

MSLA Forum: April 2011

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President's Message

Looking Back, Looking Forward, Looking Up

When I was asked recently about whether things were "looking up" for school libraries, I had to wrestle with my inner jokester looking up." I didn't say that though. What I did say was, "School libraries are in tough shape, but school librarians have never. In the past few years, I have been able to rely on members of MSLA to be there whenever we call: to support our students in academic excellence. Comments on the listserv and at conferences have helped all of us to form alliances with the other stakeholders in children's education.

Other organizations, such as the Massachusetts Reading Association have shared the floor with us on current affairs as evidenced by our recent collaboration. We provide both of our organizations with stimulating new discussions about literacy and independent reading. MassCUE continues to be helpful with our Anti-Bullying Summit. The New England Library Interest Group chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

collaboration is in the offing: the Massachusetts School Counselors Association is collaborating with us on presentations at each of our conferences. Our partnership includes including school libraries into their Legislative Days each year at the State House.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has invited members of MSLA to participate in the Striving Readers grant. The Commissioner answered our call immediately and we are excited to say that he loved school libraries. Connie Louie, the DESE Instructional Technology Director, has invited technology directors across the Commonwealth to use MSLA's use our [Bullyin](#) resources. Dorothy Earle from the Office of Reading and Language Arts have often presented at our conferences.

up.

That brings me to the friends we have made in the Massachusetts legislature. The Library Caucus, now headed by Kate Hogan, has helped us organize many resources around MSLA's need for supervision and advisory personnel at the DESE. It is our hope that work will continue to the end. The Caucus was very attentive during this year's Legislative Day speeches and meetings and they have invited us to present. *are looking up.*

I don't think enough is said about the support MSLA has received from the American Association of School Libraries. They have been instrumental with here in Massachusetts and their work has actively changed the way we all do business. AASL's Learning 4 Life initiative is an ethical citizen education that is lacking in other content areas. It aligns our current standards to the Common Core and is more of an effort and I strongly encourage MSLA members to join AASL and attend conferences and webinars. They are the source for our Toolkit is probably the best source for all school librarians in danger of losing employment and they continue to add more to it. We visited Waltham for its Vision Tour and two of our board members have served (Ann Perham) and are now serving (Valerie Diggs) as members of the New England. *Things are looking up.*

The Massachusetts Teacher's Association is about to consider a standardized school library job description written by MSLA so that it is eager to get started on this work so that school librarians can feel more secure in their roles as teachers. This is very promising.

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So, with friends like these.....where are we going? There's a lot to do and we need your voice and spirit to help us accomplish

Attend. The MSLA Annual Conference in Hyannis (March 4-5, 2012) promises to offer a lot of new workshops in technology, so lean, mean, and green school libraries. Our keynote speakers are the best ever. The Bookmark Contest will actually be judged announced at the Sunday night banquet.

Assimilate. The AASL L4L Lesson Plan Database will allow members to soak up all the knowledge of our colleagues from all five states. Lowe, is now in the middle of sorting through all the wonderful lesson plans coming in from star library teachers.

Advocate. The Massachusetts Library System, who was only one year ago decimated and reborn, is still working to provide all they need to keep going. Make no mistake, they have demonstrated the ultimate support for MSLA members for many years and loans, professional development workshops, and collective purchasing opportunities that could have easily disappeared without

Act Like a Leader. The demand for creating the "lean, mean and green library" has become an essential component of school membership. Making sure that administrators know we save them money, promote online resources, utilize interlibrary loans,

In closing, it's been a busy two years. I can say with all honesty that the MSLA Board has served all of you with integrity and area director with ideas, comments and initiatives that will help your region. We will be calling on you for your assistance when

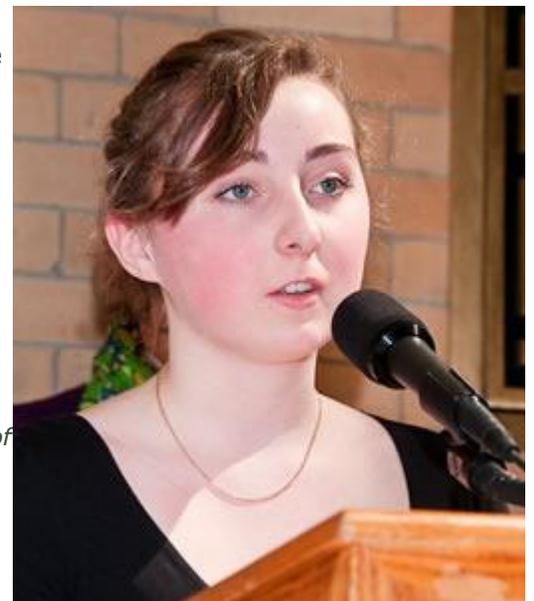
Join me in passing the gavel on to Valerie Diggs. She is a good friend, colleague, and tells a great joke. More importantly, she

Picture of Rep. Hogan by Linda Coviello

Students Tell Our Stories



The MetroWest Legislative Breakfast on February 11th took place at Natick's Wilson Middle School. School Librarian Amy Bloom and a "lineup" of student advocates were impressive in telling their stories about how important their school library is. For the Legislative Day on March 28th, Amy joined forces with Katherine Rotkiewicz from the Kennedy Middle School. They brought their students and delivered moving messages for legislators at the Massachusetts State House.



This is one of the essays:

Riley Mistrot, Grade 8, Wilson Middle School, Natick

Libraries are special, unique places, unlike any other. I love the library. I am anti-social, I don't want to hang in the gym before school waiting to go to class. Instead, the library has become the place for me to go in the morning. I hang out and help Mrs. Bloom, this has become my favorite part of the day.

The library is a place where technology resides beside books. It needs funding to keep pace with 21st century curriculum. We have to keep funding

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libraries so that they remain useful and helpful, not just a stuffy storage room for encyclopedias.

The library is the one place in the school that is accessible to all students, it is the heart of our school, and like the heart, blood needs to enter the heart in order for it to be distributed to the rest of the body.

Lots of programs run through the library that appeal to kids with varying interests. March Madness, book swaps, after school cocoa and conversation, baseball fever reading competition. These programs bring kids together.

Finally, libraries are a bully free zone. I am part of the peer leadership program at Wilson, and it's made me aware of bullying. Much of middle School bullying isn't physical, it's emotional. The most common form of bullying is judgment: what does your hair look like, clothes, smart, dumb, overweight,whatever. When you walk in the library, that all goes away. This is a safe judgment free place. A place for all students.

PHOTOS by Linda Coviello

2011 MSLA Bookmark Contest



School Libraries help you Learn4Life!

THINK:

- practice critical thinking skills
- brainstorm resources for information
- evaluate sources for bias, misinformation and timeliness

CREATE:

- complete research assignments using books, electronic resources, & quality websites
- credit sources correctly & ethically
- develop new understandings

SHARE:

- communicate ideas & information to the larger community
- interact with others using digital content, social networking & virtual spaces

GROW:

- explore the wonders of reading
- engage in self-assessment
- become independent users of information
- get higher scores on standardized tests!
- Learn4Life

Learn more about how School Libraries impact student achievement:
Massachusetts School Library Association
<http://www.maschoolibraries.org>

2011 DIVISION I HONORABLE MENTION

Bookmark created by:

Jane Tompkins

Grade 1

Bancroft Elementary School

Andover

Since 2004, students across Massachusetts have been designing bookmarks

"My School Librarian Teaches it All" (2010)

"School Libraries: Learning for Life" (2009)

"School Libraries: The Heart of Our Schools" (2008)

"Adventures in Information" (2007)

"In My Library Classroom We..." (2006)

"My School Library is My Link To..." (2005)

"What's Awesome about My School Library" (2004)



Their talent has been jaw-dropping, and their profound designs have made f

To the Winning and Honorable Mention entries, MSLA awards the students a
students' artwork on the front...**but what's on the back?**

MSLA uses the space on the back for more than recording the name of the V
school library advocacy. The bookmarks find their way into the hands of stud

This year, the Bookmark Committee instituted a new back, to reflect the the

KUDOS to the 2011 committee members: Judi Paradis, Linda Coviello, Laura Harrington

Consider joining the 2012 committee; watch the MSLA listserv for notificatio

PHOTO by Linda Coviello

MLA PR Award

On April 29th, Kathy Lowe accepted the Public Relations Award on behalf of the MSLA Bookmark Committee for the annual Bookmark Contest.

Press Release:

Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA) Awarded Second Place in the Public Relations Category of the Public Relations Awards at Massachusetts Library Association Conference

DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS – APRIL 29, 2011. The Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) presented the 20th biennial public relations awards to the winning applicants at the Association's Annual Conference at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Danvers, Massachusetts. Winners were chosen by a panel of independent judges from the public relations, press, and library fields. Evaluation criteria included graphic design, originality, and presentation. Entries were submitted for 17 categories, including brochures, community reading programs, social media, and Websites.



Help Has Arrived: Teaching with the AASL Standards

by Kathy Lowe

MSLA Executive Director and Lead Moderator, L4L Lesson Plan Database

How are you doing integrating the AASL Learning Standards into your teaching? I'll bet it would help to see how others are doing. In your own Standards for the 21st Century Learner in Action, you've probably referred to the Action Examples in the book as models, and in your grade, you've probably wished to see more.

The Standards in Action task force, which I chaired in 2008-09, came to the conclusion early in the process of putting the book together that the best vehicle for presenting exemplary lessons that school librarians could refer to for guidance in integrating the Standards would be the L4L Lesson Plan Database. I am happy to report that AASL came through with the unveiling this month of the [L4L Lesson Plan Database](#). The database bears the name of the Standards for the 21st Century Learner and Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media. One of the aspects of the database is that it includes a "cross-walk" with the English Language Arts Common Core Standards for each lesson.

To prepare for the creation of the database, AASL asked me to assemble a working group to develop a [rubric](#) that would be used to ensure the highest quality and incorporate the Standards as AASL intended them to be taught. Incoming MSLA president Valerie Digg and several members from the task force that worked on Standards in Action. That rubric, as well as a [checklist](#) of items to be included in lesson plans, standards-based lessons.

Once the rubric and checklist were finished, the database developer began the work of designing the architecture for the site and

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would use. Over the past several months, there have been many shake-down cruises and tweaks before the site was ready to be recruited and trained. Invitations went out to recognized leaders, educators and award winners in the school library field. As Moderator, I produced an online training webinar for the moderators and continue to provide ongoing support as they learn the

Before going public with the database, AASL wanted to have it pre-populated with several exemplary lessons, so each Affiliate members to submit lessons. Our Massachusetts contributors are Judi Paradis from the Plympton Elementary School in Waltham in Reading, and Valerie Diggs from Chelmsford High School. Other Affiliate members also submitted lessons, several of which are still going through the vetting and revision process.

The article below, reprinted with permission from American Libraries, has more information about the [database](#). I encourage you to reach out to school library practitioners across the country and I invite you to submit your own exemplary lessons to the collection.

New online tool links AASL Learning Standards with Common Core

Originally published on 4/19/11 by the American Library Association: <http://ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/news/pr.cfm?id=6976>

By Jennifer Habley

CHICAGO – The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) announces the launch of the "[Standards for the 21st-Century Learner](#)" database providing school librarians a fast and user-friendly way to create and share quality lesson plans with their peers.

Building on the template provided in "Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action," the [Lesson Plan Database](#) is an interactive tool for other educators in teaching the essential learning skills defined in the AASL learning standards. The database serves as a catalog of lesson plans that work together to create projects that weave content and skills into engaging learning activities.

Registered users may submit lesson plans to the database, as well as search the database by learning standards and indicators, lesson or schedule, keyword and much more. Registered users can also bookmark lesson plans in a portfolio for future use, rate lesson plans to PDF, and share lesson plans across social networking platforms. In addition, the database automatically aligns the skills and assessment strategies represented in the lesson plan to their corresponding English Language Arts Common Core Standard as well as the database will be updated to include the same capability with the Common Core Math Standards.

"The launch of the AASL Lesson Plan database signifies a red-letter day for our association," said standards and guidelines implementation. "The database represents the collective wisdom, experience and expertise of the many members and staff that helped to develop this outstanding resource. Our ongoing expansion and improvement of the database ensures that it will continuously serve the instructional design needs of school librarians and their students." life."

Submissions to the Lesson Plan Database are vetted by AASL reviewers to ensure lesson plans published are of the highest quality. Lesson plans used by moderators are available to site users prior to submitting a lesson plan. With this system, AASL hopes that the database will be used for best practices, but as professional development to those new to developing lesson plans. Not only can peers rate and comment on lesson plans, but feedback on plans prior to being published. For more information, or to create an account and begin using the database, visit [http://www.aasl.org](#)

The "Standards for the 21st-Century Learner Lesson Plan Database" is freely available to all users and is a part of AASL's national initiative (L4L), www.ala.org/aasl/learning4life, national implementation plan supports states, school systems and individual schools promote the "Standards for the 21st-Century Learner" and "Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs." Development and maintenance of the database is the responsibility of the American Association of School Librarians.

The American Association of School Librarians, www.aasl.org, a division of the American Library Association (ALA), promotes the use of school librarians in elementary and secondary schools as a means of strengthening the total education program. Its mission is to advocate excellence in school librarianship.

library field.

AudioBooks

by Jennifer Dimmick

Simmons GSLIS

Part-time School Librarian at Newman School, Needham

The Plympton Elementary School library in Waltham has a mixed collection of audio books including tapes, playaways and cds high due to the school's extensive special education and ELL populations. The librarian, Judi Paradis has encountered significant challenges with these audio book formats and wanted to explore the possibility of using MP3 players as an alternative. Is this a viable alternative to operationalize the program? This report summarizes the results of a survey designed to address these questions, and administrator opinion of and preference for various audio book formats and equipment.

AudioBook Survey [link removed]

AudioBook Report [link removed]

Graphic from freedigitalphotos.net

Library Revival

Back From the Dead—Reanimating the Resources

By Sharon Hamer

Editor's Note: Sharon Hamer received the prestigious M.S.L.A. (Massachusetts Super Librarian Award) for the Northeast Area in 2010. After reading her saga, you will understand how deserving a candidate she is.

Pictures: Fiction, Before and After; NonFiction, Before and After.

Imagine this: Coming back to Massachusetts after 4 years out-of-state, you are looking for a job as a library teacher, with almost 10 years in the profession—in tough economic times. You land an interview in a middle school. The administrators (who were all new to their positions as well) tell you that the library is being opened up after at least 10 years of being closed. One of the administrators



when she was an English teacher at the school, had a vision for the library and held a huge fundraiser the previous spring that raised almost \$20,000 for books and materials. The administration, lucky for you, wanted someone with experience who believed she could meet that challenge. Of course you say, I do it! No problem. Only after the interview do you realize that they never showed you the library. Probably on purpose!!

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Yes, that was me a couple of years ago. It was a shock when I finally walked into my space after the initial teachers' meetings. There were no tables, no chairs, no carts, nothing but a new rug and some books thrown on the shelves (which lined all 4 walls leaving space only for cleaning up his room in a wicked hurry. Thankfully, the new administration had ordered some tables and chairs that summer and I had to get it but it was impossible, being crammed full of a few extra double-sided shelves and the circa 1964 circulation desk. No catalog, no idea of what to do when it suddenly jelled in my mind. Make a plan to get the fiction together (it was totally out of order anyway) to move the books that were now empty and as quickly as possible put the books on the vacated fiction shelves before shelving those books in order.



Now I was ready to face the real challenge. Here was a school where, for as long as I had no idea what a library program was. None of the staff had ever seen libraries in the elementary schools are open only once a week. The first time they saw a library teacher was when they entered the room. The way to go. So now I had to convince the curriculum committee every now and then to teach the same concepts they were

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I was lucky that the previous summer the major subject area teachers had created the science, social studies and language arts maps to create a list of all the subjects they taught. I sought out the teachers by their curriculum areas, met with them and their classes. I gave them some ideas I had as well. I also used those maps to help with selection and purchasing. As soon as I had new books in an area that I was in charge of, the committee and the superintendent were extremely supportive of my



I was given 10 relatively up-to-date computers, although the tables they were on created a mass of spaghetti underneath. We had a new library system so that we could use the wonderful free resources they provided. This engendered a whole new kind of education for the students. The amount of reliable information they could get via the web. I was able to present a 20 min. lesson to the entire teaching staff about using the library.

The superintendent, technology specialist and the principal were all interested in getting a system-wide catalog in place. Even before I arrived. Hosted Services. The high school librarian and I thought this was a wonderful selection and so they bought it for both schools. I have seen examples of decisions that were made before I arrived but for which I got most of the credit. The same is true of the 52 inch smartboard and the portable smartboard that finds a home in the library. It was the support of the school and central administration that made it possible.

Once we got Destiny going, I was faced with the task of cataloging ALL our books. In the early 2000s, some parent volunteers tried to catalog the books using Library Pro. But since none of them were library professionals, they neglected to input either of the 2 fields required in the database with Destiny—the ISBN or the LC number. So I was left with the task of starting from scratch. At least 50% of the collection was older than 15 years. I had a goal of 1 shelf per day and thought, at that pace, I could catalog the entire library in 1 school year. Y

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the non-fiction cataloged in the first year and we are still working on the fiction section.

I quickly realized that with all this online content, we needed library website through which all users could access the new information and I created a site through which kids could access the statewide databases, a couple of databases I bought and the online catalog. The staff used to using our website as their portal when they need to do research.

Creating a library space and program out of almost nothing has been a great experience. It is so rewarding to see the shelves that were once empty now needing re-shelving because of all the purchases I have made. After school every chair in the place is filled. Many teachers and students collaborate on new projects. The high school library is being re-worked into a Learning Commons and there is a plan to give the high school the financial support and, someday in the not too distant future, some professional staff. Those are goals we can work towards. The success of the middle school library gave a shot of adrenaline to the entire library program in Saugus.

A Unique Partnership



By Anita Cellucci , Westborough High School Librarian

This year I began my first year as a high school librarian. Although I have been a school librarian for over ten years, this year presented an opportunity to create new partnerships and to expand on my long held belief that collaboration with public libraries and programs.

Last April, when I accepted the new position, I knew it would be important to introduce myself to the public library staff before I started. Fortunately, Maureen Ambrosino accepted the Director's position at the public library just before I was offered the high school librarian position in my town. Maureen and I were already friends on Facebook and it was easy to set up a time to get together over the summer to discuss how we would work together.

This conversation was the beginning to our school year long collaboration. Although we have started a few other projects, the one that I want to highlight is the formation of a town wide libraries Teen Advisory Board. The board is open to students from grades 6-12. Both the high school and public libraries have been participating and the response from students has been overwhelming. The meetings rotate between the high school and the public library. The hosting library plans the agenda and events for the day and input is solicited from the students.

Although we still have policies to put into place and more milestones to achieve, we have been able to increase the number of books in our town, more teen materials have been added to the libraries, and the public library will have a first time ever summer reading program. In addition to these accomplishments, all libraries have received input from the TAB members for collection development.

The support that we have received from administration and the Library Trustees and Friends has been inspiring! From the school providing snacks for meetings, but the overall support is summed up here by Patricia Fontes, chair of the Westborough Public Library Friends group. This collaboration! Westborough's professional public and school librarians are working together to create quality library programs. This collaboration will welcome our young people to the Public Library, encourage them to participate in activities and to create programs.

We recently met with the Superintendent of schools, Marianne O'Connor, who states, "I am delighted to see the collaboration between the high school and public libraries. The Teen Advisory Board is a welcomed addition in bringing the youth of our community together in a proactive and productive manner. We hope our students have been invited to participate in through the efforts of the Teen Advisory Board and look forward to learning more about our school-local community."

At the High School, teens have been brainstorming ways to make the space their own. We are currently working on creating a space to transform into a "Café" area. The HS teens are also communicating in a closed Blog designed to be a virtual space where they can discuss what happened at the last meeting.

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Takeaway points: This collaboration has been about giving teens a voice within a safe space, it is a way of helping to make the most of the opportunities for teens to care about libraries, But the best part - Adults across the community are working together to make the most of the opportunities.

Time to Shine

Getting ready to write your year-end report?

Do you write a year-end report?

Does anyone actually read your year-end report?

Your year-end report is the greatest opportunity of the academic year. This is when you document the many ways your school has impacted the curriculum. All you need to do is tell the story – **using data.**

If you aren't sure about how to approach your year-end report there are a number of resources and fellow practitioners ready to help.

School Library Websites

<http://schoollibrarywebsites.wikispaces.com/Reports> This wiki collects resources from many of the finest school library programs and inspiration from fellow librarians. I like it to get ideas for new ways to present my annual report.

The Unquiet Librarian – Buffy Hamilton

<http://theunquietlibrarian.wordpress.com/2010/06/01/the-unquiet-library-multimedia-annual-report-2009-10/>

Buffy sets the bar for programming and her end-of-year reports are absolutely inspiring. Her blog should be in everyone's RSS feed.

The Blue Skunk Blog – Doug Johnson

<http://doug-johnson.squarespace.com/blue-skunk-blog/2009/8/2/13-point-checklist-updated.html>

Doug posted this checklist in 2009, and it is a great resource for evaluating what your program offers and possible areas of growth. It includes great learning, resources and collection development you have accomplished over the past year, and use it for goal setting in the future.

For me this is the time of year I start organizing the data we have been collecting throughout the year using Google Forms. If you need a quick tutorial:

<http://youtu.be/lzgaUOW6GIs>

The annual data points we collect are:

- Book circulation
- Class visits for instruction – classes planned with teachers
- Class visits for research and laptop usage
- Projects in our media lab
- Program Highlights
- Professional development
 - My PD, library support staff PD, and PD I have provided to faculty
- Budget and grants
- Community – interaction with community outside of school.

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- Example: this year I am participating in the strategic planning committee of our public library.

The data we gather from curriculum-based lessons is what really gets noticed. I use a Google Form for every lesson I plan, and lovely data on:

- Standards – which information standards are we hitting? Taken from AASL, this is quick and easy to complete.
- What skills are students being taught in this lesson?
 - databases
 - advanced Google search
 - source evaluation
 - citation, copyright
 - creative commons
 - presentation platforms, etc.
- Student assessment – are we assessing these skills and how are students doing?
 - This year we made leaps in assessing student work in various research activities.
 - Our data will look different this year, and will provide an excellent baseline as we continue to work with teachers into curriculum planning.

Last year I provided my principal with a link for our annual report. Much of it is made up of screen shots from Google Forms and all to a Powerpoint and uploading it to Slideshare was easy. <http://www.slideshare.net/secret/eYpS92w0oxSfpG>

And my principal loved it!

No matter what grade levels your school library serves you can gather evidence to highlight your extraordinary work. Spring is opportunity to tell yours

Professional Development

By Christine Steinhauser

School Librarians are lifelong learners. Ongoing education for us and all teachers is a requirement so we are all on the lookout for meaningful professional development. Sandy Kelly and I carpoled to the Anti-Bullying Summit. While chatting about professional development, I told Sandy about a professional development opportunity the Reading School district offers its employees. We decided that this was worth sharing in the Forum.

The Superintendent of the Reading Public Schools, Dr. John Doherty, completed his doctorate degree a few years ago. In the past few classes from Alan November. He has created a 6 credit graduate level class for Reading Teachers called "Expanding the Boundaries of Learning," which includes online courses from November Learning (<http://novemberlearning.com/>). The class consists of teachers and administrators from all levels of education. It meets once a week from August until April. The teachers who took the class in previous years (in its 3rd year) come and teach various topics. I was in the first cohort group along with librarians from the high school and the middle school.

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Here is an excerpt from the class syllabus:

Powerful technologies are creating a worldwide shift of power. For example, during the time that you were in school, the United States was the world's most powerful nation (Friedman, 2007). Are your students prepared to be

Our education system is based on a 20th century culture that creates dependent learners instead of empowered learners. As technology becomes more powerful and more ubiquitous it will be essential to re-define the roles of learners and educators. Educators will need to become knowledge generators. This course will challenge you to raise expectations of student achievement and to prepare stu

Leadership skills such as communication, team building and literacy will be redefined based on global information and commu

This class was very unique. It gave staff the unusual opportunity to learn, experiment, create, and grow together using technology from a different aspect of collaboration, technology and critical thinking. Groups would change; for one assignment my group consisted of one administrator, one teacher from each level- elementary, middle and high. We learned through experiential learning: posting to a blog once a week, using a Twitter backchannel in class, and having our assignments and other class information discussed. We also discussed the following books, all of which I highly recommend:

- *The World is Flat*, Thomas Friedman (2007). If you wish, you may omit pages 403-476.
- *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*, Daniel H. Pink (2006).
- *Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts*, Will Richardson (2009).
- *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times*, Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel (2009).
- *Web Literacy for Educators*, Alan November (2008).
- *Empowering Students with Technology*, 2nd Edition, Alan November (2010)

The technology topics that were covered in the class include wikis, blogs, Google Docs, Wikipedia, podcasting, video creation, Delicious, Twitter, Prezi and more. We were expected to create a blog post once a week and read and respond to at least three other posts. At least one educational blog and one technology blog. I followed Joyce Valenza and found that I could easily blog just by sharing my experiences with experts in all of the applications, but we became familiar with them. The goal was not to just add technology to our lessons, but to create a digital presence for both students and teachers. We wanted to help our students create a digital footprint that demonstrated responsibility and a broader sense of worth knowing that it is shared with more than just teachers.



The beauty of this kind of professional development is that it was instantly put to use. When you are collaborating, you can go to work the next day and start to apply what you have learned. Collaborative lessons were developed by teachers who wanted to collaborate with the librarian! These collaborative lessons are ongoing three lessons.

This kind of teaching required some district changes initially. The acceptable use policy has been expanded to include online professional development at the beginning of the year which will give them access to the applications. Our district has student email for grades 5-12. All staff have accounts for these applications, keeping their "business" and "home" online presence separate. Lastly, our district does not block the a

I recently send out a question to the listserv asking what professional development members found to be most beneficial. I re summarize later in this article. The purpose for my query was to see if any other districts had a professional development mo

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responses outlining an in-district model. One was from my friend and colleague, Sharon Burke, librarian at Reading Memorial High School. She is a member of the "Boundaries of Teaching and Learning" class that we took together and most recently co-taught a class on online resources, plus she has a class with Mack from the Bristol-Plymouth district. In her district, the instructors are from nearby colleges (Bridgewater and UMASS Dartmouth) and meet on a Friday school or Saturday, and are paid for by the district. Like me, Joanne finds herself very fortunate to be so supported by her district. A comment from the listserv is that no one mentioned any of the major conferences like Blue Ribbon, MLA, MRA or MassCue. I think it is because budgets have been so tight lately. If I want to attend a conference and my district can't send me, I put in a proposal to attend two conferences for free this way.

My thanks to everyone who responded to my post on the listserv:

What has been your favorite Professional Development Opportunity? I am gathering information about what librarians feel is the best within the district or at conferences, in person and virtual. What topics were covered? Who attended- teachers, administrators, etc. Share your experiences! I know that you all have such great ideas!

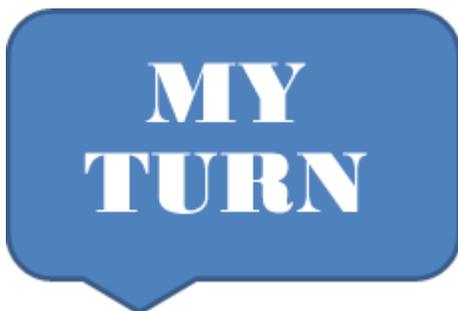
Here are the responses (in no particular order) I received from members when I asked what people considered the best professional development opportunities:

- Literacy Across the Content Areas -- PCG [Public Consulting Group] in New Hampshire is the best!
- Online class by AASL on Backward Design for the 21st Century Librarian. What made it so powerful was the opportunity to interact with other school librarians.
- Information Commons (presentation by Valerie Diggs)
- Discussions about integrating e-books into collections
- Any new YA literature
- MLS workshops
- Networking with other librarians at conferences
- Thinkfinity PD
- EdWeb provides professional learning communities on topics of interest that you can join. Topics like Educational Leadership have webinars that can be viewed once a month that allow live discussions during the webinar. The webinar is also recorded before and after where people share ideas and resources. PDPs are printed out on the computer after attending webinars.
- The Foundation for Children's Books (held at Boston College) <http://www.thefcb.org/>
- Annual and Midwinter ALA meetings and biannual AASL meetings
- Children's Literature New England (meets every other year) <http://www.clne.org/>
- Keene State College, NH - Children's Literature Festival promoting the reading, studying, and use of children's literature
- EISLA meetings (Eastern Independent School Library Association)
- Children's Literature Summer Institute at Simmons College (every other year)

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- MLA and MSLA combined forces for a conference down on the Cape. Katie Baxter (Nobles & Greenough) and others
- I have to say it was when the administration in our district gave the district's librarians the PD days for the year to year so we had time to send out surveys, have a committee with other stakeholders as members and really get some heading. By myself in a high school of 1300 students, there is no way I would have been able to do this on my own, part too it became a fun and useful guide to library services and vision. Susan Babb from MLS was very helpful with
- The Anti-Bullying Summit at Cushing Academy was the best one I have attended in a while!
- NEH Summer Institute in teaching African American literature for 4 weeks one summer with visiting writers and school writers in the field at the time—and thirty teachers from around Massachusetts.
- Undoing Racism: The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond - <http://www.pisab.org/>
- Framingham State College. Mixed groups-- usually at least one other librarian there, but it's a mix of teachers of different project-based learning course through Framingham with our own Judi Paradis, and it was excellent. Most of the classes
- EDCO classes- a theater games course, which was awesome and added some new tricks to my bag. I also took one
- MSLA conference-- I always leave with many new ideas to try out and have really enjoyed it
- SLJ Leadership Summit is held annually and does require travel and hotel expenses but the event is free. One and a school librarianship discussing the most leading edge issues in our profession. Information about upcoming summits
- Serving on a NEASC committee was a rewarding professional development opportunity. In exchange for four days at another school library to prepare and write a report. The librarian, teachers, guidance counselor, nurses and administrators helpful. It was a unique experience that gave me a picture of an entire school working toward a goal and how the librarians
- BER conference- Deborah Ford's 'Increasing the Effectiveness of Your School Library Program.' Some of the materials A workshop along those lines - ideas to better manage your library program and where to find the resources to do it

Graphics from freedigitalphotos.net



The Travails of Web Evaluation

by Alexis Kennedy, Lenox Memorial Middle & High School

[Web Evaluation Lesson](#)
(PDF of PowerPoint)

[HITS: Listserv Question on Web Evaluation](#)

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I am in my first year as a school librarian, working with students in grades 6-12. I am on a flex schedule and, while I generally appreciate this schedule, its downfalls were recently brought to my attention. I was approached by the 9th grade English teacher who wanted me to cover the topic of web evaluation with his students in 49 minutes or less. His class was beginning research on world genocide and would be using both our school's databases as well as websites. After preparing my lesson and teaching his students, I was reminded of two critical fundamentals of our profession:

1) Information literacy must be embedded into the curriculum and not simply a hit-or-miss exercise and



2) Some students may know how to navigate devices quicker than many adults, but they are overwhelmingly deficient in understanding how to evaluate the information they access on these devices.

My Process

Knowing full well that librarians are fabulous resource sharers and that re-inventing the wheel is time-consuming and foolish, I posed this question on the MSLA listserv:

Does anyone have any particularly useful teaching materials for web evaluation, either web-based or not? I'm especially looking for bogus websites that look legit (I seem to remember a faux NYT website?). I teach students grades 6-12 and am most interested in high school level content, but will happily take tips geared to all levels.

Within moments, my inbox was full of a wealth of information. Next, my job was to sort through the myriad responses, choose websites that best suited my lesson objectives (introduce 9th grade English students to the broad topics of web evaluation to inform their research on world genocide), and create a presentation easily digestible in one class period.

I chose PowerPoint as my method of presentation. While it can be a dated and dull format, I couldn't possibly remember all I needed to say without a guide, the embedded YouTube video and hyperlinks helped make it more interactive and engaging, and the visual reinforcement (i.e. text) of what I would be sharing orally with the students would help my visual learners.

The Lesson

The good news was that the students were engaged and curious throughout this presentation. One class period (49 minutes) was not nearly long enough; an extra class period would have been great, but two even better. I had wanted students to evaluate a website they were using for their project in class, though due to time constraints they did this for homework. Additionally, the topic of media bias (which cannot be divorced from evaluating media websites) needed at least another class period, and – better yet – its own course.

I was stunned by how little students (whether advanced or not) thought critically about the media they consume. Many of the hoax/joke websites that I thought we would breeze through raised furrowed brows and confusion. A great website is the Ova Prima Foundation, whose mission is “to shed light upon the primacy and importance of the egg, in a peaceful, non-violent, multi-disciplinary exchange of information and ideas between scientists and scholars worldwide” and “to provide funding for research efforts that build a body of scientific evidence showing the egg came first.” The students were confused and took this at face value until I encouraged them to think a bit deeper. Once they finally reached their “ah-ah” moment, awkward giggles ensued. This notion of being skeptical of information is clearly a new exercise for them.

They were equally naïve when it came to identifying marketing propaganda. Sharon Hamer was kind enough to share

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with me two sites with identical content and which appear to share scientific information on the health benefits of the acacia berry. However, take a look at the URLs:

<http://purchaseacaiberry.net/>

<http://www.channel6insider.com/latest/articles/breakthroughdiet/v4.htm?t202id=8983&t202kw=p360>

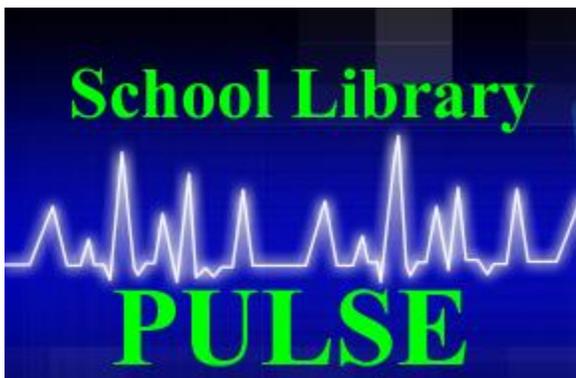
Though the latter website is no longer active, this exercise clues consumers into being critical of URLs and starts to tease out the less than ethical steps marketers take to pull the wool over consumers. My students took this information at face value and believed it until I prompted them to think more critically.

Concluding Thoughts

I am grateful for this learning experience as I had thought that our students would be more critical of the information they consume. Having gone through college reading “The Onion” and now a fan of “The Daily Show” with John Stewart and “The Colbert Report,” perhaps I find their utter and total confusion more unsettling than others. Can they separate fact from parody? In my students’ defense, perhaps I am simply forgetting how young they are. However, their youth will not get them off the proverbial hook, as these students had better become more critical consumers of information – and quickly – as they are surrounded by media 24/7.

While I am surprised and disturbed by their naiveté, I realize that most students are rarely told to think critically about the messages the media assaults them with moment to moment. In many ways, the average teenager allows media to guide how they dress, think, and behave. I think the same can be said of many adults. Therefore, our work as school librarians is more important than ever. We must continue to impress upon our students the need to be critical consumers of news, fashion, and all other media. We must continue teaching students the skills to think critically, evaluate, and analyze the information they encounter day to day. And, we must realize that these crucial lessons cannot be jammed into one library period. We must collaborate with teachers and work with our administrators to embed web and media evaluation into the curricula, in all disciplines and at every grade level.

The PULSE: News in the School Library World



Note: HELP WANTED! This feature column needs an editor; please contact

Forum Editor, Ann Perham if you are interested.

Advocacy Brochure Series Helps School Librarians Speak to Stakeholders

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasliissues/brochures/advocacybrochures.cfm>

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American Association of School Librarians (AASL) presents a new advocacy tool to help school librarians generate and guide discussion with stakeholders about quality school library programs. These were developed with a grant from Bound To Stay Books Foundation.

Advocacy Brochures for Administrators, Policymakers, Parents, and Teachers may be downloaded on 11"x17" or 8.5"x11" paper. As an added bonus, school librarians can customize their brochure for maximum impact. Another option is to order the desired brochures from the ALA store.



As a part of School Library Month, the AASL brochure, "School Library Programs Improve School Learning" was mailed to administrators. Check in with your principal and use the brochure as a discussion catalyst for how school libraries are key to learning.

RESOURCES you Need: AASL Toolkits

- **Building Level Toolkit: Implementing AASL's Learning Standards and Program Guidelines in Your School Library**
- **Crisis Toolkit**
- **Instructional Classification Toolkit** School Librarians ARE EDUCATORS
- **Parent Outreach Toolkit**
- **School Librarian's Role in Reading Toolkit**
- **School Library Program Health and Wellness Toolkit**

Swiss Army Librarian: Gamify Your Library Fines

<http://www.swissarmylibrarian.net/2011/03/31/gamify-your-library-fines/>

"Catch them being Good" is the idea behind this public librarian's blog entry. Reward those who return library materials on time. Hmmmm....perhaps this would be an incentive for getting the books back as we near summer vacation - ?

EQUACC - ALA Task Force on Electronic Content This is a posting from ALA Connect by Chris Harris:

I know there is a lot of interest in the school library world about ebooks. There are also an awful lot of questions! I wish that I could say I come bearing answers, but really this issue is way too big and complicated for simple answers. There is, however, a new place for you to find resources and join in the ongoing discussion around the future of ebooks and other electronic content in our libraries. The ALA Presidential Task Force on Equitable Access to Electronic Content (EQUACC) is pleased to announce the launch of <http://equacc.ala.org> - your trusted resource for the latest news and developments from the EQUACC's ongoing work on electronic content and ebooks. I sit on the ALA Office of Information Technology Policy (OITP, part of ALA's Washington Office) Advisory Committee, and am representing them on the EQUACC task force as well as the OITP Ebook Task Force. Of course, I am also speaking to the needs and interests of school libraries on both of those groups. Current AASL Treasurer Floyd Pentlin is also representing AASL and school librarians on EQUACC. We invite you to stop by <http://equacc.ala.org> to see what the task force is working on and to join in the conversation. With the overwhelming attention given to the Harper Collins decision to limit ebook loans to 26 times, and all of the other issues focusing on the loaning of popular fiction ebooks in public libraries, it is critical that school library needs are also clearly defined. I will be writing a short white paper for OITP to clarify concerns and

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needs in school libraries, but Floyd and I (and all of EQUACC) would welcome your further input and comments on the blog at <http://equacc.ala.org> and in the working forums there. I am on the licensing models sub-committee and Floyd is on PR. We will also be collaborating on a blog post for the EQUACC site in the next two weeks to highlight school issues, so feel free to email either of us if you have success stories or huge barriers to share!

*Christopher Harris - Director, School Library System, Genesee Valley Educational Partnership - Le Roy, NY
cgharris@gvboces.org*

New School Library Action Figure?

<http://blog.schoollibraryjournal.com/neverendingsearch/2011/04/12/meme-designing-the-new-action-figure/>

Nancy Pearl Action Figure, roll over! Joyce Valenza has her own ideas of what the School Librarian Action Figure should look like!

Student Video Contest Winners Announced

All contest entries can be seen via AASL's SchoolTube channel:<http://www.schooltube.com/user/aaslala>

Elementary: "Digital Educators @ Wilentz Library"

Robert N. Wilentz School - Perth Amboy, New Jersey

Middle School: "Think, Create, Share & Grow the JMS Way"

Johnston Middle School - Houston, Texas

High School: "Learn to Grow @ the Library"

Avon High School - Avon, Indiana

AASL Distinguished School Administrators Award

Donna Haye, district assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction for the Atlantic City (N.J.) Board of Education, has received the 2011 AASL Distinguished School Administrators Award. Haye has prioritized the hiring of a certified school librarian for every school. Read the press release:

<http://www.americanlibrariesmagazine.org/news/ala/aasls-distinguished-school-administrators-award-recipient-walked-her-talk-and-improved-stud>

AASL Collaborative School Library Award

The "Medieval Narrative" project, planned and presented by the librarians and freshman/sophomore social studies team at Deerfield (Ill.) High School is the winner. Read the press

release: <http://www.americanlibrariesmagazine.org/news/ala/exemplary-teacher-school-librarian-collaboration-wins-aasl-award>

Improving literacy through school libraries: Our Authors, Our Advocates

ALA's has launched a series of public service announcements featuring authors who uphold the importance of school libraries.

<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/ourauthors/ourauthorsouradvocates/index.cfm>

AASL Advocacy Tip of the Day

AASL members can have a **Advocacy Tip of the Day** delivered daily, weekly or monthly to an email account or mobile phone. The tips are wide-ranging but all point up ways to advocate for your program. MSLA has been featured, sharing things that we are doing in Massachusetts. What is working across the nation? Sign up today.

Volunteers: Best Practices

by Rachel Hopkins

Simmons MS LIS

May 2011, future (and very excited) school librarian for Salem High School, NH

Editor's Note: This article is a follow-up to the article on volunteers and school libraries in the February 2011 Forum.



This past spring I completed my practicum at the Pentucket Regional High School Library and one of my projects was to create a volunteer strategy and manual. Pentucket has one sole certified librarian who also assumed some technology support roles when a position was not re-filled so needless to say she's got a lot of demands on her time. For this project I spent a lot of time reviewing the literature and looking for examples of successful volunteer programs. Through my research I determined there are several important aspects to be aware of when working with volunteers: recruitment, management and training, and finally appreciation.

Recruitment

The challenge of finding volunteers can vary depending on the grade-level. Usually, elementary schools tend to have an easier time of finding volunteers but several high schools reported still being able to attract good volunteers. Regardless of how they are recruited it's important to give examples of what kinds of tasks might be expected from volunteers, helpful skills and time expectations. There are many ways to get the word out about volunteer opportunities some of which include:

- Parent newsletter
- Bulletin board at open house events
- United Way volunteer database
- Posting announcements at local religious organizations, public libraries, senior citizen centers
- School listserv announcement
- School library/main school websites
- Connecting with local GSLIS programs
- Volunteer referrals

Management and Training

Time is well spent meeting with potential volunteers to make sure that expectations, commitments and personality fit with the library. Ideally you will want to train volunteers in a small group and cover general school and library information as well as a tour of the facilities. A volunteer manual is especially helpful as it can be a good place to explain school policies and give the volunteer a place to go for information if you're busy. I used livebinders.com to create an online manual that can be easily updated by the librarian (check it out at <http://livebinders.com/play/present?id=73743>)

Survey respondents in the MSLA survey (January 2011) also had the following suggestions:

Barbara Boulay – Has a strong volunteer program with experienced volunteers that now can actually help to coordinate volunteer schedules and training.

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Laura Gardner – Uses email and memos at the front desk to keep the lines of communication strong.

Anonymous – Be clear about the role of the librarian and the do's and don'ts of volunteering in a school

Anonymous – I keep a list of projects and get to know the volunteer's skills and strengths.

Doris Gallant – Two hour shifts tend to work best and I make sure they sign-in and record what they do on their shift.

Anonymous – Start them on a trial basis, with easy tasks and if they do well work on increasing their responsibilities.

Anonymous – Offering a choice of times/days seems to work well on getting volunteers to commit.

Anonymous – Offer volunteers the opportunity to work on project based work or events rather than committing to a regular shift.

Randie Groden – We have worked hard to have detailed shelf labels to make re-shelving easier.

Anonymous – Don't be afraid to let them suggest something they want to do, it might surprise you.

Nancy J. Kane – Invite people with the attitude that they will have fun.

The reality is that sometimes people just don't have time but still want to give. If permitted by your school, encourage parents or community members to support the school library by funding new materials. Create an account at <http://schoollibraryexchange.org/> and link it to your website to request those items your budget just can't cover.

Appreciation

People volunteer for a multitude of reasons and no matter why they need to know their work is appreciated. It's a good idea to take the time every time a volunteer is in the library to say thank you and explain what you are able to accomplish with their help. Energize Inc., an organization focused on helping volunteer administrators has a lot of interesting appreciation ideas at <http://www.energizeinc.com/ideas/gift.html> It doesn't take a lot of money to express your appreciation. Some of the ways librarians are currently saying thank you are:

Rich Winnick – For most volunteers, I put a bookplate in the front of a new book that acknowledges their effort.

Anonymous – I usually purchase a small gift at the end of the year with my own money.

Anonymous – Small tokens of appreciation during National Volunteer Week in April.

Marcia Bernard – I make sure my principal meets them and personally thanks them.

Anonymous – We celebrate their birthday and give them a small but heartfelt gift. All the library staff chip in but I pay the bulk of the expense.

Anonymous – We make a donation in their name to a literacy-based charity.

Laura Larsson – The school district sponsors a volunteer luncheon each year.

Laurie Cleveland – I think it's important to send them written thank you notes as well as publicly acknowledge their contributions.

Francesca Mellin – Volunteer appreciation breakfast.

Anonymous – I make sure they are publicly recognized in the school newsletter.

Member News

Nancy Stenberg, Editor

School Librarian, West Springfield High School

It's time to SHOUT! MSLA Members do amazing things constantly... this column will celebrate these accomplishments. By nature, school librarians work to make others successful and forget their own celebrations.

Please let me know about your job changes... promotions... collaborations... committee work. If you have news about a new initiative you are involved in or something great that has happened to you in your school or library please let me know so that I can include it in this Forum! [Contact Nancy](#)

I'll kick off this column with a celebration of my own:



Race to the Top English Language Arts Curriculum Subcommittee

The state has been awarded a federal Race to the Top education grant. Last fall I applied to become a member of one of the Race to the Top Subcommittees. My number one choice was the English Language Arts Curriculum Subcommittee. I had to fill out an application and write a short essay about why I was interested. Early this year I was notified that I had been assigned to the Grades 4 and 5 ELA Curriculum Subcommittee.



One of the main components for the grant is to rewrite the states curriculum to align with the newly adopted Common Core Standards. The ELA Subcommittee will meet periodically until the summer of 2014 to create 100 new curriculum units for use by all Massachusetts teachers by the beginning of the 2014/15 school year. Beginning this summer we will start to release new units for classroom use and feedback as we continue our work. We are lucky enough to be working with J. McTighe and the "Understanding by Design" curriculum writing method.

I am excited by this work because the new Common Core Standards include research skills within the context of other nonfiction text work which is something we librarians have been advocating for years! All in all I think this new curriculum is going to further validate our work as librarians and provide fresh arguments for maintaining school libraries and more importantly school librarians!

Picture from Race to the Top Website: <http://racetotop.com/>

From the Editor, Ann Perham



School Library Month has almost ended, but the celebration of School Libraries does not stop as we turn the calendar. This issue of the Forum is a potpourri of advocacy, best practices and news. As you read these articles, please consider what you can contribute to your professional publication.

Have you been named to a committee? gotten a new job? honor? Let Nancy Stenberg hear about it for the "Member News" column.

If you are up for a larger commitment, consider editing the "PULSE" column, gathering news in the world of School Libraries. Let me know if you are interested.

How about writing up a special project at your school? Maybe you have a "Hot Button" issue that you would like to pursue. Or, take "My Turn" and share your ideas. Leslie Schoenherr is collecting your "Working Smarter" ideas.

Librarianship is about making others look good, but it's also about sharing and contributing to our common growth. That is the essence of School Library Month.

Feedback? [Let me hear your ideas!](#)