

Fall 2007 Volume 4

MSLA FORUM

Massachusetts School Library Association

<http://www.maschoollibraries.org>

School Library Teachers in an Ever Changing World

President's Message by Sandy Kelly

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." – Charles Darwin

This is such an exciting time to be writing to you as the new president of MSLA. I am proud to represent such a professional group of educators. I think it is the enthusiasm and dedication that school library teachers bring to their jobs everyday that makes us a special breed. We are flexible, shift gears constantly while juggling at break neck speed and trying to maintain the calm at all times!!! When I read the comments and posts to our list-serve I know that we are a think tank of ideas and viewpoints as we are always sharing, brainstorming and questioning. We are not afraid of expressing ourselves or learning new ideas and terms. Thus we can truly say we are lifelong learners. In my humble opinion, no other group of educators works as hard to remain cutting edge on so many fronts while struggling to keep our jobs vital and important in our schools. Sometimes we feel we are running an uphill battle, but our spirit, our persistence and collaborative nature, our collected wisdom and knowledge keep us moving onward and upward.

What does it really mean to be a school library professional today? We are managers of our programs, curriculum leaders, teachers and librarians. Many of us spend summer vacation taking or teaching courses, organizing our thoughts and refreshing ourselves with new ideas for the upcoming school year. We know that our jobs are more important than ever as we determine the best practices that will prepare our students for a global



.....
What does it really mean to be a school library professional today? We are managers of our programs, curriculum leaders, teachers and librarians.
.....

marketplace and a society awash in information. As you read the articles in this issue I hope you too will reflect on what you do to demonstrate "professionalism." Read on, get excited about the potential we have and please ask yourself how you the professional can help to ensure that every child you reach has equitable access to the best school library and school library teacher possible. And know this...change is in the air!

On June 8th, 2007, our new Governor, Deval Patrick announced that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been accepted as a leadership state in the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. The Partnership, a national network of states backed by 30 leading businesses and organizations, is working to ensure that every child masters content standards as well as the skills and competencies needed to be engaged and productive citizens and employees in an increasingly competitive global society. This week Kathy Lowe and I visited with the assistants to Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria the newly appointed Education Advisor. They told us that they had received and read all of the testimony that MSLA members gave at the transition team meetings across the state last spring! True professionalism was demonstrated by our attendance at these meetings. Kathy and I told the advisors we stood ready to work with them wherever needed to get the Governor's Early Literacy Initiative going and to assist with the implementation of P21 in our schools. In order to be prepared I urge you to read through the P21 information on their website. Their mission is the same as ours, "To bring 21st Century Skills to every child...!" Download and read the literacy maps from their website and share this information with your school administrators. Let them know how you implement these skills in your library program and how you can help them make their school a true 21st century learning environment. You will be demonstrating your

MSLA Forum

professionalism to the decision makers who determine what programs stay and who goes at budget time.

On June 26, 2007, six of our members stood proudly on Capitol Hill in Washington DC. Rhode Island Senator Jack Reed announced the Strengthening Kids' Interest in Learning and Libraries (SKILLS) Act. The SKILLS Act was introduced on both the House and Senate floors that same day and by all accounts was warmly received. This legislation requires that a good school library, along with a highly qualified school library teacher, will be present in every school by 2010. According to Senator Reed, "The SKILLS Act underscores the value of school libraries by encouraging the hiring of highly-qualified school library media specialists in our nation's school libraries."

<http://link.ics1.net/s/ve?eli=3130100&si=b117746543&cfc=3html>

Being recognized as a highly qualified teacher adds not only to our professionalism but also to our credibility within our schools. The school library teacher works for everyone, from the students and their parents, to the teachers and administrators. A good school librarian knows all of the players and the curriculum because we work with everyone and integrate information literacy skills into every possible project that we can. We are the only profes-

sional in our buildings that can say this. Be sure that you will meet the requirements of being highly qualified and encourage and mentor your colleagues in this effort to be prepared. http://www.doe.mass.edu/nclb/hq/hq_faq.html?section=competency

Also know that the parents in your schools can be among your strongest advocates. MSLA often gets calls from parents who are concerned about the lack of a good school library, school librarian or the potential for these programs to be cut. Last spring Kathy and I made a presentation at a parent organized forum in Lexington because their elementary school libraries were about to be cut. This proactive group organized the cable-televised event to help get an override passed that prevented these cuts. They were successful! Send out newsletters and school library updates regularly in your school and keep parents informed about the value of what you do. Parents are the community members whose tax dollars pay the bills. They can have a strong and positive voice.

And finally...please get involved...

Just a few people cannot take this ball and run alone. As the president of MSLA, I will look toward you, our members, to work with our executive board to make school libraries in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts a vital and integral part of a 21st century skills education. I

invite you to become participants in the movement. WE are a team. I believe WE can succeed in our effort to have a good school library and qualified library teacher in every school. It is not an impossible dream!

Let us continue to brainstorm and take advantage of the thinkers we are! Jump on every opportunity to be heard, seen and involved. I encourage you to raise your hand, if even for a small contribution of your time to the organization. Write to your legislators when asked. Attend a PTO/PTA meeting to make your job understood. Give an hour of your time to help at our conference. Share your best practices at the Exploratorium or send out press releases to the newspaper about special events you organize and share this with our members. Join our legislative committee as a researcher, have your students participate in the annual bookmark contest and attend Legislative Day at our State House. Start thinking now how you can help. And please be sure that every one of your colleagues is a member of MSLA. There is power in numbers!

I look forward to hearing from each and every one of you. I hope you will brainstorm your ideas with me, share your thoughts and not be shy about saying...

"If you want, I could...."

Warm Regards, Sandy

Table of Contents

President's Message – School Library Teachers in an Ever Changing World by Sandy Kelly	page 1	Pat's Picks for Reading by Pat Keogh	page 22
A Reflection on the MSLA Presidency by Kathy Lowe	page 4	Just say "Yes"... by Sandy Kelley	page 22
MSLA Letter to Governor Patrick by Kathy Lowe	page 5	The ALA Spectrum Scholarship Program and Me by Alma Ramos-McDermott	page 23
Advocacy, Making Every Voice Count by Sandy Kelly	page 6	Library Leadership Massachusetts 2007 by Robin Cicchetti	page 24
Letter by Sandy Kelly	page 7	Emerging Leaders Program by Kathy Lowe	page 24
Advocacy and Alliances: The Art of Shameless Self-Promotion by Kathy Lowe	page 8	Conference Envy: First Day Back by Bob Roth	page 25
Getting On Board With 21st Century Skills... by Sandy Kelly	page 9	MSLA-SIG Mini-Conference by Alison Cody	page 27
School Library and Technology Services for Schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by Sandy Kelly and Walter McKenzie	page 10	A Moment With: Diane Libbey by Lara Gross	page 28
School Libraries in a 2.0 World by Kathy Lowe	page 11	Adventures in my School Library by Maria P. D'Orsi	page 29
MassONE: Get On Board! by Kathy Dubrovsky	page 12	Adventures in my School Library by Maria P. D'Orsi	page 30
Massachusetts Recommended Pre K-12 Information Fluency Standards by Valerie Diggs	page 13	Lunch with an Author – Irene Smalls by Kathy Donovan and Linda Redding	page 31
'Highly Qualified' Librarians Under NCLB? by Debra Lau Whelan	page 14	Lunch with an Author-Barbara Larmon Failing by Kathy Donovan and Linda Redding	page 32
The SKILLs Act, MSLA and You by Alma Ramos-McDermott	page 15	MSLA Board Reports	
Letter to Senator Edward M. Kennedy by Janice K. Koleszar	page 16	Legislative Committee	page 34
Legislative Day March 2007 by Bob Roth and Judi Paradis	page 18	Public Relations/Advocacy	page 35
The 2007 Bookmark Contest: the Adventure Beyond Information by Gerri Fegan	page 19	MSLA Webpage	page 36
Vision Summit Report by Valerie Diggs	page 20	Standards/Curriculum	page 36
Tribute to Marlon Dubrawski by Audrey Friend	page 21	The MSLA Forum	page 37
Massachusetts Power! A Parent's Guide to School Libraries by Kathy Lowe	page 21	MSLA Listserv	page 37
Massachusetts Book Awards Winners for 2007 by Pat Keogh	page 22	Student SIG	page 38
		Northeast Area Directors' Report	page 39
		Metrowest Directors' Report	page 39
		Central Region Area Directors' Report	page 40
		Western Region Area Directors' Report	page 40
		MSLA 2007-08 Executive Board	page 41
		Meet the Press – 21st century-style! by Paula Byrne	page 42
		2007 - 2008 MSLA Membership Form	page 43
		MSLA Vision & Mission	page 44

A Reflection on the MSLA Presidency

(Reprinted from Forum, Summer, 2007)

By Kathy Lowe

MSLA Past- President and Executive Director

June 2007

I have seen MSLA transform since I became President-Elect in June 2004. I spent the year before I became President working closely with then-President Ann Perham, learning the ropes and becoming more involved in the inner workings of the association. During that year under Ann's leadership, the Executive Board completed MSLA's three-year Strategic Plan and crafted the Vision and Mission Statements that still guide our organization today. All committee chairs and Area Directors now submit yearly Action Plans based on these documents and report their progress in their Year-End Reports.

We held our first Legislative Day at the State House during Ann's term and ran our first Bookmark Contest for School Library Month. Both of these events have grown and become more successful and popular each year. Now they are combined, with the Bookmark Awards Ceremony held the State House. This has raised Legislators' awareness of MSLA and ensured their participation in the event.

We have learned how to make technology work for us. Ann introduced virtual meetings and we now hold two meetings a year in a chat room on the Chatzy website. We have a Board-Only web page where reports and documents for our Executive Board meetings are posted and archived. Our former newsletter, Media Forum, has been revitalized in its online incarnation as MFO, now supplemented each fall by MFO Plus, an expanded yearly print edition that includes the Executive Board's Annual Reports and is distributed at our conference.

In order to bring in new faces with fresh ideas, the size of the Executive Board was nearly double with the addition of co-chairs for each committee and co-directors for each region. We added two Special Interest Groups (SIGs) – one for GSLIS students and another for retirees. Area Directors' roles and responsibilities were expanded to include the recruitment and retention of members and collaboration on professional development opportunities with their regional YSS representatives. These efforts have raised MSLA's profile and breathed new life into our organization.



.....
The most significant change that occurred during my tenure was the renaming and "rebranding" of our organization.
.....

Advocacy is now a major focus of our organization. To that end, we have become more visible and involved with other professional organizations and committees in the state. I serve as MSLA's liaison to the MLA Executive Board and Legislative Committee. My presence on both of these committees has increased our collegiality, mutual support and understanding. This year we completed a third joint statement with MLA's Youth Services Section on school and public collaboration. MSLA became a Leadership Partner with MLA, giving us a seat on the Government Relations Advisory Committee that works with a lobbyist to promote the value of all types of libraries. MBLC invited me to be the school library representative on its Public Relations Advisory Committee which is overseeing the development of a statewide marketing campaign for all types of libraries – and school libraries will definitely be a part of the campaign. We have deepened our relationship with NEEMA, participating regularly in their board meetings and helping to plan the annual Leadership Conference. We have forged a new relationship with MassCUE, with whom we have developed a joint statement on the similarities and differences in the roles of library teachers and technology integration specialists and plan to work more closely in the future.

We have also reached out beyond our profession to engage parents as advocates and promote the cause of school libraries to the Governor, the DOE, Legislature, and local officials, lobbying at the State House, speaking at parent meetings, and issuing Advocacy Packets containing MSLA's Position Statement on School Libraries and documents that highlight the crucial role school libraries and librarians play in student achievement. We published Massachusetts Power: A Parents Guide to School Libraries with the assistance of consultant Connie Champlin and David Loertscher's High Willow Research and, with NMRLS sponsored our first Parent Power workshop. Our PR co-chairs designed a professional looking and informative new membership brochure. Our Professional Standards and Curriculum committees developed PreK-Grade 12 Information Fluency Standards and we met with the DOE to discuss how these standards can be promoted and incorporated into existing curriculum frameworks. We met with a representative from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and as a result were invited by the office of the Governor's Special Advisor on Education to contribute to the State's successful application to become a Leadership State in the Partnership.

We expanded our horizons by sending Executive Board members to national ALA and AASL conferences. MSLA board members have become AASL Affiliate Assembly representatives, members of the ALA Legislation Committee and School Library Task Force, participated in ALA Legislation Day in Washington, D.C. and the AASL Vision Summit in Chicago. One board member has become an ALA Emerging Leader. Several board members attended past School Library Journal Leadership Summits in New York City and Chicago and anticipate attending the next one in Phoenix. The ideas, relationships, and broader vision and understanding of our profession that we have gained from participating on a national level have resulted in a bigger and better annual MSLA conference, with the addition of the Exploratorium display of members' best practices, the Author

CONTINUES ON PAGE 33...

MSLA Letter to Governor Patrick

March 20, 2007

(Reprinted from Forum, Spring, 2007)

Governor Deval Patrick
The State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick,
I applaud your creation of a Pre-K to Grade 12 Education Task Force.

As the Task Force studies the state of education in the Commonwealth, I hope that you will urge its members to carefully scrutinize the serious inequity that currently exists across the state in students' access to quality literature, information resources, and school library professionals. Some cities and towns offer excellent school library programs and resources, managed by credentialed professionals. However, many school districts have libraries that are run by parent volunteers, with resources that are out of date and inadequate for students' academic needs.

The Department of Education has no one designated to provide leadership and set standards for school library programs statewide, so there is no consistency in services from town to town, and sometimes even within a single district. Because school libraries are not included in Chapter 70, there are often no funds for districts to keep collections current and aligned with the Curriculum Frameworks. Almost half of Massachusetts's schools do not have a full-time librarian. This is a situation that I implore the Education Task Force to address.

I hope you have had a chance to look at the materials I left for you on March 8th when I was at the State House for the Massachusetts School Library Association's Legislative Day. The packet contains several documents that enlarge upon the information in this letter and underscore the impact a good school library program has on student achievement.

Leadership in support of school libraries will help education reform succeed and Massachusetts students achieve. Please let me know if I can provide you with further information or assistance.

Sincerely,
Katherine Lowe
President and Executive Director