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2025 VAASL ELECTIONS

OUR CANDIDATES

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOLLOWS

PRESIDENT-ELECT	ELYSE DEQUOY LARA IVEY
SECRETARY	JENNIFER CLEMENTS BARBARA HAAS
LEGISLATIVE COORDINATOR	HEATHER MURFEE
CLINCH REGION DIRECTOR-ELECT	NO CANDIDATE
JAMES REGION DIRECTOR-ELECT	EMILY PREUSS-ANDERSON
POTOMAC REGION DIRECTOR-ELECT	MAURA MADIGAN
RAPPAHANNOCK REGION DIRECTOR-ELECT	SAMANTHA GRABMAN
ROANOKE REGION DIRECTOR-ELECT	LEAH TALBERT
SHENANDOAH REGION DIRECTOR-ELECT	JANA BAILEY
YORK REGION DIRECTOR-ELECT	BECKY FELD

Elyse DeQuoy

Candidate for President-elect



Elyse DeQuoy is incredibly honored to accept the nomination to run for VAASL President-Elect! She is currently a high school librarian at James Wood High School in Frederick County; she has been a librarian for 14 years with experience at both the elementary and secondary levels. Elyse earned her M.S.I.S. from SUNY Albany (NY) with an endorsement in School and Public Librarianship in 2011. She believes that school librarians are the leaders in their schools and need to be empowered and offered opportunities to be the best they possibly can in that position for their students and staff. That is where VAASL can help individuals with their goals, professional learning, networking, and grow their love for libraries. As President-Elect, she will create and provide those experiences. There is something to be said for having strength in numbers and she believes it is vital that we support and learn from one another, especially in these tumultuous times in which we find

ourselves. As someone who is currently navigating changes to book selection policies, processes, and defending the right to read, she has great empathy for librarians who have, are, or are going to be experiencing something similar and is here to offer support.

She believes that libraries are for all individuals and we should always be exploring new ideas to make librarians seen as more relevant and an invaluable resource to the school community; VAASL is an incredible organization which is here to help make that happen. Our State is incredibly diverse in numerous ways which Elyse recognizes and wants to ensure that our organization is here to help all districts and librarians with their unique environments in which they work and grow their library programs. We as an organization need to be thinking more globally and beyond our own radar blips; this can be done through growing and strengthening partnerships with our public libraries, other state organizations and associations, and VDOE as they are an invaluable resource and are able to offer programs and tools we would not be able to do otherwise.

Elyse is currently the chair of VAASL's Colleague Connect committee, providing monthly books clubs and professional development chats. She is also serving VAASL right now as a member of the Legislative and Fall Conference Planning committees as well as chairing VSLA's High School VRC committee and is a previous Potomac Regional Director. She has also had opportunities to present at numerous conferences throughout her career on a variety of topics such as weeding, collaboration, and implementing movement in your library lessons.

In her free time, Elyse loves to read, spin, cross stitch, whitewater raft, watch/read anything true crime, work in her flower garden, cheer for the New England Patriots (or any New England sports team), and spoil her fur baby Pete.

VAASL has lent her so many opportunities throughout her years as a part of this organization; Elyse would not be the librarian she is today without those experiences and wants to make sure other librarians have their own opportunities to grow. She feels confident that as VAASL President-Elect, she will be able to give back to the best of her ability and serve all of her amazing peers in such a way that they are inspired and encouraged as well. She is looking forward to going on this journey together as we grow and are inspired into the best librarians we can be for our students, staff, and profession.

Lara Ivey

Candidate for President-elect



Being a part of VAASL has been instrumental in helping Lara Ivey grow as a leader and librarian. She has spent the last eleven years as a librarian in both elementary and secondary settings. Prior to joining the library world and earning her Masters from Longwood University, she was a classroom teacher for 20 years. Having the classroom lens as well as the library lens has proven to be a gift for her to connect with students, teachers, and the community.

Lara is a 13 year active member of VAASL, currently serving as a member of the IGNITE Committee, VA Reads Middle School Committee, Conference Planning Committee (CPC), and Co-Chair of the Intellectual Freedom Committee. She is a past director of the James Region and has been on the CPC each year since 2017 serving in various roles. In 2017, Lara was tasked with reimagining the Student Media Festival into something that would take the work librarians were already doing with inquiry and showcasing it. In partnership with a

dynamic committee, VAASL now has IGNITE...inquire, inspire, change the world where the IGNITE Award has been given annually since 2019. Lara continues to serve on the IGNITE Committee as it evolves to stay current with topics and trends in our field. As a member of the VA Reads Committee (2021-Present), she has been able to connect with librarians around the state and surround herself with diverse books. Lara is a previous VAASL Librarian of the Year (2018) and a two-time finalist for the REB Award for excellence in teaching.

At the national level, Lara has been an active AASL member since 2013. She was appointed to the Induction Task Force Planning Committee and the Induction Task Force Implementation Committee for Developing Library Leaders (2017-19). This committee gave her the opportunity to design learning modules that would build leaders within our libraries to take on larger roles at the state and national levels. She also served on the School Librarian Job Description Task Force (2018-2019) for AASL.

Lara believes librarians need to be supported. They need support with the necessary tools to navigate book challenges, curriculum needs and supporting the overall freedom to read in Virginia. She also believes in finding ways for librarians to support one another. It's in that collaborative practice that they become the "golden ticket" in schools and communities providing experiences from a vast pool of experts.

At their core, librarians are meant to be relationship builders, connecting students, teachers, and the community to bigger ideas and empowering one another to be leaders and risk-takers.

Education:

- Masters of Education in School Librarianship/ Longwood University/ 2015
- Bachelor Science in Elementary Education/ James Madison University/ 1989

Professional:

- Member of AASL
- Member of ALSC
- Member of ALA
- Member of VAASL
- VAASL Past James Region Director
- VAASL Intellectual Freedom Committee (Current Co-Chair)
- VAASL IGNITE Committee (Previous Chair and Current Member)
- VA Reads Middle Grade and Middle School Committee (Current Member)
- Diffit Ambassador
- National Geographic Certified Educator

Jennifer Clements

Candidate for Secretary



Jennifer Clements brings 28 years of dedicated service to education, a journey that began as an English and French classroom teacher in Chesapeake, VA and New York. Her transition to library media specialist, following her Master of Library and Information Science degree from CUNY Queens College, was driven by a deep belief in the power of information literacy to transform student learning. For 21 years, she served as a secondary school library media specialist, primarily at First Colonial High School in Virginia Beach, VA. Her dedication to fostering a love of learning and school librarianship was recognized in 2010 when she was named First Colonial High School Teacher of the Year and a Virginia Beach City Public Schools Citywide Teacher of the Year Finalist.

In her current role as Coordinator of Instructional Technology for Virginia Beach City Public Schools, she supports the division's 86 schools, directly impacting the learning experiences of thousands of students, and empowers their Library Media Specialists and Instructional Technology Specialists to advance literacy promotion and the integration of information literacy skills, technology, and innovative teaching and learning. She also teaches an Old Dominion University course, "Information Literacy for the Digital Age," and serves as a university supervisor for MLIS candidates completing their internships. Jennifer regularly presents at regional, state, and national conferences including VAASL, VSTE, and AASL, FETC.

Currently serving on the VAASL Board of Directors as the VAASL York Regional Director, she is passionate about advocating for school libraries and librarians. Jennifer believes that school libraries are essential hubs for student learning, fostering not only literacy but also critical thinking and digital citizenship skills. She is committed to empowering students for future success through authentic learning experiences and cultivating lifelong readers and learners.

Thank you for the opportunity to run for Secretary!

Barbara Haas

Candidate for Secretary



Barbara Haas is the librarian at T. C. Boushall Middle School where she has worked since receiving her graduate degree from Longwood University in 2013. At that time her own two kids were in middle school and she immediately recognized the disparity between the educational opportunities her own children were experiencing and the ones offered just a few miles away where she was working. Her library program has strived to close that gap and provide all students with rigorous and engaging instruction across all content areas. In addition to promoting the joy of reading with events like Speed Book Dating and Don't Judge a Book by its cover, Barbara also is an avid supporter of the Richmond Public Schools Lit Limo.

Barbara was the recipient of the Longwood Graduate Alumni Award in 2018 and was selected as Teacher of the Year for T. C. Boushall Middle School in 2020, the Covid year! She regularly provides staff professional development and has presented at the Virginia Association of School Librarians (VAASL) conferences in both the fall and spring. Barbara also was a member of the Young Adult

Virginia Author Award and previously served on the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Board. She has served on the VAASL Conference Planning Committee for the past four years chairing the First Timer's Event.

Barbara has served as secretary for her church's Vestry, several years on the PTA and on her school's Leadership Committee.

When she's not curled up with her cat and a book, Barbara can be found in local restaurants, beating her patient husband Michael at backgammon, traveling across Europe and Wisconsin (visiting her now grown up kids!) and spending entire days in museums. A huge fan of Atlas Obscura, Barbara's fondest memories are exploring places like the World's Smallest Tree House, The World's Largest Bureau (dresser!) and The Pencil Sharpener Museum with her family.

Heather Murfee

Candidate for Legislative Coordinator



Heather Murfee is a dynamic and experienced leader in library media, educational technology, and curriculum development. She currently serves as the Head Librarian at Midlothian High School, where she has cultivated a vibrant and inclusive learning environment that positively impacts student achievement and fosters a lifelong love of reading. Her library programs are marked by innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to equitable access for all learners.

With over a decade of experience as a head librarian at both the middle and high school levels, Heather brings a rich and varied perspective to her work. Her philosophy of librarianship centers on the belief that school libraries are not just resource hubs but dynamic learning commons—essential to developing critical thinkers, fostering student agency, and supporting instructional excellence. She has a proven track record of growing multilingual collections, integrating library skills into content-area instruction, and building strong community partnerships to enrich school culture and student opportunity.

Heather is deeply engaged in professional service at both the state and national levels. She currently serves on the AASL Concurrent Session Committee, the ALA Instructional Round Table, the VDOE AI Advisory Committee, and is a VAASL conference presenter. Formerly, her leadership experience includes work on numerous VAASL committees, including Membership, Scholarships and Awards, and Conference Planning. Her advocacy is grounded in a strong belief in the power of policy to transform library programs and advance educational equity statewide.

Heather's leadership is underscored by a range of recognitions, including being named the 2023 Midlothian High School Teacher of the Year, 2016 VAASL James Region Librarian of the Year, and the recipient of multiple innovation and curriculum enhancement grants. Her professional focus and presentations have explored topics from social-emotional learning in libraries to instructional leadership through PLCs.

Heather holds a Master of Science in School Library Media from Longwood University, and she also holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Known for her tireless advocacy, strategic vision, and dedication to student-centered programming, Heather brings a unique blend of passion and policy-minded leadership to the role of Legislative Committee Chair.

Emily Preuss-Anderson

Candidate for James Region Director-elect



Emily Preuss-Anderson is currently the librarian at Victoria Elementary School in Lunenburg County. She has been an elementary school librarian for the past 3 years, with an additional 4 years of teaching experience in elementary and middle schools.

Emily is passionate about bringing S.T.E.A.M. lessons into her library and encouraging students to think critically about the world around them. She works hard to make sure the library continues to be a welcoming place for all students and staff to be their authentic selves.

Emily is the current Librarian of the Year for the James Region, and she serves as the school testing coordinator as well as the ITRT for her school. Emily is excited about the possibility of taking on a larger role in VAASL to gain more experience and help other school librarians in her region in any way she can.

Emily is an avid thrifter and can be found most weekends scouring the local thrift shops for vintage finds and items for her school library. She loves to snuggle up with her cat and husband while watching sci-fi or fantasy movies and TV shows.

BS Liberal Studies, Longwood University, 2015

MEd School Librarianship, Longwood University, 2021

Maura Madigan

Candidate for Potomac Region Director-elect



Maura Madigan has been the librarian at North Springfield Elementary School for ten years. Next year she will be transferring to Robinson Secondary School. Before getting her library endorsement from Longwood University, Maura worked in various roles in education. She's taught at every level (PK through college); been the director of a preschool/daycare center; and worked as an educational advisor on a school reform project in the United Arab Emirates.

Maura was the Philanthropy Lead and an Ignite Project Committee member for the 2022 and 2023 Annual conferences. She is currently the Ignite Project Lead. Maura achieved National Board certification (Library Media) in 2023.

Maura is proactive, organized, and efficient. She believes that ensuring all students have positive experiences and feel like they belong in the library is the most important part of her job. In her free time Maura likes reading, writing, listening to podcasts, and planning trips for some day.

Samantha Grabman

Candidate for Rappahannock Region Director-elect



Samantha Grabman is a dedicated elementary school librarian in her third year in Spotsylvania County. With a background in education that includes 14 years of teaching at the elementary level and previous experience in middle school education in Michigan, she brings a wealth of knowledge to her role. In 2022, she was nominated as Teacher of the Year for Berkeley Elementary. Samantha is passionate about cultivating collaborative partnerships within her school. She enjoys inspiring students to deepen their inquiry skills and explore learning in various ways. Most of all she works to inspire a love of reading through school-wide programs and finding innovative ways to foster a culture of lifelong learning and a passion for knowledge. She actively participates in leadership teams within her school and the elementary librarian department of her school division. Additionally, she serves as a clinical faculty member for the University of Mary Washington, mentoring practicum students. Looking ahead, she is eager to serve as the lead mentor in her school building this upcoming year and hopes to take on a larger role in the Rappahannock Region of the

Virginia Association of School Librarians, recognizing the organization's importance in championing librarianship across the state. Outside of her professional endeavors, Samantha has recently found a love for running, is exploring photography, enjoys hiking and cherishes time spent with her family!

BA Elementary Education, Oakland University, MI, 2007

M.Ed School Librarianship, Longwood University, Farmville, 2024

Leah Talbert

Candidate for Roanoke Region Director-elect



Leah Talbert is in her 6th year as a librarian. She started her librarian career with Greene County Schools and currently works for Campbell County Schools as the librarian at Brookville High School.

Leah's passion for collaboration and working with students inspired her to become a librarian. She loves co-planning and developing engaging lessons with all subject areas and especially loves creating station activities within the library. Additionally, creating a warm and welcoming space for all students and staff is at the heart of her library's mission.

Leah has previously served as Regional Director-Elect /Director for the Shenandoah Region of VAASL and looks forward to an opportunity to serve as Regional Director-Elect of the Roanoke Region.

Leah is a proud lover of all things fiber arts—if it involves yarn, needles, hooks, and a bit of creativity, she's all in!

BS Forestry and Wildlife, Virginia Tech, 1999

NC Teach Program, East Carolina University, 2003

Master's Library Science, East Carolina University, 2020

Jana Bailey

Candidate for Shenandoah Region Director-elect



Jana Bailey is in her 2nd year as the Library Media Specialist at Greer Elementary School for Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS). She was previously the Library Media Specialist for 2 years at Sexton Elementary for Pinellas County Public Schools in St. Petersburg, FL. Before her librarian role, Jana was an elementary school classroom teacher for 5 years (1st, 3rd, 4th grade) at Arcola Elementary and Forest Grove Elementary for Loudoun County Public Schools, 12 years (Kindergarten, 3rd grade) at Pasadena Fundamental Elementary School and Sexton Elementary for Pinellas County Public Schools, and a 1st grade teacher for 5 years at Lutheran Church of the Cross Day School in St. Petersburg, FL. In 2019, Jana was a library assistant for the Children's Summer Reading Program of the St. Petersburg Public Library System.

Jana believes that libraries are for everyone and that developing a love of reading books is the most important gift she can give her students. There are few things she cherishes more than seeing a child's excitement about checking out a book from Greer's library!

Jana currently serves as a member of the Technology Team for her school. She runs the daily Morning News program at Greer alongside her colleague, Mr. Rob Dent. This year, Jana proudly represented her school as a member of the ACPS School Budget Planning Committee.

Jana is looking forward to the possibility of serving as the VAASL Shenandoah Regional Director-elect, as it would give her a platform to advocate for her profession and fellow librarians.

Jana and Robert, her husband of 30 years, love to attend music concerts together or with their adult daughter, Grace. Jana also enjoys spending time in nature or reading books on the couch with her two cats, Halford and Kinsler, snoozing nearby.

BS Early Education, George Mason University, 1992

ME Curriculum and Instruction, George Mason University, 1994

MA Library and Information Science, University of South Florida, 2022

Becky Feld

Candidate for York Region Director-elect



Becky Feld is in her 8th year as the Librarian at Windsor Oaks Elementary School in Virginia Beach. Prior to working as a librarian she taught third grade for Norfolk Public Schools, and was the assistant director for Strelitz Early Childhood Education Center in Virginia Beach.

Becky works hard collaborating with teachers to create meaningful and enriching learning experiences. She enjoys teaching information literacy skills, as well as integrating technology into lessons. Passionate about fostering a love for reading, she strives to make the library a warm and welcoming hub for the entire school community.

Becky has served as the Corresponding Secretary for the Virginia Beach Library Association and is a former Teacher of the Year for Windsor Oaks Elementary School. As a key member of her school's Instructional Leadership Team, she plays a vital role in shaping the school's academic direction. Additionally, she serves as the Teacher Liaison for the school's PTO, where she actively plans and manages various school-wide fundraisers and programs.

Becky and her husband have four sons (3 human and one canine) whom they are extremely proud of. In her spare time, she enjoys spinning, reading, and watching the crazy housewives on Bravo because they make her feel sane 🤪!

Bachelor of Music in Flute Performance, Cleveland Institute of Music, 1999

MSEd in Elementary Education, University of Pennsylvania, 2002

School Library Endorsement, Old Dominion University, 2012

National Board Certification in Library, 2025