THE OKLAHOMA STANDARD

Adopting the AASL Standards as State Standards

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"The Summer Academy 2019 for school librarians was an excellent opportunity to not only learn the new library standards but to learn strategies for incorporating them and to make connections with librarians from all across the state. It was one of the best library workshops I have ever attended."

(Oklahoma school librarian via e-mail Sept. 3, 2020)

The 2017 AASL National Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, was the impetus for Oklahoma's adoption and implementation of AASL's *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. Timmie Spangler, then director of Instructional Materials and Libraries for the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), along with members of Oklahoma School Librarians (OKSL), the Oklahoma AASL chapter, attended and/or presented training sessions on the AASL Standards at the conference. The enthusiasm and creativity of this group fueled the state's adoption and implementation.

Upon her return from Phoenix, Spangler knew that sharing the new standards with Oklahoma school librarians was imperative. After the conference, Spangler met with the OSDE Executive Director and the Deputy Superintendent for Student Learning and Achievement

to share the *National School Library Standards* and investigate how to proceed with state adoption. OSDE cabinet members and its legal team held numerous meetings over the next six months. This process was simplified because Oklahoma had previously adopted AASL's 2009 standards as the state standards. Spangler reached out to Sylvia Knight Norton, AASL Executive Director, and Allison Cline, AASL Deputy Executive Director, to help navigate the adoption process. AASL gave OSDE permission to adopt the AASL Standards and post the three frameworks (Learner, School Librarian, and School Library) on the OSDE school library website, allowing all Oklahoma school librarians to access them. In May 2018 the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* officially replaced the previous 2009 AASL standards as the school library standards for the state of Oklahoma.

While Timmie Spangler was working to secure the OSDE adoption of the AASL Standards, OKSL leaders began preparing introductory training sessions on the standards. These training sessions provided an overview of the standards and were held at the Oklahoma Library Association (OLA) Annual Conference in April 2018. Aware of the financial obstacles many Oklahoma school librarians faced due to years of education budget cuts that prevented some members from purchasing new materials, the OLA Endowment Committee provided funds to supplement the cost of the *National School Library Standards* for more than thirty school librarians.

OKSL leaders designed an additional half-day pre-conference to help attendees understand the structure of the frameworks and Shared Foundations. The first three concurrent sessions used the acronym ICE and provided a more in-depth look

at the I (Inquire and Include), C (Collaborate and Curate), and E (Explore and Engage) Shared Foundations. Presenters modeled teaching activities addressing the Competencies and provided a toolbox of strategies for school librarians to use in their practice. The final concurrent session, titled "We Broke through the ICE, Let's Float Together," gave attendees an opportunity to reflect on the standards.
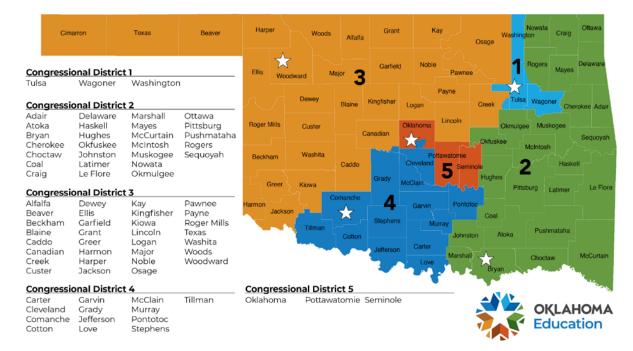
Although highly successful, this professional learning reached only a small number of school librarians who received leave time from their district to attend. To advance implementation, the need to shift away from offering professional development at a paid conference to a more-robust systemic implementation was recognized. To accommodate this need Spangler secured state title activity funding and formed a team of school library practitioners to provide implementation advice and to produce free, high-quality professional develop-

ment for school librarians across Oklahoma.

This team, the OSDE Library Advisory Board, met multiple times to create a plan to effectively and equitably deliver sessions across the approximately 70,000 square miles that make up Oklahoma (World Population Review 2020). The board was made up of building-level school librarians, district school library supervisors, and university professors who taught in school library certification programs. The team decided to deliver full-day workshops in each of Oklahoma's five congressional districts. The team made it a priority to select venues in districts that required a drive of two hours or less to reach a workshop location. Spangler secured sites free of charge at Oklahoma technology centers, schools, or university buildings in each district. In developing the full-day workshops, the team revisited the training sessions each had received at the 2017 AASL National Conference and at the state library conference to craft a

new presentation that incorporated the most successful elements from these past sessions.

OSDE designed promotional materials to send out to all school districts in Oklahoma promoting this free training for school librarians. OKSL also shared these materials on social media and in their monthly newsletter. Registration launched in September 2018 on a first-come, first-served basis, and the response was astounding. As sites began to fill up quickly, a waiting list was generated. The team worked to identify larger venues and additional dates to meet the demand. In total, seven workshops were presented across the state between September and December 2018. As team members presented workshops, they continually touched base with each other to identify areas where participants struggled and to discuss feedback. Using title funds and the support of OKSL, AASL, and the advisory board as trainers, these professional learning workshops reached approximately 400

OKLAHOMA CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS MAP

Congressional District 1

Tulsa	Wagoner	Washington

Congressional District 2

Adair	Delaware	Marshall	Ottawa
Atoka	Haskell	Mayes	Pittsburg
Bryan	Hughes	McCurtain	Pushmataha
Cherokee	Okfuskee	McIntosh	Rogers
Choctaw	Johnston	Muskogee	Sequoyah
Coal	Latimer	Nowata	
Craig	Le Flore	Okmulgee	

Congressional District 3

Alfalfa	Dewey	Kay	Pawnee
Beaver	Ellis	Kingfisher	Payne
Beckham	Garfield	Kiowa	Roger Mills
Blaine	Grant	Lincoln	Texas
Caddo	Greer	Logan	Washita
Canadian	Harmon	Major	Woods
Creek	Harper	Noble	Woodward
Custer	Jackson	Osage	

Congressional District 4

Carter	Garvin	McClain	Tillman
Cleveland	Grady	Murray	
Comanche	Jefferson	Pontotoc	
Cotton	Love	Stephens	

Congressional District 5

Oklahoma	Pottawatomie	Seminole

OKLAHOMA Education

Oklahoma school librarians from across the state.

Over the course of the fall workshops, other school librarians contacted OSDE and OKSL to indicate their interest in learning about the new standards and share their impediments to attending. These librarians cited the fact that they were the only school librarian in their building, sometimes even their district. In addition, some could not secure funding for a substitute to attend a standards workshop. As a result, many school librarians were unable to participate in a face-to-face professional learning experience.

To accommodate school librarians who could not travel, OKSL designed a low-cost asynchronous web course to provide an in-depth overview of the standards. "Understanding the Shared Foundations in the Learner Framework" was the first asynchronous web course offered by OLA. The seven-week course cost $30.

The objectives of the course were clear and specific. Learners will, at the completion of the entire web course:

- understand each of the six Shared Foundations from the learner framework of the new AASL/ Oklahoma Standards,

- incorporate and apply the new standards into existing lesson plans,

- collaborate with others to improve current lesson plans, and

- collaborate with others to design new units of study with the standards.

Registration for the first web course opened in December 2018. The seven-week web course began in January 2019 and included a module introducing attendees to the learning platform (Schoology) and a one-week module on each Shared Foundation. The structure of each week included:

- a short, narrated slide deck introducing the Shared Foundations,

- a discussion about the video,

- a selection of readings and/or videos connected to the Shared Foundations,

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- a discussion about the readings/ videos, and

- a unique tech tool introduced each week highlighting resources connected to that week's Shared Foundation.

The web course also offered attendees the ability for a Q&A discussion. OKSL received permission from AASL to link to the standards frameworks and Common Beliefs so school librarians had a one-stop shop for resources. OKSL also curated digital folders of resources and discussions by topics to equip school librarians with the tools needed to advocate for their school libraries. An annotated bibliography of all the resources used during the web course was provided at the end of the course.

Twenty-four school librarians enrolled in the web course, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. OKSL had finally identified an effective way to provide much-needed professional development to a larger audience of school librarians! A second web course focusing on the librarian framework was planned and implemented in November 2019 through January 2020. A third web course was set to launch in late spring 2020 but was postponed due to COVID-19. OKSL believed that inroads were being made in training across the state but wondered about other school librarians that might benefit from training.

The OSDE Summer Academy of School Librarians

The OSDE Summer Academy of School Librarians 2019 was borne out of the desire to infuse the standards across the state, creating a broader and deeper level of knowledge and skill set to implement the *National School Library Standards* among both pre-service and practicing school librarians. After identifying this need, Spangler and the school library advisory board once again worked collaboratively to design the academy based on their experiences and feedback from previous sessions. The team decided mid-June was the best time for the event based on the availability of school librarians during summer break. The team selected a centralized location for the training, Norman, Oklahoma. Norman Public

Schools provided meeting space in their recently remodeled high school with a new school library. OSDE was able to use title funding to provide a $25-an-hour stipend for all participants who completed the academy as well as hotel costs for those who had to drive more than 65 miles to the training.

Certified school librarians and graduate students enrolled in a school library program were invited to apply to attend the two-and-a-half-day academy. The invitation to participate and the application were disseminated through the OSDE school librarian mailing list, the mailing lists of the states' university school library certification programs, and OKSL. The application included standard demographic information and more specific questions designed to assess attendees' experience with the standards and perception of school librarianship. These items included:

• Have you participated in any professional development on the new AASL Standards in the last year? (If yes, please briefly describe those experiences.)

• Why are you applying for the academy and what do you hope to gain from attending?

• What do you feel is the biggest issue facing Oklahoma school librarians today?

• Describe an effective school library.

• How do you view yourself as an instructional leader at your site and in your district?

• Describe any qualifications (experiences, professional organizations) that will make you a strong choice for the library academy.

Interest was high; more than one hundred school librarians applied. OSDE's budget allowed for forty

stipends for participants to cover needed hotel rooms and other housekeeping expenses. The team developed a rubric to assess attendee responses, and forty applicants were selected to attend the academy.

On the first half day of the academy, participants and the design/training team began by introducing themselves. Dr. Steven Yates, then AASL President and current assistant director/assistant professor and school library coordinator for the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama, followed introductions as the keynote speaker for the event. Dr. Yates shared thoughts and data about the vital role school librarians play in the school community; the critical importance of standards for the profession, specifically the AASL Standards; and the value of belonging to the state school library chapter, OKSL, and the national association, AASL.

Next on the agenda was a panel of Oklahoma school leaders from both PreK–12 education and the university level. These leaders included:

• Dr. April Grace, superintendent of Shawnee Public Schools

• Dr. Shirley Simmons, then assistant superintendent of Norman Public Schools

• Dr. Scott Beck, then principal of Norman High School

• Dr. Cheryl Evans, associate professor at the University of Central Oklahoma

The team's objectives for including the leader panel were multifold and were intended for school librarians to:

• understand what educational leaders expect from school librarians,

• learn what leaders value in school librarians,

• reflect on how administrators view the leadership role of school librarians, and

• glean suggestions from administrators about strengthening positive relationships with their own administrators.

To meet these objectives, the panel members introduced themselves and were asked questions by a moderator. Each panelist could answer at any point. The panel discussion evolved with a natural ease much like a conversation of people sitting around a living room. Panel questions included:

• As an administrator, what do you need most from your school librarian(s)?

• You all have positive relationships with your school librarians. What advice would you give school librarians in other districts to create a similar positive relationship with their administrators?

• What do you think principals and central office administrators need to know about school librarians?

• When you walk into a school library, what do you want to see?

• Why are standards important for school librarians?

The first day ended with a presentation by team members who created the "*National School Library Standards for Learners Implementation Plan*" document (see image opposite). The team explained to participants that each would complete the document, detailing their unique plan over the course of the remaining two days. The objective of the planning document was for each attendee to develop a plan specific to their school library situation that enabled them

to create a culture of innovative teaching and learning in their school community. The document featured prompts for participants to articulate goals specific to each Shared Foundation and accompanying implementation steps.

The team also included several guiding questions:

- How will you support and sustain implementation of the learner standards from the AASL Standards?

- What do you need to support this implementation? Who will provide the support?

- What will practice look like in one year?

- What are the benchmarks?

On day one, attendees self-evaluated their comfort level and knowledge of the standards—were they just beginning to wade into the standards,

or were they ready for a deeper dive? The team created a large paper continuum to use for this self-evaluation activity. Each school librarian was given a dot sticker to place on the continuum to indicate their knowledge level. Once school librarians divided themselves into two groups, beginners and more experienced, the team led separate sessions on the standards to address the learners' differing needs. These sessions were presented on the morning of day two.

The second half of day two gave attendees the chance to select from four afternoon sessions. These sessions were:

- "Selection Policy and Intellectual Freedom." Attendees learned to create a selection policy and champion intellectual freedom.

- "Library 24/7: What Is Your Presence?" Attendees reviewed

examples and elements of high-quality school library websites.

- "Connecting with Standards — Quotes." Participants redesigned basic learning activities to incorporate the Competencies of the Shared Foundations.

- "Design Thinking and Making." Attendees learned innovative ways to use design thinking and making within the Explore Shared Foundation. Attendees were given challenges that addressed the design thinking process using common makerspace tools and supplies.

The team designed each of these sessions based on feedback from school librarians who had attended OSDE's one-day workshop the previous fall. Feedback from that workshop indicated that these were the four areas most school librarians believed they needed improved skill development. Attendees could choose to attend two of the four sessions.

Academy Application Rubric OKLA

Standards Implementation Plan

At the end of day two, school librarians revisited the continuum of their comfort level and knowledge of the AASL Standards. All indicated that their comfort levels and knowledge of the standards had increased.

On day three, the team placed all the school librarians into one of four separate groups based on the grade levels they served. These groups then rotated through sessions on the following topics:

• "Evaluation and Assessment of Learners." Attendees explored a variety of formative and summative assessment tools and data to use with learners to inform teaching and decision making.

• "Leading and Innovating with Your AASL *National School Library Standards*." Participants examined what it means to be a leader and innovator. The team used AASL's Personas as an instructional tool for this session (available at <https://standards.aasl.org/project/personas/>).

• "Collaboration or Co-teaching." Attendees explored both collaboration and co-teaching and what each should look like in practice.

• "Making Your Case." Participants learned how to create advocacy reports that incorporated data, teaching examples, and stories to illustrate each of the Shared Foundations.

By the end of the final day, attendees reflected on their opportunities to Think, Create, Share, and Grow with the *National School Library Standards*. After the academy, each school librarian had a standards implementation plan, a toolkit of best practices for their school libraries, and a deeper understanding of the standards.

At the time of this writing, collaboration continues between the OSDE and the school library advisory board to forge ahead with professional learning for Oklahoma school librarians.

"Unpacking the new AASL Standards, learning innovative practices for integrating the (school library) into our school's culture and tips for collaborating with teachers were the big takeaways for me. The training revitalized my professional perspective and gave me varied tools for future success."

(Oklahoma school librarian via e-mail Sept. 11, 2020)

Kathryn Roots Lewis, MLIS, *is the retired director of Libraries and Instructional Technology at Norman Public Schools (OK). She is an AASL Past President and was a member of the AASL Standards and Guidelines Editorial Board. She authored the article "Making It Matter: National School Library Standards for School Administrators" for the May/June 2019 issue of* Knowledge Quest.

Cherity Pennington, MLIS, *is the district communications and library services coordinator for Shawnee Public Schools (OK). She is the president-elect of the Oklahoma Library Association. She is a member of AASL and is the AASL Representative for Oklahoma School Librarians.*

Amanda Kordeliski, MLIS, *is the director of Libraries and Instructional Technology for Norman Public Schools. She is a member of AASL and is serving on the AASL Practice Committee. She is also serving on the ALA Policy Corps and YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults.*

Timmie Spangler *is the project manager for Striving Readers at the Oklahoma State Department of Education. She received a certificate of commendation for National School Library Standards Regional Training from AASL.*

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