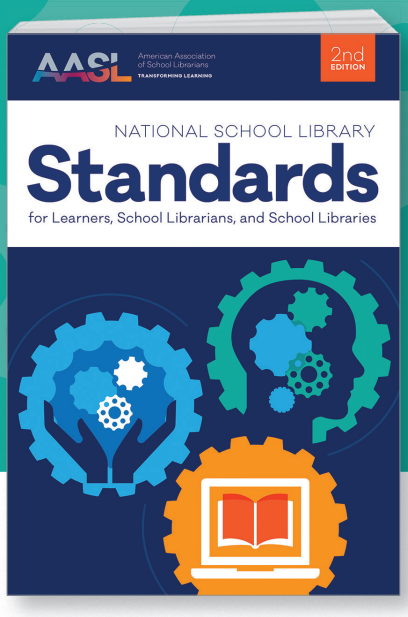
American Association of School Librarians
TRANSFORMING LEARNING

NATIONAL SCHOOL LIBRARY STANDARDS

National School Library Standards

2nd Edition



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WHAT SCHOOL LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

AASL Standards at a Glance

The *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*—developed by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL)—offer a comprehensive, competency-based framework that strengthens instruction, promotes personalization, and improves student outcomes.

They define what:

- Learners should know and be able to do in today's information-rich world.
- School librarians do to guide inquiry, instruction, and digital citizenship.
- School libraries provide as student-centered, future-ready learning environments.

Now in its 2nd Edition (2026), updates to this fundamental resource reflect modern priorities with clearer language and actionable supports.

A Smart Investment

The AASL Standards aren't just standards—they empower school librarians as instructional leaders with a vision for transforming teaching and learning through the school library.

The 2nd Edition is a strategic investment in:

- ✓ **Student success –** Stronger research, critical thinking, and communication skills
- ✓ **Teacher support –** Cross-curricular collaboration, instructional innovation and alignment
- ✓ **Access for all –** Information, technology, and a broad range of resources for every learner
- ✓ **Digital readiness –** Citizenship, safety, media fluency, and ethical tech use
- ✓ **Whole-child development –** Tailored, inquiry-based learning opportunities

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WHAT SCHOOLS GAIN

Implementing the AASL Standards provides:

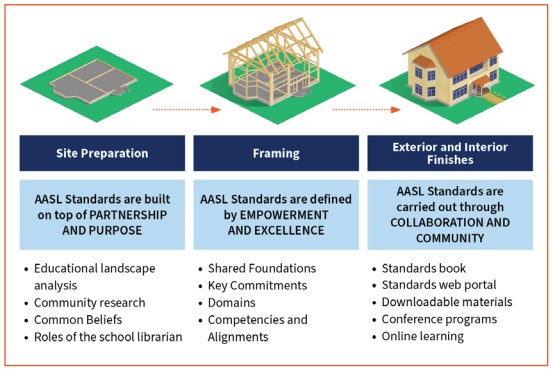
- A clear roadmap for growing library impact
- Cross-content instructional support
- Tools for library evaluation and improvement
- Stronger alignment with school goals and strategic plans
- Reinforced literacy development and literature appreciation
- Measurable learner outcomes tied to national standards

Why Update Now?

The education landscape is evolving—and so are the roles of school libraries and librarians. The 2nd Edition reflects:

- Current educational research
- Feedback from thousands of educators
- Shifts in technology, pedagogy, and learner needs
- A stronger focus on personalization and access for all learners

These updates strengthen the foundation for school libraries that are responsive, innovative, and future-ready.



5 Key Updates

1. **Clearer language, streamlined layout –** Easier to read, apply, and share
2. **Student-centered design –** Emphasizes flexibility, relevance, access, and engagement
3. **Actionable competencies –** Observable learner behaviors and librarian responsibilities
4. **Strategic alignment –** Ties to inquiry, digital literacy, soft skills, and state goals
5. **Robust tools –** Includes sample scenarios, evaluation rubrics, and goal-setting guides

Leadership Impact

School leaders are accountable for measurable learning outcomes—and the 2nd Edition helps deliver them. Supporting the AASL Standards means supporting:

Instructional Excellence

- Aligns the library with school-wide teaching and learning goals
- Supports high-quality, standards-aligned instruction in all content areas

Measurable Impact

- Provides tools for evaluating librarian effectiveness and program success
- Builds data to support strategic planning, staffing, and resource decisions

Future-Ready Schools

- Prepares students for civic life, careers, and college through inquiry and tech fluency
- Strengthens school culture through responsive, student-centered practices

Admin FAQs

Q: Are the AASL Standards just for the library?

A: No—these standards are school-wide tools designed to integrate with all subject areas.

Q: Do these standards replace state standards?

A: No—they complement and align with existing local and national standards, supporting district goals and teacher effectiveness.

Q: Are the standards one-size-fits-all mandates?

A: Not at all—the AASL Standards are flexible and adaptable to your school's context and needs.

Q: Will this require more work from our librarian?

A: The AASL Standards help librarians work smarter, not harder, by leading more strategically—with clarity, focus, and collaborative direction.

READY TO SUPPORT THE 2nd EDITION?

Ask your librarian how this investment can support school goals, drive improvement, and benefit every student.

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standards.aasl.org