

2026 WSRA Conference

Embracing the Challenge Together: Achieving the Joy of Literacy for All



February 5-6, 2026

Baird Center, Milwaukee, WI

WSRA... providing leadership, advocacy, and expertise.



WSRA 2026 Conference Planning Committee

Conference Chair



Jacqueline Witter-Easley

Program



Kris Baker

Exhibits



Tom Leis

Book Sales



Kerry Niemuth

Registration



Teri Lassig

Hospitality



Jenni Russ

WE CONNECT ON NATIVE LAND

"We acknowledge in Milwaukee that we are on traditional Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk and Menominee homeland along the southwest shores of Michigami, North America's largest system of freshwater lakes, where the Milwaukee, Menominee and Kinnickinnic rivers meet and the people of Wisconsin's sovereign Anishinaabe, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Oneida and Mohican nations remain present."

-Electa Quinney Institute UWM

USDAC.US/NATIVELAND

Visit the website to learn more...





A Word From Our President and Conference Chair

WSRA 2025-2026
President



Ryanne Deschane

Dear Friends of WSRA,

“Embracing the Challenge Together: Achieving the Joy of Literacy for All.” What a wonderful message from this year’s theme, centering JOY at the heart of literacy instruction and acknowledging that it takes a community. Classroom teachers, principals, librarians, special education staff, parents, administrators, and reading specialists all play a role in developing the literate lives of our student populations. How lucky are they that you have chosen to gather with us in Milwaukee to continue our learning together!

Jackie Easley, this year’s conference chair, along with her conference planning committee, have created a conference lineup that offers you access to a robust team of experts in the field of literacy. The sessions embrace the ongoing comprehensive body of scientific research that advocates for literacy practices which allow all students to be seen, heard, and understood in their full humanity as they make strides in their literacy learning. Yes, there are state and federal mandates to adhere to, but better understanding the sciences of reading research helps guide the moral and ethical responsibilities of ensuring all students become literate citizens.

WSRA is celebrating seventy years of providing professional development through conferences, committees, local councils, retreats, institutes, and leadership meetings. We recognize that literacy is complex and requires a comprehensive, responsive approach. We stand proudly in our mission to serve you. We welcome you to join us not only at the conference, but also through membership, so that you can take full advantage of our literacy community and our resources.

Respectfully,
Ryanne Deschane
2025-2026 WSRA President

WSRA 2026
Conference Chair



**Jacqueline
Witter-Easley**

Dear WSRA Members and Friends,

Welcome to our celebration of literacy for all! Through your attendance at this year’s conference, you will engage in energized conversations that are meant to inspire and inform us all in our quest to elevate each student’s literacy experiences in our classrooms and communities. We are teaching in challenging times, and it is my hope that your presence at this conference will bring opportunities to collaborate and network with friends, colleagues, and new literacy allies. This is the central message of our theme: embracing the challenge together so we can truly achieve the joy of literacy for *all* of our students.

As the 2026 Wisconsin State Reading Association Conference Chair, I am honored to welcome you to our conference. My committee and I have invited a plethora of highly-esteemed literacy experts who will lead us in learning, strategizing, and critiquing all domains of literacy, while lifting our hearts and spirits along the way. It is my sincere hope that you’ll leave our conference with not only a smile, but also a renewed determination to infuse your new knowledge into your literacy lessons with joy. Through your desire to continue learning and growing, you’ve set aside precious time to attend our conference; I thank you for your profound dedication to your students’ success in their literacy development.

In Joyful Kinship,
Jacqueline Witter-Easley
2026 WSRA Conference Chair



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Wisconsin State Reading Association

Mission, Beliefs, and Goals



WSRA's Mission:

The Wisconsin State Reading Association provides leadership, advocacy, and professional learning for implementing effective literacy practices, understanding the complex nature of literacy, honoring the unique needs of our diverse students, and engaging them to apply their literacies in meaningful ways in a changing world.

WSRA's Beliefs:

Expertise Matters. Research Grounds Us.

Literacy is a complex process requiring a comprehensive approach and a mindset shift.

WSRA's Goals:

- ❖ **Advocacy:** Develop tools, strategies, and interest to motivate WSRA members to engage in advocacy efforts to improve literacy research, policy, and practices that best serve students, families, and educators.
- ❖ **Professional Development:** Promote professional growth opportunities for educators, administrators, families, and community members.
- ❖ **Communication:** Provide leadership in addressing issues and trends in literacy to inform educators, administrators, families, and community members.
- ❖ **Partnership:** Create partnerships that foster literacy in the home, school, community, and workplace.
- ❖ **Membership:** Develop and strengthen an active and diverse membership.
Join: www.wsra.org/member-benefits WSRA members receive the WSRA *Journal*, WSRA *Update*, and reduced registration fees for institutes and conferences. (Standard Membership is \$45 per year; Retiree is \$25 per year; Undergraduate is \$10 per year).
- ❖ **Research:** Promote and disseminate research findings that will strengthen and support the best practices for instruction and assessment in literacy.
Check out <https://www.wsra.org/awards> and the Research Scholarship Award, and apply for the Pat Bricker Memorial Research Scholarship.

The Wisconsin State Reading Association extends its appreciation to all who contributed to the success of this annual conference. Contact WSRA via email at wsra@wsra.org or 262-825-7109.



Planning Your Visit

Session Attendance

Fire code does not permit standing in the back of the room or sitting on the floor. Please be mindful about leaving items unattended in conference rooms. WSRA is not responsible for lost or stolen items.



Facilities and American Disabilities Act Notification

The WSRA conference will be held at the Baird Center at 400 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53203. Please notify WSRA of ADA or other special requests via the online registration form.

Questions? Please contact WSRA via email at wsra@wsra.org or 262-825-7109.

For FAQ's visit

<https://bit.ly/45zOsZI>



WSRA is dedicated to providing a professional, safe, and harassment-free environment for all.

All attendees must be registered and have a WSRA Conference name tag visible at all times when at the Baird Center.

Security and Safety at the Baird Center

Security has always been a high priority for the Baird Center, and remains so, now more than ever. The Baird Center's Public Safety Department has a very close working relationship with local, state and federal law enforcement, public safety and emergency management officials, and their security operations are continuously reviewed and improved. They provide 24 hour fire watch and building security. No one other than an on-duty law enforcement officer may possess a weapon on Baird Center premises. Anyone found to possess a weapon may be reported and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Lost and Found is located at the WSRA Registration Desk

Hotel Room Block

WSRA has hotel room blocks **with conference rates** at:



DoubleTree Milwaukee Downtown

(611 W Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee)

Call 414-273-2950

Or go to <http://bit.ly/4muDxc1>



Hyatt Regency Milwaukee

(333 W Kilbourn Ave, Milwaukee)

Call 414-276-1234

Or go to <https://bit.ly/41xFbj>



For information about parking in Milwaukee:

<https://spothero.com/>



<https://bairdcenter.com/attendees/parking/>

'Visit Milwaukee' offers an abundance of information on places to visit, things to do, and events happening in the Milwaukee area. Check out their website for more information on how to make your time in Milwaukee even more memorable.

www.visitmilwaukee.com



Visit the Exhibitors



Happy Hour!

Thursday Feb. 5

3:30 to 5:00 pm

*Explore the Exhibit Hall
while enjoying a
complimentary drink and
snacks!*

Exhibit Hall Ballroom A/B Hours

Thursday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm

Friday 7:30 am - 2:15 pm



Ahrens Education Group

Books and Company

Carroll University

Capstone~PebbleGo/Maris Associates

Crossland Literacy

Educators Credit Union

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Loyola Press

Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center

Rethinking Schools

Sadlier School

Savvas Learning Company

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators -Wisconsin

UW-La Crosse Professional Studies in Education

UW-Milwaukee, College of Community Engagement & Professions

UW-Stevens Point School of Education

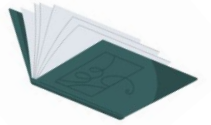
WEA Academy-Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC)

Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library

WSRA Membership

And More To Come!

Conference Schedule



Check-in at the Registration Desk Baird Center ~ 400 W. Wisconsin Avenue ~ Milwaukee WI

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm **Thursday, February 5, 2026** 7:00 am - 4:00 pm
Friday, February 6, 2026 7:00 am - 4:00 pm

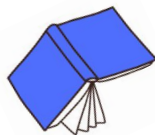
Schedule for Thursday, February 5 at WSRA 2026

<u>Start time</u>	<u>End time</u>	<u>What's Happening</u>	<u>Location</u>
8:00 am	8:30 am	Welcome	Ballroom CD
8:30 am	9:30 am	Keynote Address	Ballroom CD
9:45 am	11:00 am	Breakout Session A	See At-A-Glance
11:15 am	12:30 pm	Breakout Session B	See At-A-Glance
12:30 pm	2:00 pm	Lunch/Exhibits	1st Floor
1:15 pm	2:00 pm	Book Signing	1st Floor
2:15 pm	3:30 pm	Breakout Session C	See At-A-Glance

Schedule for Friday, February 6 at WSRA 2026

<u>Start time</u>	<u>End time</u>	<u>What's Happening</u>	<u>Location</u>
8:00 am	8:15 am	Welcome	Ballroom CD
8:15 am	8:30 am	Award Ceremony	Ballroom CD
8:30 am	9:30 am	Keynote Address	Ballroom CD
9:45 am	11:00 am	Breakout Session A	See At-A-Glance
11:15 am	12:30 pm	Breakout Session B	See At-A-Glance
12:30 pm	2:00 pm	Lunch/Exhibits	1st Floor
1:15 pm	2:00 pm	Book Signing	1st Floor
2:15 pm	3:30 pm	Breakout Session C	See At-A-Glance





Schedule

8:00-8:30
Welcome-Ballroom CD

8:30-9:30
Keynote Address

9:45-11:00
Breakout Session A

11:15-12:30
Breakout Session B

12:30-2:00
Lunch/Exhibits

1:15-2:00
Book Signing

2:15-3:30
Breakout Session C

Lunch ~ 12:30 pm

Sandwich and Salad Table

Roast Sirloin Of Beef
Sweet onion bacon jam, Boursin cheese, tomatoes, house-made focaccia bread

Roasted Chicken & Cashew Salad
Toasted cashews, red grapes, garden herbs, fresh lemon zest, freshly baked croissant bun (contains nuts)

Vegetable Griller
Grilled zucchini, roasted red pepper, eggplant, garlic hummus, ciabatta bread

Greek Panzanella Salad
Roma tomato, charred red onion, marinated artichoke hearts, cucumber, brioche croutons and feta cheese tossed in oregano vinaigrette

Pesto and Roasted Pepper Orzo Pasta Salad

Avocado Quinoa Salad
With cherry tomatoes, cucumber and cilantro-lime vinaigrette

Chocolate Chip Cookies

*Alternative options will be available for special dietary restrictions, if indicated during conference registration.

Thursday Keynote Address

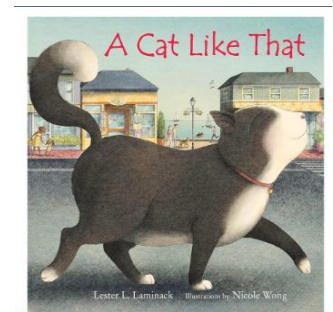
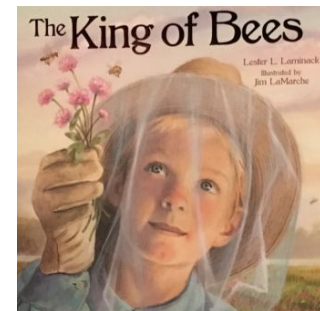
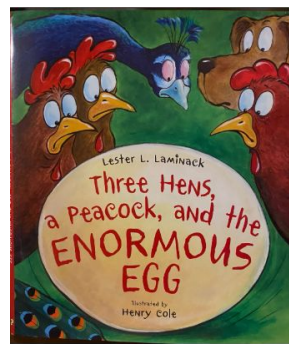
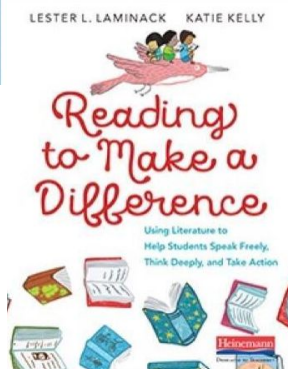
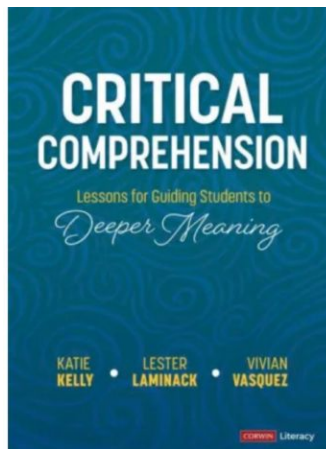
Lester Laminack

Comprehension:

More than Giving the Right Answers to Someone Else's Questions



Comprehension is more than giving the right answers to someone else's questions. It involves engagement and interest, concepts, thought, and language. Comprehension calls upon the reader to question and probe and push back to move forward. It involves weaving all this together to create something new for the reader, something that leaves them changed.



Thursday Featured Speakers



**Kathryn
Champeau**



**Dr. Sonja
Cherry-Paul**



**Linda
Christensen**



**Dr. Catherine
Compton-Lilly**



**Dr. Rachel
Gabriel**



**Antero Garcia,
Ph.D.**



**Dean Marcelle
Haddix**



**Dr. Emily
Hines**



Carol Jago



**Lester
Laminack**



**Merri
Lindgren**



**Deborah
MacPhee**



Brett Pierce



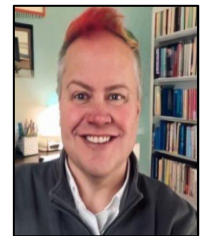
Stef Wade



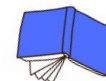
**Dr. Jeffrey D.
Wilhelm**



**Jeff
Williams**



**Dr. Michael
J. Young**



Embracing the Challenge Together: Achieving the Joy of Literacy for All

Expert Panel Discussion with Linda Christensen, Antero Garcia, Marcelle Haddix, Lester Laminack, Jeff Williams, and Kathryn Champeau

Literacy for all, a valued right in an increasingly complex world, is a compelling quest sought after by educators, parents, students, community members, researchers, policymakers, legislators, and journalists. Spanning generations, numerous literacy professionals and non-experts have devoted countless hours to this issue, communicating facts and research, debating ideas, countering misinformation, and offering differing opinions in a variety of media formats.

These formats include countless books, extensive research published in journals and reports; opinion pieces posted on blogs and in newspapers; prime time television documentaries and newscasts, movies, radio shows, podcasts, and webinars aired to large and small media markets; and a steady stream of “new and improved” literacy curricula marketed by for-profit companies to school districts, policymakers, legislators, and special interest groups. Across the country, policymakers and legislators responded by mandating increasingly more restrictive literacy policies and legislation.

And yet, here we are. Are we closer to or further removed from our literacy for all quest? Is this simply a lofty goal or a doable reality?

Where is the joy of literacy, and importantly, where is the JOY, and, for whom does it matter?

Our panel of distinguished and diverse educators will engage in honest conversations around these and other questions, sharing their insights, recommendations, and powerful stories of what supports, promotes, erodes, and prevents, but most importantly, what gives us hope for achieving the joy of literacy for all.



Linda Christensen has taught high school language arts in Portland, Oregon, for almost 40 years and currently co-teaches an 11th-grade classroom. She is the Director of the Oregon Writing Project at Lewis & Clark College. Linda has authored several books on literacy and the power of the written word. A second edition of her highly acclaimed book, *Teaching for Joy and Justice: Re-imagining the Language Arts Classroom*, published by Rethinking Schools, is currently underway. She received the Fred Hechinger Award for use of research in teaching and writing from the National Writing Project and the U.S. West Outstanding Teacher of Western United States.



Antero Garcia, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University and Vice President of the National Council of Teachers of English. Dr. Garcia was an English teacher at a public high school in South Central Los Angeles. He has authored more than a dozen books about the possibilities of literacies, play, and civics in transforming schooling in America, including *Everyday Advocacy: Teachers Who Change the Literacy Narrative*. Dr. Garcia was awarded the LRA Early Career Award, the Arthur Applebee Award for Excellence in Research on Literacy, the Divergent Award for Excellence in 21st Century Literacies, and the AERA Jan Hawkins Award.



Marcelle Haddix is the Dean of the UW–Madison School of Education and the Karen A. Falk Distinguished Chair of Education. She is a leading scholar in literacy and teacher education, with a particular focus on the experiences of students and teachers of color. Her book, *Cultivating Racial and Linguistic Diversity in Literacy Teacher Education: Teachers Like Me*, received the 2018 Outstanding Book Award from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Dr. Haddix is the recipient of NCTE’s Janet Emig Award for Exemplary Scholarship, and the Divergent Award for Excellence in Literacy Advocacy, Initiative for 21st Century Literacies Research, 2021.



Lester Laminack is Professor Emeritus from the department of Birth-Kindergarten, Elementary and Middle Grades Education at Western Carolina University, where he received two awards for excellence in teaching, the Botner Superior Teaching Award and the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award. He served as co-editor of the NCTE journal *Primary Voices*, editor of the Children’s Book Review Department of the NCTE journal *Language Arts*, teaching editor for the magazine *Teaching K-8*, and wrote the Parent Connection column. He is a former member of the Board of Directors for the Center for the Expansion of Language and Thinking. He now writes full-time and is a literacy consultant.



Jeff Williams has been a teacher of literacy in Ohio schools for over 20 years and currently teaches graduate-level courses as an adjunct professor at the Ohio State University. Jeff served on NCTE’s Executive Committee and chaired several NCTE committees, including the Government Relations Subcommittee. Jeff was one of two national recipients of the Hameray/Yuen Family Foundation Scholarship to pursue an intensive year-long Reading Recovery Teacher Leader training. He has co-authored a book, *Supporting Students in the Time of Common Core Standards: English Language Arts, Grades 3-5*, and written articles in *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent Literacy*, and the *Journal of Staff Development*.



Kathryn Champeau is a Past President of the Wisconsin State Reading Association currently serving as their Legislative Committee Chair and will serve as the panel facilitator.

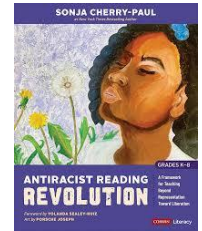


Th-A02 Radical Reading: Applying Critical Lenses To Create Identity-Affirming, Joyful Literacy Instruction

(repeated Th-B)

~*Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul*

Audience: 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist



To deeply comprehend and interpret texts is a critical thinking process powered by students' identities, funds of knowledge, backgrounds, and experiences. Conversations about the science of reading can focus primarily on technical skills of reading such as phonic, decoding fluency, vocabulary. Within this landscape, the work of comprehension, interpretation, and antiracism can be lost along with the goal of cultivating lifelong readers who read for a variety of purposes, including joy. During our time together we'll explore the critical lenses of an antiracist reading framework that guides instruction and supports meaning-making throughout the iterative process of interpretation.

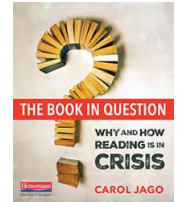


Th-A03 Turning the Page: Reversing the Slide in Reading Achievement

(repeated Th-B)

~*Carol Jago*

Audience: 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist



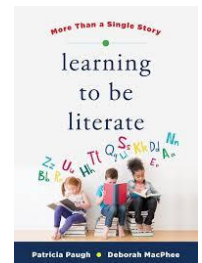
What can teachers do when students balk at doing the reading? Why do so many students have difficulty staying with a book for more than a few minutes? In this workshop Carol Jago will demonstrate instructional moves that can help students increase their stamina and develop greater confidence in themselves as readers. Based upon current research in literacy, the session offers texts and tasks designed to engage today's young readers and improve their comprehension. She will demonstrate methods for increasing reading skill while stimulating students' desire to read. A rigorous curriculum can be a joyful one.



Th-A04 Conflict or Conversation? Research-Informed, Culturally Responsive, and Joyful Literacy Instruction

~*Deborah MacPhee*

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Title 1



In the field of literacy teaching and learning, we find ourselves (once again) in tense political times. Rather than fanning the flames of conflict, let's accept the challenge and engage in dialogue about how research informs our work in classrooms as we create local literacy programs that are culturally responsive and joyful for students and teachers! In this session, we will explore how we can think and act more inclusively to draw on scientific evidence, learner assets, and community resources to support literacy learning and use.





Th-A05 Cultivating the Socially Responsible Digital Voice

~*Brett Pierce, Executive Director, Meridian Stories*

Audience: Administrator, 6-8, 9-12, Digital Technology, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Teacher Educator



Today's students work diligently on developing and maintaining two identities: their biological and their digital identity. In this workshop, we will focus on the cultivation of their digital voice as an expansion of the work that is normally done in the LA classroom: the cultivation of voice. But we'll take this a step further: the cultivation of a socially responsible, digital voice. The medium demands this. Using digital storytelling as our foundational literacy for this workshop – text, music, sound, and imagery – we will traverse the cross-section of social responsibility and digital storytelling, landing in rich, generally uncharted narrative territory. Specific activities to take away will abound.

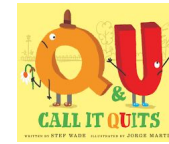


Th-A06 Sneaky Learning with Stef Wade

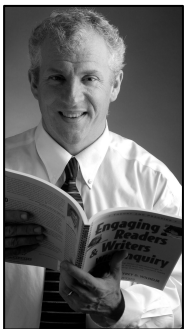
(repeated Th-B)

~*Stef Wade*

Audience: ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator



Join best-selling Wisconsin author, Stef Wade as she shares her process of turning ideas into stories by inserting fun facts and social emotional lessons, twisted up with puns and fun. In this interactive session, Stef will provide creative fuel for your classroom and leave you with inspirations to create stories of your own!



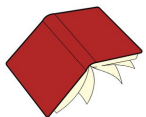
Th-A07 Diving Deep Into Fiction: Using Rules of Notice to Guide the Meaning Making Process while Reading and Composing

~*Dr. Jeffrey D. Wilhelm*

Audience: All



This interactive workshop explores how to motivate and assist students to expertly read fictional texts in a wide array of genres. Using Rabinowitz's notion of "readers rules of notice", students learn how to notice the topics of conversation taken up by fictional texts, and discern key details and text structures used to communicate meaning about these topics. We will model a variety of teaching techniques including visualization, think alouds, and questioning strategies, and will provide special attention to understanding how new notions of genre (as plot) can guide the reading of fictional texts, and will focus as well on how to help students expertly understand character, the meaning making power of perspective, and of symbolism.





Th-A08 The Power of Oral Language Throughout the Literacy Instruction

~Dr. Nancy Akhavan, Associate Professor Emerita

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Special Education, Preservice, Title 1



There truly is a silver bullet to ensure student success in literacy. While we might assume this is decoding work, or reading comprehension instruction, it isn't. The silver bullet is oral language development. By ensuring students have a strong oral language base, we are building the foundation for literacy success at multiple levels in multiple ways. This interactive session will show how to build students' oral language through engaging reading and writing instruction that also promotes student thinking and student voice. The presenter will show how to teach elaborated language learning moments that increase students' receptive language as well as build students' vocabularies. Participants will receive practical, doable lesson ideas!



Th-A09 Props, Pages, and Play: Engaging Young Children Through Adapted Storybook Conversations

~Nicole Aldworth, Janet Budney, Cindy Prendergast

Audience: ELL/ML, PK-2, Special Education, Preservice

Step into the world of interactive literacy with this engaging session focused on using storybook conversations, props, and adaptations to bring picture books to life for young children. Participants will explore how to spark rich language, comprehension, and engagement by pairing books with thoughtfully prepared story boxes—filled with tactile props, visuals, and accessible materials that support diverse learners. Learn classroom based strategies to encourage meaningful back-and-forth dialogue, scaffold vocabulary, and adapt stories to meet the needs of all children, with an emphasis on those with disabilities or language delays. Leave with creative ideas and tools to transform storytime into a multisensory, language-rich experience.



Th-A10 Literacy and Justice for All

~Jami Hoekstra Collins, NBCT; Karen Murphree, NBCT

Audience: Administrator, ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Recovery, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title 1

Literacy is the foundation for voice, access, and agency. In this session, we'll explore how early literacy practices can serve as powerful tools for advancing equity and justice. Together, we'll examine how: stories shape identity, language empowers children to express their truths, and inclusive literacy environments challenge bias and build belonging. We will explore free, bilingual resources from The Reading Universe Taxonomy and PBS KIDS that empower children to ask meaningful questions and consider diverse perspectives. Reimagining the structured literacy approach as a pathway to inclusion, empathy, and social change will help children in becoming more confident, connected, and justice-minded communicators.

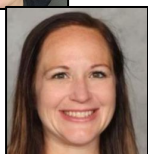




Th-A11 No Budget, No Problem. Motivate Your Students to Read All Summer Long

~Emmie Delveaux & Kelsey Ackley, Reading Interventionists, School District of Denmark

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Recovery, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Title 1



Instead of just talking about kids not reading in the summer, we did something about it. We took our small town with no public library and changed the way our community looks at summer reading. The best part is that we were able to do this with little to no school funds. We had two groups of students to target, students with reading difficulties and students who didn't struggle in reading but didn't prioritize reading over the summer. Attend our session to find out how we motivated children in our community to read over the summer and learn how you can do it too.



Th-A12 Moving from Writing Rigor to Writing Vigor!

~Peg Grafwallner, Instructional Coach/ Reading Specialist

Audience: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education

For many students, writing is an almost "mysterious" task where it seems some students are just naturally gifted writers. My presentation will take the "mystery" out of the writing process to empower all students of all abilities toward writing success. I will define rigor and explain why all teachers want to employ writing VIGOR instead of rigor. I will explain authentic writing and how to write for an authentic audience. In addition, I will demonstrate how to utilize the writing process giving students the opportunity to use their voice, and finally, I will demonstrate writing scaffolding tools meant to engage all writers in a culturally responsive and respectful way.



Th-A13 Innovative Approaches to Early Literacy: The Assisted Reading Intervention Framework

~Brian Reindl, Trainer; Wendy Hamilton, District Literacy Intervention Coordinator

Audience: Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education



Science-based early reading instruction encompasses key areas, including phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, background knowledge, oral language, vocabulary, writing, comprehension, and reading fluency. In this session, presenters will introduce an innovative Tier 2 intervention framework, Assisted Reading, specifically designed to address these essential areas of literacy. Participants can expect to gain engaging insights, as preliminary data from a large school district implementing this intervention will be shared. Additionally, the session will feature captivating videos showcasing the effective teaching methods used within this framework, providing a vivid illustration of the impact on student learning.



Thursday 9:45-11:00

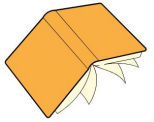
Th-A14 Steam Ahead by Unearthing Strategically Matched Picture Books

~Joyce P. Uglow, *Children's Book Author*

Audience: Content Area, PK-2, 3-5, Library Media, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Title I



Strategically STEAM your read aloud list with engaging fiction and nonfiction picture books before a lesson to unearth prior knowledge, during to discover more background knowledge, and after your elementary science lessons to build upon, spark new, and inspire students' futures. Resources include: curated book lists of recently published picture books and notice and wonder lessons



Thursday 11:15-12:30

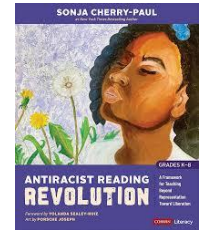
Th-B01 Radical Reading: Applying Critical Lenses To Create Identity-Affirming, Joyful Literacy Instruction

(repeated Th-C)

~Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul

Audience: 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist

To deeply comprehend and interpret texts is a critical thinking process powered by students' identities, funds of knowledge, backgrounds, and experiences. Conversations about the science of reading can focus primarily on technical skills of reading such as phonics, decoding fluency, vocabulary. Within this landscape, the work of comprehension, interpretation, and antiracism can be lost along with the goal of cultivating lifelong readers who read for a variety of purposes, including joy. During our time together we'll explore the critical lenses of an antiracist reading framework that guides instruction and supports meaning-making throughout the iterative process of interpretation.

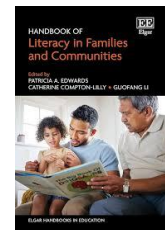


Th-B02 Historical Precedents, Attacks on Reading, and What We Can Do

~Dr. Catherine Compton-Lilly

Audience: All

Dr. Compton-Lilly will explore historical confluences between current discussions related to the Science of Reading and historical moments that are strikingly similar. This presentation will complicate historical conversations and consider the cumulation of research that challenges narrow interpretations of reading. Finally, Compton-Lilly will discuss long-term responses and instructional changes that followed these attacks, re-focused educators on children, and moved reading scholarship forward.





Th-B03 Is what you see what you get with approved curriculum options?

~*Dr. Rachael Gabriel*

Audience: Administrator, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Title 1

This session demonstrates a tool and process for evaluating the contents and supports offered by curricular materials and assessments. As states and districts increasingly rely on pre-approved lists, educators need more powerful tools to evaluate options for their particular setting. We will examine how different products with state approvals vary and how to estimate the opportunities for literacy development they include, or could be refined to allow.

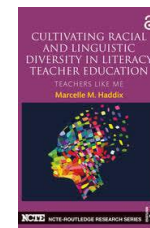


Th-B04 Creative Visioning in Literacy, Teacher Education, and Leadership

~*Dean Marcelle Haddix*

Audience: Administrator, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator

Dr. Marcelle Haddix will narrate stories from her experiences as a literacy scholar, a teacher educator, and a leader in higher education to offer a framework for visioning possible futures in the fields of literacy, teacher education, and leadership. Her presentation will provide historical contexts, address current issues, and answer the questions: What leadership is needed to address pressing issues in literacy education today? What leadership will ensure and sustain equitable and transformative outcomes in literacy education in the future?



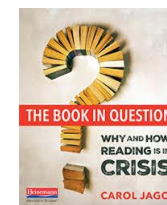
Th-B05 Turning the Page: Reversing the Slide in Reading Achievement

(repeated Th-A)

~*Carol Jago*

Audience: 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist

What can teachers do when students balk at doing the reading? Why do so many students have difficulty staying with a book for more than a few minutes? In this workshop Carol Jago will demonstrate instructional moves that can help students increase their stamina and develop greater confidence in themselves as readers. Based upon current research in literacy, the session offers texts and tasks designed to engage today's young readers and improve their comprehension. She will demonstrate methods for increasing reading skill while stimulating students' desire to read. A rigorous curriculum can be a joyful one.





CCBC
Choices
2025



Th-B06 Great New Books for K-5 Classrooms

~*Merri Lindgren Librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)*

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

Looking for literature ideas for your classroom? Books that engage and entertain, delight and inspire, affirm and inform are the focus of this session will highlight selected books for K-5 from "CCBC Choices 2026," the most recent best-of-the-year list from the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC). The CCBC is a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and serves as statewide children's and young adult literature book examination and resource center.

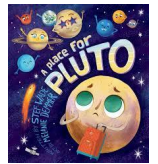


Th-B07 Sneaky Learning with Stef Wade

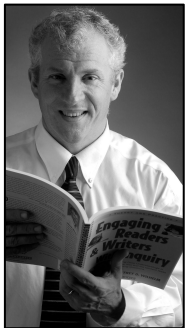
(repeated Th-A)

~*Stef Wade*

Audience: ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator



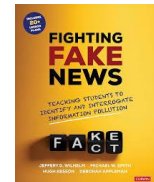
Join best-selling Wisconsin author, Stef Wade as she shares her process of turning ideas into stories by inserting fun facts and social emotional lessons, twisted up with puns and fun. In this interactive session, Stef will provide creative fuel for your classroom and leave you with inspirations to create stories of your own!



Th-B08 Fighting Fake News in the Age of AI: Promoting News Literacy and Critical Literacy in the Context of Instruction

~*Dr. Jeffrey D. Wilhelm*

Audience: All



This interactive session will explore how to use an inquiry approach to help students understand their own minds, including the ways in which they (like all human beings) are susceptible to information pollution. We will look at powerful cognitive biases and how to recognize and control for them. We will explore how to help teachers and students consider the uses and misuses of AI in the teaching/learning process, particularly as applied to reading and composing. Strategies for evaluating sources and evidence (e.g. evidence ranking and semantic scales), lateral reading (putting texts into conversation, document based inquiry) and critical reading (e.g. Civic Online Reading Questions) and more included!





Th-B09 Notice and Note: Enhancing Comprehension for K-4 Students

~Jeff Williams

Audience: Administrator, ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Title 1

Though originally intended for upper elementary students, this session shows how the work of Beers and Probst's Notice and Note lessons also benefits young children greatly.



Th-B10 I Will Not Be Erased: Reclaiming Literacy Teaching and Learning for More Just Futures

~Dr. Michael J. Young

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator

As the teaching exodus continues to grow, this session examines the polic(y)ing of teaching practice as a contributor to the exodus. Contextualized by top-down federal, state, and local school reforms, including implementation of policies that seemingly limit teacher practice in the name of science, the session invites teachers to recast the science in ways that cultivate the humanity of reading and readers in trust and in joy.



Th-B11 Promoting Literacy Through Diverse Read-Alouds

~Stacy Gray, Ph.D., Early Literacy Consultant, DPI; Mariah Pfundheller; Sarah Beaulieu, Ph.D.; Chaitali Dutta, M.S.; Aidee Hoffmann, Ed.D.; Alli Lester, M.A.; Shana Lucas, M.S.; Stephanie Smith, B.A.

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Preservice

Looking to bring more joy, equity, and intention to your read-alouds? Inclusive read-alouds are essential for nurturing early literacy skills while affirming students' diverse identities and experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Nash et al., 2025). Join a team of Wisconsin educators who collaborated to advance rightful presence and create a practical tool for analyzing and planning inclusive read-alouds using diverse picture books. Grounded in the framework of rightful presence, this session offers hands-on experience with the tool and examples of how to center students within shared reading. You will leave equipped with strategies and resources to design developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and identity-affirming early literacy experiences.



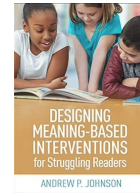


Th-B12 Empowering Literacy: Culturally Relevant, Explicit Phonics-Based Instruction Aligned with Wisconsin Act 20

~*Angela Harris*

Audience: All

In response to Wisconsin Act 20, this session explores how educators can implement explicit, evidence-based phonics instruction while honoring the diverse cultural identities of students. Grounded in research and classroom practice, participants will learn how to integrate culturally relevant pedagogy with structured literacy to boost reading outcomes for underserved learners. Attendees will gain tools, lesson strategies, and insights to meet state mandates while creating inclusive, identity-affirming reading environments that help all children thrive as confident, capable readers.



Th-B13 LETRS Does Not Meet Basic SoR Standards for Research

~*Dr. Andy Johnson*

Audience: All

Just because it says it's 'research-based' or 'scientifically based' doesn't mean that it is. Dr. Louisa Moats' website states that, "Moats developed the landmark professional development program LETRS for teachers and reading specialists and the scientifically based LANGUAGE!" This presentation will demonstrate (a) how Moats misrepresents the results of her own research, (b) how she falsifies and distorts the research of others in her 2021 paper, and (c) how the publishers of LETRS (Lexia Learning) misrepresent the 18 research studies described in their LETRS Efficacy Research paper.



Th-B14 20 Ways to Act - Reading Instruction Under Wisconsin's Act 20 Legislation

~*Brian Wilhorn*

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Preservice, Title 1

Wisconsin's Act 20 was signed into law nearly three years ago. By now we're familiar with its science-based reading mandates, engaged in its implementation, and fulfilling its requirements. But what about all the successful, yet unmandated, research-based practices? On one hand we have direct, explicit, and systematic phonics. On the other hand we have self-chosen independent reading, high-quality read-alouds, access to books, and authentic responses to literature. Can we balance both within the mandates of Act 20? Yes, we can -- and we should! In this presentation Brian will discuss what we've learned from Act 20, what students are learning from our instruction, and all the ways we can continue to bring out the best in our students.



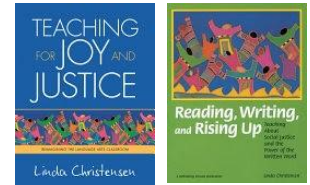


Th-C01 Finding Joy in Essay Writing: Defying Prescription

~Linda Christensen

Audience: 6-8 , 9-12, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title 1

Often, by the time students reach middle and high school, the essay is the only writing genre assigned. Yes, students should analyze text, peel back the layers, develop a thesis, marshal evidence, persuade us of their ideas. The problem is that much essay teaching lays waste to student imagination and voice. The tight reliance on a format silences students' real ideas. There is no singing, no laughing, no poetry. No one wants to write them; no one wants to read them. In this workshop, participants will explore how to teach powerful essays.

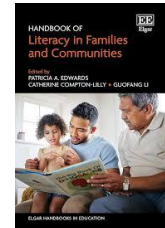


Th-C02 Exploring Community Cultural Wealth in Two Schools and Its Contribution to Literacy Instruction

~Dr. Catherine Compton-Lilly

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

Dr. Compton-Lilly will take participants on a virtual journey to visit two very different schools within the same school district. The focus will be on literacy practices, knowledge, and insights that children bring to classrooms. Specifically, she will explore the cultural, linguistic, and experiential differences that were observed and the degree to which educators recognized and drew upon these differences. The session ends with advice on how to learn about your school community and build upon the literacy practices that your students bring.



Th-C03 The future of the science of reading: Understanding and responding to international trends in reading policy: curriculum, assessment and professional development

~Dr. Rachael Gabriel

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator

This session shares results from an international comparison of reading policies in seven countries that provide initial instruction in English. We begin by outlining the significant similarities in the structure, focus and function of reading policy across countries and examine features of each setting that may explain the differences in pace and timing. We also examine settings that seem to be exceptions to the sweeping pattern that characterizes U.S. policies across states. Then we examine trends in the outcomes and directions of policies in countries that are farther along in implementation to illustrate the likely patterning of future policy aimed at increasing reading achievement in public schools.





Th-C04 Literacy Strategies for Early and Emergent Readers

~*Dr. Emily Hines*

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Preservice, Title 1

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), the five pillars of reading include phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency; these pillars are instrumental to ensuring literacy success and development in our students. In terms of early and emergent readers, we need to provide a solid foundation of early literacy skills which include print rich environments, phonemic awareness, phonics, high frequency words, spelling, writing, and access and exposure to variety of texts (predictable, decodable, high interest, etc). As educators of our early and emerging readers, we can foster a love and joy of reading by providing meaningful literacy experiences and using data to inform our classroom instruction. In this presentation, evidence-based literacy strategies will be shared to support our early and emergent learners as well as multilingual learners.



Th-C05 Digging into Details: Supporting Young Writers

~*Lester Laminack*

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Title 1

We often hear ourselves suggesting to young writers, "add some details". That suggestion may lead to a loss of focus or confusion. We will reflect on our practices and explore suggestions for leading student writers toward a deeper understanding of the power of specificity in all writing.



Th-C06 Great New Books for 6-12 Classrooms

~*Merri Lindgren Librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)*

Audience: 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

Looking for literature ideas for your classroom? Books that engage and entertain, delight and inspire, affirm and inform are the focus of this session will highlight selected books for grades 6-12 from "CCBC Choices 2026," the most recent best-of-the-year list from the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC). The CCBC is a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and serves as statewide children's and young adult literature book examination and resource center.



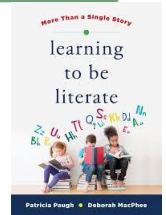


Th-C07 Teachers Make the Difference: Advocating for Children and Our Profession

~*Deborah MacPhee*

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist

We know that the most important factor in children learning to be literate is a knowledgeable and skilled teacher. From the perspective of literacy as a social practice and children as fully human users of literacy, an author of *Learning to Be Literate: More than a Single Story* will share a framework that addresses four research-based dimensions of knowledge relevant to literacy learning and teaching: Learning the Codes, Reading/Writing with Purpose, Building Confidence and Competence, and Engaging Critically with Texts. The presenter will then facilitate conversations about how we can use knowledge from within and across dimensions to advocate for children and the teaching profession.

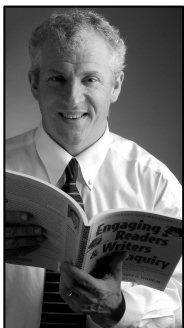
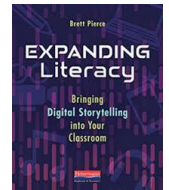


Th-C08 Narrative Unlimited – Digital Storytelling and Your Curriculum

~*Brett Pierce, Executive Director, Meridian Stories*

Audience: Administrator, 6-8, 9-12, Digital Technology, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Teacher Educator

Teaching students to communicate meaningfully inside of the digital ecosystem is paramount. In this session, we will briefly explore the essence of the digital storytelling form and then focus on narrative structure. There is well over seventy years of television and the Internet that has yielded myriad narrative forms that can be applied in the classroom. We are talking game shows, reality competitions, sitcoms, DIY and Unboxing Videos. Digital Storytelling in the classroom is an invitation to students to utilize their intimate knowledge of television, podcasting, and social media formats to explore curricular content. Specifically, we will focus on four formats: the PSA/commercial, the vlog, the podcast, and the radio drama.

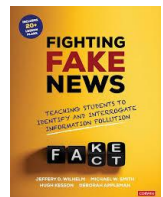


Th-C09 Democracy Building Instruction: Teaching the Disposition of Democracy, including News Literacy and Critical Literacy in Context of What We Already Teach

~*Dr. Jeffrey D. Wilhelm*

Audience: All

In the world of AI, information pollution and anxiety, we can create classroom spaces of hope and agency for ourselves and students. This session will explore a national project to promote Democracy Building Instruction (including a site at UW-Madison). Participants will learn about the dispositions of democracy, and how to teach these dispositions in the context of what we already do. News literacy and critical reading strategies as well as Document Based Inquiries (DBIs), a strategy for engaging students with short text sets on any topic will be shared. Teachers will learn the principles and practices for developing dispositions of democracy at any phase of instruction including deep listening, civil dialogue, and social imagination.





Th-C10 Self-monitoring: Foundational Executive Function Skill for Reading

~Jeff Williams

Audience: Administrator, ELL/ML, PK-2, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Title 1

This session explores the importance of self-monitoring, and how it is fostered, as a foundational executive function skill that is a precursor to strategy application and comprehension development.



Th-C11 Realizing our Literacies through Freedom Dreaming: Moving Beyond a Science of Erasure

~Dr. Michael J. Young

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator

Building on a discussion of the types of erasure taken up in varying state policies around literacy teaching and learning, this session invites participants to engage in freedom dreaming to realize the literacies and literacy teaching necessary for building a world of care, belonging, and justice.



Th-C12 Beyond Silos: Co-Creating Spaces for Literacy, Joy, and Liberation

~Robyn Bindrich, MS Ed; Stacy Gray, Ph.D.; Bianca Williams-Griffin, MBA

Audience: Administrator, ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

Literacy advancement cannot happen in isolation. Now more than ever, we must unite to ensure every learner has access to high-quality, standards-aligned, research-based literacy instruction. This session, facilitated by the WI DPI Office of Literacy with partners in the field, highlights how we intentionally co-create spaces that support equitable literacy systems. Participants will hear from educators and leaders actively engaged in this work, followed by time to reflect, exchange ideas, and generate opportunities for collaboration in their own schools and communities. Together, we will explore the guiding question: How do we create authentic opportunities to engage, support, and collaborate as agents of change for literacy and liberation?

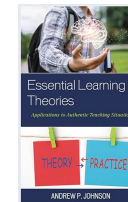


Th-C13 Orton-Gillingham: Behind the Pretty Words

~Dr. Andy Johnson

Audience: All, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist

Strawman arguments, buzzwords, and ill-defined terms have long been used by Science of Reading advocates to make the case for a limited range of strategies and scripted reading products. But what's behind the pretty words? This presentation will define science, research, and the Science of Reading. It will also use the context of Orton-Gillingham and the International Dyslexia Association to (a) unpack commonly used buzzwords, terms, and jargon; (b) demonstrate how these words are used to create strawman arguments, and (c) clarify what is meant by research-based practice and evidence-based instruction. This presentation will enable participants to be more responsible consumers of educational research and research-based claims.

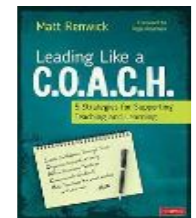


Th-C14 What School Leaders Need to Know About Act 20 and the Science of Reading

~Matt Renwick

Audience: Administrator, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator

School leaders face tough decisions navigating literacy mandates. Should they implement state-approved programs with problematic content? What if "science-based" approaches prove less effective than promised? Former principal Matt Renwick shares five practical principles for leading literacy within Act 20 and Science of Reading requirements. Participants will understand the motivation behind Wisconsin's Reading Law, learn about key research excluded from legislation, and receive a leadership toolkit for implementing effective, equitable literacy instruction schoolwide.



Happy Hour!

*You are invited to join us this evening, from 3:30 to 5:00 in the Exhibit Hall.
A complimentary drink and snacks will be available to enjoy while you
explore the Exhibit Hall!*



Friday, February 6, 2026

Schedule

8:00-8:15

Welcome-Ballroom CD

8:15-8:30

Award Ceremony

8:30-9:30

Keynote Address

9:45-11:00

Breakout Session A

11:15-12:30

Breakout Session B

12:30-2:00

Lunch/Exhibits

1:15

Book Signing

2:15-3:30

Breakout Session C

Lunch ~ 12:30 pm

Sandwich and Salad Table

Usinger's Prime Meats Italian Sub

Ham, pepperoni, salami, provolone, roma tomato, banana peppers, red onion and crisp romaine tossed in red wine vinaigrette on an Italian herb and asiago roll

Smoked Turkey

Smoked cheddar, tomato, cranberry brie spread, and multigrain bread

Mediterranean Couscous Wrap

Roasted chickpeas, cucumber, roma tomato, roasted red onion and Moroccan spiced couscous tossed in dill tzatziki

Milwaukee Caesar

Crisp romaine lettuce, Wisconsin parmesan tuile, oven-roasted cherry tomato, roasted garlic crouton and creamy peppered Caesar dressing

Chilled Vegetable Pasta Salad


Deviled Egg Potato Salad

Chocolate Brownies

*Alternative options will be available for special dietary restrictions, if indicated during conference registration.

Award Ceremony

Friday, February 6 ~ 8:15 am
Prior to the Keynote Speaker



Celebrate Literacy - Individual Award
Celebrate Literacy - Organization Award
Council Recognition
Exemplary Reading Award
Friends of Literacy Honor Roll
Digital Literacies Award of Distinction
Outstanding Administrator Award
Outstanding Service to WSRA Award
Pat Bricker Memorial Research Scholarship
WSRA President's Award
Student Scholarship Awards



WSRA Awards and Honors

Nominations for 2026 WSRA's Awards and Honors are due November 15, 2025

WSRA members go to <https://bit.ly/47ffEkp> to submit a nomination for 2026.

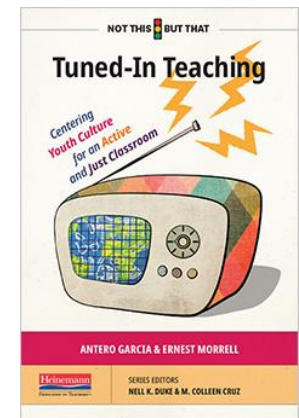
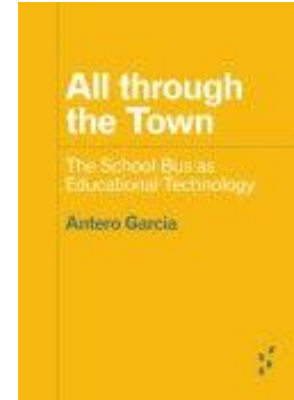
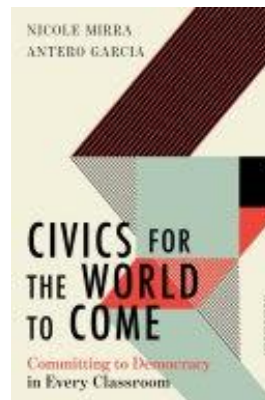
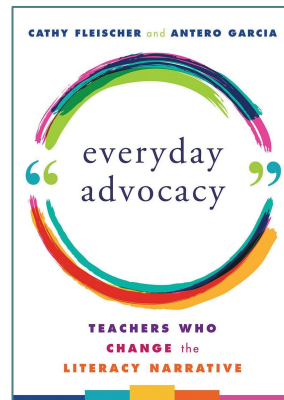
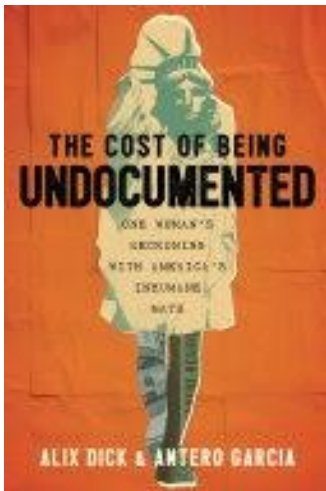
Friday Keynote Address



Antero Garcia, Ph.D.

Looking Up and Looking Beyond: Cloudgazing Justice in our Classrooms

In this talk, Dr. Antero Garcia explores contemporary contexts for supporting diverse classrooms for justice-centered learning. Building on examples ranging from youth literacy practices on public school buses to ethical storytelling activities with immigrant communities, this talk offers examples for educators and the necessary questions that must guide our field in ever tenuous times. With research spanning from across the U.S., the topics in this talk will focus on the needs of learners of all ages and educators in both K-12 and higher education contexts.



Friday Featured Speakers



**Dr. Nancy
Anderson**



**Dr. Elena
Aydarova**



**Linda
Christensen**



**Kathy
Collins**



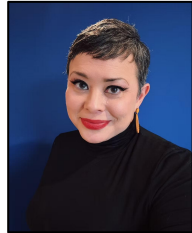
**Dr. Rebecca
Gambrell Harper**



Berit Gordon



Gay Ivey



**Erin Entrada
Kelly**



**Dr. Dennis
Magliozzi**



**Dr. Lindsey
Moses**



**David J.
O'Connor**



**Dr. Lilly
Padía**



**Baptiste
Paul**



**Kristina
Peterson**



**Michelle
Ruhe**



**Dr. Frank
Serafini**



**Dr. Hiawatha
Smith**



**Dr. Paul
Thomas**



Fr-A01 Beyond the Script: Adaptive Teaching for Oral Language Growth

~*Dr. Nancy Anderson*

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Preservice, Title I



This session explores how teachers can intentionally support oral language development as a foundation for literacy learning. Drawing on research about language systems and adaptive teaching, the presentation invites participants to reflect on their own teaching processes and decision-making. Practical tools and examples will be shared to help teachers recognize and respond to children's language approximations. Participants will leave with new ways to support rich classroom talk and flexible, responsive instruction.

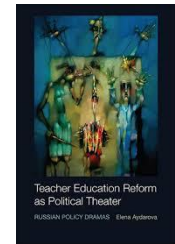
Fr-A02 Donors and Philanthropies in the Science of Reading Movement

~*Elena Aydarova*

Audience: All



Since 2013, 39 states have introduced science of reading (SOR) reforms supported by policy networks and educational businesses. Whereas the public debate has been primarily focused on the role of decoding and sound-letter correspondence in reading instruction, the involvement of various policy actors, including funders and donors, has remained overlooked. This presentation will explore how various donors and philanthropists have become involved in reading reforms and how their agendas have shaped approaches to early literacy instruction that inform Act 20 and other legislative mandates.



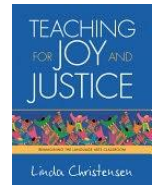
Fr-A03 No More Elegies: Building the Habit of Joy in the Classroom

~*Linda Christensen*

Audience: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Title I



Using Clint Smith's poem, "No More Elegies" participants will discover how to provide poetic pauses, to help students find new ways to look at the world: to see, acknowledge, and take refuge in the moments of connection and celebration. As much as it is a habit to find and interrogate the inequalities and the injustices that we see in the world, it is also a habit to notice and take delight in what brings us joy.



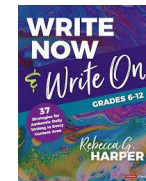
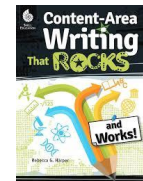


Friday 9:45-11:00

Fr-A04 Sprints and Marathons: From Quick Writes to Multi-Part Compositions in All Genres

~*Dr. Rebecca Gambrell Harper*

Audience: Content Area, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title 1



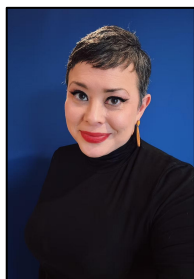
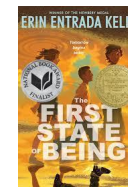
Part of becoming a skilled writer involves mastery of multiple genres and composition of writing products that vary in structure and content. For many, developing a specific strategy based on the demands of the writing task is difficult and some students attempt to attack multiple writing tasks in the same manner. However, depending on the topic, genre, and composition complexity and length, the way in which writers approach different writing tasks varies. In this session, we will focus on the use of quick writes (sprints) to build student confidence and experience before progressing to extended compositions (marathons) that require stamina.

Fr-A05 Story Building Through Character

(repeated Fr-B)

~*Erin Entrada Kelly*

Audience: All



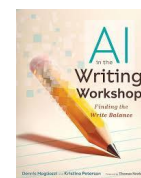
Together, we will brainstorm the beginning, middle, and end of a novel, using a single character as our starting point. This exercise demystifies the writing process and showcases a fun and energetic way to introduce storybuilding into the classroom, even for those who aren't interested in writing.

Fr-A06 Rethinking the Readers-Writers Workshop in the Age of AI

(repeated Fr-C)

~*Dr. Dennis Magliozzi, Kristina Peterson*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, 6-8, 9-12, Digital Technology, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Teacher Educator, Preservice



How do we preserve the joy of authentic reading and writing in an era of artificial intelligence? In this session, two veteran educators and authors of *AI in the Writing Workshop: Finding the Write Balance* (Heinemann, 2025) share how AI can be ethically integrated into a workshop model that still centers voice, choice, process, and human connection. Participants will explore how AI can act as a thought partner during reading, a research partner during inquiry, and a writing partner during revision, all while keeping students, not machines, at the heart of literacy. Come rethink the balance between challenge and support as we imagine a future where AI expands, rather than erases, what it means to be a joyful reader and writer.

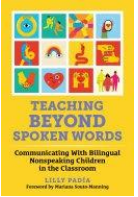


Fr-A07 Holistic Multilingual Literacy Learning: Emergent bilingualism in the classroom

~*Dr. Lilly Padia*

Audience: ELL/ML, Pre-K-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

This session focuses on how to honor students' multilingualism in the classroom to support holistic literacy learning. Session participants will explore strategies like translanguaging and multi dialectical supports, as well as interrogating how educators can disrupt notions of 'good' and 'bad' language in the literacy learning process.



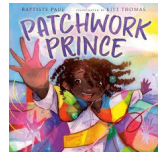
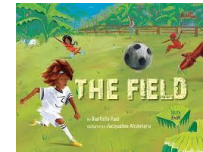
Fr-A08 Language, Culture and Identity

(repeated Fr-B)

~*Baptiste Paul*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Title 1

According to National Geographic, “Nearly half of the roughly 7,000 languages spoken on Earth will likely disappear, as communities abandon native tongues in favor of English.” Attendees will learn how my language (Creole), culture, and identity continue to influence my writing. I will take attendees on a journey exploring the importance of language and the effects of censorship while attending government school.



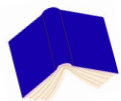
Fr-A09 Balancing Science and Sense : How We Lost Instructional Wisdom in the Rush to Remodel

~*Michelle Ruhe, Literacy Coach*

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator

In the scramble to “fix” reading instruction, many schools tossed out strong, research-aligned practices in favor of mandates, scripts, and shiny new programs. The result? Teachers sidelined. Students mislabeled. Budgets drained. And ironically—less effective instruction. In this session, we’ll talk honestly about what the science of reading movement got right... and what it bulldozed in the process. We’ll reflect on how we got here, what’s been lost along the way, and how we might move forward with both research and professional wisdom in mind. If you’ve ever asked, “Did we really need to tear it all down?”—this session is for you.





Friday 9:45-11:00

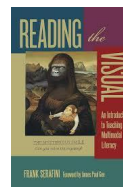


Fr-A10 Children's Identities & Literacies: Thinking with The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek

~*Dr. Frank Serafini*

Audience: All

Drawing inspiration from, *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek*, this presentation focuses on the ways mythical characters are perceived and represented in a multimodal picture book. Using critical literacy theories, multimodality, and identity theories to consider this award-winning picture book from a variety of perspectives, this presentation focuses on the relation among the mythical bunyip, the representation of indigenous peoples, and the development of children's identities as literate beings.



Fr-A11 Beyond the Comfort Zone: Using Literature to Navigate Life's Toughest Conversations

~*Dr. Hiawatha Smith*

Audience: Administrator, ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title I

This interactive session equips educators with strategies and texts to address challenging topics like social justice, death, and mental health. Many teachers feel unprepared to tackle these complex subjects, yet they reflect students' real-world experiences. Attendees will engage with strategies and explore newer literature that serves as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors for students. These texts help children interpret life's complexities, process emotional challenges, and understand they're not alone. This session provides a platform for exploring literature that stimulates meaningful discussions. Participants will examine texts and reflect on how to integrate them into their classrooms intentionally.



Fr-A12 Morphological Awareness is the new SuperPower

~*Dr. Angela Femali, Ed.D.*

Audience: Content Area, 6-8, 9-12

Tired of watching your students stumble over big words? Morphemes might be the secret sauce you've been missing. In this fast-paced, practical session, you'll discover how 14 "power morphemes" can help students crack open thousands of content-area terms—and actually enjoy doing it. Learn how to turn root word instruction into a vocabulary superpower that boosts comprehension and confidence. You'll leave with ready-to-use strategies, no-fluff routines, and a whole new way to look at words. Warning: side effects may include spontaneous wordplay and improved test scores.



Friday 9:45-11:00



Fr-A13 Your Circle Awaits

~Ms. Hannah Madson

Audience: Content Area, 6-8, 9-12, Special Education, Teacher Educator

Literature Circles presented as book talks turned into Socratic Seminars (your students will never see it coming!) This system has been developed and modeled using book talks to build literature circles that can be scaffolded into teaching Socratic Seminar. This system provides technology and face to face opportunities while preparing students with the skills necessary for Socratic Seminar. Even your quietest students will have something to say! Several different versions of this model will be provided along with the research and reasoning behind why steps are taken in a certain order. At the end of this session, attendees will be provided with materials, resources, and tips to put this model into practice when they leave.



Fr-A14 Motivating Students to Read Independently Through a Classroom Reading Challenge

~Ms. Sarah Schindler

Audience: ELL/ML, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator

All teachers know it: children need to practice reading independently to succeed. But how can we help motivate them to actually read? Challenging students to read a large number of books by the end of the year can work in any classroom! By organizing your classroom library, reading what students are interested in, and knowing students' interests, all teachers can help their students become lifelong readers...and have fun doing it!

Friday 11:15-12:30



Fr-B01 Teaching Phonics Through Children's Stories: A Systematic Asset-Based Approach

~Dr. Nancy Anderson

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Preservice, Title 1

This session explores the powerful connection between early writing and systematic phonics instruction through an asset-based lens. Participants will analyze authentic writing samples, identify developmental patterns, and consider instructional moves grounded in children's meaning-making. Emphasis will be placed on using observational data to guide phonics instruction in ways that are systematic, multisensory, and deeply connected to children's ideas and identities. Attendees will leave with practical strategies for supporting young writers and phonics learners in responsive, developmentally appropriate ways.





Friday 11:15-12:30



Fr-B02 Policy Landscape of the Science of Reading Movement

- Elena Aydarova

Audience: All



Since 2020, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) along with other education reform organizations has been promoting Science of Reading (SOR) reforms. This presentation traces the connections between CCSSO's calls for policy action and the introduction of new curricula, testing tools, professional development for teachers, and teacher education reforms. This analysis shows how SOR bills facilitated the spread of privatization, standardization, and centralization of decision-making. SOR reforms also increase reliance on platforms and diminish teacher professionalism, thus paving the way for the erosion of democratic structures and intensifying authoritarian control over educational institutions.

Fr-B03 One is Silver and the Other is Gold: Use the Power of Literacies to Empower Children's Friendship Development K-2

~Kathy Collins

Audience: PK-2

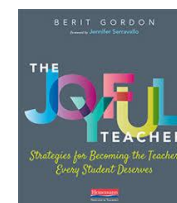


In many primary grade classrooms, educators express concerns about children's capacities to develop positive social relationships with their peers. In this session, Kathy Collins will share ways to utilize literacy practices to help children develop meaning-making skills and social relationships, which are essential to classroom communities, oral language development, and learning collaborations. This session will focus specifically on children in grades K-2.

Fr-B04 From Surviving to Thriving: 10 New Teacher Game-Changers

~Berit Gordon

Audience: All



Whether you're an administrator stopping teacher turnover, a coach supporting rookies, or a new teacher struggling—this session delivers game-changing solutions. Discover ten field-tested strategies: the "Done is Better Than Perfect" system that reclaims evenings, "Purposeful Entry Practice" that ends classroom chaos, and mentor-building techniques that work without formal programs. Perfect for mixed audiences: administrators learn systematic support for tight budgets, while new teachers gain immediately usable tools for workload management and confidence-building. Schools report 92% retention rates using this approach. Leave with digital resources and concrete next steps.

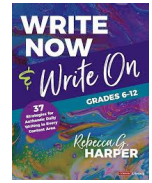
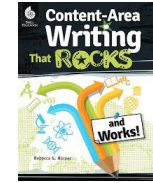


Fr-B05 Writing Workouts: Getting Students Trained and Ready for the Writing Race

~Dr. Rebecca Gambrell Harper

Audience: Content Area, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Interventionist, Teacher Educator

Is writing something you love to teach or dread? Love it or hate it, writing is a necessity in education, regardless of the subject area. This workshop will explore how writing can be taught effectively through a number of venues including rap music, post it notes, commercials, peacock feathers, props, sports programming and social media. Learn how to effectively teach writing and have fun too!

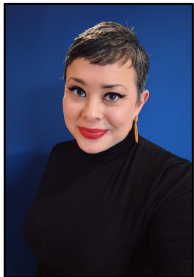
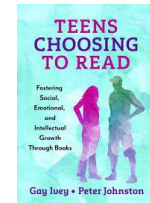


Fr-B06 Evidence, Wisdom, and Older Struggling Readers: Taking the Long View

~Gay Ivey

Audience: Administrator, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Title 1

The edging of SOR policies into the middle grades and beyond is a double-edged sword. On one side, attention to the needs of older students still developing as readers is long past due. On the other side, popular programs offer limited solutions that (a) address comprehensive literacy development; (b) produce sustained, generative effects, and (c) are meaningful to students. We will look at the evidence being used to promote common programs/approaches and consider the degree to which instruction based on that evidence might make a substantial difference (or not). The speaker will suggest a way forward with more immediate and long-term promise for both the reading lives and larger lives of adolescents.



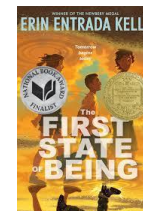
Fr-B07 Story Building Through Character

(repeated Fr-A)

~Erin Entrada Kelly

Audience: All

Together, we will brainstorm the beginning, middle, and end of a novel, using a single character as our starting point. This exercise demystifies the writing process and showcases a fun and energetic way to introduce storybuilding into the classroom, even for those who aren't interested in writing.



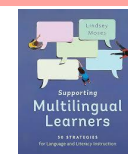


Fr-B08 Supporting Multilingual Learners: Scaffolds and Strategies for Language and Literacy Development

(repeated Fr-C)

~*Dr. Lindsey Moses*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title 1



This session, designed for every educator, introduces research-based strategies to support multilingual learners with practical guidance for designing inclusive instruction. Examples and videos of classroom-tested strategies that foster oral language, decoding skills, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and writing across the curriculum will be shared. With a focus on asset-based approaches and student-centered practices, this session equips K–8 educators with tools to scaffold instruction, engage learners in meaningful and authentic language use, and create a supportive environment where multilingual students thrive. Participants will leave with a toolkit of ready-to-use ideas for immediate implementation.

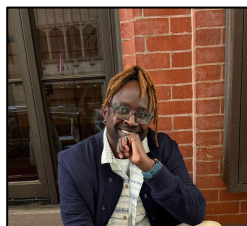


Fr-B09 How to Incorporate American Indian Studies (Wisconsin Act 31) into Our Teaching and Learning

~*David J. O'Connor*

Audience: All

This session will help participants understand how to incorporate American Indian Studies (Wisconsin Act 31) into their teaching and learning. To understand and implement Wisconsin Act 31, participants will start by learning about state law, which is the requirement that all Wisconsin public school districts and educator preparation programs provide instruction on the histories, cultures, and tribal sovereignty of the Tribal Nations of Wisconsin. This session is designed to provide participants with the resources, materials, and knowledge to incorporate American Indian Studies into lesson plans, material selections, pedagogical practices, and a district curriculum. Discussions about best practices and model programs will also be shared.

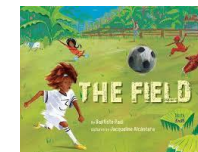


Fr-B10 Language, Culture and Identity

(repeated Fr-A)

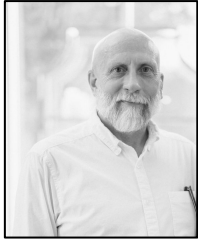
~*Baptiste Paul*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Title 1



According to National Geographic, “Nearly half of the roughly 7,000 languages spoken on Earth will likely disappear, as communities abandon native tongues in favor of English.” Attendees will learn how my language (Creole), culture, and identity continue to influence my writing. I will take attendees on a journey exploring the importance of language and the effects of censorship while attending government school.



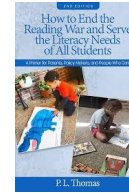


Fr-B11 Big Lies of Education: More Red Herring Reading Reform

~Dr. Paul Thomas

Audience: All

Education practices and policy are often directly and indirectly driven by the stories told in the media, among the public, and by political leaders. This session will explore the Big Lies in the compelling but misleading narratives, including A Nation at Risk/education “crisis,” reading proficiency/NAEP, National Reading Panel, poverty as an excuse, international test rankings and economic competitiveness, grade retention, growth mindset/grit, and word gap.



Fr-B12 Motivation, Meaning, and Mirrors: Embracing Curiosity and Joy Through Culturally Responsive Reading

~Dr. Cindi Koudelka

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach

How can we embrace joy in literacy while advancing student agency and equity? This session explores how culturally responsive, student-centered reading practices—anchored in identity, choice, and inclusive literature—motivate all learners and foster deep engagement. Participants will examine practices that support students as critical thinkers, emotionally grounded individuals, and change agents. We’ll explore tools that bring the joy of literacy to all—sparking collaborative transformation in classrooms and beyond.



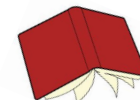
Fr-B13 Using our Teacher Expertise: Putting the Personal into Personal Reading Plans

~Katrena Leininger, Amy Sippert

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, Literacy Coach, Reading Recovery, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title I

How can teachers center their learners and use their expertise about how children learn to read while working within the Act 20 law? This interactive session will explore that question by examining ways to incorporate what research tells us about formative assessment and early intervention in the personal reading plans of the unique needs of our K-3 learners.





Fr-B14 Unlocking Digital Literacy: Empowering Students in the Online World

~Jill Puhlmann-Becker, Ph.D.

Audience: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Digital Technology, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator

Ready to equip students with digital literacy skills? This workshop is based on Jill Puhlmann-Becker's dissertation research, exploring how sixth graders understand digital texts. Discover strategies students use, differences between skilled and less-skilled readers, and how digital device proficiency impacts reading. Learn which student strategies are most effective in supporting deep comprehension, and compare approaches for print vs. digital texts. Gain strategies to enhance students' digital literacy skills and foster critical thinking. Ideal for all teachers seeking to transform teaching for the digital age. Unlock every student's potential for 21st-century success!

Special Session During Lunch

Reading Professors Meet: Literacy Collaboration and Empowerment

~Dr. Hiawatha Smith, Dr. Susan Tily, Dr. Amber Garbe

Audience: Teacher Educator

This session will provide Wisconsin professors of reading with a formal opportunity to connect as a community. During this collaborative time, professors will discuss topics and issues relevant to preparing and supporting in-service teachers of reading. This will involve disseminating new research and strategies aligned with ACT 20, the FORT assessment, and advocacy efforts to expand the role of professors in the Wisconsin State Reading Association (WSRA). Attendees will leave empowered to continue advancing the literacy performance of Wisconsin students by preparing knowledgeable, effective teachers of reading.

Friday 2:15-3:30



Fr-C01 One is Silver and the Other is Gold: Use the Power of Literacies to Empower Children's Friendship Development Grades 3-6

~Kathy Collins

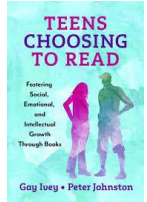
Audience: 3-5, 6-8

In many upper elementary classrooms, educators express concerns about children's capacities to develop positive social relationships with their peers. In this session, Kathy Collins will share ways to utilize literacy practices to help children develop meaning-making skills and social relationships, which are essential to healthy classroom communities, increased engagement, and beneficial learning collaborations. This session will focus specifically on children in grades 3-6.

Fr-C02 Teens Choosing to Read: Fostering Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Growth ~Gay Ivey

Audience: Administrator, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title 1

How is engaged reading connected to students' reading comprehension, growth, and wellbeing? We will look at the outcomes of research—from hundreds of interviews and years of observations of classroom life—that focused on the experiences of students whose teachers arranged for them to routinely read/talk about compelling books they chose. Students read substantially more, read more strategically-- improving state test scores--and they reported shifts in their social, emotional, and intellectual lives they attributed to reading, to the kinds of books they read, and to the conversations those books provoked. The speaker will connect the dots on how these transformations occur and describe the nature of teaching that helped produce them.

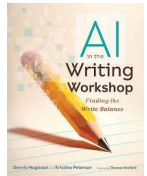


Fr-C03 Rethinking the Readers-Writers Workshop in the Age of AI (repeated Fr-A)

~Dr. Dennis Magliozzi, Kristina Peterson

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, 6-8, 9-12, Digital Technology, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Teacher Educator, Preservice

How do we preserve the joy of authentic reading and writing in an era of artificial intelligence? In this session, two veteran educators and authors of *AI in the Writing Workshop: Finding the Write Balance* (Heinemann, 2025) share how AI can be ethically integrated into a workshop model that still centers voice, choice, process, and human connection. Participants will explore how AI can act as a thought partner during reading, a research partner during inquiry, and a writing partner during revision, all while keeping students, not machines, at the heart of literacy. Come rethink the balance between challenge and support as we imagine a future where AI expands, rather than erases, what it means to be a joyful reader and writer.

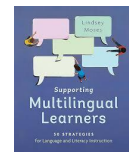


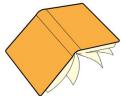
Fr-C04 Supporting Multilingual Learners: Scaffolds and Strategies for Language and Literacy Development (repeated Fr-C)

~Dr. Lindsey Moses

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, ELL/ML, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title 1

This session, designed for every educator, introduces research-based strategies to support multilingual learners with practical guidance for designing inclusive instruction. Examples and videos of classroom-tested strategies that foster oral language, decoding skills, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and writing across the curriculum will be shared. With a focus on asset-based approaches and student-centered practices, this session equips K–8 educators with tools to scaffold instruction, engage learners in meaningful and authentic language use, and create a supportive environment where multilingual students thrive. Participants will leave with a toolkit of ready-to-use ideas for immediate implementation.



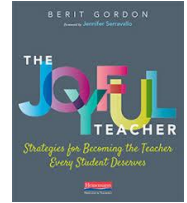
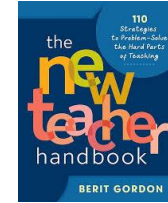


Fr-C05 Feedback That Works: End the Evening Grading Marathon!

~*Berit Gordon*

Audience: All

Stop letting feedback consume your personal time! Learn practical strategies to integrate meaningful feedback into daily instruction while maximizing student growth. Discover: quick in-the-moment feedback techniques; efficient student conference structures; peer feedback systems that build student skills; impactful written comments with clear next steps; and time-saving digital tools and workflows. Through hands-on modeling and planning time, you'll leave with concrete methods that enhance student learning without sacrificing your work-life balance. Transform feedback from exhausting burden to energizing teaching tool! Perfect for teachers, coaches, and instructional leaders looking to build sustainable feedback practices.

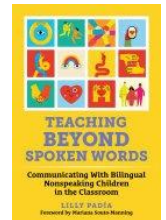


Fr-C06 Whole Children in Fragmented Systems: Teaching emergent bilingual students with disabilities

~*Dr. Lilly Padia*

Audience: ELL/ML, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Preservice

This session focuses on students at the intersections of multilingualism and disability. Drawing on theories like disability justice and translanguaging universal design for learning (TrUDL), this session explores the structural barriers and disconnects between multilingual education and special education. Participants will identify strategies to engage multimodal and multilingual communication to support the literacy learning of multilingual children with disabilities.



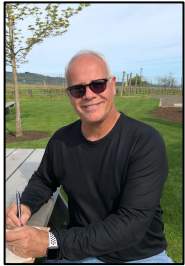
Fr-C07 Transforming Instruction: The Power of Integrated Literacy

~*Michelle Ruhe, Owner Coach from the Couch*

Audience: Administrator, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach

So much to fit in, so little time! Between foundational skills, reading and writing lessons, and small group instruction, it can feel impossible to fit it all in. Because of the complex nature of literacy instruction and the vast array of student needs, tight time constraints can lead to feelings of frustration and defeat. But it can be done! In this session, you'll discover the power of a seamless fusion of reading and writing lessons. Not only will this innovative solution save you loads of time and frustration, it will also elevate learning, increase student engagement, and build critical knowledge and skills. Reignite joy for literacy instruction where efficiency meets empowerment!



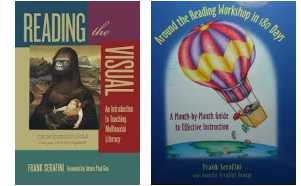


Fr-C08 The Complex Relationship Between Words and Images in Picture Books

~*Dr. Frank Serafini*

Audience: All

This presentation will consider the array of relationships among words and images in contemporary picturebooks and their connections to reading comprehension. Drawing on narrative, semiotic, and literary theory, this presentation will provide literacy educators with ideas, concepts and teaching resources for talking about children's literature with children.

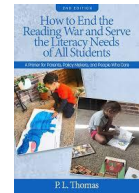


Fr-C09 We Teach English in Times of Perpetual Crisis: Selling a Story of Reading (and Literacy)

~*Dr. Paul Thomas*

Audience: All

English-speaking countries around the world are once again fighting another Reading War. In the US, the movement is called the “science of reading” (SOR) and the result has been intense media scrutiny of reading programs, teachers, and teacher education as well as highly prescriptive state-level legislation and mandates. Those of us who do not teach beginning readers are not exempt from the negative consequences of another Reading War. This webinar will briefly introduce the history of Reading Wars and identify the key elements of the SOR movement and why the public stories and legislation are poised to erase teacher autonomy and serving the individual needs of students.



Fr-C10 You've Finished LETRS Training, Now What?

~*Kathryn Champeau, Reading Specialist/Consultant & Deborah Cromer*

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Title 1

Many educators have complied with ACT 20's mandate to complete LETRS training, or an approved facsimile, as a measure to ensure students' reading proficiency. Despite that training, you may be experiencing what scientific studies, the Forward Exam, and NAEP's results show: that after LETRS, not all your students are proficient readers. Phonics is critical to reading, but after your increased focus on phonics and a new curriculum, some students have not progressed, or worse, regressed. Using student examples and student profiles, this session focuses on why this phenomenon occurs and how you can effectively utilize your valuable resources of time and expertise, including what's missing from word learning and word solving, to ensure optimal student success as readers and writers, not just for some, but for all.





Fr-C11 Writing to Enhance Comprehension: Effective Strategies for Writing About Reading

~*Lindsay Johnson & Heather Brown, Literacy Consultants, CESA 6*

Audience: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Special Education, Teacher Educator



Discover a variety of high-impact routines designed to support writing about reading in the adolescent classroom. Focused on practical strategies, the session will cover effective note-taking techniques, summarization practices and how to leverage text structures to improve both comprehension and writing skills. Educators will walk away with actionable tools to help students engage more deeply with texts, enhance their understanding, and strengthen their ability to articulate their thoughts through writing. This session will provide invaluable techniques to foster stronger literacy outcomes in the classroom.



Fr-C12 Reading for Empathy – Using Survivor Testimonies and Memoirs in the Classroom

~*Jennifer Koss*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, ELL/ML, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Reading Recovery, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Preservice, Title 1

Survivor testimonies offer a powerful entry point for teaching the Holocaust and other genocides, helping students connect emotionally while developing historical understanding and critical thinking. This session will explore how to thoughtfully incorporate memoirs, diaries, and oral histories into 6th–12th grade classrooms. Participants will examine age-appropriate texts, digital testimony resources, and strategies for guiding sensitive discussions. Attendees will leave with practical tools to deepen empathy, literacy skills, and engagement through firsthand accounts.



Fr-C13 Lighting the spark: Evidence based literacy approaches to engage and support learners

~*Dr. Susan Tily, Dr. Hiawatha Smith*

Audience: PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator, Preservice



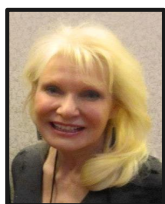
This roundtable session will connect educators with professors of literacy from across Wisconsin. In this session, educators will rotate, in small groups, to learn from professors about literacy skills and strategies rooted in research. Participants will rotate between six to eight tables and will leave each session with different evidence-based practices that can be implemented in their classrooms. This session will support educators in making connections between theory, research, and practice as we navigate the various literacy contexts shaping our practices in Wisconsin. This session is also an opportunity for various educational stakeholders to connect theory and evidence-based practices to the realities of current classroom contexts.

WSRA 2026 Featured Speaker Biographies



Dr. Nancy Anderson is a Professor of Literacy and Learning at Texas Woman's University. Nancy works extensively in school settings connecting research and theory to effective teaching practices with leaders and teachers. Nancy's publications include articles in *The Reading Teacher* and a book for novice teachers, *Linking Assessment to Reading Comprehension*

Instruction: A Framework for Actively Engaging Literacy Learners, K-8. Her areas of research include the relationship between language and literacy across classroom and leadership settings.



Kathryn Champeau is a reading specialist/consultant with over 40 years of experience, a former UW-Milwaukee adjunct instructor of 28 years, and a past president of the Wisconsin State Reading Association, currently serving as their Legislative Committee Chair. She works side-by-side with classroom teachers supporting their understanding of dialogic and responsive

teaching. Kathy has co-authored a recent book with Dr. Peter Johnston, *Engaging Literate Minds: Developing Children's Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Lives, K-3*, which chronicles the results of this work. This book received the Literacy Research Association's 2021 Literacy B. Fry Honorable Mention. Kathy has presented at international, national, state, and local conferences.



Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul is the founder of Red Clay Educators, co-director of the Institute for Racial Equity in Literacy and the Teach Black History All Year Institute and executive producer and host of The Black Creators Series. She is an educator with more than 20-years of classroom experience who has written several books about instruction that supports adolescent

literacy development including the best seller *Antiracist Reading Revolution: A Framework for Teaching Beyond Representation Toward Liberation*. Sonja has adapted the #1NYT Best Seller, *Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism and You* and the upcoming YA version of *How The Word Is Passed*. Sonja leads professional development for schools and organizations in equity and antiracism. For a full bio and additional information visit sonjacherrypaul.com.



Linda Christensen taught high school language arts in Portland, Oregon for most of the last 50 years. After recently retiring as Director of the Oregon Writing Project at Lewis & Clark College, she continues to write and edit *Rethinking Schools Magazine*. She is the author of *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word* and *Teaching*

for Joy and Justice: Re-imagining the Language Arts Classroom, and most recently, the co-editor of *The New Teacher Book* and *Transgender Justice in Schools*.



Kathy Collins presents at conferences and works in schools all over the world to support teachers in developing high-quality, effective literacy instruction. She is the co-author, along with Matt Glover, of *I Am Reading: Nurture Meaning-Making and Joyful Engagement with Any Book* (Heinemann, 2015) and the co-author, along with Janine Bempechat, of *Not This But That: No More Mindless*

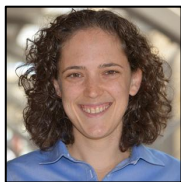
Homework (Heinemann, 2017). Kathy's other books include *Reading for Real: Teach Children to Read With Power, Intention, and Joy in K-3 Classrooms* (Stenhouse, 2008) and *Growing Readers: Units of Study in Primary Classrooms* (Stenhouse, 2004). She recently returned to the classroom as a fifth grade teacher.



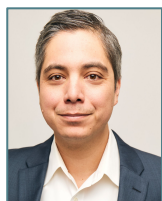
Dr. Catherine Compton-Lilly holds the John C. Hungerpiller Chair at the University of South Carolina. She engages in longitudinal research projects to examine how time operates as a contextual factor in children's lives as they progress through school and construct their identities as students and readers. In an ongoing study, Dr. Compton-Lilly is following children from immigrant families from primary school

through high school. Dr. Compton-Lilly has authored several books and journal articles.

WSRA 2026 Featured Speaker Biographies



Dr. Rachael Gabriel is Professor of Literacy Education at the University of Connecticut. Rachael currently teaches courses for educators and doctoral students pursuing specialization in literacy, and is Editor in Chief of *The Reading Teacher*. A former teacher and reading specialist, Rachael's research is focused on: literacy instruction, leadership and intervention, as well as policies related to teacher development and evaluation.



Antero Garcia is a professor in the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University. His research explores the possibilities of speculative imagination and healing in educational research. Prior to completing his Ph.D., Garcia was an English teacher at a public high school in South Central Los Angeles. He has authored or edited more than two dozen books about the possibilities of literacies, play, and civics in transforming schooling in America. Antero currently co-edits *La Cuenta*, an online publication centering the voices and perspectives of individuals labeled undocumented in the U.S. Antero received his Ph.D. in the Urban Schooling division of the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.



Ms. Berit Gordon is a teacher, consultant, and speaker focused on helping educators thrive in their classrooms. She has taught at all levels, from elementary to college, including at Columbia University's Teachers College. Currently, she teaches at Montclair State University while consulting in K-12 schools across the US and Canada. She is the author of *The Joyful Teacher, No More Fake Reading*, and *The New Teacher Handbook*. Her workshops and presentations provide practical strategies for the real challenges teachers face.



Marcelle Haddix is the dean of UW–Madison's highly ranked School of Education, a position she has held since August 2024. She is a leading scholar in literacy and teacher education, with a particular focus on the experiences of students and teachers of color. Her book, *Cultivating Racial and Linguistic Diversity in Literacy Teacher Education: Teachers Like Me*, received the 2018 Outstanding Book Award from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Dean Haddix's work is highly interdisciplinary and has been a great fit for the School of Education and its 10 departments, which house a range of highly regarded programs across the arts, health, and education. Prior to arriving on the UW–Madison campus, Dean Haddix spent 16 years in numerous leadership positions at Syracuse University, including most recently as associate provost for strategic initiatives. While at Syracuse, she also facilitated literacy programs for adolescent and adult communities, including the award-winning Writing Our Lives project. Dean Haddix, who also holds the Karen A. Falk Distinguished Chair in Education, received her Ph.D. from Boston College in 2008.



Dr. Rebecca Gambrell Harper is a Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education and Human Development at Augusta University where she teaches courses in literacy, qualitative research, and curriculum and literacy. Her research focuses on writing and critical literacy, and the ways in which authentic literacy can foster engagement, agency, and empathy in students. She is the Director of the Augusta University Writing Project and the author of *Content Area Writing that Rocks (and Works)!*, *Write Now and Write On: 37 Strategies for Authentic Daily Writing in Every Content Area*, *Writing Workouts: Strategies to Build Students' Writing Skills, Stamina, and Success*, *Literacy Practice in Sports and Coaching: Developing Literacy Competencies in Interdisciplinary Environments*, and *Write From the Beginning: 42 Joyful Lessons to Foster Skilled Writers Every Day*.

WSRA 2026 Featured Speaker Biographies



Emily Hines, Ed.D., is a Professor of Reading where she facilitates graduate reading programs as the Reading Teacher and Reading Specialist licensure coordinator at UW-Stout; Emily also teaches undergraduate pre-service teachers in educational pedagogy and multiculturalism. Emily's research focus is literacy and diversity, where she believes the two intersect and are interdependent. Emily continues to grow and develop in her cultural competence and literacy advocacy efforts within PK-16 and local and global communities.



Gay Ivey, PhD, is the William E. Moran Distinguished Professor in Literacy at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. She studies reading engagement among children and young adults and the consequences of meaningful literacy experiences on their academic lives and wellbeing. She has written about her research in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Language Arts*, and *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. Her most recent book (with Peter Johnston) is *Teens Choosing to Read: Fostering Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Growth Through Books* (2023, Teachers College Press). She is a recipient of the P. David Pearson Scholarly Influence Award, a past president of the Literacy Research Association, and an elected member of the Reading Hall of Fame.



Carol Jago has taught English in public schools for 32 years and is associate director of the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA. She served as president of NCTE and as chair of the College Board's English Academic Advisory Committee. She has also served on the National Assessment Governing Board which oversees NAEP, the Nation's Report Card. Carol has published many books with Heinemann including *Cohesive Writing: Why Concept Is Not Enough*, and *The Book in Question: Why and How Reading Is in Crisis* along with books on contemporary multicultural authors for NCTE. She is a consulting author to HMH Into Reading, a K-6 reading program and for HMH Into Literature, a 6-12 literature program. Carol has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the California Association of Teachers of English and was the recipient of the National Council of Teachers of English Squire Award given to honor an individual who has had a transforming influence and has made a lasting intellectual contribution to the profession.



Erin Entrada Kelly is a two-time Newbery Medalist and National Book Award Finalist whose work has been translated into more than a dozen languages. She has a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from McNeese University, an MFA in fiction from Rosemont College, and an honorary doctorate of fine arts from Moore College of Art and Design. She lives in Delaware.



Lester Laminack, Professor Emeritus, Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina is a full-time writer and consultant working with schools throughout the United States and abroad. Dr. Laminack has served on several regional and national boards, has served as the co-editor of the NCTE journal *Primary Voices*, and as the editor of the "Children's Book Review" column of the NCTE journal *Language Arts*. He served several years as the Basic Reading Consultant to Literacy Volunteers of America and as secretary for the NC Association for the Education of Young Children. He is the recipient of two teaching awards from Western Carolina University: the Botner Superior Teaching Award from the College of Education and Allied Profession, and the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award from the university. He is the author or co-author of numerous articles, blog posts, podcasts, and over 25 books for teachers and children. His academic publications include, *The Writing Teacher's Troubleshooting Guide* (Heinemann), *Writers ARE Readers: Flipping Reading Strategies into Writing Instruction* (Heinemann), *Reading to Make a Difference* (Heinemann), *Critical Comprehension: Lessons for Guiding Students to Deeper Meaning* (Corwin). His upcoming book, *From Empathy to Action: Empowering Students to Take Action Through Reading, Writing, and Research* (Routledge) will be released in September 2025. Lester is also the author of several children's books including: *The Sunsets of Miss Olivia Wiggins*, *Trevor's Wiggly-Wobbly Tooth*, *Saturdays and Teacakes*, *Jake's 100th Day of School*, *Snow Day!*, *Three Hens and a Peacock* (2012 Children's Choice K-2 Book of the Year Award), *The King of Bees*, and *Three Hens, a Peacock, and the Enormous Egg*. His most recent book for children is *A Cat Like That*. You can contact him via email at LesterLaminack@gmail.com or through his website www.LesterLaminack.com

WSRA 2026 Featured Speaker Biographies



Merri Lindgren is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center, (CCBC) at the School of Education. Merri has co authored numerous editions of the annual CCBC Choices publication both in the 1990s and since the 2002 edition. The CCBC is part of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Deborah MacPhee is a former first and second-grade teacher, K-5 literacy coach, and director of the Borg Center for Reading and Literacy at Illinois State University (ISU). She is currently a professor of elementary literacy education and interim associate director and coordinator of undergraduate programs at the School of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University. Her research critically examines discourses of literacy coaching, professional development school interactions, and metaphors in media on the science of reading. In 2023, she co-published her first book on literacy teaching and learning titled *Learning to Be Literate: More than a Single Story*.



Dr. Dennis Magliozzi has been teaching high school English since 2008. He has an MFA in poetry from Vermont College of Fine Arts and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of New Hampshire. He has supervised teachers in the UNH Learning Through Teaching (LTT) program and teaches in UNH's Writers Academy. He is co-developer of "Arts in Action," winner of a 2023 New Hampshire Governor's Arts Education Award. He is also a co-founder of Bookshelf Diversity, a statewide grant project designed to get diverse books into the hands of New Hampshire students. Magliozzi's current book, co-written with Kristina Peterson, *AI in the Writing Workshop: Finding the Write Balance* (Heinemann, 2025), explores AI as a thought partner, research companion, and writing tool. In addition to their book, they regularly contribute to leading publications such as *Education Week*, *California English*, and *English Journal*.



Dr. Lindsey Moses is an author, consultant, and professor of literacy education at Arizona State University. Lindsey, a former elementary teacher, 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. She is the author of *Supporting Multilingual Learners: 50 Strategies for Language and Literacy* and *Supporting English Learners in the Reading Workshop*. Lindsey is also the co-author of *Comprehension and English Language Learners* and *What Are the Rest of My Kids Doing? Fostering Independence in the K-2 Reading Workshop*.



David J. O'Connor (Anishinaabe or Ojibwe name is Bwaakoningwiid) is originally from and is a citizen of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. In January 2012, he became the Education Consultant - American Indian Studies Program at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). In David's role at DPI, he supports school districts' efforts to provide instruction on the histories, cultures and tribal sovereignty of American Indian Nations and tribal communities of Wisconsin, often referenced as Wisconsin Act 31, and the education of Native American students. David provides training opportunities and presents at conferences and workshops on American Indian Studies and provides general consultation on issues related to Native American education. He also serves as liaison to the Tribal Nations and communities of Wisconsin; tribal education departments, the Wisconsin Indian Education Association (WIEA), the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC), the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations, and the Office of Indian Education - U.S. Department of Education. David received both his Master of Science (M.S.) and Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Madison, WI. He is also a graduate of the School District of Ashland in Ashland, WI, where he did his K-12 education and a graduate of the Bad River Head Start in Odanah, WI on the Bad River Indian Reservation where he started his education and early learning.

WSRA 2026 Featured Speaker Biographies



Dr. Lilly Padia's scholarship and community work explore liberation for children, families, and communities through the intersections of disability, language, and race. She is an assistant professor of Raciolinguistic Justice in Early Childhood Teacher Education at Erikson Institute in Chicago. Her scholarship has been published in journals such as *Race, Ethnicity and Education; Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools; Journal of Critical Study of Communication and Disability; and Theory Into Practice*. Her new book, *Teaching Beyond Spoken Words: Communicating With Bilingual Nonspeaking Children in the Classroom* was published in June 2025 with Teachers College Press.



Baptiste Paul is the award-winning author of *The Field, To Carnival, I Am Farmer: Growing an Environmental Movement in Cameroon, Peace and Climb On*. His works have garnered many starred reviews from Kirkus, Booklist, and *School Library Journal*, and several titles have been translated into multiple languages. He loves writing stories inspired by his childhood in Saint Lucia. In addition to being an author, he's a lot of things: a dad and a sports fan (he loves soccer). He enjoys sharing his island culture and Kweyol/Creole language with anyone who will listen. He also enjoys roasting his own coffee and cocoa beans. When he's not writing or hiking, he upcycles wood pallets into planters and wooden floors, to name a few. He lives and works in the US now, but he will travel just about anywhere to talk about his books and St. Lucian culture as long as there is a way to get there. To learn more about Baptiste, please visit his website baptistepaul.net.



Kristina Peterson has been teaching high school English in Exeter, NH since 2008. She holds a Masters of Arts in Teaching and has served the educational community as the Secretary for NHCTE since 2017. She also teaches in UNH's Learning Through Teaching, Literacy Institute, and Writers Academy programs. She co-authored *AI in the Writing Workshop: Finding the Write Balance* (Heinemann, 2025), alongside Dennis Magliozzi, which explores AI as a thought partner, research companion, and writing tool, while addressing the ethical complexities and instructional opportunities AI presents in today's classrooms. In addition to their book, Kristina and Dennis regularly contribute to leading publications such as *Education Week*, *California English*, and *English Journal*. Dennis and Kristina are also developers of "Arts in Action," winner of the 2023 New Hampshire Governor's Arts Education Award and co-founded of Bookshelf Diversity, a grant that provides teachers with a diverse set of books for their classrooms. Whether supporting K-12 educators, higher education faculty, or law enforcement professionals, Kristina and Dennis combine research-based practices with real-world experience and a deeply engaging style to help others navigate—and harness—the power of AI responsibly.



Brett Pierce is the founder and Executive Director of Meridian Stories, a Digital Storytelling nonprofit for middle and high schoolers that challenges students to create digital narratives around core curricular goals. Brett recently authored his first book with Heinemann Publishing, *Expanding Literacy: Bringing Digital Storytelling into Your Classroom*, and wrote the National Geographic Storytelling for Impact course series in 2022 which won the Gold Anthem Award. Brett has spent much of his professional life at Sesame Workshop in New York City, serving as a Co-Executive Producer on media projects about literacy, math, science, global citizenry and conflict-resolution for youth around the world, including projects in China, North Macedonia, Indonesia, Poland, Iraq, and Ecuador. Brett began his career teaching English in a high school in Virginia, and has continued teaching intermittently at Fordham University, University of Southern Maine, and Colby College. Brett has a BA from Kenyon College, and Masters Degrees from Middlebury College (English) and Columbia University (Education). He is married with two grown children and lives in Freeport, Maine.



Michelle Ruhe, Literacy Coach A Wisconsin native, Michelle is a 25 year veteran educator, having taught K, 1, 2, and 4. In addition, she served as a K-5 literacy interventionist and is now a K-5 school based literacy coach in one of the fastest growing and top performing districts in the state of SC. Michelle works alongside teachers in classrooms each and every day, and fully understands the challenges today's teachers face. It is her mission to help as many educators as she can to streamline, simplify, and strengthen their classroom instruction.



Dr. Frank Serafini is a Professor of Literacy Education and Children's Literature at Arizona State University. Frank has published over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles in the field of literacy education, multimodality, and children's literature. He is an award-winning children's picture book author and illustrator and received the Mayhill Arbuthnot Award from the International Literacy Association as the 2014 Distinguished Professor of Children's Literature. In addition, Frank was recognized by the International Visual Literacy Association with the Distinguished Educator Award in 2021.

WSRA 2026 Featured Speaker Biographies



Dr. Hiawatha Smith, an associate professor of literacy education at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, brings extensive experience in K-8 classroom teaching and literacy coaching to his work with educators. His research focuses on supporting struggling readers, reading motivation, developmental word study instruction, and incorporating diverse perspectives in children's and adolescent literature.

Hiawatha works directly with schools to provide professional development and supports pre-service teachers in their practicum experiences. He is the author of textbooks on children's literature and literacy foundations, and his scholarly work appears in *Reading Research Quarterly*, *English Leadership Quarterly*, and the *Minnesota English Journal*. A member of the University of Michigan's Diversity Scholars Network, he received the 2023 NCTE Early Career Educator of Color award. Driven by a commitment to student success with literacy, Hiawatha is passionate about helping all educators create inclusive, engaging literacy environments where every learner can thrive.



Dr. Paul Thomas, Professor of Education (Furman University, Greenville SC), taught high school English in rural South Carolina before moving to teacher education. He is currently the poetry editor for *English Journal* (National Council of Teachers of English) and author of *Black Widow Underestimated and Hypersexualized: "I am what I am."* (Brill, 2025), *How to End the Reading War and Serve the*

Literacy Needs of All Students (2nd ed.; IAP, 2022), and *Teaching Writing as Journey, Not Destination: Essays Exploring What 'Teaching Writing' Means* (IAP, 2019). NCTE named Thomas the 2013 George Orwell Award winner. He co-edited (with Chris Goering) *Critical Media Literacy and Fake News in Post-Truth America* (Brill, 2018), receiving the 2019 Divergent Award for Excellence in 21st Century Literacies. Follow his work @plthomasEdD, @plthomasedd.bsky.social, and The Reliable Narrator (<https://radicalscholarship.wordpress.com/>).



Stef Wade's dreams came true when she published her first children's book, *A Place for Pluto* in 2018. She continues to live her dream every day by writing books and presenting to children all across the country, sharing her love for sneaky learning, life lessons, and a good pun. Stef is the best-selling author of other books such as *The Very Last Leaf*, *Q & U*

CALL IT QUILTS, and more! Her next books, *The Very Eager Evergreen* and *The Fun Guy*, release in Fall 2026. She loves to travel with her husband and three boys. They currently reside in Brookfield, Wisconsin with their Goldendoodle, Bobby Franklin.



Dr. Jeffrey D. Wilhelm is 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 the founding director of the Maine Writing Project!) and a teacher of middle or high schoolers each spring. He has authored 43 texts, mostly about literacy teaching, including: the NCTE

Promising Research Award winner *"You Gotta BE the Book: Teaching Engaged and Reflective Reading to Adolescents"* and the Russell Awards for Distinguished Research for both *"Reading Don't Fix No Chevys": Literacy in the Lives of Young Men* and for *Reading Unbound: Promoting the Power of Pleasure Reading*. His latest books are *Planning Powerful Instruction: 7 Must Make Moves of Transformational Teaching* which operationalizes major agreements from across the learning sciences about effective teaching and powerful learning, and *Fighting Fake News: Identifying and Interrogating Information Pollution* about how to help students know the susceptibilities of their own minds and how to control for these when reading digital texts and social media. This text promotes news literacy and an understanding/responsible use of AI. His latest book is *Diving Deep Into Fiction*, about using rules of notice to guide the reading and composing of narrative fiction.



Jeff Williams, an Ohio literacy educator for 35 years, is the Reading Recovery Teacher for St. Mary's College of California. He is a regular speaker at international, national, and regional conferences and provides staff development in school districts across the country. He has served as President of the Literacy Council of North American and has been on the the Board of Directors for

over a decade. Jeff has co-authored and contributed to professional books, numerous professional journals, and authored 120 children's books for Hameray Publishers.



Dr. Michael J. Young, Assistant Professor of Elementary Literacy Education, earned his Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning: Language, Literacy, and Culture from the University of Iowa. His research examines pursuits of equity and justice in literacy teaching and learning. Dr. Young serves as Co-Chair for the Legislative and Social

Issues Committee for the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER). He also serves as the Co-Chair for the Whippoorwill Award for Rural Young Adult and Middle Grades Literature.

Wisconsin's Featured Professors of Literacy Biographies



Dr. Amber Garbe - Prior to joining the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point faculty, Amber worked in Wisconsin K-12 school districts for 15 years in a variety of roles, including classroom teacher, ELL Teacher, Reading Teacher, Reading Coach and District Literacy Coordinator. She is dedicated to creating systems that support all students. Current research interests include evidence-based practices for multilingual students, culturally relevant pedagogy, inquiry-based learning, text set implementation, and early intervention.



Emily Hines, Ed.D., is a Professor of Reading where she facilitates graduate reading programs as the Reading Teacher and Reading Specialist licensure coordinator at UW-Stout; Emily also teaches undergraduate pre-service teachers in educational pedagogy and multiculturalism. Emily's research focus is literacy and diversity, where she believes the two intersect and are interdependent. Emily continues to grow and develop in her cultural competence and literacy advocacy efforts within PK-16 and local and global communities.



Dr. Katrena Leininger is an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. She has more than twenty-five years' experience in Literacy Education. Her experience includes work in elementary and bilingual education, early literacy intervention, and literacy coaching, as well as literacy teacher education at K-12, undergraduate and graduate levels.



Dr. Hiawatha Smith, an associate professor of literacy education at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, brings extensive experience in K-8 classroom teaching and literacy coaching to his work with educators. His research focuses on supporting struggling readers, reading motivation, developmental word study instruction, and incorporating diverse perspectives in

children's and adolescent literature. Hiawatha works directly with schools to provide professional development and supports pre-service teachers in their practicum experiences. He is the author of textbooks on children's literature and literacy foundations, and his scholarly work appears in *Reading Research Quarterly*, *English Leadership Quarterly*, and the *Minnesota English Journal*. A member of the University of Michigan's Diversity Scholars Network, he received the 2023 NCTE Early Career Educator of Color award. Driven by a commitment to student success with literacy, Hiawatha is passionate about helping all educators create inclusive, engaging literacy environments where every learner can thrive.



Dr. Susan Tily is currently an assistant professor at The University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. She taught fourth and second grade in South Jersey, right outside of Philadelphia. While there, she served as a mentor for early-career teachers and the chairperson of the district's Professional Development Committee. She completed her PhD at The University of

Texas at Austin in Language and Literacy Studies. She worked as a field supervisor for student teachers, instructor for literacy methods courses, and a graduate research assistant for Senior Associate Dean, Dr. Beth Maloch. Her dissertation studied the teaching of writing in inclusion classrooms. Currently, at UWEC, Dr. Tily teaches literacy methods courses to preservice teachers. She is involved with the Wisconsin State Reading Association (WSRA) and is a recent recipient of UWEC's Nancy Quinn Early Career University Fellowship. Her research interests include writing, the work of young writers, inclusion classrooms, approaches to reading instruction, and supporting early-career teachers as they transition from university to classroom.

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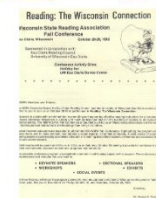
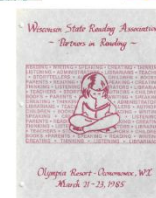
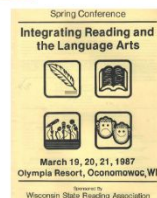
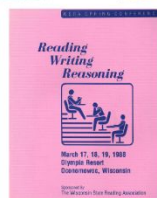
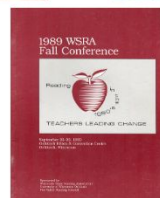
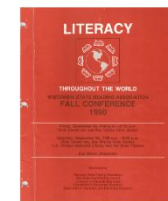
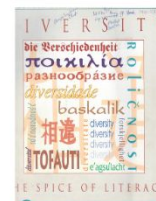
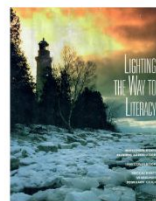
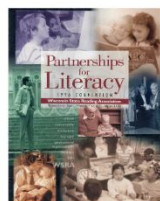
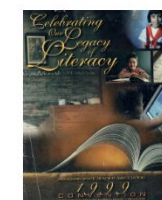
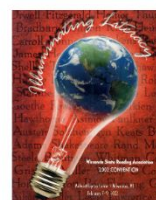
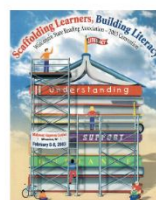
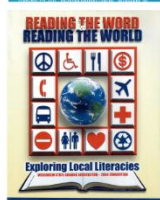
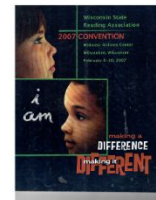
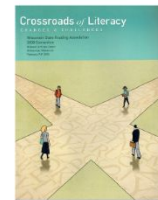
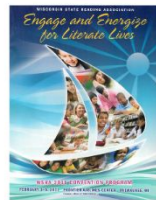
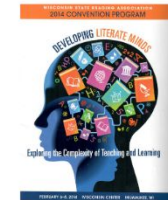
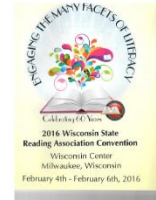
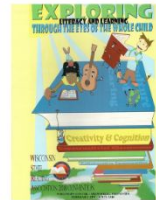
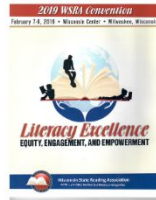
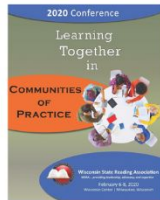
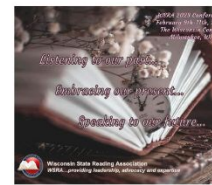
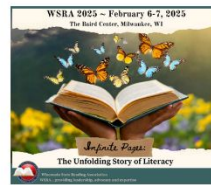
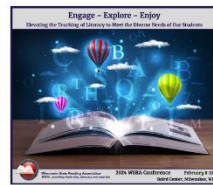


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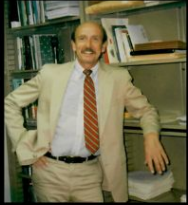
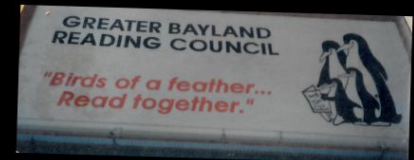


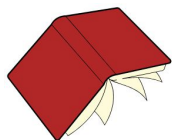


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Dates to Remember!

Registration for WSRA 2026 closes February 4, 2026



The window to submit a WSRA 2027 proposal is February 1, 2026 to June 26, 2026

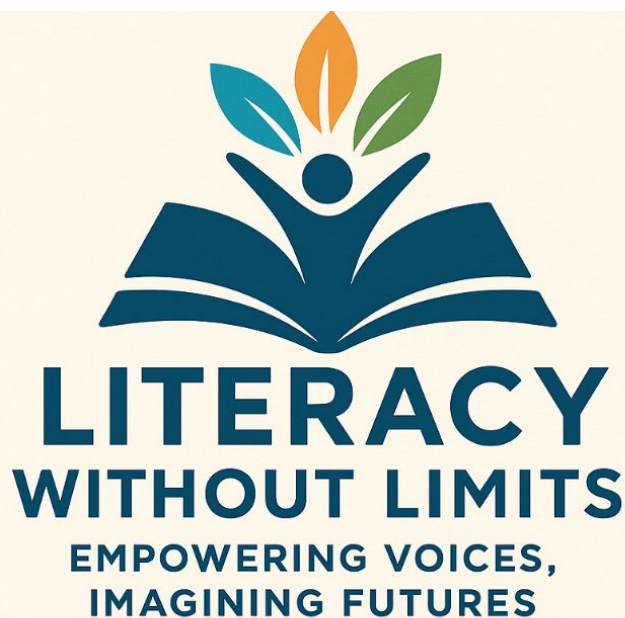
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6a

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Access information about local reading councils at <http://www.wsra.org/councils>

Submit your self-nomination to join a committee at <http://www.wsra.org/committees-task-forces>

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**Fill out the
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**We would love to have you join
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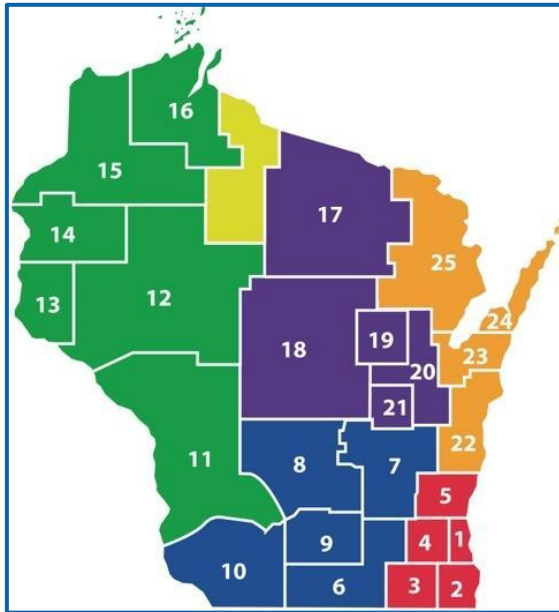


Wisconsin State Reading Association
WSRA...providing leadership, advocacy and expertise

2025-2026 WSRA Committee Chairs

Committee	Chair(s)
Advocacy	Dr. Emily Hines
Children's Literature	Open
Digital Literacies	Open
Early Intervention	Dr. Katrena Leininger & Amy Sippert
Elementary Reading	Nichole Ponzer
Families & Literacy	Kelsey Guenther
High School Literacy	Open
International Partnership	Dr. Rita Chen
Legislative	Kathy Champeau
Membership	Open
Middle Level Literacy	Megan Miller
Preservice Teachers	Dr. Susan Tily & Dr. Amber Garbe
Reading Specialists	Brenda Vitcenda-Moore
Research	Open
Research:Pat Bricker	Krissy Lize
Title I	Diane Salazar
Young Authors Workshops	Sue Bradley & Lynn Graening

Get involved in the Wisconsin State Reading Association! Join a local Reading Council.



For information regarding WSRA's Local Councils, scan the QR Code.



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18~ Central Wisconsin Reading Council

19~ Wolf River Reading Council

20 ~Mid-East Reading Council

21~ Fox Valley Reading Council

25 ~Northeast Reading Council

24~ Door County Reading Council

23~ Greater Bayland Literacy Council

22~ Interlake Reading Council

16 ~Ashland Bayfield Literacy Council

15~ Lake Superior Reading Council

14~ Northwest Wisconsin Reading Council

13~ St. Croix Valley Reading Council

12 ~Eau Claire Area Reading Council

11 ~Midwest Wisconsin Reading Council

10~ Hidden Valley Reading Council

9 ~Madison Area Reading Council

8 ~Muirland Literacy Council

7 ~Rock River Reading Council

6 ~South Kettle Moraine Reading Council

5~ Washington Ozaukee Reading Council

4~ Waukesha County Reading Council

3~ Southern Lakes Reading Council

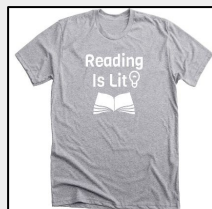
2~ Racine Kenosha Reading Council

1~ Milwaukee Area Reading Council

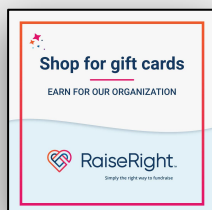
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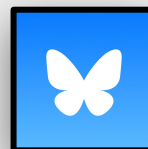
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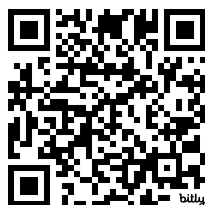
Registration

To register for the 2026 Conference go to
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See the website for *Early Bird* and *Full-Time Undergraduate* discounts.

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**Registration closes on
February 4, 2026**



Early Bird Rates!! (Register by January 11, 2026)	WSRA Member	Non- Member
Thursday and Friday	\$375	\$475
Thursday	\$199	\$299
Friday	\$199	\$299

Standard Fees (Register after January 11, 2026)	WSRA Member	Non- Member
Thursday and Friday	\$475	\$575
Thursday	\$299	\$399
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Full-Time, Undergraduate Students find SPECIAL prices at [wsra.org](https://www.wsra.org)!

WSRA Policies: The Wisconsin State Reading Association sponsors conferences and institutes focused on the improvement of literacy instruction. Institutes are held throughout the state of Wisconsin. WSRA's policy is to conduct its own conferences and institutes. Periodically, these may be coordinated or sponsored in conjunction with WSRA's local reading councils or WSRA committees, accredited universities, DPI, CESAs, and other organizations in Wisconsin.

- ❖ WSRA policy states that "Presenters at WSRA events may not promote products. A product is defined as a published program, scripted material or kit designed to be used in a school. This does not include published professional books."
- ❖ The WSRA conference will not be canceled due to weather conditions. (Refunds are not granted for no-shows).
- ❖ All attendees must be registered and have a WSRA Conference name tag visible at all times when at the Baird Center.
- ❖ Attendance at the WSRA conference constitutes consent to be photographed and video/audio recorded for use in publicity for WSRA.
- ❖ WSRA is dedicated to providing a professional, safe, and harassment-free environment for attendees.
- ❖ If you are in need of a lactation room at the conference, please stop at the Help Desk for the key.

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Fr-C14 I Can Read...Music!

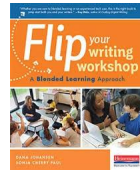
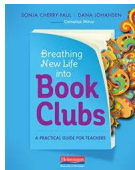
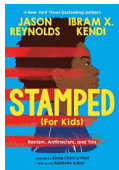
~Dr. Yolanda Williams

Audience: Administrator, ELL/ML, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Recovery, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Title 1

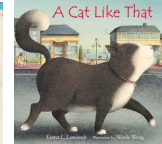
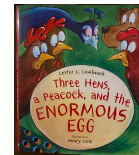
Step into a high-energy, music-filled session that bridges generations and makes learning come alive! Using songs from a wide range of genres, this interactive workshop demonstrates how lyric analysis and close reading can enrich instruction in reading, writing, social studies, and language arts. Participants will explore annotation strategies that support language learners and enhance comprehension across multiple content areas. Discover how to transform song lyrics into engaging texts for analysis, interpretation, and critical thinking. This time-travel-themed experience offers practical, classroom-ready tools to connect curriculum to students' lives in meaningful and memorable ways.

Author Book Signing

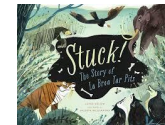
Thursday, February 5, 1:15 pm



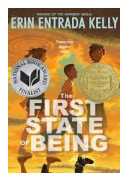
Sonja Cherry-Paul
Lester Laminack



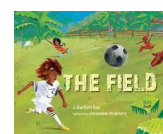
Joyce Uglow
Stef Wade



Friday, February 6, 1:15 pm



Erin Entrada Kelly
Baptiste Paul





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February 5 & 6, 2026 * Baird Center * Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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1. Existing users, please enter your username and password. New users, please enter your preferred email address.
2. **REGISTER ONLINE BY FEBRUARY 4, 2026** at <https://wsra.memberclicks.net/conferences> **Preferred payments are by** Check, ACH, Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit cards.

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3. **SCHOLARSHIPS:** WSRA offers the potential of five scholarships to full-time undergraduate students as well as five graduate scholarships. Submit to wsra@wsra.org. The deadline is Nov. 15, 2025.
4. **WSRA CANCELLATION POLICY:** WSRA 2026 Conference cancellations submitted in writing before January 31, 2026, will be refunded the cost of registration minus a \$75 processing fee. After January 31, 2026, no refunds will be given, however, you may transfer your registration to another individual from your organization through February 4, 2026. All cancellation and transfer requests must be submitted in writing to wsra@wsra.org. No-shows and unpaid invoices will be subject to collections for the full amount.

Wisconsin State Reading Association
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