

THE **AASL STANDARDS**
ARE THE SCHOOL
LIBRARY STANDARDS IN

P E N N S Y L

Allison Mackley
allisons21@gmail.com



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Twenty years ago I walked into my childhood home to find my mother and four-year-old niece playing with a Play-Doh Fuzzy Pumper Barber and Beauty Shop that had been my sisters and mine when we were young. The contraption is a little bit creepy and a little bit amazing, as the hollow, thimble-shaped people sit on barber chairs and Play-Doh extrudes from their skulls when you crank the lever. I enjoyed the pure nostalgia evoked by this toy. It brought me back to a time of inspiration, imagination, and creativity. As I watched, I could not help but notice the sparks of curiosity streaming from my niece's fingertips. As I left the kitchen, I said to my mom, "You know Ashley is going to cut her own hair now." My mom found it amusing that I thought so, but I could just feel it. Ashley's bangs were gone by the next day.

When the AASL *National School Library Standards* were released in November 2017, I felt a similar electricity in the school library community. The AASL Standards Integrated Frameworks evoke emotions, textures, and scents that taste and feel like Play-Doh to me.

Inspiration

Like Play-Doh, AASL's *National School Library Standards* provided school librarians with inspiration. The standards didn't look anything like the previous versions. The integrated frameworks were crafted so cleverly that educators of school librarians, administrators, educators, and others would have to re-create their vision of school librarians when applied to the school library culture and environment.

When AASL first announced that the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* would be the focus of the 2017 AASL National Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, the Pennsylva-

nia School Librarians Association (PSLA) Board of Directors made a commitment to send representatives who would create and provide professional learning opportunities for the Pennsylvania school library community. As PSLA President-Elect I was privileged to travel with Jennifer Bates, PSLA President, to attend the conference and to start planning how to launch them in Pennsylvania. As AASL Pennsylvania Chapter Representatives, we joined others from chapters across the United States.

I remember being awe-struck during that conference. Not only was I in the room where it was happening (nod to "Hamilton"), but some of the most influential people in the school library field were the conference presenters. I studied our trainers and their approaches to presentation. For instance:

- I absorbed Kathryn Roots Lewis's confident presenting style when she started her session with an ice-breaker asking about our current binge and what we would be doing if we were not school librarians.
- I soaked up Mary Keeling's graceful way of facilitating discussions when she explained how facilitators who teach the standards can use learning strategies, which could be added to our repertoire of instructional strategies.
- I took in Judy Deichman's humor and ease as she asked attendees to brainstorm how we might elevate our own practice around a Shared Foundation.
- I noted how the structure Joyce Valenza used in her session complemented her energy as she used a HyperDoc to guide our learning.
- I recognized the warmth of Sara Kelly Johns and Susan Ballard as they introduced the "School

Library Evaluation Checklist" through a Shared Foundation speed-dating activity.

From that conference, Jennifer and I were able to pull together the content and style for a preconference session for the May 2018 PSLA Annual Conference for more than 300 attendees.

The "Limitless Learning with the AASL *National School Library Standards*" preconference kicked off with this statement from PSLA President Jennifer Bates: "We are uniquely positioned to ensure that our students become discerning and discriminating consumers of information and grow into savvy citizens. This annual conference is crucial to expand your skill set." Her statement set the tone for the three hours of learning during the preconference, as well as the regional training sessions that followed throughout the next year. Although we used many of the strategies presented to us in Phoenix, there were several strategies for exploring the standards that stood out with attendees based on their feedback.

In round one we used a graphic organizer called "Breaking into the Conversation" to encourage participants to share their ideas and reflections on the learner standards and help colleagues think through ways to elevate their professional practice. Each person reviewed the AASL Standards Framework for School Librarians and identified one Shared Foundation to develop in their practice. Thinking about their learners, participants jotted down one Competency in which they wanted to gather ideas for implementation.

In round two, the graphic organizer was passed to the person to the right who reviewed the Competency and added a strategy their colleague could use to elevate the identified



Breaking into the Conversation



<p>Read the Framework for School Librarians, and identify one shared foundation you would like to develop in your practice.</p> <p>Thinking about your learners, jot down one competency to gather ideas for implementation.</p>	<p>Review the competency that your colleague identified.</p> <p>What strategy can your colleague use to elevate the identified competency with learners?</p>	<p>Review the competency that your colleague identified.</p> <p>Read the suggested strategies. Build upon the suggestions or share a new strategy that could be used to elevate the competency with learners.</p>	<p>Review the competency that your colleague identified.</p> <p>Read the suggested strategies. Build upon the suggestions or share a new strategy that could be used to elevate the competency with learners.</p>	<p>Review the competency that your colleague identified.</p> <p>Read the suggested strategies. Build upon the suggestions or share a new strategy that could be used to elevate the competency with learners.</p>	<p>Retrieve your original paper. Review the suggestions from your colleagues.</p> <p>Reflect about one of the suggestions that resonates with you most or one of the strategies you could implement immediately.</p>



Competency with learners. This process was repeated in rounds three through five, each subsequent person reading the prior suggested strategies and either building on the suggestions or sharing a new strategy. During round six, the graphic organizer was retrieved by the originator who reviewed their colleagues' suggestions and reflected on one of the suggestions that resonated with them most or could be implemented immediately. This activity provided guided practice in instructional strategies attendees could use with students as well as a variety of implementation ideas to incorporate into their action plan.

We borrowed the concept of hexagonal thinking from an AASL preconference to broaden perspectives and deepen understanding. Hexagonal thinking is a method used to consider connections between and among concepts as well as variations in those connections. Participants were given hexagonal thinking decks with approximately twenty tiles, each

with a word that related to one of the six Shared Foundations. For example, the Include Shared Foundation had the following words in its tile deck: balanced perspectives, global community, informed conversation, empathy, equity, respect for diversity, discerning stance, understanding cultures, exchanging viewpoints, variety, unbiased, access,

listen, diverse viewpoints, and social responsibility.

Table groups then arranged the tiles, placing them side by side to demonstrate their relational connections. Groups then moved from table to table in a gallery walk to view how others organized their tiles. The conversations within and among the groups showed there is a wide range





Action planning provided an opportunity to develop reflective practices, ownership, and accountability.



of ways to view the Shared Foundations and related vocabulary. They are pliable and interconnected in a way that presents unlimited possibilities for our learners and our schools.

The session closed with the opportunity for participants to create an action plan meant to ensure sustained and meaningful success in their school libraries. All the individual and collaborative activities leading up to this point were developed in a methodical manner to help participants analyze and reflect upon best practices. By focusing on the Shared Foundation best practices in the *National School Library Standards*, attendees could develop action plans personalized to their school situation. It was a tool to (1) develop a goal, (2) define the steps to accomplish that goal, and (3) track progress. The action plan was organized around small steps to guide the participant's professional practice. An action plan template that we provided to participants included the following components:

- AASL Standards Integrated Frameworks focus (Learner, School Librarian, School Library)
- Shared Foundation
- Domain
- Key Commitment
- Competency
- Goal statement
- Action steps (with identified required resources (human/material), desired outcomes, and notes)

Developing an action plan can be an effective way to visualize your path and strengthen your confidence. The training was designed in a very intentional way to incorporate collaborative activities, divergent thinking, problem solving, and

reflection. Action planning provided an opportunity to develop reflective practices, ownership, and accountability. Some sample goals included:

- Build on the capacity of colleagues by providing professional development opportunities to demonstrate proper use and access to technology and media in the school library.
- Conduct a diversity audit of the collection.
- Use the "School Library Evaluation Checklist" to identify and rank needs to create a long-term budget plan and improvement report.
- Determine barriers that inhibit access to library materials and develop a plan to create a robust reading culture around personal interest, free choice, and sharing of knowledge within the school community.
- Integrate design process, making, the inquiry process, social-emotional learning, project-based learning, etc. into lesson plans.
- Implement one creative library project per grade level, leading students to design, implement, reflect, persist, and tinker/make.
- Develop a plan to attend department-/grade-level meetings on a rotating/monthly basis to share and/or provide professional learning specific to that audience.

The robust action plans assisted in creating a goal that was meaningful to the individual school context and broke down the steps for a successful launch. One attendee shared in her evaluation, "This session provided an opportunity to develop a mini action plan that I can use to affect changes in the high school library. I will be able to develop lessons that focus on the standards and begin to move towards student independence."

Imagination

Following a successful launch within our own state, PSLA wondered if we could make a larger impact by providing professional learning on a national level. This curiosity is exactly how PSLA became one of the recipients of an AASL Past-Presidents Planning Grant. The PSLA Board and the teaching and learning committee brainstormed ideas about how we could build a sustainable tool for professional development around the *National School Library Standards* that could be accessed by school librarians and other library-focused interest groups. The group immediately came up with the idea of a live webinar that could be recorded. The “Beyond the Standards: Creating Partnerships Guided by AASL *National School Library Standards*” webinar was designed to support school librarians as they implemented the standards in their local school community. PSLA framed the webinar around the Personas (the varied stakeholders and/or school librarians with different perspectives involved in the school library). The webinar taught attendees how they could engage with their community to gain administrator, faculty, parent, community, and student support as they embedded the AASL Standards into instruction and infused the school community with opportunities to Think, Create, Share, and Grow.

During a conversation with Heather Lister, librarian at Camp Hill Middle/High School, I brainstormed how to develop a product that could be duplicated by other AASL chapters. We tested several options for an online learning experience, which ultimately became the “Limitless Learning with the AASL Standards” three-module course. Members of the PSLA planning grant working group supported the idea. Grant developers included the following PSLA members:



Cathi Fuhrman, president-elect/Hempfield High School librarian
Deb Kachel, advocacy committee co-chair;
Dustin Brackbill, teaching and learning committee co-chair/
Mount Nittany Elementary School librarian, and Leah Lindemann, teaching and learning committee co-chair/Blackhawk High School librarian.

The course uses a learning management platform (Canvas) to provide training on how to implement AASL’s *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. The first online module focuses on creating an action plan for implementing the AASL Standards Integrated Frameworks. The second module puts the standards into practice through the development of lesson plans. Module three provides strategies for developing communication, presentation, and data-reporting tools to engage community members at the local (school or district) level.

The course I co-developed with Dustin Brackbill and Corey Hall, librarian at Manheim Central Middle School, has more than 600 enrolled learners and is open

to an international audience of library stakeholders. The submitted coursework from participants will be curated into a select group of example action plans, learning plans, and community engagement tools. One participant shared, “The organization of the modules, strong content, the inclusion of several templates, resources to supplement the basic instruction, as well as requiring participants to create an action plan and a learning plan was very helpful. It forced me to put what I was learning directly into practice!”

Simultaneously, the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Office of Commonwealth Libraries funded the development and publication of the *Model Curriculum for Learners in Pennsylvania School Libraries* (Pennsylvania Dept. of Education 2019). The following members of a steering group led an ambitious group of PSLA members to develop the curriculum:

- Dr. Mary Kay Biagini, associate professor and director, School Library Certification Program, University of Pittsburgh
- Cathi Fuhrman, librarian, Hempfield High School

- Allison Mackley, librarian, Hershey High School
- Rebecca Morris, editor, *School Library Connection*
- Susan Pannebaker, youth services advisor, Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Pennsylvania Department of Education

The writing and development group, made up of school librarians representing each grade band (K–1, 2–5, 6–8, 9–12) as well as different regional areas and school types across Pennsylvania, updated the 2012 version of the model curriculum. The *Model Curriculum for Learners in Pennsylvania School Libraries* provides a curriculum for K–12 students that incorporates the AASL Standards Framework for Learners and the *ISTE Standards for Students* as well as fifty-seven Pennsylvania Academic Standards from the following sets of standards:

- *English Language Arts*
- *Reading and Writing in Science and Technology/Technical Subjects*
- *Reading and Writing in History and Social Studies*
- *Career Education and Work*
- *Business, Computer, and Information Technology*
- *Pennsylvania Career Ready Skills Continuum*

Using Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe’s Understanding by Design (UbD) model as a tool to inspire our work, the model curriculum includes several guiding documents for school and district curriculum development. The model curriculum overview describes each element of the UbD model and how it parallels the AASL Standards Framework for Learners. Four long-term transfer goals are based on the four domains

Library Curriculum Framework									
Stage 1 Desired Results: Concepts & Competencies									
PA Academic Standards, AASL Standards for Learners & ISTE Standards for Students									
Arranged by Concepts & Grade Bands PK-12									
Big Idea I Inquire		Learners build new knowledge by inquiring, reading, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.							
Essential Questions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do learners display curiosity and initiative? • How do learners engage with and create meaning from information and text? • How do learners participate in an inquiry-based process? 							
Concepts and Competencies for Learners		PA Academic Standards					AASL Standards for Learners	ISTE Standards for Students	
Concept: Constructing Questions for Research and Inquiry									
Grade Band	Learner Competencies What students should be able to do; key skills	ELA 1–12 Grade Band	Science K–12 Grade Band	SS & H K–12 Grade Band	CEW 13–16 Grades 9, 10, 11	ICT 13–16 Grade Band	CRSC PK-12	Shared Foundation, Domain, Competency PK-12	Number Letter PK-12
9-12	Narrow a self-generated, broad research question.	1.4.V 9-12	3.6.F 9-12	8.6.F 9-12	13.2.B 9-12	15.3.C 9-12		I.A.1 I.D.2 II.D.2 IV.A	1a 3a
6-8	Develop a self-generated, focused research question and sub-questions about a topic.	1.4.V 6-8	3.6.F 6-8	8.6.F 6-8	13.B 6-8			I.A.1 V.A.3	4a 3a
3-5	Choose aspects of a topic to investigate.	1.4.V 3-5			13.1.3.F 13.1.5.F 13.2.3.B 13.2.5.B 3-5			I.A.2 I.B.2	3a

of the AASL Standards Framework for Learners. According to Wiggins and McTighe, long-term transfer goals identify the fundamental understanding, knowledge, and skills learners should develop and be able to do when they confront new challenges, both in and outside of school (2005). From the transfer goals, six big ideas of the model curriculum, based on the Shared Foundations, bring focus to learning priorities. Three to five essential questions for each big idea assist learners as they develop and deepen understanding, prompting transfer of learning. From the big ideas and essential questions, there are key concepts that express core knowledge learners should know and understand about the library and information literacy. Competencies, aligned with the learner framework, express key skills and what learners should be able to do at each grade band. To reflect a continual improvement approach, the concepts and the learner Competencies spiral upward in complexity as learners progress through the grade bands.

The long-term transfer goals, big ideas, and essential questions align with the Domains, Shared Foundations, and Competency descriptors.

Concepts are categorized under each Shared Foundation, and Competencies are grouped into grade bands identifying a scope and sequence structure.

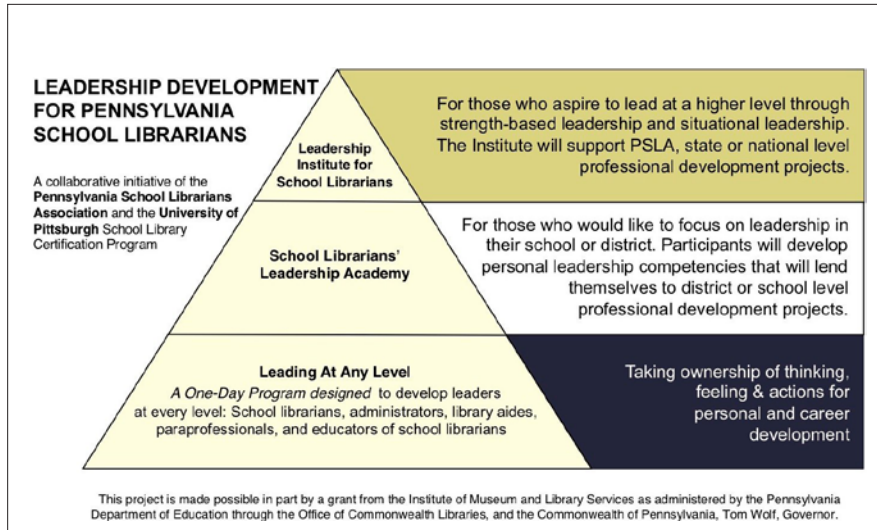
Implementing the model curriculum for lesson development was planned to be the focus of the preconference during the 2020 PSLA Annual Conference, but the pandemic interrupted those plans. Fortunately, PSLA has a leadership development structure in place, supported by a Library Services and Technology Act grant. PSLA was able to shift the medium for the preconference and create a two-part virtual model curriculum training via video conferencing (Zoom).

The leaders and mentors who created and presented the training set the groundwork for implementation of the model curriculum at the school and district level.

Experimentation

The work of PSLA at the state level has trickled down to the school building and district level.

With PSLA’s in-person and virtual professional learning that took place across the state, school librarians are poised to fine-tune curriculum-



Explore/Engage

- In-service specific to school librarians
- Highlighting library services within the school and greater community
- Reports to demonstrate the impact of instructional process and academic achievement

At the individual school librarian level, we used the AASL Standards Framework for School Librarians to self-evaluate our own practices. We determined priority areas that deserved our attention. We shared and identified individual goals so we would know how to lean on, share, and grow from one another. The elementary school librarians noted the need for an increased focus on the Shared Foundations of Explore, Include, and Collaborate. Secondary school librarians identified similar needs for the Explore and Include Shared Foundations. These priority areas would follow us through the writing process.

As we moved to the next stage, we used the learner framework to identify the areas in which the curriculum already addressed the Competencies. There were a lot of bright spots as we coded the current curriculum with Roman numerals for the Shared Foundations and colors for the Domains while closely reading and interpreting the learner framework.

As we began to break down the units, we found that we were in the middle of a mess and a mound of opportunity. Instead of fitting the AASL Standards Integrated Frameworks and the model curriculum into our units, we shifted our mindset from “what we used to do” to “what we get to do.” It was difficult not to fall back into the “when I teach this, I do that,”

related vocabulary, identify target standards, and revolutionize the curriculum. There is a clear desire to infuse the traditional understanding of “library” with the inspired pedagogy of the AASL Standards Integrated Frameworks.

At Derry Township School District, where I serve as the high school librarian and K–12 library department coordinator, the members of the K–12 library department began a curriculum review process to integrate the AASL Standards into K–5 instruction. Through the entire process, the secondary librarians worked side by side as a collaborative team with the elementary librarians. We thought we would study the curriculum, switch out a few words and standards, and be ready to hop back into the school library with our learners. It did not happen that way at all. It was organized chaos.

As we worked through the iterative process of re-inventing the K–5 curriculum, we refined our process, learned how to use our resources (both human and material), and emerged a little worn but with a lighter, softer, more pliable set of instructional units. We started our analysis and self-reflection at the district level by individually color-coding perceived levels of mastery within the “School Library

Evaluation Checklist.” By studying the big picture and focusing our evaluation on the building and district, it was possible to take a more objective and less personal view of the library department, as well as the structures within each school and across the district that strengthened or hindered our practice.

As a department of K–12 school librarians, we explored the best practices sections of the AASL Standards to ensure we shared common interpretation of the standards. After sharing our ratings, we determined core focus areas under paired Shared Foundation categories that we felt we could set as overarching goals for buildings and the district. It looked similar to this:

Inquire/Include

- Co-creating and teaching
- Curriculum development team membership
- Access before and after school

Collaborate/Curate

- Assessing and evaluating learning
- District policy review
- District-level committee membership

but we kept each other in check to take advantage of the opportunity.

The process did not proceed without roadblocks. With a fixed schedule and 900 minutes of instruction for each class during the school year, the elementary school librarians had to be very discerning about what they would include. Considering our school district is located in Hershey, PA, the principles that embody our district-wide culture are called the COCOA Principles, which stands for community, opportunity, citizenship, ownership, and academics. As the lessons that would begin each learner's experience in the school library, the COCOA Principles were a natural way to provide a safe and comfortable way to enter into the library curriculum. Ultimately, the curriculum holds five consistent units based on the *ISTE Standards for Students* (2016) across the grade levels: Using the Library with the COCOA Principles, Empowered Learner, Digital Citizen, Knowledge Constructor/Creative Communicator, and Innovative Designer/Global Citizen.

There were extreme shifts in our direction during the process due to the number of lessons we allowed for each unit to accommodate special experiences, like the Pennsylvania Young Readers Choice Awards and the inquiry process we would use as a consistent model across grade levels. However, once we started to make the connections from our draft to the model curriculum and started backward mapping from the Competencies necessary for the students to find success, it all fell into place. Competencies led to concepts, which fell under essential questions, which tied back to big ideas. Two highlights of the updated curriculum include instructional activities for the Instructional Designer/Global Citizen unit from *Lessons Inspired by Picture Books for Primary Grades*

(Schlosser and Granatini 2019) and lessons from Common Sense Media's Digital Citizen unit.

Conclusion

This year some previous impossibilities became possibilities. The pandemic altered school scheduling, giving the elementary school librarians the opportunity to see each group of students daily for six weeks rather than once during a six-day cycle. This schedule allows our department to share reflections, identify priority standards, and refine the learning targets.



Allison Mackley,
*National Board Certified
Teacher librarian,
is the K–12 library
department coordinator*

and instructional technology coach at Hershey (PA) High School in the Derry Township School District. She is a past president of the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association. She is a member of AASL and has served as a member of the AASL Board of Directors and is a member of the AASL Standards Committee. Allison currently serves on the Pennsylvania Department of Education Governor's Advisory Council on Library Development, and she is a member of the ISTE Librarians Network Leadership Team. In 2017 she was a finalist for the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Teacher of the Year Award. She was the 2019 AASL Social Media Superstar Leadership Luminary, and the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (PSLA) won the 2019 AASL Affiliate of the Year during her presidency. She received her Master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh.

The limitations of a lack of technology was removed when at-home learning propelled the district to provide 1:1 tablets. Book selection has moved to a time outside of the regular library class period, which allows for synchronous or asynchronous library lessons that span the full class period. Time has shifted in a way that allows for inspiration, imagination, and creativity. The AASL Standards Integrated Frameworks have found their way to the middle of this moment.

The "old" curriculum was comfortable, and it was vintage. It was the 1970s version of Play-Doh with three primary colors. It still meets its intended purpose but lacks the rainbow of colors that become possible with shifts in culture and sparks of curiosity in your hands.

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