

April 4, 1985
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TO: Judith King, Task Force Chairman, AASL

FROM: Eleanor K. Pourron, Task Force Member, YASD

It was a pleasure to meet with the Task Force members and with Ray Fry from the Department of Education. I believe our discussion was fruitful and I am hopeful that this same spirit of interest, commitment and mutual cooperation will be evident in the future work of other task forces.

If the recommendations from ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENCE are to have any impact, we must begin now to create the necessary coalitions. The ALA youth divisions can begin by developing and encouraging closer and stronger cooperation between school and public libraries. Each can offer the other strong supportive roles in enhancing the use of the separate collections and in providing greater access to information through the education of students, teachers and other adults. Joint committees might be used to develop specific programs that could serve as prototypes for local coalitions of schools and public libraries to follow. However, the development of programs is not the important issue. We all need a more active awareness of each other that could lead to such cooperative assistance or programs.

Several of the recommendations, D, I, K, L, and M have implications for research that need to be explored. The Department of Education, ALA's Office of Research, graduate schools of library and information science, ALISE or some other research organization could be encouraged to turn their attention to some of the needs for research and information in these areas. Findings of the research and investigation would help support new programs or provide new direction for the cooperative efforts of school and public libraries.

Recommendations C, F, H, and M have particular implication for the education, including continuing education, of librarians, teachers and administrators. The Information Age will continue to be a challenge in a lifelong learning society. Research has already been done to define competencies for librarians and information specialists. It will need to be examined for incorporation into existing professional degree programs and for new programs in continuing education for the practicing professional.

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At issue in all of these recommendations is the importance of bonding and strengthening the tenuous and tentative ties that now exist between the institutions devoted to education and those concerned with libraries. New emphasis should be placed on reducing some of the barriers that inhibit closer cooperation or exchange of information. This applies to divisions within ALA and down to local jurisdictions. We all need to fully realize that the the questions and concerns emerging from A NATION AT RISK and ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENCE do involve all of us. We're all in this together and the more we help each other the better the future results.

cc: Lydia LaFleur, YASD President
Evelyn Shaevel, YASD Executive Director