

MSLA JOURNAL

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Fostering Joy in the Library Learning Commons



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President's Message

By Brandi Bartok



Dear Members and Friends of the Manitoba School Library Association,

The importance of school libraries has never been more clearly demonstrated than it has over this past year. We have experienced public challenges to school library collections and attacks on diversity in multiple school divisions. The explosive growth in AI technology is pushing the education system to adapt at full speed while we all struggle with not just the questions of how to use these new tools, but how to use them ethically and responsibly. Never mind mastering AI, we still can't figure out how to use our pocket computers to our advantage, and there are new calls to ban personal digital devices from all classrooms. All of these are areas in which the library learning commons can lead the way and support teachers and students as they learn and grow. Yet, across the country, school libraries and library staff have been the first to be cut when school budgets fall short.

As an organization, MSLA plays a pivotal role in supporting its members, networking with other provincial school library associations, and liaising with

Canadian School Libraries. The invaluable contribution of the volunteers who work in supporting the school library community cannot be overstated. Our efforts ensure that there are networking and professional development opportunities available for school library staff. Our advocacy efforts keep school libraries on the radar so that they continue to be an integral part of the educational ecosystem.

Here are some highlights of the MSLA's activities this year:

- Letters defending school library collection diversity were written to multiple school divisions, the Minister of Education, and the Manitoba School Boards Association.
- A Toolkit for Diverse Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom in Manitoba Schools was developed and is available on our website. Special thanks to Sandy Welbergen, Nikki Card, Heidi Cromwell, Jo-Anne Gibson, and Jonine Bergen for their assistance with this task. The most recent version of the toolkit can be found on our advocacy page.
- A quick "Responding to Challenges" document was developed, primarily aimed at parents or concerned community members who wish to respond to book challenges in their own school divisions. The document can be found on our website.
- We partnered with the Manitoba Library Association to issue joint statements about the attacks on collection diversity.
- We developed and ran a successful social media campaign during the provincial election period to raise awareness about the importance of school libraries and diverse school library collections. The campaign was noticed by Anita Brooks Kirkland of Canadian School Libraries, and I was asked to submit a write up about the campaign to the Canadian School Libraries journal.
- I was a guest on the MB Teachers Unplugged Podcast to highlight MSLA and our MTS PD Day.
- We held a very well attended and



successful MTS PD Day.

- We delivered an informative Fall MSLA Journal.
- In conjunction with MLA, we wrote to the River East Transcona School Board in objection to school library technician layoffs.
- I wrote to the Minister of Education to request proclamation of Manitoba School Library Day, but despite confirmation of the request and positive indication that it would be proclaimed, the transition in provincial government in October caused it to be omitted.
- We wrote to the new Minister of Education in November, advocating for school libraries and requesting equitable access for all students in Manitoba.
- I appeared as a delegation at the Pembina Trails School Division board meeting on February 29th, 2024, to speak against the draft budget motion to eliminate Teacher-Librarian positions from MY and SY schools.

As a result of our efforts, TL positions will be maintained in Pembina Trails for the 2024-2025 school year.

- We were granted a meeting with the Minister of Education in response to the letter we sent in November. We were able to educate the Minister and Deputy Minister about the importance of school libraries, we highlighted some of the amazing opportunities being provided to students through school libraries, and made a case for equitable access for all students in Manitoba. We also hand delivered a request letter for the proclamation of Manitoba School Library Day in October 2024. Thank you to Michelle Carlos, Lisa Bova and Brad Fallis for attending this important meeting with me and for the incredible amount of work they did in preparation.
- We sponsored The Centre for Free Expression's virtual session, titled "School Libraries and Curriculum Under Attack. Why and what to do?"
- We provided support to CM: Canadian Review of Materials and MYRCA.

- We awarded three grants to three very deserving schools to support literacy and school libraries.
- We held a successful Lit Forum in March.

It has been my pleasure to serve as the MSLA president this year. I am very thankful to the rest of the MSLA executive for their support, knowledge, and dedication. As we move forward, let's take a moment to acknowledge all the great things happening in library learning commons and makerspaces across the province. Let's continue to find and share the joy in school libraries, and harness our collective energy to ensure that school libraries remain vibrant and relevant in the educational landscape.

Sincerely,

Brandi Bartok
President
Manitoba School Library Association

MSLA Business

MSLA AGM

Our Annual General Meeting was held on May 21, 2024 at McMaster House. It was a wonderful evening full of connection, laughter and recognition of the amazing contributions made by members of the school library community.

The 2024-2025 Executive members and Standing Committee Chairs

Board of Directors:

Co-Presidents: Niki Card and Sandy Welbergen

Past President: Brandi Bartok

President Elect: (vacant)

Co-Secretaries: Kathy Atkin and Krista Siemens

Treasurer: Jonine Bergen

Standing Committees:

Publications: (vacant)

Advocacy: Lindsay Stewart

Professional Learning: Michelle Barclay

Archives: Stacey Matsumoto

Members-at-Large: Lisa Bova and Michelle Carlos

Welcome to our New Executive Members

Kathy Atkin – Co-Secretary

Kathy Atkin joins the MSLA Executive this year as co-Secretary, sharing the role with colleague Krista Siemens. Kathy has worked as a teacher-librarian in both English and French Immersion programs in Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) for over 30 years. In 2007, she transitioned to the divisional role of Coordinator of Library Services at the LRSD Board Office, and currently holds the title of Divisional Teacher-Librarian on the School and Classroom Support Team, as part of Instructional Services.

Krista Siemens - Co-Secretary

Krista Siemens graduated from the Library and Information Technology diploma program at RRC Polytech in 2011 and has been working as a library technician for the past thirteen years. She has had various library-related positions, including school and public libraries, as well as a two-year stint at Cambridge University Library in the Special Collections department. Krista is currently the Divisional Library Technician for Louis Riel School Division.

MSLA Awards

2024 Outstanding Teacher-Librarian of the Year Award, in Memory of Lois Gervais

Brad Fallis
Teacher Librarian
Darwin School and Victor H.L. Wyatt School
Louis Riel School Division



Brad Fallis, a dedicated and innovative teacher-librarian in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), has been recognized as the 2024 MSLA Outstanding Teacher-Librarian of the Year. This prestigious award, given in memory of Lois Gervais, honours Brad's significant contributions to teacher-librarianship and information literacy.

Brad Fallis has been a leading figure in transforming teaching and learning within the LRSD. Known for his collaborative spirit, Brad consistently demonstrates the power of partnership between classroom teachers and teacher-librarians, significantly enhancing educational outcomes. His 2019 presentation at the Metro Interdivisional Learning Commons Day, titled "Teacher-Librarian as Learning Leader," highlighted the multifaceted roles of teacher-librarians as reading initiative activators, information technology mentors, and instructional partners.

Brad began his teaching career in 2005 at Victor Mager School, quickly establishing himself as an engaged educator with a passion for inquiry-based learning and information literacy. His tenure at Dakota Collegiate saw him embrace large-scale inquiry projects under the mentorship of Zoya Osipova, which significantly shaped his teaching philosophy. Brad's innovative approaches, such as fostering peer support and inclusivity, were evident early in his career.

Transitioning to the role of teacher-librarian in 2017, Brad has since supported nearly 600 students across two elementary schools. His efforts to reclaim and redefine school library culture have created vibrant, inquiry-based learning environments. Notable projects include digital escape rooms, the "Level Up: Winnipeg!" Minecraft project, and participation in the Global Read Aloud, all designed to engage students in critical thinking and real-world problem-solving.

Brad's instructional programs are exemplary, blending hands-on and minds-on learning experiences. He integrates literature with STEAM activities, uses primary sources for deeper learning, and supports colleagues in creating information-rich environments. His commitment to developing students' information literacy skills—critical in navigating today's complex information landscape—is a hallmark of his teaching.

A recognized technology leader, Brad introduces and supports the use of digital tools to enhance learning. From managing library software to facilitating coding clubs and innovative projects like the Minecraft re-imagining of downtown Winnipeg, Brad continually leverages technology to foster creativity and critical thinking.

Brad champions global citizenship through literature that addresses human rights, social justice, and environmental issues. His dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion is evident in his resource selection and programming, ensuring all students see themselves represented in the library. Initiatives like the "DEI Story Time" project and tailored programming for Grade 7/8 students showcase his commitment to fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity.

An active member of the Manitoba School Library Association (MSLA), Brad supports professional development and advocacy efforts. His involvement in MYRCA book clubs and participation in critical budget discussions highlight his dedication to the profession. Brad also leads a professional learning network focused on developing an information literacy continuum, demonstrating his commitment to continuous improvement and instructional leadership.

Brad Fallis's exemplary service as a teacher-librarian, his innovative teaching practices, and his dedication to student success make him a deserving recipient of the 2024 MSLA Outstanding Teacher-Librarian of the Year Award. His work continues to inspire and elevate the educational experiences of students and staff alike.

2024 Outstanding Library Support Staff of the Year Award, in Memory of Lois Gervais

Katia Guzzardi
Divisional Library Technician
Brandon School Division



Katia Guzzardi, serving as the Brandon School Division Library Technician in Brandon, Manitoba, has been recognized for her exceptional contributions that go far beyond her official title. Katia is responsible for cataloguing books for 19 K-8 schools in the division. Her role involves visiting each school to provide leadership in curating their libraries, offering advice on purchasing, weeding, and organizing collections. Amidst increasing enrollment and shrinking library spaces, Katia has taken on additional responsibilities to maintain these school libraries, especially as elementary school Teacher Librarian positions have been reduced.

Katia gathers and analyzes data and trends within the BSD libraries, providing crucial information to her supervisors. Her work was particularly significant this year, as libraries faced challenges and required accurate data on purchasing, cataloguing, and weeding practices. Katia's support for books and libraries is unwavering. She passionately defended children's access to books when faced with challenges from vocal groups at Brandon School Board meetings in 2023.

Katia played a key role in implementing new library software, becoming the go-to person for resolving issues and training school staff. She consistently communicates software updates and advocates for changes that meet the needs of the schools. Her expertise extends beyond cataloguing, as she supports other Library Technicians in the division, drawing on her Masters of Library Science to provide invaluable guidance.

In rural school divisions like Brandon, qualified Library Technicians are scarce. Katia supports new hires, often Educational Assistants or book enthusiasts, through their learning curves while working with her Union

representative and supervisor to uphold the integrity of the Library Technician position. Her advocacy for professional development led to a successful session for BSD Library Technicians, showcasing her leadership and commitment to their growth.

Katia also serves as a liaison between library personnel and the MIST department, demonstrating strong communication and problem-solving skills. Her broad range of knowledge allows her to troubleshoot and multi-task effectively. Brandon School Division greatly benefits from Katia's technical expertise, advocacy for libraries, and professional demeanor. Her significant impact on the division's libraries and her dedication to her colleagues and the wider school community make her a deserving recipient of this award.

MSLA School Administrator Award for Distinguished Service

Heather Eby
Principal
Laidlaw School
Pembina Trails School Division



Heather Eby has been recognized for her outstanding contributions to the school libraries in the Pembina Trails School Division, earning the MSLA School Administrator Award for Distinguished Service. Her extensive background as a library consultant and teacher librarian enriches her current role as Principal at Laidlaw School. Heather's dedication to the school library extends well beyond her administrative duties, providing invaluable support and guidance to the library learning commons.

Heather seamlessly integrates her experience and passion for school libraries into her leadership, actively engaging with staff to offer insights and expertise. Her support has been crucial to the success of Laidlaw's library learning commons, fostering an environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Heather's collaborative approach empowers staff to implement new ideas and programs, enhancing the learning experiences of students.

Heather introduced FLEX time at Laidlaw School, embodying the spirit of inquiry and belonging. This initiative allows students to explore their interests, develop critical thinking skills, and pursue new topics in a supportive environment. Her commitment to progressive programs underscores her dedication to promoting literacy and fostering a love for learning.

Throughout her career, Heather has consistently demonstrated her support for school libraries and teacher librarians. She was instrumental in the rebranding of library learning commons, transforming them into vibrant hubs of creativity and exploration. Her efforts have ensured that libraries remain at the heart of educational experiences, even in challenging times.

As a mentor and resource, Heather has been a vital support to new teacher librarians, providing guidance and fostering professional growth. Her advocacy extends to defending the role of teacher librarians within the division, ensuring their continued presence and influence.

Heather's leadership and dedication make her a deserving recipient of the MSLA School Administrator Award for Distinguished Service. Her passion for promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and the essential role of school libraries is truly commendable, and her contributions have significantly enriched the educational community.

Honorary Lifetime Memberships

By Brandi Bartok



Vivianne Fogarty, Jo-Anne Gibson, Joyce Riddell

MSLA congratulates our lifetime membership recipients for their unwavering support and years of dedication to advancing school libraries in Manitoba.

From time to time, the MSLA recognizes past members for their invaluable contributions to the school library community by awarding an honorary lifetime membership. This year, we are recognizing five people in this way. These five remarkable individuals have all won awards for their contributions to school libraries and have served, sometimes for many years and in different roles, on the MSLA executive. They are all simply outstanding, knowledgeable individuals who tirelessly advocated for school libraries and library staff and who elevated the profession of teacher-librarian. They all continue to be sources of inspiration, encouragement and an absolute wealth of knowledge. Their previous work and documentation of that work, has been invaluable. The events of the past year had me contacting several of them for their perspective, advice and professional judgement. Even in retirement, they are still working hard for this community.

At this year's AGM, we awarded Honorary Lifetime Memberships to: Jo-Anne Gibson, Joyce Riddell, Vivanne Fogarty, Alison Bodnar and Gerald Brown. These five individuals have our heartfelt appreciation for their contributions, dedication and advocacy.

Kevin Mowat Seed Grants: Canadian Author Grant, Makerspace Grant, Diverse Books Grant

By Brandi Bartok



Curtis Lowton, Archwood School



Michelle Saul Brosch, Principal Sparling School

In September 2017, our community lost a true friend and advocate. Kevin Mowat was an inspiration, an intellectual and an innovator. An educator for 42 years and a valued member of the MSLA, Kevin worked tirelessly in Winnipeg School Division for the benefit of school libraries and library staff. In honour of Kevin, the MSLA awards the Kevin Mowat Memorial Seed Grant in support of school library learning commons or makerspaces.

In the 2023-2024 school year, MSLA moved the grant application process to the fall and created three Kevin Mowat Memorial Seed Grant categories, each worth \$500.

The Canadian Author Grant is designed for MSLA members who aim to enrich their school library collections with books written by Canadian authors. This grant was awarded to Michelle Saul Brosch, Principal Sparling School Winnipeg School Division.

The Makerspace Grant is awarded to support makerspaces and ignite the spark of innovation. This grant helps provide the tools and materials needed to enhance a library makerspace and contribute to the creativity and innovation of students at a deserving school. This grant was awarded to Curtis Lowton, Archwood School, Louis Riel School Division.

The Diverse Books Grant aims to enrich a school library with diverse and inclusive literature, empower students, cultivating empathy, celebrating diversity, expanding horizons, and supporting inclusivity. This grant was awarded to Angela Perez, Rockwood School, Winnipeg School Division.

We are pleased that Kevin's name and legacy live on through these seed grants.

Literacy

L.I.T. Forum - The Joy of _____

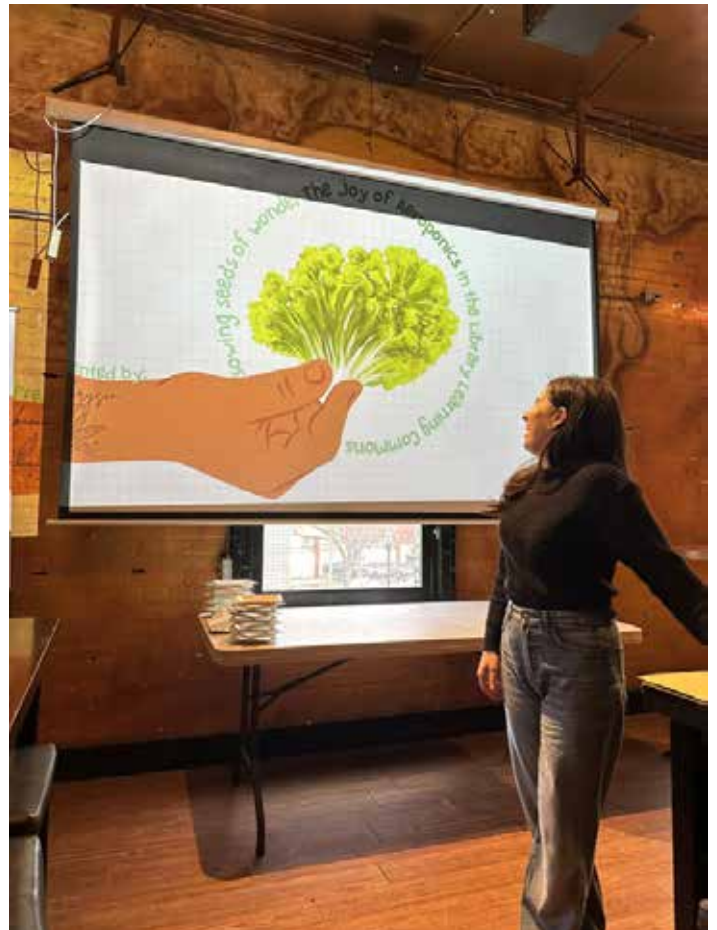


This year's L.I.T. Forum had us sharing how we found joy over the past year. Participants shared their joyful moments in 5-10 minute presentations, which included:

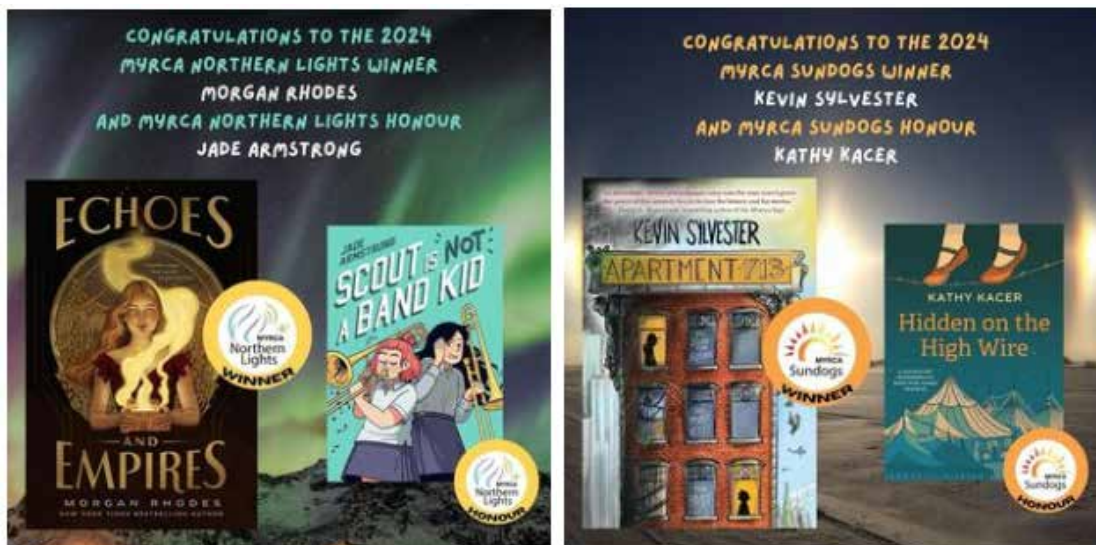
- The Joy of Reading Picture Books
- The Joy of Seeing a Struggling Student Succeed
- The Joy of Hatching Tadpoles and Chicks in the LLC!
- The Joy of Playing the Saxophone
- The Joy of Forest School
- The Joy of Tower Garden Inquiry OR The Joy of I Love to Read Month (still deciding!)

The L.I.T. Forum was held on March 11, 2024 at the King's Head Pub.

L.I.T. Forum - The Joy of _____



MYRCA 2024 Winners



MYRCA 2025 Nominees



For more information on the Manitoba Young Reader's Choice Award, visit: www.myrca.ca

Leading Learning

Embracing Artificial Intelligence: Enhancing Education and Literacy

By Niki Card, with the assistance of AI

As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of education, one technology stands out as a transformative force: Artificial Intelligence (AI). It's with a touch of irony that I asked AI to take the helm in discussing the profound impact AI can have on both education and our personal lives. From streamlining administrative tasks to revolutionizing the way we approach learning, AI holds the promise of a brighter, more efficient future.

At the recent *Learning and the Brain* conference in New York City, that I had the pleasure of attending, experts converged to explore the intersection of neuroscience, education, and technology. Among them were thought leaders like Dylan Williams, Tony Wagner, Scott Barry Kauffman, AJ Juliani, and Yong Zhao, whose insights shed light on the potential of AI in shaping future-ready brains.

At the conference, AJ Juliani discussed “hinges of history”, inventions that had a significant and lasting impact on the trajectory of humanity. AI is clearly a hinge of history and will undeniably influence our future, both in our personal lives and in education.

The Power of AI in Education and Beyond

In our daily lives, AI enhances efficiency and convenience, from virtual assistants streamlining tasks to predictive algorithms optimizing everything from our commutes to our shopping experiences. These applications extend to education, where AI-powered tools facilitate everything from grading assessments to generating personalized learning pathways.

AI's integration into education offers myriad benefits, fostering personalized learning experiences tailored to each student's needs. Through adaptive learning platforms, AI algorithms analyze students' performance and adapt instructional content accordingly, ensuring optimal engagement and mastery. This not only empowers students to learn at their own pace but also provides educators with invaluable insights into individual progress, enabling targeted interventions and support. AI facilitates differentiation like no other tool in education!

AI's Role in Fostering Literacy and Reading

AI demonstrates immense potential in supporting literacy development, both inside and outside the classroom. With the guidance of experts like Monica Burns and Scott Barry Kauffman, we can explore innovative ways AI can enhance reading experiences for students.

In the classroom, AI-powered tools can:

- Provide personalized recommendations for reading materials based on students' interests and reading levels.
- Create personalized reading materials to incorporate student interest and/or reading level.
- Analyze reading comprehension through natural language processing, offering targeted interventions to improve understanding.

In the school library, AI can:

- Assist library staff in cataloging and

organizing resources, making it easier for students to discover relevant reading materials.

- Create interactive storytelling experiences through augmented reality and virtual reality technologies.
- Assist school library staff in creating resource lists and make book recommendations for students and staff.

Personal Highlights from the Learning and the Brain Conference

Monica Burn's session had the most immediate and noteworthy impact on my thinking about effective use of AI in education. In her “Creating a Love of Reading in the Digital Age” presentation, Burns outlined eight areas that educators can use AI tools to support reading acquisition, proficiency, and enjoyment. For each section she demonstrated two AI tools that could be used for that purpose.

A few examples:

- An AI tool, like Brisk Teaching (a Chrome extension) or Claude, could be used to personalize a text by reading level. (Prompt example: Adapt the following passage to a grade three reading level.)
- Use a tool, such as ChatGPT or Gemini (a Google tool), to create a personal text by interest. (Prompt example: Create a short text for a grade four student about the summer Olympics.) You can include reading level ranges, such as 700 to 1000 Lexile, or other specifics to match the

intended reader, as well.

- Use a tool, such as Adobe Firefly or Diffit, to design student extension activities, like vocabulary lists to support learning/reading on a topic.

Burns had a second presentation, “AI for Planning, Instruction, and Productivity” where she promoted using AI tools, this time primarily focusing on ChatGPT, to accomplish tasks in a more efficient and productive manner. Burns encouraged AI use for communication tasks, tedious tasks, and prompt engineering (i.e. Write an open-ended question for ____). – Similar to how I wrote this article. I gave Chat GPT a prompt, asking it to write an article for the journal that explained the benefits of using AI in education and in our personal lives. I requested to have space to add information from my conference and named some of the presenters I was most influenced by. I used what ChatGPT provided as the framework for this article, changing phrases to suit my style, removing sentences that didn’t align with my thinking and adding additional information that I felt was significant from the conference. Having the basic framework started for me saved significant time and stress. (Of course, it is important to be transparent and model responsible AI use when using the tool.) –

Burns’ statement “I can do that myself, but this is faster” really resonated with me.

Less about AI and more about education in general, Zhao’s presentation also resonated with me. He made some bold statements that initially had my back up, such as speaking against SEL, growth mindset, and project-based learning, but he spoke to the statements and backed them up with an emphasis on personalization in education. It was very thought-provoking!

AJ Juliani is the co-author of one of my all-time favourite educational texts, *Launch* with John Spencer, so it was also a pleasure to listen to him speak. He encouraged attendees to consider compliance vs engagement. He also shared a traffic-light model for setting clear expectations for acceptable levels of AI use on assignments that I really liked.

It was an excellent professional learning and growth experience for me to attend the *Learning and the Brain* conference, supported by the River-East Transcona Teachers’ Association. (Visiting New York City was pretty amazing too!) I am keen to continue to build on my knowledge and use of AI tools, as they relate to teaching and the library, as well as in my personal life.

As we embrace the opportunities afforded by AI, it’s essential to remain

mindful of the ethical considerations and ensure that technology serves as a tool for empowerment rather than a replacement for human interaction. By harnessing the power of AI in education and literacy, we can cultivate future-ready brains equipped to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Works Cited

“Write an article for a school library association journal on artificial intelligence. Be clear in the introduction that the article was written primarily with AI. The article should explain the benefits of using AI in education and our personal lives, including some example prompts. Also include a more in-depth explanation on how AI can be used to support reading in the classroom and in the school library. I will be adding information from a conference I attended, *Learning and the Brain: Future Ready Brains*, in New York City, April 18-20, 2024. You may add details you know and then leave me a logical place to add more based on my personal experience. Sessions I was most impressed by were by Monica Burns, AJ Juliani, Scott Barry Kauffman, and Yong Zhao. The article should be informative and practical.” ChatGPT, version 3.5, OpenAI, April 28, 2024, chat.openai.com.

A Meeting with the Minister

By Brandi Bartok

On May 2, 2024, the MSLA was granted a meeting with Nello Altomare, Minister of Education and Brian O’Leary, Deputy Minister of Education. Brandi Bartok, Michelle Carlos, Brad Fallis and Lisa Bova represented school library staff in an open and candid discussion with the Minister about the state of school libraries in the province and the need for equitable access for all students. The Minister and the Deputy Minister were attentive as we emphasized the critical role that school libraries play in fostering literacy, critical thinking and curiosity, which are essential for academic success and lifelong learning.

The MSLA presented a compelling case for increased funding and support, highlighting the positive correlation between well-resourced and fully staffed school libraries and student achievement. Minister Altomare and Deputy Minister O’Leary acknowledged the importance of school libraries in education but cited that the funding model makes this a concern the MSLA must take up with school divisions and suggested that we approach the Manitoba School Board Association and COSTL.

During the meeting, the Minister was provided with the following two documents.

Equitable Access to School Libraries: Part of the Solution to Educational Challenges in Manitoba

By Brandi Bartok

Equitable access to well funded school libraries, that include teacher-librarians and library technicians, play a pivotal role in addressing the challenges currently faced in the Manitoba Education system. Here's how:

1. **Growing Student Literacy and Numeracy:** School libraries enhance student literacy and numeracy skills through access to high quality, professionally curated resources and Makerspace STEAM programs. They also foster a multiliteracies approach, creating an inclusive environment that supports language and literacy development across all curricular areas.
2. **Chronic Absenteeism:** School libraries serve as safe, welcoming spaces that foster a sense of belonging among students. School library staff are non-judgemental and supportive adults. This can encourage regular school attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism.
3. **Student Disengagement:** Libraries offer a variety of resources and learning experiences that cater to different learning styles, thereby re-engaging students in the learning process and re-igniting a passion for reading.
4. **Ethical Use of Technology:** Teacher-Librarians can guide students and teachers on the ethical and creative use of smartphones and personal mobile devices, promoting digital literacy and responsible use.
5. **Upholding Diversity Policies:** School libraries house a diverse range of learning materials, connecting to the varied interests, abilities, and backgrounds of students. This supports inclusive education and ensures every student's needs are met. School library staff manage library collections according to professional selection procedures, supporting the province's diversity policies in a tangible way.
6. **Disinformation/Misinformation/Malinformation:** Teacher-librarians educate students to critically evaluate information, discerning fact from false and harmful information. This is crucial in an era where disinformation and misinformation are rampant.
7. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Teacher-librarians provide resources and guidance on AI and related technologies, preparing students and teachers for a future where these technologies are ubiquitous.
8. **Sense of Belonging:** School libraries foster a sense of community and belonging among students. They are essential to upholding our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. Students from vulnerable populations often feel safe in their school library.

Equitable access to school libraries and library staff can significantly contribute to solving the educational challenges faced in Manitoba. It's an investment in our students' future and a step towards a more inclusive and effective education system.

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The Library Stands for Hope, Created by Michelle Carlos with input from Brad Fallis, Lisa Bova and Brandi Bartok



The Library Stands for Hope



"In our democratic society, the library stands for hope, for learning, for progress, for literacy, for self-improvement and for civic engagement. The library is a symbol of opportunity, citizenship, equality, freedom of speech and freedom of thought, and hence, is a symbol for democracy itself." – Vartan Gregorian

Truth	Community	Engagement
Artificial Intelligence - Teacher Librarians leading digital initiatives	Anti-Racism - Truth and Reconciliation - Black History Month	Safe space for all - LGBTQ+ youth - Cultural Diversity
Resource Selection and Curation - Indigenous Peoples Floor Map - Holocaust Resources	Belonging - Student voice and choice - Divisional Grandfathers and Grandmothers resources	Makerspace - Breakout Boxes - STEM
Words Matter - MTS Language Matters - Language changes	Community Connections - Speakers, author visits, workshops - Peaceful Village	Different ways of knowing and learning - Minecraft EDU - SORA app for ebooks and audiobooks
Book displays - Weeded books removed - High-interest topics - Showcase diversity	Mentoring new teachers and inspiring all teachers - Unit planning and co-teaching - Resource selection	Multimodal - Book Creator student writing for literacy and cross-curricular connections
Digital citizenship - Teacher resource list - Picture books	STEAM/STEM - Micro Bits, coding & robots - Minecraft - Teacher PD through TLs	Connections between curricular areas - Disciplinary Literacy - Accessibility features
Libraries as truth holders - Holocaust being added to Provincial Curriculum - Resource selection	Languages, EAL, Mother tongue - Home-to-school connections - After-school literacy events - Engaging with literacy at home	Self-directed learning - Research skills - Databases
Disinformation & Misinformation - Provincial eResources - Libraries provide accurate resources for teachers and students	Skilled Staff - WSD is investing in training support staff with library skills and knowledge to better support students	Love of Reading - Global Read Aloud - Canadian Author/Illustrators - MYRCA Clubs - I Love to Read Month
Mobile Device Use & Guidance - Students as creators and critical consumers - Ethical use & Parent sessions	Connect School Community - School-wide themes - Student vote for active democratic citizenship and leadership	Attendance - Safe, welcoming spaces for students - Supportive staff to reduce absenteeism

Brandi Bartok, President
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May 22, 2024

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'd like to express our sincere thanks for the meeting on May 2nd. We appreciate the opportunity to share the rich learning experiences that school libraries offer students.

Recently, The Canadian Federation of Library Associations published a position statement on the status of school libraries in Canada. The Manitoba School Library Association agrees with the statement and sees a direct correlation to many of the topics shared in our meeting on May 2nd.

"Thirty years of international research has established that school library programs with qualified professional staff have a significant positive impact on student academic achievement, especially in literacy development, reading engagement, information and digital media literacy, and research skills. School libraries also make a unique contribution to student well-being as inclusive and welcoming spaces, supporting the diverse needs of all students" (CFLA 2024).

We thank you for your support in addressing the critical issues facing school libraries so that we can make a lasting impact on the academic success and well-being of our students. We look forward to hearing the Member's Statement in support of Manitoba School Library Month later this year. Please feel free to contact us at mslapresident@manitobaschoollibraries.ca to discuss these matters further.

We look forward to working together to ensure that all Manitoba students have the best possible access to resources, support, and educational opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B Bartok".

Brandi Bartok
President
Manitoba School Library Association

Enclosures (1): Canadian Federation of Library Associations Position Statement



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

CFLA POSITION STATEMENT ON THE STATUS OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) believes that every child in Canada deserves access to an excellent, professionally staffed, and fully-funded school library. Our school libraries are an integral part of students' educational experience and should reflect our common values of equity, diversity, and cultural identity as well as best approaches in the education and library professions. They should be contextually relevant to student needs and success. School libraries should be built, cared for, measured, renewed and sustained on an ongoing basis and integrated into school goals.

Thirty years of international research has established that school library programs with qualified professional staff have a significant positive impact on student academic achievement, especially in literacy development, reading engagement, information and digital media literacy, and research skills. School libraries also make a unique contribution to student well-being as inclusive and welcoming spaces, supporting the diverse needs of all students.

Canada's public school systems are founded on the premise that all children deserve access to quality education, yet there are vast inequities between jurisdictions in the provision of library facilities, collections, programs, and services. Chronic underfunding has resulted in depleted and outdated collections, the de-professionalization of library staffing, and reduced hours of operation. In many schools and districts, libraries have been closed altogether.

Across the country there are widely divergent understandings of the role of the school library, and equally divergent or even non-existent policy frameworks, funding models, staffing, and program expectations. That Canadian students' access to library programs and services depends largely on where they live is a deplorable situation in one of the world's richest democracies. Equity of access to quality school library programs and services should be considered as a core foundation for education in Canada.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations supports the establishment of:

- an open and accessible library learning commons in every school, including the protection of existing libraries;
- policy and funding frameworks to provide equitable access to school library facilities, collections, services, and programs designed to meet the diverse needs, abilities, and identities of all learners;
- policy and funding frameworks to ensure every school library is professionally staffed and appropriately funded, and able to provide relevant and current resources, technologies, and physical and virtual learning spaces to support the evolving needs of all learners;
- a policy framework that recognizes the importance of intellectual freedom in libraries, particularly in protecting and amplifying the voices of underrepresented identities.

We call for a national consensus on the role of school libraries in public education consistent with this vision.

The CFLA recognizes that all students have the same rights of inquiry and access to information as any library user, and these rights should not be impeded by political or ideological considerations.

[*Foundations for School Library Learning Commons in Canada: A Framework for Success*](#) (Canadian School Libraries, 2023) provides guidelines for building effective library learning commons programs, based on the International Federation of Library Association's (IFLA) [*School Library Guidelines, 2nd revised edition*](#) (2015), internationally-approved standards for school libraries. The foundations and frameworks described in the document serve as a prerequisite for the successful implementation of [*Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for School*](#)



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

[Library Learning Commons in Canada](#) (Canadian School Libraries). *Leading Learning* standards are expressions of the core actions that effective school library learning commons programs take to have an impact on student learning.

Cataloguing Corner

Book Review: "Cataloging Code of Ethics by Karen Snow"

Karen Snow, contributor to the Cataloging Code of Ethics, has written the next book in her Practical Guide series. Published in January 2024, *A Practical Guide to Dewey Decimal Classification* aims for the same goal as the others in the series: to make technical library work accessible and easy for people of all skill levels to understand. And, like the other books in the series, it absolutely achieves that goal!

As library technicians, we are often islands, being the sole person in our place of employment with any technical library knowledge. We may or may not have any support, or access to PD. However, it's crucial that we maintain our skills and stay on top of the latest changes in the library world - as well as keeping seldom-used skills fresh. This book is a fantastic reminder of things we may have forgotten - or may have never even known.

The book begins with a basic description of what the DDC is, as well as its history. It follows with DDC terminology and covers the

introductory matter of DDC in plain English. It provides an overview of WebDewey and how to use it. It covers the basics of assigning a call number and explores number building in depth, and discusses the importance of notes and the manual, tables of preference, and more. All 6 tables are thoroughly discussed, and this is absolutely the biggest strength of this book, as number building is a complicated process, especially for those who don't have access to WebDewey. And despite covering such complicated topics, the book is very easy to read. Examples abound in every chapter, and are well chosen to illustrate the author's information. The book is thoughtfully organized, so you very clearly build on your skills throughout the book. Each chapter ends with a set of questions, with an answer key at the end of the book. For particularly complex subjects, like number building, the questions start out fairly simply but increase in complexity. A glossary, index, and flowchart for the wildly convoluted T3B make this a perfect every-day

reference guide.

An extensive list of references and recommended readings (print and digital) at the end of the book allow interested readers to explore the subjects discussed in whatever amount of detail they would like.

A personal highlight for me is the frequent reminders throughout the book that the needs of library users must always be the primary focus of our work. I also appreciated the author's many mentions of bias within the DDC.

This book would be ideal for a new cataloguer or library technician student, but even as a veteran cataloguer, I will certainly refer back to it in the future.

Karen Snow's *A Practical Guide to Dewey Decimal Classification* (paperback: 9781538127209 ; hardcover: 9781538127193) can be ordered directly from the publisher, Rowman & Littlefield, or from Chapters.

Review by: Michelle Rondeau, Winnipeg School Division's Cataloguing and Systems Technician

A banner with a green and yellow wavy background. It contains the Manitoba School Library Association logo, the text 'Follow us on SOCIAL MEDIA', and social media handles for Facebook, Instagram, and X. Below the logo is a list of three goals: Celebrating & Supporting School Libraries, Professional Growth, and Promoting High Standards of Programs Advocacy.

The logo for the Manitoba School Library Association, featuring a stylized 'M' made of squares and the text 'MANITOBA SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'.

Follow us on

SOCIAL MEDIA

Celebrating & Supporting School Libraries
Professional Growth
Promoting High Standards of Programs
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