

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Amanda Kordeliski

2025–2026 PRESIDENT OF AASL

Amanda Kordeliski is the Director of Libraries and Instructional Technology for Norman Public Schools in Oklahoma. Kordeliski has written for AASL's *Knowledge Quest* and YALSA's *YALS* journal. She is currently an active member of ALA Policy Corps, Unite Against Book Bans, and has served on a wide variety of AASL, ALA, and YALSA committees including co-chair of the AASL Practice Committee, the AASL/ISTE Standards Crosswalk, and the 2023 Printz Committee. Kordeliski is also a past chair of the school library division of the Oklahoma Library Association (OLA) and the OLA Advocacy committee.

The Work That Changes Everything

As I begin to wrap up my year as AASL President, I am reflecting on the pathways I took to become involved in my professional organizations. How I went from an online and journal lurker to quiet committee member to confident committee member, then chair and so on.

What are the elements that prepared me to take those next steps each time? The answer for me is in the professional development and learning I attended over the course of my career.

Being able to identify which types of professional learning work best for me and what I've learned over the years about how to apply what I've learned in a professional development session to my library practice. I have long realized that the experience of learning and collaborating with others is one of my happiest places. I love learning. I strongly feel that when I am no longer interested in learning, it is time to hang up my cardigan and move into another phase of life. As I look over the teetering stack of

PD books I've accumulated as I have attended state conferences this year, I know I am certainly nowhere near being finished with my "Learner Era"

Professional development is not a perk. It is not a reward for high performers or a remediation tool for struggling ones. It is essential and vital to our growth and development as a librarian and it is the foundation upon which every thriving school library program, every effective school librarian, and every resilient learning community is built. As I step down from this role, that is the message I most want to leave with you.

We exist in a profession defined by change. Instructional models shift. Information literacy standards evolve. The academic, social, and digital needs of our students transform in ways we cannot always predict. What protects us and what keeps our programs relevant, our teaching effective, and our advocacy credible, is not experience alone. It is the deliberate, ongoing commitment to growing as professionals alongside the students and educators we serve.

The evidence is clear. School librarians who engage consistently in high-quality professional development report greater confidence in their instructional practice, stronger collaborative relationships with classroom teachers, and measurably better outcomes for student learning. This is not anecdotal. It is what the research tells us, and it is what the work of this organization has affirmed year after year.

But access and intention are not the same thing. Too many of us wait for professional development to come to us — assigned by a district, scheduled by an administrator, or squeezed into a staff development day that was not designed with school librarians in mind. The most transformative growth I have witnessed in our membership has been through association led collaborations and resources, grounded in our National Standards. the librarian who pursued a new instructional coaching framework, who sought out a peer learning network, who brought a research-backed approach to inquiry-based learning back to their school and rebuilt their program around it. That kind of professional agency is available to every one of us

Here is what I want you to take seriously: the time you invest in your own development is not taken from your learners, it is for them. Deepening your knowledge of curriculum integration, staying current on collection development, equity and access, strengthening your capacity to lead and advocate within your building — these are professional responsibilities, not personal indulgences. Over the course of this issue you will encounter a wide range of ways to grow your knowledge in the library and education fields. Whether your preference is small group, leading from the middle, webinars, in-person workshops, etc, we talk about it at length in this issue.

As you go into the summer months and begin to plan out your next school year, I offer this as a direct charge: make professional development structural, not supplemental. Advocate for the time, funding, and organizational culture that treats ongoing learning as essential to our practice. Build pathways that serve school librarians at every career stage — because the needs of someone just stepping into their first library position and someone leading a district-wide program are different, and both deserve support. Most of all, lean into AASL, so we can provide the scaffolding and support you need to be successful. The most important takeaway is

The school library profession has never been more essential and realistically, more scrutinized. The strongest response we can offer is excellence in practice, grounded in continuous learning.

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