

The School Library Monthly Update



A MONTH MADE FOR READERS!

March is National Reading Month, and it's a wonderful opportunity to spotlight the power of reading in your school. You can build on routines already in place or re-energize your library program with something new. Either way, this month offers endless ways to spark excitement, curiosity, and connection through books. In this issue, you'll find ideas for building a month-long reading celebration that is simple to manage, meaningful for students and teachers, and fully adaptable to your school's needs. National Reading Month really does invite us to celebrate readers in all the ways that matter.

See more on page 2.

TO-DO

- ✓ Consider applying for the [2026 School Achievement Through Libraries \(SATL\) Award](#)! It's open year-round.
- ✓ Join the chat! The March School Library Collect + Connect is Wednesday 3/4 at 4:30pm CT. [Enroll HERE.](#)

REMINDERS



Check out [SDSL's CE Catalog](#) for all continuing education opportunities.



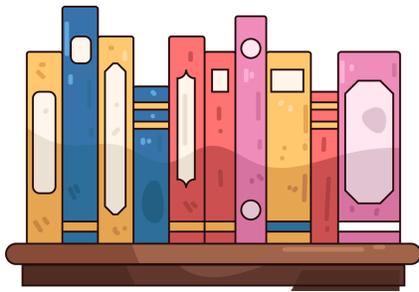
You can also view [SDSL's Training Calendar](#) for CE/PD opportunities from our database vendors, etc.

**EVERY MONTH, WE WILL HIGHLIGHT
A SATL AWARD RECIPIENT! SEE P.4!**

NATIONAL READING MONTH

Building a Reading Culture That Shines All Month Long

National Reading Month is an opportunity to deepen reading habits, highlight the joy of discovery, and bring your school community together through stories. With a few intentional choices, your library can become the heartbeat of March reading experiences.



Create a Month-Long Reading Experience

Instead of one big event, design a series of small, consistent touchpoints that build excitement. A weekly rhythm gives students something to look forward to and makes your planning manageable. For example:

- **Week 1, Try Something New:** Encourage students to explore a new genre, format, or author. Feature a display that rotates every few days.
- **Week 2, Celebrate Student Voice:** Invite readers to recommend books, record short book shout-outs, or create mini shelf-talkers.
- **Week 3, Read Together:** Offer partner reading time during library class or invite a teacher to read aloud during checkout.
- **Week 4, Share Your Favorites:** Highlight staff picks, student favorites, and books that have made an impact on your community.

The goal is to make reading feel expansive, like something students want to participate in, not something they are told to do.

Spotlight Reading Identities

March is the perfect moment to help students reflect on who they are as readers. Keep it simple:

- Provide short prompts students can respond to during checkout.
- Invite students to add a sticky note to a “Reading Is…” wall.
- Share a few reading identity reflections from staff members to model the idea.

Partner with Classrooms

Offer a small menu of ready-to-use ideas that teachers can easily use:

- **5-Minute Read Aloud:** Give teachers a short text or poem they can read anytime.
- **Reading Moment Cards:** Provide a set of cards teachers can draw from when they have a few spare minutes—facts about authors, “would you rather” questions tied to books, or short reading challenges.
- **Teacher Book Spotlight:** Ask one classroom per week to share a favorite book with a short blurb you can display.



Host a School-Wide Reading Challenge



Keep it flexible and open to all. Instead of counting pages or minutes, focus on experiences:

- “Read somewhere unusual.”
- “Read a book that makes you laugh.”
- “Share a book recommendation with someone.”
- “Read something shorter than 10 minutes.”

You can offer a small reward for completing a set number of activities or simply celebrate with a collective goal for the school.

Try a “Book of the Day” or “Mystery Read” Moment

Choose one book each day to display near the entrance with a brief teaser or a short excerpt. Students love the novelty, and it takes only a few minutes to prep.

Or, spotlight a book wrapped in a simple piece of colored paper with a clue: “If you like surprising friendships, try this...”

Celebrate Teachers as Readers

Highlight teachers as reading role models. Simple ways to do this include:

- A display of teacher reading photos (“Caught Reading!”)
- Staff book picks posted in the hallway
- A teacher read-aloud video shared during morning announcements (if your school uses them)

Students should see the adults in their school as readers, too!



Incorporate Storytelling Into the Month

Stories don’t only live in books. Consider adding one or two storytelling moments for classes:

- Share a folktale or short oral story.
- Invite students to tell a one-minute story based on an object you display.
- Play a collaborative storytelling game where each person adds one sentence.

This reminds students that reading and storytelling are connected forms of expression.



Create a Reading Finale for the End of the Month

Wrap up March with something that feels celebratory but manageable. Ideas include:

- Announcing fun reading statistics (most checked-out genre, most visited day, etc.)
- A school-wide reading minute on the last Friday of the month
- A “reader appreciation day” where students receive a bookmark or sticker
- A collaborative mural titled “Books That Changed Us”

These small touches give the month a sense of completion and honor the reading your students have done.



Sioux Falls Sonia Sotomayor Elementary School Library



Librarian: Jennifer Egstad

At Sonia Sotomayor Elementary, librarian Jennifer Egstad leads a bilingual library program that truly reflects the school’s identity as a Spanish immersion community. Guided by the SFSD mission and the SDSL School Library Standards, Jennifer builds a collection and learning environment that intentionally supports students in both English and Spanish. Her commitment to curating culturally rich and linguistically diverse materials, traveling annually to the Guadalajara International Book Fair to hand-select Spanish titles, ensures that every student can find books that feel meaningful and accessible. From literacy programming and reading challenges to STEAM-infused lessons and digital citizenship instruction, Jennifer creates a vibrant, dual-language library space where students grow as readers, thinkers, and global citizens.



Thanks for helping us hit our goals!!

Sotomayor:
19,592 books

Siouxland:
406,172 books



Mission-Driven Collection Development

Jennifer purchases books with purpose and intentionality. Last year, she added 514 English titles and brought in 450 new Spanish books purchased directly in Guadalajara. With a generous \$8,000 annual book budget (plus an additional \$2,000 for Spanish titles), she ensures students have access to high-quality, culturally responsive materials that support bilingual learning.

Programming That Builds Community

Jennifer runs a robust lineup of reading initiatives, including: Book Battles, Prairie Pasque Reading, Challenge, Everybody Reads, and Read for the Record. She also tracked the number of books students read in March, creating visuals that motivated students and celebrated their progress. Her programs bring excitement to reading!

A Bilingual Library Space

Students check out books daily in both English and Spanish, supported by a collection that is now 45% Spanish. Jennifer curates resources for Spanish-speaking classrooms, manages a Spanish Book Room, and maintains digital supports to ensure biliteracy across grade levels. Students see their language reflected and honored throughout the library.

Blended Literacy Instruction

With a 4-day rotation serving every K-5 class, Jennifer’s lessons incorporate digital citizenship, STEAM exploration, and the joy of reading. Maker lessons and hands-on activities are integrated throughout her instruction, all aligned with the SD State Library Standards. She works hard to consistently deliver rich, high-quality learning experiences.