Strategic Planning

During the PSLA Summit in July 2018, thirty-four representatives worked with consultant Michael Kumer from Boards Made to Order to review our mission, vision and strategic priorities. After a lively and passionate full day of discussion, collaboration and consensus building, we walked away with a framework from which to craft a final document.

The difficult worked continued through August and September with eleven volunteers, in a Tier I and Tier II review structure, who brought multiple voices and a broad range of perspectives to finalize the project.

Mission: The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association is dedicated to transforming teaching and learning through quality school library programs.

Vision: A world of critically literate, connected learners

Strategic Priority Critical Issues

Professional Learning and Leadership Development
Critical Issue: Leadership Development
Critical Issue: Professional Learning

Communication and Organizational Excellence
Critical Issue: Association Relevance
Critical Issue: Membership Development
Critical Issue: Internal and External Communication

Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession
Critical Issue: Public Perception of School Libraries
Critical Issue: Integrated Advocacy

The revised mission statement, vision statement and strategic priorities, which was approved by the PSLA Board on October 6th.

School Library Legislation

During the 2017-2018 legislative session there were two pieces of legislation introduced. Representative Longietti introduced House Bill 740, an act which would amend the Public School Code to require one “certified librarian” per public school. Thirty-eight co-sponsors joined in his efforts. HB740 was referred to the House Education Committee on March 7, 2017. (http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?syear=2017&sind=0&body=H&type=B&bn=740) In addition, Senator Blake introduced Senate Bill 1269 with the same goal of requiring a certified librarian in public schools. Although presented late in the legislative session, five co-sponsors supported SB 1269, and it was referred to the Senate Education Committee on September 28, 2018. (http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?sYear=2017&sInd=0&body=S&type=B&bn=1269) The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association plans to work with legislators next session to reintroduce this legislation and build political support.
Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries in partnership with the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association executed an initiative to revise the Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs (2011). The Steering Group, consisting of Allison Mackley, Jennifer Bates, Cathi Fuhrman, Eileen Kern and Susan Pannebaker, guided two groups, in a Tier I and Tier II structure, to re-envision the guidelines. The project, which began in July 2018, included both virtual and face-to-face work. The Steering Group hopes to pass the project to the editor and then to the graphic designer with the goal of presenting the document to the Governor’s Advisory Council on Library Development in January for approval.

Chapter 49 Regulations

In July 2018, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality held three stakeholder meetings across the state to gather feedback regarding revisions to the Chapter 49 Certification for Professional Personnel regulations. One school librarian, Karey Killian, was able to attend the meeting in Harrisburg, PA. The discussions around certification provided valuable feedback used to identify common themes and priority areas to move forward to the State Board of Education.

With support from Glenn Miller, Deputy Secretary/Commissioner for Libraries, I was afforded the opportunity to take part in subsequent phone and face-to-face conversations throughout the months of August and September to provide feedback on multiple areas, with specific emphasis on the section which limits certificates that can be added onto another by testing only, emphasizing that a library certificate requires special and unique technical skills and understanding.

Janus Retreat

To bring closure to the 2017 – 2018 LSTA Grant cycle, Mary Kay Biagini hosted a Janus Retreat on September 7 – 8, 2018, in Hershey. Eighteen people representing the following groups attended: LSTA Grant Steering Group, Communicators Network and Regional Coordinators, Academy Members, PSLA Presidential Line Officers, Communications Committee Co-chairs, Operations Committee Co-chairs and Conference Committee. During the retreat, we spent the first evening looking back to analyze the LSTA grant initiatives through the lenses of what we have accomplished, what we have observed and what we have learned. We spent the second day looking forward to the 2018 – 2019 LSTA grant activities to determine what we hope to accomplish based on lessons learned.

AASL Standards Regional Training (LSTA Grant - PSLA and University of Pittsburgh)

With funding from the current LSTA grant, PSLA is offering 3-hour regional training sessions on AASL Standards for School Library Programs at two levels—Understanding framework and content and implementing the Standards with an emphasis on integrating the Standards into information literacy curriculum at elementary and secondary levels and infusing Standards across all curricular areas.

Strengthening the Association through Local Affiliates

The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association is focused on strengthening its membership through the development and approval of local affiliates to provide regional support to school librarians. We currently have three affiliates in the Pittsburgh area. There are two additional groups forming, one in the South Central area and one in the Eastern part of the Commonwealth.
PSLA Leadership Academies (LSTA Grant – PSLA and University of Pittsburgh)

With LSTA funding, the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh’s Library Certification Program will hold three leadership academies in the upcoming year.

- Developing Leaders Academy – An academy that focuses on librarians in more isolated, rural and urban areas who are the sole librarians for K-12 school districts, serve multiple schools and/or are unable to participate in professional development at the state level
- Aspiring Leaders Academy – A mini academy for librarians who aspire to leadership within PSLA and PSLA-affiliate associations with an emphasis on organizing additional PSLA affiliate associations across Pennsylvania and intern with PSLA Board and committees
- Revitalizing Leaders Academy – Includes participants of the first Academies (Emerging [1 and 2], Sustaining and Regional [1 and 2] who seek updating of and refining of competencies to advance to a next level of excellence for their library programs and their own professional learning.

AASL Standards Implementation Committee

PSLA is represented at the national level with various members on task forces and committees. I am a member of the AASL Standards Implementation Committee whose work is to carry out the goals in the AASL National School Library Standards implementation action plan.

As a member of the AASL Standards Implementation Committee, I also serve as the liaison to the AASL Presidential Initiative Task Force and AASL Standards Crosswalk Task Force. The work of the Presidential Initiative Task force includes developing presentations and resources for advocacy efforts at the school and district administrative level. The AASL Standards Crosswalk Task Force developed the AASL Standards Crosswalk to the ISTE Teacher and Student Standards, as well as the Future Ready Framework. They continue to examine additional potential crosswalks. Other members liaise with the State Workshops Task Group, OER Task Group, Trends Task Group, Professional Development Content on Creating Self-Reflection Tool Task Group and Developing School Library Evaluation Online Tool Task Group.

All Committee meetings are attended by members, as well as Sylvia Norton, AASL Executive Director, an AASL Board liaison and an AASL office staff member. In addition, the AASL President, Katheryn Roots Lewis, attends the Presidential Initiative Task Force meetings.

PSLA Pulse – “Behind the Scenes”

With a commitment to transparency, I am writing “Behind the Scenes” blog posts for the PSLA Pulse to ensure PSLA members have access to information and happenings that they may not have known about otherwise.

SXSW EDU

As PSLA President, I have been asked by John Chrastka, Executive Director of Every Library to be a member of a 5-person panel presentation titled “Why is the Largest Classroom in the School Empty” at the SXSW EDU conference in March. I will be presenting with other people of influence including Keith Curry Lance, Kafi Kumasi, and Azi Jamalian. This high-level panel will present information and facilitate discussion about practice and policy with a focus on how state education agencies can – and should – be looking to restore and enhance school library programs to build equity, and how that takes a librarian in that role. that impacts libraries at the state and national levels. Presenting at this conference is very selective and highly competitive. It will bring PSLA into a national spotlight.