

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Update on School Libraries

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
Information only

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Marci Merola, Director, Office for Library Advocacy
Sylvia Norton, Executive Director, AASL

CONTACT PERSON:

Marci Merola, Director, Office for Library Advocacy
312-280-2431, mmerola@ala.org

Sylvia Norton, Executive Director, American Association of School Librarians
312-280-4388, snorton@ala.org

DRAFT OF MOTION:
N/A

DATE: 01.13.15

SUMMARY: An update of school library initiatives

Background

The Office for Library Advocacy (OLA) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) report on developments in advocacy for school libraries. Multiple years of strategic advocacy plans have culminated in past months, as OLA and AASL begin to institutionalize much of the strategies and tactics articulated in these plans. A new working framework has emerged, with three distinct audiences: external audiences (including advocates, parents, and decision-makers); the profession at large including librarians of all types, and ALA staff and member groups.

For External Audiences

- **Digital Supplement:** “School Libraries Transform Learning,” a stand-alone, strategic supplement of American Libraries magazine for use among members and external stakeholders in September/October 2014.
- **Online Resources for Parents and Advocates:** “School Libraries Make A Difference,” an online resource available at www.Ilovelibraries.org, launched in June. The resource answers

questions such as *Why are school libraries essential?*; *Are school libraries in danger?*; *How can I get involved?*; and *Frequently Asked Questions*. It is filled with infographics and videos.

- **Declaration for the Right to School Libraries:** 2013-2014 ALA President Barbara Stripling's initiative continues through 2014-2015 ALA President Courtney Young's term. The Declaration for the Right to School Libraries brings the critical role of school libraries into the spotlight.

For the Profession

- AASL launched an internal campaign that will run through the ALA Midwinter Meeting, seizing the opportunity for face-to-face conversations that can be leveraged to spread the school library advocacy message through AASL and within the greater ALA. "Ask Me How School Libraries Transform Learning" will inform conference goers from all types of libraries about the critical role school libraries play in children's lives, as well as how they can be advocates for their fellow librarians.
- ALA President Courtney Young echoed this campaign with her recent e-blast to membership asking all types of librarians to speak up for school libraries via letter to the editor and op-eds at the local level.

For ALA Staff and Member Groups

OLA, PIO and AASL continue their work of institutionalizing efforts around school library advocacy within the association. Key initiatives include:

- **Messaging:** enhancement of current school library messaging for media opportunities such as op-eds, and letters to the editor, as well as advocacy opportunities such as crisis messaging and talking points for decision-makers. Includes talking points on college- and career-readiness, Common Core (when needed) and other key points as indicated in AASL's Standards for 21st Century Learning. Includes a student-focused emphasis.
- **Media Strategizing:** Representatives from all units meet regularly to discuss media focus and planning
- **ESEA:** As ESEA legislation looms, these groups are prepared to work in collaboration with the Washington Office for maximum media exposure and timely, on-message communication to members and library advocates.