

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Status of 2011-2012 ALA Presidential Task Force on School Libraries

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
Information only

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
Susan D. Ballard and Patricia Tumulty, Co-Chairs
2011-2012 ALA Presidential Task Force on School Libraries

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DRAFT OF MOTION:
N/A

DATE: 06-15-12

SUMMARY: Recent activity of the ALA Presidential Task Force on School Libraries.

Charge

The ALA Presidential Task Force on School Libraries was created by 2011-2012 ALA President Molly Raphael in response to what some believe is a “national crisis in the making,” a number of districts proposing the de-professionalization of school librarians and de-funding of school libraries.

The goals of school library campaign are:

- To lead a campaign addressing the urgent need for advocacy for school libraries, and the impact of the de-professionalization and curtailment of school library instructional programs on students and student achievement.
- To collaborate with member groups and staff to coordinate implementation of the campaign.
- To serve as liaisons to key divisions and other groups, as well as libraries at the local, state, and national level to galvanize support among libraries of all types, around the nation.
- To assist in outreach efforts to various external partners

- To create messaging and strategies for communicating with the public and for use by public advocates.
- To participate in regular communication about the initiative, including conference calls, and if possible, in face-to-face meetings at Midwinter and Annual Conferences.

In order to convey a sense of urgency, the Task Force took a unique, “all hands on deck” approach in its formation: it includes representatives from all major divisions and committees of ALA, as well as state chapters and school affiliates.

Highlights

- Ongoing communication throughout the year with representatives of task force via conference calls and meetings at ALA conferences, in order to keep the importance of school libraries in the forefront, across the association.
- Full support (and therefore, association-wide support) of AASL President Carl Harvey’s White House Petition on School Libraries, which gathered more than 27,000 signatures nationally.
- The ALA Washington Office offered education on current legislation, such as the breakout session on ESEA at National Library Legislative day.
- Ongoing creation of cross-divisional “teams” that include community advocates and supporters at the state level to connect with federal representatives regarding federal legislation. Creating supporting materials to assist in the teams’ advocacy efforts.
- Task Force members are currently revising the ALA Resolution “*School Libraries and Librarians are Critical to Educational Success*” passed in June 2003 to articulate the critical importance of well funded school library programs staffed by professional school librarians in student achievement and learning in the 21st century.
(<http://www.ala.org/aasl/aaslissues/advocacy/alaresolution>)

Challenges

- Articulating the impact of poorly funded school libraries to create a sense of urgency throughout the profession.
- Building partnerships and coalitions among partner agencies of influence for the support of school libraries (e.g., National Parent Teachers Assn., American Assn. of School Administrators, National Assn. of Secondary School Principals, National Assn. of Counties, International City/County Management Assn., National League of Cities)
- Filling the gap in resources available to parents and community members engaged grassroots advocacy for school libraries.

Plans for 2012-2013

ALA President-Elect Maureen Sullivan has asked that the 2011-2012 Presidential Task Force on School Libraries, be extended into her presidential year. Current co-chairs Pat Tumulty, Chair of the Committee for Library Advocacy, and Susan Ballard, President-Elect of AASL, have agreed to co-chair again. 2013-2014 ALA President Barbara Stripling has asked to take an active role in this task force, as well.

With one-year terms ending at the close of the 2012 ALA Annual Conference, the Co-Chairs will create a new roster. Projects planned include:

- A rapid response mechanism to lead association-wide messaging and discussion on current library issues, including federal legislation and or/regulations, as well as advocacy crises at the local level
- Collaboration with AASL Affiliate Assembly to gather information on outstanding administrators who have been honored for their demonstrated support school library programs around the country and leverage these administrators as local spokespersons for school libraries with peer administrators at a state and national level.
- A website to help track school library reductions.
- Increase support to parent and community grassroots school library advocates.