

MSLA JOURNAL

Volume 51, Number 2
SPRING/SUMMER 2023



Choose Your Own Title



I am the editor of the Manitoba School Library Association's bi-annual journal. I want a good title for our spring/summer issue, which features articles about Artificial Intelligence in the context of School Libraries, as well as significant coverage of attempted Book Banning and challenges to reading materials. What should I name the issue?



"Books and Bytes: Navigating Artificial Intelligence and Freedom of Knowledge in School Libraries"



Can you give me a range of different options?



Absolutely, here are a variety of titles that might suit your journal issue:



1. "The Dual Frontiers: AI Integration and Book Censorship in School Libraries"
2. "School Libraries at Crossroads: AI Opportunities and Censorship Challenges"
3. "Defining New Shelves: AI Innovation and Freedom of Thought in Today's School Libraries"
4. "AI & Advocacy: Evolving Libraries Amidst Technological Change and Controversy"
5. "Page to Pixel: The Balance of AI Progress and Book Banning Debate in School Libraries"
6. "From Bookmarks to Algorithms: Navigating the Modern School Library Landscape"
7. "Between Lines and Code: AI Adoption and Book Banning in School Libraries"
8. "Turning the Digital Page: AI and the Fight Against Censorship in School Libraries"
9. "Shaping Tomorrow's Libraries: The Role of AI and the Ongoing Book Banning Debate"
10. "Code Meets Page: AI Advances and Censorship Struggles in the School Library"

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President's Message

By Sandy Welbergen



As my time as the president of the MSLA comes to an end, I find myself filled with a mix of emotions. It has been a great privilege to serve two terms leading this remarkable association, and I am grateful for the unwavering support of every one of you. Together, we have faced many challenges head-on and emerged stronger than ever. Looking back, I am reminded of the hurdles we faced as we emerged from the grips of the global pandemic.

The transition from virtual to in-person meetings was no small feat. We navigated through, adapting and ensuring the safety of our members while fostering the personal connections that make the MSLA so special. I am immensely proud of how we rallied together, pulling together an in-person SAGE Conference on Children's Rights and embracing the power of human interaction once again.

This post-pandemic era brought its own unique set of challenges and from it, we witnessed the rapid rise of AI tools and its impact on the world of education. AI brought with it both promises and

concerns, and the MSLA stood at the forefront, spearheading conversations to ensure that technology is used responsibly and ethically in our schools. Our L.I.T. forum in March proved that, as library professionals, we are already embracing the opportunities AI presents while safeguarding the values that make our profession indispensable - the human touch, empathy, and creativity.

Despite our efforts, I cannot ignore the unfortunate reality that government austerity and cutbacks to education have resulted in a reduction in the number of trained library staff in schools. It is disheartening to witness the shrinking presence of teacher-librarians and trained technicians in our educational institutions, especially at a time when new challenges such as AI and book banning demand their expertise and guidance. Library staff are the frontline defenders of intellectual freedom and we are the ones best equipped to manage these challenges. Our absence leaves a void that is easily manipulated by special-interest groups and bigots. This void must be addressed if we are to safeguard the educational experience of our students.

In the face of these circumstances, it is imperative that we continue to advocate for the restoration and expansion of library staff in schools. We must champion the crucial role we play in fostering critical thinking and guiding students through the complexities of the digital age. It is through our expertise that we can effectively navigate the intricate landscape of AI and combat the insidious threat of book banning. The MSLA, as a collective voice, must continue to champion the vital importance of library staff in our

schools, advocating for their presence and influence in shaping the educational landscape.

To the incoming executive team, thank you so much for taking on this challenge. Embrace this opportunity to make your mark, to lead with passion and purpose, and to continue MSLA's legacy. Through your dedicated efforts, we can ensure that our profession remains strong, resilient, and equipped to confront the challenges that lie ahead. I want to express my deepest gratitude to all the members of the MSLA. Thank you for your tireless efforts to elevate our profession. Together, we have accomplished great things, and I am confident that the MSLA will continue to thrive and shape the future of education in Manitoba.

Sandy Welbergen

Written with assistance from :

OpenAI. Personal Communication.
ChatGPT (May 15, 2023)

Editor's Monologue

Prompted by Morgan Arksey, with assistance from ChatGPT

Could it be that the art of the editor's letter is really a love letter to the city of ideas we navigate each day?



The Prompt: *Write a monologue spoken by a stressed teacher-librarian and editor of the Manitoba School Library Association journal, who needs to come up with the editor's letter for said journal.* The journal features articles about the freedom to read, book challenges, and the rise of AI in our classrooms, as well as other features on book awards and making engaging library displays. And can you write it in the style of *Sex and the City*?

The Result: [The scene is set in a cluttered office that echoes the chaotic charm of a New York apartment, filled with stacks of books, papers, and a computer humming with life. The lone figure of a teacher-librarian, Mr. Arksey, has made this space his sanctuary. He's sitting at his desk, his fingers dancing an anxious jig against his keyboard, his aura a mix of exhaustion and a sense of being overwhelmed.]

Mr. Arksey: [Sighs, the sound enveloping the room like a lonely whisper in the city night] Where does one even begin? The editor's letter for the Manitoba School Library Association journal... always been my personal Everest, but this time, it's a full-on K2. The pressure is wearing me down, like the weight of overdue books that seem to grow heavier with each passing day.

[His gaze wanders over the pages of

the journal, his fingers tracing a tactile map over the articles. It's a silent love affair.]

Mr. Arksey: Freedom to read... it's the Central Park of our modern world - an oasis amidst chaos. We've seen threats to this sanctuary, attempts to bar entry, and even outright bans. How do I broadcast this urgency, the importance of defending

this intellectual Eden? How do I inspire others to play their part, to make sure every student can discover the landscapes of diverse ideas?

[He picks up a pen, and it shakes as if it's the first date with a piece of paper.]

Mr. Arksey: Then there's the new city slicker - AI in our classrooms. Thrilling, yes. Frightening, absolutely. AI could change the skyline of education, give our teaching methods a new edge. But at what cost? Will it cast us, the teachers, into obsolescence? Will it strip away the joy of reading, the heart-to-heart chats that come from sharing the love of a book? I need to address these fears, offer a balanced view, and motivate our members to ride this tech wave without losing sight of our central tenets.

[His eyes rest on a pile of books waiting patiently on his desk for their review.]

Mr. Arksey: Book challenges... my personal Manhattan traffic jam. It's a sucker punch to the gut when the books that broaden horizons and grow empathy are called into question, censored, sidelined. We must embolden our librarians and teachers, arm them with the wisdom and tools to stand up to these challenges. How can I communicate the importance of standing strong, of protecting literature against the onslaught of ignorance and fear?

[His gaze sweeps over the room, resting on the displays with the admiration of a true artist.]

Mr. Arksey: And then there are the library displays... my own personal art gallery. They've always been a comfort, a canvas for creativity. But of late, they seem to be just another unchecked item on my eternal to-do list. How can I fire up my fellow librarians to keep these displays vibrant and inviting, to make our libraries the beating hearts of our schools, just like Central Park is to New York?

[He massages his temples, attempting to ease the Manhattan rush-hour traffic in his head.]

Mr. Arksey: This editor's letter... it's not just an article. It's the collective voice of our Association, the chorus of the Manitoba School Library Association. It needs to inspire, educate, and unify us in our pursuit of promoting reading, advocating intellectual freedom, and keeping pace with the twists and turns of this ever-changing world.

[His eyes dart to the clock, a harsh reminder of the looming deadline.]

Mr. Arksey: I can't let the stress swallow me. I have to believe in my own wisdom, my experience, and my passion. I need to find those magic words that will resonate with our members, uplift them, and light a spark in them for the noble work we do.

[With a resolve that would put any New Yorker to shame, Mr. Arksey takes a deep breath and starts typing, his fingers dancing on the keyboard as he weaves his thoughts into the editor's letter, one word at a time. This was his New York marathon and he was going to run it with all he had.]

MSLA Business

Manitoba School Library Association Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Manitoba School Library Association took place on May 8, 2022 at McMaster House, the first in-person AGM since May of 2019.

It was a great opportunity to gather and celebrate what School Libraries and library staff bring to Manitoba schools, as well as to recognize the organization's 85th anniversary.



The 2023-2024 Executive members and Standing Committee Chairs:

Board of Directors:

- President: Brandi Bartok
- Past President Sandi Welbergen
- President Elect: (open)
- Secretary: Niki Card
- Treasurer: Jonine Bergen

Standing Committees:

- Publications: Morgan Arksey
- Advocacy: Lindsay Stewart
- Professional Learning: Michelle Barclay
- Archives: Stacey Matsumoto
- Members-at-Large: Lisa Bova and Michelle Carlos



Make sure

To follow us on all of our social media
pages to keep up to date on all things
MSLA



Manitoba School
Libraries Association



@mbschoollibrary



@_MSLA_



Welcome to our New Executive Members:



Michelle Carlos – Member-at-Large

Michelle Carlos has been teaching for 25 years in Pembina Trails School Division and in that time has filled many roles including classroom teacher, literacy support, Reading Recovery Specialist, Vice-principal, and Teacher-Librarian. Michelle is currently the Library Learning Commons Consultant for Pembina Trails and also works as a Digital Coach. She recently worked as a concept developer on the Minecraft Level Up Winnipeg project. Michelle is a mom to three active teenagers, has a passion for gardening (grown from her roots as a country girl) and she enjoys bike rides with her husband.



Lisa Bova – Member-at-Large

Hello, I'm Lisa Bova the Manager of Library Services for Winnipeg School Division, where I connect educators to engaging resources and support school libraries. I enjoy a good picture book that can make me laugh. I'm looking forward to joining MSLA as a member-at-large!

Stacey Matsumoto – Archives

Stacey joins MSLA this year and is a teacher-librarian in River East Transcona School Division.

Thank you to the 2022-2023 MSLA Board and Departing members

We would also like to thank the members who served on the MSLA Board for 2022-2023. Several members will be taking a step back from the Board this upcoming year; we would like to thank them for their service over the past many years. We wish Bev Werbuk, Ella Munro, Heidi Cromwell, and Allison Marshall all the best; you will be missed!

MSLA Awards

2023 Outstanding Teacher-Librarian of the Year Award, in Memory of Lois Gervais



Morgan Arksey graduated from Brandon University, receiving a Bachelor of Education in 2009. In May of 2022, he completed a diploma in Teacher-Librarianship from the University of British Columbia and is currently working toward a Master's degree in Educational Technology (UBC). Morgan has worked as a Teacher-Librarian in the Pembina Trails School Division since 2017 at both Arthur A. Leach Junior High and Fort Richmond Collegiate.

Relationship building is important to Morgan; accordingly, he offers many clubs and extracurricular activities for students. He has facilitated reading clubs, I Love to Read Month activities, Drop Everything and Read, robotics clubs, a student digital writing publication (The Write Company), and student opportunities for podcast creation. Always an advocate for multiple forms of literacy, Morgan has started a family storytime at FRC to strengthen connections between the high school and parents. Morgan creates welcoming spaces to meet multiple needs ranging from class research

projects, student prayer, and individual calming spaces. He aims to develop essential skills for life-long learning by building student confidence, organization and communication skills. Morgan has a keen interest in how school libraries promote equity and has worked to modernize school collections and expand the diversity of materials offered to students and staff.

Morgan demonstrates leadership in many ways at school and in the community, including in the role of Literacy Lead and through participation on School Leadership Teams. Morgan helps staff to enrich teaching and learning by incorporating digital literacy and information fluency. He is relied upon by both staff and students to support student inquiry, assist with organizing technology and to guide teachers with their literacy programs and project-based learning. He regularly leads staff professional development events and encourages teaching staff to be creative, current, and collaborative. Morgan's influence is evident as the many letters of support included in his nomination package demonstrate the high level of respect and admiration he has earned from his colleagues and students.

Morgan has served on the Manitoba School Library Association's Publications committee for the last three years, filling a crucial role keeping members informed of MSLA events, documenting professional development sessions, sharing professional knowledge by writing informational articles, and ensuring engaging content for journal readers.

Morgan is an outstanding Teacher-Librarian and an inspiration to all of us. Congratulations!

Morgan's Acceptance Speech

Thank you so much to MSLA for this honour; I still think you chose the wrong person. Are you sure?

Okay then. I guess I will continue. First up, some thanks: to Tanus Tosh McNeil for pointing me towards the library, to Raegan Rocco, Rosemarie Schwarz and Meng Ding for being excellent team members and passionate about helping students get the resources and build the connections they need to learn best. To the students, staff and admin I have worked with at Arthur A Leach and Fort Richmond Collegiate. To Heather Eby for teaching me to weed ruthlessly, for JoAnne Gibson for encouraging me towards TL training and being a general inspiration in terms library advocacy, and for the whole MSLA board for all the work that

they do to support Library Staff in this province.

I feel like I need to come clean here: I've spent most of my life as a bad library user. Both as a child and today I have bought the books I want to read instead of putting them on hold and waiting my turn for them to arrive. I study in quiet places in my home, on my own technology. As a child I spent a ridiculous amount of time browsing the Microsoft Encarta encyclopedia on a computer that had internet access before any computer at my school or community library did. I learned to make things through online guides, and when I was stuck I knew that I could ask a parent for help, not a librarian.

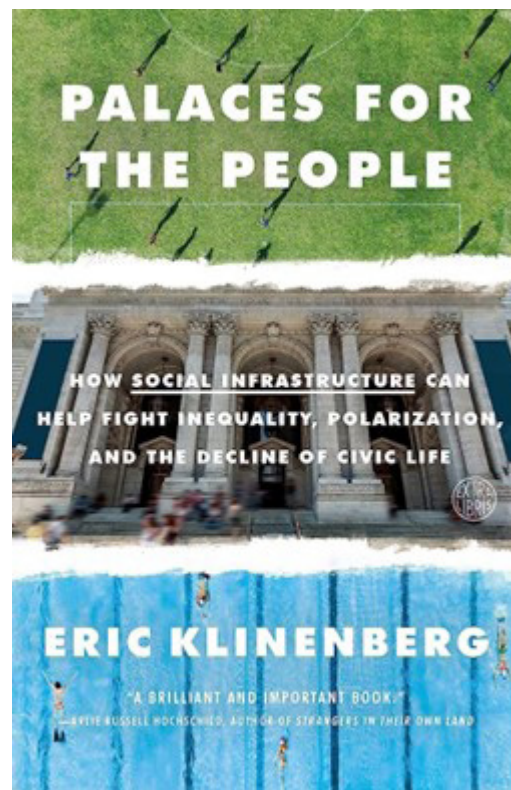
10 years ago I didn't even know that being a teacher-librarian was a real job. I once saw an internet meme pie chart that was said to contain all of the world's knowledge. A tiny sliver was labeled 'what you know', a similar sized piece was labeled 'what you know you don't know', the other 90% of the pie was labeled 'what you don't know you don't know'. I didn't know that I didn't know!

What I've come to realize is that I essentially fell into a 21st century learning skillset through my own privilege, whether it financial, experiential, or familial. But the beauty of the library is that it is there to make sure that ALL students have the chance to develop the skills they need to survive in a world that is changing faster than ever before.

While I love teaching about finding information and helping students discover a good book, what I love most about the library is that it is one of the few places left in society where you can simply exist without being expected to pay for something. Libraries are community spaces. One of my favourite reads of the past several years is Eric Klinenberg's *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*. I recommend it if you are interested in learning of the benefits of social infrastructure, like that which we provide in school libraries.

When our budgets and personnel allocations are slowly reduced year by year, make no bones about it, we are stealing from the futures of the students that need these resources the most. A quote from *Palaces for the People* goes "Today, as cities and suburbs reinvent themselves, and as cynics claim that government has nothing good to contribute to that process, it's important that institutions like libraries get the recognition they deserve. After all, the root of the word "library," liber; means both "book" and "free." Libraries stand for and exemplify something that needs defending: the public institutions that -- even in an age of atomization and inequality -- serve as bedrocks of civil society. Libraries are the kinds of places where ordinary people with different backgrounds, passions, and interests can take part in a living democratic culture."

I look forward to helping to shape the future of school libraries with you, as well as fight for their continued funding, quality resource access, and a catalogue of materials that reflects the beautiful diversity of the communities we live in. I encourage you to do your part to help make sure that more people don't know that they don't know about the integral work that libraries are doing. Thank you.



2023 Outstanding Library Support Staff of the Year Award, in Memory of Lois Gervais



Audrey Otto is a Filipino-Canadian born in Winnipeg to immigrant parents. She graduated from the University of Manitoba receiving a Bachelor of Arts. In 2018, Audrey graduated as a library technician from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in Calgary with a Library Information Technology Diploma (Honours) and joined the Louis Riel School Division in Winnipeg in the role of library assistant at H.S. Paul School. Audrey continues to engage in professional learning and is currently completing her Library Technician Post-Diploma Certificate at the University of the Fraser Valley (BC) through distance education.

Within the Library Learning Commons, Audrey supports and organizes many opportunities for students and staff to come together as a collaborative learning community. Audrey makes the library a diverse and exciting place for students and staff by ensuring that the library is a space where everyone is

welcome and everyone feels they belong. As a skilled readers' advisor, Audrey makes nurturing lifelong reading habits a priority for students and staff. She motivates readers of all ages by connecting patrons to just the right reading material, whether that means reading text or images from a book or a screen. She ensures that the rich and diverse collection of resources and programs the school library offers are accessible to everyone, and that all students, staff and the school community are inspired to explore their world and see themselves represented in the Library Learning Commons.

Audrey is intentional in providing opportunities for students to engage in story and a relevant maker activity in the Library Learning Commons to build deeper understandings on a theme. Staff take notice of how the library staff integrate maker culture into learning and often continue to work on these activities back in the classroom during choice or exploration time. Audrey is a technology leader in the school and she frequently supports students and staff in the integration of new digital tools to enhance learning and instruction. Audrey is a strong advocate for personalized professional learning in her role as a library technician and models a "learning lifestyle" at all times. She actively pursues new opportunities to learn by attending conferences, reading professional journals, conducting her own research, and following relevant social media blogs in the field of school librarianship. Audrey also actively shares her professional knowledge divisionally and presented on the subject of diversity at the last MSLA MTS PD day.

We recognize Audrey for her exemplary service to school libraries in Louis Riel School Division.

Audrey's Acceptance Speech

I have to admit that while I'm now well-versed speaking in front of an entire class of children every day, I still get really nervous getting up to talk to a room full of my colleagues and peers. And full transparency: I briefly considered using ChatGPT to help me write this speech.

I'm both humbled and honoured to receive this recognition, and would like to thank the Manitoba School Libraries Association for presenting me with this award.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Kathy Atkin, Divisional Teacher-Librarian at LRSD and Debbie Hoffman, Teacher-Librarian at H.S. Paul, aka my partner in crime and the other half of the library's "dynamic duo". Their unwavering support have played a significant role in my journey to this stage in my career. Thank you for believing in me.

I'd like to thank my husband, Keith, for being a constant support through my educational journey to becoming a Library Technician, and for always being my sounding board when I go on and on about work and children's literature, and the challenges

and victories we all face in the field.

I'd lastly like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the late Lois Gervais. Her dedication and passion for the advancement and recognition of libraries were a constant source of inspiration for many and something to aspire to. Thank you to the Gervais family for their generosity in her name. Her legacy lives on through the work of all those who continue to champion libraries in Manitoba.

Growing up, the library was my safe place. I spent countless hours at the Sir William Stephenson Library as a child. I also spent a lot of time in my own school's libraries, sometimes getting permission from the teacher-librarian to stay inside at lunch recess because she knew I would be spending my time actually reading. These early years ignited a passion within me for literature and the magic it holds. This led me to pursue a career in the field, where I have been fortunate enough to work alongside so many amazing individuals who share my love for books.

As a child, I often found it difficult to find books featuring characters with whom I could really identify. This challenge made me realize the importance of diversity and inclusion in children's literature. I firmly believe that every child should be able to see themselves reflected in the stories they read, and it's with great pride that I continue to work toward a future where this is possible.

In my role as a library technician, I've made it my mission to promote and advocate for a more diverse and inclusive range of books, so that every child, regardless of their background or experience, can find a story that resonates with them. By providing these stories, we can inspire the next generation of readers and ensure that our libraries remain a sanctuary for all.

Again, I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone involved in making this memorable event happen. To the MSLA for the continued support, and to the Gervais family for upholding Lois' vision of a better future for all school library professionals, which in turn helps us to be our best for our patrons. This award is not only an acknowledgement of my own work but also a testament to the incredible community of library professionals who are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of our young readers.

I'm truly honored to be a member of this community, and I look forward to continuing our shared mission of promoting the importance of children's literature.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of the evening.

Library Roles

School Library

Library Technician

Requirements

Grade 12 education and Library Technician Certificate

*Please note that each school division may have different requirements. Some school divisions have Library Clerks or EA's instead of technicians. These positions usually don't require a technician's certificate but may ask for other relevant experience.

Teacher Librarian

Requirements

Bachelor of Education
After Degree or Integrated
Any grade stream

Preferred Qualifications

3-5 years varied
teaching experience

**Certificate or Masters
in Teacher-
Librarianship**

Public Library

Library Assistant

Requirements

Grade 12 education and Library Technician Certificate
(sometime listed as preferred or required)

Public Librarian

Requirements

Master of Library Information Science
from an ALA accredited university

Library Roles Defined

Library Technician: Supports and assists teacher-librarians with library work within the school setting. This designation usually requires a certificate from an accredited program.

Teacher Librarian: Certified teachers who support teachers and students with their information literacy, technology and inquiry needs.

Library Assistant: Supports and assists Librarians in the public library setting. May require a certificate from an accredited program.

Public Librarian: Library professionals that aid the public with their information needs through reference, programming and outreach services.



Literacy

L.I.T. Forum: The Role of ChatGPT and AI Tools in the Modern Classroom



Educators from around the province gathered on March 22nd to take part of an excellent panel discussion led by MSLA's own Brandi Bartok.

Panel participants included,

- Barry Dyck, consultant with Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning - @barry_dyck
- Kirsten Thompson, ICT Coordinator with Mountain View School Division and ManACE executive member = @MissLwb
- Sean Giesbrecht, Teacher-Librarian at Ecole Secondaire Oak Park High School = @SPGiesbrecht
- Samantha Adamson – technology educator at College Miles MacDonnell Collegiate

What followed was an hour and a half of engaging conversation and dialogue about the benefits that AI can bring to education, and the things we need to keep in mind before we wholeheartedly embrace it.

Presenters agreed that the technology is here to stay, and that educators need to pivot to ensure that students develop the skills necessary to remain creative and critical thinkers in a world where language models like ChatGPT have increasing power. Performance based assessments seem more important than ever.

Highlights included,

Does using ChatGPT constitute plagiarism, and are we entering the age of "post-plagiarism"? – a discussion

- We are still in early stages, and these rules are still being defined but currently it seems like the author of the prompt is the owner of the response. This will be important to keep an eye on as it will evolve with time.

The importance of learning how to prompt well

- The better the prompting the better the response; teaching this will become integral in a post AI world.

AI as an accessibility game changer

- Chatbots are not yet great at developing material and are still caught making things up entirely, but they are excellent at distilling the main idea from providing text, or simplifying provided text. How can we be teaching students to use these tools to build understanding?

Privacy and data concerns

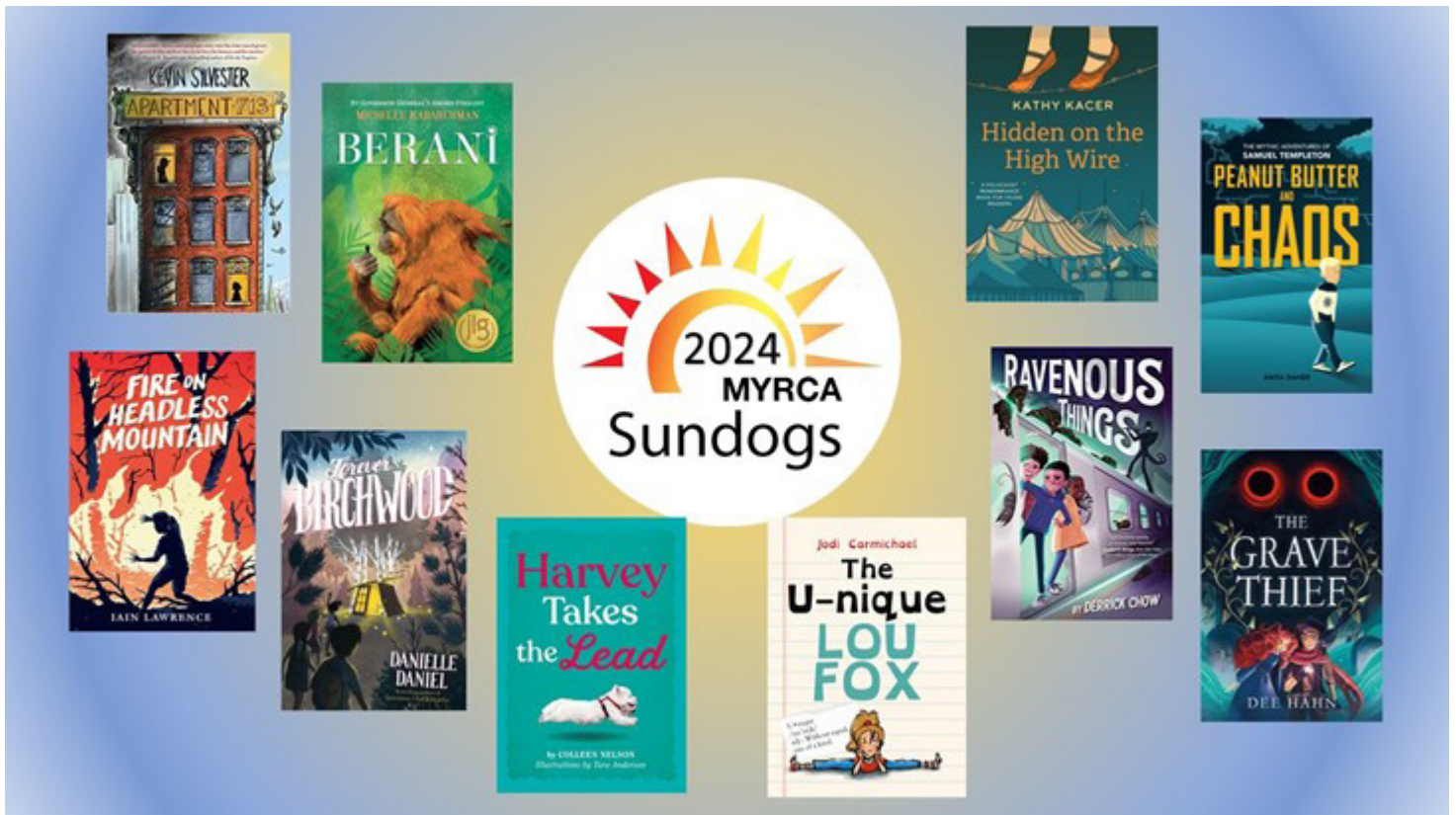
- Where is our information going, and what is it being used for?



Manitoba Young Readers Choice Awards 2023 Winners Announced!



Manitoba Young Readers Choice Awards 2024 Nominees Announced!



Academic Posting Etiquette

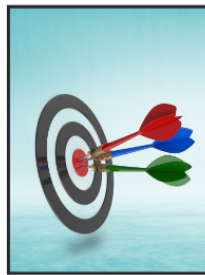
Be careful of your tone

Avoid posts that are sarcastic or joking - while a comment might be appropriate for between friends, academic discussions have much stricter expectations about appropriateness. Joking with people requires a close relationship, or else boundaries are often crossed.



More and more of our daily life revolves around our interactions with others online.

Here are some handy rules for participating in online discussions to make sure that you are adding positively to the conversation.



Stay on topic

Don't post irrelevant links, comments, thoughts, and pictures. Carefully consider your use of emojis.

Respond with names

If you are responding or referring to something someone else said, be sure to say their name and give a brief summary of the post you are referencing.
For example: "To respond to Carl's statement about cheese, I think..."



Be polite

Thank others for their contributions to the conversations, and complement others on ideas that help you better understand a topic or look at something in a new way.

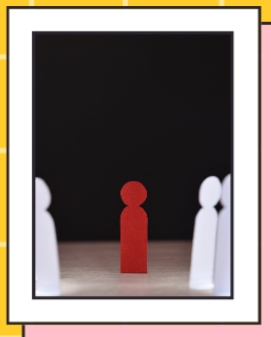
Understand Diversity

Recognize and embrace the fact that people participating in online forums come from diverse backgrounds and have different perspectives. Respect everyone's right to express their own viewpoint.



scan me to get a printable copy!





Don't Discriminate

Never discriminate based on race, gender, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic. Every person has the right to be treated with dignity and fairness.

Language Matters

Be mindful of the language you use. Avoid slurs, offensive terms, or language that might demean someone else. Strive for inclusivity and neutrality in your communication.



Listen before you speak

Before responding, ensure you understand the other person's point of view. Do not disregard others' feelings or experiences.

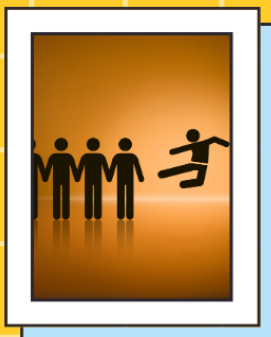


Respect Privacy

Do not share or disclose someone's personal information without their explicit consent. Respect personal boundaries in your conversations. Don't screenshot and share, especially with identifying information.



Online discussions require more thought than their in-person counterparts, because tone and emotion are hard to read online.



No Personal Attacks

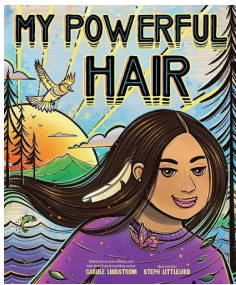
Disagree with ideas, not people. When you disagree, be polite and respectful. Do not resort to personal attacks, insults, or other forms of online harassment.

They also leave a permanent record.

Remember, an online forum is a place for sharing knowledge, ideas, and experiences. It's everyone's responsibility to create a respectful, inclusive, and safe environment for everyone. A strong, inclusive, and respectful discourse elevates us all. Keep it professional, keep it respectful.

Indigenous

Recommended Reads!



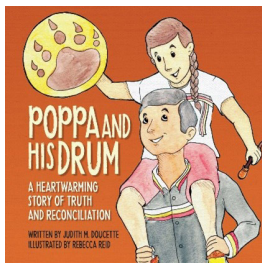
Picture Book

Title: My Powerful Hair

Author: Carole Lindstrom – Turtle Mountain Band (Nebraska)

Illustrator: Steph Littlebird – Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (Oregon)

Synopsis: This story explores the tale of a young girl's determination to grow her hair long, to honor her family and cultural lineage, despite her mother's and grandmother's inability to do so. It's an uplifting narrative that celebrates hair as a powerful symbol of strength, resilience, and cultural connection among Indigenous communities. Illustrated by debut artist Steph Littlebird, this book offers a healing and empowering depiction of Indigenous traditions.



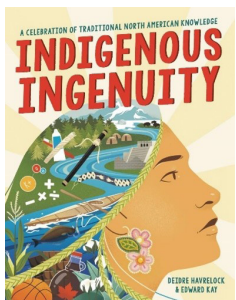
Picture Book

Title: Poppa and His Drum

Author: Judith M. Doucette – Qalipu First Nation

Illustrator: Madelyn Goodnight – Mi'kmaw

Synopsis: A tale of Poppa, who endured ill-treatment as a young boy after moving from an all-French Indigenous community to the English town of St. George's. When his grandson invites him to perform a drum show at school, Poppa is initially hesitant due to his past experiences. However, he finds a welcoming environment, encouraging him to share his Mi'kmaw cultural traditions. This positive encounter helps Poppa reconcile with his harsh school experiences, symbolizing the power and wisdom of Reconciliation in changing times.

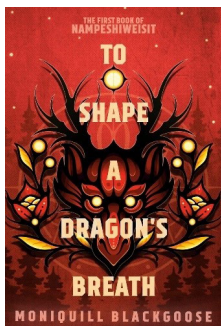


Middle Years

Title: Indigenous Ingenuity: A Celebration of Traditional North American Knowledge

Authors: Deidre Havrelock – Saddle Lake Cree Nation and Edward Kay - Settler

Synopsis: NON-FICTION – This book explores the profound impact of Indigenous North Americans on modern life, through a range of scientific discoveries and technological inventions in areas such as civil engineering, astronomy, medicine, and agriculture. The book illuminates hidden history while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indigenous innovation through fun, hands-on activities and experiments. Readers are invited to acknowledge the significant contributions of traditional North American Indigenous cultures, and to adopt principles of reciprocity, environmental stewardship, and universal interconnectivity.

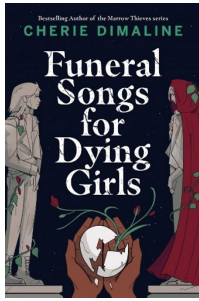


Young Adult

Title: To Shape a Dragon's Breath

Author: Monique Blackgoose – Wampanoag

Synopsis: FICTION - FANTASY On the secluded island of Masquapaug, 15-year-old Anequs bonds with a dragon hatchling, reviving ancient tales of dragons cohabitating with humans. However, her relationship with the dragon conflicts with the English conquerors' norms, forcing her into a mainland dragon school. Anequs, an untrained girl with unique cultural perspectives, faces both social and academic obstacles. Nonetheless, her determination prevails as she endeavors to save her dragon, refusing to conform to English expectations. As Anequs and her dragon grow, they recognize their burgeoning power and their potential to change the world.

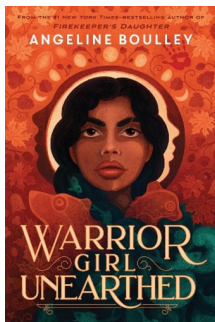


Young Adult

Title: Funeral Songs for Dying Girls

Author: Cherie Dimaline – Georgian Bay Métis Nation

Synopsis: Sixteen-year-old Winifred, residing in an apartment above a crematorium near her mother's grave, spends her summer tending to neglected graves and nursing a crush on her best friend, Jack. When rumors of Winterson Cemetery being haunted surface, Winifred sees a chance to save her father's job and their home. Enlisting her con-artist cousin, they stage ghost tours, even as she tries to dispel her father's belief that his wife has returned. Things get complicated when Phil, the genuine ghost of a teenage girl, appears, leading Winifred to question her understanding of life, death, and especially, love.

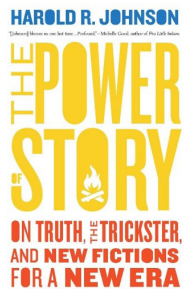


Young Adult

Title: Warrior Girl Unearthed

Author: Angeline Boulley – Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa

Synopsis: FICTION – Set in the same world as *Firekeeper's Daughter*! Perry Firekeeper-Birch, a self-proclaimed troublemaker and skilled fisher, is content with her life on Sugar Island. However, when a murder investigation embroils her family, and grave robbers threaten her Anishinaabe tribe's heritage, Perry is forced to question her once-clear path. To save her people's inheritance and find the missing Indigenous women, Perry takes action, relying on her friends, her diligent twin, and a morally steadfast new boy in town. Despite facing old feuds, hidden sisterly secrets, and failed heists, Perry is determined to solve the mystery and protect her tribe's legacy and the lost women.

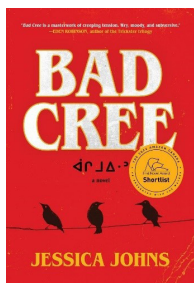


Senior Years/Staff Reads

Title: The Power of Story: On Truth, the Trickster, and New Fictions for a New Era

Author: Harold R. Johnson – Montreal Lake Cree Nation

Synopsis: Released posthumously after Johnson's death in the winter of 2022 in *The Power of Story*, Johnson explains the role of storytelling in every aspect of human life, from personal identity to history and the social contracts that structure our societies, and illustrates how we can direct its potential to re-create and reform not only our own lives, but the life we share. Companionable, clear-eyed, and, above all, optimistic, Johnson's message is both a dire warning and a direct invitation to each of us to imagine and create, together, the world we want to live in.

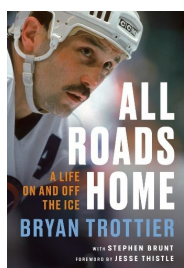


Senior Years/Staff Reads

Title: Bad Cree

Author: Jessica Johns – Sucker Creek First Nation

Synopsis: FICTION - Cree millennial, Mackenzie, living in Vancouver, mysteriously acquires items from her dream world, eerily connected to her deceased sister and Kokum. As her life escalates into a waking nightmare, marked by stalking crows and messages from the afterlife, Mackenzie, fearing real-world consequences, retreats to her Alberta hometown. Here, she and her female relatives must uncover the secret behind these hauntings to prevent further tragedy. *Bad Cree*, a potent debut, is a chilling tribute to female bonds and the power of kinship.



Senior Years/Staff Reads

Title: All Roads Home

Author: Bryan Trottier – Cree/Metis

Synopsis: MEMOIR - Hailing from a mixed heritage family in Val Marie, Saskatchewan, Trottier's memoir offers an insightful look at his personal and professional growth. Trottier recounts memorable encounters with notable figures like his father Buzz, coach Al Arbour, and teammates like Clark Gillies, Mike Bossy, and Mario Lemieux, alongside his experiences with mentor, Lorna Crozier. His narrative, peppered with lessons learned from these relationships, highlights their influence in molding his life and career. The book features a foreword by Jesse Thistle, and afterwords from his daughter, Lindsay Ruthven, and close friend, Dave "Tiger" Williams.

Library Lounge

Show Them What You've Got: Making a Great Library Display!

By Audrey Otto

Book displays have always been a staple in every library. They promote, encourage, and highlight materials and supplement different topics that align with the library's values. It may seem like a simple concept to put together a group of related book titles, but there is one key thing that makes a display great: intention. What's the message we are trying to get across? Does it supplement the books we are reading in the library? Does it help when teaching a specific lesson? How can we engage our community with the display? These are all important things to ask when planning a display.

Whether we physically place books in a window or a shelf, or we put together a bulletin board, there are many factors that go into creating a meaningful display. We've all seen examples of bulletin boards with the phrases "fall into a good book" during autumn, or "spring into reading" when the snow begins to melt, and we finally see the first signs of springtime. While they can be visually appealing, they lack engagement and can appear more decorative than anything. The message of falling into a good book is a great one, but instead of just leaves falling from a tree, why not have students write their book recommendations on them? The value of the display instantly goes up because we've now gotten our community involved in contributing to the display. Displays are typically centered around themes. It could be



a holiday, a school event, highlighting new books; the possibilities are endless. Here at the H.S. Paul School Library Learning Commons, we take current events in our school, our city, and beyond. We make sure that our displays are engaging by having them reflect our community so that our students and staff notice them and feel a sense of belonging or teach a lesson, while promoting the library at the same time.

For example, our most recent Pride display evoked many reactions and emotions from students and teachers alike, especially in the wake of news of book banning and censorship in some parts of the world. Bringing



attention to current events can resonate a bit differently with the community of patrons because it's happening in their lifetime, right now. Having a selection of our 2SLGBTQIA+ books displayed proudly like this during this time helped people feel seen, heard, and supported. These are values that we hold very high in our library and want everyone that walks through the door to feel that.

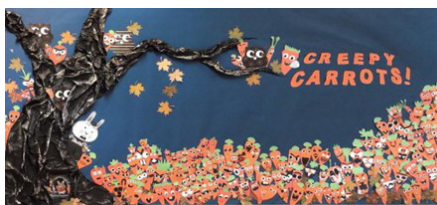
Furthermore, one of our recent back-to-school bulletin boards featured beloved, familiar children's book characters welcoming students back by saying "hello" in many of the languages spoken in our community. Another highlighted the importance of learning people's names; pronouncing them correctly and not being afraid to ask for help, avoiding making up nicknames without the other person's consent, and how our names are a part of our identity. This display was based around the book "Your Name is a Song" by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, which was the first read aloud of the school year. The final back-to-school bulletin board shared ideas on how to make a friend, supplemented by displaying different books available in the library. Examples included giving someone a smile ("Smile" by Raina Telgemeier), including others ("Can I Play Too?" by Mo Willems), and being kind ("We Don't Eat Our Classmates" by Ryan T. Higgins).

Another way to make an eye-catching

display is to incorporate student work. We've made many bulletin boards related to the books that we read aloud to classes, and after sharing the books, we have stations set up where students can use different materials to make a craft that we will then collect and incorporate into our display. When students see their hard work up there, they feel a sense of excitement and pride.

All of these examples really emphasize the fact that the library is a community space for everyone.

Interactive displays are a great way to create fun in the library. Several



teaching resource. For example, we created a bulletin board about reliable sources. We took different news stories happening at the time (2021); news that many of our students were aware of and interested in themselves and found newspaper clippings and books related to those topics. Some topics included the Black Lives Matter movement, residential schools, and climate change.



activities we've offered were enhanced by bulletin boards and display shelves. During International Women's Day, we created a guessing game where photos of some notable women were shown along with a few keywords as captions. Students guessed who they were by filling out a ballot, which was attached to the bulletin board in the hallway. Inside the library, we displayed some biography books of these women in different spots as clues. They also had access to search the Internet for the keywords using the library's iPads. If they completed the activity, they received a small prize. The intention was to have them move around the library and explore the different non-fiction sections and utilize technology in order to find their answers in an enjoyable way.

A good display can also be a valuable



I put QR codes under each book title that, when scanned, linked to our library catalogue via Destiny Discover. Students were then able to read information about the book and place a hold on the titles if they wanted to.

Another example was our very popular Star Wars vs. Star Trek display (a very controversial topic, we know) in May 2023. The idea stemmed from May being Asian Heritage Month and



Jewish Heritage Month. Both franchises hired actors of Asian and Jewish descent, but reactions in the media were mixed. We covered several topics with this one: Asian and Jewish culture, media literacy, and our school-wide theme of 'belonging'. We emphasized that there is "space" for everyone while comparing and contrasting the two sci-fi franchises. Our intention was to have students share their opinions and start great discussions about inclusivity and diversity in the entertainment industry.

Whatever your intention is with your library display, make it a meaningful one. A meaningful display creates



a welcoming and fun space for the community while promoting all the amazing things that the library has to offer.

(Images from https://twitter.com/hspaul_llc)



Adèle Oleschuk (b. 2007)

My Reading Journey, 2023

Sharpie and pencil on paper

Oak Park High School

This artwork was created using the titles from all the books I have taken out, through my school libraries, starting with kindergarten and ending at tenth grade. I used the older book titles to build up the owl, later coming back with newer titles to add depth and layers. Akin to how reading builds up and shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world. The owl is a way to visually quantify and represent my reading journey, highlighting the beauty in both the process and products of reading.

Leading Learning

Defending Diversity: Intellectual Freedom and Collection Diversity Amid Calls for Book Bans in Canadian Schools

By Brandi Bartok

On May 29th, 2023, I had the opportunity to participate in seven CBC radio interviews thanks to an invitation I received from Anita Brooks-Kirkland, Chair of Canadian School Libraries. These interviews were a mixture of live and pre-recorded segments and were featured on the following stations during their morning shows: Winnipeg, Calgary, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Regina, Whitehorse and Saint John. The following is an approximate summary of the questions that were asked, as well as the responses that I gave.

What happened in Brandon School Division?

During a school board meeting on May 8th, 2023, a delegate made a presentation calling for a committee to be formed with the sole purpose of reviewing books and materials that had sexual health information and LGBTQ+ perspectives for the possible removal from Brandon school division libraries. At a subsequent board meeting on May 23rd, 2023, after hearing hours of concerned citizens and groups, the school division denied that request. The request was not consistent with Brandon School Division's own diversity policies and the province's Safe and Inclusive Schools legislation.

Why is this happening now?

Book challenges and book bans are not new. Every year in North America, books are removed from school and public library shelves, often without

due process. Books with sexual health information and LGBTQ+ content, as well as books with characters of colour or that confront racism have always been targeted. What is different now is the level of organization behind the calls for books to be removed or restricted. There are organizations in the US and Canada that are providing support, resources and scripts for like minded people, encouraging a very vocal minority to garner attention and press coverage. This is a movement that we see repeating in many places in the US, most notably in Florida and Texas where it has received political support. Unfortunately, this movement has gained some traction here in Canada.

What can be done about these calls for book bans?

We encourage all school library professionals to have clear and robust selection policies and guidelines that emphasize intellectual freedom. These guidelines should consider how resources will be used for learning, literacy development and how they support representation and diversity. It should also align with Manitoba's Safe and Caring Schools legislation and Respect for Human Diversity policies.

A reconsideration policy with clear steps for performing impartial reviews of challenged materials should also be in place in your school or division. Reviews of materials should be conducted professionally and careful records should be kept. Challenged materials should be held to the

standard of your selection guidelines. Do they conform with your selection standards, or do they fail to meet the selection standards? This takes the values based conversation out of the picture and provides an impartial way to review material. We also would like to emphasize that the material being challenged should stay in circulation while the review process takes place. We do not recognize any calls for clear cutting of library collections as a valid or professional process.

What would you say to parents who are concerned about materials their child can access?

Teacher-Librarians encourage parents and caregivers to have conversations with their own children about the reading choices they are making and whether or not they align with their family values. It is within a parent's purview to do so. Things become problematic when parents try to limit every child from accessing the material in question. People also need to understand that school libraries must reflect the diversity of the school population and that of wider society. We have a responsibility to make sure every child can see themselves in the library collection.

What's concerning about the types of activity we are seeing lately is that we are seeing people go far beyond expressing concern about what their own child is reading. These calls propose to remove or restrict numerous

titles from numerous schools for every child, and they often circumvent established procedures and policies.

Why is it important for school libraries to have items like these in their collection?

One of the key ways we support the needs of Manitoba students is through collection diversity. Collection diversity is essential in school libraries because it ensures that all students can find materials that resonate with their own experiences and this fosters a sense of validation and belonging. A diverse

collection also gives opportunities for students to encounter perspectives and experiences that are different from their own, which promotes empathy, understanding and critical thinking skills.

What impact is this having on school library staff?

There are many different points of impact. It is stressful for school library staff to feel like every decision will be second guessed. This may lead to soft censorship, which occurs when library staff might avoid making purchases of

materials that might be controversial or that they suspect might be challenged, even if those purchases align with their selection guidelines. The diversity of the school library may suffer as a result. Ultimately, it is students who suffer and face the greatest impacts as the perspectives they are exposed to are narrowed and Charter Rights, the principles of intellectual freedom, and Child Rights are eroded.

Brandi Bartok
Past-President 2022-2023

Manitoba School Library Association
c/o Manitoba Teachers' Society
191 Harcourt St.
Winnipeg, MB
R3J 3H2



May 12, 2023

Brandon School Division
Attention: Dr. Linda Ross, Chairperson
1031 - 6th Street
Brandon, MB
R7A 4K5

RE: Delegate Presentation on Banning of 2SLGBTQ+ Materials

Dear Brandon School Division School Board Members:

The Manitoba School Library Association writes to express our deep concern regarding the delegate presentation calling to ban books with 2SLGBTQ+ perspectives and books referencing sexual health education during the May 8th, 2023 board meeting. The Manitoba School Library Association (MSLA) is committed to promoting the development and maintenance of high-quality school libraries that meet the varied learning and information needs of all Manitoba students. One of the key ways we support this goal is by advocating for collection diversity in school libraries. Collection diversity refers to the practice of curating a school library collection to ensure that it includes material that is representative of diverse perspectives, experiences, abilities and identities. This includes materials that feature information, characters and storylines reflecting a range of cultural, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as materials that explore themes related to gender, sexuality, and other dimensions of identity.

Collection diversity is essential in school libraries because it helps to ensure that all students can find materials that resonate with their own experiences and interests, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and validation. A diverse collection also provides opportunities for students to encounter perspectives and experiences that are different from their own, which can promote empathy, understanding, and critical thinking skills. Moreover, collection diversity is particularly important for students from marginalized or underrepresented communities, who may not see themselves represented in the mainstream literature. By including materials that represent a range of perspectives and identities, school libraries can help promote social justice and equity, and to support students in developing a positive sense of self and community.

School libraries also contain informational texts related to curricular content and general interest to support the academic and personal growth of our students. This includes information about human body systems, reproduction and sexual health. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection advocates for the sharing of factual names of body parts as an important strategy for keeping children safe from sexual abuse and asserts that, "Empowering children with knowledge about personal safety and boundaries can help reduce their risk of victimization" (2023). Factual texts provide students with the knowledge, language and vocabulary to speak up about their feelings and experiences, reducing the risk that they would be victimized or remain silent about abuse. One of the titles targeted by the delegation, *Sex Is a Funny Word*, written by Canadian sex educator Cory Silverberg, is an award winning book that discusses puberty, sexuality, trust, respect, consent and a healthy body image using factual and accurate terminology. It provides an educational resource for young people seeking answers to questions that they may be too embarrassed to ask. It is certainly not pornographic.

In light of the important benefits of diverse school library collections, we encourage all school boards and administrators to prioritize collection diversity in classrooms and school libraries. This can be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies, preferably by a qualified teacher-librarian:

- Regularly reviewing the school library collection to ensure that it includes materials that represent a range of perspectives

and identities, and removing materials that perpetuate harmful stereotypes or biases.

- Working with teachers, students and other members of the school community to identify gaps in the collection and to develop strategies for addressing them. Seeking out resources and materials that promote diversity and inclusion, and making them visible to teachers and students.
- Collaborating with community organizations and groups to identify and acquire materials that represent diverse perspectives and identities.

These strategies align with the Manitoba provincial government's Safe and Caring Schools: Respect for Human Diversity document and with The Brandon School Division's Human Diversity Policy, which states that, "School libraries will strive to have the best and most up-to-date collection of age appropriate books on sexual orientation and gender identity issues and topics, including a variety of novels, short story collections, movies, and magazines for youth that are affirming of gender variance" (2019, p. 10). Diverse school library collections also reflect the values enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.

The MSLA recognizes that there may be instances where an individual or group wishes to challenge the inclusion of a particular item in a school library collection. In such cases, The MSLA advocates that challenges should be handled in a respectful and professional manner. The MSLA also believes in the importance of having clear policies, record keeping practices and procedures in place for addressing challenges to classroom and school library materials, with input from teacher-librarians, educators, parents, and community members. These proceedings should be open, transparent and carried out on a single case-by-case basis at the school level by a committee made up of one administrator, one teacher, the teacher-librarian and the individual who filed the challenge. The material in question should be viewed or read by all committee members in its entirety, and careful consideration should be given to the overall quality of the material and to the benefits of maintaining the item in the collection, as well as to the relevance of the material for that specific school library. These policies and procedures should emphasize intellectual freedom and the right to access information while also acknowledging the need to balance divergent viewpoints and values. The Manitoba School Library Association believes that respectful policies for challenging classroom and school library materials can help to promote critical thinking, dialogue, and understanding within the school community.

By prioritizing collection diversity in school libraries, we can create learning environments that are truly inclusive and that support the needs of all students. We hope that you will join us in this important work and avoid clearcutting library collections without regard to these important considerations.

Sincerely,

Sandy Welbergen, President
Manitoba School Library
Association

Brandi Bartok, Past President
Manitoba School Library
Association

References

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Manitoba School Library Association
191 Harcourt St
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2



May 16, 2023
The Honourable Wayne Ewasko, Minister of Education
Room 168 Legislative Building
450 Broadway Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3C 0V8

Re: Recent Calls for Book Bans Across the Province

Dear Minister Ewasko,

The Manitoba School Library Association is deeply concerned about multiple recent calls to ban books with 2SLGBTQ+ perspectives and books referencing sexual health education from Manitoba public and school libraries.

The Manitoba School Library Association (MSLA) is committed to promoting the development and maintenance of high-quality school libraries that meet the varied learning and information needs of all Manitoba students. One of the key ways we support this goal is by advocating for collection diversity in school libraries. Collection diversity refers to the practice of curating a school library collection to ensure that it includes material that is representative of diverse perspectives, experiences, abilities and identities. This includes materials that feature information, characters and storylines that reflect a range of cultural, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as materials that explore themes related to gender, sexuality, and other dimensions of identity.

Collection diversity is essential in school libraries because it helps to ensure that all students can find materials that resonate with their own experiences and interests, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and validation. A diverse collection also provides opportunities for students to encounter perspectives and experiences that are different from their own, which can promote empathy, understanding, and critical thinking skills. Moreover, collection diversity is particularly important for students from marginalized or underrepresented communities, who may not see themselves represented in mainstream literature. By including materials that represent a range of perspectives and identities, school libraries can help promote social justice and equity, and to support students in developing a positive sense of self and community.

In light of the important benefits of diverse school library collections, we encourage all school boards and administrators to prioritize collection diversity in classrooms and school libraries. This can be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies, preferably by a qualified teacher-librarian:

- Regularly reviewing the school library collection to ensure that it includes materials that represent a range of perspectives and identities, and removing materials that perpetuate harmful stereotypes or biases.
- Working with teachers, students and other members of the school community to identify gaps in the collection and to develop strategies for addressing them.
- Seeking out resources and materials that promote diversity and inclusion, and making them visible to teachers and students.
- Collaborating with community organizations and groups to identify and acquire materials that represent diverse perspectives and identities.

These strategies align with the Manitoba provincial government's Safe and Caring Schools: Respect for Human Diversity document which sets requirements for the development of a respect for human diversity policy for all school divisions and independent schools in the province. Diverse school library collections also reflect the values enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.

The MSLA recognizes that there may be instances where an individual or group wishes to formally challenge the inclusion of

a particular item in a school library collection. In such cases, The MSLA advocates that challenges should be handled in a respectful and professional manner. The MSLA also believes in the importance of having clear policies, record keeping practices and procedures in place for addressing formal challenges to classroom and school library materials, with input from teacher-librarians, library technicians, educators, parents, and community members. These proceedings should be open, transparent and carried out on *a single case-by-case basis at the school level* by a committee made up of one administrator, one teacher, the teacher-librarian and the individual who filed the challenge. The material in question should be viewed or read by all committee members in its entirety, and careful consideration should be given to the overall quality of the material and to the benefits of maintaining the item in the collection, as well as to the suitability of the material for that specific school library. These policies and procedures should emphasize intellectual freedom and the right to access information while also acknowledging the need to balance divergent viewpoints and values. The Manitoba School Library Association believes that respectful policies for challenging classroom and school library materials can help to promote critical thinking, dialogue, and understanding within the school community.

A well-staffed library, with a qualified and full time teacher-librarian and library technician, is better equipped to navigate challenges, provide access to diverse materials, and promote intellectual freedom. When a book is challenged, it often requires a robust defense to protect intellectual freedom and promote the principles of a well-rounded education. Inadequate staffing can limit the school's ability to mount a strong defense, as it may lack the necessary time, resources, and expertise to respond effectively to challenges. This can lead to the removal of books from the library based on narrow perspectives or personal biases. The MSLA calls for the provincial government to stop the erosion of professional library staff from Manitoba schools and to ensure a full time teacher-librarian and library technician are employed in every school library.

We hope that the provincial government will take a position on the side of human rights and social justice and voice strong condemnation of any process that calls for clear cutting school library collections without consideration for intellectual freedom and diversity.

Sincerely,

Brandi Bartok, President
Manitoba School Library Association

CC: Nello Altomare

