

“No one understands what we do.”

How many times have you heard that said? School librarians, their value, and their contribution to a student’s education are truly misunderstood, *but that has to change*. Knowing that DESE has eliminated the reporting of Screen 7 Data for Missouri school libraries, other states have already begun eliminating this certified position, and districts are facing the ever-pressing issue of budget cuts and new focuses, your state organization has responded.

MASL has formed an advocacy task force to represent the evolving librarian. This group of librarians from across our state has met approximately once a month via Skype to discuss the best ways to advocate so that others will truly understand the value of a certified school librarian in the education of a child.

This task force, through much research, has a list of accomplishments thus far:

- Developed “Libraries Transform” campaign based off of the ALA model
- Created the Libraries Transform Advocacy website:  
*missourischoollibrariestransform.weebly.com*
- Identified school library stakeholders and best points of contact, conferences, and conventions
- Constructed an infographic for Missouri Legislators distributed on Library Advocacy Day February 9, 2016
- Secured copies of *School Libraries Work!: A Compendium of Research Supporting the Effectiveness of School Libraries* which were distributed to legislators on February 25 and will be mailed to school superintendents this week, communicating research on the value of school libraries
- Created a data collection survey, which MASL will release at Spring Conference, that reflects the evolving librarians’ practices

However, there is still work to be completed by the MASL in this endeavor:

- Host exhibits and/or present at conferences of our stakeholders
- Analyze data collected via the survey to create meaningful advocacy literature
- Investigate grant opportunities along with the possibility of hosting Missouri’s own study of school library effectiveness

Of course, we need the help of our members to make this happen. Here’s what you can do:

- Contact your legislators and let them know about the importance of school librarians and libraries
- Share MASL advocacy information with stakeholders in your community
- Submit data to MASL when it is requested

Currently this task force is without a budget. We have requested funds from our board to begin this endeavor and hope to build a budget through fundraising.

This very long letter is meant to serve two purposes. First, it is to keep you informed of how your organization is working diligently on your behalf. Second, we hope to spark you to begin advocating within your circle. Parents, administrators, and your community deserve to know how you are meeting the educational challenges of today in assisting the students of your school. We do so much more than circulate books!

Please feel free to contact the MASL office (573) 893-4155 with any comments or concerns. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
The Evolving Librarian Task Force

Margaret Sullivan, MASL President  
Amy Taylor, MASL 1st Vice-President  
Mernie Maestas, MASL 2nd Vice-President  
Lisa Scroggs, MASL Legislative Committee Chair  
Barry Crook, MASL Public Relations Chair  
Melissa Corey, MASL Member  
Kerry Townsend, Region Director  
Jill Hancock, Association Management