

The Wisconsin State Reading Association's 2027 Annual Conference

Literacy Without Limits: Empowering Voices, Imagining Futures



February 11-12, 2027
Baird Center, Milwaukee, WI

WSRA 2027 Conference Planning

Conference Chair



Susan Tily

Program



Jennifer Russ



Emily Freeman

Exhibits



Sue Fondrie



Tom Leis

Book Sales



Jane Jaenke



Sue Boquist

Registration



Teri Lassig

Hospitality



Ryanne Deschane

A Word From Our President and Conference Chair



Sarah Schnuelle
WSRA 2026-27
President

Dear Friends of WSRA,

You may have joined us today hoping to grow as a professional, or because you wanted to expand your literacy knowledge. Perhaps it was to be better equipped to advocate for your students, or simply to enjoy being celebrated as the professional that you are. Maybe it was all of the above. Whatever your motivations, thank you for choosing WSRA for literacy leadership, advocacy and expertise.

This year's program, centered around the theme, *Literacy Without Limits: Empowering Voices, Imagining Futures*, will surely expand your mind and speak to your heart. In an increasingly digital and disconnected world, Susan Tily and her team have worked diligently to create an opportunity for us to not only learn from highly respected literacy experts, but to also find joy by being in community with colleagues who share similar passions. Such opportunities for educators are rare, but we at WSRA are constantly imagining a future where literacy is joyful and all voices that matter are empowered.

Whatever may have brought you to this Conference, I hope you'll consider continuing your growth beyond today by becoming a WSRA member. Literacy is complex, but we look forward to supporting you in navigating those complexities in the future.

Warmly,
Sarah Schnuelle
2026-2027 WSRA President



Susan Tily
2027
Conference Chair

Dear WSRA Colleagues and Community,

I am excited to welcome you all to WSRA's 71st annual conference here in Milwaukee. Our theme, *Literacy Without Limits: Empowering Voices, Imagining Futures* serves as a reminder that literacy is embedded in almost everything we do throughout our lives. Literacy is how we express, create, process, connect, and advocate. It is a lifelong practice that helps us make meaning of our experiences and engage with the world around us. When we think about *Literacy Without Limits* we consider the possibilities for students when we connect evidence-based literacy practices to authentic, expansive, real-world purposes for literacy. Foundational skills matter, and when taught in thoughtful, responsive, critical, and humanizing ways they open pathways to position students as creators, meaning-makers, and decision-makers.

Educators play a vital role in helping students utilize literacy as a source of well-being, a spark for curiosity and engagement, and a vehicle for change. The 2027 WSRA Conference Committee worked to curate a diverse range of speakers whose expertise reflects the richness and complexity of literacy learning across a variety of contexts and communities. My hope is you leave sessions with new ideas, a strengthened sense of community, and renewed excitement to bring to students across Wisconsin. Thank you for the important work you do each day in your classrooms and community spaces and thank you for being a part of the WSRA community. I look forward to learning together this conference.

With hope and possibility,

Susan Tily
2027 WSRA Conference Chair



Table of Contents



WSRA Missions and Beliefs	1
Planning Your Visit	2
Exhibit Hall	3
Conference Schedule	4
Thursday	5
Friday	23
Awards Ceremony	24
Author Book Signings	42
Featured Speakers' Biographies	43
WSRA Conference Sponsors	51
WSRA Future Dates to Remember	52
Get Involved in WSRA	53
Conference Registration	57
WSRA President's Hall of Fame	59
Board of Directors	58





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.
- **Research:** Promote and disseminate research findings that will strengthen and support the best practices for instruction and assessment in literacy.



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

For FAQ's visit
<https://tinyurl.com/33zvtnn8>



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.

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

<https://tinyurl.com/5b2kdr89>



SpringHill Suites

Milwaukee Downtown

744 N Vel R. Phillips Ave, Milwaukee, WI

Call 414-273-9811

Or go to

<https://tinyurl.com/mtv2vs2u>



For information about
parking in Milwaukee:

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



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.

'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.

<https://www.visitmilwaukee.org/>



Visit the Exhibitors

Exhibitor Hours

Thursday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm / Friday 7:30 am - 2:15 pm

Ahrens Education Group
BBB Education Enterprises: Crossland
Literacy
Books and Company
Carroll University
Charge Mommy Books
Haman Gibson and *The Boy with the Glass
Stomach*
Educators Credit Union
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
LaToya Washington, author
Loyola Press
Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education
Resource Center
Rethinking Schools
Rise Up Foundation
Savvas Learning Company
Self Esteem Shop



Society of Children's Book Writers and
Illustrators -Wisconsin
Townsend Press
UW-La Crosse Graduate Education
Programs
UW-Milwaukee, College of Community
Engagement & Professions
UW-Stevens Point School of Education
UW-Stout
WEA Academy-Wisconsin Education
Association Council (WEAC)
And More To Come!



Happy Hour!

Thursday, Feb. 11
3:30 to 5:00 pm

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

Conference Schedule



Schedule for Thursday, February 11 at WSRA 2027

<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	Ballrooms
1:15 pm	2:00 pm	Book Signing	Exhibit Hall
2:15 pm	3:30 pm	Breakout Session C	See At-A-Glance

Schedule for Friday, February 12 at WSRA 2027

<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	Ballrooms
1:15 pm	2:00 pm	Book Signing	Exhibit Hall
2:15 pm	3:30 pm	Breakout Session C	See At-A-Glance

Check-in at the Registration Desk

Baird Center
400 W. Wisconsin Ave
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Wednesday, February 10

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Thursday, February 11

7:15 am - 4:00 pm

Friday, February 12

7:15 am - 4:00 pm

Thursday, February 11, 2027

Lunch ~ 12:30 pm



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

Sandwich and Salad Table

Mediterranean Wrap

Fresh Cucumber, Roasted Chickpeas, Roma Tomato, Roasted Red Onion, and Moroccan Spiced Couscous Tossed in Dill Tzatziki (V)

Roast Sirloin of Beef

Tomato, Sweet Onion Bacon Jam and Boursin Cheese on Herb and Garlic Focaccia

Smoked Turkey Cranberry Club

Smoked Usinger's Turkey, Tomato, Cranberry Relish, Crisp Lettuce and Pepper Aioli on Rustic Sourdough

WCD Caesar

Crisp Romaine Lettuce, Wisconsin Parmesan Tulle, Oven Roasted Cherry Tomato, Roasted Garlic Croutons and Creamy Pepper Caesar Dressing (V)

Honey Glazed Roasted Baby Carrots

Roasted Seasonal Vegetable Quinoa Tabbouleh

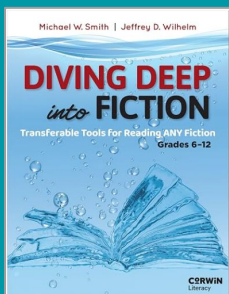
White Chocolate Door County Cherry Blondie

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

Thursday Keynote Address

Dr. Jeffrey Wilhelm

Teaching with a Sense of URGENCY: Teaching (Reading) AS and FOR Democracy



It is entirely within our capacity to create healthy microcultures of engaged reading in our classrooms, schools and districts. To quote Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed [people, like teachers!] can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” This interactive keynote will explore the lessons from a national level Democracy Building Instruction through Document Based Inquiries (DBI2) Project regarding how to meet the teaching challenges of our times (SOR, student engagement, reading capacity and resilience, promoting dispositions of democracy like news literacy, responsible AI use, respectful dialogue, a recognition and valuing of “factfulness,” and more), and to do so in ways that fulfill the requirements of our jobs, and in a way that meets, enlivens and enriches our own deepest hopes, values and commitments to our students, and that enriches and extends everything we work for and that keeps us teaching and our students learning.



Thursday Featured Speakers



Angeline
Boulley



Kathryn
Champeau



Catherine
Compton-Lilly



Leah
Durán



Violeta
Encarnación



Marcelle
Haddix



Rebecca
Harper



Emily
Hines



Katie
Kelly



Merri
Lindgren



Brady
Nash



David James
O'Connor



Kris
Piotrowski



Julian
Randall



John
Schu



Hiawatha
Smith



Cris
Tovani



Maria
Walther



Mia
Wenjen



Jeffrey
Wilhelm



Jacqueline
Witter-Easley



Kamania
Wynter-Hoyte



Dominic
Wyse

"The Challenges of Literacy Teaching and Learning in Complex Settings"

Expert Panel Discussion with
Leah Durán, Marcelle Haddix, Kris Piotrowski,
Jeffrey Wilhelm, Dominic Wyse,
and Kathryn Champeau

Award-winning educational psychologist Lee S. Shulman is quoted as describing teaching as "perhaps the most complex, most challenging, and most demanding, subtle, nuanced, and frightening activity that our species ever invented." What makes this statement true? Human variation and context, the complexity of both, and the interactions between them.

Consider some of the factors that make literacy complex: the complexities of the English language; children's complex thinking, their language, and their comprehension of language; the relationship of language to the disciplines; the reciprocity of reading and writing; children's complex backgrounds and

experiences; and the complexity of the human brain. Astrophysicists have stated that our brains are staggeringly intricate and the most complex structures in the known universe.

Why should understanding all of this complexity matter? Understanding human, contextual, and literacy complexity helps us become better teachers as we learn to navigate interactions, decisions, and organizations more effectively. This panel will discuss their perspectives on this question and provide us with insights to be more effective as literacy educators. In other words, this panel will help us help our students become literate.



Dr. Leah Durán, an Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at UW-Madison, is a former bilingual teacher who works with teachers to design asset-based curriculum and instruction and prepares them to work effectively in culturally and linguistically complex settings.



Dr. Marcelle Haddix, Dean of the UW-Madison School of Education, is an award-winning literacy scholar in literacy and teacher education whose work is highly interdisciplinary focusing on the experiences of students and teachers of color.



Kris Piotrowski, an Early Literacy Curriculum Specialist in the Troy School District in Michigan, worked closely with the district leadership team to create a comprehensive literacy plan to ensure that all children receive the literacy support they need.

Dr. Jeffrey Wilhelm, Distinguished Professor of English Education at Boise State University, studies the reading attitudes and aspirations of adolescent boys, with particular attention to supporting the learning of students often considered reluctant or resistant.



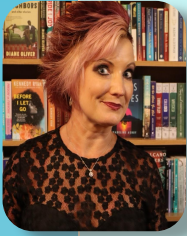
Dr. Dominic Wyse, Professor of Early Childhood and Primary Education at University College London Institute of Education, is internationally recognized for his work on teaching reading and writing and for his award-winning theory, The Double Helix of Reading and Writing.



Facilitator **Kathryn Champeau** is a WSRA past president, current member of the WSRA Board of Directors, and the Legislative Committee Chair.



Thursday Session A 9:45-11:00



Th-A02 Literacy Escape: Using Classroom and Digital Escape Rooms to Engage Students in Literacy

~*Dr. Rebecca G. Harper*

Audience: All

Escape rooms have become a widespread entertainment experience that individuals of all ages can enjoy. Using hints and clues, participants solve a series of puzzles to complete the objectives of the game and escape the room. In this session, participants will take part in a Literacy Escape room using a novel as an anchor text to address literacy competencies and standards in an engaging setting.



Th-A03 Planning and Prepping Aren't the Same: Strategies to Get Students to Dig into Reading, Writing, and Discussing

~*Cris Tovani*

Audience: Content Area, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Teacher Educator

Teachers know that preparation is necessary for student engagement. However, without long-term planning, students often view each day in isolation. During this breakout session, participants will have the opportunity to investigate how planning for students to read, write, and discuss is more than just prepping for the next class period. Participants will investigate how to create the need to know and explore why readable text matters. Participants will leave with strategies for long-term planning as well as prepping for daily reading, writing, and discussing.



Th-A04 From Decoding to Deep Thinking: Comprehension, Fluency, and Vocabulary Strategies for Intermediate Readers

~*Dr. Emily Hines*

Audience: English Language, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist, Preservice

Since the passage of Act 20 (2023), much of our instructional focus has been on early literacy skills of phonemic awareness and phonics. But what about our intermediate readers? In this session, we'll explore the remaining pillars of reading established by the National Reading Panel (2000): comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Come gather practical, evidence-based strategies for your classroom and share your own favorite ideas!

Thursday Session A 9:45-11:00

Th-A05 The Unlimited Possibilities of Read-Aloud Experiences: Maximizing Every Minute

~*Maria Walther*

Audience: Pre-K-2, 3-5, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice



Pressed for time but aiming for impact? Read-alouds can do it all by boosting language comprehension, building knowledge, and amplifying student voice. Join Maria to explore standout picture books and simple, effective ways to maximize every minute of your interactive read-aloud experiences, even within a published literacy program. You will leave with practical, classroom-tested strategies for making read-alouds a joyful, essential part of your daily routine.

Th-A06 Writing Without Limits: Empowering Student Voices Through a Process-Oriented Approach

~*Katie Kelly*

Audience: All



This session explores how a process-oriented approach to writing instruction can cultivate authentic student voice and agency. In an age shaped by AI, teaching the craft of writing remains essential for helping young people think critically, communicate effectively, and understand the power of their own words. Participants will learn practical strategies to create writing environments that honor student identities, support growth across the writing process, and position writing as a tool for expression, connection, and shaping their futures.

Th-A07 Literacy Without Limits: Empowering Voices, Imagining Futures

~*Mia Wenjen and Violeta Encarnación*

Audience: Content Area, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice



In this workshop, Mia Wenjen will introduce the reverso poetry form using Marilyn Singer's picture book *Mirror Mirror*. Violeta Encarnación will "read" *Barbed Wire Between Us* using just the illustrations. Violeta will then lead a workshop using the theme "home," where participants will translate a concept from words to pictures. The audience will be challenged to find other themes to apply, such as "family" or "love." Teachers will leave with a PDF of this session to teach students how to create their own picture books by thinking from 2 different perspectives.



Thursday Session A 9:45-11:00

Th-A08 Poems Your Students (Probably) Won't Hate and How to Find Them

~Julian Randall

Audience: Administrator, Author, Content Area, Multilingual Learner/English Language, 3-5, 6-8, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice Interventionist, Teacher Educator



A talk and workshop on teaching poetry, voice, and creative writing to young people from award-winning slam poet and children's author Julian Randall. Drawing from his experience as a poet, performer, and author, Julian will explore ways to help young people connect with poetry and see themselves as writers. Participants will consider how to find poems that resonate with today's students, encourage authentic voice and creative expression, and make poetry feel relevant, accessible, and exciting. Through conversation and hands-on activities, Julian will share approaches for bringing poetry and creative writing into the classroom in ways that invite curiosity, engagement, and a willingness to experiment with language and ideas.

Th-A09 Stories are Good Medicine

~Angeline Boulley

Audience: All



I often say, "Stories are good medicine." It's why I write the stories I do. Prior to my author life, I enjoyed a 20-year career striving to improve public school education for Native students and improving public school education about Native Americans for all students. At the time of my book deal for *Firekeeper's Daughter*, I served as the Director for the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education. What I know is that I could speak at the highest level of government about issues such as the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and not have the reach or impact as I can through my novels.

Th-A10 Reading Adventure Backpacks!

~Melanie Eskildsen and Brittany Schnobrich

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



Reading Adventure Backpacks are theme-based activity packs for students to check out and take home for a week. During this session, attendees will learn about funding sources, program development, implementation, promotion and maintenance of a Reading Adventure Backpack program at their school. This program has been a successful part of our elementary school since 2021. We look forward to sharing our experiences and success with you so your school/students/families/community can enjoy Reading Adventure Backpacks!

Thursday Session A 9:45-11:00

Th-A11 Critical AI Literacy

~*Kim Butterfield*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, Digital Technology, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice, Reading Recovery, Reading, Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Title I

Artificial intelligence is ubiquitous and growing exponentially. While it is easy to use when one has critical thinking skills, developing those skills when such tools exist is becoming more challenging. This presentation will discuss the ethical implications of AI in our society and schools, how to teach students to use AI with a critical mindset, and how to detect AI-generated writing in order to ensure that students are still thinking for themselves.



Th-A12 STEAMing Through Picture Book Biographies: Generating Student Responses that Link Literacy and STEAM

~*Cyndi Giorgis and Marie LeJeune*

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

STEAM-focused picture book biographies inspire children by narrating the lives of innovators, inventors, and creators who changed the world. These biographies highlight human stories of curiosity, persistence, and problem-solving. Features such as timelines, resources, author notes, and overall book design will be discussed. Attendees will use a framework to assess various STEAM picture book biographies. Strategies will be offered to enhance the literacy and STEAM connection through student responses including creating digital and physical timelines, generating found poetry, making body biographies, crafting character trading cards, constructing playlists, and producing artistic responses. Book lists and lesson ideas will be provided.



Th-A13 The 3 Rs: (W)riting, Rangefinding, and Revision

~*Patricia Sankey and Paul Walter*

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

Looking for a way to engage middle level writers in a Writing-Rich classroom and prepare them for Forward success? Attendees will learn to leverage student writing to showcase what strong writers do both authentically and in high-stakes testing. Presenters will share strategies related to rangefinding with both teachers and students, annotations, and high-impact revision.



Thursday Session A 11:15-12:30

Th-A14 Holocaust Literacy in the Digital Age: Teaching Students to Recognize Misinformation and Denial

~*Jennifer Koss*

Audience: Administrator, Author, Content Area, Digital Technology, Multilingual Learner/English Language, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice, Reading Recovery, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Title I

In an era of misinformation and digital media, students must learn to critically evaluate what they read about the Holocaust. This session provides educators with tools to teach media literacy alongside historical understanding. Participants will examine examples of denial and distortion, practice source evaluation strategies, and explore ways to help students navigate online content responsibly. Walk away with classroom-ready approaches that strengthen critical reading skills while promoting accurate, evidence-based understanding.



Thursday Session B 11:15-12:30

Th-B01 Can't We All Just Get Along? Investigating the Crossroads of Comprehension Instruction and Science of Reading

~*Cris Tovani*

Audience: Content Area, English Language, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Teacher Educator

During this breakout, Cris Tovani explores the intersection of comprehension instruction and the Science of Reading. As literacy educators navigate evolving research and instructional practices, questions often arise about how foundational reading skills and meaningful comprehension work with older students. Drawing on her classroom experience and work with teachers around the country, Cris will examine key tenets of the Science of Reading alongside proven comprehension strategies, highlighting ways they can complement rather than compete with one another.



Th-B02 Great New Books for 6-12 Classrooms & CCBC Resources

~*Merri Lindgren*

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

This session will highlight recently published trade books recommended in "CCBC Choices 2027," the most recent best-of-the-year list created by librarians at the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The books recommended in the annual "Choices" list offer a range of opportunities for supporting grades 6-12 students across literacy, learning, and reading for pleasure.



Thursday Session B 11:15-12:30

Th-B03 Stories are Good Medicine

~*Angeline Boulley*

Audience: All



I often say, “Stories are good medicine.” It’s why I write the stories I do. Prior to my author life, I enjoyed a 20-year career striving to improve public school education for Native students and improving public school education about Native Americans for all students. At the time of my book deal for *Firekeeper’s Daughter*, I served as the Director for the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education. What I know is that I could speak at the highest level of government about issues such as the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and not have the reach or impact as I can through my novels.

Th-B04 Listening for Language: Creating Oral Language Opportunities in Early Literacy

~*Kris Piotrowski*

Audience: Pre-K-2, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist



Oral language is foundational to reading and writing development, yet opportunities for rich classroom discourse are often overlooked during literacy instruction. This interactive session examines how everyday teacher-child interactions can support children's language growth. Drawing on research in oral language, early literacy, and teacher-child interaction, participants will explore instructional moves that promote increasingly complex language. Through authentic examples and practical strategies, participants will learn to intentionally create opportunities for productive talk and leave with actionable tools to foster oral language development and strengthen children's literacy learning through purposeful conversation.

Th-B05 Multimodal Literacies in the English Classroom

~*Brady L. Nash*

Audience: 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice



This session explores how teachers can use multimodal literacy practices (drawing, listening, recording, etc.) to support reading, writing, and literature instruction in secondary English classrooms. Dr. Nash will share contemporary research, lessons from his own classroom, and examples from student work.

Thursday Session B 11:15-12:30



Th-B06 Empowering Critical Readers, Writers, and Change Makers

~*Katie Kelly*

Audience: All

Reading is a powerful tool for deepening understanding and inspiring change for a better world. This session explores how to empower students beyond passive reading to critical comprehension, helping them question assumptions, explore diverse perspectives, build empathy, and take action—key skills to empower their voices and imagine a better future.



Th-B07 The Power of Untold Stories: Using Authentic Texts to Teach Social Studies

~*Mia Wenjen and Violeta Encarnación*

Audience: Content Area, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

The jumping off point of this workshop will be introducing the Japanese Internment experience and its connection to modern day detention camps using picture books *Barbed Wire between Us*, *Unbreakable*, and *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*. Additional resources on Japanese Internment will be introduced, including a music video, a geography game, and an origami art project. Book lists to deepen the topic on Pearl Harbor, Japanese Internment, and Immigration and Refugee Experience will be provided. Teachers will leave with a PDF of the book lists and resources presented in this session.



Th-B08 Teaching with the Four I's Framework: Inform, Include, Integrate, and Infuse in American Indian Studies (Wisconsin Act 31)

~*David O'Connor*

Audience: All

This session introduces the Four I's framework—Inform, Include, Integrate, and Infuse—as a practical approach to embedding American Indian Studies and Indigenous stories and narratives into teaching and learning. Participants will explore strategies for presenting accurate historical and contemporary content. The session emphasizes moving beyond isolated lessons to integrate Indigenous content across curriculum and instructional practices. Through discussion and reflection, educators will examine how the framework supports inclusive learning, inquiry, critical thinking, and engagement with Indigenous perspectives. Participants will leave with practical tools, resources, and adaptable strategies for implementation in classrooms and schools.

Thursday Session B 11:15-12:30

Th-B09 The Gift of Story

~John Schu

Audience: All



When we share our hearts through story, we inspire others to think more deeply about their own hearts and how stories connect us all. In this presentation of the heart, teacher, librarian, children's author, book lover, and story ambassador John Schu invites readers to consider literacy beyond its academic benefits, highlighting the ways story speaks to our hearts and brings us together. Presented through a study of five affective elements of story --- healer, inspiration, clarifier, compassion, and connector --- participants will explore how the universal truths found in stories can change us, inspire us, connect us to others, answer our deepest questions, and help us heal.

Th-B10 Revolutionary Love: Knowing the Systems We Teach Within

~Dr. Kamania Wynter-Hoyte

Audience: Administrator, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

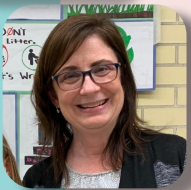


Literacy education did not develop in a vacuum. Drawing from *Revolutionary Love: Creating Culturally Inclusive Literacy Classrooms*, this session explores how race, power, language, and politics have shaped literacy education and continue to influence today's classrooms. Through a historical journey, educators will examine whose knowledge and literacies have been valued, consider why teaching is never neutral, and reflect on how understanding the systems we inherited can help us interrupt inequitable practices and imagine more just possibilities for literacy education.

Th-B11 The Interactive Read-Aloud: Empowering Young Voices Using Culturally Relevant Literature as a Catalyst for Literacy and Activism

~Margaret Policastro and Noreen Wach

Audience: All



This interactive session explores how culturally relevant children's and adolescent literature can advance literacy, identity, and social action. Participants will engage in dynamic read-alouds while learning practical strategies to support comprehension, critical thinking, and purposeful writing. Aligned to Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts—including reading, writing, speaking, and listening—this session highlights how literature fosters student voice and advocacy. Participants will explore texts that inspire students to write and act for change, while collaborating on instructional approaches. Attendees will leave with classroom-ready resources, diverse book lists, and actionable strategies to strengthen teaching.

Thursday Session B 11:15-12:30

Th-B12 Ready, Set, Goal: Guiding Students to Set Goals that Empower Their Learning and Growth as Writers

~*Valerie Bolling*

Audience: Multilingual Learner/English Language, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator

In this session, I'll share a goal-setting process that I used with my own students to grow them as writers and to increase their overall literacy skills. What was most rewarding is that not only was their growth evident to me and to their parents, but my students witnessed themselves the improvement they'd made and felt proud and successful. I'll tell you how I guided my students through this process by helping them set goals, monitor their progress, revise (and sometimes even abandon!) goals, and celebrate their achievements along the way. I'll also share examples of how you can set your own goals to learning and grow alongside your students.



Th-B13 Don't Skip the Prologue!! Enhancing Reading and Writing Strategies through the Exploration of Paratextual Prologues in Picture Books

~*Marie LeJeune and Cyndi Giorgis*

Audience: Multilingual Learner/English Language, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, Library Media, Preservice, Reading Teacher/Specialist

What is a paratextual prologue? How is this storytelling device used to immerse readers in a story? Many picture books include pages of text and illustrations within the front matter, delaying the title page. These pages are not merely for design purposes but serve as an essential prologue. Teaching children to read and comprehend paratext offers a multilayered reading experience. Paratexts introduce characters, conflicts, themes, or literary elements such as foreshadowing or mood. Attendees will engage in hands-on strategies that explore ways stories are constructed and how these books lend themselves to serve as mentor texts that offer compelling and mimicable approaches in creating narratives for fiction and nonfiction writing.



Th-B14 Write Your Voice

~*Charla Meyer*

Audience: Administrator, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator, Title I

Help students discover the power of their own stories. In this interactive workshop, educators will learn practical strategies for cultivating student voice, identity, and confidence through writing. Participants will explore how to create brave spaces for authentic expression, build writing stamina with low-stakes prompts, teach the craft of powerful storytelling, and design culturally sustaining writing experiences that honor students' lived experiences. Through community-centered celebration and feedback practices, teachers will leave with ready-to-use tools that help students see themselves as writers whose stories, perspectives, and aspirations truly matter.



Thursday Session C 2:15-3:00

Th-C01 Write from the Beginning: Building Strong and Skilled Young Writers

~*Dr. Rebecca G. Harper*

Audience: All



Building a strong foundation for writing involves starting early with our youngest learners no matter their skill level. From pictorial representations and oral storytelling to sentence starters and beginning paragraphs, each writing experience can provide learners with the practice and opportunity to develop foundational skills needed for success. Learn how to use wordless picture books, hands-on punctuation, video shorts, and more with your elementary students and make writing fun, engaging, and effective.

Th-C02 Storytime Meets STEAM: Where Today's Readers Become Tomorrow's Thinkers

~*Maria Walther*

Audience: Pre-K-2, 3-5, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice



With packed schedules and endless to-dos, you need smart, time-saving strategies. Join Maria to learn how picture books can be powerful springboards for cross-curricular learning. Discover read-aloud experiences that inspire inquiry and grow thinkers, tinkerers, and innovators. Walk away with simple STEAM learning experiences you can use right away, along with a list of engaging books to bring STEAM to life through literacy.

Th-C03 Great New Books for K-5 Classrooms & CCBC Resources

~*Merri Lindgren*

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



This session will highlight recently published trade books recommended in "CCBC Choices 2027," the most recent best-of-the-year list created by librarians at the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The books recommended in the annual "Choices" list offer a range of opportunities for supporting K-5 students across literacy, learning, and reading for pleasure.

Thursday Session C 2:15-3:00

Th-C04 Community Literacy in Elementary Classrooms: Creating Culturally Inclusive Literacy-Learning Environments

~Jacqueline Witter-Easley

Audience: Pre-K-2, 3-5, Preservice



As teachers become increasingly required to focus solely on skill development, this session offers important information on how to create meaningful reading lessons that go beyond skill development and immerse students in cultural knowledge and civic engagement. Teachers will be empowered to reimagine their reading curriculum so that they can teach content and skills while honoring and elevating their students' cultural wealth and community experiences in ways that move students' thinking into realms of critical and analytical action.

Th-C05 Putting It All Together: Developing Strategic Readers

~Kris Piotrowski

Audience: Pre-K-2, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist



Learning to read involves more than developing foundational skills—it requires children to learn how to use multiple sources of information together as they make sense of text. This interactive session explores how responsive teaching can support the development of increasingly strategic readers. Participants will examine children's reading behaviors, consider what those behaviors reveal about how they are processing text, and explore teaching moves that prompt children to notice, search, check, and problem solve. Participants will leave with practical ways to support increasingly flexible, efficient, and independent reading.

Th-C06 Enduring Controversies: Revisiting “Why Johnny Can’t Read” in 2027

~Catherine Compton-Lilly

Audience: Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator



Catherine Compton-Lilly revisits “Why Johnny Can't Read” – the classic critique of reading scholarship – in the age of the Science of Reading. This analysis compares the rhetorical devices used by Rudolph Flesch in 1955 to the current discourses surrounding the Science of Reading, particularly the podcasts of Emily Hanford. Intriguing parallels are identified. Compton-Lilly argues that when we understand how discourses and rhetorical appeals are used to denigrate and dismiss legitimate research, we are better able to respond to problematic claims.

Thursday Session C 2:15-3:00

Th-C07 Tropes of the Reading Wars: Research Evidence, Legislation, and Teaching in Wisconsin.

~*Professor Dominic Wyse*

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

“The Reading Wars” have always been fought in the battlegrounds of the media, locally and increasingly globally. This media coverage has repeatedly promoted ideas that are exaggerated, inaccurate, or both. This talk begins by deconstructing some of these tropes in order to present a more accurate picture based on robust research evidence. It will examine the concept of “the science of reading.” Some of the realities of legislation in Wisconsin, and the implications for teachers and schools, will be used as examples to highlight how policies can fail to match up-to-date evidence from research.



Th-C08 Revolutionary Love in Action: Liberating Our Literacy Instruction

~*Dr. Kamania Wynter-Hoyte*

Audience: Administrator, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

Once we understand the systems in which we teach, how do we teach differently? Drawing from *Revolutionary Love: Creating Culturally Inclusive Literacy Classrooms*, this session moves from understanding to action. Educators will examine how texts, questions, and responses to children’s languages, cultures, identities, and knowledge can reproduce or disrupt inequitable systems. Participants will explore practical ways to make culturally responsive teaching part of everyday reading instruction and create rigorous literacy classrooms where every child is seen, valued, challenged, and loved.



Th-C09 Stories That Teach Everything: Practical Strategies for Literature-Anchored Learning in K-8

~*Dr. Hiawatha Smith*

Audience: Content Area, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

This session explores creative strategies for using children's literature as an anchor for cross-curricular learning, giving K-8 teachers practical tools and resources they can use immediately. Attendees will explore how to pair literature with science, social studies, writing, and SEL instruction, turning a single well-chosen text into your most efficient curricular tool, not just an ELA add-on. Strategies shared will cover primary, intermediate, and middle grade levels, so there's something for every K-8 classroom.



Thursday Session C 2:15-3:00

Th-C10 What Counts as Reading Policy? Beyond the Science of Reading

~*Leah Durán*

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



In recent years, legislatures across the nation have adopted “science of reading” laws and invested heavily in teacher training, curriculum, and instructional approaches. And yet, reading scores continue to decline nationwide, and the gap between students who are doing well and those who are struggling remains large. This session examines major U.S. policy initiatives in the past 25 years that focused on reading and considers why these policies have had limited success in the past. We then review research showing how factors beyond instruction influence children’s reading development and achievement. Education policy should address the social and economic conditions affecting children’s lives, and reading policy needs to be thought of more broadly than just curriculum and instruction. Children’s experiences with housing, poverty, health, and stress shape their learning in critical ways, and in ways that public policy can address. Our argument is not that reading instruction is not important. Rather, we argue that to be truly effective, policy efforts should take a more holistic approach, expanding from “science of reading” to the “science of learning and development.”

Th-C11 Using the Essential Literacy Skills to Engage Your Students

~*Peg Grafwallner*

Audience: 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator



In this presentation, I will explain how to create a sustainable classroom culture that welcomes the seven essential literacy skills. Next, I offer the essential literacy skills where educators will discover how to: expand their teaching methods to include literacy skills, activate students' prior knowledge to build new learning, introduce literacy into daily lesson planning, embed reading comprehension into any subject area, and scaffold instruction using literacy strategies to boost subject-area comprehension.

Th-C12 Inspire Your Young Authors and Artists with World-class Masterpieces from the Milwaukee Art Museum

~*Terry Kaldhusdal and Caitlin Anguil*

Audience: Administrator, Author, Content Area, Multilingual Learner/English Language, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice Interventionist, Teacher Educator



What happens when world-class masterpieces meet student imagination? In this session, you’ll explore how the Art of Writing, Young Authors and Artists Conference at the Milwaukee Art Museum has sparked powerful stories, bold artwork, and creative photography for more than 35 years. Walk away with ready-to-use strategies used in the conference to inspire meaningful, student-driven creation in your classroom. We will also share practical ways to bring your students to the annual conference and showcase student work developed over the last 30+ years. See student examples, explore fresh ideas, and gain everything you need to turn inspiration into celebration while giving your students an authentic audience for their voices.

Thursday Session C 2:15-3:00

Th-C13 Empower and Inspire Your Students' Hearts and Minds with Poetry Writing

~*Valerie Bolling*

Audience: Multilingual Learner/English Language, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Teacher Educator

Whether you already provide time for your students to write poems or you want to get started, this session is for you. You'll explore ideas for creating a poetry-inclusive classroom environment, and you'll be introduced to – or reminded of types of poems – your students will enjoy writing. You'll learn how to scaffold poetry-writing for students who may need that, and you'll also leave with suggestions for raising the challenge level for students who are ready. Writing poetry helps students develop important literacy skills and brings joy to the classroom. So, make space for this vibrant classroom practice! I bet you may even write some poems of your own.



Th-C14 Early Literacy Partnership: Engaging Families with Oneida Reads and PBS KIDS

~*Ann McCotter, Jennifer Webster, and Jen Kobylecky*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, Digital Technology, PK-2, Library Media

Oneida Reads is a collective impact initiative working to address early literacy challenges and improve third-grade reading proficiency among Native students in Brown and Outagamie Counties. Four strategic focus areas are supported by partnerships at the local, state, regional, and national levels, including a partnership to support kindergarten readiness with PBS Wisconsin Education. Presenters will share an overview of Oneida Reads and an in-depth look at a pilot family engagement event designed to facilitate intergenerational learning and support the development of early reading skills at home with research-backed and trusted resources from PBS KIDS.



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

**You are invited to
WSRA Happy Hour!**

**Join us Thursday,
February 11
from 3:30 to 5:00 pm**

Friday, February 12, 2027

Lunch ~ 12:30 pm

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

1:15-2:00

Book Signing

2:15-3:30

Breakout Session C

Sandwich and Salad Table

Mediterranean Wrap

Fresh Cucumber, Roasted Chickpeas, Roma Tomato, Roasted Red Onion, and Moroccan Spiced Couscous Tossed in Dill Tzatziki

Roasted Chicken Salad

Toasted Cashews, Red Grapes, Garden Herbs and Fresh Lemon Zest on Freshly Baked Croissant Bun

Usinger's Chopped

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

Greek Panzanella

Roma Tomato, Charred Red Onion, Marinated Artichoke Hearts, Cucumber, Brioche Croutons, Feta Cheese and Oregano Vinaigrette (V)

Chilled Vegetable Pasta Salad

Marinated Olives, Tomatoes and Mozzarella with Candied Pistachios, Wisconsin Honey, Aged Balsamic and Carrot Top Pesto

Double Chocolate Brownies

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



Award Ceremony

Friday, February 12 ~ 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

*Recognizing Impact.
Inspiring the Future.*

WSRA Awards and Honors

Nominations for 2027 WSRA's Awards and Honors are due November 15, 2026

WSRA members go to <https://wsra.memberclicks.net/awards> submit a nomination for 2027.





Friday Keynote Address

Dr. Lakeya Afolalu

What Counts as Literacy? A Journey Through History, Policy, and Practice



In this talk, I take you on a journey through the history of literacy education in the United States. Along the way, I trace how policies, standards, research, and social and racial dynamics have shaped evolving definitions of literacy. Moving from historical moments to today's reading policy reforms, I invite us to consider what history teaches us. Drawing on my teaching experience and research with immigrant, transnational, and U.S.-born youth, I illustrate how instruction can build foundational skills while centering students' identities, languages, lived realities, and their full humanity. We conclude with an interactive reflection to (re)consider literacy teaching and learning today and in the future.



Friday Featured Speakers



Lakeya
Afolalu



Cristina
Betancourt



Kathryn
Champeau



Catherine
Compton-Lilly



Leah
Durán



Tricia
Ebarvia



Rachael
Gabriel



Carol
Jago



Katrena
Leininger



Henry 'Cody'
Miller



Lindsey
Moses



Brady
Nash



Julian
Randall



Matt
Renwick



John
Schu



Katie
Sciurba



Dr. Anna
Smith



Hiawatha
Smith



Maria
Walther



Jeffrey
Wilhelm



Jeff
Williams



Dominic
Wyse

Friday Session A 9:45-11:00

Fr-A01 Literacy, Migration, and Race: Centering Young People's Realities in Teaching and Learning

~Dr. Lakeya Afolalu

Audience: All

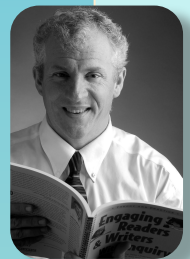


What is the relationship between migration, race, and literacy? In this interactive session, we explore this question through stories from the educational lives of Black African immigrant and transnational youth. We'll discuss how immigrant and transnational youth enter our classrooms with literate lives already in motion, carrying literacy practices that cross borders and are shaped by language, ethnicity, and race. Attendees will reflect on young people in their own contexts and explore ways to recognize and build on the literacies they bring with them. Participants will leave with practical approaches for centering all young people's humanity, dignity, and freedom in literacy teaching and learning.

Fr-A02 Addressing All Major Reading Challenges: Leveraging the Document Based Inquiry Approach to Teach More Engaged and Expert Reading at All Grade Levels, (focus on collaboration)

~Dr. Jeffrey Wilhelm

Audience: All



This interactive session will use a DBI (Document Based Inquiry), a strategy for engaging students with short text sets on any topic, that promotes motivation, critical reading and thinking, and dispositions of democracy like how to collaborate in ways that help students to support each other and to be "smarter together". Participants will experience highly flexible strategies like reciprocal reading, patterned partner reading, collaborative strategic reading, literature circles and more that can enliven reading and teaching at any grade level and in any content area, all while experiencing a DBI and learning how to create one for your own classroom.

Fr-A03 The "Double Helix of Reading and Writing": From New Theory to New Teaching Practices

~Professor Dominic Wyse

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



The prize winning "Double Helix of Reading & Writing," a new theory of teaching, was first published in the journal *Literacy*. The Double Helix was created from analyses of teaching, influential theories, and robust scientific studies of reading. This talk gives unique insights into the creation of the Double Helix including its links with, and critique of, some seminal theories of learning. On the basis of evidence from research, examples of exemplary practices of teaching are given to contextualise the Double Helix, including the approach to teaching children how to crack the alphabetic code.

Friday Session A 9:45-11:00



Fr-A04 Multimodal Literacies in the English Classroom

~*Brady L. Nash*

Audience: 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice

This session explores how teachers can use multimodal literacy practices (drawing, listening, recording, etc.) to support reading, writing, and literature instruction in secondary English classrooms. Dr. Nash will share contemporary research, lessons from his own classroom, and examples from student work.



Fr-A05 Reading and Relevance, (Re)Illuminated

~*Dr. Katie Sciurba*

Audience: All

Join Dr. Katie Sciurba as she facilitates an interactive session based on her research on reading and relevance, as illuminated through the literacy experiences of a group of young men of color over a ten-year span of time. Explore four dimensions of relevance - identity, spatiality, temporality, and ideology - and their connections to classroom practices in and beyond K-12 contexts.



Fr-A06 Why Read Poetry?

~*Carol Jago*

Audience: All

Galway Kinnell said, "Poetry is someone standing up and saying, with as little concealment as possible, what it is for him or her to be on earth at this moment." Carol Jago will explore the purposes of poetry and demonstrate practical methods for engaging students in reading, reflecting, responding, and writing about poems. She will also model ways of using poetry to inspire students to write their own poems. As they compose, students discover how poetry can be a vehicle for personal expression as well as for social change.

Friday Session A 9:45-11:00



Fr-A07 Putting Reading Research in Conversation with Practice

~Dr. Rachael Gabriel and Jeff Williams

Audience: Administrator, Pre-K-2, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator



When people bring up “the research,” they don’t usually mean “an organized human exploration for meaning within vast amounts of information.” They usually mean THE answer. But if research is as human as teaching, why do some forms of research have so much more power and influence? What would we know and be able to do if teaching and research had more interaction and collaboration with each other? If information and influence went both ways? In this session we use 3 recent peer-reviewed articles focused on a single topic in literacy instruction to demonstrate and invite attendees to participate in putting new research in conversation with what we know from practice. Using a set of guiding questions and prompts we demonstrate a way to process and synthesize the three articles, while considering what we know, how we know it, and what we could do in classrooms to find out more. This process is made transparent through a handout with the protocol listed, as well as links to the articles and an organizer for generating additional ideas and connections for research in partners and small groups at the end of the session.



Fr-A08 Strategies for Maximizing Language and Literacy Development for Multilingual Students

~Lindsey Moses

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, Digital Technology, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

Discover practical, research-based strategies to strengthen language and literacy instruction for multilingual learners through whole-class teaching, targeted small-group instruction, and AI-supported planning. This interactive session highlights classroom-tested scaffolds that promote oral language, vocabulary, decoding, reading comprehension, and writing across the curriculum. Participants will explore strategies to differentiate instruction, increase meaningful language use, and leverage AI to streamline lesson planning and create individualized instructional resources. Participants will leave with evidence-based strategies, adaptable scaffolds, and ready-to-use resources for immediate classroom implementation



Fr-A09 Storytime Meets STEAM: Where Today’s Readers Become Tomorrow’s Thinkers

~Maria Walther

Audience: Pre-K-2, 3-5, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice

With packed schedules and endless to-dos, you need smart, time-saving strategies. Join Maria to learn how picture books can be powerful springboards for cross-curricular learning. Discover read-aloud experiences that inspire inquiry and grow thinkers, tinkerers, and innovators. Walk away with simple STEAM learning experiences you can use right away, along with a list of engaging books to bring STEAM to life through literacy.

Friday Session A 9:45-11:00



Fr-A10 From Representation to Belonging: Children's Literature for Multilingual and Multicultural Classrooms

~*Dr. Cristina Betancourt*

Audience: Content Area, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Preservice

Books can serve as mirrors, windows, and doors (Sims Bishop, 1990) for students, but how do we ensure our classroom libraries truly reflect the strengths and experiences of multilingual and multicultural learners? With a special focus on multilingual learners, we'll examine book examples, discuss ways to integrate multiple languages, and share practical strategies for creating inclusive learning experiences with children's literature. Participants will leave with book recommendations and ideas they can immediately apply in their classrooms.



Fr-A11 Our Bookshelves are Our Civic Lives: Fighting for a Pluralistic Future in the Age of Censorship

~*Dr. Henry "Cody" Miller*

Audience: Administrator, 6-8, 9-12, Teacher Educator, Preservice

This presentation provides an analysis of what PEN America has dubbed “the normalization of book banning” in the United States. The talk will connect the last five years of censorship to broader historical trends and moments. Additionally, participants will learn about the civic engagement tactics that have been fruitful in fighting for intellectual freedom across the country. Finally, this presentation will invite audience members to craft an action plan they can take in their immediate context to secure the right to read in their communities.



Fr-A12 Thanks For Writing It How We Talk: Constructing Authentic Young Voices

~*Julian Randall*

Audience: Administrator, Author, Content Area, Multilingual Learner/English Language, 3-5, 6-8, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice Interventionist, Teacher Educator

A talk from Julian Randall on Spanglish, mirrors, and crafting authentic young characters. Drawing from his work as a poet and children's author, Julian explores how writers can create young characters whose voices feel genuine, specific, and true to their experiences. He will consider the ways language, culture, identity, and lived experience shape a character's voice, including the use of Spanglish and other forms of language that reflect how young people actually communicate. Participants will explore how writers can move beyond stereotypes and create characters who see themselves—and their worlds—reflected authentically on the page.



Friday Session A 9:45-11:00



Fr-A13 What Counts as Reading Policy?: Beyond the Science of Reading

~*Leah Durán*

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

Legislatures across the nation have recently adopted “science of reading” laws and invested heavily in teacher training, curriculum, and instructional approaches. Yet reading scores continue to decline nationwide, and the gap between students who are doing well and those struggling remains large. This session examines major U.S. policy initiatives in the past 25 years that focused on reading and considers why these policies had limited success in the past. We review research showing how factors beyond instruction influence children’s reading development and achievement. Education policy should address the social and economic conditions affecting children’s lives, and reading policy needs to be thought of more broadly than just curriculum and instruction. Children’s experiences with housing, poverty, health, and stress shape their learning and in ways that public policy can address. Our argument is not that reading instruction is not important but rather that to be truly effective, policy efforts should take a more holistic approach, expanding from “science of reading” to the “science of learning and development.”



Fr-A14 Literacy Without Limits: Unleashing the Joy of Reading and Shaping Tomorrow's Readers, Writers, and Storytellers

~*Theresa A. Smith-Hickman*

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

The adults who model literacy today help shape the readers, writers, and storytellers of tomorrow. In this interactive session, participants will explore research-based strategies for fostering positive reading associations that increase motivation, engagement, and reading identity. Through reflection, discussion, and practical application, attendees will discover how read-alouds, student choice, family engagement, and authentic literacy experiences empower children to find their voices and imagine new possibilities. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to create joyful, literacy-rich environments where every child can thrive as a reader.

Friday Session B 11:15-12:30



Fr-B01 A Longitudinal and Critical Counter-Narrative of Literacy Learning for a Child Diagnosed with Asperger's

~*Catherine Compton-Lilly*

Audience: Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Teacher Educator

Compton-Lilly explores the longitudinal becoming of a Chinese American child who was diagnosed in elementary school with Asperger’s Syndrome. While James’ early years of schooling were challenging, the researcher documents events, people, and social networks that contributed to James’ eventual success. James’ becoming was marked by past school experiences, the challenges he faced in meeting school timelines, his family’s history as Chinese American immigrants, and the draw of popular culture, which helped James to connect with his peers. Together these timescales highlight James’ longitudinal becoming over a 13-year period. Recommendations for teachers working with neurodiverse children will be shared.

Friday Session B 11:15-12:30



Fr-B02 Fostering Relevant Literacy Experiences for K-12 Students

~Dr. Katie Sciurba

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

In this hands-on workshop, participants will have the opportunity to create literacy interest inventories designed to capture the complexities of K-12 students' conceptualizations of relevance. Ideas for linking these inventories to engaging student-centered literacy practices will be generated.



Fr-B03 Telling a Better Story: Anti-Bias Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers

~Tricia Ebarvia

Audience: 6-8, 9-12

In today's challenging climate of book bans and backlash against the importance of inclusive teaching, it can be hard to know how to engage in the necessary work we know all of our children need and deserve. Yet providing students with strong academic instruction and social consciousness raising are not mutually exclusive. In this session, we'll discuss what learning is possible when we root our practices in anti-bias instruction. Together, we will define bias, identify how it informs teaching and learning, and engage in practices that are inclusive of diverse learners and experiences. Participants will reflect on the impact of biases on students and classroom practices. Practical strategies will be embedded throughout the workshop.



Fr-B04 From Symptoms to Systems: Improvement Science for Schoolwide Literacy Excellence

~Matt Renwick

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

Reframe schoolwide literacy initiatives with improvement science. Use root cause analyses and PDSA cycles to engage in authentic problems of practice.



Friday Session B 11:15-12:30

Fr-B05 Strategies for Maximizing Language and Literacy Development for Multilingual Students

~*Lindsey Moses*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, Digital Technology, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice



Discover practical, research-based strategies to strengthen language and literacy instruction for multilingual learners through whole-class teaching, targeted small-group instruction, and AI-supported planning. This interactive session highlights classroom-tested scaffolds that promote oral language, vocabulary, decoding, reading comprehension, and writing across the curriculum. Participants will explore strategies to differentiate instruction, increase meaningful language use, and leverage AI to streamline lesson planning and create individualized instructional resources. Participants will leave with evidence-based strategies, adaptable scaffolds, and ready-to-use resources for immediate classroom implementation.

Fr-B06 Notice & Note for Non-fiction in Primary Grades

~*Jeff Williams*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice



Though originally intended for upper elementary students, this session shows how the work of Beers and Probst's *Notice and Note* for Nonfiction can benefit comprehension of non-fiction texts for younger grades as well.

Fr-B07 This Is a Story

~*John Schu*

Audience: All



The best booktalks are those delivered from the heart. It's the way we share our love and passion for favorite titles and books that inspires students and colleagues. Join children's book author and librarian John Schu as he invites us to imagine the many ways books can foster connection and understanding. He'll share some of the best new books and ways to easily incorporate them into your school reading culture to increase reading motivation, stamina, and growth.

Friday Session B 11:15-12:30



Fr-B08 Connected Stories: Intergenerational Digital Storytelling for Literacy and Belonging

~Dr. Anna Smith

Audience: All

What happens when young people and older adults create digital stories together? Drawing on the Connected Stories project, this session explores intergenerational digital storytelling as a way to support writing, digital literacy, relationship-building, and community connection. Participants will learn about an adaptable workshop process that invites storytellers to gather memories, compose across words and media, and share stories with authentic audiences. Attendees will leave with practical ideas for developing intergenerational digital storytelling partnerships for their classroom, schools, libraries, and community settings.



Fr-B09 Our Bookshelves are Our Civic Lives: Fighting for a Pluralistic Future in the Age of Censorship

~Dr. Henry "Cody" Miller

Audience: Administrator, 6-8, 9-12, Teacher Educator, Preservice

This presentation provides an analysis of what PEN America has dubbed “the normalization of book banning” in the United States. The talk will connect the last five years of censorship to broader historical trends and moments. Additionally, participants will learn about the civic engagement tactics that have been fruitful in fighting for intellectual freedom across the country. Finally, this presentation will invite audience members to craft an action plan they can take in their immediate context to secure the right to read in their communities.



Fr-B10

Readers' Rules of Notice: What to Notice/How to Interpret It in Fiction, Nonfiction, Information Pollution and AI generated Texts

~Dr. Jeffrey Wilhelm

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

Our students are bombarded with texts from a variety of sources each day, many developed by human actors and/or AI with an intent to deceive and manipulate them. This workshop will explore how required curricular topics can be taught in ways that promote engagement, open-minded inquiry, critical reading, news literacy, and digital literacies that can serve to promote hope, humanity and agency. We will focus on how a powerful method of reading called “Readers’ Rules of Notice” can be used to teach and guide critical reading of fiction, nonfiction, fake news, and AI generated texts at all grade levels.

Friday Session B 11:15-12:30



Fr-B11 Yes, You Can Publish: Finding Your Voice Through Publication

~Dr. Hiawatha Smith and Dr. Katrena Leininger

Audience: All

Educators like you are doing remarkable work every day. Publication is how that work travels beyond your school walls. This hands-on workshop supports all writers, newcomers and experienced authors alike, in developing compelling manuscripts drawn from their own professional practice, whether that's a conference presentation, a classroom innovation, or a professional learning initiative.



Fr-B12 Building a Coherent Statewide Literacy System

~Stacy Gray, Robin Bindrich, and Bianca Williams-Griffin

Audience: All

Wisconsin's literacy landscape is evolving, with research, policy, and practice shaping a shared vision and creating the context for coordinated implementation. Join the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Office of Literacy for an inside look at statewide literacy initiatives, progress, and what's ahead. Hear updates on the Statewide Literacy Plan, 2023 Wisconsin Act 20 initiatives, including the Early Literacy Coaching Program, and other efforts to improve literacy systems. Attendees will leave with ideas for strengthening collaboration through communities of practice and an increased awareness of statewide resources for advancing literacy for every Wisconsin learner.



Fr-B13 Pencils, Pixels and Purpose

~Erica M. Zitzke and Shanna O'Connor

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, Digital Technology, Multilingual Learner/English Language, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Library Media, Literacy Coach, Preservice, Special Education, Teacher Educator, Title I

Are your students blocked by a blank screen? Discover how the humble pencil, backed by cutting-edge brain research, unlocks creativity and reduces cognitive load during drafting. We won't stay analog! Learn to bridge those messy ink ideas into polished digital masterpieces. Whether through Google Docs, interactive videos, or Book Creator, we'll explore transitioning students from high-touch thinking to high-tech publishing for an authentic audience. Walk away with a framework that scaffolds the writing process from private brainstorming to public pride for powerful, multimodal results.



Friday Session B 11:15-12:30

Fr-B14 Arts Integration and Teacher Well-Being

~*Dr. Kathryn Allen*

Audience: Administrator, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, All



Educator well-being holds implications for teachers, students, school environments, and the local community. Additionally, educator well-being is a factor in teacher recruitment, retention, and empowerment. This qualitative case study prioritizes teacher perspectives to illuminate how arts integration facilitates professional integrity and helps us envision education that re-centers humans. Session attendees will learn about arts integration as a path to well-being for themselves and their students along with methods supporting arts integration as a pedagogical approach. Session will invite attendees to participate in activities promoting wellness; examples from arts-integrated classrooms will be shared.

Attention Professors:

Special Session During Lunch

**“Professors Meet:
Literacy Collaboration
and Empowerment”**

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 Session C 2:15-3:00

Fr-C01 Lifelines, Sunscreen, and Airbags for the Savvy Educator

~*Kathryn Champeau*

Audience: Content Area, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8,, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Preservice



Are you a busy educator trying to make sense of the endless stream of social media posts, blogs, and claims about what the science says—and doesn't say—about literacy teaching and learning? Are you inundated with literacy products marketed as "science-based," scripted programs that dictate instructional decisions for every child, and mandates that may not have been developed by literacy experts? This session is a lifeline for educators seeking to cut through the noise. Learn how to critically evaluate literacy research, instructional products, and policy claims using trusted peer-reviewed research, accessible professional reports, and high-quality webinars. Leave with the knowledge and resources to reclaim your professional judgment, make informed instructional decisions, and confidently advocate for the literacy needs of every child.

Fr-C02 Translanguaging in Practice: Creating Opportunities for Multilingual Learners

~*Cristina Betancourt*

Audience: Content Area, English Language, Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Preservice



You know translanguaging matters, but how do you intentionally build it into instruction? This session moves beyond theory to practice by highlighting simple, effective ways to create opportunities for multilingual learners to leverage all of their language resources for learning. Participants will leave with concrete ideas that can be applied across content areas and grade levels to support multilingual learners' engagement, comprehension, and success.

Fr-C03 Turning the Page: Reversing the Slide in Reading Achievement

~*Carol Jago*

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



What can teachers do when students balk at doing the reading? Teachers across the country are reporting that their students are disaffected, disengaged from school, barely putting in seat time, stuck in neutral. This may be a continuation of habits formed during the pandemic and/or a result of too much screen time, but the time for excuses is past. We need to help students rediscover their learning gear. In this workshop Carol Jago will demonstrate instructional moves that can help students increase their stamina and develop greater confidence in themselves as readers. Participants will learn strategies designed to “turn the page” on declining reading scores.

Friday Session C 2:15-3:00



Fr-C04 Change Over Time in Politicized Pedagogies

~Dr. Rachael Gabriel

Audience: Administrator, Pre-K-2, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator

No matter where the pendulum swings, the perennial challenges at the heart of teaching reading stay the same. This session outlines patterns in international policy trends that indicate where policies about assessment, instruction, curriculum and achievement are heading, and what that means for educators navigating everyday decisions that impact students' opportunities to learn.



Fr-C05 Culturally Sustaining Writing Practices in Action

~Tricia Ebarvia

Audience: 3-5, Literacy Coach, Teacher Educator, Preservice

This workshop will explore how culturally responsive and sustaining workshop practices can speak to the diverse needs of our students by examining the potential limitations of current writing units and practices. Participants will walk through multiple examples of culturally sustaining workshop practices, discuss their potential impacts on diverse student writers, and consider the applications for their own classrooms, particularly in the context of AI and its impact on writing instruction.



Fr-C06 Helping Students Help Themselves in Small Group Work

~Jeff Williams

Audience: Pre-K-2, Literacy Coach, Special Education, Reading Teacher/Reading Specialist, Title I, Interventionist, Teacher Educator, Preservice

Many students are getting ample attention to phonics principles and word learning but do not know how to utilize this knowledge in connected text. This session will showcase cycles of learning for early elementary students that help students see connections between word/letter learning and text.



Friday Session C 2:15-3:00

Fr-C07 More Than Fidelity: Supporting Teacher Expertise in Contested Literacy Times

~*Dr. Anna Smith*

Audience: All



Literacy teachers have long navigated mandates, approved programs, competing research claims, and the complex needs of actual students. Now, schools are increasingly asking them to use digital platforms, screen-based scripted programs, and new assessment systems designed to automate instructional decision-making. This session explores how educators can respond to increasingly digitally automated times without reducing professional learning to compliance or positioning teachers as implementers of someone else's decisions. Drawing on research conducted in collaboration with teachers, participants will leave with collaborative routines for asserting pragmatic agency, interpreting policy, and sustaining responsive literacy practice.

Fr-C08 From Book Choice to Voice: Strategies for Centering Indigenous Voices and Elevating Cultural Awareness and Perspective through Authentic Literacy Lessons

~*Genny King, Early Learning Educator and Heidi Reinen, Early Learning Educator*

Audience: Administrator, Content Area, Multilingual Learner/English Language, PK-2, 3-5, Preservice, Special Education, Teacher Educator



Whose Stories Are We Reading? This session provides a framework and practical strategies for creating engaging, year-long multicultural literacy experiences that center Indigenous voices. Participants will explore the importance of authentic literature, intentional text selection, and collaboration with members of represented communities. Through classroom examples, photos, videos, and student work, attendees will see how connected lessons build cultural knowledge, vocabulary, and deep understanding over time. The session also highlights the importance of educator learning and preparation to ensure culturally responsive instruction honors Indigenous perspectives with accuracy, respect, and purpose.

Fr-C09 It's an Experience: A 4K Play-Based Program

~*Cheryl Panka*

Audience: Content Area



We know learning should be fun, but how do we make it an experience? In this session participants will learn about how to create rich language experiences, positive interactions and active, exploration using a multi-sensory approach all while embedding letter-sound knowledge, handwriting, phonological awareness skills and writing into the play. This program even the playing field for ELL, low income, and students with special needs by building background knowledge and vocabulary necessary for success. Come see how we transformed 6 traditional 4K classrooms into 12 theme-based play rich classrooms where our students thrive.

Friday Session C 2:15-3:00



Fr-C10 Sijo Across the Curriculum: Creative Collaboration Without Limits

~*Elizabeth J. Jorgensen*

Audience: All

What happens when poetry moves beyond the ELA classroom? This session explores how sijo, a traditional Korean poetic form, can spark cross-curricular collaboration in art, music, and across grade levels. Participants will discover how students translate poetry into visual art, musical composition, and shared writing experiences. Through examples and practical strategies, educators will learn how sijo fosters creativity, builds community, and amplifies student voice across disciplines. Attendees will leave with adaptable project ideas and structures to support meaningful collaboration in their schools.



Fr-C11 The Power of Representation: Helping Students See Themselves in Books

~*Lesley L. Bracero and Natoia Franklin*

Audience: Administrator, Author, PK-2, 3-5, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Teacher Educator

This professional learning session explores the power of culturally responsive literature and authentic representation in second-grade classrooms. Presented by Melanated Authors, the session highlights how seeing themselves in books can boost students' self-esteem, engagement, and connection to learning. Participants will learn how diverse books serve as both mirrors and windows, promoting inclusion, empathy, and academic growth. Through examples from Melanated Authors' books, educators will gain practical strategies for integrating diverse literature into literacy instruction, social-emotional learning, and classroom culture. Teachers will leave with actionable ideas for creating more inclusive and engaging learning environments.



Fr-C12 Empowering Voices: The Power of Oracy in the Multilingual Literacy Journey

~*Angie Meier*

Audience: Content Area, Multilingual Learner/English Language, PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Literacy Coach, Reading Teacher/Specialist, Interventionist, Special Education, Title I

For multilingual learners, oracy is the foundation of literacy and the key to agency. This session dives into research-based practices that prioritize student voice and collaborative talk. We will examine how different frameworks can be used to create inclusive literacy environments where students' home languages are honored as assets. Attendees will leave with a toolkit of practical strategies to integrate oracy into daily routines, ensuring that every student has the confidence and the language to imagine and articulate their own future.



Friday Session C 2:15-3:00



Fr-C13 From Reading to Writing: Amplifying Student Voices

~*Whitney La Rocca and Travis Leech*

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



Reading and writing are two sides of the same coin, but most classroom instruction treats them as separate subjects. This collaborative session explores how intentional craft study of mentor texts transforms students from passive readers into purposeful writers. Participants experience a mentor text cycle that moves from reading like a reader to reading like a writer, identifying craft moves, naming them, and applying them in their own writing. The session bridges grammar, revision, and writing workshop instruction in one coherent framework. Participants will walk away with practical strategies for creating meaningful opportunities for students to use reading as a pathway to stronger writing.

Literacy

Discussion

Fr-C14 Wisconsin Professors of Literacy Roundtable

~*Professors of Literacy*

Audience: All

The Professors of Literacy are back for another year of round tables at the 2027 WSRA conference! During this session, you will visit a rotation of four round tables that each feature a different evidence-based literacy strategy. This year's topics include Effective Writing Instruction (Dr. Hiawatha Smith, UW-River Falls), Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping (Dr. Krissy Lize, UW-Milwaukee), Reading Fluency (Dr. Emily Hines, UW-Stout), Teacher Reflection (Dr. Amber Garbe, Dr. Polly Manske & Dr. Jackie Sernau, UW-Stevens Point), Integrating Wellness (Dr. Kathryn Allen, UW Oshkosh), and Cumulative Review of Vocabulary (Dr. Tom Knutson & Amy Wabiszewski, Carroll University).



→ Effective Writing Instruction

Dr. Hiawatha Smith

UW – River Falls



→ Teacher Reflection

Dr. Amber Garbe

UW – Stevens Point



→ Integrated Wellness

Dr. Kathryn Allen

UW – Oshkosh



→ Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping

Dr. Krissy Lize

UW – Milwaukee



→ Teacher Reflection

Dr. Polly Manske

UW – Stevens Point



→ Cumulative Review of Vocabulary

Dr. Tom Knutson

Carroll University



→ Reading Fluency

Dr. Emily Hines

UW – Stout



→ Teacher Reflection

Dr. Jackie Sernau

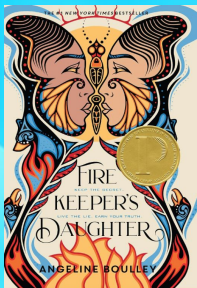
UW – Stevens Point



→ Cumulative Review of Vocabulary

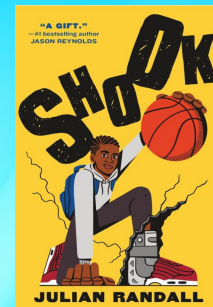
Amy Wabiszewski

Carroll University



Author Book Signings

MEET THE AUTHORS • GET YOUR BOOKS SIGNED • BE INSPIRED



Thursday, February 11
1:15 – 2:00 pm
in the Exhibit Hall



Valerie Bolling
Angeline Boulley
Violeta Encarnación
Julian Randall
John Schu
Mia Wenjen



Friday, February 12
1:15 – 2:00 pm
in the Exhibit Hall



Lesley Bracero
Natoia Franklin
Julian Randall
John Schu
Katie Sciurba
Theresa A. Smith-Hickman



Stories Connect Us

Featured Speakers Biographies



Dr. Lakeya Afolalu is an Assistant Professor of Language, Literacy, and Culture at the University of Washington's College of Education. A scholar, creative writer, and educator, her work explores migration, race, language, and literacy. Her research examines how African immigrant and transnational youth navigate identity, language, and race across borders. Her scholarship has appeared in the *Journal of Literacy Research* and *Teachers College Record* and has been recognized by the American Educational Research Association. Committed to bringing scholarship into public spaces, she founded LitiArts, which expands access to literacy and arts education for young people, and has shared her public scholarship through TEDx and NPR. Her experiences navigating multiple cultural worlds as a Nigerian and African American are foundational to her scholarly and creative work.



Angeline Bouley, an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, is a storyteller who writes about her Ojibwe community. Her debut novel, *Firekeeper's Daughter*, was an instant #1 New York Times bestseller. The American Library Association named it the Michael L. Printz Award for excellence in young adult literature and William C. Morris Award for best young adult novel by a debut author. *TIME* magazine named it one of "The 100 Best Young Adult Books of all Time," and it won the Goodreads Choice Award for Best YA Novel. Her follow-up novel, *Warrior Girl Unearthed*, was also an instant New York Times bestseller and won the Boston Globe's Horn Book Award. Her most recent novel, *Sisters in the Wind*, also debuted on the New York Times bestseller list, received seven starred reviews, and was named a Printz award honor book. Angeline lives in southwest Michigan, but her heart will always be on Sugar Island.



Dr. Cristina M. Betancourt is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education Studies at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire. Before entering higher education, she spent a decade teaching in K-12 classrooms, where her commitment to supporting multilingual learners' academic success and sense of belonging inspired her to pursue graduate study. Her research focuses on teacher learning and the experiences of educators as they support multilingual learners in content-area classrooms. Dr. Betancourt enjoys partnering with teachers in their classrooms and in the university settings to identify effective, asset-based approaches that meet the needs of multilingual learners. Her recent collaborative work has been published in *Science Education* and *Teaching and Teacher Education*. Outside of her professional work, she enjoys dancing and spending time with her multilingual family.



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.



Featured Speakers Biographies



Dr. Catherine Compton-Lilly holds the John C. Hungerpillar 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.



Dr. Leah Durán is an Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction whose work brings together bilingual education, biliteracy, language policy, and early childhood education. A former bilingual teacher, Dr. Durán is passionate about helping educators recognize and build upon the cultural and linguistic strengths that young children bring to the classroom. Her research explores how children develop literacy across languages and how teachers can create asset-based learning experiences that support all students. Her research has been featured in leading literacy and education journals, including *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*. Dr. Durán's contributions to literacy research have earned national recognition, including the Literacy Research Association's Arthur Applebee Award for Excellence in Research on Literacy. Through her research, teaching, and community partnerships, Dr. Durán works to help educators navigate culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms and expand possibilities for young multilingual learners.



Tricia Ebarvia is a lifelong educator, activist, and speaker. After teaching high school for twenty years, she is currently an administrator at a PS-8 independent school in Philadelphia. A co-founder of the Institute for Racial Equity in Literacy, Tricia works with educators across the country on curriculum and instruction. The daughter of Filipino immigrants, Tricia writes about teaching, literacy, and justice. She is the author of *Get Free: Antibias Literacy Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers*.



Violeta Encarnación is a Cuban-American artist based in New York City known for her vibrant, storytelling-driven visuals across both traditional and digital media. Her award-winning work often explores our connection to nature and to each other. She has illustrated numerous picture books and collaborates with publishers, magazines, and organizations including HarperCollins, Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, The New York Times, MTA Arts & Design, Walmart, and Airbnb. Her illustrations have been recognized by the Society of Illustrators, American Illustration and Society of Publication Designers. In addition to her illustration practice, Violeta regularly speaks at schools, universities, and conferences about visual storytelling, the creative process, and the publishing industry. She has given lectures and workshops for institutions including the School of Visual Arts, Syracuse University, Hartford University, Westmont College, and SUNY Purchase. In her free time, she's an avid plant lover, always pushing the limits of how much green her apartment can hold.



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.



Featured Speakers Biographies



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.



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.



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 the National Council of Teachers of English 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 *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.



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*, *Write From the Beginning: 42 Joyful Lessons to Foster Skilled Writers Every Day*, *Photovoice: Using Words and Images in Qualitative Research and Social Studies Instruction, Learning, and Assessment in the Contemporary World: Leveraging the Past to Form a New Future*. Dr. Harper is a former middle grades educator and has served as an invited speaker and keynote for literacy organizations across the country.



Featured Speakers Biographies



Katie Kelly is a Professor of Education at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. As a former teacher and literacy coach, Katie's teaching and research interests include engaging children in meaningful literacy experiences and practices to foster critically curious and compassionate lifelong readers and writers. She is widely published in various peer-reviewed journals and has co-authored several books including: *From Empathy to Action: Empowering K-6 Students to Create Change through Reading, Writing, and Research* (Routledge), *Critical Comprehension: Lessons for Guiding Students to Deeper Meaning* (Corwin); *Reading To Make a Difference: Using Literature to Help Students Think Deeply Speak Freely and Take Action* (Heinemann); *From Pencils to Podcasts: Digital Tools to Transform K-12 Literacy Practices* (Solution Tree); and *Smuggling Writing: Strategies that Get Students to Write Every Day, in Every Content Area (3-12)* (Corwin). She is available for professional development and speaking engagements and can be contacted at ktkelly24@gmail.com.



Merri Lindgren is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center with more than three decades experience reading, evaluating and talking about books for children and teens.



Henry "Cody" Miller is an associate professor of English education at SUNY Brockport. Prior to that role, he taught high school English in Florida for seven years. He has been awarded the National Council of Teachers of English's LGBTQIA+ Advocacy in 2022 and Leadership Award and National Intellectual Freedom Award in 2024.



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, literacy coaching, as well as literacy teacher education at K-12, undergraduate and graduate levels. Katrena's research interests include early literacy acquisition, writing development and instruction, and teacher learning. Her research supports the idea that teachers shift their understanding of writing development and writing instruction practice through embedded, collaborative, and reflective professional development.



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*.



Featured Speakers Biographies



Brady Nash is Assistant Professor of English Education at The University of Florida. A former English teacher, college counselor, and instructional coach, his research now focuses on critical media literacy, multimodal literacy, and navigating artificial intelligence in secondary English classrooms. In addition to teaching and writing, Dr. Nash serves as an editor of *English Journal's* Navigating Generative AI section.



David J. O'Connor, whose Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) name is Bwaakoningwiid, is originally from and an enrolled citizen of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Odanah, WI, on the Bad River Indian Reservation. In January 2012, he began serving as the Education Consultant for the American Indian Studies Program at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). In this role, he supports school districts in Wisconsin in implementing instruction on the histories, cultures, and tribal sovereignty of American Indian Nations of Wisconsin in the state requirements known as American Indian Studies (Wisconsin Act 31), and the education of Indigenous students. David delivers trainings and presents at conferences and workshops focused on American Indian Studies (Wisconsin Act 31) and Indigenous education. He serves as a liaison to Tribal Nations and communities of Wisconsin, Tribal Education Departments, and organizations including the Wisconsin Indian Education Association (WIEA) and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC). David is pursuing a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership at Edgewood University. He earned his M.S. and B.A. degrees from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.



Kris Piotrowski is an Early Literacy Curriculum and Instruction Specialist in Troy, Michigan. She graduated from Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and Child Development. She continued her studies at Michigan State University with a Masters in Literacy Instruction. Currently, she serves as a teacher leader supporting the comprehensive literacy system in the Troy School District, specifically focused on early literacy intervention. Kris is currently working on her dissertation at Texas Woman's University in Literacy, Language and Culture. Her research interests include early literacy intervention, oral language and supporting the literacy needs of diverse learners. Kris lives with her husband, Jason, and three daughters in Waterford, Michigan.



Julian Randall is a Living Queer Black poet from Chicago. He is the author of *Refuse* (Pitt, 2018), winner of the 2017 Cave Canem Poetry Prize and a finalist for a 2019 NAACP Image Award. He is also the author of the middle grade books the *Pilar Ramirez* novel duology, *The Chainbreakers*, and his memoir *The Dead Don't Need Reminding: In Search of Fugitives, Mississippi and Black TV Nerd Shit* (Bold Type Books). He has received fellowships from Cave Canem, CantoMundo, Callaloo, BOAAT, and the Watering Hole. Julian is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize and the 2019 Betty Berzon Emerging Writer Award from the Publishing Triangle. He is the only ever solo winner of the National College Slam Best Poet Award. His writing has been published in the *New York Times*, *Esquire*, *PEOPLE Magazine*, and *POETRY*, and anthologized in *Black Boy Joy*, *Wild Tongues Can't Be Tamed*, and *Furious Flower*. He holds an MFA in Poetry from the University of Mississippi. An award-winning, nationally recognized slam poet, Julian has performed for audiences of all ages for over a decade at more than fifty colleges and universities and numerous festivals.

Featured Speakers Biographies



Matt Renwick is an experienced educator and systems coach for CESA #3, an educational service agency in Wisconsin. His previous roles include teacher, principal, and senior lecturer at a university. He received the Kohl Leadership Award and WSRA's Friend of Literacy recognition, and helped lead an elementary school to become a DPI Spotlight School for literacy. Renwick is the author of multiple books, including *Leading Like a C.O.A.C.H.*, and publishes a newsletter for literacy leaders. He holds an M.S. in Educational Administration and credentials in instructional coaching.



John Schu has made a career out of advocating for the people and things he cares about most: kids, books, and the people who connect them. He is the children's librarian for Bookelicious and the author of *This Is a School* (Candlewick, 2022) illustrated by Veronica Miller Jamison, *This Is a Story* (Candlewick, 2023) illustrated by Caldecott Honor artist Lauren Castillo, *Louder Than Hunger* (Candlewick, 2024), *The Gift of Story: Exploring the Affective Side of the Reading Life* (Stenhouse, 2022) and the soon to be released *Ruthie Rose's Big Idea: A Poetry Story* (Candlewick, 2025). John Schu lives in Naperville, Illinois.



Katie Sciorba, Ph.D. is an associate professor of Literacies and Children's Literature in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Georgia. Her scholarship focuses on two primary areas of inquiry: 1) the reading experiences and meaning-making processes of young readers, and 2) representations of the sociopolitical world in children's literature. She is the author of *Reading and Relevance, Reimagined: Celebrating the Literacy Lives of Young Men of Color* (Teachers College Press, 2024). Her other work appears in such publications as *Urban Education*, *Teachers College Record*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *English Journal*, and the *Journal of Children's Literature*. Learn more at <https://katiesciurba.com/>.



Anna Smith (PhD, NYU) is a Professor and Coordinator of Graduate Programs in the School of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University. In partnership with educators and young people, she is the author of more than 40 articles, book chapters, and other manuscripts, including her most recent articles in *Language Arts*, *Writing & Pedagogy*, and *Review of Research in Education*. She is a co-author of *Developing Writers: Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age* and co-editor of the *Handbook of Writing, Literacies, and Education in Digital Cultures*. Dr. Smith is a lead co-editor of the journal *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*. Her collaborative research has been recognized with the 2018 Arthur Applebee Award for Excellence in Research on Literacy; the 2023 Emerald Literati Award for Most Outstanding Article; and the 2025 Divergent Award for Excellence in Research on Literacy in a Digital Age. You can engage with her research+practice lab at <https://about.illinoisstate.edu/edunowlab>.



Hiawatha Smith, Ph.D., is an associate professor of literacy education at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and 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. He works directly with schools to provide professional development and supports preservice teachers in their practicum experiences. He is the author of textbooks on children's literature and literacy foundations, and his scholarly work has appeared in *Reading Research Quarterly*, *WSRA Journal*, *Dragon Lode*, *Minnesota English Journal*, and other outlets. He also serves as editor of *English Leadership Quarterly*. 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 in literacy, Hiawatha is passionate about helping educators create inclusive, engaging literacy environments where every learner can thrive.

Featured Speakers Biographies



Cris Tovani is an internationally known consultant who focuses on issues of disciplinary reading, assessment strategies, and writing instruction. She was awarded the 2017 Thought Leader award from the International Literacy Association. Cris has been an adjunct professor at several Colorado universities. She is the author of five books. Her most recent from Routledge/Stenhouse is *Why Do I Have to Read This? Literacy Strategies to Engage Our Most Reluctant Students*. For 39 years, Cris taught students from grades one to twelve. She continues to study the “knowing-doing gap” by investigating how best practice research can be practically applied to meet a variety of learners’ needs. Embracing a growth mindset, she loves sharing her successes and failures with colleagues as they work to serve students.



Maria Walther is a seasoned educator, author, and literacy consultant with over three decades of experience teaching first grade. Her practical, yet engaging approach to classroom instruction has made her a trusted partner for educators seeking effective teaching strategies. With a doctoral degree from Northern Illinois University, Maria is an avid researcher who continues to further her knowledge of literacy instruction. All of Maria’s books are filled with helpful ideas for busy literacy teachers. Learn more about her consulting work and find other resources at mariawalther.com or connect with her on Instagram as [@mariapwalther](https://www.instagram.com/mariapwalther) and [@ayear4thebooks](https://www.instagram.com/ayear4thebooks).



Mia Wenjen blogs at PragmaticMom.com. She is the President and Co-Founder ReadYourWorld.org, a nonprofit that promotes literacy through diverse children’s books. Her picture books include *Barbed Wire Between Us*, *Fortune Cookies for Everyone!*, *The Traveling Taco*, and *We Sing From the Heart*, published by Red Comet Press; *Food for the Future*, published by Barefoot Books; and *Sumo Joe*, published by Lee and Low. Honors for her books include: ALSC Notable Children’s Book, Carter G. Woodson Book Award Honoree, Orbis Pictus Recommended Book for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children, Massachusetts Book Award Long List, Julia Ward Howe Prize for Children’s Literature Winner, California Eureka Non-Fiction Award Honor Book, Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People Winner, Bank Street Best Children’s Books of the Year, and Junior Library Guild Gold Selection. To learn more, see her website, MiaWenjen.com, and follow her on social media [@pragmaticmom](https://www.instagram.com/pragmaticmom).



Jeff Wilhelm is Distinguished Professor of English Education at Boise State, director of the Boise State Writing Project, and a full-time classroom teacher for 13 years who teaches middle or high schoolers each spring. He has authored 44 texts about literacy teaching, including the NCTE Promising Research Award for *You Gotta BE the Book* and the Russell Award for Distinguished Research for *Reading Unbound: Why Kids Need to Read What They Want and Why We Should Let Them* and *Reading Don’t Fix No Chevys*. His current research is into “rules of notice” (tip-offs/cues) for information pollution and AI-generated texts, and for developing expertise in reading fiction and non-fiction. His latest pedagogical initiative is leading DBI squared: Democracy Building Instruction through Document Based Inquiry, helping teachers develop instruction that cultivates dispositions of democracy, including careful listening, identification of bias, news literacy, and evaluation of sources and evidence, as a part of required instruction. He is internationally recognized as a researcher and practitioner in adolescent literacy and inquiry/cognitive apprenticeship approaches to learning, particularly how this approach promotes engagement, critical literacies, deep reading, transformed understanding, and community building.



Featured Speakers Biographies



Jeff Williams, has been active in literacy education for over 35 years as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, and teacher leader. Most recently, Jeff was the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader-in-Residence for St. Mary's College of California and The Ohio State University. 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 Board of Directors for over a decade. Jeff has also served on the Board of Directors for the National Council of Teachers of English. He has co-authored and contributed to professional books, numerous professional journals, and authored 120 children's books for Hameray Publishers.



Jacqueline Witter-Easley has been teaching in a variety of settings for over 35 years. For 12 years, she's worked directly with elementary and middle-school students in several roles: as a classroom teacher, a reading specialist, a children's librarian, and currently, as the director and program creator of the Carthage College Community Literacy Center, located in Kenosha, WI. Additionally, Dr. Witter-Easley has been a college professor for over 25 years, teaching literacy instruction courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. She's currently a Professor of Education at Carthage College, where she's been teaching for these past 20 years and has held the following administrative positions: department chair, division dean, and co-director of faculty development. Her research interests revolve around literacy: early elementary literacy instruction, culturally responsive literacy instruction, visual literacy of picture books, and multicultural children's literature.



Kamania Wynter-Hoyte, Ph.D., is a professor in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of South Carolina. Her scholarship is anchored in culturally relevant literacies that foster liberation in teacher education and early childhood spaces. She is the co-author, *Revolutionary Love for Early Childhood Classrooms: Nurturing the Brilliance of Young Black Children* and *Revolutionary Love: Creating a Culturally Inclusive Literacy Classroom*. She teaches culturally relevant pedagogy, literacy methods, and linguistic pluralism courses with an emphasis on equitable practices.



Dominic Wyse PhD is Professor of Early Childhood and Primary Education at University College London (UCL), Institute of Education (IOE), Founding Director of the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Pedagogy (0–11 Years) (HHCP), a research centre devoted to improving young children's education, and Chair of the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029 Education Panel UoA 23. Dominic Wyse's research includes a sustained contribution to effective teaching of reading and writing. With co-author Charlotte Hacking, Dominic developed the theory of teaching, "The Double Helix of Reading and Writing," published in the prize-winning research paper, "Decoding, reading and writing: the double helix theory of teaching." Their evidence-based practices are published in the highly commended book, *The Balancing Act: An Evidence-based Approach to Teaching Phonics, Reading, and Writing*. The Balancing Act Initiative has attracted international attention from policymakers, researchers, teachers, the media, and wider society. Dominic's work on writing includes multidisciplinary analysis of writing across the life course, published in *How Writing Works*. His work was featured in BBC Radio 4's *Life Without Writing*.



Thank You

to Our WSRA Conference Sponsors!

Partners in Literacy. Brighter Futures Together.

Series Level Sponsors

(sponsoring \$2,000 or more)



Novel Level Sponsors

(sponsoring \$1,000 up to Series Level)



Friends of Literacy

(Sponsoring up to Chapter Level)



Educators Credit Union 1326 Willow Rd, Mt. Pleasant, WI 53177
Hanson & Associates 500 2nd Street South #101, La Crosse, WI 54601
Insperity/Jennifer Libby 8401 Greenway Blvd, Middleton, WI 53562
Lautz Lassig Custom Builders, Inc 640 Commerce St # B West Salem, WI 54669
Marine Credit Union Foundation 300 2nd Street N, Ste 400, La Crosse, WI 54601

UWEC 105 Garfield Avenue Eau Claire, WI 54701
UWRF School of Education 410 S. 3rd St. River Falls, WI 54022
UWSP School of Education 2100 Main St, Stevens Point, WI 54481
Visit Milwaukee 648 N Plankinton Ave, Ste 220, Milwaukee, WI 53203

Dates to Remember

Registration for WSRA 2027
closes February 10, 2027!



<https://tinyurl.com/bdep6yw2>

The call for **WSRA 2028 proposals opens** February 1, 2027, and remains open through June 26, 2027.



<https://tinyurl.com/h2u2pu4x>

Join us for the 2028 WSRA Conference!

February 10 & 11, 2028

At the Baird Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

*Navigating New Chapters-Balancing
Tradition and Innovation in Literacy*



Get involved in the Wisconsin State Reading Association!

Become a WSRA Member - Benefits include:

WSRA Update, WSRA journals, free access to the archived webinar recordings, and more!

Reduced rates for WSRA conferences and institutes

<https://tinyurl.com/r2rxr9rj>

Mail in this form or join online.

For undergraduate or retired rates, contact wsra@wsra.org



WSRA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

6a

Today's Date _____
First Name _____ Initial _____ Last Name _____
Home Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip +4 _____
Place of Employment _____
Duties, Title & Level/Dept. _____
Cell Phone (____) _____ Work Phone (____) _____
Home E-mail _____

Are you a member of International Literacy Association? ☐ Yes _____ ☐ No
Membership Number _____

Are you a member of a local reading council? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, check name(s) →

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>

☐ Renewal _____ WSRA Membership Number ☐ New

Membership is for one year from the date of joining. Dues may be tax deductible. Some of the information provided will be in the WSRA Membership Directory.



Visit www.wsra.org/membership-application to join or renew and pay by credit card to expedite your membership benefits or mail your **\$45** check with this form payable to WSRA at

WSRA 6964 N Lincolnshire Cir Milwaukee, WI 53223

- ☐ Ashland Bayfield Counties
- ☐ Central Wisconsin
- ☐ Door County
- ☐ Eau Claire
- ☐ Fox Valley
- ☐ Greater Bayland
- ☐ Headwaters
- ☐ Hidden Valley
- ☐ Interlake
- ☐ Lake Superior
- ☐ Madison Area
- ☐ Mid-East Area
- ☐ Midwest Wisconsin
- ☐ Milwaukee Area
- ☐ Muirland
- ☐ Northeast Wisconsin
- ☐ Northwest Wisconsin
- ☐ Racine-Kenosha
- ☐ Rock River
- ☐ St. Croix Valley
- ☐ South Kettle Moraine
- ☐ Southern Lakes
- ☐ Washington Ozaukee
- ☐ Waukesha County
- ☐ Wis. Professors of Literacy
- ☐ Wolf River

WSRA OFFICE USE

_____ Check number
_____ Date received by WSRA



Literacy
Thrives
Together!
♥

Your Voice. Your Ideas. Your WSRA. Join a Committee!

Share your expertise, connect with fellow literacy professionals,
and help shape the future of literacy in Wisconsin.

Together
We Make a
Difference!
♥

Get Involved!

Choose a committee that
interests you—or tell us
where you can contribute.

**SCAN TO NOMINATE
YOURSELF**



<https://www.wsra.org/committees>

*We'd love to have you
on the team!* ♥

2027–2028 WSRA Committees

Find Your Place in WSRA

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



*Connect.
Collaborate.
Make a Difference.*



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

Stronger
Readers.
Brighter
Communities!



Get Involved in the

Wisconsin State Reading Association!

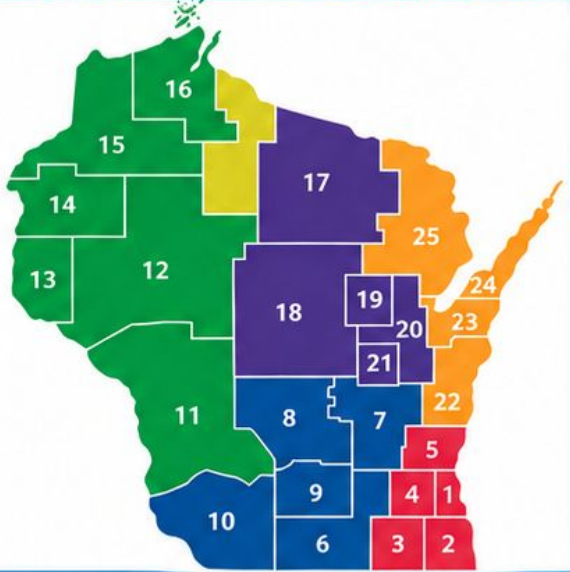
Literacy
Thrives
Locally!



Join a Local Reading Council.

Connect with educators in your region, share ideas,
and support literacy across Wisconsin!

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



- 17 ~ Headwaters Literacy Council
- 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

Get involved in the Wisconsin State Reading Association!

Support & Follow WSRA

Follow WSRA



wsra.org



Facebook.com/WSRAread



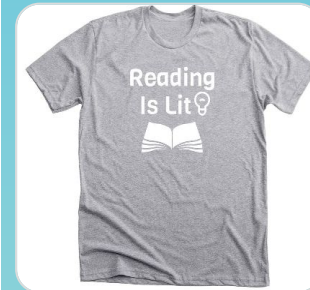
@wsraliteracy.bsky.social



@WSRALiteracy

Support WSRA

Visit our WSRA store



Become a WSRA Friend of Literacy



Registration

To register for the 2027 Conference go to

<https://tinyurl.com/yc6c3rxp>

See the website for *Early Bird* and *Full-Time Undergraduate* discounts.

<https://wsra.memberclicks.net/conference-registration1>

**Registration closes on
February 10, 2027**



Early Bird Rates!! (Register by January 22, 2027)	WSRA Member	Non- Member
Thursday and Friday	\$390	\$490
Thursday	\$205	\$305
Friday	\$205	\$305

Standard Fees (Register after January 22, 2027)	WSRA Member	Non- Member
Thursday and Friday	\$490	\$590
Thursday	\$305	\$405
Friday	\$305	\$405

Full-Time, Undergraduate Students find SPECIAL prices at 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.
- ❖ You or your organization may choose to pay at a later date; however, **payment in full must be received prior to attending the conference.**

WSRA President's Hall of Fame

1955-1956	Sr. M. Julitta Fisch, OSF	1980-1981	Melvin Yanow	2005-2006	Dr. Brenda Shearer
1956-1957	Dr. Arthur Schoeller	1981-1982	Doug Vance	2006-2007	Katherine Liddell
1957-1958	Mildred Brady	1982-1983	Dr. Sandra Dahl	2007-2008	Gail Halmstad
1958-1959	Lorena Scherkenbach	1983-1984	Laura (Holmgren) Maas	2008-2010	Norm Andrews
1959-1960	Dr. Arthur S. McDonald	1984-1985	Dr. Donna Thomas	2010-2011	Dr. Tom Lueschow
1960-1961	Dorothy Gardner	1985-1986	Judith Casey	2011-2012	Sandy Benton
1961-1962	Dr. Lester Van Gilder	1986-1987	Paul Majerle	2012-2013	Jan Weinhold
1962-1963	Myrtle Nyberg	1987-1988	Dr. Mary Regina Jett	2013-2014	Joyce Uglow
1963-1964	Dr. Anthony Ingrelli	1988-1989	Suzanne Jund	2014-2015	Kathy Galvin
1964-1965	Dr. Lou Burmeister	1989-1990	Doug Buehl	2015-2016	Sue Boquist
1965-1966	Dr. Norman Frenzel	1990-1991	Lorraine Gerhart	2016-2017	Barb Novak
1966-1967	Dr. Theodore Harris	1991-1992	Barbara Gaulke	2017-2018	Gale Gerharz
1967-1968	Dr. Lura Carrithers	1992-1993	Dr. Richard Telfer	2018-2020	Deborah Cromer
1968-1969	Dr. James Kerfoot	1993-1994	Patricia Sows	2020-2021	La Tasha Fields
1969-1970	Dr. Matthew Valitchka	1994-1995	Lucy Keuntjes	2021-2023	Debra Zarling
1970-1971	Dr. Donald Benz	1995-1996	Kristine Michell	2023-2026	Ryanne Deschane
1971-1972	Dr. Jean Caudle	1996-1997	Bonnie Corcoran	2026-2027	Sarah Schnuelle
1972-1973	Dr. Roger Quealy	1997-1998	Dr. Michael P. Ford		
1973-1974	E. Jane Sauer	1998-1999	Dr. Carmen Coballes-Vega		
1974-1975	E. Jane Sauer	1999-2000	Dr. Delores Heiden		
1975-1976	Sr. Marie Colette Roy	2000-2001	Luann Dreifuerst		
1976-1977	Dr. M. Hope Underwood	2001-2002	Kathy Champeau		
1977-1978	John Kinnett	2002-2003	Beverly Bell		
1978-1979	Dr. Russell Burgett	2003-2004	Sharon Tilton		
1979-1980	Dr. David Gustafson	2004-2005	Debra Zarling		



WSRA 2026-2027 Board of Directors



*Sarah Schnuelle
President*



*Jacqueline Witter-Easley
President-Elect*



*Susan Tily
Vice President*



*Emily Hines
Second Vice President*



*Ryanne Deschane
Past President*



*Teri Lassig
Treasurer*



*Deborah Cromer
Recording Secretary*



*Amy Sippert
Committee Coordinator*



*Kathryn Champeau
Legislative Chair*



*Norm Andrews
Public Relations Liaison*



*Jennifer Russ
Update Editor*



WSRA
6964 N Lincolnshire Circle
Milwaukee, WI 53223

Postage



Address label

WSRA 2027 CONFERENCE



February 11 & 12, 2027 * Baird Center * Milwaukee, Wisconsin

***Literacy Without Limits:
Empowering Voices, Imagining
Futures***



1. Existing users, please enter your username and password. New users, please enter your preferred email address.
2. **REGISTER ONLINE BY FEBRUARY 10, 2027** at <https://tinyurl.com/bdep6yw2>. Preferred payments are by Check, ACH, Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit cards.

❖ You or your organization may choose to pay at a later date; however, **payment in full must be received prior to attending the conference.** You will receive an invoice showing the balance due. **Forward the invoice to the accounts payable contact in your district/agency immediately.** You will continue to receive payment reminder notifications until the invoice is marked paid by WSRA.
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, 2026.
4. **WSRA CANCELLATION POLICY:** WSRA 2027 Conference cancellations submitted in writing before January 31, 2027, will be refunded the cost of registration minus a \$75 processing fee. After January 31, 2027, no refunds will be given, however, you may transfer your registration to another individual from your organization through February 10, 2027. All cancellation and transfer requests must be submitted in writing to wsra@wsra.org. Unpaid invoices will be subject to collections for the full amount.



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