

ESSA AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Transforming School Librarians into Advocates WITH AASL'S ESSA WORKSHOPS



American Association
of School Librarians
TRANSFORMING LEARNING

AASL Executive Summary

Study conducted for AASL by:
2017 ALA Emerging Leaders – Team B

Shannon DeSantis
Cristin M. Dillard
Samantha Hull
Melissa Ray
Denise Tabscott
Melody Townley

Lori Donovan, member guide
Stephanie Book, staff liaison



INTRODUCTION

In September 2016, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) began providing advocacy workshops that provided information on federal developments related to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and how to connect ESSA directly to the role of the school librarian. These AASL workshops were presented free of charge by AASL leaders.

The goals of the workshops were to:

- provide the most current information on developments at the federal level and work through the sections of ESSA that can be directly linked to the school librarian/school library program;
- connect ESSA language to the school librarian's role; and
- discuss work currently underway in states and provide recommendations for opportunities to ensure the “effective school library program” language is included in state and local plans.

At the close of 2017, more than 40 workshops nationwide will have been held.

The 2017 Emerging Leaders group sponsored by AASL was charged with evaluating the effectiveness of these workshops. To effectively evaluate the workshops, the Emerging Leaders group conducted a national survey between February 27, 2017, and March 24, 2017. The survey collected data on the effectiveness of the ESSA workshops provided by AASL.

This paper is an overview of the data that was collected. As the results show, school librarians felt more comfortable advocating for their programs after attending the workshop. Many felt the workshops were beneficial. Suggestions were given to AASL to continue the support of school librarians and the ESSA.

OBSERVATIONS

Participants answered five questions on advocacy perceptions before and after the workshop. State organizers of the workshop were contacted for phone interviews after the survey. Sixty-two percent of survey respondents were school librarians.

A majority of respondents stated that the tools and resources provided by AASL were very helpful in preparing them for contact with their stakeholders and elected representatives. These AASL-provided materials made them feel more comfortable and knowledgeable, gave them valuable insight into ESSA, and prepared them for real-world advocacy. Many respondents mentioned that the time spent in the workshop learning how to build coalitions and develop elevator speeches was very helpful.

Within many states, ESSA plans had begun before the AASL-provided workshop; still many states' plans have not been completed by the date of this summary. Therefore, it was difficult for observers and participants to effectively measure their advocacy efforts. The workshops did raise awareness of advocacy for school librarians. ESSA is providing hope for school librarians, and the workshops helped foster discussions about advocacy tools for librarians at the building, district, and state level.

The chart below shows that school librarians' advocacy comfort levels increased after the workshop:

- 45.09 percent of respondents felt “Adequately equipped” to effectively communicate with stakeholders about the academic impact of school libraries.
- 20.22 percent felt “Completely equipped” to effectively communicate with stakeholders about the academic impact of school libraries.

CURRENT ROADBLOCKS

ESSA has strong language about school librarians, but it does not mandate school librarians in each school. Schools can apply

for funding to help maintain school librarians and libraries. However, school librarians continue to lose their positions. Although ESSA includes language about school librarians, members felt ESSA funding was going to be left up to states to decide how money would be appropriated. Many state workshop leaders contacted for this survey stated that the outcome of the presidential election had many of their state programs at a standstill and questioning their state's current ESSA plans. It seems many are waiting to see how things shake out on a federal level. Another roadblock mentioned is that states lack school librarian representation at the state departments of education or on the ESSA state planning committees. The deadline for states to submit their plans has been pushed back as well. One concern was that ESSA has school librarians competing for funding with other school personnel such as counselors, and it is difficult for librarians to find solid answers on where and how to secure funding for their programs. Finally, there are still uninformed stakeholders who don't understand the role of the school librarian or the impact of school librarians and the school library on students.

ADVOCACY EFFORTS FROM THE ESSA WORKSHOP

In follow-up interviews state leaders were asked if any advocacy efforts had been launched as a result of the ESSA workshop. State leaders noted that numerous advocacy stories have been shared due to the ESSA workshop. School librarians also have partnered with their state departments of education and created networks to share ESSA information from the state. School librarians have created weekly advocacy challenge lists, participated in library legislative day, created social media accounts, and met with their school boards and administrators. Some state leaders have created related or follow-up workshops for their states.



Advocacy Methods, Tools, and Stories:

Responses from the survey and phone interviews provided information on how state leaders responded to the ESSA workshops.

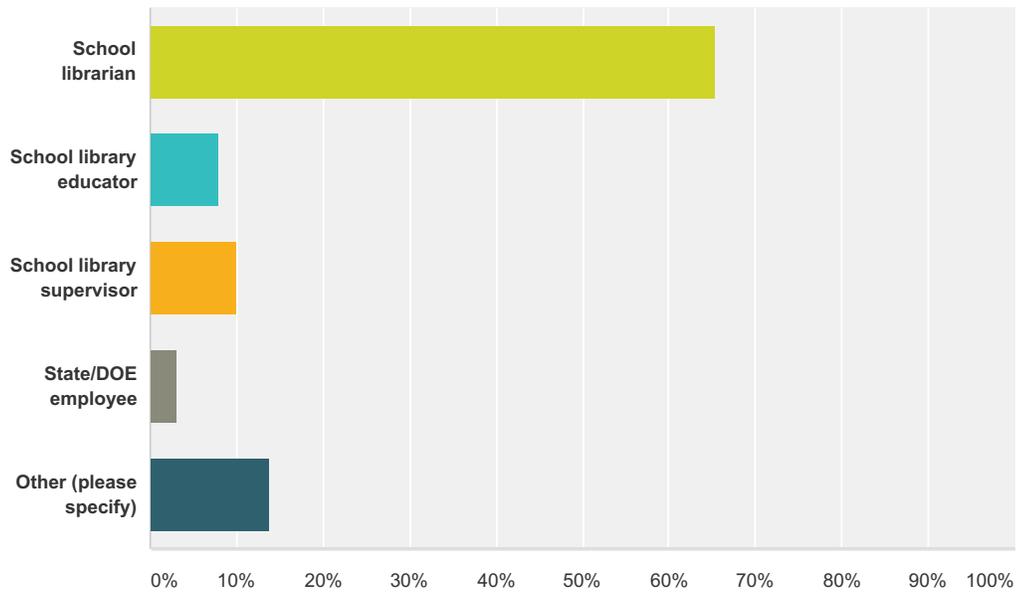
- Participate in state and national library legislative day.
- Partner with your state department of education on the state ESSA plan.
- Partner with your state library association to improve advocacy.
- Attend town hall, PTO, and board of education meetings to advocate for school librarians. If school librarians cannot go to these events because of restrictive schedules, ask retirees and system directors to go.
- Share the labor with clear communication via Google Docs and conference calls.
- Work with hyperlocal chapters (i.e., county school librarians' association) and hold workshops about self-advocating.
- Send e-mails to local and state listservs reminding people to go to state stakeholder's meetings and take a specific action needed to move the state plans forward.
- Create a network within the state.
- Sit at the table and be a voice during ESSA planning.
- Create a weekly advocacy challenge list.
- Create social media accounts for groups of librarians sharing information about upcoming meetings and advocacy challenges.
- Schedule a follow-up workshop at state-level conferences and trainings.
- Collaborate with organizations including AASL and Every Library.
- Attend other conferences not specifically for/by librarians to network and advocate to the right people.
- Launch a campaign in order to raise funding to share school library stories.

SUGGESTIONS

School librarians suggested ways AASL can assist them in the future, including workshops, webinars, and other educational forums. Other suggestions include providing grant-writing templates and preparation to apply for ESSA funds. AASL can offer support in training librarians statewide and give suggestions on creating customizable messages for different audiences.

Q1 Which of the following positions most closely reflects your job title?

Answered: 190 Skipped: 0



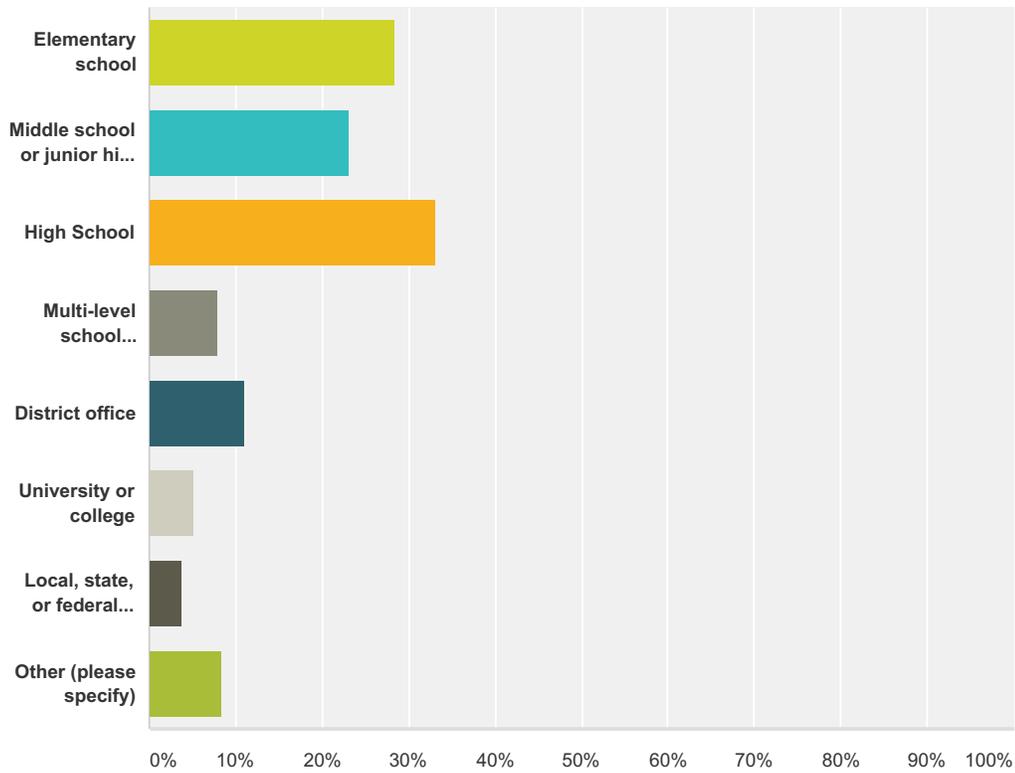
Answer Choices	Responses
School librarian	65.26% 124
School library educator	7.89% 15
School library supervisor	10.00% 19
State/DOE employee	3.16% 6
Other (please specify)	13.68% 26
Total	190

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	District Coordinating Field Librarian	3/26/2017 11:05 AM
2	retired school librarian	3/24/2017 10:50 PM
3	Education Service Center Specialist	3/21/2017 9:51 AM
4	Retired librarian/current TASL Councilor	3/19/2017 5:07 PM
5	Retired school librarian	3/13/2017 12:17 PM
6	library aide	3/11/2017 1:49 AM
7	Executive Director for State Library Association	3/10/2017 7:30 AM
8	Practicum Supervisor University	3/8/2017 8:58 PM
9	Community college library dean	3/8/2017 7:22 AM
10	Faculty member at a university with a School Librarian Endorsement program	3/7/2017 1:02 PM
11	LIS Student	3/7/2017 11:47 AM
12	Retired School Librarian	3/7/2017 11:19 AM

13	District director of library programs	3/7/2017 11:16 AM
14	seeking a position	3/7/2017 10:22 AM
15	joint use facility high school/ public	3/6/2017 2:18 PM
16	Retired school librarian educator	3/6/2017 1:10 PM
17	MLIS Student/ Library Assistant	3/6/2017 12:20 PM
18	Retired school librarian	3/5/2017 10:26 PM
19	President State Library Association	3/3/2017 7:11 PM
20	Retired	2/28/2017 2:01 PM
21	Media Teacher	2/28/2017 11:38 AM
22	University Faculty	2/28/2017 10:59 AM
23	School district library administrator	2/28/2017 10:18 AM
24	New Jersey Association of School Librarians Legislative Consultant	2/28/2017 7:41 AM
25	unemployed	2/27/2017 9:58 AM
26	School librarian digital learning coach	2/24/2017 6:01 PM

Q2 Which of the following best describes your work environment? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 190 Skipped: 0



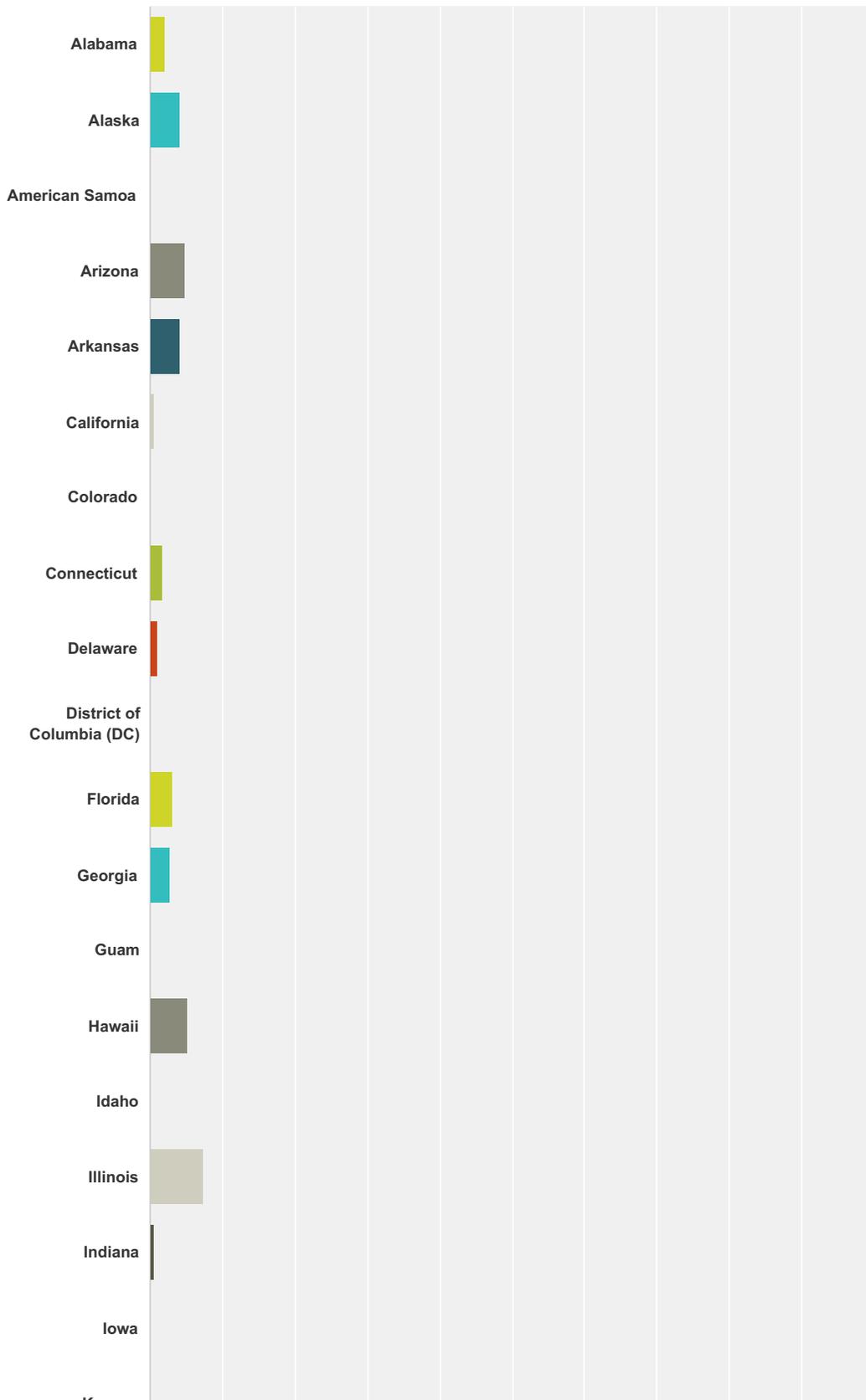
Answer Choices	Responses
Elementary school	28.42% 54
Middle school or junior high school	23.16% 44
High School	33.16% 63
Multi-level school environment	7.89% 15
District office	11.05% 21
University or college	5.26% 10
Local, state, or federal government office	3.68% 7
Other (please specify)	8.42% 16
Total Respondents: 190	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	preschool-8th grade	3/21/2017 12:10 PM
2	ESC	3/21/2017 9:51 AM
3	District Head Librarian	3/19/2017 5:40 PM

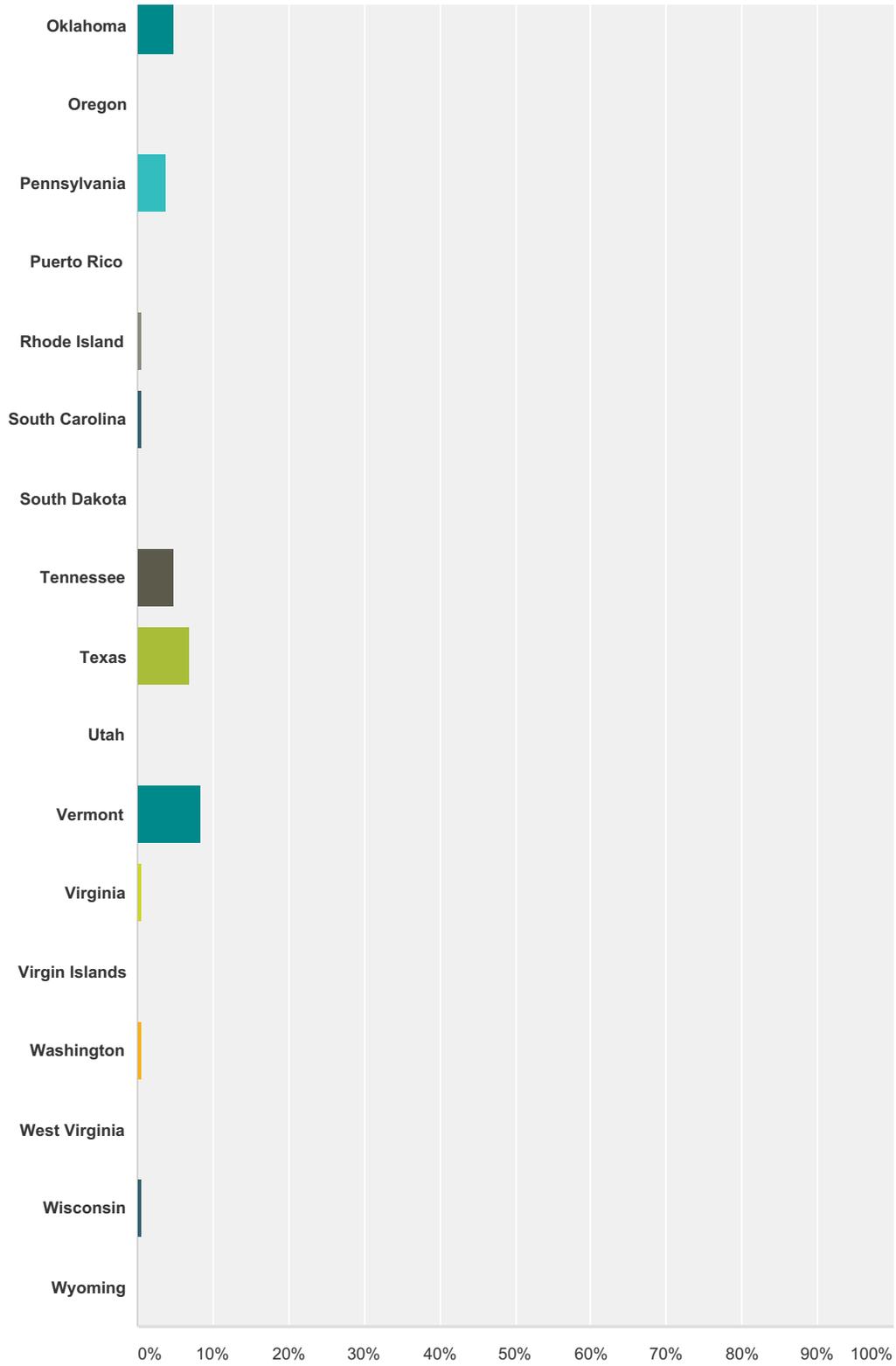
4	Current TASL Councilor/ former intermediate & middle school librarian	3/19/2017 5:07 PM
5	private, K - 9 independent school	3/14/2017 6:59 PM
6	K-8	3/12/2017 9:31 AM
7	PreK-8th school	3/12/2017 7:55 AM
8	State Association	3/10/2017 7:30 AM
9	Multi-school elementary	3/8/2017 2:45 PM
10	seeking a position	3/7/2017 10:22 AM
11	public and school	3/6/2017 2:18 PM
12	Consultant	3/6/2017 1:10 PM
13	Legislative Chair for state association	2/28/2017 2:01 PM
14	Recently retired	2/28/2017 11:50 AM
15	Represent all school librarians in NJ	2/28/2017 7:41 AM
16	presently doing my internship at a middle school	2/27/2017 9:58 AM

Q3 In what state or U.S. territory do you currently work?

Answered: 190 Skipped: 0







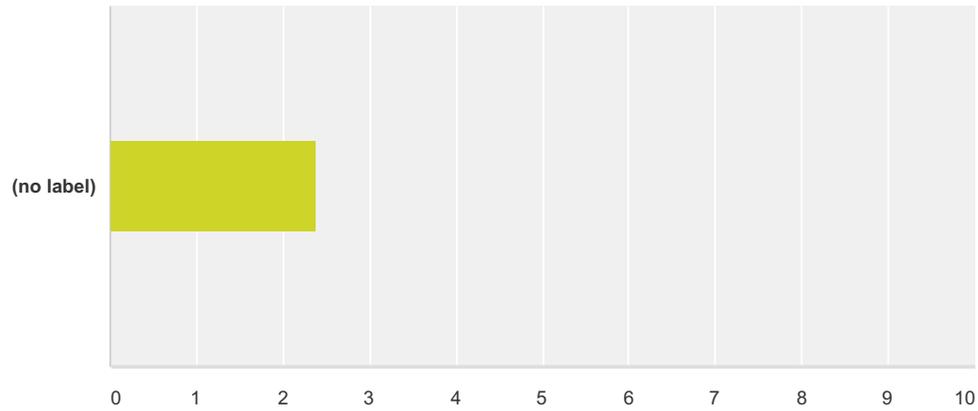
Answer Choices	Responses
Alabama	2.11% 4
Alaska	4.21% 8
American Samoa	0.00% 0

Arizona	4.74%	9
Arkansas	4.21%	8
California	0.53%	1
Colorado	0.00%	0
Connecticut	1.58%	3
Delaware	1.05%	2
District of Columbia (DC)	0.00%	0
Florida	3.16%	6
Georgia	2.63%	5
Guam	0.00%	0
Hawaii	5.26%	10
Idaho	0.00%	0
Illinois	7.37%	14
Indiana	0.53%	1
Iowa	0.00%	0
Kansas	0.00%	0
Kentucky	2.11%	4
Louisiana	0.00%	0
Maine	0.00%	0
Maryland	4.21%	8
Massachusetts	2.63%	5
Michigan	3.68%	7
Minnesota	0.00%	0
Mississippi	0.00%	0
Missouri	2.63%	5
Montana	0.00%	0
Nebraska	1.58%	3
Nevada	0.00%	0
New Hampshire	0.00%	0
New Jersey	2.11%	4
New Mexico	2.11%	4
New York	3.16%	6
North Carolina	6.84%	13
North Dakota	0.00%	0
Northern Marianas Islands	0.00%	0

Ohio	0.53%	1
Oklahoma	4.74%	9
Oregon	0.00%	0
Pennsylvania	3.68%	7
Puerto Rico	0.00%	0
Rhode Island	0.53%	1
South Carolina	0.53%	1
South Dakota	0.00%	0
Tennessee	4.74%	9
Texas	6.84%	13
Utah	0.00%	0
Vermont	8.42%	16
Virginia	0.53%	1
Virgin Islands	0.00%	0
Washington	0.53%	1
West Virginia	0.00%	0
Wisconsin	0.53%	1
Wyoming	0.00%	0
Total		190

Q4 How would you rate your comfort level with advocating for the school library's importance within ESSA before attending the workshop?

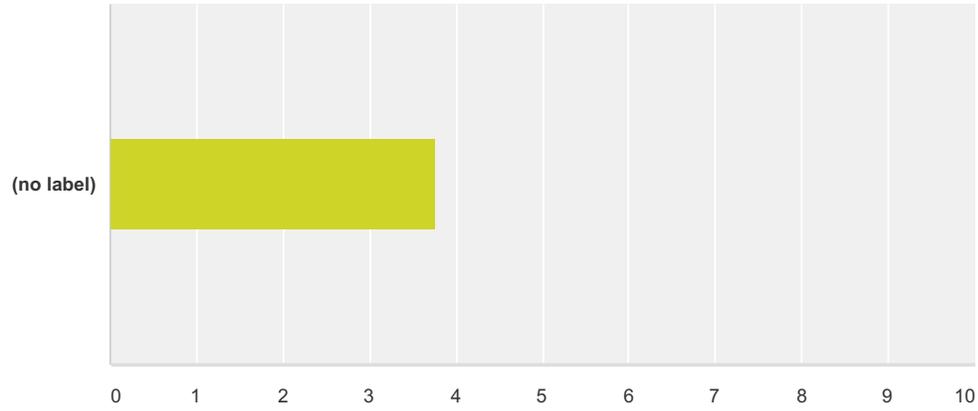
Answered: 183 Skipped: 7



	Not comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Comfortable	Adequately comfortable	Completely comfortable	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	26.78% 49	32.79% 60	22.40% 41	10.93% 20	7.10% 13	183	2.39

Q5 How would you rate your comfort level with advocating for the school library's importance within ESSA after attending the workshop?

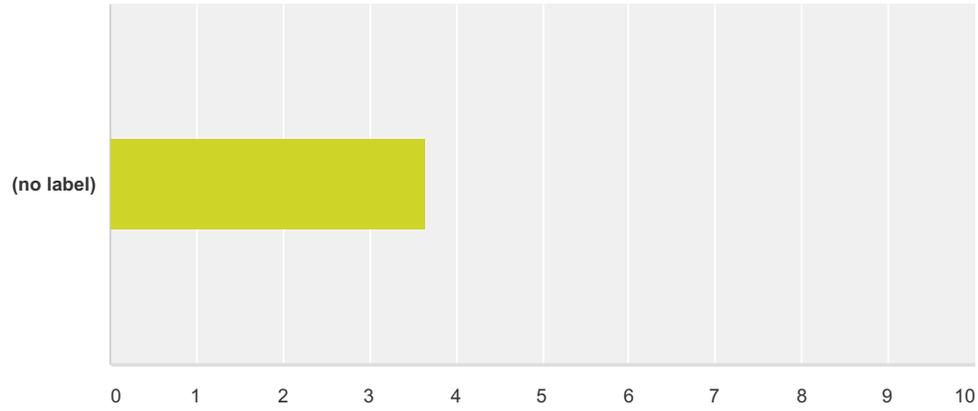
Answered: 183 Skipped: 7



	Not comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Comfortable	Adequately comfortable	Completely comfortable	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.55% 1	10.38% 19	22.95% 42	45.90% 84	20.22% 37	183	3.75

Q6 After attending the workshop, do you feel better equipped to effectively communicate with stakeholders about the academic impact of school libraries?

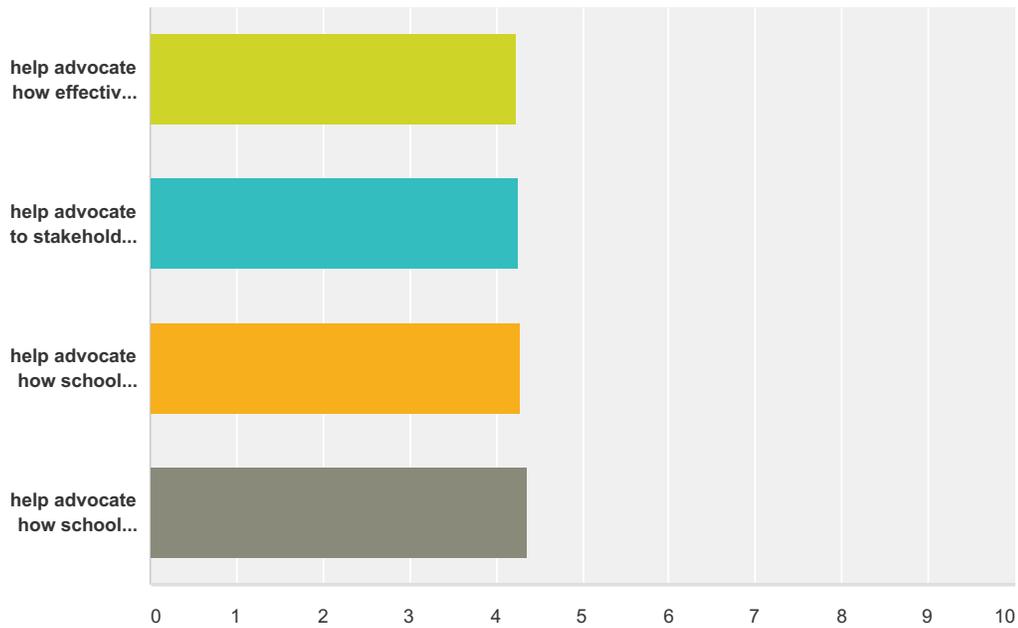
Answered: 183 Skipped: 7



	Not equipped	Somewhat equipped	Equipped	Adequately equipped	Completely equipped	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.64% 3	11.48% 21	22.95% 42	47.54% 87	16.39% 30	183	3.66

Q7 Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning your preparation in each of the key areas of ESSA with School Library emphasis. The ESSA workshop provided me with tools to...

Answered: 179 Skipped: 11



	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Weighted Average
help advocate how effective school library programs impact overall school improvement.	0.56% 1	0.56% 1	6.70% 12	59.78% 107	32.40% 58	179	4.23
help advocate to stakeholders how school librarians support effective instruction.	0.56% 1	0.56% 1	6.15% 11	57.54% 103	35.20% 63	179	4.26
help advocate how school librarians are uniquely suited to provide literacy education for all students.	0.56% 1	1.12% 2	6.70% 12	52.51% 94	39.11% 70	179	4.28
help advocate how school librarians support equitable resources for all students.	0.56% 1	1.12% 2	3.35% 6	50.28% 90	44.69% 80	179	4.37

Q8 Is there anything else that you would like AASL to know about your experience at or preparation from the ESSA workshop you attended?

Answered: 65 Skipped: 125

#	Responses	Date
1	Time is a factor in advocating for libraries. With funds decreasing, all educators are searching for ways to advocate for their programs. Including Title funds.	3/27/2017 10:50 AM
2	Workshop was a tremendous opportunity for our local workshop attendees.	3/26/2017 11:06 AM
3	I have to honestly say, I felt like the program emphasized more of a "hold your hand out for money" mentality. There was a fair amount of real advocacy, but at the end of the day when I realized that my district doesn't really receive that much Title money, I actually teetered on the thought that it was wasted day for me. I am using the advocacy that I learned there, plus the very good materials we received, to strengthen my general library attention-getting strategies. I do not feel it was a wasted day at all anymore!	3/21/2017 3:22 PM
4	The other attendee and I from my district took the information from the AASL workshop and presented it to the 50+ librarians in our district.	3/21/2017 10:44 AM
5	Thank you for the timely and thorough information related to ESSA and school libraries.	3/21/2017 8:15 AM
6	no	3/20/2017 3:26 PM
7	I thought it was good and appreciated the information and collaboration	3/20/2017 9:59 AM
8	Still need strategies on how to make inroads with the state education department which is not striving to engage its stakeholders.	3/19/2017 5:10 PM
9	I wasn't crazy about the presenter- we thought it would be from outside of our state	3/15/2017 11:47 AM
10	Linda Weatherspoon was excellent!	3/15/2017 9:51 AM
11	severe tech problems cut into the presentation's timing and I had to leave the presentation early because I had to present	3/14/2017 7:01 PM
12	Honestly, I felt I could have gotten this information through a simple powerpoint. It would have been much better for it to be interactive and have us troubleshoot some situations or scenarios.	3/14/2017 5:38 PM
13	I think I would have rated the workshop better but the venue had very limited (awful) internet service so the presentation did not go as they planned. I did go through it on my own after.	3/14/2017 4:53 PM
14	I wish more librarians had attended the workshop.	3/14/2017 3:30 PM
15	My district has done NOTHING related tl ESSA, DEPI	3/14/2017 3:27 PM
16	It was a great experience, but I personally am not totally confident talking to people holding higher positions	3/14/2017 11:30 AM
17	Was glad to have the new information that was provided, and I have passed it on to others.	3/14/2017 10:22 AM
18	It was excellent, with many helpful materials and resources.	3/14/2017 6:00 AM
19	Additional tools are needed to communicate and educate the librarians in the field. Too many are busy with the daily work of teaching and running their library programs with little deep knowledge of how they can play so crucial a role in their own schools and districts in the ESSA process.	3/13/2017 12:20 PM
20	It was very worthwhile.	3/13/2017 12:13 PM
21	We appreciate the efforts from AASL!	3/13/2017 11:38 AM
22	I attended the workshop at ALA in Orlando and at FAME - very good information	3/13/2017 10:58 AM
23	I am still not clear how the library could possibly get funding from ESSA. Admins do not seem to know about this.	3/13/2017 8:16 AM
24	Found the practice with "elevator speeches" to support libraries very valuable. Went back to my library and practiced a few with my assistant around situations that have happened in our library.	3/12/2017 7:57 AM

25	This was a helpful workshop. I'm curious to see how Vermont is weaving our state Educational Quality Standards into ESSA.	3/10/2017 2:56 PM
26	So much important information was shared! What a valuable workshop!	3/10/2017 12:15 PM
27	I went into the workshop with very little knowledge but left prepared to advocate not only locally, but on a state level with politicians.	3/10/2017 11:55 AM
28	The speakers were organized, informative and brought forth great ideas we can use.	3/10/2017 9:51 AM
29	The workshop was very well done, and I appreciate my administration supporting the libraries and letting us attend.	3/10/2017 9:37 AM
30	I was completely disappointed in the AASL Workshop, despite being very excited to plan it in partnership with AASL. As requested, we required participants to review the recordings in advance, and then the presenter continued to take precious time during the workshop to present them again, stating "I am required to read these parts." People gave up a Saturday to drive a distance to attend and missed out on the opportunity to dig deep into skills and messaging. We paid for the cost of a venue and food; which, when combined with AASL-paid travel and hotel for a speaker, made this a VERY expensive meeting for what little was accomplished. (We accomplished much more with 2 conference calls with our members and a meeting with our State Dept of Educ prior to the workshop.) The presenter only stayed a part of the scheduled time and, while a very lovely person and school library champion, knew less than we--who had been already been working in this space. We wanted to work on our tactics and specific messaging, as the AASL provided messages--while helpful for internal audiences--need to be re-written for context, plain language and to help potential champions. AASL may "check the box" that AASL held a workshop in IN, but please understand the resources could have been better managed. Education policy is made at the state and local level and workshop activities should be focused on the state and local policy. I have worked in policy advocacy for years, which I shared with AASL staff in the planning of the meeting. The cookie-cutter approach to workshop delivery may work for those less sophisticated or less knowledgeable (and for your funder outcomes), but feels like a waste of very precious resources for us. If I only can secure 1, 3 or 6 volunteer hours from members, I want those hours used most effectively to advance the cause. We very much appreciate the work AASL has put into ESSA. Please approach us more as an equally (if not more) knowledgeable and skilled partner in this important advocacy work.	3/10/2017 7:56 AM
31	It was a good workshop. The only roadblock I have encountered since this has been with how my district views reading interventionists. It is as if they siphon our roles away!	3/10/2017 4:40 AM
32	It was appreciated! I especially liked having printed materials and digital resources I could consult after the workshop.	3/9/2017 9:10 PM
33	I would like more training on this subject.	3/9/2017 1:22 PM
34	I appreciate the materials that were provided.	3/9/2017 11:48 AM
35	It was a lot of info to cover in a small amount of time.	3/8/2017 2:47 PM
36	Because we had limited time, we had to rush through some of the presentation at the end. That wasn't the best situation to be in for optimal learning.	3/7/2017 2:43 PM
37	A great resource manual was provided.	3/7/2017 2:35 PM
38	Kathryn was an excellent presenter!	3/7/2017 2:03 PM
39	I know we were out of time but it would have been nice to have created some sort of personal (or small group, organizational, etc.) strategic plan of "where to go from here".	3/7/2017 1:27 PM
40	I am concerned about ESSA with the change of our new secretary of education.	3/7/2017 12:47 PM
41	Thank you for the work that you do!	3/7/2017 12:39 PM
42	The materials provided were amazing. I was able to bring home multiple copies of certain items to share with other librarians in my district. I was also able to send our administration copies of important documents and share the importance of school libraries. Each one responded personally! It was great to have our amazing organization supply this information!	3/7/2017 12:01 PM
43	It was great! Well organized and helpful!	3/7/2017 11:52 AM
44	I felt better informed about ESSA and other laws pertaining to libraries. I also discovered that I am on par with how I create and promote library services to my school district, and how to add to and continue those services.	3/7/2017 11:10 AM
45	I thought the materials and resources provided were very helpful but I was not impressed with the presenter. She read the slides and skipped actually doing the activities.	3/7/2017 10:49 AM
46	Very informative with specific points that can be shared with administration and stakeholders	3/7/2017 10:25 AM
47	I only attended the first session due to another commitment, so I didn't get the advantage of the entire presentation.	3/6/2017 2:20 PM

48	I appreciate the workshop but the state of education in Arizona and the 20 efforts for librarianship in this environment have left me exhausted.	3/6/2017 7:05 AM
49	We are currently writing our first Long Range Plan. Information from the work shop was used as part of our presentation to an assistant superintendent whose approval we needed to write the plan.	3/5/2017 5:27 PM
50	AASL was very organized in the preparation for the workshop. Jody Howard, our presenter was very knowledgeable and engaging	3/4/2017 11:41 AM
51	During this meeting, the school librarians in my complex decided to collaborate on special K-12 events so we could make our programs more visible to our stakeholders. We hope to demonstrate what we can do & let our actions speak as loudly as our words.	3/3/2017 10:03 PM
52	Hawaii is a "small world" politically; most everyone knows everyone else. therefore, advocating for anything has to be done "graciously" to get support. Has AASL consider entertaining an audience of administrators or superintendents?	3/3/2017 9:53 PM
53	The session was very informative.	3/3/2017 7:12 PM
54	The workshop was not interactive. The videos that were shown were not engaging. Kathy Parker's portion was the best part of this presentation. She was friendly, engaging and hands-on.	3/3/2017 12:29 PM
55	The workshop was very useful. I would like an update around what might change in the current political climate.	3/1/2017 4:17 PM
56	The workshop has been delivered to individual counties in Maryland - including Harford, Howard, Frederick, Prince George's and Washington County. Plans are in the works to create a live WebEx version of the workshop to reach some of our more remote parts of the state and will be recorded to share out.	3/1/2017 1:52 PM
57	Concerned that the MD workshop was scheduled so late in the MD process. The opportunity for feedback at state workshops and on the state survey were limited to none. I felt the workshop gave me tools to go back and talk with my fellow librarians about giving their input, but the State ESSA workshops were finished and the survey closed 2 days after the workshop.	3/1/2017 8:24 AM
58	Loved the collaboration between MSDE and MASL.	2/28/2017 6:55 PM
59	Prior to this workshop, I participated in a session on ESSA given by the NJEA that was very informative. I also serve on my district's Future Ready Leadership team.	2/28/2017 8:59 AM
60	I utilized a number of tools on the website - they were very helpful.	2/28/2017 7:42 AM
61	I can't even remember anything from this webinar, so it made little impact on me.	2/28/2017 7:16 AM
62	We mostly focused on how to highlight areas of funding that our legislators could pull from for school librarians should we successfully get out of the unit count and in the Delaware Code as mandatory.	2/27/2017 12:11 PM
63	N/A	2/26/2017 6:21 AM
64	I appreciated the opportunity to attend this workshop, but would love some follow up training to continue advocating for ESSA.	2/24/2017 9:42 AM
65	I am very thankful I attended this workshop. My district does not have a Media Specialist director and I was able to bring back vital information to our district and share with other SLMCs.	2/24/2017 8:46 AM