

MSLA JOURNAL

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Building Bridges: Spaces, Places, and Possibilities in Manitoba School Libraries



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President's Message

By Brandi Bartok



Dear Members and Friends of the Manitoba School Library Association,

Welcome to another school year. It is sure to be full of challenges, connections and learning. I think we have all learned over the past few years to expect the unexpected and that change is the new normal! What hasn't changed is that the Manitoba School Library Association is committed to professional development for our members and equitable funding for school libraries.

Our recent Manitoba Teachers' Society Professional Development Day, themed "Building Bridges: Spaces, Places, and Possibilities," was a tremendous success. It ignited important conversations about creating safe and diverse spaces for learning and growth in classrooms, makerspaces, and school library learning commons. We were able to discuss the vital role that school libraries play in providing inclusive environments for all students. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our dedicated executive members for their tireless efforts and hard work in making the conference an enjoyable learning experience for attendees. Your commitment and volunteer hours are truly commendable, and it's thanks to your unwavering support and expertise that we were able to bring our professional

development day to life.

The executive has also been hard at work responding to current challenges related to intellectual freedom and diverse library collections. In the spring, we initiated a letter-writing campaign to numerous school boards facing calls for book bans. We strongly advocated for diversity and human rights, standing up for intellectual freedom and representation. To further support this cause, we created a "Toolkit for Diverse Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom in Manitoba Schools," which is available on our website. This toolkit is a valuable resource for educators, library staff, administrators, and school board trustees, helping them understand the importance and legal requirements for diverse classroom and school libraries, and equipping them to defend against challenges. We also embarked on a month-long social media campaign advocating for collection diversity, extending our influence into the election campaign to ensure this crucial message was heard and understood.

I also had an opportunity to participate in the Manitoba Teachers' Society podcast, "Unplugged," in mid September. The podcast was an opportunity to highlight the MSLA, talk about some of our initiatives, the benefits of membership and our MTS PD Day conference. It is available on Podbean and on the MTS website: <https://mbteachersunplugged.podbean.com/e/mts-pd-day-talk-with-msla/>

With the change in provincial government we see an opportunity to raise the profile of school libraries and we are actively advocating for equitable funding province wide and for divisions to reinstate positions that have been cut back. A strong school library program is essential for the success of our students, and we are committed to ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to support these essential services.

This fall, we are excited to announce that we will be accepting applications for three \$500 seed grants, awarded in

memory of Kevin Mowatt. These grants are designed to empower our members to initiate projects that champion intellectual freedom, celebrate diversity, and ensure the representation of Canadian authors in our schools. It's an opportunity for you to make a tangible impact, and we encourage all interested members to apply.

We invite you to nominate library staff or administrators who are championing school libraries and demonstrating excellence for our awards program beginning after the winter break. This is a fantastic opportunity to recognize and celebrate the outstanding work of those in our community. More information is available on our website, along with award criteria. Applications open in January are accepted until the end of March.

For those who wish to get more involved with MSLA, there has never been a better time. You can serve on a committee or volunteer for one of our executive positions. You may consider writing an article for our journal, joining one of our short-term committees, or even volunteering for our executive team. Our association thrives when fresh ideas and new perspectives are brought into the fold, so please reach out and let us know how you'd like to contribute.

We are always grateful for your expertise and willingness to share as a learning community. Together, we will continue to build bridges, foster diversity, champion intellectual freedom, create better educational spaces, advocate for equitable funding, and work to ensure the importance of well-staffed and well-resourced school libraries.

Thank you for your ongoing support, and here's to a future full of possibilities.

Sincerely,

Brandi Bartok
President
Manitoba School Library Association

MTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

MSLA MTS PD Day Conference Summary: Building Bridges: Spaces, Places, and Possibilities

By Brandi Bartok



**BUILDING BRIDGES:
SPACES, PLACES, AND POSSIBILITIES**

MTS PD DAY: OCTOBER 20, 2023

LINDEN MEADOWS SCHOOL: 335 LINDENWOOD DR. E, WPG, MB
+VIRTUAL OPTIONS

Offering in person and virtual learning focused on practices in

- Manga for Classroom & School Libraries
- Reading for Global Students
- Leading in a Good Way: Intro to Mamahatowin
- Freedom to Read Podcasts
- The Microbits of Technology in the Classroom (Get a Free Microbit)
- Lessons Leading to Fusion: A Presentation From MYRICA Author Prinvose Madyog Khasan
- The Pebble Project: Fostering a Culture of Kindness & Connection
- Tools to Help Students Decipher AI & Misinformation/Disinformation
- Reshaping School Libraries to Serve Gen Z & Gen Alpha
- MB Ed & Early Childhood Learning Presentation (Online Resources)
- Technology Integration in the Elementary Classroom
- Cataloguing Corner: The MB Edition
- Embracing Diversity Through Literature
- Empowering Voices: Tackling Book Challenges & Censorship
- Conversations with a Teacher Librarian (K-12)

INCLUDES A YEARLONG MEMBERSHIP TO THE

MANITOBA
SCHOOL
LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

KEYNOTE: TIBERT LE VOYAGEUR ROB MALO



The MSLA MTS PD Day Conference, under the theme “Building Bridges: Spaces, Places, and Possibilities,” allowed us to bring together rich history, cultural exploration, and innovative practices in both physical and virtual settings. The conference sessions, led by educators and school library professionals, provided a dynamic range of insights and experiences. Many of our sessions were filled to capacity and attendees had an opportunity to engage in lively discussions and hands-on learning experiences. Over 135 educators, library technicians, and Teacher-Librarians attended this year, which nearly doubled the number of attendees that we had at last year’s conference.



TiBert, le voyageur!

Virtual sessions were also well attended, and several participants commented that having virtual options is important to people living in rural areas who would not otherwise have been able to attend. This is important feedback for event planners in the future, and consideration should be given to having the keynote speaker available as a live stream option to make virtual attendees feel included in the community atmosphere. These sessions were also recorded and will be shared with all registered conference attendees.

“Histoire cachée - In Plain Sight”

Rob Malo, also known as TiBert, a Franco-Manitoban Métis storyteller, author, juggler, poet, and community builder, brought his passion for history and culture to the forefront during his keynote speech. His presentation showcased “Histoire cachée - In Plain Sight,” an augmented reality audio tour app of St. Boniface. This app, offering content in French, English, and French M  chif, allowed users to immerse themselves in St. Boniface’s diverse history. Notably, the project emphasized authenticity and community collaboration, providing a more balanced perspective of local French-M  tis history.

In addition to the keynote, the conference featured a variety of informative sessions:



“Introduction to Manga for Classroom and School Libraries” (Presenter: Heidi Cromwell)

This session introduced Manga as literature and an educational tool, covering its history, interpretation, vocabulary, and symbolism. Attendees had the opportunity to explore examples of Manga series suitable for different age groups.

“Manitoba Education & Early Childhood Learning Presentation” (Virtual Presenter: Nancy Girardin)

Participants received insights into copyright, educator rights and responsibilities, and resources for navigating copyright in an educational context. The presentation also delved into Manitoba Education’s Alternate Formats Collection and the research databases and video streaming platforms available to educators and students.

“Freedom to Read Podcasts” (Presenter: Colleen Nelson)

Colleen Nelson shared how to bring social issues such as freedom of speech and book banning to life through

podcasts, specifically designed for middle-grade students.



“Reshaping School Libraries to Serve Gen Z and Gen Alpha” (Presenters: Nidhi Srivastava, Rosemarie Schwarz, Mikaela Oldenkamp)

This session explored strategies to create school library environments that engage and empower Gen Z and Gen Alpha students, fostering their academic, creative, and social growth.

“Leading in a Good Way: An Introduction to Mamahtawisiwin” (Presenters: Kim Bryson, Kara Dueck, Colleen Nelson)

Attendees discovered ways to honor and integrate Indigenous histories, stories, culture, and pedagogy into their classrooms. The session introduced Mamahtawisiwin, Manitoba’s Indigenous Education Policy Framework, and featured an interactive gallery walk of valuable resources.

“Cataloguing Corner - The Manitoba Edition” (Moderators: Kim Marr, Colleen Einarson, Roberta Chapman, Christine Janzen)

This session provided a forum for discussing best practices in cataloguing and library standards, encouraging collaboration and the opportunity for

attendees to submit questions.

“Tools To Help Students Decipher Online AI and Misinformation/Disinformation” (Virtual Presenter: Kathy Miller from Kids Boost Immunity)

The workshop outlined lateral reading strategies and ready made lessons on AI, misinformation, and disinformation, enhancing students’ recognition of bias vulnerabilities. The platform uses game based strategies to get students engaged in the content.

“Diversity and Cataloguing for Diversity” (Presenters: Debbie Smith, Jonine Bergen)

Debbie and Jonine explored strategies for promoting diverse materials and enhancing catalogue access for diverse materials to foster inclusivity and diversity in school libraries.

“Unleashing Curiosity: Building Inquiry-Based Bridges” (Virtual Presenters: Tanya Humphries, Candace Rea)

This session delved into the power of inquiry-based learning and collaborative projects between teacher librarians and classroom teachers, providing insights into creating accessible and engaging inquiry projects for K-5 students.

“Technology Integration in an Elementary Classroom” (Presenter: Lindsay Stewart)

Participants discovered strategies, tips, and tools for leveraging technology to engage learners, encourage critical thinking, and foster meaningful learning experiences.

“The Micro:bits of Technology in the Classroom” (Presenters: Melissa Smith and Caleigh Bell). A hands-on workshop that focused on incorporating Micro:bits into the classroom. Participants learned to program

Micro:bits for various subjects and had opportunities to experiment with MakeCode, Python and JavaScript. Additional cross-curricular ideas were shared, and participants left the session with a free Micro:bit.

“The Pebble Project: Fostering a Culture of Kindness and Connection” (Presenters: Kim Bryson and Alex McGavin) Presenters introduced The Pebble Project, an inquiry-based kindness initiative, emphasizing empathy and compassion in post-pandemic middle years classrooms. It provided practical examples and insights, followed by a Q + A session and self-guided planning time.

“Conversations with a Teacher Librarian (FI/E/K-12)” (Presenters: Suzanne Beauregard and Michelle Carlos) This session invited teachers to discuss read-

alouds, mentor texts, and literary resources. Participants networked, shared ideas, and learned about eResources.

“Embracing Diversity Through Literature: Empowering Voices, Tackling Book Challenges and Censorship” (Presenter: Brandi Bartok) Participants engaged in discussions about the issue of book challenges and censorship in educational settings. Educators and library staff learned strategies for protecting intellectual freedom and handling book challenges, with a focus on resources like the MSLA’s *Toolkit for Diverse Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom in Manitoba Schools*. This collaborative session sparked lively conversations about defending diverse book collections.

“Reading for Global Students” (Presenter: Amanda Benson) Amanda

explored book recommendations for K-12 students that nurture global citizenship. The session highlighted MCIC’s Global Student Reading List and educational resources related to global citizenship and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The variety of sessions offered this year highlighted just how important school libraries are and demonstrated that we work hard to bring fresh initiatives and support every student. The success of our professional development day depends almost entirely on volunteers to develop content, plan and organize the conference. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this wonderful day of connection and professional growth.

Overview of the “Freedom to Read Podcasts”

By Colleen Nelson

The importance of addressing book banning in education and libraries is not lost on anyone in the field. Colleen Nelson, a dedicated teacher and author, recently presented a comprehensive guide on creating podcasts with students centered around the topic of book bans. She aptly named this project “Freedom to Read Podcasts.” Her inspiration came from attending a presentation by the team at Juice Box Talks Podcasts during the OLA Conference in Toronto.

Nelson realized that podcast creation not only aligned with the Grade 8 Social Studies and ELA curriculum, focusing on citizenship, communication, power, and agency, but also provided an excellent platform for students to engage in discussions about social justice issues that directly affect them. While the subject matter may seem daunting and recording projects can be challenging, after listening to Nelson’s presentation, the idea of empowering students to tackle this important issue feels like a no-brainer.

Any new lesson plan begins with research and careful planning. Nelson was particularly struck by the statistics released in PEN America’s Index of School Book Bans, revealing a 33% increase in the banning of individual books during the 2022-2023 school year, affecting 1,557 unique titles. These alarming figures prompted her to realize

that book banning is not limited to the United States; it affects Canada as well.

Nelson emphasized that challenges to books can come from both sides of the political spectrum, citing the Roald Dahl book editing controversy as an example. Armed with this information, she started planning her classroom project. She used PEN America’s updated list of banned books and combined it with the books available in her class to create a selection suitable for her students’ reading level.

Equipped with her research and booklist, Nelson divided the project into five stages:

Stage 1: Activation

- Begin with a prewriting activity and model the writing process.
- Teach students how to form and express their opinions in writing.
- Acquire the necessary recording equipment, such as a Yeti Microphone, to ensure good sound quality.
- Secure a quiet recording space.
- Present the podcast assignment and gather enough copies of the chosen books, potentially seeking assistance from library support staff.

Stage 2: Reading and Post Reading

- Encourage students to select books based on their interests.

- Allow student groups to decide reading schedules for their chosen books.
- Permit reading during class time or at home.
- Consider audiobooks and reading in students’ first languages as options.
- Offer post-reading activities, such as creating “If You Liked...” posters to recommend similar titles.

Stage 3: Writing the Script

- Listen to example podcasts related to the topic, such as “Juice Box Book Talks” for podcasts on banned books.

Stage 4: Posting

- Use platforms like Pod Bean to publish the finalized podcasts.
- Share the podcasts with families through platforms like Pod Bean
- See the “Freedom to Read Podcast” here: <https://cnelsonf.podbean.com/>

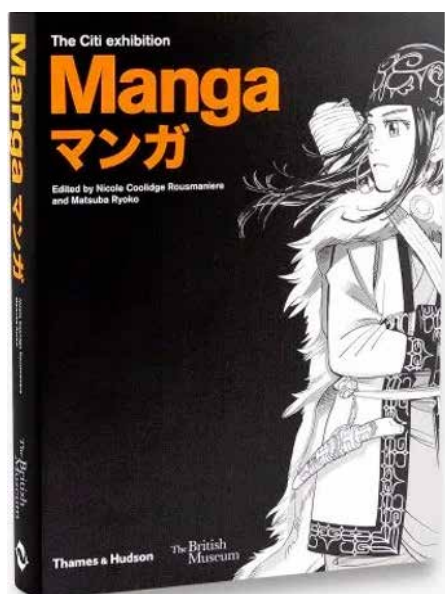
Stage 5: Results

- Have students share their experiences
- Assess students on their completed podcasts.

Colleen Nelson’s “Freedom to Read Podcasts” project offers a unique and engaging way to tackle any social justice based issues making it an activity that every student can participate in.

Manga! Where do I start?

By Heidi Cromwell



Do you have Manga in your classroom or school library collection? Are you interested in developing your Manga collection? Or maybe you just want to know what everyone is talking about?

If you said yes to any of these questions, then that is exciting news!

Let's take a walk together for a few minutes and talk about this worldwide phenomenon called Manga.

Japanese comics connect with the reader by using emotional visual storytelling. There is no stereotypical Manga consumer and there is Manga for all ages and demographics. Why is it so popular? Why are Manga readers so passionate about it? I think it is because the reader emotionally connects to the characters visually and they see first-hand how each character feels

in each situation.

Emotions, thoughts and feelings must be expressed through line drawing. Text is normally only used for a character's response to an emotion, thought or feeling. Manga is all about the images and emotion.

There are four key elements of Manga:

1. Speech bubbles
2. Dynamic Paneling & Camera Angles
3. Use of Background (Setting)
4. Facial Features & Expressions

It can be difficult to know what series works best for each age group. Fortunately, there is a manga series for every age group and every interest. There is something for everyone. But how do you choose?

Without a standardized rating system, it can be challenging; therefore, it requires a fair amount of research to make an educated discussion.

Here are some resources and links to help you begin your Manga journey.

Manga in Libraries: A Guide for Teen Librarians by Jillian Rudes (ALA), 2023. ISBN: 9780838938614 Manga in Libraries: A Guide for Teen Librarians | ALA Store (Great introduction to Manga schools)

The Citi exhibition: Manga, edited by Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere. Thames & Hudson, The British Museum, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-500-48049-6 (digs deeper into symbolism & Manga artists)

<https://noflyingnights.com/browse-manga/> No Flying No Tights

<https://goodcomicsforkids.slj.com/category/manga/> Good Comics for Kids

<https://www.anime-planet.com> Anime Planet

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/manga-brief-history-12-works> British Museum Citi Exhibition

<https://www.nypl.org/blog/2018/12/27/beginners-guide-manga> NYC Public Library Blog

Embracing Diversity Through Literature: Empowering Voices, Tackling Book Challenges and Censorship

Presented and summarized by: Brandi Bartok

The conference presentation titled “Embracing Diversity Through Literature: Empowering Voices, Tackling Book Challenges and Censorship” highlighted the importance of collection diversity in school libraries and the challenges of censorship. The presentation began by asking thought-provoking questions to the audience about the removal and censorship of books from library collections. These questions emphasized the significance of considering whose voices are being silenced and who holds the power in such scenarios.

Collection diversity, as defined in the presentation, involves curating a library collection that represents a wide range of perspectives, experiences, abilities, and identities. This includes materials that encompass various cultural, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as themes related to gender, sexuality, and other dimensions of identity. The goal of collection diversity is to ensure that all students can find materials that resonate with their own experiences and interests, fostering a sense of belonging and validation.

The presentation stressed the importance of collection diversity, not only for promoting empathy, understanding, and critical thinking but also for supporting students from marginalized or

underrepresented communities who may not see themselves represented in mainstream literature. It was noted that collection diversity aligns with various legal and ethical frameworks, including provincially required diversity policies, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, and the TRC Calls to Action.

The presentation addressed the issue of book challenges and bans, noting that such actions are not new but have become more organized and politically supported in recent times. Books with content related to sexual health, 2SLGBTQ+ topics, and racial diversity have frequently been targeted. In response, the Manitoba School Library Association (MSLA) encouraged educators and library professionals to follow selection policies and guidelines that emphasize intellectual freedom and diversity. MSLA advocated for the development of clear reconsideration policies with impartial review processes and discouraged the removal of materials without a formal review.

The presentation provided guidance on how to respond to challenges, including reading or viewing the entire work for context, writing letters to local school boards, presenting at school board meetings, and referring to established policies

and guidelines. The importance of articulating personal stories and connections to illustrate the significance of collection diversity and intellectual freedom was also highlighted.

It was also asserted that while parents have the right to discuss their child’s reading choices, challenges should not seek to remove or restrict titles from the entire school population. Educators have a responsibility to ensure that every student can see themselves in the library collection.

The presentation concluded by urging attendees to report challenges to national databases, such as the Canadian Federation of Library Associations and the Centre for Free Expression, as this helps document and track challenges, protect intellectual freedom, provide support and resources, facilitate advocacy and awareness, promote collaboration, and maintain records.

The Pebble Project: Fostering a Culture of Kindness, Connection, and Generosity

By Kim Bryson

“Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects.” - Dalai Lama

According to Michele Borba (2018), author of *UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in our All About Me World*, today's students are part of a generation that is smart and self-assured but also significantly self-centered, competitive, individualistic, sad, and stressed. This has been exacerbated by the mass consumption of social media and increased screentime during the Covid-19 pandemic, pointing to a decline in empathy and a potential “spillover effect” of meaner attitudes in person (Baig, 2023).

Co-creators Alex McGavin and Kim Bryson created the Pebble

Project, an inquiry-based kindness project, in response to a need for more compassion, empathy, and connection in our post-pandemic classrooms and school communities. Guided by the essential question, “What is the best way for you to create a culture of kindness to promote a happier, healthier, more connected school and community?” Students delved into the science of kindness, its impact on individuals and communities, and applied their learning to develop and implement personal plans to foster a culture of kindness within their school.

From redesigning and renovating their little free library, running sports camps, musical performances, reading to younger classes for snack and story time, and weeding their

gardens to morning high fives with an adopted early years classroom, their junior highschoolers tapped into their interests and strengths and shared them with their school community.

Their 90 min session consisted of their why, a breakdown of the first year of the project, interactive activities, and planning time. Participants also walked away with access to a curated Padlet of resources should they want to run something similar in their own learning communities.

For year two, Alex and Kim are now planning a Year of Generosity for their 7/8 multiage classes with multi-level service projects ranging from local school level, neighborhood, city and province, through to global scale.

Leading in a Good Way: An introduction to Mamahtawisiwin

By Kim Bryson

As leaders of education for reconciliation, in what ways can we honour and embed Indigenous histories, stories, culture, and pedagogy in our classrooms and schools? In this session, presenters Colleen Nelson, Kara Dueck, and

Kim Bryson provided a breakdown of Mamahtawisiwin, Manitoba's Indigenous Education Policy Framework, followed by an interactive gallery walk of readily available resources and lessons. The gallery consisted of STEAM activities,

podcasts, indigenous music, and a plethora literature for both classroom and professional use. Participants also walked away with access to a curated Padlet of Indigenous based resources to share with their respective learning communities.

Tools To Help Students Decipher Online AI and Misinformation/Disinformation Using Lateral Reading Strategies and Recognition of Bias Vulnerabilities

Session summary provided by Kathy Miller and Takuto Shiota

Navigating The World of Online Information (grades 6-12) is created by an expert in misinformation and provides lessons that explain practical ways that help students protect themselves from being lured into viewing and believing online content. Information can appear credible when it is not, and as consumers, we need to pay attention to how something we come across online makes us feel. If it grabs our attention, we need to ask why! Then we can choose to critically ignore, switch to lateral reading that uses fact-checking, and recognize that

some sources are much less credible than others. Online information is designed to serve individuals more of what they are searching for, so relying on a communal web of knowledge and discussing with others to get different perspectives helps us be less vulnerable. It is important to recognize that sources based on personal opinions such as those by influencers and Tik Tok are less trustworthy than those that follow the rules of credible journalism.

Critical Thinking and Evaluating Information (grades 4 to 12) has lessons that provide an evaluation

checklist tool (TRAAP/CRAAP), explain primary and secondary sources, provide practical examples of lateral reading, test ideas using the scientific method, explain the meaning of bias, show the difference between correlation vs causation, and for grades 10-12 there is a research example.

These lesson plans, and more are available in the Teacher Centre on the Kids Boost Immunity website: <https://kidsboostimmunity.com/>

Conversations with a Teacher Librarian K-8, English/French

By Michelle Carlos and Suzanne Beauregard



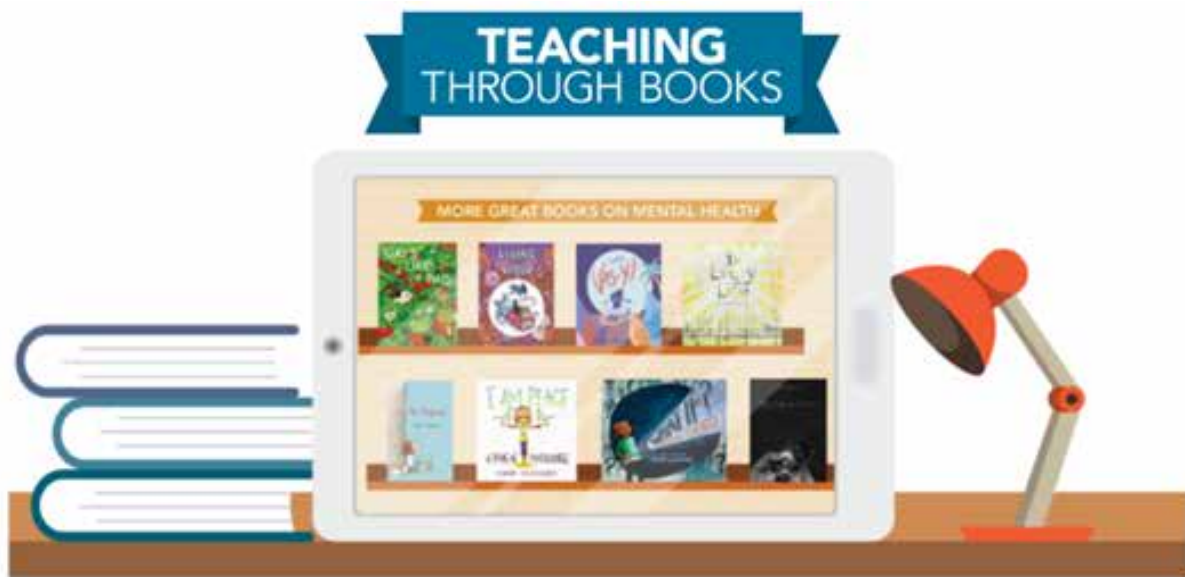
This session included practical examples of inquiry-based learning using mentor text. Canadian literature was the springboard to inspire young writers and artists in the classroom. The work of Elise Gravel was used as a model for animal research with a final

project that included text features such as speech bubbles, font size for emphasis, humour, and cartooning. The rich learning experiences and engaging format brought in a multimodal approach that integrated Science, Art, Social Studies, and ELA curriculum outcomes.

The series *Mothers of Xsan* was featured in an interdisciplinary project that focused on Indigenous knowledge. Students worked as teams to illustrate animal life cycles starting with a planning tool, summarizing

the information, and sharing through artistic representation and a Green Screen recording.

Participants had time to ask questions about new read alouds, MYRCA books for 2024, and took time to explore Manitoba Education eResources and the Teaching Through Books resources on the Teach Mag website at <https://teachmag.com/teaching-through-books>.



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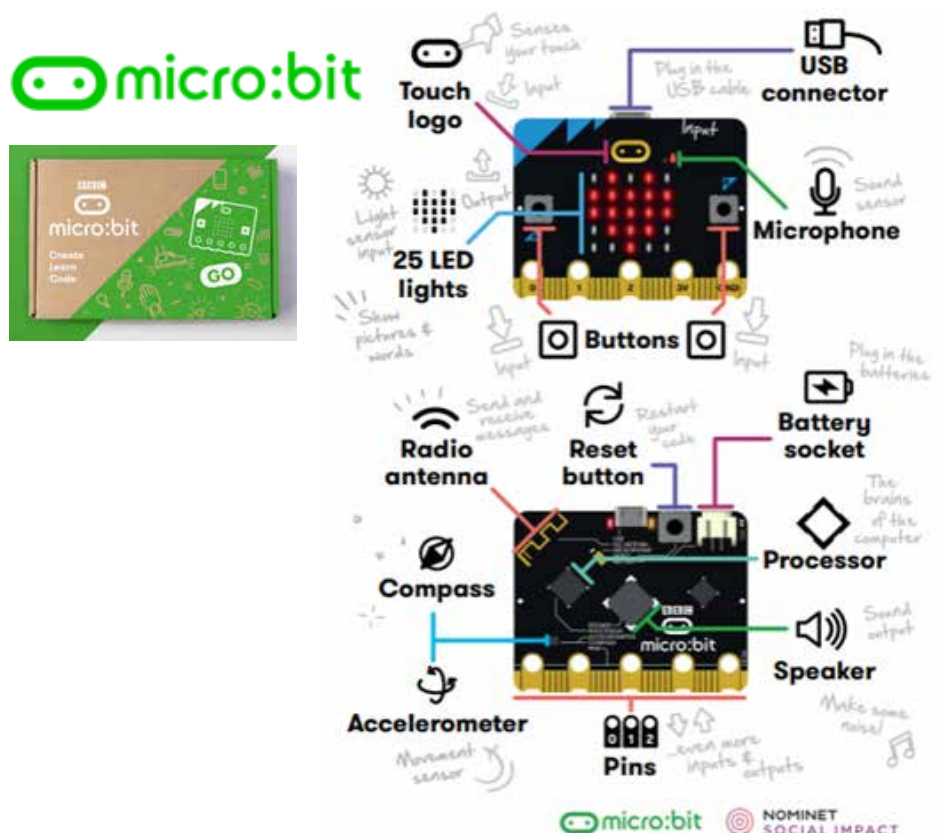
The Micro: Bits of Technology in the Classroom

By Michelle Carlos

Participants learned how to program a Micro:Bit and how to use this technology in various subject areas, with a focus on effective pedagogical practice.

Melissa Smith, Louis Riel School Division, & Caleigh Bell, WISE Kid-Netic Energy & Collège Béliveau explored the use of technology in the classroom using Micro:Bits. Participants worked with the MakeCode (block-based) editor to write code or took the challenge to work in Python or JavaScript. Additional cross curricular ideas were shared, and participants were given all the activity details from the session.

Find more great resources and professional learning at: microbit.org.



Literacy

Celebrating Manitoba School Library Day: Championing Diverse Collections and Freedom of Information

By Brandi Bartok

On October 23, 2023, Manitoba celebrated the annual Manitoba School Library Day, a day dedicated to recognizing and honoring the invaluable role that school libraries play in education. This event takes place on the fourth Monday of October as part of Canada Library Month. The theme for this year's celebration was "Enriching Minds, Embracing Voices: Celebrating Diverse Collections and Freedom of Information." In the face of challenging times, this day serves as a reminder of the essential role school libraries play in fostering a well-rounded education and promoting inclusivity. In keeping with tradition, we challenged schools to Drop Everything and Read, beginning at 11 am.

Despite the significance of Manitoba School Library Day, the executive of MSLA was met with disappointment this year. We had anticipated an official proclamation from the provincial government, promised via official correspondence from the former Minister of Education, but it never materialized. Manitoba Education cited the transition in government as the reason for this omission. This was a setback, given the critical role the proclamation plays in bringing school libraries to the forefront of public attention, especially given the current climate of book challenges and calls for censorship. This was also the second year in a row that the proclamation was mismanaged.

Despite this setback, there remains a commitment to advocating for the vital role of school libraries in education. Manitoba Education pledged to support another initiative of our choice highlighting school libraries this school year. The community is actively brainstorming ways to ensure that the role of school libraries continues to be celebrated and appreciated. Even without the official proclamation, we celebrated and acknowledged the importance of the day through the network of the membership.





Brandon School Division @BrandonMBSD · Oct 23
Today is Manitoba School Library Day!

Our libraries are not just a place to borrow books, they are a space where we can learn, grow, and explore. A place where we can find answers to our questions, discover new worlds, and make lifelong friends.

#BDSchools #BrandonMB #BdnMB



2 7 13 768



Prairie Sunrise School @PSSchoolshines · Oct 23

A whole school Drop Everything and Read to celebrate Manitoba School Library Day! @_MSLA_ #manitobaschoollibraryday

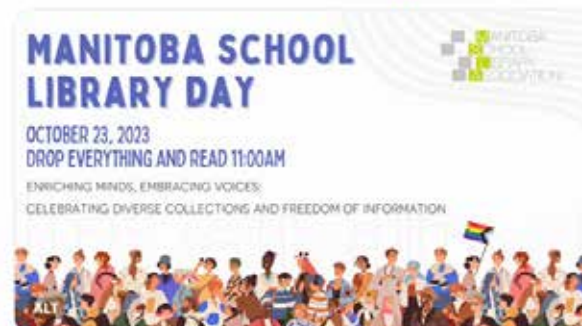


1 2 11



River East Transcona School Division @RETSDschools · Oct 23

Today is Manitoba School Library Day! Many of our schools will be taking part in the @_MSLA_ "Drop Everything and Read" challenge, which encourages students of all ages to put aside distractions and spend 30 minutes reading. This is a great idea for all of us! 📖



You can reply to this conversation

2 7



MINISTER
OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

Room 168
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8
CANADA

June 23, 2023

Brandi Bartok
President
Manitoba School Library Association
191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg MB R3J 3H2

Dear Brandi Bartok:

I am responding to your letter requesting the Proclamation of Manitoba School Library Day and promotion of the "Drop Everything and Read" challenge.

I am pleased to support Manitoba School Library Day and issue a proclamation for October 23, 2023. In addition, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning will encourage schools in Manitoba to participate in the reading challenge on that day.

A copy of the proclamation and letter to Superintendents asking them to support Manitoba School Library Day and participate in the "Drop Everything and Read" challenge will be shared with you in October.

Thank you for bringing Manitoba School Library Day to my attention. I look forward to supporting the event this October and highlighting the importance of school libraries to all students and educators in Manitoba schools.

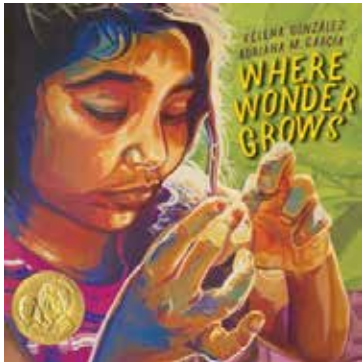
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Ewasko', is written over a horizontal line.

Wayne Ewasko

Reviews for Young Readers

By Lisa Bova



Where Wonder Grows by Xelena Gonzalez and illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia

“Where Wonder Grows,” a captivating picture book by Xelena Gonzalez with vibrant and textured illustrations by Adriana M. Garcia, takes young readers on a journey through the eyes of Grandma and her granddaughters, exploring the world of rocks. Through Gonzalez’s Indigenous perspective, rocks are not lifeless entities but rather beings with unique stories and wisdom, like that of a grandmother or grandfather.

The book’s vibrant and colorful illustrations bring the rocks to life, effectively conveying the “super powers” Grandma speaks of, making this a visually enchanting experience for young readers. As Grandma and her granddaughter stroll through the garden, they embark on a series of wonderings about the rocks they encounter. Questions like “why this one has so many holes like secret rooms?” and “What wisdom the tiny white forests and houses of

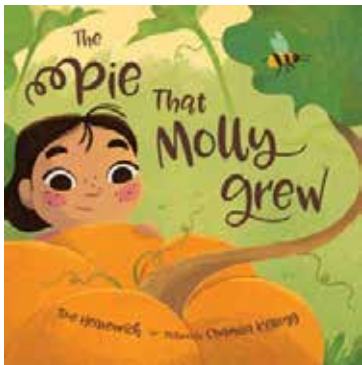
shell hold in the sea where there is so much mystery?” encourage young minds to view the world around them with a sense of wonder and curiosity.

“Where Wonder Grows” is a valuable resource for Grade 4 Manitoba Educators and students pursuing a rock inquiry, as it introduces rock formation phenomena while fostering a deep sense of curiosity and connection to the natural world. The back matter, including a personal letter from the author, rock facts, reflections and inquiry questions, enhances the educational value of the book.

It is worth noting that author Xelena Gonzalez is a member of the Tapilam Coahuiltecan Nation and the characters in the books reflect her family members. “Where Wonder Grows” is a delightful and thought-provoking book that encourages young readers to see the world in a new light and wonder from within, making it a great addition to any school library.

Reviewed by: Lisa Bova

Publisher: Cinco Puntos Press | Publication Year: 2022 | ISBN: 978-1-947627-46-8 | 40 pgs.



The Pie that Molly Grew by Sue Heavenrich and illustrated by Chamisa Kellogg

“The Pie That Molly Grew” is a delightful and educational children’s book by Sue Heavenrich, illustrated by Chaim. Using the familiar rhyme scheme of “The House that Jack Built,” this story takes young readers on a journey through the life cycle of a single seed, making it a perfect addition to Grade 1 and 2 plant inquiry studies. The bright and fun illustrations not only engage young readers but also provide a visual guide to the various stages of plant growth.

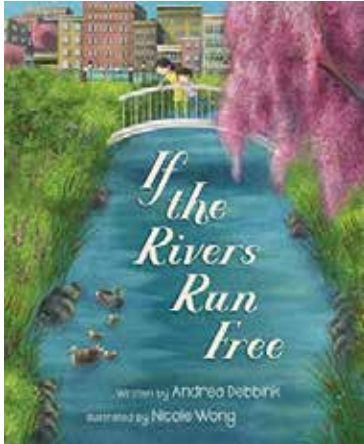
Molly’s seed transforms from a tiny seed into a vibrant pumpkin plant, and this transformation captivates young readers as they follow along. With each turn of the page, they learn about roots, sprouts, leaves, vines, blossoms, and finally, pumpkins. Molly’s pumpkin becomes the pie for a Thanksgiving dinner, making this story a fun and relevant holiday read as well.

The book goes beyond the narrative, offering valuable back matter that includes pumpkin pie recipes and an overview of pollination. One key message stands out: “No Bees, No Pie!” This simple yet powerful phrase reinforces the importance of pollinators, making it an ideal conversation starter for young students.

“The Pie That Molly Grew” is a great addition to school libraries, offering an engaging and educational story that aligns with curriculum standards. With a few read-throughs, students may find themselves delightfully chanting along with the rhyming text. This book is suitable for Grade K and up, providing an excellent resource for introducing young minds to the wonders of plant life and the vital role of pollinators in our food production. Sue Heavenrich and Chaim have crafted a charming and informative tale that’s both fun and enlightening.

Reviewed by: Lisa Bova

Publisher: Sleeping Bear Press | Publication Year: 2023 | ISBN: 978-1-534111-84-4 | 28 pgs.



If the River Runs Free by Andrea Debbink and illustrated by Nicole Wong

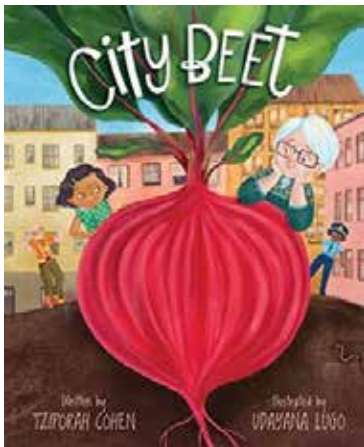
“If the Rivers Run Free” by Andrew Debbink, with vivid illustrations by Nicole Wong, is a visually stunning and emotionally resonant exploration of the journey of rivers through time. With a rhyming text scheme, the book skillfully engages young readers in the powerful narrative of our planet’s life-giving waterways.

Wong’s masterful use of color and line imbues the pages with a dynamic sense of movement, carrying the reader along the rivers’ epic journey. The story begins with rivers running wild and free, but their fate takes a poignant turn as industrial development encroaches upon their natural course. Cities grow, and the rivers, in their benevolence, continue to provide until they can give no more. It’s the engineers who realize that the rivers must be freed to manage our urban waterways effectively.

The book beautifully unveils the critical work of restoring buried rivers to the surface in an accessible and engaging manner. “If the Rivers Run Free” could spark discussions on climate action and highlight the importance of water in our world. With its captivating narrative and illustrations, it serves as a powerful tool for educators to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. This book is a great non-fiction addition to school libraries, encouraging young minds to appreciate, respect, and protect our precious rivers.

Reviewed by: Lisa Bova

Publisher: Sleeping Bear Press | Publication Year: 2023 ISBN:978-1-534112-78-0 | 40 pgs.



The City Beet by Tziporah Cohen and illustrated by Udayana Lugo

In “The City Beet” by Tziporah Cohen, with charming illustrations by Udayana Lugo, young readers are treated to a heartwarming tale of community, problem-solving, and the joy of growing your own food.

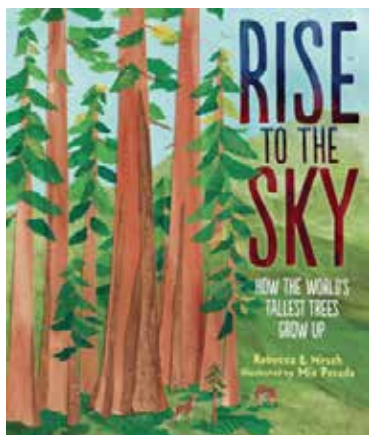
Victoria and her friend Mrs. Kosta embark on a delightful culinary adventure, aiming to create a raw beet salad for their community’s Potluck Block party. Their decision to plant beet seeds and nurture them from scratch sets the stage for a wholesome story about the rewards of patience and teamwork.

As the beet grows and the community rallies together to help pull it out, young Victoria is initially told she’s too small to contribute. However, it’s her critical thinking and determination that ultimately lead to a clever solution for the group’s predicament.

Cohen’s text is accompanied by colorful and pleasing illustrations that vividly capture the spirit of the story. The book’s light-hearted tone and repeating refrains make it an engaging read-aloud for young students. “The City Beet” not only entertains but also inspires, making it an excellent choice for teachers looking to encourage their students to explore the joys of gardening. This book is a perfect springtime addition to any school library, igniting a desire to go outside, play, and plant for a bountiful future. Young readers will undoubtedly be asking to grow their own vegetables after enjoying this heartwarming tale.

Reviewed by: Lisa Bova

Publisher: Sleeping Bear Press | Publication Year: 2023 ISBN:978-1-534112-78-0 | 40 pgs.



Rise To the Sky: How the World's Tallest Trees Grow Up by Rebecca E. Hirsch and illustrated by Mia Posada

“Rise to the Sky: How the World's Tallest Trees Grow Up” by Rebecca E. Hirsch, beautifully illustrated by Mia Posada, is a must-read for young learners eager to explore the remarkable world of tree growth. As they inquire about the tallest living beings on Earth, this book provides a comprehensive and accessible journey through the life of trees.

From the humble beginnings of an old stump, small seed, or speck of dirt, Hirsch's text breaks down each step of a tree's growth process with engaging clarity. What truly sets this book apart are Posada's masterful paper collage and watercolor illustrations. They offer a unique perspective, revealing inner details that remain hidden to the naked eye. Young readers will be mesmerized by the intricate artistry on every page.

“Rise to the Sky” is not just an engaging read; it's an educational treasure trove. The back matter includes answers to common questions, making it an ideal choice for students who have already started wondering about trees. Moreover, a detailed tree diagram facilitates classroom discussions, helping young minds comprehend the various components that enable a tree to reach such great heights.

This book is a fantastic resource for educators and teacher librarian's looking to inspire curiosity about the natural world, making tree growth a fascinating and understandable concept for children. “Rise to the Sky” offers an enchanting visual and educational experience that will leave young readers with a newfound appreciation for the world's tallest trees.

Reviewed by: Lisa Bova

Publisher: Millbrook Press | Publication Year: 2023 ISBN:978-1-728440-87-3 | 32 pgs.



Cataloguing Corner

Assigning Call Numbers and Cutters - Including Biographies and Series for RETSD School Libraries

By Roberta Chapman

a. What is a call number?

Every book in the library is given a unique call number to serve as an address for locating the book on the shelf. The call number itself is composed of two parts—a Prefix (e.g. FIC) and a Dewey Decimal Classification number (e.g. 796) and/or Cutter letters (e.g. SMI).

b. Dewey Decimal Classification System

RETSD school libraries use the Dewey Decimal Classification system to keep their non-fiction books in order. In the Dewey Decimal Classification system, books on similar subjects are grouped together by means of their call numbers.

c. WEB DEWEY

WebDewey is the online version of the Dewey Decimal Classification * (DDC) 4 volume paper book set. If you want print version, volumes 1-4 (2022) or Abridged (15th), see the OCLC website.

d. Cutter Letters

The “Cutter”, the last line on the spine label, in the call number is made of the first (3) three letters of the author’s last name or the first (3) three letters of the book’s title when there is no author. NEVER include the articles The, An, A, or other articles in other languages as part of the “Cutter”.

e. Who is NOT an author?

Editors are NOT authors; neither are names following “compiled by” and “selected by”.

Authors are persons on the title page preceded by “written by”, “retold by” and “adapted by”.

With some book materials and many non-book materials, authorship is not so easy to determine. With many non-book items, there may be no clear author.

When there is any question about authorship, the cutter will be the first three letters of the title, NOT including the articles The, An or A. Books in languages other than English also follow the no articles rule.

Cutter letters for Author names examples:

MAC – Macleod
MLO – M’lot
DEP – De Paola
YE - Ye (last name only two letters)
A - (author’s last name is one letter)

Title cutter examples:

WAL – A Walk in the Woods (no author)
QUE – The Question (no author)

f. Biography Cutters

Use your individual library’s assigning policy for biographies. Place books either in the 920-928s or in their subject areas.

Examples:

796.092 ZZZ – subject area – Sports
-- for the biography of an athlete
920 ZZZ – 920 is used for a collection

of biographies (multiple persons) in a single book

921 AAA ZZZ – 921 is used for a single (one person) biography in a single book

NOTE: the double cutter – AAA is the 1st three letters of the last name of the person the biography is about and the ZZZ is the 1st three letter of the author of the biography

g. Series Cutters

OPTIONAL -- Using double cutters for series

You may want to use this system to keeps series together on the shelves. Use for true book series (single author) if you need only. BEST USED IF A SERIES HAS MULTIPLE AUTHORS.

Definition: A book series is a sequence of books having certain characteristics in common that are formally identified together as a group. Book series can be organized in different ways, such as written by the same author, or marketed as a group by their publisher.

A novel sequence is a set or series of novels which share common themes, characters, or settings, but where each novel has its own title and free-standing storyline and can thus be read independently or out of sequence. A novel sequence contains story arcs or themes that cross over several books, rather than simply sharing one or more characters.

Fictional series typically share a common setting, story arc, set

of characters or timeline. They are common in genre fiction, particularly crime fiction, adventure fiction, and speculative fiction, as well as in children's literature.

Some works in a series can stand alone—they can be read in any order, as each book makes few, if any, reference to past events, and the characters seldom, if ever, change. Many of these series books may be published in a numbered series. Examples of such series are works like *The Hardy Boys*, *Nancy Drew*, and *Nick Carter*.

Some series do have their characters go through changes and make references to past events. Typically, such series are published in the order of their internal chronology, so that the next book published follows the previous book. How much these changes matter will vary from series to series (and reader to reader). For some, it may be minor characters might get engaged, change jobs, etc., but it does not affect the main storyline. Examples of this type include Tony Hillerman's *Jim Chee* and *Joe Leaphorn* books. In other series, the changes are major, and the books must be read in order to be fully enjoyed. Examples of this type include the *Harry Potter* series.

There are some book series that are not proper series, but more of a single work so large that it must be published over two or more books. Examples of this type include *The Lord of the Rings* volumes or the *Dark Tower* series by Stephen King.

Some authors make it difficult to list their books in a numerical order when they do not release each work in its 'proper' order by the story's internal chronology. They might 'jump' back in time to early adventures of the characters, writing works that must be placed before or between previously published works. Thus, the books in a series are sometimes enumerated according to the internal chronology rather than in publication order,

depending on the intended purpose for the list. Examples of this series include works from the *Chronicles of Narnia*, where the fifth book published, *The Horse and His Boy*, is actually set during the time of the first book, and the sixth book published, *The Magician's Nephew* is actually set long before the first book. This was done intentionally by C. S. Lewis, a scholar of medieval literature. Medieval literature did not always tell a story chronologically.

****IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER, if you begin this system of call numbers for series use them CONSISTENTLY or don't use at all. Another option is to use the volume numbers of the series as the last line in your call number.**

Example: Crown of Feathers series
FIC PAU 1

Fiction series with a **single, same author** do not need double cutters

Examples:
7 Generations
FIC ROB -- David Alexander Robertson, author for the entire series

Magic Tree House
FIC OSB -- Mary Pope Osborne, author for the entire series

Katie Woo
FIC MAN -- Fran Manushkin, author for the entire series

Star Wars Jedi Academy
FIC KRO (Jarrett Krosoczka, author for entire series)

Franklin
FIC BOU (All of the books in the original series were authored by Paulette Bourgeois)

NOTE: there is a HUGE amount of Star Wars "series", some might require FIC STA XXX, choose correctly

Fiction series with multiple, different authors could use double cutters to keep the series together on the shelf.

Examples:

39 Clues
FIC THI (39-thirty-nine) WAT (one of several authors who write for this series)

Orca Currents
FIC ORC POL (one of several authors who write for this series)

Spirit Animals
FIC SPI MUL (one of several authors who write for this series)

Franklin
FIC FRA JEN (one of several authors/several adaptors of the new series of Franklin books)

For French:
39 clés
FR FIC TRE (39 = trente-neuf) KOR (one of several different authors writing for this series)

Benjamin
FR FIC BEN (Benjamin) JEN (one of several authors/several adaptors of the new series of Benjamin (ENG-Franklin) books)

h. "Reading" = Making sense of a call number

Here is a sample of a book title and Dewey decimal call number. Note how, as we analyze the call number, each line leads to more specific information about the book's topic:

142.780973 COT	Existential America by George Cotkin
----------------	---

100	Philosophy & psychology
-----	----------------------------

140	Specific philosophical schools
142	Critical philosophy
142.78	Existentialism
142.780973	About existentialism in America (0973 at the end means history and description about America)



Tips on searching databases and Library catalogues

By Amany Ezow

Libraries house vast collections of materials, ranging from thousands to millions of items, all meticulously organized for your convenience. No need to memorize the precise location of each book on the shelf. Instead, libraries employ catalogs to store essential information about every item within their collection and guide you to your desired resources.

Think of the library catalog as a specialized search engine tailored to your library's holdings. You can explore items by their title, author, or subject. The library catalog may also be referred to as an OPAC, which stands for Open Public Access Catalog.

Every item in a library catalog is accompanied by a unique catalog record. These records include crucial details such as the author, title, publication date, item type (e.g., book, DVD, map), the item's status (available, checked out, lost), and the call number. The call number acts as your map to locate an item within the library, with nonfiction books typically having a combination of letters and numbers, while fiction books usually consist of letters only.

When searching the library catalog, you have two main approaches:

1-Basic Search: Ideal for beginners or when you have limited information about what you're looking for. For instance, if you know part of the title

and the author's last name, the Basic Search is your go-to option.

2-Advanced Search: Designed for those who prefer more control over their search parameters.

Here are some valuable tips for navigating and searching within a database and library catalog:

- **Pay Attention to Spelling:** The catalog does not feature a spell-check function, so ensure your spelling is accurate.
- **Consider Pluralization:** Plural forms may not automatically match singular ones. For example, searching for "gladiator" will not retrieve "gladiators."
- **Ignore Capitalization, Punctuation, and Initial Articles:** The catalog treats (The Memory Keeper's Daughter) the same as (memory keepers daughter)

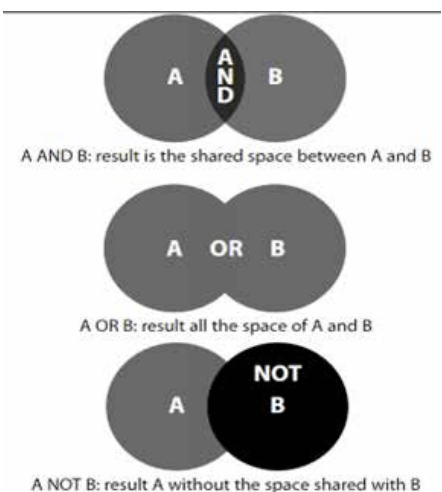
Utilize Wildcards: Represented by a question mark (?) or a pound sign (#), wildcards can be invaluable. Using "?" as a wildcard will return results in which the wildcard is replaced by another character. For example, "ne?t" will find results containing "neat," "nest," or "next," but not "net".

- **Truncation:** is represented by an asterisk (*), enter the root of a search term and replace the ending with an *, Ex: comput* finds results with computer, computing,

computation, computational, etc.

- **Boolean Operators:** Combine search terms using uppercase AND, OR, and NOT:
- **AND:** Narrows results to items containing both terms.
- **OR:** Broadens results to items containing either term.
- **NOT:** Excludes results containing the specified term.

Libraries are repositories of knowledge, standing ready to answer your inquiries. Yet, for those unfamiliar with library systems, exploring their vast resources can be daunting. Our goal is to empower everyone to confidently navigate their local or school library. We hope this article will be your guide on the journey through the library catalog.



Leading Learning

The Vital Importance of Reporting Book Challenges

By Brandi Bartok

In an age where access to diversity of ideas is fundamental to education, the importance of safeguarding intellectual freedom cannot be overstated. School libraries serve as vital resources for students to explore a wide range of materials and viewpoints. However, challenges to these resources can arise in the form of book challenges, bans, and soft censorship. It is crucial to report such challenges for a number of reasons.

- Reporting book challenges provides a systematic way to document and track instances where materials in school libraries are questioned or censored. These reports serve as a historical record of attempts to limit access to information. These records can be used to identify patterns, trends, and areas in need of advocacy and support.
- Organizations that track challenges offer valuable support and resources to educators and library staff facing challenges. They can provide guidance on how to address challenges and defend intellectual freedom. They also provide insight into how similar challenges have been resolved in other jurisdictions.
- Reporting challenges contributes to the broader advocacy for intellectual freedom and awareness about the importance of diverse collections in school libraries. It encourages a dialogue about the role of school libraries in promoting critical thinking and open inquiry.
- Reporting allows for collaboration among different stakeholders, including educators, library staff, parents, students, and community members. It fosters a collective effort

to uphold intellectual freedom and prevent censorship.

Where to Report Book Challenges

The Manitoba School Library Association (MSLA) recommends reporting book challenges to two organizations:

Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA)

The CFLA collects information through the Intellectual Freedom Challenges Survey, which can be filled out at any time by concerned individuals. The data collected through this survey is aggregated and summarized in a yearly report, which is made available online. This report allows for year-to-year comparisons, helping to identify trends and areas of concern.

Centre for Free Expression

The Centre for Free Expression maintains a library challenges database that is fully searchable. Challenges can be submitted to this database, which includes individual reports for each item challenged and a database page summary for easy reference. This database provides a comprehensive resource for tracking challenges and censorship in school libraries.

The act of reporting book challenges in school libraries is essential to safeguarding intellectual freedom and ensuring that students have access to a diverse and inclusive range of materials. By reporting challenges educators, administrators, parents, students, and community members contribute to the documentation, protection, support, advocacy, and awareness of intellectual freedom. They

also help foster collaboration and maintain records of challenges faced in school libraries, ultimately promoting a rich and open learning environment for all. In a world where knowledge is power, the reporting of challenges ensures that knowledge remains both accessible and uncensored.

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How Does Your Garden Grow?

By Michelle Carlos

Tower Gardens have inspired yearlong inquiries in classrooms and library learning commons around Pembina Trails. These towers are vertical aeroponic systems that allow students to grow fresh produce in a small space, using less water and energy than traditional gardening. The Tower Gardens have inspired



numerous questions, curiosities, and wonderings from students K-12 and were made possible through a sustainability grant. Linden Meadows School used Wonder Journals to track plant growth and to record questions and observations. Other school libraries developed Curiosity Corners to examine different types of seeds

and make predictions. Tower Gardens have enriched conversations around food sustainability, crop production, equitable access to food, healthy eating, food prices across Manitoba, composting, and food waste.

Tower Gardens work by pumping nutrient-rich water through a central tower, where the plants are suspended in air, without soil. The water trickles down from the top of the tower, nourishing the roots and then



recirculating back to the reservoir. The plants get everything they need to thrive, while using up to 95% less water than soil-based gardening. Tower Gardens can grow a variety of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers, all year round, with minimal maintenance and environmental impact.

As the daylight hours grow shorter, Tower Gardens offer not only fresh greens, but light, hope, expectation, and an opportunity for students to nurture and care for the natural world.



Makedo Cardboard Tools Review

By Brandi Bartok



We purchased some of Makedo's cardboard tools last year, and they have been quite popular with our students. Specifically, we purchased a kit that contained Safe-Saws, "Scrus," Fold Rollers, Scru Drivers and some mini-tools. These items are designed to facilitate safe, glue-free cardboard crafting, making them particularly appealing for school library learning commons and makerspaces looking to expand their offerings in creative building activities. I love that these tools allow us to work without glue guns and rolls of duct tape. Even better, when students are done building, the scrus can be removed and the cardboard can be reused or recycled easily. Overall, we have found these to be a great addition to the makerspace and they definitely make cardboard constructions easier for students.



Safe-Saw

The Safe-Saw, as the name implies, aims to make cardboard cutting safe for students of all ages. Featuring a

steel-toothed blade that eliminates the risk of cuts, this tool means no more awkward scissor cutting for cardboard construction. Incidentally, we also found it to be effective at cutting pieces of repurposed foam.



"Scrus"

Scrus are the blue connectors that enable students to join cardboard pieces without relying on traditional adhesives. These connectors securely hold cardboard sheets together, enabling students to construct a variety of structures. They come in a couple of different sizes to allow for different construction options.



Scru Drivers

Scru Drivers complement the Scru connectors by simplifying the assembly of cardboard creations. The end of the Scru Driver fits into the heads of the Scrus, sort of like a combination of a screwdriver and a ratchet.

These cardboard creation tools are a worthy addition to your Makerspace!

AI: A Place to Start

By Michelle Carlos

The tech world is buzzing with discussion about artificial intelligence (AI) and how schools will respond to the new and innovative tools that are popping up in our favourite applications. A familiar Canadian tech educator, Brian Aspinall, has developed a place for schools to start exploring. Codebreaker, along with MAETL sponsorship, offers a free site with no login and no student tracking. Teachers should follow all copyright guidelines and not submit student work into an AI program due to personal and intellectual property protections. Teacher librarians and all educators are key to preparing students to thrive in a world where artificial intelligence is an integral part of their lives and careers.

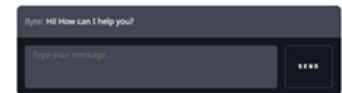
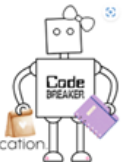
Code BREAKER

- Sponsored by MAETL
- Free
- [No login required](#)
- No student tracking

Byte

/bit/

proper noun
on AI space for use in education



Code
BREAKER

DONATE



FIND RESOURCES HERE



www.codebreakeredu.com/chat



MSLA Business



Kevin Mowat

MEMORIAL SEED GRANTS



HONOURING KEVIN MOWAT'S INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL
LIBRARIES IN MANITOBA.

The Canadian Author Grant

We are delighted to introduce The Canadian Author Grant. This \$500 grant is designed for MSLA members who aim to enrich their school library collections with books written by Canadian authors. You must be a member of the MSLA to apply. Membership can be purchased for \$25, please see the membership page.

Grant Details:

Amount: \$500

Purpose: To purchase books written by Canadian authors.

Eligibility: Open to members of the Manitoba School Library Association who are currently working in a Manitoba school.

Application Process: A minimum 500 word written explanation of why your library is a good candidate for this grant and how you plan to use the funds. This explanation may be used in MSLA's Fall Journal.

Deadline: December 10, 2023.

Application: <https://www.manitobaschoollibraries.ca/grants>

The Makerspace Grant

We're thrilled to announce the launch of the Manitoba School Library Association Makerspace Grant, offering \$500 in funding to expand your makerspace and ignite the spark of innovation. This grant will help provide the tools and materials that you need to enhance your library makerspace and contribute to the creativity and innovation of students at your school.

You must be a member of the MSLA to apply. Membership can be purchased at for \$25, please see the membership page.

Grant Details:

Amount: \$500

Purpose: To purchase makerspace materials, resources, and/or technology.

Eligibility: Open to members of the Manitoba School Library Association who are currently working in a Manitoba school.

Application Process: A minimum 500 word written explanation of why your library is a good candidate for the grant and how you plan to use the funds. This explanation may be used in MSLA's Spring Journal.

Deadline: December 10, 2023.

<https://www.manitobaschoollibraries.ca/grants>

The Diverse Books Grant

We are excited to share The Diverse Books Grant, \$500 to enrich your school library with diverse and inclusive literature. Empower students, cultivate empathy, celebrate diversity, expand horizons, and support inclusivity.

You must be a member of the MSLA to apply. Membership can be purchased or \$25, please see the membership page.

Grant Details:

Amount: \$500

Purpose: To purchase diverse and inclusive books for a classroom or school library.

Eligibility: Open to members of the Manitoba School Library Association who are currently working in a Manitoba school.

Application Process: A minimum 500 word written explanation of why your library is a good candidate for the grant and how you plan to use the funds. This explanation may be used in MSLA's Spring Journal.

Deadline: December 10, 2023.

<https://www.manitobaschoollibraries.ca/grants>

Manitoba School Library Association's Social Media Campaigns

By Brandi Bartok

Candidate Question Series

During the lead-up to the Manitoba provincial election, the Manitoba School Library Association worked hard through social media to raise the status of school libraries in election discourse and to get candidates engaged in dialogue about the future of education. *The Candidate Question Series* took a deep dive into various aspects of school libraries with ten specific inquiries. The questions ranged from personal reflections on candidates' experiences in school libraries to broader policy matters. Candidates were asked how they planned to ensure equitable education by providing fully funded and staffed school libraries to benefit every student. The posts highlighted defending diversity in school libraries and some questions probed candidates on their plans to promote inclusivity through culturally relevant materials that support all students, including 2SLGBTQIA+ students. A call was made to celebrate diversity in reading choices and to empower students in embracing their individuality and well-being.



Additionally, through our website and social media platforms, we promoted a list of questions to ask provincial candidates if they came to the doorstep. The questions were developed in partnership with the Manitoba Library Association which represents the interests of public libraries in the province. This partnership between the MSLA and the MLA increased visibility of our collective and common concerns. These questions were also promoted during the recent school trustee by-elections that occurred during the month of October in Brandon School Division.

Advocating for your School Library

During provincial or school board elections, ask candidates about equitable education, fully funded school libraries, diverse materials for critical thinking, and protecting child rights.

- What memories do you have about your Early Years/Middle Years/High School Library?
- What will you/your party do to ensure equitable education for all?
- What will you/your party do to ensure that all students have access to fully funded and fully staffed school libraries?
- What measures will you implement to support intellectual freedom in school libraries, allowing students access to diverse viewpoints and materials for critical thinking and personal growth?
- In what ways will you advocate for the inclusion of diverse and culturally relevant literature in school libraries, reflecting the community's unique demographics and promoting inclusivity?
- How will you work to protect the intellectual freedom of both students and school library staff, ensuring that their rights to access and disseminate information are upheld?
- How will you ensure that child rights, particularly the right to access information and participate in educational opportunities, are safeguarded and prioritized in our local school libraries?
- How will you address any potential disparities in funding and resources between schools in different school divisions, ensuring that every student has access to a well-equipped and supported library?
- Can you outline your broader vision for education and the role that school libraries play in shaping well-rounded, engaged, and informed citizens within our community?



Your vote matters!

Championing Intellectual Freedom

Another series of social media posts were developed to focus on the crucial issue of censorship. Posts encouraged people to have open dialogue and respectful conversations about diverse content and to think about how book bans might impact students. The MSLA also urged readers to report censorship challenges and advocated for open access to information. At the same time, the MSLA launched our Toolkit for Diverse Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom in Manitoba Schools meant to support educators, school library staff, administrators and school trustees in understanding how collection diversity fits with provincial policy and to articulate the need for clear policies surrounding collection development, selection of materials and responding to challenges. This document is meant to be a living document, subject to updates and is available on our website at manitobaschoollibraries.ca.



These activities, in conjunction with letter writing campaigns to school boards impacted by calls for book bans, various media opportunities, public statements written in partnership with the Manitoba Library Association and plans for future advocacy are some of the ways the Manitoba School Library Association is working to educate and elevate conversations related to school libraries.



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October 30, 2023

The Honourable Nello Altomare, Minister of Education
Room 168 Legislative Building
450 Broadway Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3C 0V8
mineecl@manitoba.ca

Dear Minister Altomare,

On behalf of the Manitoba School Library Association, I extend our warmest congratulations to you on your recent appointment as the Minister of Education for our province. We appreciate the dedication and hard work that you will bring to this essential role, and we look forward to collaborating with you to enhance the quality of education in Manitoba.

Research demonstrates that qualified library staff are crucial to advancing student literacy, developing excellent school library collections, improving academic achievement, contributing to innovative teaching practices and supporting student well-being. Our association is deeply committed to ensuring that every student in Manitoba has access to an equitably funded, well-equipped, and professionally staffed school library. School libraries are a cornerstone of the education system, offering a safe and inclusive environment that fosters inquiry, exploration of STEAM, foundations in digital citizenship, and personal growth.

A full-time teacher-librarian and library technician should be the standard in every school. Sadly, this is not currently the case.

In light of the vital role that school libraries play in the support of student learning, we urge you to take the following actions:

Restore and Strengthen School Library Staffing: Address the concerning trend of the reduction or elimination of teacher-librarian and library technician positions in school divisions. Ensure that every student has access to a full-time teacher-librarian and library technician.

Provide Equitable Funding for School Libraries: This is necessary to bridge the existing disparities in access to educational resources and qualified library staff across the province. In many communities, particularly in rural schools and in communities already facing socio-economic challenges, students are being denied the advantages and support that a well-staffed and funded school library provides.

Support the Proclamation of Manitoba School Library Day: Recognize the importance of declaring Manitoba School Library Day each year on the fourth Monday of October to emphasize the value of school libraries and to show the province's unwavering support for library staff. Our request for the proclamation of Manitoba School Library Day was mismanaged for two consecutive years, most recently with the explanation that the transition caused by the change in government led to its omission. This was despite the fact we received a confirmation letter dated June 23, 2023 stating that the proclamation would be issued in October. It is our hope that your office can help us rectify this and ensure that the value of school libraries is reaffirmed through partnership in another initiative that highlights school libraries this year.

Promote Diversity, Inclusivity and Safety: Acknowledge and support the safe spaces that school libraries provide, particularly for LGBTQ+ youth. Work to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, can access school library resources that promote diversity and inclusivity. Professional school library staff are a vital line of defence in upholding the province's diversity and inclusion policies.

Establish a Provincial School Library Consultant: Recognize that significant outreach and rebuilding efforts are required to bring school libraries back to adequate levels after years of austerity budgets and harmful cutbacks. To assist with this rebuilding, we strongly advocate for the creation of a Provincial School Library Consultant position in the Department of Education. This consultant should possess the specialised knowledge and expertise to guide and support schools and divisions in revitalising their libraries and ensuring that they meet the evolving needs of students in the digital age. Consider allocating resources to further study the impact of well-staffed and well-funded school libraries on student performance, literacy rates, and overall well-being.

As we embark on this journey to enhance the educational landscape in Manitoba, we sincerely hope to work together with your office in a collaborative and productive relationship. Your support in addressing the critical issues facing school libraries will make a lasting impact on the academic success and well-being of our students. We are ready and eager to provide any information or assistance that your office may require to move forward with these initiatives. Please feel free to contact us at mslapresident@manitobaschoollibraries.ca to discuss these matters further.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment, Minister Altomare. We look forward to working together to ensure that our students have the best possible access to resources, support, and educational opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "BBartok".

Brandi Bartok

President

Manitoba School Library Association

Enclosures (1): Select Annotated Bibliography of Research Supporting the Importance of School Libraries

Select Annotated Bibliography of Research Supporting the Importance of School Libraries

Dix, K., Felgate, R., & Ahmed, S.K., Carslake, T., & Sniedze-Gregory, S. (2020). School libraries in South Australia. 2019 Census. Adelaide, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research. Retrieved from: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1036&context=tll_misc

Data from 728 schools was collected through a detailed survey of the state of school libraries in South Australia. Of note in the study is the use of comparative literacy achievement data demonstrating higher student literacy achievement in schools with qualified teacher-librarians.

Haycock, K. (2011). Connecting British Columbia (Canada) school libraries and student achievement: A comparison of higher and lower performing schools with similar overall funding. *School Libraries Worldwide* 17(1).

Demonstrates that school libraries managed by qualified professional staff and supported by clerical and volunteer staff were more likely to be associated with higher school performance. Libraries with more qualified school librarian hours, more paid clerical and technical staff hours, a larger number of volunteers and total number of staff were more likely to be associated with higher school performance.

Human Rights Campaign. (2023). 2023 Youth Report for Librarians/Media Specialists. Retrieved from: <https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/Youth-Report-Librarians-Media-FNL.pdf>

Presents key findings from a 2022 survey of nearly 13,000 LGBTQ+ youth aged 13-18 across the United States. Key findings highlighted in the report include: Many LGBTQ+ youth feel unsafe at school—yet the library is often seen as a safe haven. Almost half of LGBTQ+ youth, transgender and gender expansive youth, reported feeling unsafe in school settings. However, 88% of LGBTQ+ youth reported that they usually or always feel safe in their school library.

Lance, K. C., & Kachel, D. E. (2018). Why school librarians matter: What years of research tell us. *Phi Delta Kappan*. Retrieved from: <http://kappanonline.org/lance-kachel-school-librarians-matter-years-research/>

Lance and Kachel draw on extensive research to emphasize the positive impact of school teacher-librarians on student achievement. The article highlights the significance of teacher-librarians, especially for vulnerable student populations. The authors call for recognizing and leveraging the vital role of school teacher-librarians to enhance student performance and close achievement gaps.

Lao, C., Lee, S., Krashen, S., & McQuillan, J. (2021). Predictors of reading ability among ten-year olds: Poverty (negative), school libraries (positive), instruction (zero), early literacy (zero). *Language Magazine*: <https://blogs.ifla.org/literacy-reading/files/2021/05/Krashenpredictors-of-PIRLS.pdf>

A longitudinal literacy study completed by Dr. Stephen Krashen, an international linguistics scholar, and his colleagues Christy Lao, Sy-ying Lee, and Jeff McQuillan, looked at literacy levels in children. The research demonstrates that school libraries are the most influential factor positively influencing literacy development among disadvantaged students.

Library Research Service. (2013). School Libraries & Student Achievement. Retrieved October 31, 2023, from https://www.lrs.org/documents/school/school_library_impact.pdf?lrspdfmetric=no.

An infographic that clearly demonstrates the positive impact teacher-librarians have on student literacy.

Ontario Library Association. (2006). School libraries and student achievement in Ontario. Toronto, Ontario. Retrieved from: <https://accessola.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2006-SchoolLibrariesStudentAchievementOntario.pdf>

Findings consistently report that students in schools with well-staffed, stocked and funded libraries score significantly higher on standardized tests than students in schools with poorly resourced libraries.

Valenza, J. K., Dalal, H., Mohamad, G., Boyer, B., Berg, C., Charles, L. H., Bushby, R., Dempsey, M., Dalrymple, J., & Dziedzic-Elliott, E. (2022). "First Years' information literacy backpacks: What's already packed or not packed?" *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 48(4), 102566. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102566>

A 2022 study by Rutgers University found that first year college students from high schools with a rigorous school library program were more confident with their research skills.



Toolkit for Diverse Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom in Manitoba Schools



Access our toolkit via this QR Code

