

Fight for School Libraries

An Executive Summary

The American Library Association, as part of an initiative by 2017-2018 ALA President Jim Neal, brought together in May 2018 a group of members from academic, public and school libraries to review and discuss the status of school libraries, and to develop an Association-wide strategy for supporting school libraries, school library workers, American Association of School Librarians and the students and communities that they serve.

In his presidential column, “Fight for School Libraries” in the March 2018 American Libraries, Jim Neal stated:

“Libraries constitute an ecology of educational, research and community services. In this environment of interdependency, we, as a family of libraries, must embrace advocacy for school libraries as foundational to the success of our collective work for students who love to read, as we prepare them for college, career and life.

school libraries, including strengthening relationships with other ALA divisions as well as working more closely with the ALA Washington Office.

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The attendees at the summit focused on the present state and future opportunities for school libraries, the impact on the work of public and academic libraries, and on the essential responsibilities of ALA and the profession for supporting school libraries. Active participation are keys to success. The following strategies were identified:

1. Collect quality data on school libraries and on standards and policies regarding their staffing, funding and accreditation. We must inventory, influence and implement. We must work with the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute for Museum and Library Services, and with state library and education agencies to gather current, accurate and actionable data.
2. Develop and