

**TRANSFORMING LEARNING**  
American Association of School Librarians  
A Division of the American Library Association  
[www.aasl.org](http://www.aasl.org)



**AASL** American Association  
of School Librarians  
**TRANSFORMING LEARNING**

# 2024-2025 Year in Review



## From the President

Looking back on all that AASL has accomplished in my presidential year, it is a true honor to be leading and serving a strong, passionate, and resilient group of leaders. School librarians are tireless champions of knowledge, dedicating themselves to nurturing curiosity, cultivating a love of reading, teaching essential research and information literacy skills, and promoting a lifelong love of learning with every learner they serve. Whether working in a public, private, independent school or university setting as instructors of school librarians, our many members have shown up to advance the mission and vision of AASL.



AASL has witnessed a year where school librarians continue to be standouts in their profession. [The Freedom Walk](#) recognized a humanities program led by Lucy Podmore which introduced learners to civic engagement and the Constitution at Tom C. Clark High School. The [I Love My Librarian Award](#) honored Charlotte Chung, an AASL member from West Virginia for her work in engaging reluctant readers and supporting English language learners via her Building Bridges to Literacy project. In January, the documentary, [The Librarians](#) premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, showcasing the courage and bravery of school librarians in Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Louisiana who persevered despite being fired, harassed and threatened with jail time for speaking out against censorship. And in May, AASL members Amanda Kordeliski, Cherity Pennington and Molly Dettman were recognized as [2025 Mover & Shakers Advocates](#) for their tireless legislative work on behalf of libraries in Oklahoma.

Book challenges and threats to the freedom to read in school libraries across the country continue to be an issue. The preliminary data from the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) showed that between January and August of 2024, challenges to books in school libraries accounted for 38% of those documented by OIF, down from 41% during the same reporting period in 2023. AASL also continued to hear about the reduction of school librarian positions due to budget challenges in schools across the country. The withdrawal of IMLS funding by the current administration presented new challenges in the Spring of 2024 impacting AASL members in the areas of library research, funding for research databases in schools and professional learning. While the withdrawal does not affect every member, the ripple effects impact the greater school library profession and the learners these professionals serve.

In my role as AASL President, I've had opportunities to speak with the media about intellectual freedom, digital equity, IMLS implications and the evolution of library services. The AASL Board has focused all work of the association around our new strategic plan which centers on engagement. This work included offerings to hone advocacy skills for school librarians which included learning opportunities on media training, writing op-eds and letters to the editor. None of this could not have been accomplished without the dedicated time, commitment and support of our AASL Board, staff, chapter leaders, and members. Their participation, involvement and engagement is what makes AASL "Stronger Together."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Calzoda".

AASL President 2024-2025



From left to right: Juan Rivera, Nora Wiltse, April Dawkins, Courtney Pentland, Sylvia Knight Norton, Becky Calzada, Barbara Johnson, Amanda Kordeliski, Hannah Byrd Little. Not pictured: Lindsey Kimery

## AASL Board of Directors 2024-2025

Becky Calzada  
President  
District Library Coordinator  
Texas

Amanda Kordeliski  
President-Elect  
Director of Libraries &  
Instructional Technology  
Oklahoma

Courtney Pentland  
Immediate Past President  
School Librarian  
Nebraska

Juan Rivera  
Secretary/Treasurer  
School Librarian  
New York

Nora Wiltse  
Division Councilor  
School Librarian  
Illinois

Lindsey Kimery  
Director-At-Large, Chapters  
Coordinator of Library Services  
Tennessee

Hannah Byrd Little  
Director-At-Large  
Director of Library  
Tennessee

April Dawkins  
Director-At-Large  
Assistant Professor  
North Carolina

Barbara Johnson  
Director-At-Large  
Library Media Specialist  
Connecticut

Sylvia Knight Norton  
AASL Executive Director



## Leadership Travel

### AASL Chapter Visits

The AASL Presidential trio actively connects with state- and regional-affiliated chapters through a rotating visit schedule, building meaningful relationships and gaining first hand insight into the inspiring work, challenges, and successes happening across the country. These visits are also a powerful way to share the latest AASL news, updates, and resources—ensuring chapter members stay informed and empowered by the work happening at the national level.

States visited in 2024-2025 included Wyoming, California, Arkansas, Delaware, Missouri, New York, Washington, Arkansas, and Alabama.

### ALA Sharjah School Librarians Conference

The first-ever [ALA Sharjah School Librarians Conference](#) made an inspiring debut on April 15–16, 2025! Hosted by the Sharjah Book Authority (SBA) in partnership with the American Library Association (ALA), AASL, and the Emirate Library and Information Association, this groundbreaking event brought school librarians together to share innovative ideas and discover best practices. The conference included an opening keynote and a closing address from AASL President Becky Calzada, who passionately underscored the transformative role of libraries in creating vibrant educational spaces and building impactful school partnerships.

### Chapter Advocacy Workshop

ALA welcomed a dynamic new cohort of Chapter leaders for the second Chapter Advocacy Workshop, held December 13–15, 2024, in Rosemont, Illinois. This 2 day workshop equipped ALA and AASL Chapter leaders with advanced skills and insights to amplify their advocacy efforts, delivered hands-on media training, and fostered stronger state ecosystems through enhanced cooperation and cross-collaboration. It was recently announced that the workshop will continue for a third year, taking place in December 2025.



Sharjah School Librarians Conference

## AASL Strategic Plan

The [2024–2027 AASL Strategic Plan](#) builds upon the organization's existing mission, vision, and core values. This plan emphasizes 'Engagement' as its central focus, recognizing it as essential for advancing the association and the school librarian profession. It outlines three primary areas of engagement:

- **Meaningful Engagement:** Fostering deep connections within the school library community.
- **Leadership Engagement:** Encouraging active participation and leadership development among members.
- **Purposeful Engagement:** Aligning activities with the association's goals to create a responsive and agile organization.

Approved by the AASL Board of Directors in June 2024 during the ALA Annual Conference, this strategic plan aims to guide the association in effectively meeting the evolving needs of its members and the broader educational landscape.

## Highlights

Our members are an important resource in AASL. By giving of their time and expertise, each contributes their unique talents and perspectives that are essential in shaping the future of school librarianship. There are more than 300 volunteer positions in the organization filled by passionate volunteer leaders. Their invaluable contributions leave a lasting impact on our association.



## Knowledge Quest Redesign

AASL unveiled a bold, refreshed look for *Knowledge Quest (KQ)*, the association’s official journal. The redesign breathes new life into a cherished classic while continuing to deliver the expert insights and fresh perspectives that school librarians rely on.

## Engagement Finder

This [new engagement tool](#) allows school librarians to search AASL engagement opportunities by interest, amount of time available, workstyle, and/or experience level. Results include informal engagement, like attending an event or sharing on social media, to more formal options like serving on a committee or the Board of Directors.

## School Library Month 40th Anniversary

School Library Month, celebrated annually by AASL, honors the vital role of school librarians and libraries—and 2025 marked the exciting 40th anniversary of this nationwide celebration. AASL President Becky Calzada reflected on the occasion in her [April 2025 KQ blog post](#):

“As we reflect on this milestone, we celebrate the resilience, dedication, and innovation of school librarians who create safe, welcoming spaces, empower students with critical information skills, and collaborate to enhance learning communities. Like a deep well, the professional community of AASL continues to provide an endless source of knowledge, support, and inspiration, enriching both individual growth and the broader field.”

## National Conference

[Registration opened](#) for this one-of-a-kind gathering, offering endless opportunities to grow, connect, and inspire. Designed for librarians at every stage of their career—whether diving into AASL [National School Library Standards](#) or seeking innovative tools to enhance practice—this conference delivers. With exclusive perks like complimentary registration for school administrators, meal vouchers, and morning coffee, #AASL25 is crafted to energize and empower.



## Advocacy Efforts

AASL maintains a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship with the American Library Association (ALA), drawing strength from ALA’s resources and influence while contributing to its advocacy efforts and overarching mission. AASL helps amplify ALA’s messages, encouraging its members to contact their Congressional representatives and inspire others within their networks to do the same. Through the [ALA Public Policy and Advocacy Office](#), AASL gains essential lobbying support to ensure school librarians are represented in education-related initiatives, funding, and legislation. Additionally, AASL has direct access to the [ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom](#), which provides crucial guidance on issues such as book challenges, access to information, and privacy rights.

## Institute of Museum and Library Services

On March 14, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order intended to dismantle the only federal agency dedicated to funding library services, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), as well as six other agencies. The American Library Association is [fighting for IMLS](#) to be preserved and to continue supporting the nation’s 125,000 public, school, academic, and special libraries.

ALA’s policy and advocacy team in Washington DC is working with partners and library supporters across the country to advocate for IMLS. On April 6, ALA and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees filed a federal lawsuit, and on April 10, a motion for a preliminary injunction to stop the dismantling of IMLS.

## U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)

On February 7, 2025, the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) announced plans to remove and review books in DoD schools that address topics related to gender ideology or so-called discriminatory equity ideology. Additionally, the DoDEA intends to suppress related programs, activities, and holidays. In response, the American Library Association (ALA) and AASL issued a [joint statement](#) condemning the decision, asserting that “the DoDEA is engaging in censorship of legitimate views and opinions, violating the First Amendment rights of those who serve our nation and their families, and denying them the very freedoms they have pledged to protect with their lives.”

## Letters of Support

AASL plays a critical role in advocacy at the national, state, and district levels, standing as a strong and unwavering voice for school librarians. In collaboration with state chapters and ALA when applicable, AASL responds to formal requests for letters of support, reinforcing the essential role of school librarians in educational communities by influencing key decisions, upholding professional standards, and advocating for the recognition and resources school libraries deserve.

## Work With AASL Chapters

### Chapter Advocacy Workshop

ALA welcomed a dynamic new cohort of Chapter leaders for the second Chapter Advocacy Workshop, held December 13–15, 2024, in Rosemont, Illinois. This 2 day workshop equipped ALA and AASL Chapter leaders with advanced skills and insights to amplify their advocacy efforts, delivered hands-on media training, and fostered stronger state ecosystems through enhanced cooperation and cross-collaboration.

### Empowering AASL Chapters Through Targeted Policy Training

The AASL State Policy Training Task Force will identify the unique policy training needs of AASL Chapters and deliver impactful solutions through tailored Train-the-Trainer programs and curated resources. By aligning these efforts with a dynamic, in-person AASL Chapter meeting at the AASL National Conference, we can ensure meaningful collaboration, knowledge sharing, and progress that directly supports state policy efforts.

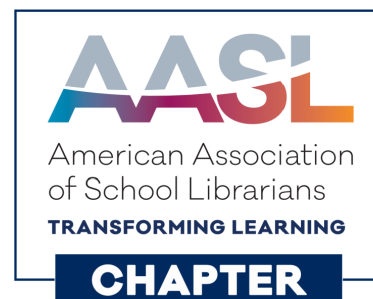
### Advancing Chapter Leadership: A Strategic Approach

The AASL Chapter Leadership Task Force is a strategic initiative designed to uncover and address the diverse leadership development needs of AASL state chapters. From cultivating leadership capacity and managing leadership transitions to fostering new opportunities and guiding pathways from chapter to national leadership, it's focused on empowering leaders at every level. The result will be a comprehensive list of high-impact content areas—paired with strategic recommendations for optimal delivery formats, whether through in-person events, online training, or ready-to-use materials—ensuring chapters have access to the right resources in the right way.

### Commending Resolutions

AASL annually recognizes outstanding programs, events, and products nominated by AASL Chapters for their support of the school library profession and the learners the profession serves. In 2024, AASL recognized:

- Families Against Book Bans (South Carolina)
- Anderson Reads (South Carolina)
- Free to Read Spartanburg (South Carolina)
- Community Advocates for Public Education (South Carolina)
- Seneca City Museums (South Carolina)
- Reading for Change (Ohio)
- Free to Read Project (Virginia)
- Maryland State Education Association
- Teachers Association of Baltimore County's Anti-Book Banning Committee (Maryland)
- Worcester County Public Schools Media Expo (Maryland)
- Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners
- North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching



- Legislator Invite Tour by the Walter P.J. Gilefski Media Center (Delaware)
- Right to Read Coalition (Missouri)
- Turn the Page KC (Missouri)
- U-Turn in Education (Missouri)
- 313Reads (Michigan)

## Member Highlights

### AASL Award & Grant Recipients

AASL awards and grants honor outstanding achievement and spotlight exemplary practices in school librarianship, with a focus on collaboration, leadership, and innovation. This year's recipients shine a light on the incredible work taking place in school libraries across the nation—championing excellence and inspiring the future of the profession.



Distinguished School Administrator Award  
Sponsored by ProQuest

Jason Skiba  
Principal  
Michigan



Frances Henne Award  
Sponsored by  
Libraries Unlimited

Shannon Bailey  
School Librarian  
Virginia



Innovative Reading Grant  
Sponsored by Capstone

Danielle Schwessinger  
School Library Media Specialist  
Maryland



Intellectual Freedom Award  
Sponsored by ProQuest

Melissa Jacobs  
Director of Library Services  
New York



Roald Dahl's Miss Honey Social Justice Award  
Sponsored by Penguin Young Readers,  
a division of Penguin Random House

"Cranford Dixie Giants"  
Cranford High School  
New Jersey

Toor Scholarships for Strong Public-School Libraries  
Sponsored by the Toor Family, in honor of their parents Jay and Ruth Toor



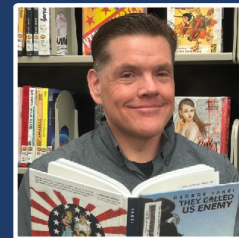
Robbie Barber  
Teacher-Librarian  
Georgia



Charlotte Chung  
Library Media Specialist  
West Virginia



Sarah Logan  
Teacher-Librarian  
Washington



Jason Parker  
Teacher Librarian  
Colorado

AASL Chapter of the Year  
Sponsored by AASL



Massachusetts School Library Association

ABC-CLIO Leadership Grant  
Sponsored by ABC-CLIO



Washington Library Association - School Library Division

AASL National School Library Program of the Year  
Sponsored by Follett Content



Scotts Ridge Middle School, Ridgefield, Connecticut

Also awarded/recognized:

- Fifteen \$500 Jewish American Heritage Month Collection Development Grants generously sponsored by The Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History
- Thirty \$750 travel grants to attend AASL National Conference, generously sponsored by Bound to Stay Bound Books, Inc. (BTSB)
- Three \$350 AASL Research Paper Grants
- 2025 Best Digital Tools for Teaching & Learning

## Members in the News

Across the country and around the world, AASL members are making headlines for their remarkable contributions to the library profession and their communities. From earning prestigious awards and grants that champion reading advocacy and literacy, to developing innovative programs like voter registration drives and educational exhibits, our members are setting new standards in leadership and service—especially in support of underserved student populations.

Their voices are also shaping national conversations. Many have taken bold stands on intellectual freedom, addressing book challenges in major media outlets and reinforcing the essential role of school libraries in upholding access to information. Others have elevated the profession by leading professional development initiatives, joining national executive boards, and participating in academic leadership programs.

Collaboration remains a cornerstone of this work. From founding nonprofits to build school libraries abroad to forging powerful partnerships that bring national attention to literacy and school library programs, AASL members are driving meaningful change. Together, they continue to champion education, equity, and intellectual freedom—leading with purpose and inspiring a stronger future for all learners.

## AASL Gathering

[AASL Gatherings](#), an evolution and reimaging of the AASL Town Halls, are a dynamic virtual space for school librarians to connect, collaborate, and grow together. This interactive Zoom forum provides opportunities to network, share ideas, ask questions, and explore fresh perspectives on school library topics. Whether seeking inspiration, support, or innovative strategies, this welcoming community fosters meaningful discussions and professional growth. Gatherings in 2024-2025 included:

- Partnering for Human-Centered Innovation Through Change
- Your Personal Leadership Journey: Strategic Moves You Can Make
- Joy in the Journey: A Gratitude Gathering
- Writing for Change: Stand Up for School Libraries in Media
- Piece by Piece Finding Your Perfect Fit in AASL
- Celebrating School Library Month

## AASL Headquarters Updates



### Staffing Updates

Sylvia Knight Norton, AASL Executive Director, [retired on April 11, 2025](#). Since 2013, Norton has overseen the division, driving the restructuring of the AASL Board of Directors and association governance, developing inspiring programs, and launching initiatives that have positioned AASL as the leading organization for school librarians in advocacy, leadership, and professional standards.

Allison Cline will serve as Interim Executive Director.

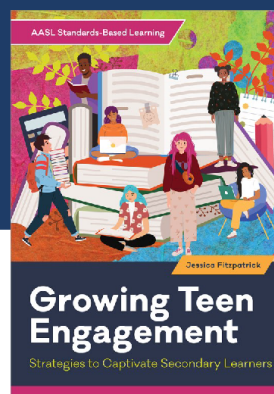
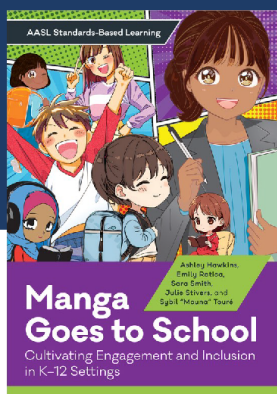
### New Publications

AASL is proud to expand its robust catalog of publications—developed in collaboration with ALA Editions—with new and updated titles that reflect the diverse needs and interests of today’s school librarians.

*Manga Goes to School: Cultivating Engagement and Inclusion in K-12 Settings*     *Growing Teen Engagement: Strategies to Captivate Secondary Learners*

Ashley Hawkins, Emily Ratica, Sara Smith, Julie Stivers,  
and Sybil “Mouna” Touré  
979-8-89255-585-2

Jessica Fitzpatrick  
979-8-89255-289-9



## Distinguished Service Award

AASL is pleased to announce the opening of nominations for the esteemed AASL Distinguished Service Award. This prestigious honor recognizes an individual within the library profession who has demonstrated exceptional national contributions to advancing school librarianship and school library development over a sustained period. The award recipient will receive a \$1,000 cash prize, complimentary registration for the AASL National Conference, and a three-night stay at the conference hotel.

## Looking Forward

### From the AASL President-Elect

As we move into the 2025-2026 year and I shift from President-Elect to President, I am so excited to continue the work begun last year on our new strategic plan. The AASL national conference happens in October in St Louis, MO and I want to personally invite every school librarian to gather with us to think, create, share, and grow together. Even though these are tough times for libraries, we are always stronger when we are standing together. I am looking forward to supporting all school librarians where they are and working to improve the state of school libraries across the country. My goals within AASL is to continue to work toward achieving our mission and vision: every librarian is a leader, and every learner has a school librarian. See you in St. Louis!



### Newly Elected Leadership

During the 2025 ALA/AASL elections, AASL members elected April Dawkins, Assistant Professor for Information, Library, and Research Sciences in the School of Education,

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, as the 2025-2026 President-Elect. She will serve as the AASL President during the 2026-2027 term and immediate Past President in 2027-2028. Also elected to the AASL Board of Directors are Sue Kowalski as Division Councilor, Stacey Nunn as Director-At-Large, and Melissa Corey as Director-At-Large.



April Dawkins  
AASL President-Elect



Sue Kowalski  
Division Councilor



Stacey Nunn  
Director-At-Large



Melissa Corey  
Director-At-Large

The three member sections of AASL—Educators of School Librarians, Independent Schools, and Supervisors—also elected new officers during the 2025 election.



Buffy Edwards, ESLS Chair-Elect



Jessica Thompson, ESLS Secretary



Jamie Gregory, ISS Chair-Elect



Maureen Squier, SPVS Chair-Elect



Kaitlyn Benavides, SPVS Secretary

## ALA Annual Conference

At the upcoming 2025 ALA Annual Conference, scheduled for June 26–30 in Philadelphia, [AASL will host a robust slate of](#) events designed to empower and connect K–12 school library professionals. Attendees can look forward to a series of engaging sessions on intellectual freedom and digital innovation, and specialized workshops focused on emerging issues in school librarianship. Topics will range from integrating poetry into makerspaces to strategies for supporting multilingual learners and elevating student voices within library programs. The AASL President’s Program will feature Ashley Hope Pérez, author of *Banned Together: Our Fight for Readers’ Rights*.

Governance meetings will also take place during the annual conference. AASL’s three member sections—Educators of School Librarians, Independent Schools, and Supervisors—and the AASL Chapter Assembly will hold their yearly face-to-face meetings. The AASL Board of Directors is also set to convene throughout the event to advance organizational priorities and guide the association’s strategic direction.

## Meet Us In St. Louis

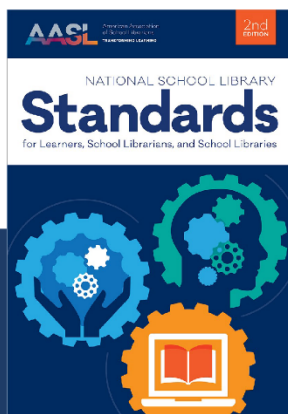
The AASL National Conference is the only national conference dedicated solely to the needs of school librarians and their roles as educational leaders—and registration is now open! AASL25 will feature daily keynotes, more than 150 concurrent sessions, author panels, research into practice sessions, more than 100 exhibitors, the best practice IdeaLab, Poster presentations, author signings, and endless networking opportunities. Content provided at the conference is rooted in AASL's *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. A discount promo code is available each month! Join the more than 1,300 attendees who have registered as of June 15!

**AASL**  
**AASL**  
**SAINT LOUIS**  
**OCTOBER 16-18 2025**  
national.aasl.org

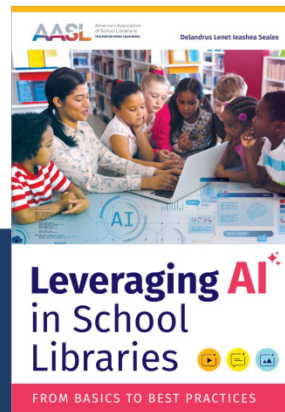


## Upcoming Publications

The second edition of the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* debuts in St. Louis! Built on the strong foundation you know, the [second edition](#) offers refined guidance and reaffirmed values to support school librarians in today's school libraries and evolving learning environments. For more information about the second edition, the research process, scheduled availability, and answers to frequently asked questions, visit the [AASL Standards Portal](#).

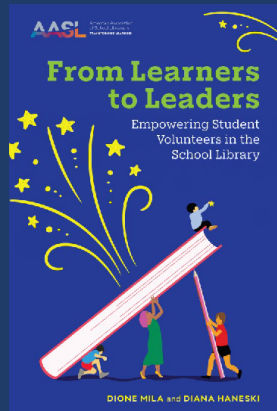


*National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries, Second Edition*  
979-8-89255-328-5



*Leveraging AI in School Libraries: From Basics to Best Practices*  
Delandrus Lenet Ieashea Seales  
979-8-89255-305-6

*From Learners to Leaders:  
Empowering Student  
Volunteers in the School  
Library*  
Dione Mila & Diana  
Haneski  
979-8-89255-329-2



*The School Librarian's  
Guide to (Almost)  
Everything*  
Maura Madigan  
979-8-89255-330-8



## AASL Headquarters

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