








WSRA 2023 Conference Speakers

Last	First		Speaker Biographies
Ahmed	Sara K.		Sara K Ahmed ~ Sara K. Ahmed currently serves as the Director of Curriculum Integration and 5th-grade advisor at Catherine Cook School in Chicago. She has taught and coached in city, suburban, public, independent, and international schools, where her classrooms were designed to help students consider their own identities and see the humanity in others. When she is not in the classroom or meeting with teachers, you can find her coaching cross country, soccer, or basketball. Sara is the author of <i>Being the Change: Lessons and Strategies to Teach Social Comprehension</i> and coauthor with Harvey "Smokey" Daniels of <i>Upstanders: How to Engage Middle School Hearts and Minds with Inquiry</i> . She is an international speaker and staff developer in schools around the world-- bridging literacy, inquiry, and social identity work through curriculum development, professional growth meetings, and lab classrooms. Sara has also served on the Teacher Leadership Team for Facing History and Ourselves, an international organization devoted to examining and confronting the choices we've made in history--individual and society. Sara has just returned from Bangkok, Thailand where she served as a literacy coach and consultant-in-residence at NIST international school. These days you can find her playing tennis, reading, or writing her way through her sweet-home Chicago, and rediscovering the restaurant and pastry scene with her family. You can find her on Twitter or Instagram @SaraKAhmed.
Aldworth	Nicole		Nicole Aldworth is an Early Childhood Program Support Teacher at CESA 2. She joins CESA 2 with almost 20 years of experience working with young children and their families. Nicole spent most of her career working in the Sun Prairie Area School District and Marshall Public Schools teaching Early Childhood Special Education, 4K, and 5K. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field of early childhood education, special education. Providing rich and engaging early literacy opportunities for all children is a passion of hers, along with coaching and support of those working with young children.
Anderson	Kevin		Science Education Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Anderson	Dr. Nancy		Nancy Anderson, Ph.D., is a professor of Literacy at Texas Woman's University. Complex connections between language, literacy, and learning focus her research and work with children, teachers, and leaders. Her work has been published in national journals, including <i>The Reading Teacher</i> , and she has contributed chapters to multiple books. She co-authored a book for novice teachers, <i>Linking Assessment to Reading Comprehension Instruction: A Framework for Actively Engaging Literacy Learners, K-8</i> , and is engaged in multiple school-based research projects. She may be found most often joyfully laughing and learning with teachers and children in schools.
Azoff	Teresa		3rd Grade teacher at Erin School (12 years), Teacher at Jared Bruce Academy, Teacher at Slinger Elementary, Master's Degree in Leadership, Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education
Bildner	Phil		Phil Bildner is a former New York City public school teacher who lives in Newburgh, New York. He spends much of his year visiting schools and libraries around the country and world. He is the author of over twenty books including the middle grade novel <i>A Whole New Ballgame</i> and picture books <i>Marvelous Cornelius</i> , <i>The Soccer Fence</i> , <i>The Hallelujah Flight</i> , and <i>Twenty-One Elephants</i> . Along with Loren Long, he is the coauthor of the New York Times bestselling <i>Sluggers</i> series.
Bomer	Kathrine		Katherine Bomer is Professor of Practice in the College of Education at the University of North Texas. Awarded the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) "Outstanding Educator of 2017," she is the author most recently of <i>Writing Workshop Essentials: Time, Choice, Response</i> , co-authored with Corinne Arens (2020). Earlier books include <i>The Journey is Everything: Teaching Essays that Students Want to Write for People Who Want to Read Them</i> (2016), <i>Hidden Gems: Naming and Teaching from the Brilliance in Every Student's Writing</i> (2010), and <i>For a Better World: Reading and Writing for Social Action</i> , with Randy Bomer. She continues to consult nationally and internationally, presenting workshops, demonstrating, and coaching inside K-12 classrooms about approaches to teaching reading and writing across the curriculum. As a frequent and popular keynote speaker, she combines a teacher's practical advice, a writer's love of language, and a powerful plea for social justice.
Bowling	Deb		Fine Arts Manager: Dr. Bowling has worked at MPS for 21 years and has served as an Arts Specialist, Assistant Principal, and Principal prior to her current position. Dr. Bowling received her Doctor of Education – Concentration in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. Dr. Bowling oversees all arts educators in MPS while maintaining close relationships with community partners across the city, grant writing, principal support, and PD regarding visual art, music, dance, theater, physical education, and health.

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Bryan	Trevor		Trevor Bryan has been an art teacher in New Jersey for over 20 years. Trevor's first book, <i>The Art of Comprehension: Exploring Visual Texts to Foster Comprehension, Conversation, and Confidence</i> , was published in 2019 by Stenhouse Publishers. Since 2012, Trevor has presented his work which focuses on reading comprehension, writer's craft (story-sharing) and arts integration to a wide range of school districts and at numerous national and state art and literacy conferences.
Champeau	Kathryn		Kathy Champeau is a Past President of the Wisconsin State Reading Association (WSRA) currently serving as their Legislative Committee Chair. As a literacy consultant, Kathy works side-by-side with classroom teachers supporting both students' and teachers' intellectual lives creating strong dialogic and socially and emotionally secure classrooms. Kathy has co-authored a recent book with Dr. Peter Johnston, <i>Engaging Literate Minds: Developing Children's Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Lives K-3</i> , that chronicles the results of this work. As a 40-year educator, including the role of reading specialist and university adjunct instructor, Kathy has presented at international, national, state, and local conferences.
Chen	Rita		Professor at UW-LaCrosse, Co-Chair WSRA New & Preservice Teacher committee
Ciesielczyk-Gibson	Jordan		Jordan Ciesielczyk-Gibson is an Educator and Maritime Archaeologist with the Wisconsin Historical Society's Maritime Preservation and Archaeology Program. Jordan has always been between the realms of education, science communication, maritime history and archaeology. He has worked both as a museum educator and as a archaeologist both over and under the water. Prior to this, Jordan studied Archaeology and Philosophy graduating with a Bachelor's of Science from the University of Wisconsin La Crosse in 2014.
Clark, III	Louis V.		Louis V Clark III was born on the Oneida reservation of Wisconsin. Raised during the often troubled, often wonderful decade of the 1960's, Clark learned to stand up for what he thought was right, aided by the guiding hand of many influential people. He joined forces with his beautiful wife during their high school years and together they ran away to build their own life aided by the Oneida principle of "looking ahead seven generations." Encountering many obstacles along the way including a poetry professor who said that what he wrote wasn't poetry and a theater professor who said that if what he wrote was any good that it was already being done. Clark continued to write. In Clark's fifth decade the University of Arkansas along with the Sequoyah National Research Center published his chapbook "Two Shoes." This work received an Oneida Fellowship Award and a Wisconsin Arts Board Award. In 2016 the Wisconsin Historical Society Press published his Memoir in Poetry and prose "How to be an Indian in the 21st Century." This book received the 2017 Midwest Booksellers Choice Award as well as Oneida/Wisconsin Arts Board Award. WHSP published his follow up book, "Rebel Poet" in 2018 and this work received a Midwest Independent Publishers Book award. Clark currently has a play "Little Boy Lost/Stupid Indian" scheduled for airing on public radio.
Collins	Jami		Early Learning Engagement Specialist, PBS Wisconsin Education
Cruz	Sara		Principal, Milwaukee Public Schools
Davis	Amy		Assistant Professor in Elementary Literacy
Dempsey	Kristina		

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DeRosa	Rachel		Founder of the Global Vybe, Lifetime Certified Teacher in 6th-12th grade Biology, Chemistry and Broadfield Science and Pediatric Physician Assistant/Child Health Associate (Master's Degree from the University of Colorado)
Ehlert	Rita		English teacher grades 8 & 9, Baraboo School District
Engstrom	Denise		Denise Engstrom is a member of WSRA and the Special Events Coordinator. She has been a teacher in the Fort Atkinson School District for 31 years. She is currently teaching third grade. She has a masters in Curriculum and Instruction. She is highly active in her district on numerous committees and is a Success Team leader of her Third Grade PLC program. She loves to integrate literacy into all areas and is passionate about bringing the love of reading to all students.
Espana	Dr. Carla		Carla España, Ph.D. is a New York-based educator from Chile, researcher, writer, and co-founder of the En Comunidad Collective. Dr. España partners with K-12 schools and teacher preparation programs to support teachers, librarians, coaches, and administrators. Her teaching, writing, research, and workshops live at the intersection of critical literacies, bilingual/ multilingual education, children's literature, language ideologies, curriculum development, and teacher education. Dr. España is the incoming Assistant Professor of Bilingual Education and Puerto Rican/Latinx and Latin American Studies in the Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies at Brooklyn College, City University of New York.
Fletcher	Ralph		Ralph Fletcher has written over fifty books for writing teachers and young readers. His books include Fig Pudding, Flying Solo, Joy Write, Craft Lessons, What a Writer Needs, Focus Lessons: How Photography Enhances the Teaching of Writing, and Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide. Heinemann released his video series, "Get Focused," in April 2022. His forthcoming picture book, "The World's Loneliest Elephant," illustrated by Naoko Stoop, will be published by Little, Brown this summer. Ralph visits schools and frequently speaks at educational conferences around the world, helping teachers find wiser ways of teaching writing. He has a passion for nature photography. Find his Instagram posts at ralphoto17 . Check out his website: www.ralphfletcher.com
Garbe	Dr. Amber		Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Goldberg	Samantha		Director of Education, Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center
Gone	Amitha		ESL Teacher Leader, Department of Bilingual and Multicultural Education, Milwaukee Public School district. I have been offering professional development for staff and ESL teachers in MPS schools. My background in teaching Applied Linguistics at undergraduate and graduate levels afforded me a deep theoretical insight. Teaching ESL to learners from myriad nationalities and age groups ranging from professional adults to K-12 honed my practice over 26 years of being a researcher, teacher, and teacher educator.
Good	Dr. Annalee		Annalee Good serves as Director of the WCER Clinical Program, as well as the co-director of the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative. She has published and presented numerous papers on topics including the role of K-12 teachers in the creation of public policy, the integration of digital instructional tools, and the nature and role of tutoring in school reform. She was an 8th grade social studies teacher before earning her master's and doctoral degrees in Educational Policy Studies from UW-Madison.
Gordon	Berit		Author and Consultant, as well as 20+ years teaching experience in NYC

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Graetz	Megan		4th Grade, Coleman Elementary School
Graf	Mary Ellen G		Mary Ellen Graf is an Implementation and Training Specialist for TeachingBooks and a licensed educator with a master's in teaching. She has taught in a variety of settings for more than 30 years, most recently as a middle school classroom teacher. Her experience with a wide spectrum of students including ELL and gifted and talented students adds to her understanding of teachers' roles and student needs. She has presented at the conferences such as Wisconsin State Reading Conference, Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association, Kansas Library Associations/Mountain Plains Library Association Joint Conference, Iowa Reading Conference, Georgia Library Media Association Conference as well as multiple mini-conferences in Texas.
Gray	Dr. Stacy L.		Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Griesemer	Kurt		Kurt Griesemer has been involved in education for over 20 years, teaching in public and private schools, creating classroom media for television and the web, and currently as the Coordinator of Primary Education at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Print publications include co-authoring the award-winning 4th grade textbook Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story (2017), and education supplements for the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission's Ogichidaa Storytellers video series, Patty Loew's Indian Nations of Wisconsin (2014), Louis V. Clark III's How to Be an Indian in the 21st Century, Somos Latinas, and Wisconsin Public Television's Vel Phillips: Dream Big Dreams (2016). Kurt has also produced several video series for the classroom, including democracy it is! (2007), Engage: State-Tribal-Local Government (2008), Global Wisconsin (2010) and the Emmy-winning series Wisconsin Biographies (2012). Web publications include interactive media for the above series, Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story (2017) and Patty Loew's Native People of Wisconsin (2014).
Grisius	Angie		Reading Specialist, Waterford Union High School
Handsfield	Lara		Lara J. Handsfield is a Professor of Bilingual and Elementary Literacy Education at Illinois State University, where she teaches courses in language and literacy theory and practice. A former fourth grade teacher, her research critically examines comprehension instruction in multilingual classrooms, discursive and embodied positioning and identities, and how teachers negotiate multiple political and pedagogical demands in their work. Her scholarship has been funded by the Spencer Foundation and has appeared in a variety of academic and professional journals, including Reading Research Quarterly, the Journal of Literacy Research, Research in the Teaching of English, Language Arts, and The Reading Teacher. She is author of Literacy Theory as Practice: Connecting Theory and Instruction in K-12 Classrooms (2016), and in 2021 she was named Outstanding University Researcher at Illinois State.
Hansen	Jacquelyn		My name is Jacquelyn Hansen and I am an ESL Teacher Leader in the Department of Bilingual Multicultural Education at Milwaukee Public Schools. I have earned a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and I have nearly 20 years of teaching experience between the Bilingual and ESL fields. In my current placement as an ESL Teacher Leader, I provide support and guidance for ESL specialists around English Language Development.
Harper	Rebecca G		Associate Professor of Literacy and Director of the Augusta University Writing Project

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Hartwell	Michael		Education Engagement Specialist, PBS Wisconsin Education
Herrera	Dr. Luz Yadira		Luz Yadira Herrera, Ph.D. is a teacher, researcher, author, and co-founder of the En Comunidad Collective. Dr. Herrera has over sixteen years of experience in the education of emergent bilinguals in both mainstream and bilingual settings. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Bilingual Education in the School of Education at California State University, Channel Islands. Dr. Herrera's teaching and research are in culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, translanguaging, critical pedagogies, and bilingual education policy. She is the co-author of En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students with Dr. Carla España.
Hochholzer	Nicole		Literacy Coach/Reading Teacher/Kaukauna High School/Kaukauna Area School District
Hollnagel	Jacob		Educational Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Irby	Dr. Decoteau		Decoteau Irby is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies where he teaches and advises in the College's Urban Education Leadership program area. He researches equity-focused school leadership as a lever to improve Black children's academic and socio-emotional experiences and outcomes.
Jaackel-Rodriguez	Kari		Senior Lecturer in the Reading and Study Skills Center, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Jago	Carol		Carol Jago has a longtime English teacher and associate director of the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA. She served as president of the National Council of Teachers of English and currently serves on the ILA executive board.
Jensen	Julie		Reading Specialist in the Hayward Community School District.
Johnson	Latricia		Latricia is a Curriculum, Coaching & Continuous Improvement Consultant. She worked most recently in Milwaukee Public Schools as a District School Improvement Coordinator and has worked in the Beloit and West Allis/West Milwaukee School Districts. She has extensive experience providing educational leadership support services that focus on planning, developing frameworks, models and implementation strategies that support equity for all children.

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Jorgensen	Elizabeth		English Teacher, Arrowhead Union High School
Kamps	Teresa		8th grade ELA Teacher, Baraboo School District- 27 years, MS Advanced Learner Coach, Baraboo School District, 2020 Kohl Teacher Fellowship Recipient
Kelly	Katie		Katie Kelly is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Literacy Graduate Program at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. As a former teacher and literacy coach, Katie's teaching and research interests include engaging children in meaningful literacy experiences and practices to foster lifelong literacy, equity, and justice.
King	Ryan		Teacher Leader for K-5 Science, Madison Metropolitan School District. Former elementary teacher and field biologist.
Kissel	Brian		Brian Kissel is a writer, reader, and teacher. An educator for 25 years, he is a professor of literacy and director of Elementary Education at Vanderbilt University. He holds a PhD in education from the University of Virginia. A former elementary school teacher and literacy coach, Brian teaches courses, conducts research, and provides professional development in writing instruction, digital literacy, and literacy development and instruction. He is the author of When Writers Drive the Workshop and co-author of the Literacy Coach's Companion, What's New in Literacy Teaching, and Perspectives and Provocations in Early Childhood Education. Brian lives in Franklin, Tennessee with his wife Hattie and three children: Charlie, Ben, and Harriet.
Kleinrock	Liz		Liz Kleinrock (she/her) is a Korean-American, queer, Jewish, antiracist and antiracist educator of both children and adults, and creates curriculum for K-12 students, specializing in designing inquiry based units of study. In addition to her work as a classroom teacher, Liz also works with schools and companies to facilitate learning for adults that supports antiracist and antiracist practices. In 2018, Liz received the Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching, and in 2019 delivered her TED Talk, "How to teach kids to talk about taboo topics." In the spring of 2021, Liz released her first book, Start Here, Start Now: A Guide to Antiracist and Antiracist Work in Your School Community with Heinemann Publishing, and is excited to announce the publication of four upcoming children's books with HarperCollins. She currently teaches and resides in Washington DC with her partner and two bunnies.
Knezel	Sherrill		Art Educator, Wauwatosa School District Sherrill Knezel is a K-12 Art Educator and graphic recorder in the Wauwatosa School District since 1992. She leads PD on visual literacy/visual note taking in school districts and community organizations as a means to enhance communication, comprehension, clarity, and collaboration. Sherrill recently gave a TEDx talk entitled, "Sketchnoting: Using Listening & Drawing To Change The World" She uses her graphic recording to support local and national organizations doing work around education, equity, inclusion, and social justice. Her mission is to share sketchnoting as a powerful literacy tool with the world!
Knutson	Tom		Assistant Professor, Carroll University










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Kopp	Laurie		Laurie Kopp is a retired K-8 Reading Resource and classroom teacher from the School District of Holmen. She holds a masters degree in Reading from UWL. Additionally Laurie was a National Board Certified Teacher (2007-2017) in Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Pre K-12. Watercolor painting has become her retirement passion.
Laird	Jennifer		RtI Coordinator/Literacy Coach
Laundrie	Amy		Retired 4th grade elementary teacher; SCBWI member; author of children's fiction
Lecy	Vanessa		3rd Grade, Coleman Elementary School
Lee	Ronda		Principal of the Hayward Intermediate School
Lee	Carol		Edwina S. Tarry Professor Emerita, School of Education and Social Policy Northwestern University
Lindgren	Merri		Librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)
Martinez Neal	Juana		Juana Martinez-Neal is the daughter and granddaughter of painters. Alma and How She Got Her Name was her first book as author-illustrator. She is the New York Times bestselling illustrator recipient of a Caldecott Honor, a Sibert Medal and a Pura Belpré Medal for Illustration. Juana was born in Peru, and lives in Connecticut with her family.
McCarty Plucker,	Jennifer		Literacy Consultant and Director, Mackin Learning








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McMahon	Jane		Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, Baraboo School District
Meurer	Patricia		PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Library Media, Principal/Administrator, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator
Miller	Donalyn		A teacher of upper elementary and middle school students in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and was a finalist for 2011 Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year. In her popular book, <i>The Book Whisperer</i> , Donalyn reflects on her journey to become a reading teacher and describes how she inspires and motivates her middle school students to read 40 or more books a year. In her latest book, <i>Reading in the Wild</i> , Donalyn collects responses from 900 adult readers and uses this information to teach lifelong reading habits to her students. Donalyn co-founded the community blog, <i>The Nerdy Book Club</i> and co-hosts the monthly Twitter chat #titletalk. Her articles about teaching and reading have appeared in publications such as <i>Education Week Teacher</i> , <i>The Reading Teacher</i> , <i>Educational Leadership</i> , and <i>The Washington Post</i> . Donalyn serves as Scholastic Book Fairs' Manager of Independent Reading and Outreach.
Minor	Cornelius		Cornelius Minor is a Brooklyn-based educator and part-time Pokemon trainer. He works with teachers, school leaders, and leaders of community-based organizations to support equitable literacy reform in cities (and sometimes villages) across the globe. His latest book, <i>We Got This</i> , explores how the work of creating more equitable school spaces is embedded in our everyday choices — specifically in the choice to really listen to kids. Cornelius has been featured in <i>Education Week</i> , <i>Brooklyn Magazine</i> , and <i>Teaching Tolerance Magazine</i> . He has partnered with The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, The New York City Department of Education, The International Literacy Association, Scholastic, and Lesley University's Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative. Out of Print, a documentary featuring Cornelius, made its way around the film festival circuit, and he has been a featured speaker at conferences all over the world. He is a dedicated Hip hop fan, and on some evenings, you can find him online saving the universe with his PlayStation or on paper saving the realm in <i>Dungeons & Dragons</i> .
Moga	Neva		Instructional Technology Supervisor, Milwaukee Public Schools
Moncrief	Takisha		A career educator, Dr. Takisha Moncrief has taught elementary students, coached teachers, and provided individualized support as a reading specialist. She has successfully led curriculum development teams, directed school improvement efforts, and coordinated district-wide professional development in Wisconsin, Arkansas, and Texas. Dr. Moncrief continues to promote education as the great equalizer offering literacy and leadership solutions as a consultant and coach through her company Step Up Education. Most recently, she launched an online tutoring network, Step Up Tutors, at the onset of the pandemic. Dr. Moncrief hails from Milwaukee, WI and currently lives in Dallas, TX. Together with her husband, NBA Hall of Famer Sidney Moncrief, she co-manages their nonprofit, Moncrief Game Changer, and Moncrief One Team, another professional development company serving youth and adults alike.
Moncrief	Sydney		Sidney Moncrief is a five-time NBA All-Star, five-time NBA All-Defensive team, a two-time NBA Defensive Player of the Year, an NBA All-Pro, and a 2019 Naismith Hall of Fame Inductee. He is a former NCAA Division I head coach (ULAR) and NBA assistant coach (Dallas Mavericks, Golden State Warriors, Milwaukee Bucks). Moncrief also led an international team as head consultant in Beijing, China. He served on the board of directors for a Fortune 500 company and as president of multiple retail auto dealerships. Hall of Famer Sidney Moncrief is a sought-after inspirational speaker who engages crowds with his stories of triumph and grit as a pro basketball player and businessman. Moncrief is managing partner of Moncrief One Team, founder of Moncrief Game Changer 501(c)(3), and the author of nine books.
Moses	Lindsey		Lindsey Moses is an associate professor of literacy education at Arizona State University and a Heinemann author and consultant. A former elementary teacher, Lindsey works with classroom teachers across the country and internationally supporting the implementation of effective literacy instruction. She conducts ongoing classroom-based research on elementary literacy instruction in diverse classroom settings. Lindsey brings her classroom and research experience together to provide practical, research-based instructional ideas for teachers in her books and presentations. Her latest books include <i>What Are the REST of My Kids Doing?</i> <i>Fostering Independence in the K-2 Reading Workshop</i> and <i>Supporting English Learners in the Reading Workshop</i> .

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Mouw	Tamara		Tamara Mouw, MAHRM & MS Ed., focuses on creating equitable working and learning environments as the Director of Operations, Innovation, & Strategic Partnership at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. She is also an adjunct instructor at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin, where she teaches reading courses and co-coordinates the language and literacy program.
O'Connell	Susan		Susan O'Connell has years of experience as an elementary classroom teacher, reading specialist, math coach, district school improvement specialist, and math speaker/consultant. She is the author of numerous books that support the teaching of K-5 mathematics including Putting the Practices Into Action (Heinemann, 2013) and Mastering the Basic Math Facts (Heinemann, 2011). Sue is the lead author of Heinemann's Math in Practice series (2016), as well as their newly-released Math by the Book series (2021), and is particularly focused on instructional practices that support the development of mathematical thinking. She is a frequent speaker at state and national conferences and is Director of Quality Teacher Development, providing on-site professional learning opportunities for teachers in school districts across the country.
Ochonogor	Celeste		Writing Curriculum Specialist, Milwaukee Public Schools
Ortiz	Liznette		Liznette Ortiz is an experienced and knowledgeable special education teacher. Most recently a K4 classroom teacher she believes getting to know students and their families yields extremely positive results in behavior and early literacy skills. Liznette also has a degree in administrative leadership.
Payne Smart	Maya		Maya Payne Smart helps parents and educators nurture, teach, and advocate for children on the road to reading with support from her book Reading for Our Lives: A Literacy Action Plan from Birth to Six. Her website, MayaSmart.com, publishes new book lists, literacy activities, and other free family resources weekly to help parents play their dual roles as first teachers and educational advocates. She holds a master's degree in journalism from the Medill School at Northwestern University and a bachelor's in social studies with honors from Harvard University. She serves as affiliated faculty in Educational Policy and Leadership in the College of Education at Marquette University.
Pelle	Amy		English, Speech & Theatre Teacher with additional Literacy Coaching responsibilities at Rice Lake High School, Rice Lake, WI
Perkins	Mitali		Mitali Perkins (mitaliperkins.com) has written many books for young readers, including You Bring the Distant Near (nominated for a National Book Award) and Rickshaw Girl (adapted into a film by Sleeperwave Productions), all of which explore crossing different kinds of borders. Her goal is to make readers laugh or cry, preferably both, as long as their hearts are widening. She lives and writes in the San Francisco Bay Area.
Peterson	Bruce		Principal, Westby Area School District
Peterson	Chris		MS. Education. Independent Educational Consultant

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Piebenga	Kristy		I have been in the education field for almost 20 years in various roles--a classroom teacher, university professor, conference presenter, and school consultant. As a teacher and researcher, I am interested in theories and research that promote the development of students' literate identities. My work has focused on the social nature of literacy and its application to best practice in the classroom. I am the Director of the Master of Education in Literacy program at Judson University and teach courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. I enjoy working with teachers to evaluate current assessment practices and design effective and authentic methods of assessing students and too implement affective elements of literacy instruction to increase motivation and interest in students who are reluctant to engage in reading and writing. I continues to participate in schools by working with teachers in the classroom to develop strategies for building readers and writers.
Pipp	Merideth		Meredith Pipp started her journey in education 15 years ago. She has worked in a variety of grade levels and populations. She began her career in fourth grade, moved on to the preschool level, and is currently a second grade teacher at Niagara Elementary. Mrs. Pipp prides herself on making relationships with students and using these relationships to foster a positive classroom climate. Mrs. Pipp works closely with Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Zychowski in identifying students in need of interventions. Mrs. Pipp also works closely with her students to perform classroom interventions for struggling learners.
Pranikoff	Kara		DEI and Literacy Coach
Qarooni	Nawal		Nawal Qarooni is an educator and writer who works in education spaces to support a holistic model of literacy instruction. She and her team of coaches at NQC Literacy work with teachers and school leaders to grow a love of reading and composition in ways that exalt the whole child, their cultural capital and their intrinsic curiosities. She is the proud daughter of immigrants, and mothering her four young kids shapes her understanding of teaching and learning. Nawal's first book about family literacy with Heinemann is forthcoming in 2023. She is a graduate of University of Michigan and attended Syracuse University for her first master's degree in journalism, and transitioned from newspaper reporting to education as a New York City Teaching Fellow.
Renwick	Matt		Matt Renwick is a PK-5 principal for the Mineral Point Unified School District in Wisconsin. He has served in public education for over 20 years – as a 5th and 6th grade teacher in a country school outside of Wisconsin Rapids; a junior high dean of students; and an assistant principal with athletic director duties. Matt's latest book, with a foreword by Regie Routman, is <i>Leading Like a C.O.A.C.H. 5 Strategies for Supporting Teaching and Learning</i> (Corwin, 2022). You can subscribe to his popular free Read by Example newsletter (and explore the archives) at his website. Follow him on Twitter @ReadByExample.
Ristau	Stacy		A first grade teacher at Janssen Elementary, in Kimberly Area School District. I received my bachelor's degree from UW- Green Bay. I double majored in Elementary Education (Emphasis in Early Childhood and Middle Childhood) and Human Development with a minor in Psychology. This is my tenth year at Janssen. (first grade for eight years and second grade for two years). I am a certified ERE interventionist. For the past year I took on a unique role as a first grade literacy teacher for half of the day and an interventionist in the afternoon. Currently, I am pursuing a Masters degree in Literacy and Language from UW-Oshkosh. In my spare time, I love reading and spending time with my husband, my 3 month old, and two black kitties.
Rosengren	Gayle		Former Youth Services Assistant in public library; research assistant in American Girl library; author of 2 Middle grade historical fiction novels published by Putnam/Penguin;
Ryder	Kelly		Director of Curriculum and Programs in the Hayward Community School District
Scherrer	Rachel		Rachel Scherrer is a professional development specialist in literacy at CESA #1. She is a dynamic and seasoned educator with a passion for literacy and innovation in the classroom. Rachel brings over 23 years experience of both classroom teaching and instructional coaching across all K - 12 grade levels. She has lectured on the integration of the arts into content-area classrooms at the undergraduate level at Mount Mary College and Alverno College.

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Schliesman	Megan		CCBC Assistant Director
Schroeder	Darla		Darla Schroeder - Library Media Specialist/Tech Integrator, Westby Area School District
Schu	John		Bio from website: John Schu has made a career out of advocating for the people and things he cares about most: kids, books, and the people who connect them. He is the children's librarian for Bookelicious and the author of <i>This Is a School</i> (Candlewick, 2022) illustrated by Veronica Miller Jamison, <i>This Is a Story</i> (Candlewick, 2023) illustrated by Caldecott Honor artist Lauren Castillo, and <i>The Gift of Story: Exploring the Affective Side of the Reading Life</i> (Stenhouse, 2022). He's currently revising <i>Louder Than Hunger</i> , a novel-in-verse for middle school readers. John Schu lives in Naperville, Illinois
Scoville	Mike		K-12 Library Media Specialist, Fish Creek WI
Serafini	Dr. Frank		Frank is currently a Professor of Literacy Education and Children's Literature in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. Frank has published eleven professional development textbooks with Heinemann, Scholastic, and Teachers College Press. His newest book entitled <i>Beyond the Visual: An Introduction to Researching Multimodal Phenomena</i> will be available in early 2022 from Teachers College Press. Frank has garnered numerous awards for his teaching and research including the Distinguished Professor of Children's Literature from the International Literacy Association and the Distinguished Educator Award from the International Visual Literacy Association. Frank's current research projects include materiality and interactivity in movable picturebooks, the semiotic resources of wine labels, young children's multimodal compositions, and the roles of monsters in children's literature. Frank's interests include traveling, playing guitar, cooking, photographing nature, wine tasting, visiting museums, and listening to music.
Sharp	Colby		I am a fifth grade teacher in Parma, Michigan. My wife and I have five children (Breslin, Dharia, Adelai, Hobbes, and Harvey). Helping kids find the books that help them fall in love with reading brings me tremendous joy. I have been a classroom teacher since 2006. In 2011, I started the Nerdy Book Club blog with my friend Donalyn Miller. I co-host The Yarn podcast with Teacher Librarian Travis Jonker. I also serve on the Nerd Camp Michigan team. Nerd Camp is a free literacy event that takes place in Parma, Michigan each summer.
Smith	Megen		Megen has been in education for eighteen years, working as both a classroom teacher and reading specialist. She received her master's degree as a K-12 Reading Specialist in 2009 and has served as a classroom teacher in first through third grades. For the past seven years, she has been Niagara's reading specialist, working with students and staff to deepen understanding of literacy development. She is passionate about early literacy, a professional interest that began after completing training to become a Reading Recovery teacher early in her career. Megen loves to read anything she can get her hands on, and children's literature is her reading home.
Smith	Dr. Antony		Dr. Antony Smith is an associate professor in the School of Educational Studies at the University of Washington, Bothell, where he teaches courses in teacher education, research methods, and literacy assessment and instruction. His current research projects focus on the intersection of reading and mathematics and how exploring children's literature can help deepen comprehension, develop vocabulary knowledge, and increase motivation and engagement for children to become lifelong readers.
Stieber-White	Kim		CESA 2 Curriculum, Coaching and Digital Learning Consultant






WSRA 2023 Conference Speakers

Last	First		Speaker Biographies
Thew	Brittany		First grade teacher, Necedah Area School District, Co-chair WSRA New & Preseervice Teacher committee
Thielen	Molly		1st Grade Teacher, Audubon Elementary School, Dubuque Community School District
Thom	Lisa		Lisa Arenas Thom is a professional development specialist and Title Coordinator at CESA #1 in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. After spending 4 years in administration as a principal, Lisa has served as a classroom teacher, Reading Specialist and District Reading Coordinator before coming to CESA #1. She has also taught courses related to literacy development at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and UW-Milwaukee, Concordia University, and Cardinal Stritch University.
Thomas	Paul		P. L. Thomas, Professor of Education (Furman University), taught high school English for 18 years in South Carolina before moving to teacher education and teaching first-year writing. He is author of How to End the Reading War and Serve the Literacy Needs of All Students: A Primer for Parents, Policy Makers, and People Who Care (IAP). Follow him at http://radicalsolarship.wordpress.com/ and @plthomasEdD.
Twombly	Stephanie		4th grade teacher: former 4K, 5K, 1st, and 2nd grade teacher
Ulatowski	Lauren		Reading Teacher, West Allis West Milwaukee School District
Umar	Mallory		Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Racine Unified School District
Uppena	Micki		Elementary Library Media Specialist, Mineral Point Unified School District
Van Haren	Katie		4th & 5th Grade Social Studies Teacher

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Vande Zande	Steve		Steve Vande Zande, an Arts Integration Teacher Leader for Milwaukee Public Schools, helps to develop arts integrated classrooms across the district, through professional development, mentoring, curriculum design, and strategic planning. Prior to this position, he worked as a Program Implementer and Visual Art teacher in public schools. Vande Zande holds a BFA in the areas of Art Education from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a MS Educational Policy and Leadership and studio art from Bank Street College of Education and Parsons the New School For Design. In his current studio practice, Vande Zande works as a printmaker. Currently he teaches a course on Arts Integration at Marquette University.
Vu	Dr. Don		Dr. Don Vu has been an elementary school teacher and principal for 24 years. Don and his former school staff chartered a literacy campaign in 2013 to foster the love of reading in all students. In 2017, he received the Celebrate Literacy Award from the California Reading Association (CRA) for his outstanding leadership in literacy. In 2018, his school was one of five schools nationally to receive the Exemplary Reading Program Award from the International Literacy Association (ILA). In 2020, the school received the California Distinguished School Award for its work in closing the opportunity gap for all kids. Most recently in 2022, he received a 2nd Celebrate Literacy Award from the California Reading Association for his book and his continual advocacy of underrepresented students and families. He understands the challenges children face when learning a new language and culture, having fled Vietnam with his family in 1975. He also knows that reading can be transformative and life-changing. Don continues to spread the message that literacy can change the world through his work with state and national literacy organizations as well as his writing in publications such as Edutopia and Scholastic. He currently serves on the national advisory boards of Scholastic Book Fairs and the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program. His book, Life, Literacy, and the Pursuit of Happiness, is a call to action for all educators who want to build a school culture of literacy to empower all students as they pursue their American Dream.
Wabiszewski	Amy		Literacy Coach, Whitnall School District
Wagner	Randi		Randi Wagner, an Arts Integration Teacher Leader for Milwaukee Public Schools, helps to develop arts integrated classrooms across the district, through professional development, mentoring, curriculum design, and strategic planning. Prior to this position, she worked with grades kindergarten through twelve as a visual art teacher in public schools. Wagner holds a BFA in the areas of Art Education and Art Therapy from Alverno College. In her current studio, Wagner works as a fiber artist.
Wemette	Rhonda		Rhonda Wemette - Second Grade Teacher, Westby Area School District
Whitfield	Dr. Pam		Pam Whitfield, PhD, CeRT. Professor of English and Humanities, Rochester Comm & Tech College; MnSCU Educator of the Year, 2010; Carnegie Professor of the Year for Minnesota, 2011
Wiemer	Liza		Liza Wiemer is an award-winning educator with over twenty-five years of teaching experience. Her second young adult novel, The Assignment, was published by Delacorte Press and has received numerous honors, including being named a 2021 Sydney Taylor Notable Book. To date, The Assignment has also been published in Russian, Polish, Italian, and Korean. Liza has had two adult nonfiction books published, several short stories included in the New York Times bestselling Small Miracles series, and a picture book, which will be published fall 2023. A graduate of UW-Madison, Liza has two married sons and lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with her husband, Jim. Visit lizawiemer.com for more information.
Wilhelm	Jeffrey		A full time classroom teacher for 15 years, Jeff Wilhelm is currently Distinguished Professor of English Education at Boise State, director of the Boise State Writing Project and a teacher of middle and high schoolers each spring. He has authored 42 texts, mostly about literacy teaching, including: the NCTE Promising Research Award winner "You Gotta BE the Book" and the Russell Awards for Distinguished Research for both "Reading Don't Fix No Chevys" and for Reading Unbound: Promoting the Power of Pleasure Reading. His last two books, PLANNING POWERFUL INSTRUCTION: 7 MUST MAKE MOVES OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING (grades 2-5 and 6-11) summarize how research from across the learning sciences can be operationalized through the mental model of EMPOWER. His latest project is on how to prepare learners to notice and deal with information pollution and fake news in all its forms.
Williams	Dr. Jeffery		Jeff is the RR Teacher Leader-in-Residence at The Ohio State University and an active RR Teacher Leader in Solon, Ohio. He served RRCNA as President and on the Board from 2013-present. Jeff presents at international and national conferences and consults in districts across the country. He has co-authored and contributed to professional books, been published in numerous professional journals, and authored 120 books for Hameray.

WSRA 2023 Conference Speakers

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Wong	Janet		Janet Wong is a graduate of Yale Law School and a former lawyer. She has written more than 35 books for children on a wide variety of subjects, including chess (Alex and the Wednesday Chess Club) and yoga (TWIST: Yoga Poems). She is the 2021 winner of the NCTE Excellence in Poetry for Children Award, a lifetime achievement award that is one of the highest honors a children's poet can receive. Janet is also the co-founder of Pomelo Books, an indie publishing company whose last several books have donated 100% of the profits to charity. Learn more about her at JanetWong.com and PomeloBooks.com .
Zarling	Deb		Debra Zarling has been an educator for over 40 years, most recently serving as the PK-5 Literacy Coordinator for the Oshkosh Area School District in Wisconsin and site coordinator for the Valley Area Reading Recovery Consortium prior to her retirement in 2021. In addition to her role as a district Reading Specialist, she has also been a classroom teacher, Title I Teacher, Reading Recovery Teacher, and school level Reading Specialist as well as an ad hoc instructor for the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. She holds a Master Educator License as a Reading Specialist and is currently President of the Wisconsin State Reading Association and a former RRCNA Board Member. She has presented at numerous conferences and workshops locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, including for the Wisconsin State Reading Association, the International Literacy Association, and the Reading Recovery Council of North America.
Zignego	Mona		Mona Zignego PhD is a professional development specialist in literacy and data analysis at CESA #1 (Cooperative Education Service Agency). Her work is multifaceted encompassing coaching, teaching, modeling, presenting, and consulting. Before joining CESA #1, she was a teacher for over 25 years working with all ages from preschool through adults. Mona has taught literacy courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at Cardinal Stritch University, Mount Mary University, and Concordia University. Mona's research on teacher literacy education won the 2020 Pat Bricker Memorial Scholarship Research Award and her published research can be seen in such journals as AERA and Currere.
Zoeller	Emily		Emily Zoeller, Ed.D., is an assistant professor of education at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin. She coordinates the language and literacy program for ESL, bilingual, and reading teacher preparation. Her research examines equitable literacy instruction of multilingual learners, focusing on how teachers develop strength-based, language-focused pedagogy.
Zychowski	Sarah		Sarah has been in education for 17 years. She began her career as a paraprofessional, and is now an cross-categorical special education teacher. She excels in building rapport with the toughest kids while maintaining a safe learning space. Sarah collaborates with classroom teachers and interventionists to meet her students where they are. She was instrumental in developing Niagara's Badger Backpacks, a program to ensure students have food over weekends and breaks. She loves her students with her whole heart and is an excellent resource for staff development related to all things special education.