

Take Action: A Content Analysis of Administrators' Understandings of and Advocacy for the Roles and Responsibilities of School Librarians

[Pamela Harland, EdD](#), School Librarian and Digital Learning Specialist Program Director, Plymouth State University, Plymouth, New Hampshire

Judi Moreillon, PhD, Literacies and Libraries Consultant, Tucson, Arizona

Anita Cellucci, MEd LMS, High School Librarian, Westborough, Massachusetts

Abstract

The dissemination and adoption of new standards is of primary concern to national education associations, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) among them. The purpose of this content-analysis study was to investigate the impact of the National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries (AASL 2018) on the School Leader Collaborative members' understandings of and advocacy for the roles and responsibilities of school librarians. These members were all public school administrators. The researchers used documents co-developed by AASL and the Collaborative to create a category matrix to analyze the content of primary and secondary source videos. The results of the study show the extent to which these exemplary administrators value leadership and other responsibilities of school librarians. Their perspectives offer practicing and preservice school librarians specific expectations to elevate the practice of school librarianship and improve library services for all library stakeholders.

Introduction

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: SCHOOL LEADER COLLABORATIVE

The School Leader Collaborative (Collaborative) was the central focus of AASL President Kathryn Roots Lewis's presidential initiative. This two-year initiative was sponsored by AASL in collaboration with OverDrive Education with the goal of forging new understandings of and avenues for disseminating "the profound impact school librarians and school administrators wield as they work together to impact all learners" (Habley 2019). "School administrators in this collaborative believe that school librarians work as leaders in their school communities to reimagine teaching and learning through the implementation of AASL's *National School Library*

Standards” (Lewis 2020). The school administrators in the Collaborative also believed that implementing the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* (referred to as the “2018 Standards” in this study) would help school librarians positively impact their schools.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Nationally in the United States a twenty-percent decline in school librarian positions has occurred over the past decade (Kachel 2021, 52). Seven million students in the U.S. have no access to a school library with a state-certified school librarian (Kachel 2021, 49). District- and school-level administrators determine whether or not schools will include school librarians on their faculty. It stands to reason that if administrators understood the roles and responsibilities of school librarians and school librarians were meeting administrators’ needs, then fewer positions would be eliminated. Therefore, it is essential that today’s school librarians and educators of preservice school librarians have specific knowledge about the connections between the 2018 Standards and the self-identified needs of decision-makers so that the decline in positions can be reversed. This knowledge is also essential for serving the literacy and learning needs of all students through vibrant school library programs.

The purpose of this content-analysis study was to investigate the extent of the impact of the 2018 Standards on the Collaborative administrators’ understanding of and advocacy for the roles and responsibilities of school librarians. Through an iterative process, we developed three research questions to analyze transcriptions of videos: secondary source data (Artifacts 1–4) and primary source data (Town Hall Artifact).

1. In what ways do the Collaborative testimonial video artifacts describe these administrators’ understandings of school librarians’ roles and responsibilities?
2. How are the 2018 Standards’ five roles and six Shared Foundations prioritized in these Collaborative artifacts?
3. How do these artifacts created by the Collaborative—in coordination with AASL leadership and in conversation with AASL members—support the leader role of school librarians?

Each of these questions was developed based on the purpose of the Collaborative and the historical timing of Collaborative members’ service to AASL in relation to the publication of the 2018 Standards and school building closures in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The original research questions were modified after the researchers determined that the first four videos should be considered secondary sources due to AASL's involvement in their creation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

“Standards in any profession lend credibility and importance to the profession’s practice and procedures” (Sturge 2021, 6). School librarians use new standards as communication tools to influence administrators’ and colleagues’ understandings of school librarians’ roles and responsibilities. Disseminating and implementing standards in practice have been the subject of

research studies and professional articles (Barnett 2021; Burns 2020; Church 2015; Elkins 2018; Lewis et al. 2021; Mackley 2021; Madsen and Rinio 2021; Moreillon, Cahill, and McKee 2012). Standards dissemination and implementation can be a challenge in any profession.

Educating School Librarians about Standards

One goal of national standards is to guide the education of preservice school librarians. In a 2014 study of nine graduate-level school librarian preparation programs (Moreillon, Kimmel, and Gavigan 2014), researchers found very little overlap in required course readings and no consensus on ranking the school librarian's five roles as defined in *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs* (AASL 2009), referred to as "EL" in this study.

School librarians' five roles as described in EL are leader, instructional partner, information specialist, teacher, and program administrator. The EL descriptions for each role are quoted in the 2018 Standards (AASL 2018, 14–16). The leader role relates to how the work of school librarians impacts the entire learning community. In the role of instructional partner, school librarians' collaborative work with classroom teachers addresses curriculum standards and results in positive student learning outcomes. Through the information specialist role, school librarians share their knowledge of print and digital resources and tools, and teach how to locate, evaluate, and use information. As teachers, school librarians support students as critical thinkers, readers, researchers, and ethical users of information. Finally, the program administrator role relates to the management of physical and virtual spaces of the library, its resources, and programs. Indicators for performing each of these roles are specified on the category matrix developed for this study (see the appendix).

Research studies have described how preparation programs can elevate school librarians' instructional partner and leadership roles. In 2013 Judi Moreillon suggested specific interventions in preservice education that support school librarians in serving as leaders and effective instructional partners. These interventions include support for developing interpersonal skills through engaging in communication using electronic tools and collaborative assignments. Daniella Smith studied the level of preservice school librarians' self-perceived transformational leadership potential by looking at their responses to leadership development coursework and academic support such as mentors. Smith also studied the usefulness of a leadership pre-assessment in improving candidates' skills (2011). Another researcher's study related to leadership in practice noted how a distributed leadership framework creates a school environment in which the work of school librarians can thrive, particularly in the area of technology integration (Johnston 2015). Research also suggests a gap between national standards and practice. Researchers studying how 615 U.S. conference program offerings aligned with school librarians' five roles (AASL 2009) found that both the instructional partner and leader roles were significantly underrepresented (Moreillon, Cahill, and McKee 2012). In a three-year study of Virginia school librarians conducted more than four years after that state implemented new performance standards, the largest cluster of participants' open-ended responses centered around "the lack of awareness regarding the new standards and feeling unprepared" (Church 2015, 9).

In addition to mentioning the five roles described in EL, the 2018 Standards are focused around six Shared Foundations: Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage. A 2020 study of school librarians' adoption of the 2018 Standards found "nearly all participants stated

that their school district did not have a plan in place to implement the NSLS [2018 Standards]. Participants further perceived the NSLS as supplementary and less relevant to the work the school librarians were currently tasked to complete” (Burns 2020, 8). Research suggests that to fully understand and enact the 2018 Standards school librarians (and administrators) require coursework, or one or more professional development opportunities at the district, state, regional, or national levels.

Administrators’ Understandings and Perspectives

Many principals may not perceive school librarians as essential collaborative partners and building leaders. Research and practice have shown that administrators must be educated about the potential contributions of school librarians to the school’s culture and academic program (Church 2015; Levitov 2013; Lewis et al. 2021; Madsen and Rinio 2021; Reed and Tharp 2020). Professional development courses designed expressly for administrators are one type of intervention. Deborah Levitov (2013) and the team Linda B. Alexander, Robert C. Smith, and James O. Carey (2003) studied the change in principals’ perceptions after taking courses focused on learning about school librarian standards and guidelines.

While the positive influence of formal professional development must be considered, research has also shown that school librarians themselves are the main source of this information (Church 2008, 2010; Hartzell 2007; Shannon 2009). Leadership is linked to accountability, and school librarians are best positioned to lead activities for which they are accountable (DiScala and Subramaniam 2011), especially if these activities are specified in their job descriptions. With the publication of EL, AASL named “leader” as a distinct role of exemplary school librarians (AASL 2009, 16–17). Nine years after EL was published, Aaron Elkins found that only twenty-one out of fifty-eight Florida districts’ job descriptions for school librarians addressed performance responsibilities in each of the five roles of school librarians, and only twenty-nine descriptions included at least one performance responsibility related to the “leader” role (2018). If job descriptions lack specific criteria for implementing the five roles, then it is unlikely these roles will be performed in practice or be addressed by administrators in school librarian evaluations.

Administrators as Advocates

It has long been known that “principal advocacy is key to the development of a strong library media program that supports and enhances teaching and learning” (Haycock 1989, 10). While efforts, including the Collaborative, are being made to raise principals’ and other administrators’ understandings of state and national standards, it is likely that many are unaware of the most-current recommended practices in school librarianship. When school librarians, principals, and other administrators are in agreement about librarians’ roles and responsibilities and the role of the library in the school’s academic program, the librarian and the school library program are more likely to help principals meet the principals’ own goals for their schools (Shannon 2009). “Knowing the principal’s concerns allows the librarian to rethink the SLP’s [school library program’s] role in achieving school objectives” (Kachel 2017, 51). Shared understandings of principals’ priorities can maximize school librarians’ capacity to influence teaching and learning in the school. Shared and positive outcomes will also engender and increase administrators’ advocacy for school librarianship (Shannon 2009).

Although previous studies have spotlighted administrators' positive perceptions regarding school librarians' leader and instructional partner roles (Church 2008, 2010; Shannon 2009; Todd, Gordon, and Lu 2011), 110 school librarians from around the country who participated in focus groups conducted by the KRC Research Group before the 2018 Standards were drafted ranked "leadership and collaboration" ninth out of ten values (AASL 2016, 9). That finding may have resulted in the leader and instructional partner roles being unequally addressed within the 2018 Standards.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THIS TAKE ACTION STUDY

Some previous studies have examined school administrators' perceptions of the work of school librarians generally or in light of specific standards developed by AASL (Church 2008, 2010; O'Neal 2004; Shannon 2009). All of these studies have focused on principals in specific states who voluntarily responded to surveys or questionnaires. No previous studies have included principals from across the country or have focused on administrators' adoption and understanding of the 2018 Standards, which include not only the five roles from EL (leader, instructional partner, information specialist, teacher, and program administrator) but also the six Shared Foundations (Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage).

Rather than using data from surveys and questionnaires, this study is a focused examination of artifacts (videos) created by superintendents and principals themselves. These administrators represent districts located in a variety of locations across the U.S. and were vetted by AASL. The Take Action study data illuminates the specific needs of exemplary school administrators in their own words aligned with indicators from the 2018 Standards and clearly describes the actions administrators expect school librarians to take in practice.

The Take Action study centers administrators' voices, words, and knowledge, and further demonstrates to the profession the impact of standards on administrators' understanding of school librarians' roles and responsibilities. This study is unique because it is based on evidence found in administrators' own words included in the artifacts examined. While these exemplary administrators were schooled in the 2018 Standards, this study documents which specific indicators from AASL documents were central to the administrators' understandings and which indicators were rarely or never mentioned. This information is important to the profession in terms of knowing where to focus practice and professional development. It is also instructive when considerations are made for crafting future standards, which are typically based on the most recent previous standards.

Methodology

OVERVIEW

This mixed methods study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative content-analysis research processes. This hybrid approach allowed thorough investigation of the perspectives of the Collaborative. Content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) in the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff 2004, 18). The study used content analysis to quantify the occurrence of certain words, phrases, and concepts in the set of transcripts and to make qualitative inferences from the

quotes (Creswell and Clark 2011). The study was organized, its data analyzed, and results found in the context of the purpose of the Collaborative. The Collaborative's purpose was to enlist school administrators in guiding the dissemination of the 2018 Standards as well as furthering AASL's advocacy efforts. The focus of the study was on group messaging, on how the Collaborative as a group expressed their understandings through the secondary and primary source videos for which artifact transcriptions were examined. This situationality was essential to construct and adjust the research questions, develop the category matrix, code the data, and interpret the findings.

We framed this study in terms of the three research questions (cited above), a component of qualitative content analysis. These modified and open-ended questions did not assume a hypothesis. Initially, the research questions were formulated to include investigating data from all five video artifacts as primary sources. After we developed the category matrix and began testing it with the first four videos, we quickly realized that these were secondary sources rather than primary sources. The videos were heavily developed and edited by AASL rather than the Collaborative members themselves. Modifying research questions as the result of a deep investigation into the data is a feature of qualitative content analysis (White and Marsh 2006, 34).

DATA CONTRIBUTORS

Publicly available videos of the Collaborative members' statements were used as data for this study. Collaborative members were nominated by AASL members. The nomination applications included questions related to the school leader's support for the 2018 Standards and how the nominee had responded to a cause (advocacy effort) related to school librarianship in their district. In August 2019 three school superintendents and four school principals were selected to join the Collaborative:

- Shawn Arnold, superintendent, Valdez City Schools, Valdez, Alaska
- Sean Doherty, superintendent, School District of Clayton, near St. Louis, Missouri
- April Grace, superintendent, Shawnee Public Schools, Shawnee, Oklahoma
- Kelly Gustafson, principal, Pine-Richland School District, Wexford, Pennsylvania
- Joel Hoag, principal, Franklin Special School District, Franklin, Tennessee
- Kim Patterson, principal, Grossmont Union High School District, El Cajon, California
- Melita Walker, principal, Columbia Public Schools, Columbia, Missouri

These seven administrators and their nominators attended the 2019 AASL National Conference from November 14–16, 2019, in Louisville, Kentucky. AASL interviewed these seven dynamic principals and superintendents at the conference, and the Collaborative's content for four videos was gathered, selected, and edited by AASL. These videos were transcribed and analyzed as secondary source data for this study (AASL 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, and 2020d). As previously mentioned, the videos were considered secondary sources because they were edited by AASL from member's testimonials collected at the conference and not created by the Collaborative

themselves. The unedited video transcript from the Collaborative’s Town Hall held one year later on November 18, 2020 (AASL 2020e) was the primary source of data for this study.

CODING SCHEME

The researchers developed the *a priori* coding scheme based on the research questions (see appendix). The researchers based their scheme on one used for an earlier study. This common practice in quantitative content analysis situated this investigation in the context of a study of how school librarian conference sessions supported librarians’ professional development related to four of the five roles described in EL: instructional partners, information specialists, teachers, and program administrators (Moreillon, Cahill, and McKee 2012). For the Take Action study, we built our coding scheme based on the 2012 matrix categories and added the leader indicators derived from the “leader” description in EL and AASL’s “School Librarian Job Description” (2020g). To complete the matrix, we added categories based on the six Shared Foundations as described in AASL’s “School Librarian Interview Question Matrix” (2020f).

The entire matrix was first tested using the secondary sources of data referred to in this study as “Artifact 1” (AASL 2020d), “Artifact 2” (AASL 2020c), “Artifact 3” (AASL 2020a), and “Artifact 4” (AASL 2020b). We ultimately applied the category matrix to analyze the primary source data in the Town Hall Artifact (AASL 2020e). Chart 1 provides a description of the data sources.

Chart 1. Data descriptions.

Artifact Title	Description of Artifact (length of video)	Source Type
Artifact 1 Administrators Partner with School Librarians (AASL 2020d)	In this video, members of the Collaborative discuss their partnerships with school librarians and the critical roles school librarians play in student success. (00:02:39)	Secondary
Artifact 2 Administrators on School Librarians Leading Collaboration (AASL 2020c)	In this video, members of the Collaborative share how school librarians foster collaboration in their schools by innovatively supporting educators and making learning accessible to all students. (00:02:40)	Secondary
Artifact 3 Administrators on #AASLStandards (AASL 2020a)	In this video, members of the Collaborative reflect on how working with school librarians and the National School Library Standards has enhanced teaching and learning, goal setting, and curriculum connections. (00:02:36)	Secondary
Artifact 4 Administrators on EDI and School Libraries (AASL 2020b)	In this video, members of the Collaborative describe how school librarians increase educational equity, diversity, and access for learners through diverse literature and information resources. (00:02:31)	Secondary

Town Hall Artifact AASL Town Hall (AASL 2020e)	In this video, members of the Collaborative share their perspectives about the leadership of school librarians during pandemic learning conditions and answer questions about how to best approach administrators while going through the 2020–2021 school year and planning for the next. (01:02:00)	Primary
--	---	---------

INTER-RATER PROCESS

During phase one we developed an inter-rater process for analyzing the category codes. First, each brief video was transcribed, and the transcripts searched for the five roles and six Shared Foundations keywords. Then, for Artifacts 1 and 2, we discussed every sentence and coded the data together using the indicators on the category matrix. We set and met our inter-rater goal: 75 percent agreement.

In phase two each of us independently analyzed the transcripts of Artifacts 3 and 4, and met to share and discuss our coding. Again at least a 75 percent inter-rater reliability was achieved. We continued the iterative data analysis process with discussions around indicator descriptions developed during the analysis of the secondary data sources. To guide our interpretations, we also began looking for themes, key concepts, and patterns as well as identifying noteworthy quotes in the data.

In phase three the process developed for the secondary data sources was applied to the Town Hall Artifact (AASL 2020e). This video data was transcribed and organized for analysis around the eight questions posed during the one-hour meeting. We conducted independent ratings and met to compare and discuss the coding. A 75 percent inter-rating consensus was achieved. We also discussed key quotes and patterns in this data. Town Hall Artifact findings are reported later in this document in relationship to the eight questions.

Findings: Secondary Data Sources

CONTEXT

At the time of the 2019 AASL National Conference, the Collaborative members were familiar with the 2018 Standards, but they had not had much time to interact with AASL’s “School Librarian Job Description,” “School Librarian Interview Question Matrix,” the AASL leaders, and with their fellow Collaborative members.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The following tables are organized by each of the four secondary source videos. The indicators cited in the tables were noted by three or more Collaborative members and were coded with at least a 75 percent inter-rater reliability. In addition, for an indicator to be included on a table, at least three of the administrators’ comments related to the individual indicator cited. The appendix contains a complete list of indicators (arranged by categories) and their code numbers.

In tables 1, 2, and 3, the frequencies were out of seven Collaborative member participants. Since only four administrators contributed to video 4, the frequency in table 4 is out of four. The frequencies for the town hall tables 5.1 through 5.7 are based on the number of administrators who responded to each question.

In addition to the frequency of particular indicators represented in administrators’ comments, the tables include qualitative data in the form of quotes that further specify and illuminate Collaborative members’ understandings of school librarians’ roles and responsibilities.

A great deal of overlap in the findings for the three research questions was found. Therefore, aligning individual research questions with the data tables was difficult. Instead, we took a holistic perspective to clearly share the findings. The tables and the summary preceding each table address each of the three research questions based on the data in that particular table. Research Question 1 about administrators’ understandings of the roles and responsibilities of school librarians is evident in the quotes provided on each table. The frequency number for the cited indicators answers Research Question 2 by showing how the administrators prioritized the five roles and Shared Foundations. Finally, these administrators’ support for the school librarians’ leader role, the focus of Research Question 3, is evidenced in the number of times specific leader indicators were mentioned and the representative quotes accompanying those indicators.

ARTIFACT 1: “ADMINISTRATORS PARTNER WITH SCHOOL LIBRARIANS”

In Artifact 1 (see table 1), the Collaborative members’ comments were focused on how administrators and school librarians can partner to co-lead in their learning communities. Several of the comments, directed specifically to other administrators, noted how administrators can support and encourage school librarians as leaders. Other comments suggested that school librarians reach out to administrators to increase the school librarian’s opportunities to positively impact student success. Aligning the school library program’s vision and mission with that of the school is a critical piece in this leadership role.

Table 1. Artifact 1: “Administrators Partner with School Librarians” (AASL 2020d).

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.3 Builds Relationships in the Learning Community	3/7	“I think that the librarians often serve as the heart of the school. I think that they serve as a support system to so many different people in the buildings beyond just the students.”
	0.5 Advocates for Student Learning	3/7	“Reach out to [administrators] because we want to support students, and we know that you’re a critical part of every student being successful.”
	0.7 Fosters Exploration, Discovery,	3/7	“All schools are a living laboratory, and you know librarians are kind of the head scientists. They help everyone in that petri dish of learning think more broadly and experiment.”

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
	Creation, and Innovation		
Collaborate	7.5 Collaboration w/Principal / Connection to School Vision	3/7	“I would recommend any administrator to sit down with your media specialists, get a vision, and see how that vision matches up with your vision and mission statement for your school and then support them financially.”

ARTIFACT 2: “ADMINISTRATORS ON SCHOOL LIBRARIANS LEADING COLLABORATION”

As in the first artifact, the Artifact 2 comments (see table 2) were heavily focused on the area of the school librarian’s leadership role, particularly as it relates to leading collaborative work. These administrators charged school librarians with initiating collaboration and developing collaborative teams to meet instructional goals. Technology applications were mentioned several times in this video. (It is important to remember that these comments were collected before school building closures.) Thinking outside the box and developing innovative ways to make curriculum come alive was another focus of the Collaborative members’ comments in this video.

Table 2. Artifact 2: “Administrators on School Librarians Leading Collaboration” (AASL 2020c).

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - Responds to Challenges and Opportunities to Increase Effectiveness	5/7	“Our librarians are often working collaboratively with our classroom teachers to think about what are we doing in our classrooms to make sure that we are being culturally responsive. What are we doing to raise the level of expectation for our students?”
	0.3 Builds Relationships w/in the Learning Community	3/7	“It is a collaboration which creates that positivity amongst our school culture.”
	0.7 Fosters Exploration, Discovery, Creation, and Innovation	3/7	“To our teaching team I think what you have is somebody (school librarian) who is very informative. Somebody who brings different ways that they might look at a particular objective or curriculum, often innovative and thinks outside the box.”
Instructional Partner	1.6 Instructional Design:	5/7	“They find ways to enhance the lesson for every teacher.”

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
	Objectives, Goals, Assessments		
Program Administrator	4.1 Collection Development / Collection Management; Connection to EDI	3/7	“Any initiative that the school, the district, even a grade level subject area has they know that they can go to the library to get resources, to have activities, to engage with students, and make those things come alive.”
Collaborate	7.2 Develop Collaborative Working Teams	3/7	“My school librarians are critical to engaging all content areas together.”
	7.4 Collaboration w/Classroom Educator	6/7	“I think that the librarians often set the tone for collaboration. Our librarians are the ones who are incubating ideas in their space that often become evident in our classrooms.”
	7.5 Collaboration w/Principal / Connection to School Vision	4/7	“Without professional librarians to not only oversee the collection but to initiate programs, to partner with me on school level initiatives, to be a leader on committees, and at the school level, the district level, the state level learning would suffer, outcomes would not be what they are.”
Explore	9.1 Leader, Change-maker, Thought-leader	3/7	“My librarian is helping to teach teachers about new ways that they can kind of better deliver content within the school with new technology, really innovative kind of processes.”

ARTIFACT 3: “ADMINISTRATORS ON #AASLSTANDARDS”

All of the Collaborative members addressed the 2018 Standards in their comments in Artifact 3 (see table 3). Within that framework, they most frequently connected the 2018 Standards to leader and instructional partner roles and the Collaborate Shared Foundation indicators. They emphasized the instructional partner role of school librarians who enact classroom-library collaboration. Collaborative members’ comments suggested a leadership role for school librarians in co-creating a culture of collaboration in their schools.

Table 3. Artifact 3: “Administrators on #AASLStandards” (AASL 2020a).

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - Responds to Challenges and Opportunities to Increase Effectiveness	5/7	“What the shifts and standards have meant is that students should experience school in a completely different way: Project-based learning, depth versus breadth.”
Instructional Partner	1.6 Instructional Design: Objectives, Goals, Assessments	3/7	“The national standards are looked at by ELA with school librarians, and then we reach out to the science team, the social studies team, all of the various levels within the district.”
Collaborate	7.4 Collaboration w/Classroom Educator	3/7	“[School librarians] have such influence: collaboration, working with other teachers to help grow their practice, developing that level of reading. I love that there is a through line in the standards.”

ARTIFACT 4: “ADMINISTRATORS ON EDI AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES”

The Artifact 4 testimonials in this video (see table 4) centered on equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is not surprising that comments clustered around the leader role and the Include Shared Foundation. Include and Explore Shared Foundation comments were also focused in the leader role. From the beginning of their service on the Collaborative, members understood and valued the critical role of school librarians in enacting equity, diversity, and inclusion in their schools. The predominance of Collaborative members’ comments that fell in the leader role category was consistent with their perspective prior to being selected. It was, in fact, their understanding of school librarians as leaders that garnered them a seat at the Collaborative table.

Table 4. Artifact 4: “Administrators on EDI and School Libraries” (AASL 2020b).

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - Responds to Challenges and Opportunities to Increase Effectiveness	4/4	“They [school librarians] know learners on a different level and it helps us raise the level of expectation for our students.”

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
	0.6 Champions Equity, Access, and Intellectual Freedom	4/4	“We really try to make our media center the hub of learning and a welcoming place where all kids can gather.”
Teacher	3.7 Personally Relevant Learning	3/4	“Librarians can give young people access to texts which help them find themselves and validate themselves.”
Program Administrator	4.1 Collection Development / Collection Management; Connection to EDI	3/4	“Our librarian is instrumental in helping with diversity in ordering diverse texts.”
Include	6.1 Inclusive (Space) w/Equity and Diversity	4/4	“We talk about equity and access and opportunity. Librarians are a really untapped resource, and so libraries have to be a part of that conversation and so do the librarians.”
	6.3 Appropriate Reading/Instructional Resources - All Formats/Multiple Perspectives	3/4	“Our job is to support those [diverse] learners and help them see themselves in texts and in the learning.”
Explore	9.1 Leader, Change-maker, Thought-leader	3/4	“As a leader, it’s really important that we make sure that we’re tapping into every voice to make sure that we’re thinking about everybody, and there’s an inclusivity that’s important, and librarians bring that.”

Findings: Town Hall Primary Data Source

CONTEXT

The primary data source in this study was the transcript of the video from the November 2020 AASL Town Hall. This virtual meeting included school librarians, AASL hosts, and six members of the Collaborative. In response to questions, superintendents and principals in the Collaborative shared their perspectives about the roles and responsibilities of school librarians during pandemic learning conditions. They also suggested how school librarians could work alongside administrators through the pandemic and into the future. The Collaborative members introduced themselves, and the hosts facilitated questions from school librarians across the country and the AASL Practice Committee.

OVERVIEW

Taking action to respond to challenges was the indicator that emerged the most frequently throughout this Town Hall meeting. School leaders, including librarians, were forced to respond to unique challenges throughout the pandemic. Even before the pandemic, the administrators highlighted the need for librarians to take action in response to challenges, as evidenced in the secondary artifacts. Many of the actions taken by school librarians will remain in place following a return to mostly in-person learning during the coming years. These administrators repeatedly emphasized that a librarian’s willingness to take action without direction leads to increased opportunities for all. Participating administrators were not asking librarians to work harder. Instead, administrators were asking librarians to do what they could to change a circumstance by identifying the ways they could lead improvements in particular situations.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The following tables summarize the findings for each of the eight questions asked during the Town Hall. Each table is organized by matrix category indicators, the frequency of comments in that particular category based on the number of Collaborative members who addressed that particular question, and sample quotes that further indicate their perspectives on school librarians’ roles and responsibilities. The indicators cited in the tables were noted by three or more Collaborative members and were coded with at least a 75 percent inter-rater reliability.

Q1: WHAT DOES TEACHING LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARIANS DURING THE PANDEMIC?

The first question (see table 5.1) was asked by the town hall facilitator AASL past-president Kathryn Roots Lewis.

Collaborative members noted that librarians proactively responded to multiple modalities of teaching during the pandemic by working collaboratively on curriculum, finding creative ways to provide students with books, and through the use of digital tools and resources to support student learning. Librarians helped classroom educators “discover” library and technology resources that had been available to them pre-pandemic. Respondents further noted that teachers realized these resources would be useful to support their remote or hybrid teaching and their students’ learning.

Table 5.1. Q1: What does teaching look like for your school librarians during the pandemic?

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - responds to challenges and opportunities to increase effectiveness	5/6	“Our librarians haven’t been waiting for people to tell them what to do. They’ve been saying, ‘Okay, here’s the problem we need to solve, and then here’s how we’re going to make it happen’.”

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Information Specialist	2.1 Technology Tools to Supplement School Resources	3/6	The pandemic “forced us ... to look at new innovative methods.”

Q2: HOW ARE SCHOOL LIBRARIANS AND STUDENTS INTERACTING DURING THE PANDEMIC?

The second question (see table 5.2) was asked by one of the school librarians in attendance.

The administrators emphasized the need for librarians to take action to respond to some of the challenges faced in the area of access to resources and instruction. Throughout the pandemic, librarians collaborated with classroom educators and provided multiple innovative methods to connect with students. Librarians offered multiple modalities of instruction and access to books by extending the physical and virtual spaces of the library to expand reading opportunities to the entire school community.

Table 5.2. Q2: How are school librarians and students interacting during the pandemic?

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - responds to challenges and opportunities to increase effectiveness	3/5	“We learned new methods to get various instructional materials through library services and stuff that we would have never done before. [The pandemic] kind of forced us in a way to look at new innovative methods.”

Q3: WHAT CAN SCHOOL LIBRARIANS DO IN THE FUTURE TO REMIND ADMINISTRATORS THAT WE FOSTER EXPLORATION FOR STUDENTS?

The third question (see table 5.3) was asked by a school librarian in attendance.

The administrators collectively repeated that librarians should take action through collaborative work specifically with the school principal. Leadership came up several times during the answers to this question. The administrators emphasized a librarian’s ability to instruct students and classroom educators on access to and use of different information sources as an important element of leadership. It is important to note that the original question referred to makerspaces, and none of the Collaborative members’ responses specifically mentioned makerspaces.

Table 5.3. Q3: What can school librarians do in the future to remind administrators that we foster exploration for students?

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - responds to challenges and opportunities to increase effectiveness	5/5	“I think it’s important to have those direct conversations and to present it in a way: This is an opportunity for us to be different and better once we come back to some type of normalcy.”
	0.3 Builds Relationships w/in Learning Community	3/5	“When teachers know that they are sending kids into breakout rooms and they need supervisors, [our librarian] is one of the first people that they think of. Because not only is she instructionally sound, but she also can navigate technology when kids have issues.”
Collaborate	7.5 Collaboration w/Principal / Connection to School Vision	5/5	“Talk to your school administrators. Make sure that they understand you want to be part of this collaborative process and then... make sure that you really continue to assert yourself as a leader.”
Explore	9.1 Leader, Change-maker, Thought-leader	3/5	“All the librarians in our district, they’re leaders. They influenced me, the teachers, students, the parents. And I think that title needs to go along with leaders.”

Q4: HOW CAN A SCHOOL LIBRARIAN CONVINC A RELUCTANT ADMINISTRATOR TO APPRECIATE THEIR LIBRARIANS?”

The fourth question (see table 5.4) was asked by a librarian in the online chat and read by one of the facilitators.

These administrators stressed the importance of librarians’ understanding of cross-curricular connections that empower them to act as catalysts for innovative collaboration and instruction. The administrators valued school librarians’ partnering with administrators and classroom educators on schoolwide initiatives, including offering professional development. Administrators also noted that connecting books and other information sources to the curriculum communicates the collaborative leadership role of librarians.

Table 5.4. Q4: How can a school librarian convince a reluctant administrator to appreciate their librarians?

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.3 Builds Relationships w/in Learning Community	3/3	“[The librarian] wants to help. She wants to be that person in front of the staff who’s recommending books because she knows them, and so she’s making connections and she’s enhancing the learning of the staff and our students.”
Collaborate	7.5 Collaboration w/Principal / Connection to School Vision	3/3	“Over the summer when your principals are planning, ask what the big rocks are and ask how you can support the learning of the teachers and the principal.”

Q5: HOW DID YOUR LIBRARIAN OPEN UP THE CHANNEL IN THE FIRST PLACE SO THAT YOU BECAME SUCH A SUPPORTER OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES?

Question five (see table 5.5) was asked by a school librarian.

Administrators noted that communication is a cornerstone of becoming an essential part of the school community. Taking action to share and explain the 2018 Standards as well as illustrating the work school librarians do that connects these standards to the school’s goals and visions led to greater understanding of a librarian’s vital role. Four of out five administrators who responded to this question emphasized the importance of librarians reaching out to their school principal to develop support for the library program.

Table 5.5. Q5: How did your librarian open up the channel in the first place so that you became such a supporter of school librarians and school libraries?

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - responds to challenges and opportunities to increase effectiveness	4/5	“[The librarian] showed up in my office before school started and sat down and said, ‘Hey, here’s how I’ve done things in the past does that sound good to you?’ And then she said, ‘What do you want me to focus on?’ And so she presented herself as someone who is going to act on whatever initiative I had before we even knew each other.”

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Collaborate	7.5 Collaboration w/Principal / Connection to School Vision	4/5	“Share the AASL standards and make sure that [principals] know what those are because most of you are trying to do important work around those. So if they see how those connect with the larger scope of what’s really important to us as leaders they’re going to buy in.”
Explore	9.1 Leader, Change-maker, Thought-leader	4/5	“[The librarian] has created her own way of communicating which I absolutely support. She never asked me if she could, and she doesn’t need to. But she has made herself invaluable... the skills and what she offers to our community are so amazing, and she just has figured out a way to make herself essential.”

Q6: WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP JOE BIDEN AND WHOEVER HE CHOOSES TO LEAD THE DOE TO INCLUDE LIBRARIANS IN THEIR EDUCATION INITIATIVES?”

Question six (see table 5.6) was the final question asked live by a school librarian during the town hall.

Librarians take action to build relationships both within and outside of the school community by reaching out and sharing stories with school boards and with state and national leaders to increase effectiveness. The administrators noted it is important to be able to “tell the story” of the library, which includes how librarians participate and lead in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within the school. Administrators also suggested librarians invite elected officials to visit their libraries. The emphasis in these collective responses was on taking the initiative to reach out to decision makers.

Table 5.6. Q6: What can we do to help Joe Biden and whoever he chooses to lead the DOE (Department of Education) to include librarians in their education initiatives?

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - responds to challenges and opportunities to increase effectiveness	3/3	“You can also reach out to [elected officials’] offices, their field offices, and let them know about your concerns and things that you’re thinking about related to libraries.”

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Explore	9.1 Leader, Change-maker, Thought-leader	3/3	“Try to be involved even at your state level in the legislative processes, and then where you have the opportunity to be involved, ... at the national level and speaking to your representatives.”

Q7: IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOUR LIBRARIANS COLLABORATING WITH CLASSROOM EDUCATORS TO ADDRESS LEARNING LOSS DURING THIS PANDEMIC AND HOW DO YOU HELP MAKE THAT COLLABORATION AN EXPECTATION?”

The seventh question (see table 5.7) was posed by the AASL Practice Committee.

Collaborative members noted that librarians collaborate with classroom educators by taking part in team meetings, proactively examining student benchmark data, and sharing solutions with principals. One administrator indicated the importance of being involved in PLCs during the early planning stages so that school librarians can share solutions with the team. Another added that the willingness to share PLC work with the school principal extends collaborative efforts by increasing relationships and creates future opportunities for collaboration. Several of the administrators echoed that participation in PLCs and taking action proactively were important steps for a school librarian to take.

Table 5.7. Q7: In what ways are your librarians collaborating with classroom educators to address learning loss during this pandemic and how do you help make that collaboration an expectation?

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - responds to challenges and opportunities to increase effectiveness	3/3	“As we got our benchmark data for the year [the librarian] immediately saw: Okay we had some reading loss, and our sixth graders and fifth graders aren’t where they typically are. So she worked on a new schoolwide reading initiative.”
Explore	9.1 Leader, Change-maker, Thought-leader	3/3	“[The librarian’s] not afraid to say ‘hey don’t forget this is important,’ gives me what I need to put it out every week to our parents, so we have family engagement with it. And so she’s looking for those opportunities and not waiting on me to say ‘hey, I’ve seen this data. What do you

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
			think?’ She’s saying, ‘hey, I’ve seen the data. Here’s what I can do’.”

Q8: HOW HAVE YOU ENCOURAGED LEADERSHIP AMONG YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARIANS? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HELP THEM BUILD THOSE SKILLS THEY NEED TO BE BETTER LEADERS IN THEIR BUILDINGS?

With only two minutes remaining in the hour, the final question of the Town Hall was asked by an AASL Practice Committee member. “How have you encouraged leadership among your school librarians? What have you done to help them build those skills they need to be better leaders in their buildings?”

Only two of the administrators had time to speak. Since this was a small data set, no table was created for this question. These administrators reported they supported the leadership role of their school librarians by connecting the critical actions they took and sharing that information throughout the school community. School librarians collaborated with principals to increase their capacity to meet the needs of all learners. During the pandemic, some school librarians, in collaboration with their principal, increased access to e-books, digital audiobooks, and other online information materials to provide remote access to information resources.

Once again, the willingness of a librarian to take action in response to a situation without being directed to do so is vital in this role. These administrators noted that school librarians responded to critical needs during the pandemic because teachers and students required remote and safe access to information and tools.

CROSS-QUESTION THEMES

The cross-question themes presented in table 6 tabulate how many times each indicator appeared during the answers to the eight questions in the Town Hall Artifact.

These school leaders noted that exemplary librarians now—and in the future—must act as change-makers and thought leaders by taking action to increase effectiveness. They do so by enacting their influence in the school community through collaborative instruction, schoolwide initiatives, and intentional communication. Many of the changes made by school librarians during the pandemic potentially lead to future innovative practices. However, those ideas must be clearly communicated with school administrators and connected to a school’s goals, mission, and vision. During the Town Hall, indicators related to acting as a leader and change-maker emerged in responses to five out of the eight questions asked. This finding clearly shows a repetition of the theme. The words “lead,” “leader,” and “leadership” were spoken by Collaborative members thirty times throughout the hour-long meeting.

Table 6. Cross-question themes.

Category	Indicator	Frequency	Quotes
Leader	0.2 Takes Action - responds to challenges and opportunities to increase effectiveness	25/32	The librarian... “was in all the PLC meetings at the beginning of the year, helping teachers realize how the resources in the library and the technology that we’ve had can be beneficial to them.”
Leader	0.3 Builds Relationships w/in Learning Community	6/32	“I (the principal) look to [school librarians] for professional development, which then impacts our students.”
Collaborate	7.5 Collaboration w/Principal / Connection to School Vision	14/32	When the principal first started his job his librarian asked “ ‘What do you want me to focus on?’ And so she presented herself as someone who is going to act on whatever initiative I had before we even knew each other.”
Explore	9.1 Leader, Change-maker, Thought-leader	15/32	“[The librarian] is an influencer. So like all the librarians in our district, they’re leaders. They influenced me, the teachers, students, the parents. And I think that title (school librarian) needs to go along with leaders.”

Discussion

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative administrators highlighted the unique role of the school librarian as being one of the only educators in the school who understands what classroom educators are teaching and students are learning across content areas and grade levels. The librarians are “curriculum experts” and collaborative partners in instruction and academic support. This schoolwide impact necessitates that school librarians communicate with the school principal about how the library program touches everyone in the school and extends learning through access to information and resources through collaborative work. This discussion applies to the primary source data from Artifact Five, unless otherwise noted.

TECHNOLOGY

The comments by the Collaborative rarely mentioned the integration of technology by school librarians. It is obvious that librarians were actively using technology throughout the pandemic, but these administrators rarely described it as the integration of technology. One administrator noted how their school needed to communicate with the community about how the learning management system worked, “We really had to look at how we were going to disseminate that information to everyone, have it be one message, a clear message, and our media specialist became the voice and the face for all of that.” The librarian created a series of screencasts for all to access.

Remote learning showed that technology had to be fully adopted and integrated out of necessity and in response to a challenge. School librarians were and will continue to use digital tools to communicate, advocate, collaborate, educate, and curate now and into the future. A variety of technologies and their use were referred to in responses to all questions. As noted in table 6, spotlighting technology was a way for school librarians to take action and lead during school closures. Technology integration is a skill set that has become functionally and firmly embedded in much of what school librarians do.

COLLABORATION

School librarians collaborating with principals to meet the goals, mission, and vision of the school appeared in answers to five of the questions asked. These administrators noted the value of librarians and principals working closely together to find solutions to challenges. This indicator most frequently clustered with taking action. One principal said, “Coming to us and letting us know what you can provide in these times is really helpful.” This quote illustrates the need for school librarians to take the first step in reaching out to the school principal while also sharing solutions to problems faced by the entire school. Continuing these conversations will lead to an increased understanding of what the librarian and the library offer, and how librarians are collaboratively contributing to the school’s goals. One of the administrators said, “You’re the rocks that we need to move with connecting to the school goals and saying, ‘This is how I can contribute to making these goals actualized’.” As Donna M. Shannon stated, “Understanding principals’ perspectives of and priorities for the library program should help librarians develop a plan for garnering administrative support critical to a successful program” (2009, 19). These administrators were looking for their school librarians to not only connect what was happening in the library to the school goals but also to clearly explain how the librarians were independently and collaboratively meeting outcome targets.

Collaboration is also connected to building relationships within the school community, instructional partnerships aligned to standards, and the curation of reading and informational resources aligned to the school curriculum and interests of all learners. Administrators noted the importance of librarians collaborating with other educators by describing how, “Our [librarians] work alongside the teachers to see how they can enhance learning and enrich learning and just continue to extend those opportunities regardless of the modality.” This superintendent noted that the flexibility of these librarians led to an increase in learning opportunities for all students. Even before the pandemic as administrators noted in the secondary data sources, school librarians were meeting with other educators and informing them of the books and other resources they could use in their instruction and for students’ independent reading. The work

school librarians do now—and in the future—involves working with others. Without these collaborative efforts and intentional relationships, school librarians will not reach their capacity to lead, and learning and teaching through the library will not be interconnected with the entire school community.

These administrators noted that librarians who actively participate in PLCs, examine student benchmark data, and collaborate with other educators to integrate needed skills across disciplines become valuable members of the academic program. Librarians influence will grow if they are teaching students, supporting classroom educators through equitable access to information and diverse resources, and collaboratively designing and implementing projects. Additionally, when school librarians share current innovations with administrators and educators alike, these librarians serve as leaders. Keeping those communication, relationship, and collaboration channels open will be important long into the future.

LEADERSHIP

The school librarian’s leadership role was reinforced throughout the findings. One administrator stated, “Becoming an instructor and becoming an academic leader in the building is what I would encourage.” Another administrator shared, “I think it’s important to have those direct conversations and to present it in a way that this is an opportunity for us to be different and better.” With a focus on solutions and improvement, these administrators encouraged librarians to intentionally take action and serve as change agents for the entire school community through communication and collaborative instruction.

These administrators described their school librarian leaders as influencers and connectors. School librarians, before and during the pandemic, were leading by instructional collaboration across content-area and grade-level boundaries. They influenced the school when they provided professional development (PD) for the staff, communicated intentionally beyond the school community, and designed initiatives that impacted all learners.

Another administrator explained, “Tell those great stories. Do really impactful things. Make sure those things are captured, like in a newsletter or social media. There are lots of ways that you can do that and show how you enhance and add to the environment which [will] speak to any administrator’s language.” The administrators encouraged librarians to document and share what is happening within the library with the greater school community in any way possible to open additional communication channels and to serve as a leader.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

Collaborative members most frequently referred to indicators of school librarians’ roles as active leaders and instructional partners, and less often as program administrators. Collaborative members rarely referred to indicators that related to the information specialist or teacher roles. Indicators related to the Shared Foundations of Collaborate and Explore were frequently mentioned. Indicators related to Include, Curate, and Engage were only occasionally referenced and rarely—if ever—noted using these terms. The Inquire indicators were not mentioned at all. In summary, indicators related to two of the five roles of school librarians dominated administrators’ comments—leader and instructional partner. Indicators related to the Shared Foundations were much less frequently mentioned except for Collaborate, which is related to

both the leader and instructional partners roles. Explore indicators were mentioned as well. The members of the Collaborative shared multiple stories, specific examples, and practical solutions for school librarians to use to take action.

Limitations and Further Research

This research study involved seven exemplary administrators who had prior knowledge of the 2018 Standards and had served as advocates for school librarians and libraries prior to being selected for the Collaborative. They were nominated by AASL members and were vetted based on their resumés and commitment to this volunteer opportunity. Their understandings may or may not reflect those of other principals and superintendents from across the country. That said, their perspectives and priorities for the practice of school librarianship are valuable to increasing the effectiveness of the profession.

This study focused on the artifacts developed by the Collaborative, in conjunction with AASL. Researchers in the future could pursue interviews with the Collaborative members in an effort to see how this experience impacted them and how their perspectives on and priorities for the roles and responsibilities of school librarians may have evolved. Further research could also discover how the Collaborative artifacts influenced the understandings of other school administrators and school librarians.

The content-analysis process was useful in determining how keywords, concepts, and themes used by AASL appeared or did not appear in these artifact transcripts. A pre-publication content-analysis of proposed future standards would be valuable to help quantify and analyze the vocabulary and ideas used to ensure they align with those used or understood by stakeholder groups. Professional organizations refresh and publish up-to-date standards for the purpose of guiding the implementation of currently recognized excellence. An early analysis of the terminology used in standards would be valuable in any profession.

Conclusion

This study identified a tension between the 2018 Standards and the priorities of the administrators who served on the Collaborative, namely the critical importance of the leader role of school librarians and their work as instructional partners. Although the 2018 Standards imply the role of “leader,” leadership behaviors are not specifically defined in the standards. The original printing of the 2018 Standards book’s index includes a reference to just one page focused on this role, which is the one-paragraph definition brought forward from EL (AASL 2018, 307). A replacement index was later commissioned with additional locators to the leader role.

Collaboration is mentioned more frequently in the 2018 Standards due to the “Collaborate” Shared Foundation, but specific mention of the instructional partner role, which includes co-planning, co-teaching, and co-assessing student outcomes, is mentioned only in the “School Library Evaluation Checklist” (AASL 2018, 174, 176), not in the standards themselves. In the index, there are references to the “instructional partner role for school librarians” on four pages plus the definition that was likewise brought forward from EL (AASL 2018, 307). The testimonials of the Collaborative members and this study clearly fill a gap in the literature and understandings of administrators about school librarians’ path to exemplary practice.

School librarians must be leaders who take action to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning in their schools. They must be integral members of collaborative teams in their schools and proactive instructional partners who make a measurable difference in student learning outcomes. They must provide PD for the staff, communicate intentionally within and beyond the school community, and design initiatives that impact equitable access for all learners.

Whether or not the testimonials of the Collaborative have had or will have a lasting impact on and improvement in the practice of librarianship is unknown. It is also unknown if the work of the Collaborative members and these video artifacts have had an influence on other administrators and have successfully served as advocacy tools for the profession. This study indicates that the potential is there, if these artifacts are shared and understood by their intended audiences, namely school librarians and their administrators. This study is an opportunity to learn from this AASL presidential initiative and grounds librarians, administrators, and advocates in the 2018 Standards for best practices in school librarianship. These school leaders' understandings and perspectives can guide members of the profession to demonstrate specific behaviors and take specific action toward exemplary practice to meet administrators' needs. Bringing this research into practice may reduce the number of state-certified school librarian positions eliminated or help restore positions and lead to a more-positive future for the profession.

Works Cited

- Alexander, Linda B., Robert C. Smith, and James O. Carey. 2003. "Education Reform and the School Library Media Specialist: Perceptions of Principals." *Knowledge Quest* 32 (2): 10–13.
- American Association of School Librarians. 2009. *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs*. Chicago: ALA.
- . 2016. "AASL Member and Stakeholder Consultation Process on the Learning Standards and Program Guidelines."
<www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/guidelinesandstandards/AASL_SG_ResearchFindings_ExecSummary_FINAL_101116.pdf> (accessed April 7, 2021).
- . 2018. *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. Chicago: ALA.
- . 2020a. "Administrators on #AASLStandards" (June 26).
<<https://youtu.be/aMhTH0M6kNo>> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- . 2020b. "Administrators on EDI and School Libraries" (July 23). <<https://youtu.be/1n-peqbB50g>> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- . 2020c. "Administrators on School Librarians Leading Collaboration" (June 26).
<<https://youtu.be/Ysl6sc2rP-s>> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- . 2020d. "Administrators Partner with School Librarians" (March 30).
<<https://youtu.be/9fkTsLHFkS8>> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- . 2020e. "AASL Town Hall: A Conversation with the AASL School Leader Collaborative" (November 18). AASL Learning Library.
<<https://aasl.digitellinc.com/aasl/sessions/4159/view>> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- . 2020f. "School Librarian Interview Question Matrix." <<https://standards.aasl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SL-Interview-Matrix.pdf>> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- . 2020g. "School Librarian Job Description." <https://standards.aasl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SL-Job-Description_3-30-2020.pdf> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- Barnett, Cassandra. 2021. "State Standards Revision the Arkansas Way." *Knowledge Quest* 49 (3): 18–25.
- Burns, Elizabeth A. 2020. "AASL National School Library Standards: Progress toward Implementation." *School Libraries Worldwide* 26 (1): 1–12.
- Church, Audrey P. 2008. "The Instructional Role of the Library Media Specialist as Perceived by Elementary School Principals." *School Library Media Research* 11.
<www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol11/SLMR_InstructionalRole_V11.pdf> (accessed November 4, 2021).

- . 2010. “Secondary School Principals’ Perceptions of the School Librarian’s Instructional Role.” *School Library Research* 13.
<www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol13/SLR_SecondarySchool_V13.pdf> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- . 2015. “Performance-Based Evaluation and School Librarians.” *School Library Research* 18.
<www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol18/SLR_PerformanceBasedEvaluation_V18.pdf> (accessed November 4, 2021).
- Creswell, John W., and Vicki L. Plano Clark. 2011. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Sage.
- DiScala, Jeffrey, and Mega Subramaniam. 2011. “Evidence-Based Practice: A Practice towards Leadership Credibility among School Librarians.” *School Libraries Worldwide* 17 (2): 59–70.
- Elkins, Aaron. 2018. “Mind the Gaps: School Librarians’ Job Descriptions and the Professional Standards for School Librarians in the United States.” *School Libraries Worldwide* 24 (1): 87–98.
- Habley, Jennifer. 2019. “AASL Opens Nominations for Administrator Collaborative.” ALANews blog (May 24). <www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2019/05/aasl-opens-nominations-administrator-collaborative> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- Hartzell, Gary. 2007. “How Do Decision-Makers Become Library Media Advocates?” *Knowledge Quest* 36 (1): 32–35.
- Haycock, Ken. 1989. “Summary of EL Research Findings to Date: What Works, Research: The Implications for Professional Practice.” Vancouver, BC: Emergency Librarian.
<<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED327181.pdf>> (accessed November 19, 2021).
- Johnston, Melissa P. 2015. “Distributed Leadership Theory for Investigating Teacher Librarian Leadership.” *School Libraries Worldwide* 21 (2): 39–57.
- Kachel, Debra. 2017. “The Principal and the Librarian: Positioning the School Library Program.” *Teacher Librarian* 45 (1): 50–52.
- . 2021. “Data Speaks: Addressing Equity of Access to School Librarians for Students.” *Teacher Librarian* 48 (3): 49–52.
- Krippendorff, Klaus. 2004. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Levitov, Deborah. 2013. “Perspectives of School Administrators Related to School Libraries.” In *School Libraries Matter: Views from the Research*, edited by Mirah J. Dow, 91–108. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

- Lewis, Kathryn Roots. 2020. "School Administrators and the Power of School Librarians." *Knowledge Quest* blog (April 29). <<https://knowledgequest.aasl.org/school-administrators-and-the-power-of-school-librarians>> (accessed January 7, 2021).
- Lewis, Kathryn Roots, et al. 2021. "The Oklahoma Standard: Adopting the AASL Standards as State Standards." *Knowledge Quest* 49 (3): 32–38.
- Mackley, Allison. 2021. "The AASL Standards Are the School Library Standards of Pennsylvania." *Knowledge Quest* 49 (3): 8–16.
- Madsen, Janet, and Deborah Rinio. 2021. "Alaska's Journey to Adopting the AASL Standards." *Knowledge Quest* 49 (3): 26–31.
- Moreillon, Judi. 2013. "Educating for School Library Leadership: Developing the Instructional Partnership Role." *Journal of Education in Library and Information Science* 54 (1): 55–66. <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1074121.pdf>> (accessed November 24, 2021).
- Moreillon, Judi, Maria Cahill, and Rebecca McKee. 2012. "State Library Conferences as Professional Development Venues: Unbalanced Support for the AASL-Defined Roles of the School Librarian." *School Library Research* 15. <www.ala.org/aasl/slr/volume15/moreillon-cahill-mckee> (accessed February 23, 2021).
- Moreillon, Judi, Sue Kimmel, and Karen Gavigan. 2014. "Educating Pre-Service School Librarians for the Instructional Partner Role: An Exploration into University Curricula." *School Library Research* 17. <www.ala.org/aasl/slr/volume17/moreillon-kimmel-gavigan> (accessed March 26, 2021).
- O'Neal, Anita J. 2004. "Administrators', Teachers', and Media Specialists' Perceptions of the Roles of Media Specialists in Schools' Instructional Programs: Implications for Instructional Administration." *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 45 (4): 286–306.
- Reed, Karen, and Terri Tharp. 2020. "Application of the Teacher Citizenship Behavior (TCB) Theory to the Extra-Role Work of School Librarians." *School Libraries Worldwide* 26 (1): 48–60.
- Shannon, Donna M. 2009. "Principals' Perceptions of School Librarians." *School Libraries Worldwide* 15 (2): 1–22.
- Smith, Daniella. 2011. "Educating Preservice School Librarians to Lead: A Study of Self-Perceived Transformational Leadership Behaviors." *School Library Research* 14. <www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol14/SLR_EducatingPreservice_V14.pdf> (accessed November 27, 2021).
- . 2014. "Improving the Leadership Skills of Pre-Service School Librarians through Leadership Pre-Assessment." *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 55 (1): 55–68. <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1074294.pdf>> (accessed November 27, 2021).

Sturge, Jennifer. 2021. "Four Roadmaps for AASL Standards Adoption." *Knowledge Quest* 49 (3): 6–7.

Todd, Ross J., Carol A. Gordon, and Ya-Ling Lu. 2011. *One Common Goal: Student Learning: Report of Findings and Recommendations of the New Jersey Library Study Phase 2*. Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries. <https://sites.cominfo.rutgers.edu/cissl/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2020/01/njasl_phase-_2_final_0.pdf> (accessed November 18, 2021).

White, Marilyn Domas, and Emily E. Marsh. 2006. "Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology." *Library Trends* 55 (1): 22–45.

Appendix: Category Matrix

Key:

- A. Indicators based on the five roles as described in *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs* (AASL 2009)
- B. Indicators based on the “School Librarian Job Description” (AASL 2020g)
- C. Indicators 5–10 based on the School Librarian Interview Question Matrix (AASL 2020f)

Note: (C) Indicator decimal numbers follow this pattern of school librarians’ roles: .1 = leader; .2 = instructional partner; .3 = information specialist; .4 = teacher; and .5 = program administrator

Code	Indicator	Description
0	Leader	
0.1	Listens (A)	
0.2	Takes Action - responds to challenges and opportunities to increase effectiveness (A)	PD and Advocacy - keywords: improve, goals, increase expectations, enhance lessons, reach every learner, meet the needs of today’s learners
0.3	Builds Relationships w/in Learning Community (A) (B)	Within the school - including w/principal/stakeholders - keywords: heart/hub of the school/learning/central part of school - positive school culture/partnerships
0.4	Builds Relationships in Larger Professional Community (A) (B)	Beyond the walls of the school
0.5	Advocates for Student Learning (A) (B)	Publicly supports student learning - keywords: supports student voice/success - reach every learner - meet needs of every student; differentiated instruction
0.6	Champions Equity, Access, and Intellectual Freedom (B)	Supports/defends the causes of EDI - reach every learner, inclusivity (see also 6.1)
0.7	Fosters exploration, discovery, creation, and innovation - Growth Mindset (B)	Promotes the development of explore, discover, create, innovate as well as a growth mindset - could include PBL and/or inquiry. keywords: out of the box, experiment, imagination, innovation
0.8	Addresses Broader Educational Issues (B)	Communicates about issues (not specific to student learning, EDI, growth mindset). keywords: at district/state/national level (see also 4.8)

Code	Indicator	Description
1	Instructional Partner	
1.1	Collaborative Assignments Matched to Academic Standards (A) (B)	Works with teacher(s) on planning, co-teaching connected to classroom standards, curriculum - keywords: align across disciplines/grade levels, grow practice (see also 7.4)
1.2	Collaborative Assignments Promoting Critical Thinking (A) (B)	Works with teacher(s) on planning/co-teaching connected to critical thinking- keywords: think (as in Think, Create, Share, Grow) (see also 3.1)
1.3	Collaborative Assignments Promoting Info. Literacy (A) (B)	Works with teacher(s) on planning/co-teaching info lit. (see also 2.5)
1.4	Collaborative Assignments Promoting Technology skills (A) (B)	Works with teacher(s) on planning/co-teaching digital/tech skills.
1.5	Collaborative Assignments Promoting Social Skills / Cultural Competencies (A)	Works with teacher(s) on planning/co-teaching social skills and/or cultural competence. keywords: culturally responsive teaching
1.6	Instructional Design: Objectives, Goals, Assessments (A) (B)	Could include the design of PBL, inquiry-based learning, culturally responsive- keywords: raise expectations, align across disciplines
1.7	Communication: f2f and virtually (A)	Speaking, writing, videos, screencasts, signage, directions
2	Information Specialist	
2.1	Technology Tools to Supplement School Resources (A) (B)	Not hardware
2.2	Creation of Engaging Technological Learning Tasks (A)	Activities in which students engage; student-created book trailers; interactive video/audio creation; infographics
2.3	Communication Tools: Students, Teachers, Global Learning Community (A)	Teacher or student-created book trailers; screencasts; schoolwide support for virtual learning
2.4	Emerging Technologies (A) (B)	trends; new apps, QR codes; virtual/augmented reality

Code	Indicator	Description
2.5	Information Literacy (A)	Teaching, collaborating on or offering PD on info lit: news literacy; evaluating information sources (see also 1.3)
2.6	Software & Hardware Evaluation (A)	Selecting new tools/apps/software; Chromebooks; cameras; tablets; smartboards
2.7	Information Ethics / Copyright (A) (B)	Citing sources; reusing digital information; reading books online; Creative Commons
2.8	Digital Citizenship and Safety (B)	Cyberbullying; digital footprint; netiquette; Internet safety; student privacy; social media
2.9	Use Info in Global Society (B)	Publish blog posts/artwork to share globally authentic audience
3	Teacher	
3.1	Promotion of Critical Thinking (A) (B)	Teaching critical thinking, debate (see also 1.2)
3.2	Literacy Skills (A) (B)	Teaching reading and writing skills
3.3	Research Skills (A) (B)	Teaching how to find, gather, analyze, and use information to answer a question or solve a problem, inquiry
3.4	Pleasure Reading Motivation (A) (B)	Booktalks; reading incentive programs; new literature; live author visits; book clubs
3.5	Multiple Reading Formats: Graphic Novels, Periodicals, Audiobooks, Ebooks - All Formats (A) (B)	Teaching about a variety of formats (see 4.1 for Collection Development)
3.6	Peer Learning (A) (B)	Teaching involving students learning from each other
3.7	Personally Relevant Learning (A) (B)	PBL included here. keywords: personalized learning, windows and mirrors, validation of self, student choice, student voice
3.8	Teaches ethical use of info (A) (B)	PD for teachers and instruction for students
4	Program Administrator	
4.1	Collection Development / Collection Management (A) Connection to EDI (B)	Cataloging; genrefying- keywords: resources, books, ebooks

Code	Indicator	Description
4.2	Collaborative Program Mission, Plan, Policies (A) Both School and Library (B)	Connecting library's mission, vision, goals, policies, and/or initiatives with those of the school/district. Including social/cultural competencies that affect policies; pandemic related policies and safety measures
4.3	Staff Management (A) (B)	Working with paraprofessionals/library assistants/volunteers
4.4	Budget (A) (B)	Grants, funding, budget
4.5	Physical and Virtual Space (A) (B)	The physical library and its web presence
4.6	Partnerships with Stakeholders and Sister Organizations (A) (B)	PTA, NEA, committee work
4.7	Partnerships with Other Librarians / Professional Associations (A)	ALA, AASL, state associations, public/academic librarians
4.8	Broader Educational Issues (A) (B)	Initiatives, trends in education (see also 0.8)
4.9	Environment: fun, inviting, safe, flexible, collaborative, inclusive, conducive to learning (B)	Positive library (physical and virtual) environments - key context: the "library" not other types of "spaces"
5	Inquire	
5.1	Lead Inquiry/Problem-solving Process (C)	
5.2	Work w/Ts Personalize Inquiry (C)	Including PBL
5.3	Integrate Tech/Info Lit Skills as Instructional Partner (C)	
5.4	Coteaching Unit of Instruction (C)	
5.5	Inquiry Program/Service/Strategy (C)	
6	Include	
6.1	Inclusive (Space) w/Equity and Diversity (C)	More than the physical space of the library - keywords: diverse community, opportunity, culture (see also 0.6)
6.2	Instructional Partner: Promote Peer Learning/Multiple Perspectives (C)	

Code	Indicator	Description
6.3	Appropriate Reading/Instructional Resources - All Formats/Multiple Perspectives (C)	
6.4	Discussion/Active Debate re: Multiple/Diverse Viewpoints (C)	Engaging learners in discussions and debate
6.5	Physical Space/Policies to Promote Inviting/Respectful Inclusive Environment (C)	Physical space only
7	Collaborate	
7.1	Build and Measure Culture of Collaboration (C)	
7.2	Develop Collaborative Working Teams (C)	Take part in team projects/work
7.3	Use Collaborative Technologies - Working w/Others - Students Working w/Peers (C)	
7.4	Collaboration w/Classroom Educator (C)	Key concept: for instruction (see also 1.1)
7.5	Collaboration w/Principal / Connection to School Vision (C)	
8	Curate	
8.1	Create a Culture of Reading (Favorite Secondary Books) (C)	Keywords: booktalks, displays, reading promotion, reading initiatives
8.2	Curation to Support Classroom Educator's Unit (C)	
8.3	Use of Technology Tools for Own and Learners' Own Curation (C)	
8.4	Collaborate w/Classroom Educator to Support Learner Curation (C)	
8.5	Learners' 24/7 Access to Library (C)	Website, social media, chat, email
9	Explore	

Code	Indicator	Description
9.1	Leader, Change-maker, Thought-leader (C)	Keywords: influence, out of the box, experiment, risk-taking
9.2	Help Learners Develop Growth Mindset (C)	
9.3	Low-tech and High-tech Making Connected to Curriculum (C)	
9.4	Learners' Reflections and Constructive Feedback from School Librarian (C)	
9.5	Intellectual and Physical Library Space Promote Growth Mindset (C)	
10	Engage	
10.1	School Librarian's Global Learning Network and Impact on Practice (C)	
10.2	Partnership w/Classroom Educator: Focus on Digital Citizenship (Beyond Info Lit) (C)	
10.3	Response to Book/Technology/Lesson/Assignment Challenge from Parent (C)	
10.4	Learners' Self-Assessment and Publishing for Wider Audience (C)	Keywords: Student blogging, ePortfolios, content creation, application of skills/knowledge
10.5	Connections Between School Library and (Outside) Community (C)	

Cite This Article

Harland, Pamela, Judi Moreillon, and Anita Cellucci. 2021. "Take Action: A Content Analysis of Administrators' Understandings of and Advocacy for the Roles and Responsibilities of School Librarians." *School Library Research* 24.
<www.ala.org/aasl/slr/volume24/harland-moreillon-cellucci>.



School Library Research (ISSN: 2165-1019) is an official journal of the American Association of School Librarians. It is the successor to *School Library Media Quarterly Online* and *School Library Media Research*. The purpose of *School Library Research* is to promote and publish high quality original research concerning the management, implementation, and evaluation of school libraries. The journal will also emphasize research on instructional theory, teaching methods, and critical issues relevant to school libraries. Visit the [SLR website](#) for more information.



The American Association of School Librarians empowers leaders to transform teaching and learning. Visit the [AASL website](#) for more information.