

President-Elect

Tammy Hinkle



My name is Tammy Hinkle, and I am an elementary librarian with Prince William County Public Schools, with over 30 years of experience in education, including nine years in school librarianship. I hold a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction with an Administrative Certificate and a Master of Education in Librarianship from Longwood University. I am currently National Board-certified in School Librarianship and have also earned National Board Certification in English Language Arts (Early and Middle Childhood), making me one of a relatively small number of educators who have achieved National Board Certification in multiple areas. My professional service includes serving as President of the Prince William School Librarians Association, Regional Director for the Potomac Region, and Philanthropic Chair for the Virginia Association of School Librarians for the past three years.

I am committed to serving VAASL because the organization plays a critical role in advocacy, professional learning, and connection for school librarians across the Commonwealth. VAASL has been instrumental in my own professional growth, and I am motivated to give back through leadership that is approachable, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of our members.

Janice Raspen



I am Janice Raspen, and I work in the Central Library Services department of Chesterfield County Public Schools, just outside of Richmond, Virginia as the acquisitions/collection development librarian. Before becoming a librarian in 2000, I was a classroom teacher for several years in South Carolina and Virginia. I earned my MSLS from Catholic University in 2000, started working in an elementary school library and have enjoyed every librarian moment since then! After fourteen years at the elementary level, I moved to a middle school for eight years before starting my current role. In 2022, I pivoted to working directly with the librarians at my new district's 65+ schools. As part of the Central Library Services team for CCPS, I love getting to work with librarians at all levels, helping them create relevant collections that fit the needs of their school communities.

VAASL has been an important part of my professional and personal life even before I started working as a librarian. Librarians are the most amazing people, always willing to support each other and share ideas and resources. For many years, I was on the receiving end of this generosity, eagerly attending VAASL conference sessions to learn from seasoned librarians. Now with my years of experience, it is so rewarding for me to help new librarians as they start their library journeys: I have presented sessions at our regional and state conferences on using the VRC books in the library and also 100 (or more) New Books for Middle and High Schools. I served as the Rappahannock regional director in 2005, and I was also honored as the Rappahannock librarian of the year in 2010.

In my spare time, I enjoy reading (of course!), watching and attending baseball games, and worrying over my rescue pup, Schuyler. My spouse and I just finished a multi-decade odyssey of seeing a baseball game at all 30 MLB ballparks, an excellent way to see our country and visit lots of libraries along the way! I recently finished my term as secretary of VAASL, where I worked collaboratively with the executive board to lead VAASL in our historic 50th year, and I welcome the opportunity to serve our organization again as president-elect as we navigate the challenges ahead and celebrate our successes as the voice of librarians in Virginia.

Treasurer

Rebecca
Caufman



My name is Rebecca Caufman. I am the secondary librarian at Radford City Public Schools and an adjunct faculty member at Longwood University. I began my teaching career as an elementary classroom teacher. Questions on how to best teach reading led me to get a Master's degree in reading and a Ph.D. in literacy. I have worked as a reading specialist in the first through eighth grade and was inspired to become a school librarian during a summer conference at Longwood University. I successfully obtained my library certification from Longwood University in May of 2019.

I believe strongly in the importance of belonging to professional organizations and being an active member. In other organizations I have served as guard, chaplain, secretary, treasurer, vice president, and president. In VAASL I have served as Roanoke Director, social media chair, advocacy committee member, and I am the current liaison for the Virginia State Literacy Association (VSLA). As the only secondary librarian in my county, I deeply value my VAASL membership and the connections it has helped me build, which strengthen my work and allow me to better serve my schools. I am excited about the opportunity to serve VAASL further and appreciate being considered for the role of Treasurer.

Board of Directors/Regional Directors-elect

Clinch

TBD

TBD

James

Elizabeth Kyser



My name is Elizabeth Kyser and I am the librarian at Ettrick Elementary School in Chesterfield County, south of Richmond, Virginia. Before I became a librarian, I was a classroom teacher for fourteen years in both Richmond City and Chesterfield, mainly teaching third and fourth grade, with a stint in fifth grade as well. I am a graduate of Allegheny College where I earned my Bachelor's degree in History, Loyola College of Maryland where I earned a Master's in Education, and Longwood University, where I earned my library endorsement. I have been an elementary librarian for my entire career with the exception of two years in middle school.

I have been a member of VAASL since I was a student at Longwood and I can still vividly remember my first VAASL (then VEMA) conference. I barely slept the night before it started; I was so thrilled to be among other librarians and learn from their expertise. From that conference, I became actively involved in VAASL, serving as James Region Director-Elect and then Director, presenting at many annual and regional conferences, serving as Philanthropy Chair and volunteering in many other roles. Nationally, I have served as a monthly blogger for Knowledge Quest, and have been a proposal reviewer for the AASL national conferences. I was awarded the Laura Bush Grant in 2021 which was a huge honor and also enabled me to thoughtfully diversify the collection at my school, ensuring that students saw themselves in the books they checked out. In 2017, I was selected to participate in a National Endowment of the Humanities seminar on the Rochester NY Reform Trail which informed my teaching and usage of primary sources--a practice I am still enthusiastic about and love to share with my students. At my school, I have been named Teacher of the Year and have served as the resource team leader. Within my district, I am a PLC leader for librarians in my geographic area, and I've mentored librarians new to our county. I've also served as a cooperating teacher to Longwood students working toward their library certification.

In my spare time, I am a member of three book clubs, I love to travel, and I love watching my Buffalo Bills. If elected as your James Region director, I look forward to helping VAASL navigate an exciting future while also being an advocate and mentor for our profession. I am passionate about our career and serving those in it just as I have benefited from others' expertise and passion.

Cassidy Haight



I am a graduate of the Longwood School Librarianship program, where I also earned my Master's of Education. Prior to that, I attended Virginia Commonwealth University where I earned my Bachelor's Degree in English. For the last five years I have had the honor of working with the wonderful community of students, staff, and families at Bellwood Elementary School in Chesterfield, Virginia. In my not-so-quiet library, I have welcomed authors from all over the world, coached our Battle of the Books team, and created opportunities for student voice and choice through my Morning Video announcements team, school wide reading initiatives, and our Bellwood Author & Illustrator corner. I am proud to serve as a regional Professional Learning Community leader for Chesterfield County, where I collaborate with my colleagues to create lesson plans and resources to be used throughout the elementary schools. I have presented at both regional and state VAASL conferences on Elementary Manga and I am a passionate advocate for developing collections that meet the diverse needs of our students. Recently, I was a recipient of the Communities in Schools Henshaw Grant, which will allow me to lead my students a service learning project to create donation bags for the RVA Free Community Fridges while making connections to literacy and social studies standards - a project that is really close to my heart.

I am pursuing this leadership opportunity because I want to help shape a more inclusive future for school librarianship. As librarians, I think we have made great strides in filling our collections with books that are windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors for our students, but there is clearly still work to do when it comes to filling our field with professionals and leaders that reflect the diversity of our students. I'm a first-generation Asian American - in school, I never had a librarian that was like me. The books on the shelves still portrayed offensive stereotypes of Asian Americans. It is truly so incredible to see how much has changed since I was sitting on the story time carpet; to now be the librarian in the rocking chair, reading fairy tales to my students sprinkled with Spanish, stories about all types of families, and poems of resistance and struggle during the Civil Rights Era. I believe that this

perspective, along with my experience working with elementary learners and my strengths in planning, communication, and decision-making, will be a meaningful contribution to the leadership of VAASL.

Potomac

Heather Gonzalez



My name is Heather Gonzalez and I am currently an elementary librarian for Loudoun County Public Schools. As a child I always knew I wanted to be a teacher and went to Kent State University for my Bachelors in Early Childhood Education. After receiving my degree, I moved to Virginia, accepting my first position as a 3rd grade teacher in Loudoun County. While teaching, I received my Masters in Education as a Math Specialist from UVA. Soon after, I moved into a math facilitator position, helping both teachers and students with math. After having a family and staying home with my kids for several years, I decided to go back to teaching, but wanted to do something different. This is when I came across Longwood's School Librarianship program. Nothing sounded better than being surrounded by, sharing, and talking about books most of the day, so I went all in, receiving my second masters in School Librarianship. I love that I can incorporate all subjects and topics into library lessons. I always tell my students- you can do anything in the library! This is my 15th year in education, 6 were spent in the classroom, 6 as a Math Specialist, and 3 in the library. I truly feel like I have found my perfect place in the school within the walls of the library. I am passionate about building our library program, curating a collection to meet the needs of teachers and students, collaborating to support learning, and making connections with all students. After being in a leadership role in my math position, I knew I wanted to get more involved in library organizations, both locally and at the state level. I joined the VAASL Conference Planning Committee as the Author Signing Chair and the Loudoun Association of School Librarians as their Scholarship Chair. I am also a member of ALA and AASL. I love connecting with other librarians, hearing their ideas, and being a part of such a supportive community. Attending the state and regional conferences has helped me to feel supported and to become a better librarian, both by presenting and learning during sessions, and my hope is, in the position of Regional Director, that I can help others feel that too. In my spare time I love spending time with my family, reading, listening to Taylor Swift, and learning about my new obsession- sourdough!

Kim Reakes Smith



My name is Kim Reakes Smith, and I'm beginning my 28th year as a secondary educator. Originally from Illinois, I moved to the DC Metro area after graduating from University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, with a BS in Education and English, plus additional certifications in Speech and Theatre, and taught HS English for 17 years - two in Baltimore City, three at Mt. Vernon HS in Fairfax County Public Schools, and twelve at Robinson Secondary in FCPS. Eleven years ago I embraced a new challenge, earning my MS in School Librarianship from Longwood University and continuing to serve Robinson Secondary as a teacher-librarian. Throughout my years of service, I presented to colleagues when I assumed a variety of leadership roles such as Teacher Consultant for the Northern Virginia Writing Project, FCPS' Great Beginnings Lead Mentor Training Facilitator, and Robinson Secondary's HS Lead Mentor, Secondary Literacy Leader, and member of the Instructional Counsel. In the spring of 2025, I retired from my Head Librarian position in FCPS and enthusiastically embarked on my new role as a Teacher-Librarian for Manassas Park High School.

A reflective practitioner, I'm passionate about the power of professional learning and collaboration, especially learning created by colleagues, and I firmly believe in the importance of the VAASL community. Moving from a large school system like Fairfax County to the small district of Manassas Park City Schools continues to shape my perspectives, emphasizing the importance of school librarians in schools regardless of their size. I look forward to continued engagement with VAASL by serving this valuable organization and the regional community. In my personal life, I'm grateful to share each day with my husband, fourteen year old daughter, and two cats. Additionally, I love hiking, biking, paddle boarding, boating, swimming, singing, dancing, reading, skiing, traveling, musical theatre, dinner parties with friends, and spending time outdoors, particularly during cool weather, rain storms, and snowy winters!

Rappahannock

Heather Garrard



My name is Heather Garrard, and I am running for Director-Elect for the Rappahannock region. This is my second year as a librarian and I work at Brooke Point High School in Stafford County. Before becoming a librarian, I spent 16 years serving as a school psychologist, earning my Ed.S. from Radford University in 2008 before later pursuing a Master's in School Librarianship at Longwood University. My career shift was driven by a desire to broaden my impact on the students in my community by combining my background in student well-being with my passion for literacy. While I love nothing more than a great book talk with a student, I find just as much joy in the 'ah-ha' moments that happen during library lessons. Watching students collaborate and make new connections is incredibly rewarding—in fact, my only regret about becoming a librarian is that I didn't make this career shift sooner.

I am passionate about advocacy and leadership in all that I do, and I strive to create a supportive, inclusive space for every student. I hold leadership positions at my school by serving on our leadership team, co-leading our staff book club, maintaining a monthly staff newsletter, and I have created a space for collaboration among staff through our coffee club. I recently had the opportunity to present at the VAASL conference in November on creating an inclusive library. This opportunity was such a rewarding experience and motivated me to want to take on a more active role in our professional community.

Roanoke

Amanda Rising



My name is Amanda Rising. I am currently the school librarian at Dan River Middle School in Ringgold, Virginia. I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Relations from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, a Master of Elementary Education degree from Averett University in Danville, Virginia, and a School Librarianship endorsement from Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. My awesome DRMS faculty named me Teacher of the Year at my school during the 2023-2024 school year, and I was the runner-up for the Pittsylvania County Schools title, as well. I recently became a voting member of the Danville Regional Foundation, which grants funds to community organizations, and I plan to promote literacy as much as possible! I am also the librarian at our church, Mount Hermon Baptist. In my spare time, I love going on dinner dates with my husband, watching my daughter perform in loads of theatre productions, singing with our praise team at church, scrapbooking, and of course, reading as much as I can!

I have been an active VAASL member since I was a student at Longwood, and I feel that the support I have received from the organization has played a huge role in helping me become the librarian I am today. The lessons, maker spaces, activities, programming, etc. that I have learned about through conferences and other resources are always used in our library, and it has made it a welcoming and calming environment for our students and staff alike. I am looking forward to becoming more involved with VAASL through my region because I want to give back to the community of librarians that has given me so much over the years.

Carrie Dodge



Hello! My name is Carrie Dodge and I am the Media Specialist at Jefferson Forest High School located in Bedford County. I have been teaching for 25 years, first as a history teacher and then for the last 16 years as a librarian. I have a Bachelor of Arts from Randolph-Macon Woman's College and a Masters of Science from Longwood University. I am married with four beautiful and smart daughters. One just graduated from Virginia Tech, one is at JMU, one is in high school and one is in middle school.

I also organize our school's travel program and take trips every summer. I love getting to see and help our students navigate new cultures. I am definitely a busy person! However, I have been a member of VAASL, even before I became a librarian and I believe wholeheartedly in this organization. We are better together! I have learned so much by being a part of this organization and I am ready to take the next step to help lead us into the future.

Shenandoah

Elisheba
Cornelius



My name is Elisheba Cornelius and I'm the Library Media Specialist at Red Hill Elementary School, Albemarle County. However, I prefer to say I'm the librarian - a term that's much easier and more accessible for the elementary kiddos! This is my 5th year as a librarian and my 35th year in education. Prior to making this slight career change, I was an elementary classroom teacher and over the span of 30 years I taught all the grades from preschool to 5th grade. I have worked at independent schools, public schools, and even an international residential school. As for my educational background, I have a Bachelor in Psychology (Delhi University), a Bachelor in Elementary Education with a Music Minor (Goshen College), a Master in School Librarianship (Longwood University), an Advanced Certificate in Flute (Royal Schools of Music, London), and an Endorsement in Gifted Education (James Madison University).

During my first few years as a librarian, I focused on learning the ropes, navigating a new school division, and defining my identity in this new role. While I am certainly not an old hand yet, I feel ready to push myself beyond the walls of my library and become more involved with VAASL. It is easy to remain within the comfort of a small school community; however, with so much at stake regarding freedom of expression, diversity, and ongoing book challenges, I want to be more actively engaged with organizations that advocate for the rights of all. And, what do I do with my "plentiful" spare time? I love playing board games with family, working on puzzles of all kinds - jigsaw, logic, word. I grew up knitting and doing embroidery, but I've recently picked up crocheting and love it! When I need to get into a calm frame of mind, I play the piano and flute, but this is only for my ears!!

Adam
Kelly



My name is Adam Kelly, I am the librarian at Riverheads High School in Augusta County. I have a Bachelor of Arts from Bridgewater College and a Master of Education in School Librarianship from Longwood University. I'm in my seventh year as a school librarian, with four years experience at the secondary level and three years at the elementary level.

If being a librarian has thought me anything, it's that connecting with others is one of the most important ways we learn. VaASL has been instrumental in building and maintaining these connections among librarians and I want to do my part to serve the organization which has been so supportive in my career so far.

When I'm not at school I enjoy spending time in the garden with my wife and playing piano for school and church choirs.

York

Sharon Hyland



My name is Sharon Hyland. I am a Teacher-Librarian at Phoebus High School in the Hampton City Schools District. I have a Bachelor of Arts in English from Elmira College, a Master of Arts in English Literature from Loyola University Chicago, and a Master of Education in School Librarianship from Longwood University. I currently serve on the Library Leadership Team for Hampton City Schools, and I am a member of the High School Virginia Readers' Choice Committee. This past school year, my library team secured the Laura Bush Grant for America's Libraries, which we have used to grow our nonfiction collection and expand our selections in World Languages. I have also enjoyed moderating the Phoebus Library Bookclub for the last 2 years.

I am an active member of VAASL, as the organization is essential to my professional development and, in turn, the growth of the Phoebus Library program. The opportunities to attend local and state conferences have provided me with insight, inspiration, and direction as I work to increase collaboration with teachers, build library programming, and increase student interest and engagement with the library and its resources. I am excited to run for York Regional Director-Elect for VAASL because I want to provide leadership, support, and advocacy to a greater community of librarians. I look forward to contributing to the planning and implementation of events, programs, and resources to continue the great work of VAASL at the regional level. When I'm not working in the library, I enjoy reading (of course), crocheting, running, and spending time with my husband, two sons, and dog.

Mary Sutterluety



My name is Mary Sutterluety. I am the sole Library Media Specialist at Kempsville Middle School in Virginia Beach. I have a Bachelor's in History from Virginia Tech, and a Master of Education in School Librarianship from Longwood University. I am the current VBCPS Library Media Specialist of the Year, the VAASL York Regional School Librarian of the Year, and the VAASL School Librarian of the Year. Before becoming a Librarian, I was an English 8 teacher at KMS. I sponsor more clubs that I can remember! At the moment, I am the co-sponsor of the KNN News, Vex Robotics Teams, and Garden Club.

This is my tenth year as a Librarian, and I am ready to expand my advocacy outside of my school and district. In the role of York Regional Director for VAASL, I would leverage my background as a middle school Library Media Specialist, former English teacher, and AVID coordinator to elevate the visibility and impact of school libraries across the region. I would focus on strengthening collaboration among York-area librarians, amplifying practitioner voices at the state level, and providing practical support around issues that directly affect our work, including intellectual freedom, collection development, instructional collaboration, and equitable access to resources. Drawing on my experience with grants, program building, and cross-curricular instruction, I would work to share best practices, promote professional learning opportunities, and advocate for policies and funding that recognize librarians as instructional leaders.