CSLA-CUE partnership, we support each other’s advocacy and marketing efforts. We exchange complimentary booth privileges and publicity at our annual conferences. When we were advocating at the California State Board of Education in 2010 for the adoption of the Model School Library Standards for California Public Schools (which have been adopted, see <www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/librarystandards.pdf>), Mike Lawrence, CUE CEO at the time, was one of the speakers. We have periodically participated in membership incentives allowing CSLA members to become CUE members at a reduced rate. Glen Warren, the CSLA vice president of government relations, and Renée Ousley-Swank, CSLA president-elect, cochair the CUE Library Media Educator Network, one of CUE’s special interest groups. Glen also represents CSLA and school libraries on the CUE Advocacy Committee.

Information Literacy Summits at CUE Conferences

In 2014 we took our partnership to a new level when our two associations agreed to have CSLA host a day-long Information Literacy Summit within the CUE Annual Conference. This now-annual summit has provided a number of benefits for both associations.

First, here is a snapshot of how the summit is organized. The summit consists of four sessions held during the four concurrent-session time slots on one of the CUE conference days. For the first time slot, we have a summit keynoter who is engaged by CUE as one of its Spotlight Speakers. CUE features several crowd-drawing speakers at each conference and pays them an honorarium and expenses. These Spotlight Speakers present three sessions during the conference. Since we began the summit, our keynoters (all financed by CUE) have been Gwyneth Jones (2014), Kathy Schrock (2015), Joyce Valenza (2016), and Mark Ray (2017), all outstanding leaders in our field. They were all selected through mutual agreement between CSLA and CUE. The other three summit sessions are presented by CSLA members and selected by CSLA’s summit organizers. The selection process involves our identifying literacy-related topics of most interest to both school librarians and other teachers, and inviting some of our very best member practitioners and presenters. Conference attendees can come to the entire summit, or any one or more of the sessions. The audience is always a mix of school library professionals and other educators.

So, what are the benefits? CUE’s conference organizers benefit from having sessions and speakers that will attract more school librarians and library support staff to attend the conference. While CSLA has its own annual conference and regular regional workshops, many school library professionals do their best to put CUE on their event attendance list.
list as well, or even instead of our own conference, in part because of these attractive summit keynoters. CUE appreciates getting a high turnout of attendees from the school library world. Likewise, we appreciate that the summit attracts school librarians who are not CSLA members, and we have the opportunity to publicize our association and encourage new members to join. We also appreciate CUE’s financial support of nationally recognized speakers we want to hear and interact with. In addition to the keynoters at our CSLA conferences, we get a second chance each year right in California to hear from national thought leaders.

For CSLA and our school library advocacy efforts, the summit means that CUE and its attendees hear from high-profile, nationally recognized school librarians as spotlight speakers. CUE members also learn about topics of value for all educators—but from the perspective of a school librarian. Unfortunately, with the dismal 1:7,187 ratio of credentialed librarians to students in California reported in 2014–2015 (California Dept. of Ed. 2017), many of the state’s teachers and administrators lack experience in what a school librarian can provide. The CUE sessions may be the place where they find out what they

Gwyneth Jones, CSLA Information Literacy Summit Keynoter, presenting and having her session recorded during the CUE Conference, March 2014.
are missing at their own schools, and become aware of the special expertise school librarians have to teach information literacy, digital literacy, and digital citizenship to students and to provide their teachers with professional development. In addition, those who attend the other summit sessions see that there are students and schools in California benefitting from school librarians’ expertise. Perhaps this knowledge will encourage teachers to contemplate advocating to use local funding to get such staffing in their schools. The CSLA Summit raises awareness among CUE members of what school libraries and librarians do.

Finally, everyone benefits from the expertise shared in literacy-related sessions delivered by skilled library practitioners and from the networking and new relationships school librarians and other educators develop with one another both during the sessions and through interactions in between.

**What You Can Do**

Do consider having your own school library association reach out to your regional technology association, start cooperating, and propose offering a summit during the tech association’s conference that will reach both school librarians and other educators. Everyone wins from this replicable partnership model! And, do not stop there. Think about other types of partnerships your association can develop. Below are a few ideas, based on CSLA’s outreach efforts over the years.

**Book award program partnerships:** The California Young Reader Medal Program, established in 1974, encourages students to read, nominate, and vote for favorite books each year. It is administered through a partnership between CSLA and the California Reading Association, the California Association of Teachers of English, and the California Library Association. The goal of the program is to inspire recreational reading by students, but the work of the committee also makes school librarians visible to other librarians and English teachers who may support us in other venues.

**Reciprocal presentations at conferences:** At some of our recent conferences, CSLA has invited other associations to partner with us by making a presentation and sharing in our exhibit hall. In 2016, for example, these associations accepted our offers: California Association for Teachers of English, California Library Association, California Reading Association, California Art Education Association, California Council for Social Studies, California Mathematics Council, California Science Teachers Association, and CUE. We have not, thus far, built this concept into ongoing reciprocal arrangements, but perhaps we will be able to in the future. Some of our members have taken the personal initiative to propose sessions at subject-area conferences and have thereby been able to share their expertise with teachers who might not have on-site librarians. School librarians typically have closer relationships with English and social studies teachers than with STEM teachers, but I have done some of my best collaborative units with science and math teachers. It would behoove us to reach out to all the subject areas. Why not, for example, propose a session at a computer science teachers’ conference?

**Union partnerships:** CSLA has a long-standing relationship with the California Teachers Association (CTA). CTA funds a school librarian representative’s attendance at CSLA’s board meetings to report on CTA activities, and learn about CSLA activities to report to CTA. A number of our members, working in their local districts, have been able to work with their unions to get support for school libraries. Repeatedly, we see that school librarians who are willing to become active volunteers in their unions can leverage that involvement to get better union support for libraries and librarians.

We all need to think beyond the obvious and brainstorm within our own state associations and local regions about different types of groups we can partner with for mutual benefit. The more we do, the more others will know and understand our work and become our advocates.

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**Jane Lofton,** school librarian “in the wild,” served as school librarian at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, California, before retiring in 2016. She is now a library advocate and part-time instructor in the Rutgers University librarian preparation program. She is a past president and honorary member of the California School Library Association. She was recently the chair of AASL’s Social Media Recognition Committee and social media chair for the November 2017 AASL National Conference. She is the current chair of AASL’s Best Websites for Teaching and Learning Committee. She served as co-coordinator of CSLA’s CUE conference summit from 2014 through 2017. Read more about her experiences on Twitter @jane_librarian and her blog at [www.janelofton.com](http://www.janelofton.com).

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**Work Cited:**

CACY

It’s a Marathon, Not a Sprint

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Editor’s Note: The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) offered a significant opportunity for school librarians; it also created opportunities to partner with school librarians on their efforts to be included in their states’ educational plans. This three-part article explores the development and rollout of AASL’s ESSA State Workshops; how these workshops spurred additional state advocacy efforts from the California School Library Association (CSLA); and the AASL Vision for Implementing ESSA Task Force’s continuing efforts to track state ESSA plans and provide advocacy tools and resources for school librarians.

Anyone who has prepared to run a marathon knows it takes many steps: Make a plan, visualize your success, set goals. The same is true for advocacy. There is a reason why we use the phrase “It’s a marathon, not a sprint” when talking about advocacy. A sprint in advocacy equals a short-term result; a marathon involves a long-lasting result like ensuring every student has access to a fully funded school library with a full-time state-certified school librarian.

Endurance Training

Like marathons, advocacy takes patience and perseverance. More than a decade of steady efforts and strong messaging by the American Library Association (ALA) and AASL resulted in language specifically naming school libraries in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). School librarians and their advocates ensured federal legislation included school libraries.

The Starting Line

Before the marathon even started, AASL needed to provide decision makers in Washington with a clear definition of an effective school library program to measure against state plans and to support individual efforts to advocate for school library programs. To this end, AASL created new or revised position statements related to the legislation in the first few months after ESSA was signed into law. Language in these position statements was updated from messaging AASL and the ALA Washington Office used to advocate for the proposed Strengthening Kids’ Interest in Learning and Libraries (SKILLS) Act in 2007 and 2015. AASL’s position statement “Definition of an Effective School Library Program” noted:

AASL supports the position that an effective school library program has a certified school librarian at the helm, provides personalized learning environments, and offers equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student. (AASL 2016)

Having a single definition accepted by federal, state, and district educational stakeholders is critical for advocacy efforts, and as your national professional association, AASL/ALA played a critical role in defining an effective school library program to ensure the first step in a successful journey.

Mile Six

At this point the excitement of being in a marathon, knowing that the preparation worked turns to realization that there are still twenty miles to go! Because school libraries had not been included in the previous version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), AASL recognized the importance of informing school library advocates and all education stakeholders of the new inclusion in ESSA.

As summer 2016 began, the U.S. Department of Education moved rapidly to develop rulemaking and guidance before a new administration took over. The regulations and guidance clearly showed a significant focus on state and local plans and a need to act quickly but thoroughly to ensure school librarians were able advocates at the state and local level. AASL, the ALA Office of Library Advocacy, and the ALA Washington Office decided to launch a series of workshops related to ESSA for AASL affiliates, the school library association in each state. New materials and resources were developed for these workshops to educate members on the legislation. The materials included background information on ESSA, an outline of the specific titles in ESSA in which school librarians could make the most impact to advocate for inclusion in state plans, and an advocacy plan using ALA’s Office for Library Advocacy resources and staff expertise.

Half-Marathon Point

This is usually the point in a marathon when you check in with yourself to make sure you’re keeping your pace, take in some nourishment, and hydrate to push through the next half. By September, AASL’s ESSA Workshops were ready for rollout to states.

As states signed up for the workshops, AASL developed a personalized workbook to connect the dots between a state’s education ESSA goals and the language and messages ALA/AASL had developed. AASL knew it was important for each state to be speaking the same language as their educational stakeholders to ensure our message points would connect with administrators, district leaders, and state education departments.
Workshop participants reviewed key messages for ESSA, identified stakeholders, developed coalition plans, and connected messaging to stakeholders and decision makers. Sample one-line messages relevant to school libraries for each ESSA title provided a foundation for small groups to identify stakeholders and develop targeted messaging.

Mile 22

Many marathoners refer to this mile marker as “The Wall.” This is the point in the race in which you’ve come so far and yet you know there is still a lot of race left to run—to many it’s the most challenging part of the race. In the ESSA marathon, this was when ALA/AASL rolled out its messaging and advocacy tools to as many states and local-level school librarians as possible. This happened in a very short window as state ESSA plans were being developed.

AASL worked with state affiliate leaders to develop workshops tailored to each state’s planning process and to bring key partners to the table. Developing relationships, knowing the local, political landscape, and understanding the ongoing, continuous nature of advocacy are critical to success. Signing a petition may feel good in the moment and thousands of signatures may briefly highlight a cause, but the development of relationships and the creation and implementation of planned actions before, during, and after are what leads to success.

The state organizations gathered their members and supporters together to hear from AASL leaders, who presented forty-five workshops in total—thirty states were covered in the first sixty days. AASL’s ESSA State Workshops were the culmination of a sustained effort started long before the first workshop in early September 2016.

The Last Mile

The finish line is in sight for a marathoner, and for ALA/AASL, this point was when a sense of accomplishment, pride, and some exhaustion set in. The result of the efforts for all parties has been a pool of school librarians at the local level who are now confident about advocating for their vital role in K–12 schools. Although a change in administration and new guidance have made it necessary to revisit some previous planning and adjust timelines, the impact of finishing this marathon reaches beyond those states who have school librarians specifically noted in their approved ESSA state plans.

The findings from a national survey of state affiliates, completed by the 2017 ALA Emerging Leaders team sponsored by AASL, shows the increased comfort levels and confidence of school librarians to advocate (AASL 2017). Each new advocacy opportunity builds upon the steps taken previously. AASL’s ESSA State Workshops added many strong resources and advocates for school libraries.

Post-Marathon Recovery

Runners take a break after a marathon, and there has definitely been a down time for ESSA, too, when state plans are submitted but not yet approved by the U.S. Department of Education, when districts take their summer break, or legislatures are on recess. However, just like marathoners the training doesn’t stop for long. The advocacy must continue and sustain these efforts. The AASL Vision for Implementing ESSA Task Force continues to scan the environment, monitor and analyze state plans, and provide support for all school librarians and school library advocates.

School librarians continue to advocate for their vital role in education, and for many states these workshops were actually just one part of the marathon training phase as they start advocacy efforts at the state and local level.

Allison Cline is deputy executive director of AASL.

Sylvia Knight Norton is executive director of the ALA Office for Library Advocacy.

Marci Merola is director of the ALA Office for Library Advocacy.

Works Cited:
California’s Local Control Funding Formula & The Local Control Accountability Plan
While many school libraries throughout our country are dependent on decisions that are made at the state level, the state of California has made recent significant changes in how it manages school finances. The new system offers school districts more control than they have had in decades to run schools as they deem best. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), enacted in 2013–2014, calls for school districts to set both district-wide and school-wide goals and spells out the specific action steps needed to achieve those goals for all students, but especially for English learners, young people in foster care, and low-income students. A Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) is designed to provide school districts and their communities with more local control and make it easier to respond to the needs of their students. Therefore, LCAPs are the central documents for making sure that local control over funding for schools is spelled out clearly.

Additionally, with the enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), California has streamlined local, state, and federal requirements into a single accountability plan. The plan incorporates the federal requirements of the act and builds upon the work that has been done to develop an accountability system based on multiple measures that show how students, schools, and districts are doing. This new accountability system is just one element among sweeping changes in California. These changes include implementing new academic standards, expanding career- and college-readiness programs, and, with the adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula, shifting power from Sacramento to local districts. While local control of funding has many benefits, there is a huge disparity among districts in how school libraries are funded. Much of this disparity is due to local community leaders’ lack of awareness about the role and importance of school libraries in their students’ education.

WHILE LOCAL CONTROL OF FUNDING HAS MANY BENEFITS, THERE IS A HUGE DISPARITY AMONG DISTRICTS IN HOW SCHOOL LIBRARIES ARE FUNDED. MUCH OF THIS DISPARITY IS DUE TO LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS’ LACK OF AWARENESS ABOUT THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN THEIR STUDENTS’ EDUCATION.
Energized by AASL’s ESSA advocacy efforts and the AASL ESSA State Workshop presented in fall 2016 by Katie Williams, our AASL Affiliate Region 7 director, the California School Library Association (CSLA) established an ESSA Task Force. The association developed a position statement on ESSA, shared it with members, and published it on our website <http://csla.net/csla-position-statement-on-essa>. CSLA also led an active campaign to solicit comments and requests from our members and stakeholders directed to the California Department of Education to advocate for school libraries’ inclusion in California’s ESSA plan.

Even with these efforts in place, CSLA leadership knew from the beginning that, because of our LCFF legislation, most advocacy, collaboration, and partnerships supporting school library funding in California had to be done on a local basis. Nevertheless, we saw that the AASL recommendations that Katie shared could be applied to advocacy for school library support at any level and from any potential funding source. With that in mind, our CSLA ESSA task force began brainstorming how we could train our members to be better advocates and develop a group of enthusiastic, knowledgeable supporters from among our stakeholders. Inspired in part by New Jersey’s Unlock Student Potential site <unlockstudentpotential.org>, we launched a new campaign and website: Stand Up 4 Students <standup4students.org>.

The Stand Up 4 Students effort has three main components:

- A campaign website with information about the value of school libraries, current issues, and legislation related to school libraries in California and about the importance of advocacy. One page on the site, for example, has a list of questions for stakeholders to answer to assess whether their district has an effective school library program. (Sadly, for most California public schools, stakeholders’ conclusion will be “no.”) Another page features short testimonial videos featuring students, teachers, and others about the value of school libraries. We are encouraging our members to create more such videos, which we upload to the CSLA YouTube channel, and then include in a playlist on the Stand Up 4 Students website. We chose to create a site separate from our main CSLA website <CSLA.net> to keep the entire focus on advocacy with stakeholders as the key audience.

- A pledge form asking stakeholders and organizations to partner with us and support our advocacy efforts. Once people sign the pledge, they receive an immediate e-mail response with suggestions of what they can read and do to advocate. We also provide links to create automatic, editable Twitter tweets and Facebook postings encouraging others to participate.

- A plan to build a group of supporters from the pledge-signers and keep them informed on a regular basis of any specific advocacy action opportunities. Our goal is to have supporters outside our own library profession who will be armed with information and ready to take action when we need them.

The time for advocating for school library inclusion in the California state ESSA plan has now passed, and, unfortunately, no library-related language was included in the final plan sent to the U.S. Department of Education in September 2017 for federal approval. Nevertheless, CSLA now has a small but growing list of stakeholders willing to support school libraries in state legislation and local districts, and better understanding by our members of how to advocate at the local level.

Our association leadership, led by Vice President of Government Relations Glen Warren and lobbyist Jeff Frost, is actively involved in advocacy and partnership-building for state legislation that would bolster school library programs. It was CSLA’s advocacy efforts that led to State Board of Education adoption of the Model School Library Standards for California Public Schools in 2010. Most recently, State SB 390, which requires these standards to be explicitly considered as essential learning content within LCAPs, passed the state senate and assembly. The bill was crafted thanks to our association’s government relations advocacy efforts, and we encouraged our members and stakeholders to write letters to the governor in support of the bill. Unfortunately, the governor decided to veto the bill. However, we will continue our work.

In the future, we expect that our Stand Up 4 Students pledge list will be an excellent way to marshal quick support for legislative efforts such as this on behalf of California school libraries, and we look forward to developing advocacy activities that can easily be implemented by this group of school library supporters.
Teresa Lai is teacher librarian at Denman Middle School/San Francisco Unified School District in San Francisco. She is a member of AASL and is the president of the California School Library Association.

Sue Heraper is school librarian at Newbury Park (CA) High School. An AASL member, Sue is past president of the California School Library Association.

Katie Williams worked as a teacher librarian at Gale Ranch Middle School in San Ramon, before retiring in 2013. She is a past president of CSLA-Northern Region, and currently is a member of the AASL Board of Directors, representing Region 7.

Jane Lofton, school librarian “in the wild,” served as school librarian at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, California, before retiring in 2016. She is now a library advocate and part-time instructor in the Rutgers University librarian preparation program. She is a past president and honorary member of the California School Library Association. She was recently the chair of AASL’s Social Media Recognition Committee and social media chair for the November 2017 AASL National Conference. She is the current chair of AASL’s Best Websites for Teaching and Learning Committee. Read more about her experiences on Twitter @jane_librarian or her blog at <www.janelofton.com>.
Have you ever received a delivery that was packaged boxes within boxes? Opening the package can cause excitement, anxiety, or frustration. Building-level school librarians feel the same way about unwrapping the layers within the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The AASL Vision for Implementing ESSA Task Force has been charged with assisting affiliates and school librarians with understanding the layers of the law and the guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

As with opening any delivery, you will need tools to start the process. The most important tool is AASL’s “ESSA and School Libraries” website <http://essa.aasl.org>, which provides resources vital to opening all the ESSA boxes.

**The Federal Law**

Signed into law on December 10, 2015, by President Obama, the Every Student Succeeds Act [reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965 (ESEA)] included language addressing school libraries and the role school librarians play in the educational process. The law contains school library language within:

- **Title I, Part A**—Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies
- **Title II, Part A**—Supporting Effective Instruction
- **Title II, Part B**: Section 2213, Subpart 2—Literacy Education for All; Results for the Nation
- **Title II, Part B**: Section 2226—Innovative Approaches to Literacy
- **Title IV, Part A**: Subpart 1—Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

AASL has offered several vital tools to help you understand the federal law:

- ESSA Workshops: AASL in collaboration with the ALA Office of Library Advocacy (OLA) and the ALA Washington Office held comprehensive workshops on ESSA over the past year. As of this writing, forty-two workshops have been held across the United States. These workshops focused on the opportunities within ESSA with regards to school libraries.
- **ESSA Terms**: Essential for reading any legal document is an understanding of the language used and how best to discuss with various stakeholders the issues addressed. Therefore, the task force published “ESSA Terms” <http://essa.aasl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ESSA_Terms.pdf>. This document defines the key terms and provides talking points about the role of school libraries/librarians in relationship to each term.

Currently, the task force is working on documents to help school librarians unwrap the complex guidelines of Title IV, Part A: Subpart 1, “Student Support and Academic Enrichment [SSAE] Grants.” Among the resources under development are:

**Flow Chart of Funding**: It is important to understand that these grants are funded at the federal level but funneled through each SEA (state educational agency). During the congressional budgetary process, the amount of money available to be divided among the SEAs will be determined. The law established the process of distributing the funds to the SEAs. The SEA will determine the distribution of funds to the LEAs (local educational agencies).

**FAQs about Title IV, Part A**:

- The U.S. Department of Education developed non-regulatory guidance for Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. This guidance document addresses in more detail how the grants can be used and how grants can be awarded. Among the key points addressed by the Department of Education’s guidance document and further illuminated by AASL’s FAQs are:
  - These funds may be used only to supplement, and not supplant, non-federal funds that otherwise would be available for activities authorized under the SSAE program (ESEA section 4110).
  - The SEA controls the local application process, which can:
    - require a needs assessment and protocols,
    - require matching funds, and
    - encourage a consortium with one or more surrounding LEAs (ESEA section 4106(b)).

LEAs are required to consult with stakeholders in the area served by the LEA (ESEA section 4106(c)(1)). Note that included in this list of stakeholders are specialized instructional support personnel, including school librarians.
The State Educational Agency (SEA)

A requirement of ESSA is that every state educational agency (SEA) must submit a consolidated state plan to the U.S. Department of Education for approval. The department developed guidelines and a template for submitting the plan. Plans could have been submitted either on April 3, 2017, or September 18, 2017.

The AASL task force created tools to help:

- **ESSA State Plans**: This AASL document identifies:
  - date of plan submission,
  - date of plan approval, and
  - language within each plan that addresses school libraries/librarians

It is important to note that until the U.S. Department of Education has approved a plan the language can change. This AASL document about the plans will be updated continually until all state plans have been approved.

- **Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants per State Plan**: This AASL document identifies:
  - the process by which each state will award subgrants, and
  - what LEAs within each state will be allowed to use funds for.

Each state can determine the process LEAs will use to award subgrants and how local educational agencies can use the funds received by the state educational agency. An SEA may use four percent of its SSAE program allocations for state activities and one percent for administrative costs. This AASL document will be updated as state plans are approved.

Visit [http://essa.aasl.org/resources](http://essa.aasl.org/resources) to access these ESSA resources.

The Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

The key to understanding the process for developing the local educational agency plan is to become familiar with the overarching requirements of ESSA and the details available in your state plan. You need to be a voice for school libraries at the district level. Therefore, you should:

- Volunteer to serve on the local team: Be a voice at the table. Talk to your district administrators about how school libraries can impact student achievement and are supported in ESSA.
- Identify who is on the team: If school librarians are not represented, you must identify person(s) who can be your voice.
- Participate in public comment time.

Seventeen states do not mention school libraries in the state plan. A major concern for school librarians in those states is identifying what actions can be taken. If school libraries are not mentioned in your state plan, read the plan carefully to identify wording in the state plan that you could use to develop talking points to advocate for school libraries as essential resources for achieving the goals articulated in the plan. Some terms relevant to starting discussions about school libraries’ role in meeting the goals could include:

- resources
- digital literacy
- school leaders
- well-rounded education

To keep up-to-date on what is happening in your state, look to your state or regional association that is an AASL affiliate. Each state is unique. Remember it is up to the SEA to determine the process used by local educational agencies to allocate funding. The task force will continue to provide general suggestions to affiliates as local educational plans become the focus.

Impact on the Individual School Building

ESSA does not require all buildings in a local educational agency’s jurisdiction to receive the same level of funding. Many factors impact the funding. Talk to your building administrator! Take the initiative to be at the table when your building’s action plan for using funding and meeting goals is developed. Do not wait for someone to come to you!

Unwrapping a delivery that comes in several boxes can be time-consuming and tedious. However, in the end the result is most important: sharing the importance of school librarians and school libraries in educating our students!
FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

How Understanding the Nature of Trust Can Help Address the Standards

Deborah Rinio
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The National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries (ALA 2018) are comprised of six Shared Foundations: Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage. This article will focus on the Shared Foundation of Collaborate.

Importance of Collaboration

Since 1988, standards and guidelines for the school librarian have included references to school librarians’ serving as instructional partners (AASL and AECT 1988, 1998; AASL 2007). In fact, Daniel Callison noted that in the 1998 edition of Information Power the word "collaboration" appeared over sixty times. Teacher and librarian collaboration is a main theme in school librarianship and education research and professional literature: views of collaboration, encouraging teachers to collaborate, theories of collaboration, and how to collaborate effectively. Now, within AASL’s National School Library Standards, Collaboration is one of the six Shared Foundations on which the standards are based.

Why is collaboration so important? Ken Haycock stated that "collaboration is the single professional behavior of teacher–librarians that most affects student achievement" (2007, 32). Improving collaboration in schools, and particularly collaboration between teachers and the school librarian, is of benefit to students both directly and indirectly, and helps improve student academic achievement (e.g., Houston 2008; Lance and Loerscher 2001). In AASL’s National School Library Standards the key commitment for Collaboration is to “work effectively with others to broaden perspectives and work toward common goals” (2018). We want our students to be able to interact with a wide variety of people and work together effectively. Therefore, we must not only teach them the skills necessary to collaborate, but we must engage in collaboration ourselves.

Importance of Trust

It may seem a cliché, but developing trust is the first step toward building effective working relationships with colleagues. In fact, studies show that trust is a significant predictor of collaboration; the higher the levels of trust, the higher the levels of collaboration in schools (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2000). In schools with trusting environments, teachers are more likely to disclose more accurate, relevant, and complete information regarding problems, enabling them to engage in dialogue about their problem areas and areas of improvement (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2000). Only by being vulnerable in this way can educators—including school librarians—improve their...
Students are much more likely to engage in discussion and try new things if they trust the librarian to look out for them and their interests.

instructional practice. To avoid duplicating efforts and ensuring students’ needs are met, each party in a collaborative endeavor needs to trust that the other will do his or her job effectively and communicate consistently.

To “[partner] with other educators to scaffold learning and organize learner groups to broaden and deepen understanding” (AASL 2018, School Library III.A.1.) or “…[include] the school community in the development of school library policies and procedures” (AASL 2018, School Library III.B.3.) librarians must build and maintain trust with the members of the school community, including parents, students, administrators, and teachers. Here are a few things school librarians can do to help build or maintain trust among their colleagues:

1. **Communicate** effectively and consistently.

2. Build awareness of each other’s knowledge base and set boundaries on your own to determine who knows what.

3. Fulfill your promises and be careful about making commitments.

**Communicate**

Communication is not just about sharing ideas and resources; it often indicates the sender’s values, habits, and skills. A school librarian who sends an overcrowded text-heavy e-mail sends a different message than one who uses a powerful technology tool to create a graphic flyer. Not only does the librarian subtly indicate an understanding of the audience, the librarian is demonstrating technology skills. Furthermore, school librarians must remember to educate the teachers and administrators in their building about their skill sets and the services they provide; many teachers may not know that the school librarian can write lessons, teach, and assess student learning just like classroom teachers do. How this information is formally disseminated depends in large part on the culture of the school and the mechanisms already in place. A weekly or monthly newsletter, or a quarterly report may be a way to present this information, but if no one reads the report or newsletter, it’s not effective. If a school has a student newsletter or video-based news crew, inviting the students to do a story on the library or share announcements would be a better choice for reaching both students and teachers. A school librarian may also consider creating flyers or pamphlets for teachers, presenting at teacher orientation sessions and staff meetings, and even sharing at district-wide professional development opportunities. Informal mechanisms such as hosting a back-to-school tea or “check out the new books party” can be useful too and will encourage teachers to visit the library and get to know the librarian both professionally and personally.

**Determine Who Knows What**

An often-overlooked way to build effective working relationships is to accurately identify who knows what within the school. Even if all other aspects of an organization foster and support collaboration, people won’t connect on new projects or collaborate to solve existing problems if they don’t have an understanding of one another’s knowledge base (Cross and Parker 2004). In addition to teachers knowing what the school librarian can do, it is important for librarians to understand other educators’ skill sets. One way to identify who knows what is through orientation games or surveys at the beginning of the year. If each teacher lists not only professional strengths but also personal interests, a catalog of knowledge is created through which the entire school community can identify individuals who may be helpful in a particular situation.
A school librarian who fosters this sort of information-gathering can help serve as a knowledge broker, connecting diverse participants within the school community. Librarians naturally help their users find information, but that information is not relegated only to books and databases. Information also comes from experts. If the librarian comes to be known not only as a resource for locating information and for modeling and teaching other information-literacy skills but also as one who can connect people, the librarian’s value will increase within the community. Opportunities for collaboration will increase as well.

It is important, however, that individuals not only identify what they know to others within their organization but also set boundaries on the limits of their knowledge. Although this boundary-setting can be a challenge, it is important that the school librarian—and others—not let the pressure to be an expert in all areas result in anyone answering questions with more confidence than they should. The possibility of incorrectly answering a question can create a wedge in the trust that exists. This is not to say that nobody can ever make mistakes. It does mean thinking about what time and knowledge an individual possesses and whether taking on a requested task is reasonable. For example, if a teacher came to the librarian with a DVD stuck in a computer disc drive, the librarian might say something like “I know a few tricks, but I’m not sure exactly where the problem lies. I’ll look into it for you and let you know,” rather than saying, “Sure. I’d be happy to fix that for you.” The first statement is very clear about intentions and doesn’t create false expectations.

Be Careful about Making Commitments

Another critical way of building and maintaining trust is through the fulfillment of promises. It’s easy in the hectic chaos of a school year to forget something, wait until the last minute, or say “yes” to something too time-consuming. Unfortunately, if a strong relationship does not already exist, breaking promises—even small ones—can result in mistrust that is difficult to repair. Before engaging in a new project, or committing to a task, all librarians should be sure they have the time to do it. Being clear about timelines and expectations helps in this process. A teacher might be mildly annoyed that it will take a week to get back to her with resources for her class, but she’ll learn that the librarian is in high demand. If instead, the librarian promises to get back to the teacher the next day and then takes five days, the teacher learns that the librarian is unreliable, and the teacher may not reach out to the librarian in the future.

Working with Students

Communicating, determining who knows what, and being careful about commitments are skills to help foster trust between colleagues, but they apply to students as well. For example, a school librarian who wishes to “[stimulate] learners to actively contribute to group discussions” (AASL 2018, School Librarian III.D.i.) will have a much easier time getting students to contribute to in-class activities if the librarian already has a trusting relationship with students. Students are much more likely to engage in discussion and try new things if they trust the librarian to look out for them and their interests. Although the channels of communication might differ, a librarian who communicates effectively with students; takes time to understand their skills, abilities, and interests; and keeps his or her promises will have a good start on forming a trusting environment in the library.

School librarians who want to address the AASL Standards’ Shared Foundation of Collaboration with learners would do well to set the stage for collaborative work by allowing students time to get to know one another and helping build that trust. One way to foster this trust is to build in time at the beginning of the year or the beginning of a collaborative unit for students to build friendships with their classmates. Playing cooperative games, sharing likes and dislikes, and having social time will help build relationships that inspire trust. After students have had time to get to know one another, the librarian can encourage collaboration by grouping students together (in pairs or larger groups) intentionally so that students’ skills complement the skills of others in the group. For example, in a lesson that asks students to use mathematics to draw a picture to scale, the teacher might pair students having stronger measuring skills with students who are more artistic. Not only does this tactic force students to work with those they might not otherwise have worked with, it requires them to depend on each other for assistance.
Asking students to be reflective about the experience can cement the ideas that learning is a social responsibility and diverse perspectives enhance the process. At lower grades, a simple question like “Was it easier to draw the picture with help or without help? Why?” can be asked. With older students, a librarian or teacher might ask students to discuss what they did when they disagreed with each other or the process they went through to solve a challenge. Routinely engaging students in structured collaborative and reflective activities will help them develop the skills necessary to work with others.

**Conclusion**

Once relationships are formed, they can be leveraged to meet the standards. For example, School Library standard III.B.3, “Including the school community in the development of school library policies and procedures” requires community input and participation. Having existing connections with teachers, parents, and students will allow the standard to be enacted more smoothly. Similarly, enacting School Library standard III.A.1, “Partnering with other educators to scaffold learning and organize learner groups to broaden and deepen understanding” will be much more effective if the librarian has prior relationships with teachers.

Understanding how both large and small actions influence the trust built and maintained with colleagues, parents, and students can help ensure that those relationships flourish. Once personal and professional connections have been made, librarians can use them to collaborate frequently and effectively. Relationships are critical both for teachers and students; and they must be intentionally fostered and maintained. A librarian who focuses on relationships within the school community will increase his or her success in addressing the standards and cementing the library’s role in the school.

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**Works Cited:**


Documenting Evidence of Practice: The Power of Formative Assessment
Educational researchers have long recognized the benefits of formative assessment (Black and Wiliam 1998; Stiggins and DuFour 2009; Wiliam 2010). James H. McMillan asserts that classroom assessment “is the most powerful type of measurement in education that influences student learning” (2013, 4).

Educational researchers recommend that educators receive training in assessment literacy (Brookhart 2011; Campbell 2013; Popham 2013, 2014). School library researchers also recognize the importance of school librarians’ becoming proficient in assessment (Harada 2007; Hughes-Hassell and Harada 2007; Zmuda and Harada 2008). Formative assessment provides school librarians with a method to document student learning and provide tangible confirmation of librarians’ own practice—evidence of student learning. In addition to helping school librarians determine what students have or have not learned, formative assessment also gives school librarians opportunities to make significant contributions to school library research. Although there has been growing interest in identifying causal (as opposed to correlational) linkages between school librarians and student achievement (AASL 2014), there is still no theory of action focused on what a school librarian does or does not do regarding instruction (e.g., teaching critical-thinking skills, inquiry-based learning, or information literacy) that explains what and how school librarians contribute to student achievement (Stefl-Mabry and Radlick 2017). The school library field desperately needs school library practitioners to share information about what happens within the context of their practice and therein lies the power of formative assessment.

**Assessment Terms**

Karee E. Dunn and Sean W. Mulvenon revealed that the lack of an agreed-upon vocabulary and the “vagueness of the constitutive and operational definitions” of formative assessment contribute to the lack of understanding of what is actually being studied (2009, 2). To ensure a common understanding of assessment vocabulary, below is a list of terms and how they will be used within this article. These definitions are based upon the seminal work of Mauritz Johnson (1967, 1976, 1977) and have been further refined by William E. J. Doane, Paul Zachos, and me (Zachos and Doane 2017; Stefl-Mabry and Doane 2014).

A learning goal is a capability developed through an educational program. Learning goals are broad statements aligned to local, state, national, and/or professional standards. The Standards Framework for Learners in AASL’s 2017 National School Library Standards is anchored by six Shared Foundations: Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage, which highlight the standards’ core educational concepts (AASL 2018). A one-sentence key commitment describes the essential understandings for each of the six Shared Foundations:

**Inquire:** Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

**Include:** Demonstrate understanding of and commitment to inclusiveness and respect for diversity in the learning community.

**Collaborate:** Work effectively with others to broaden perspectives and work toward common goals.

**Curate:** Make meaning for oneself and others by collecting, organizing, and sharing resources of personal relevance.

**Explore:** Discover and innovate in a growth mindset developed through experience and reflection.

**Engage:** Demonstrate safe, legal, and ethical creating and sharing of knowledge products independently.
while engaging in a community of practice and an interconnected world.

Each of the Shared Foundations is explained by three to five competencies for each learning category or domain.

Learning objectives describe the ends or the intended results. Ideally a learning objective has three parts:

1. verb representing a task that is measurable or observable,
2. important condition (if any) under which the performance is to occur, and
3. criterion for acceptable performance.

Instruction is anything that is intended to help the learner master the learning objectives.

Learning outcome is a product or activity that the learner performs at the end of a learning experience.

Core capabilities are proficiencies that contribute to concurrent and subsequent learning and/or have powerful application to the world outside the learning environment.

Assessment (the product or outcome) is information on the extent to which learning outcomes have been attained.

Assessment (the process and instrument) describes the means by which information about the level of attainment of learning goal is obtained.

Formative assessment describes a process carried out to form or inform an educational program for currently participating learners.

Summative assessment describes an assessment that is carried out when instruction is completed, and forming or informing an educational program for current learners is no longer possible.

Evaluation is the use of information to improve (increase the value) of an educational program.

Tests or testing refers to the aggregation of the results of assessments targeting multiple objectives (learning objectives) into an overall score.

Developing Formative Assessments

After the learning objectives have been articulated, formative assessments should be developed to determine students’ level of attainment for each learning objective. W. James Popham has provided a useful working definition of formative assessment:

Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment–elicited evidence of students’ status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics (2014, 290).

Formative assessment provides evidence of students’ learning as well as the effectiveness of instructional practice. Formative assessments should be integrated seamlessly throughout instruction. They should not detract from instruction. Multiple forms of assessment provide opportunities for school librarians to document students’ level of success in attaining the learning objective. Formative assessment also affords opportunities for students to validate their skills and understanding in numerous ways (e.g., oral and written expression, art, music, performance).

Unfortunately, the concept of formative assessment is often misunderstood by school librarians and other educators who often view tests as synonymous with formative assessments. Tests are NOT formative assessments as they target numerous learning objectives. Typically, tests (summative assessments) occur at the end of a unit or semester and leave no opportunity for re-teaching or re-learning. Carefully designed formative assessments allow school librarians to document student learning as it evolves within the context of practice.

Learning Segment: News You Can Trust?

To help readers understand how the content presented in this article can be used in actual practice, a learning segment is highlighted; this learning segment focuses on teaching students how to establish the credibility of online news sources. This is an important concept; researchers recently revealed that young people have a difficult time determining the credibility of online information (Donald 2016; Stanford History Education Group 2016).

The learning goal is aligned to three of the Shared Foundations and Domains and Competencies of the AASL Standards:

II. INCLUDE: Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to inclusiveness and respect for diversity in the learning community.

A. THINK: Learners contribute a balanced perspective when participating in a learning community by:

1. Adopting a discerning stance toward points of view and opinions expressed in information resources and learning products.

IV. CURATE: Make meaning for oneself and others by collecting, organizing, and sharing resources of personal relevance.

A. THINK: Learners act on an information need by:

1. Determining the need to gather information
2. Identifying possible sources of information
3. Making critical choices about information sources to use.
Learning Objectives: The Need for Specificity

It is impossible to teach the new standards in one lesson; therefore, they must be broken down into specific learning objectives if they are to be of practical value at the classroom level. Using Ahmed A. Bakarman’s (2005) ASK model, which categorizes learning as attitudes (affective learning domain), skills (psychomotor learning domain), and/or knowledge (cognitive learning domain), school librarians should ask themselves:

1. What do I want students to believe and/or feel about the topic by the end of the lesson? [Attitudes/Affective]

2. What do I want students to be able to do/demonstrate by the end of the lesson? [Skills/Psychomotor]

3. What do I want students to understand about the topic by the end of the lesson? [Knowledge/Cognitive]

Although the questions look deceptively simple, answering them requires a great deal of thought. Focusing on the learning goal (“Students will become cautious consumers of online news”), below are four proposed learning objectives that will be used to frame the lesson. Note that each learning objective contains a verb and a condition under which the performance is to occur, and will be accompanied by criteria for acceptable performance. The criteria to help the students identify credible articles must be clearly articulated by the school librarian and shared with the students through instruction and also in a tangible way, perhaps in the form of a checklist, so that students know exactly how to evaluate information. If we, as educators, cannot describe how to verify the legitimacy of online information, how can we expect students to?

1. Students will recognize the difficulty of using online news sources when verifying claims about a controversial topic as they select sources for their public service announcement. [Attitude and Skill]

2. Students will be able to determine the reliability of an online news source by verifying the source by using a variety of authentication resources (News Literacy Project and Checkology n.d.). [Skill and Knowledge]

3. By comparing articles from a variety of sources and written on the same topic, students will understand that the Internet can be used to both fact-check information and to spread bias and disinformation. [Skill and Knowledge]

4. Students will use a checklist to determine the reliability of the sources used by their peers in their public service announcement. [Skill and Knowledge]

Learning Outcome

The learning outcome selected for this lesson is a student-designed multimedia public service announcement (PSA). The purpose of the PSA is to outline precautions that people should take when considering online news sources. Students may choose to design their PSAs for a specific population such as elementary school, middle school, or high school students. A detailed checklist and/or rubric should be provided to students at the beginning of the learning segment so that students know exactly what elements the final project should contain. The checklist/rubric should describe each component of the project and detail the criteria that will be used to judge the quality of the PSA. Components are likely to include the number, type, and quality of sources used; the quality of the written narrative; the effectiveness of oral expression; the nature of group interactions; project design; peer feedback; self-reflection, etc.

The more clearly school librarians express what they want students to do, the more easily students will be able to meet expectations for the project.

Core Capabilities

Learning objectives should address core capabilities. Learning how to tell a reliable news source from an unreliable one has value beyond one particular lesson. This core capability extends far beyond Pre-K–12 to contribute to college- and career-readiness as well as to life in general.

Suggested Formative Assessments

Assessment information should always be shared with students so that they can adjust (self-regulate) their learning. Proposed ideas for formative assessments for a News You Can Trust? learning segment include those listed below.
Pre- and Post-Assessments

A pre-assessment should be developed to determine students’ attitudes, skills, and knowledge of a topic before instruction begins. Pre-assessment results provide a useful benchmark to identify and document what students know or don’t know about a topic as well as any preconceptions and misconceptions they might have about the topic. Before the lesson is introduced, students could be given sticky notes in three different colors. Using one color for each question students should be asked to:

- list valid online news sources,
- note what they believe are spurious online news sources (depending on the age group, students might also be asked to rank the sources), and
- list one or more questions or concerns that they have about recognizing valid online news sources.

After the notes have been collected, the school librarian can review the responses, and compile a chart summarizing students’ prior knowledge, preconceptions, and misconceptions, and the types of questions raised. This information should be used to inform subsequent instruction. At the end of the project, conducting a post-assessment activity based on a similar set of questions will reveal what students have learned. Pre- and post-assessments provide concrete evidence of what students know at the beginning of the project and what they have learned as a result of the instruction given by the librarian.

Graphic Organizers

Venn diagrams and other graphic organizers provide visual representations of students’ conceptual understandings. For this learning segment, the school librarian can ask students to complete a Venn diagram illustrating a major news story of their choice as presented by three different online news sources. What details do the three sources have in common? What details are different? As the students work on their diagrams for this “Three Sources, Same Story” assignment, the librarian can walk around and examine students’ work. Taking photos of students’ work and carefully analyzing the results is a way to determine whether additional instructional support is needed and identifies which students may need additional support.

Peer Assessment

Providing students with an opportunity to peer-assess enables them to use the attitudes, skills, and knowledge they have developed to review the work of their classmates. Peer assessment allows students to see how the same assignment can be interpreted differently and, oftentimes, how they can make improvements to their own work. Students can be asked to use the checklist/rubric to evaluate the work of their peers and to provide suggestions to help improve their classmates’ projects. It is typically easier to identify errors and weaknesses in other people’s work than to see weaknesses in our own work. The heightened sense of awareness learners get when they give and receive constructive feedback helps them to become more reflective.

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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
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<th>Peer-to-Peer Assignment</th>
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Table 1. Student assessment data on multiple assessments.
of their own work, and the peer-review process may also provide them with examples to emulate.

Exit Commentary

At the end of each class students should have time to anonymously write down questions, concerns, or comments they have about what has been taught and post their jottings to a common wall. Allowing students to review the comments of others often helps students to see that others have similar concerns. This activity provides school librarians the opportunity to see what students are thinking. School librarians should review, record, and characterize students’ comments and then use the information gathered in subsequent lessons to acknowledge and address students’ concerns. Validating what students feel demonstrates that educators care about students and are willing to listen and address their questions. Tracking the type of problems students experience and when the problems arise helps school librarians to strengthen their instruction when students need it most—while they are learning.

Work Sheets

Purposefully designed work sheets can reveal students’ attainment of the learning objective(s). If the learning objective calls for students to use specific criteria to distinguish between authentic and fake information, students could be asked to rate and rank a list of online resources using the criteria. Identifying what students know and what they don’t know enables school librarians to adjust future instruction to address gaps in knowledge and/or misconceptions.

Google Forms

Google forms is a useful online tool to gather assessment information. However, educators must remember that the purpose of an assessment is NOT to test or assign a grade, but rather to determine students’ level of attainment of the learning objectives. The assessment should be designed to collect information related to a targeted learning objective; the information gathered should be used to help students learn and to improve instructional practice.

Scoring Formative Assessments

It is best to have a simple scale to score student attainment of learning objectives. Here is a suggested scale:

- 0 = no level of attainment
- 1= some level of attainment
- 2= full level of attainment

Table 1 presents hypothetical students’ assessment results for four formative assessments associated with this learning experience: the “Three Sources, Same Story” assignment, the self-assessment, the peer-to-peer assessment, and the PSA.

While an overall pattern of student performance can be seen in figure

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<th>Score</th>
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Table 3: Summary of performance on Three Sources, Same Story assignment.
1, if the school librarian digs deeper into the data, a more detailed picture of student performance unfolds. Table 2 provides individual students’ performance data only on the “Three Sources/Same Story” learning activity.

Now a more detailed picture of student learning emerges. Note in Table 3 that five out of the ten students (50 percent) experienced difficulty completing the assignment.

These results should not be interpreted as a failure on the part of the students, but rather as an indication that students may have experienced problems, which could include difficulties in:

1) finding three articles on the same topic,

2) reading the articles,

3) understanding the content and/or context of the articles,

4) identifying critical elements of tone or bias within the articles, and/or

5) interpreting the instructions.

Of course, it is possible that some students experienced a combination of all five. Therefore, it is important that educators continuously assess, at the individual level while instruction is taking place, what students are learning and identify when and why students are experiencing difficulty.

If presented with results similar to those in Table 3, the school librarian should work with students to identify the problem(s) and address the issues before moving ahead to the next phase of the lesson. This is the point at which the school librarian should reflect upon and improve his/her instructional practice. Part of the solution may involve reworking the instructions and/or providing access to a variety of articles that the school librarian knows students are capable of reading. It is also critical not to penalize the other 50 percent of the class by having them repeat an assignment that they have already mastered. Therefore, in redesigning the assessment the librarian should include activities to allow students who were successful the first time to expand their skills and competencies. For example, students who successfully completed the “Three Sources, Same Story” assignment could be asked to find articles that present a neutral and/or balanced tone. Or they could search for additional articles and rank them in terms of credibility. In this way, all students benefit from the learning experience.

It is also important to note that before moving on to the creation of the PSA that all students demonstrate that they have mastered the learning objective: that they understand that the Internet can be used to both fact-check information and to spread bias and disinformation.

Evaluating the School Library Program

At the time a formative assessment is done, its primary value is helping learners and educators to determine what has been learned, what hasn’t, and to identify learning objectives that students must re-learn and that educators must re-teach. In addition, formative assessment information, systematically collected and analyzed over time, allows school librarians to record:

• what students have learned and developed (attitudes, skills, and knowledge)

• concepts and/or skills that students struggled with, and

• instructional techniques and activities that have been successful (or not).

The systematic use of formative assessment provides school librarians with vital information that can be used to document evidence of their practice, and evaluate and increase the value of their school library programs.

Conclusion

The field of school librarianship has long called for stronger evidence related to school libraries and student achievement (Stefl-Mabry and Raddick 2017; Stefl-Mabry et al. 2016; Morris and Cahill 2017). This article outlines a systematic method for school librarians to document student learning and provide tangible confirmation of their practice—evidence of student learning. Well-written learning objectives make core capabilities visible to school librarians, students, parents, and administrators. Systematically documenting evidence of practice by using formative assessment provides tangible evidence of what and how school librarians contribute to student achievement.

Joette Stefl-Mabry, PhD, is on the faculty of University at Albany, State University of New York, where she is an associate professor in the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity, an associate research professor in the School of Education, and director of the School Library Program. Currently, she is the principal investigator for research funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services: The School Librarian Effect on Student Academic Achievement in New York State (IMLS award number RE-04-15-0081-15). This three-year longitudinal research project (2015–2018) examines the effect of school librarians on academic achievement in all public schools in New York State. She currently serves on the New York State Education Department edTPA Task Force, and in 2016 she was invited to serve on the United University Professions Teacher Education Task Force.
Works Cited:


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Catherine Von Brand
April Wathen

MASSACHUSETTS
Jessie Clough
Sarah Forfa
Elissa Gershowitz
Mitzi Gousse
Callie Graham
Janet Hamilton
Long Zhen Han
Kimberly Honey
Zoe Keenan
Amanda Lawrence
Molly Lewis
Karen Mackauri
Kathryn Malo
Sandra Waltz
Jacqueline Nealh-Foster
Tracy O’Brien
Anne O’Malley
Sarah Paisner
Lori Rabeler
Carolyn Ricker
Catherine School
Cricket Segaloff
Linda St. Laurent
Sarah Swift
Anna Winters

MICHIGAN
Mary Cook
Julie Green
Julie Keller
Kelly Kelchuk
Amy Sue Manley
Genevieve Minor
Michael Puffpaff
Tracie Richards
Shannon Torres
Beth Wells
Christine Woelmer
Jennifer Zimmer

MINNESOTA
Jennifer Zimmer
Christine Woelmer
Beth Wells
Cherish Wingler
Kathleen Wright
Barbara Lynch
Debra Bonnett
Debra Bellamy
Molly Hazeltine
Joshua Jackson
Ann Kaste
Randy Klauck
Monica Kunkel
Jill Lurie
Kristina Moulton
Caryl Mousseaux
Lisa Newhouse
Rebekah Orensten
Sarah Rose
Katherine Ruhland
Janet Rundquist
Kathryn Salmela
Jeff Shepherd
Lesli Skarphol
Diane Spence
Amy Straube
Jacquelyn Ward
Katherine Warde
Annalisie Werner

MISSISSIPPI
Debra Bonnett
Kimberly Bryant

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More than a reading, the story was a dynamic art exhibition.

Circling Back to Start

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This tale will be told out of order because that is the way it happened—completely backwards and in an unconventional way that I somehow see as normal. Still, I think the details will be of special interest to my fellow librarians, particularly those wishing to build unique coalitions with community members.

At the time of this writing, I am counting down the days until my first book, *All Around Us*, will be released by Cinco Puntos Press. Yet it was over a year ago that we held what many considered to be our book’s launch. It was an unforgettable celebration, complete with live music, dancing, poetry, and several community organizations sponsoring the event. So how exactly—and why—did we put the cart before the horse?

Well, the first rule I eschewed was to submit my manuscript to a big publishing house that would pair me with an illustrator they trusted but whom I might never meet. These rules are in place for a reason, but I happened to know and trust an amazing artist with whom I had collaborated on many community-based projects. To have my book illustrated in the phenomenal way I knew she could, Adriana Garcia and I applied for a grant from the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC). They were the first organization to take a chance on us.

As with many grants, this one stipulated we present the final product—in our case, a fully illustrated children’s book—to the community in a meaningful way. We considered hosting a regular reading, of course, but ever since my days in library school, I had been longing to display a story walk. To me, the concept is simple, appealing, and effective, especially in a city like our hometown of San Antonio, Texas, where family literacy and physical fitness are areas that could use a caring nudge.

Over the next nine months, Adriana toiled over the illustrations, experimenting in a new digital medium that both stretched and challenged her impeccable painting skills. Meanwhile, I cheered her on from the sidelines, which happened to be located across the globe in Guangzhou, China, where I serve as head librarian at an international school. When the time came for summer break, my colleagues fled to various exotic vacation spots, while I returned to my hometown to join Adriana in realizing our story walk idea.

Pulling off the project required extra stores of energy I did not realize I had. (Really, who among us is not ready to sleep all summer...
holiday by the time it rolls around?) Luckily, we had many extra hands supporting our effort. Among our team of party planners was a community health organization, a local gardening society, organizers from a youth poetry slam team, three restaurant entrepreneurs, several well-known local musicians, and, in a starring role, the San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) and its early-literacy team, the Little Read Wagon. Our event was held at Mission Library, one of SAPL’s newer branches that features sprawling fields and several community gardens. It was the perfect location with the perfect partners.

The story walk drew a considerable number of people out of bed on a Saturday morning. Thanks to our community partnerships, we were able to offer a full breakfast buffet of healthy options. (I never did get to see the fruit tray assembled in a rainbow; it disappeared by the time I was done touring the story walk with visitors.) We began with a brief reading of the book, which was only a mock-up version at that time. Then we walked as a large group through the story walk outdoors. At each page—printed and mounted in the style of large political campaign signs—we asked audience members to help read the story, printed in English on one side, in Spanish on the reverse.

More than a reading, the story was a dynamic art exhibition. When we reached the part of the story where the child narrator gardens with her grandfather, our friends from Healthy Neighborhoods briefly demonstrated a seeding activity and discussed healthy eating habits. Then came the page where our characters practice mulching, and the Mission District gardening society was on hand to show the basics. Further along in the book, Xelena González during story time with her youngest bunch of students in Guangzhou, China. Photo courtesy of Xelena González. Source: <https://therivardreport.com/san-antoniros-first-origina-storywalk-to-premiere-at-mission-branch-library/>
we had various performing artists present at each page, responding to the story in song, poetry, spoken word, and dance.

Just remembering the experience makes my heart warm with gratitude and eases the mild sadness I feel for having to miss the official book launch to come in a few weeks. That piece of gold was struck soon after we completed the story walk and realized there was ample interest from the community in taking home a copy of our story. We researched the publication possibilities—including printing the book ourselves here in China—and pitched an independent press favored among indigenous and Latinx creators. Cinco Puntos Press said "yes" in an e-mail I received on my first day back at school. Elated and with tears in my eyes, I shared the good news with curious colleagues and parents of returning students. Immediately, many took an interest in the story walk project, photos of which some had already seen on WeChat (China's answer to Facebook). Since our school is located in an arts district, the recurring idea was to replicate the project on our campus.

Offers began pouring in to translate the story into other languages. Our school hosts a multitude of nationalities, and our little library contains materials in eight "mother tongue" languages. But of course Chinese had to come first. My deputy librarian graciously agreed to translate the book and did so remarkably vividly. Our crowning project of the school year was taking each class on a story walk around our campus, where students took turns reading pages in English and Chinese. I welled up all over again hearing my story in foreign tongues, as students not only read aloud but translated smaller parts for one another in Korean, Italian, French, and Arabic.

And so the story ends at the beginning—with a new book that I trust will be as well received by the larger community as it was by our smaller circles. In telling this tale, I often hear variations of "So, you did things completely backwards?" Yes, in a certain sense. But when it comes to garnering community support, be it for a library program or a work of art, it is the smaller connections that must be nurtured. From there, the larger circle forms, steadily, organically, and beautifully.

Xelena González is the author of All Around Us (Cinco Puntos Press 2017), a picture book that deftly depicts her Mestiza culture and roots on the west side of San Antonio, Texas. Before moving to China to serve as an international school librarian, Xelena conducted community outreach for the San Antonio Public Library, specializing in early literacy programs. Along the way she has led various workshops in dance, creative writing, and interdisciplinary arts. These varied experiences add to the bag of tricks she hopes to take into her new adventures as a visiting author.