

School Libraries Transform Learning Message Box

The *School Libraries Transform Learning Message Box* is not for distribution. For instructions on using the Message Box strategy and other advocacy tools and resources, visit standards.aasl.org.

The school library is a unique and essential part of the learning community.

- School librarians build instructional **partnerships** to engage learners in creative inquiry.
- Learners **engage** with local and global communities through literacy projects and events.
- School librarians are **instructional leaders** who provide a wide-angle lens on learning across all disciplines, grades, and abilities in the school community.
- School libraries **empower** students to tell their stories and share their voices with others.

The school library is the great equalizer for all learners.

- Every learner has the **right to choose** what they will read, view, or hear.
- An effective school library plays a crucial role in **bridging digital and socioeconomic divides**.
- School libraries provide **equitable 24/7 open access** to resources and technological learning tools.
- School libraries create **inclusive environments** where all learners feel safe to create knowledge and share their perspectives.

School Libraries Transform Learning

Qualified school librarians are trained to help students navigate information.

- Students **strategically seek** information with persistence and flexibility.
- Evaluating the **authority and accuracy** of information is an essential part of citizenship.
- School librarians teach students to seek, understand, and learn from **diverse perspectives**.
- Students who can ask their own meaningful questions and curate their own resources become **self-directed learners** who effectively make decisions and solve problems.
- School librarians provide opportunities for learners to use digital tools and networks **ethically, responsibly** and **creatively**.

School libraries prepare all learners for college, career, and life.

- School libraries are **learner-centered environments** that foster inquiry and critical thinking.
- In school libraries, students discover and connect diverse resources to expand and personalize their learning for a **well-rounded education**.
- **Reading** is the core of personal and academic success.
- School librarians **motivate learning and support literacy** across media formats.
- School library experiences prepare students to **think, create, share, and grow** as effective users and creators of ideas and information.

Think Inside the Box!

Tips for using a Message Box from Salient Point, LLC

When asked about how school libraries transform learning, it is important that our response delivers focused and compelling messages that resonate with influencers and policy makers and strengthen the understanding of the role of the school librarian. The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) has adopted the Message Box strategy to aid flexibility while increasing consistency throughout the school library community.

The School Libraries Transform Learning Message Box is not a handout and is by no means a script. It is your notes—a crib sheet that prompts your customized response.

Why use a message box rather than a list of talking points?

Many people instinctively use a sheet of bulleted “talking points” to form and remember their messages. We are all taught to read and even write in linear fashion, but in verbal communication that foundation breaks down.

- The information in talking points usually exceeds the audience absorption capacity. Sometimes less really is more.
- An old-fashioned laundry list is difficult to refer to when speaking and hard to remember when responding to questions under pressure.
- Lists tend to grow over time as more and more messages are added.
- A list intuitively implies that what is stated first is most important.
- A list compels us to start at the top and finish at the bottom—the ultimate act of linearity.

How can I use the message box effectively?

The message box strategy assures quality non-linearity and focused message delivery. Notice that in the center of the message box is the central pro-active goal or theme. Simply put, it sums up your position, philosophy, or conclusion in a few, short words. Framing that goal are four core messages that are applicable to all audiences, while the supporting points for each message maintain flexibility allowing the messenger to tailor their message to audience and topic.

Less is more. Be able to state the case in a minute or less. Laundry lists don’t work. Keep your messages short and digestible.

Choose your message. As all the messages are roughly of equal importance, the geometric arrangement prevents the hierarchy that a list can create. There is no special order or obvious place to start and finish, and not all messages will be used. Choose your messages based on the audience and topic.

Use words that stick. Punching through the overwhelming amount of information delivered each day requires catchy words that are consistently used. Messages should be repeated, not like a broken record but as often as possible, to help them punch through the clutter. Supporting points provide depth to the core messages, allowing repetition in delivery of a message without becoming redundant.

Tell your story. Typically, people don’t remember facts and statistics well, but we always seem to recall a story. These messages can and should be an active lead to a personal story that you add to illustrate your point. Just remember to keep it brief.

Avoid false debates. Suggesting cuts in other programs is likely to pit you against key colleagues and make some audiences defensive. It doesn’t take much to ignite a debate—individual words can do it. Stay positive and take advantage of common ground.

Stay on message. When using the message box in a question and answer format, it is necessary to think ATM—*Address* the question, then *Transition* to one of the key *Messages*.

Reaching Our Stakeholders

School library advocates can use the *School Libraries Transform Learning Message Box* to select key phrases and statements to craft unique messages about school libraries for specific audiences. Here are some examples of how you might craft messages using the message box when asked common questions about school libraries and librarians.



AN ADMINISTRATOR ASKS:

Why do we need school libraries and librarians when we have the internet?

Qualified school librarians are trained to help students navigate information.

Evaluating the authority and accuracy of information is an essential part of citizenship, and we are uniquely qualified in this area. School librarians are instructional leaders who provide a wide-angle lens on learning across all disciplines, grades, and abilities in the school community.



A TEACHER ASKS:

How can a school librarian help me and my students?

School librarians build instructional partnerships to engage your learners in creative inquiry. We can help your

students discover and connect diverse resources to expand and personalize their learning for a well-rounded education. Together, we can teach your students to seek, understand, and learn from diverse perspectives.



A PARENT ASKS:

What do school librarians do besides check out books?

School librarians do care about books because reading is the core of personal and academic success. We

protect every child's right to choose what they will read, view, or hear. But we provide more than books for your child: the school library offers an inclusive environment where all learners feel safe to create and share their perspectives. We help your children ask their own meaningful questions and curate their own resources to become independent learners who effectively make decisions and solve problems.



A COMMUNITY MEMBER, JOURNALIST, OR POLICY-MAKER ASKS:

What role do school libraries play in democratic education?

School libraries promote equity and community. An effective school library plays a crucial role in bridging digital and socioeconomic divides. We provide equitable 24/7 open access to resources and technological learning tools, and librarians help learners engage with local and global communities through literacy projects and events. In addition, school librarians teach students to seek, understand, and learn from diverse perspectives.

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