

School Libraries Support SaskReads

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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The Provincial Reading Team released *Saskatchewan Reads: a companion document to the Saskatchewan English Language Arts Curriculum Grades 1, 2, 3* in 2015 with the intent to provide a framework for school divisions to develop their own constructs to teach reading based upon the uniqueness of their student population. In 2016, recognizing the importance of system leaders in implementing *SaskReads*, the writing team developed *Saskatchewan Reads for Administrators*. Both documents reference the crucial role school libraries play in achieving reading outcomes.

School Library

The school library is at the heart of the school's reading **culture**. A high quality school library:

- includes a diverse collection of texts that are current and relevant to student interests and learning needs;
- reflects culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including Métis and First Nations cultures;
- has a high level of circulation;
- is staffed by individuals who are knowledgeable and passionate about promoting reading in the school;
- is a safe and welcoming environment, accessed throughout the day for independent reading and learning opportunities; and
- provides teachers with resources to support reading instruction, including professional resources and current texts for classroom libraries.

Saskatchewan Reads for Administrators

Could someone walking through a Saskatchewan school library today easily recognize that library as a proponent of *Saskatchewan Reads*? Answer the following questions to determine the result.

1. Do the book displays reflect the diversity of the student population and student interests?
2. What percentage of the collection has been circulated into the hands of students and staff? Would it be a surprise to learn that less than 10% have been loaned? Recently in the Good Spirit School Division, the calculation revealed that 31 628 items were currently out from a collection of 359 000. That means 92% of the collection remains on the shelves.
3. Is the school library accessible throughout the school day?
4. Can enough comfortable spaces be found to entice readers to stay and delve into their selections?
5. Does signage lead students to the many digital options from the eBook and audiobook collections at the school and public libraries as

well as magazines and other selections available on apps such as Epic!, Tumblebooks, Freading, Hoopla, Flipster and Zinio—just to name a few?

6. Are the conversations at the circulation desk centered around what the reader will tackle next or what the reader can recommend to someone else rather than when the book needs to be returned?

7. How does the school library connect readers with books over the summer? Is there a plan in place or does it appear that the school library has a sign pinned to the door stating, “Summer is coming; lock up the books.”

It can be all too easy to fall into the habit of maintaining library old rules and patterns not realizing the obstacles it places between students and their reading. What limits and constraints are placed on students’ borrowing? Students in this day and age of recycling understand the “read and reuse” concept. Books to today’s students are not the sacred tomes they once were. Yet libraries tend to operate as if students will steal all the books of the shelves if we turn our backs. Now, stealing the iPads might be a different matter....

One certain method of getting resources out the doors of the library and into the hands of students is to establish classroom libraries outfitted with selections from the school library and refreshed after a certain length of time. Circulating resources through classroom libraries allows the classroom collection to better respond to the varying interests and range of reading levels of the students at a given time. The Good Spirit School Division created the following guide for developing classroom libraries and granted permission to share. Their schools employ a variety of methods to circulate materials from the classroom. Some schools assign students the task of circulating classroom materials using the app on the classroom iPad. Teachers use the app on their phones. One school purchased barcode scanners for each classroom to ease the task of tracking circulation. Whatever method is chosen, the undisputed fact is that children read 50 – 60% more in classrooms with libraries than without them (Morrow 2003, Neuman 1999; Kim 2003; as quoted in Miller 2013).

Tips for Building a Classroom Library

- Collaborate with your teacher librarian regularly to build multi-genre text collections to rotate through your classroom library.
- Infuse student and class created books into your classroom library.
- Create a wish-list of text titles for families and community groups to consider donating to the classroom library.
- Collaborate with your School Community Council to build classroom libraries (e.g.; book drive, fundraiser, community sponsors, corporate sponsors).
- Connect with your local library to borrow books for your classroom library.

Saskatchewan Reads

CLASSROOM LIBRARIES

Supporting Independent Reading



SASKATCHEWAN
READS

The Classroom Library

Classroom libraries are one important aspect in providing a literacy-rich environment. They offer opportunities for students to engage with texts that reflect their interests by including a range of topics and genres; and to read more by having easy and equitable access to texts located not only on a bookshelf, but displayed throughout the classroom. Students can play an integral role in the development of the classroom library by being involved in the continual, revolving selection of texts. Student ownership and participation in the classroom library fosters reading engagement (Early Reading Strategy, 2009).

Dynamic classroom libraries include a wide range of topics, interests and varying levels of text complexity. Resources are culturally diverse and represent many viewpoints. Texts can be found in varying formats and genres with a balance between fiction and nonfiction materials.

Classroom libraries cannot exist in isolation. Resources need to be rotated into the classroom library from the school library on a regular basis. Collaboration and conversations between classroom teachers and teacher-librarians/library technicians foster the growth of rich, high



“Make excellent classroom libraries one of your highest priorities - ahead of the latest technology, resources, programs and standards. It is only through wide, self-selected reading that we will produce proficient and joyful readers as well as writers.”

Regie Routman, 2014

Questions For Developing a Classroom Library

1. Where in your classroom will your library be?

- Centred around your reading corner
- On book shelves along the wall
- In baskets on trolleys

2. How will you display the books?

- By interest and topic
- Author and genre
- According to student suggested categories



3. How will the classroom library be built?

- Sub-locate 100+ books from your school library to your classroom library
- Provide mobile devices or allow student devices in your classroom to access eBooks
- Tap into the resources from your public library

4. How will students access the books?

- Loan the books to students using the Destiny library software
- Students select books for their book boxes or reading bags
- Students borrow eBooks from their school library or public library

“Children read 50 to 60 percent more in classrooms with libraries than without them.”

(Morrow 2003; Neuman 1999; Kim 2003)

No More Independent Reading Without Support – Miller 2013

“Schools...can make it easy and less risky for children to take books home for the evening or weekend by worrying less about losing books to children and more about losing children to illiteracy.”

Richard Allington



CHECKLIST FOR CLASSROOM LIBRARIES



Multi-format Selections

- books
- eBooks
- magazines
- newspapers
- maps
- brochures
- pamphlets
- posters
- wordless picture books

Multi-genre Selections

- full length fiction
- full length nonfiction
- poetry
- short stories
- plays
- graphic novels
- biography/autobiography
- comic books

All styles of Fiction

- action adventure
- animal stories
- crime
- fantasy
- ghost stories
- historical
- horror
- humorous
- mystery
- post-apocalyptic fiction
- realistic
- science fiction
- sports
- thriller

Popular Series

- Mercy Watson
- Flying Beaver Brothers
- Geronimo Stilton
- Our Canadian Girl
- Amulet
- Bone
- I am Canada
- Divergent

Favourite Authors

PICTURE BOOKS

- Marie Louise Gay
- Ruth Ohi
- Amy Krouse Rosenthal
- David Shannon
- Melanie Watt
- Mo Willems
- Karma Wilson

CHAPTER BOOKS

- Deborah Ellis
- Kathy Kacer
- Jeff Kinney
- Gordon Korman
- Rick Riordan
- Raina Telgemeier

FOR TEENS

- James Dashner
- Malcolm Gladwell
- Ellen Hopkins
- Susan Juby
- Barbara Kingslover
- Robert Kirkman