

New National School Library Standards encourage students to explore, collaborate, engage

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) national standards include a checklist for evaluating school libraries across the district

Looking to illustrate an abstract concept from a novel she'd read, an Oklahoma high school student turned to her building-level school librarian. Then, with the school librarian's encouragement to tinker in the makerspace, the girl sculpted a clay model of a kneeling woman balancing a 3D-printed replica of the earth on her back.

"She was demonstrating the concept of oppression and the weight of the world on the woman," explains Shirley Simmons, assistant superintendent of educational services for the Norman Public School District, located about 20 miles south of downtown Oklahoma City. "It came from a question she had about how women are viewed in some parts of the world and how they experience oppression. It was much deeper than just writing a paper on it."



National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries. Also known as National School Library Standards, they were released by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) last November.

The goal of the standards is to help school librarians establish effective school libraries that prepare students for the next phases of their lives—college, career, life," says AASL President Kathryn Lewis, who also is director of libraries and instructional technology for Norman Public Schools. "We want standards of practice to help our students be innovators, creators, problem-solvers and thinkers. And also advance our school libraries so they are in step with the broader world and educational community."

The standards framework integrates what used to be three separate sets of standards for learners, school librarians and school libraries. The new, comprehensive approach demonstrates the connections among those three groups of standards, which share six foundations: Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore and Engage. Within each foundation are four domains: Think, Create, Share and Grow.

"Most of the standards are not content-based but address how we approach learning and interact with content," Simmons says. "The librarian helps content-area teachers go



By emboldening the student to inquire, explore and create, the school librarian was following the recently revised

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beyond their curriculum and help students do things such as collaborate, ask their own questions—inquire, wade through the incredible amount of information that’s available and curate it.”

**BECAUSE COLLABORATION
EMPOWERS TEACHERS.**



Lewis was part of the seven-member editorial board that spent over two years researching and discussing current needs and trends with stakeholders such as school librarians, classroom educators, school administrators and professors teaching librarianship to graduate students. This feedback influenced the final product, which features streamlined, easily understood information presented in a parallel structure that’s light on jargon.

To assist in using the standards, the AASL released a School Library Evaluation Checklist, which assesses areas such as environment, curriculum and “commitment to maintaining intellectual freedom.”



**BECAUSE LEARNING
CAN HAPPEN ANYTIME,
ANYWHERE.**

“On a building level, the checklist allows the school librarian and principal to focus on the library space, program and outcomes,” Simmons says. “On a district level, it provides the framework for administrators to establish needs across the district—resources, professional development.”

The standards, which were revised for the first time in 10 years, have important implications as education becomes more personalized, Lewis says. “Students are asked to contribute to the knowledge base, think about it, question, share and interact with it,” she says. “That is so important because we need learners who are able to understand what’s happening in the world as they grow up and leave K12 institutions.”

**For more information, visit standards.aasl.org.
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National School Library Standards

Connect Learning Across Grades and Disciplines

The *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* is a must-have resource for every school librarian in your district as you work to build capacity in your schools and bring equity, connectivity, and personalization to instruction.

Talk with your school librarian about your shared goals and priorities. Download the *Because Everyone Is a Learner* infographic to help you spark conversations within your learning community (standards.aasl.org/project/transform).

Visit standards.aasl.org to access support resources and discover ways you can collaborate with your school librarian to prepare learners for college, career, and life.



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