

# The Path to Youth Library Leadership:

An Emerging Leader Project

by Sarah Gowdy Herford



# What is the Emerging Leader's Program?

- Initiated in 1997 by former ALA President Mary R. Somerville
- One-year program that fosters leadership skills and allows for professional networking
- 50 Participants must develop a project-plan for an ALA division.
- I was personally sponsored by the Arkansas Library Association





# Team J: Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)



Christine Gaffney, Dayton Metro Library  
Sarah Gowdy Herford, Bentonville Public Library  
Tori Ann Ogawa, Darien Library, Darien CT  
Sara White, Seminole County Public Library



# Team J:

## How We Worked Together As A Team

- First meeting at ALA Midwinter: Atlanta 2017
- Then met once a week via Google Hangouts & utilized Google Drive for business
- Wrapped up with a presentation to the ALSC Board of Directors and the ALA Emerging Leader's Poster Session at ALA Annual: Chicago 2017





# Our Project: The Path to Youth Library Leadership

- Examine current trends in leadership development practices, especially as they relate to the library world
- Examine the career paths of librarians who work with youth
- Examine the needs of ALSC members
- Develop leadership and teamwork skills necessary to act as future leaders for the division and for ALA
- Present findings, research and recommendations as a paper submitted to the ALSC Board of Directors
- Develop a poster & presentation to deliver at the 2017 ALA Emerging Leaders Poster Session



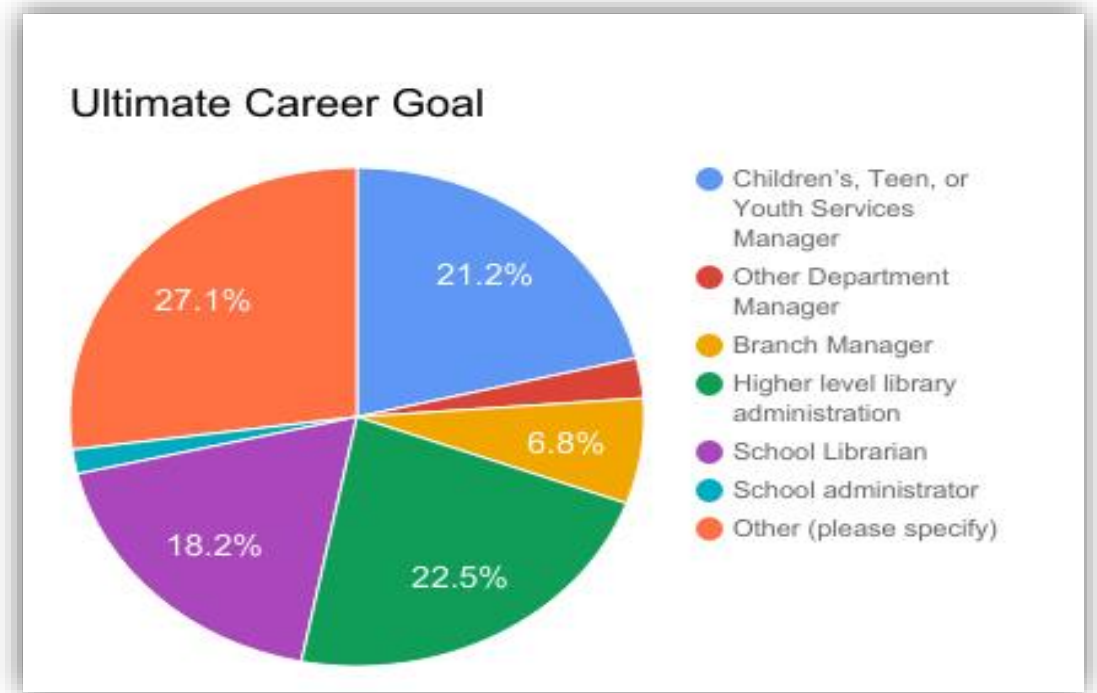
# Current Trends in Leadership Development Practices

First, Let's Define Leadership vs Management



## We Asked Around...

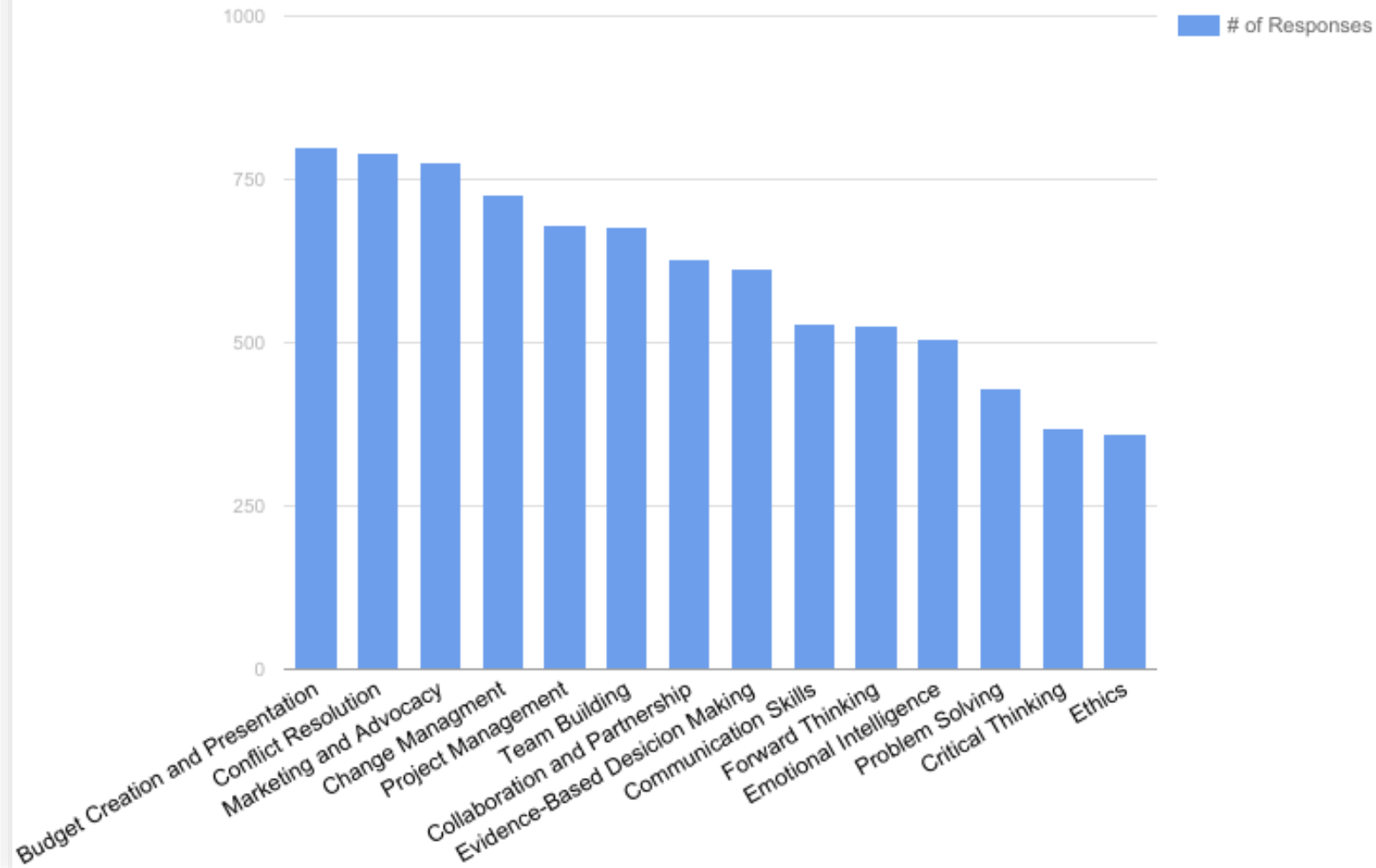
- Team J conducted a survey that had 1551 individuals respond about Youth Library Leadership.
- The survey was sent out to state listservs, ALSC members and other professional organizations
- The team personally interviewed 20 librarians from around the country for qualitative research



\*Other responses included: retired and variations of statements on 'management is not leadership.'



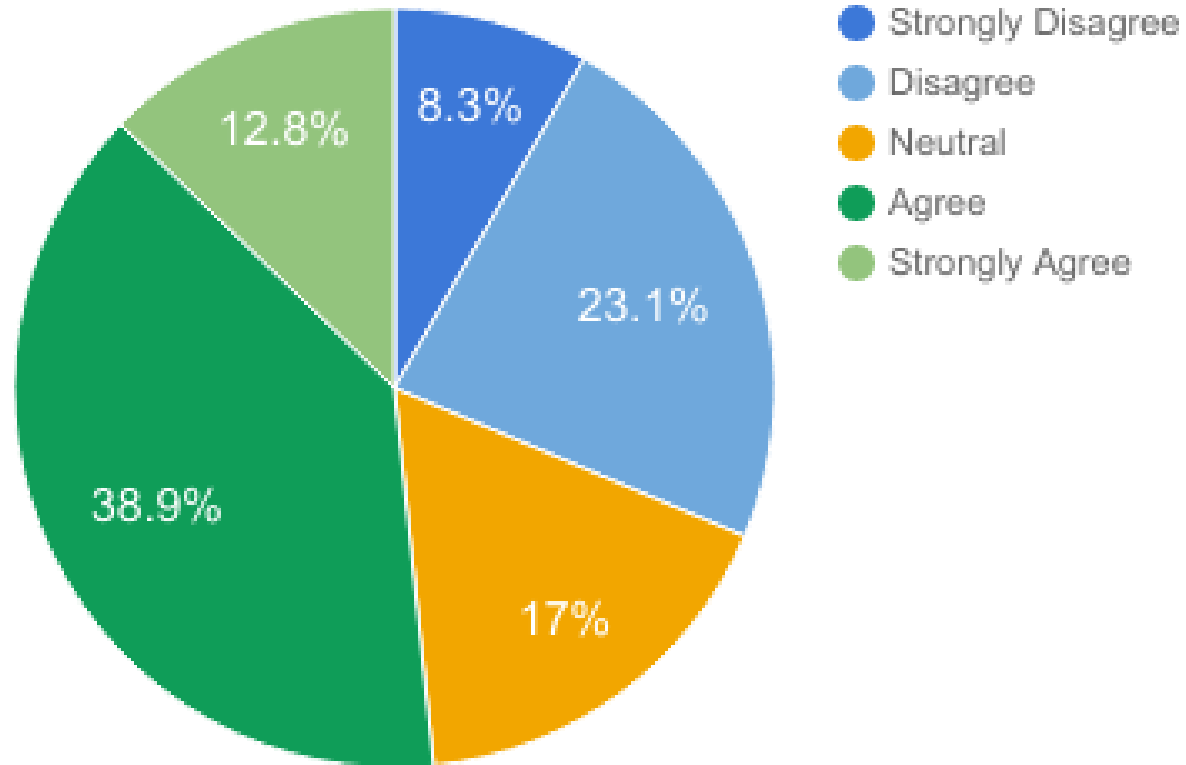
## Skills You Wished You Learned








## I am satisfied with the opportunities my organization makes





“To move up the leadership ladder, you seem to have to exit youth services. And I think that a lot of children’s librarians who are youth services librarians at heart don’t want to give up that direct service work with children...at some point being a youth librarian leader probably means giving up the direct service work, unfortunately. ...[but] there are usually some ways to keep your fingers in the stuff that really feeds your soul, as you learn to take on a larger role. So I’d encourage more youth services librarians to make that leap.”

Children’s Services Supervising Librarian from California, personal communication, 19 March 2017

# Career Paths of Librarians Who Work With Youth



- Leading from where you are
- Youth Service Manager
- Higher-level library management/ school administrator
- Leadership in the library community

# Leading From Where You Are



- Leading from where you are
- Youth Librarians and School Librarians
- Literacy experts for their community
- Integrity, Collaboration and Ingenuity

## Youth Services Manager

- Desire for career advancement, but does not wish to leave daily interactions with youth
- May train and mentor other youth librarians
- Manages and sets the direction of their department





## Higher-Level Library Management or School Administrator

“Good youth services librarians make the best leaders and library directors. The skills they bring are organization, management, communication—both oral and written—and active listening, enthusiasm, and a fierce dedication to libraries, literacy, and building community through the library”

-Retired library director from Pennsylvania, personal communication,  
19 March 2017





## Higher-Level Library Management or School Administrator

“Professional organizations helped me by giving me opportunities to lead and learn leadership through committee work or mentoring. I saw youth librarians in leadership positions and those role models helped me feel comfortable stepping up and out of youth leadership into association-wide leadership.”

-Youth Services Manager from Wisconsin



# Examine the needs of ALSC members

1. Foundations: Meaningful Discourse about Confidence, Risk, Success, and Failure
2. Creating a Diversified Personal Learning Plan with Professional Goals
3. Mentorship
4. Youth Services Capital Resource Management
5. Strategic Planning & Leading Change for Youth Services
6. Practicing Leadership with Project-Based Learning
7. Strengthening Advocacy Skills for the Library and Youth Services
8. Building Strategic Partnerships to Support Youth Services
9. Youth Services Personnel Management & Coaching

# Short Term Recommendations to ALSC



- Youth Library Leader Panels
- Strengthen Existing Mentoring Program
- Library Career Road Map...

# ALSC: EMERGING LEADERS 2017 PROJECT - The Path to Youth Library Leadership

## Becoming Transformational Leaders

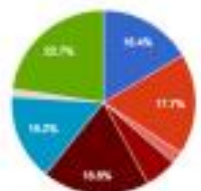
Research Team: Christine Gaffney, Sarah Gowdy Herford, Sara White, Tori Ogawa

### Librarian's Path

#### Skills and Qualities

- Strong people skills
- Willingness to try
- Passionate enthusiasm
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Ability to tailor communication
- Change management skills
- Experience with youth

#### Ultimate Career Goal



- Children's, Teen, or Youth Services Librarian
- Children's, Teen, or Youth Services Manager
- Branch Manager
- Higher level library administration
- School Librarian
- School administrator
- Other (please specify)

#### I am satisfied with the opportunities my organization makes



- Branch Manager
- Children
- Books
- Space
- Specialty Area

#### Leadership in Library Community

Involvement in local and national library associations provides opportunity for leadership development

#### Lead Where You Are

Seeking out leadership roles without a manager title

#### Youth Services Manager

Supervising Youth Services, with less direct involvement serving youth.

#### Higher Level Management

Involvement in strategic planning and visioning

#### Youth Services Personnel Management and Coaching

#### Youth Services Capital Resource Management

### Needs of ALSC Members

#### Emotional Intelligence

#### Diversified Personal Learning Plan

#### Mentorship

#### Strategic Planning and Leading Change for Youth Services

#### Practicing Leadership with Project-Based Learning

#### Strengthening Advocacy Skills for the Library and Youth Services

#### Building Strategic Partnerships to Support Youth Services

#### How Can ALSC Support?

##### Short Term Options:

- library career road map
- youth library leader panels
- strengthening professional mentoring program

##### Long Term Options:

- leadership development programs
- toolkits or original webinars
- potential partnerships
  - Power Up Conference
  - local and state library associations
  - MLIS programs





# Our Long Term Recommendations for ALSC

- Leadership Development Program
- Toolkits or Original Webinars
- Potential Partnerships





# We Have Emerged!

## Questions?

### Contact:

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