

From: Registrar AISLE <registrar@aisled.org>

Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 1:42 PM

Subject: School Reopening Guidelines and AISLE Advocacy Efforts

CAUTION: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source.

Last week ISBE issued the guidelines for opening schools this fall. As a profession, we were disappointed by how school libraries were addressed. Impending budget cuts, pandemic guidelines, ignorance, and apathy are all working against us. It's easy to feel like we are drowning.

Now, more than ever, advocacy matters. It is important to be proactive rather than reactive in a time like this. The AISLE Board will advocate for school librarians in Illinois at the state level, but each school librarian must also advocate locally for their position and the significance of their program. Well-worded official statements from the Board might make a ripple. What we need is a tsunami. Competing voices, the economic impact of the pandemic, and multiple other factors make it much more difficult for our message to reach necessary ears. But your voices-- joined with the voices of your colleagues, your students, your parents, and your communities and anyone else you can get on board-- can have an impact. Each and every one of us needs to marshal all of the resources at our disposal and advocate for ourselves and ask others to join us. And, we need to do this not just once- but constantly.

What does this look like?

- Go to your Board meeting and log in and speak during "public comment." Speak about what you do in your libraries--be ready with a presentation: circulation stats, testimonials, a book talk or two...engage them and remind them of your importance in the school.
- Make an appointment with your Teachers' Association President and Superintendent-- speak specifically to your contributions to the District.
- Ask for video testimonials from students who are alums or from current students.
- Find four or five teachers and ask them to do video testimonials
- Send stories about library programs and activities to your local paper

Those are just a few ideas to get you started. AISLE is committed to advocating for school library programs and staff. Attached, please find an open letter to ISBE regarding their current guidelines. We will soon release a letter template that you can personalize and send to your administration. We will be announcing continuing advocacy efforts and professional development opportunities to build your skills as a self- advocate as the year progresses. As these future advocacy programs are announced at local, state, and national levels, we need your participation.

Please, find your voice. Actively look for opportunities to enlist others to support your library program. Spread the message far and wide that what we do makes a difference in students' lives. It's time to make waves.

Sincerely,

The AISLE Board of Directors

Christy Semande
President 2020-2021



AISLE

Association of Illinois School
Library Educators