

Monthly Update

July 2026

Reset, Refresh, Reimagine

Summer offers something the school year rarely does: space to pause. Before the rush of schedules, classes, and checkouts begins again, July can be an opportunity for a reset and a chance to reflect on what's working, what isn't, and what small shifts could make a big difference this year.

Maybe it's rethinking a procedure that frustrates students. Maybe it's refreshing a display area, reorganizing a section, or reconsidering the messages your library space sends. Maybe it's simply asking: What do I want my library to feel like this year?

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Turning the Page on What Counts as Reading

July is **Graphic Novels in the Library Month**. It's the perfect time to celebrate one of the most beloved (and often most checked-out!) sections of the school library. We know that graphic novels capture the attention of our students, but they also build visual literacy, strengthen comprehension, support vocabulary development, and help students develop reading confidence and stamina. They invite readers into stories, spark curiosity, and often serve as a bridge to lifelong reading.

So, whether your graphic novel shelves are already thriving or you're looking to grow the collection, this month is a great reminder that graphic novels belong in the school library and in the hands of students.

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SCHOOL LIBRARY RESOURCES

- ➔ [SDSL CE Catalog](#)
- ➔ [SDSL Training Catalog](#)
- ➔ [School Library Services Handbook](#)
- ➔ [SDSL Electronic Resources](#)
- ➔ [Monthly Update Archives](#)
- ➔ [Guides for School Librarians](#)
- ➔ [PD Opportunities](#)
- ➔ [School Library Scoop](#)
- ➔ [School Library Pulse](#)

SDSL School Library Services

- ☎ +605-295-3152
- ✉ scottie.bruch@state.sd.us
- 🌐 library.sd.gov/LIB/SLC/index.aspx
- 👤 facebook.com/LibrarySD
- 📍 800 Governor's Drive, Pierre, SD 57501

Hit the Reset Button this Summer!



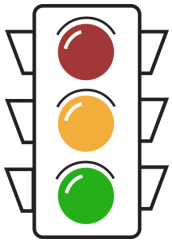
Start With Reflection, Not a To-Do List



Before jumping into projects, take a moment to reflect:

- What worked really well last year?
- What consistently frustrated you or students?
- What part of your library brought the most joy?
- If you could change one thing this year, what would it be?

Your answers can help guide a reset that feels purposeful rather than overwhelming.



Try a “Stop, Start, Continue” Reset

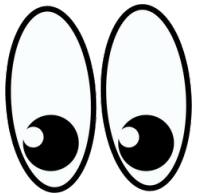
Grab a sticky note or notebook page and make three quick lists:

- STOP: What practices, rules, or habits no longer serve your students?
- START: What’s one small thing you’ve wanted to try?
- CONTINUE: What worked so well that it deserves even more attention?

Reset the Student Experience

Think about your library through a student’s eyes.

Ask yourself:



- Is it clear what students can do in the library...not just what they can't?
- Does the space feel welcoming?
- Are books easy to browse?
- What messages do displays, signage, and procedures communicate?

Choose One Tiny Win

You don’t have to transform everything before school starts.

Instead, choose one meaningful reset:

- ✓ Refresh a display area
- ✓ Rework library expectations
- ✓ Create a new student recommendation feature
- ✓ Rearrange a confusing section
- ✓ Build one stronger teacher partnership
- ✓ Add more student voice to the space



You don’t need a Pinterest-perfect library or a complete reinvention to start the year strong. Students rarely remember perfectly laminated signs or matching bins. They remember how a space made them feel!

BEYOND RELUCTANT READERS

Graphic novels are sometimes viewed as tools only for struggling or reluctant readers, but their value goes far beyond that.

Graphic novels support:

- ✓ Visual literacy
- ✓ Inferencing skills
- ✓ Vocabulary development
- ✓ Reading stamina
- ✓ Comprehension of complex themes
- ✓ Multimodal learning

And perhaps most importantly? Students love them.

Graphic Novels Count as Real Reading

Let's say it louder for the people in the back: graphic novels are real reading! Readers navigate text, images, sequencing, facial expressions, symbolism, and visual cues all at once. In many ways, graphic novels ask readers to do incredibly sophisticated comprehension work.

Graphic novels can:

- Support English learners
- Build confidence in emerging readers
- Engage advanced readers with complex themes
- Provide access points to history, science, and memoir
- Increase overall reading engagement

Think Beyond Fiction

Graphic novels can be nonfiction, too!

Consider expanding collections with:

- History & Biography: memoirs, historical events, famous figures
- STEM: science topics, coding, engineering, nature
- Adaptations: classics and mythology
- Social-Emotional Topics: identity, belonging, mental wellness
- Informational Texts: nonfiction graphic formats

Students often discover entirely new interests through graphic nonfiction.

Quick Collection Reflection

Take a quick look at your shelves:

- ☐ Can students see themselves?
- ☐ Are multiple genres included?
- ☐ Are there options for all grade levels and reading interests?
- ☐ Are graphic novels easy to find and browse?
- ☐ Are they displayed as valued materials and not hidden away?

Try: A Graphic Novel "Gateway" Display

IF YOU LIKED...TRY A GRAPHIC NOVEL!

Examples:

Liked fantasy?→Try graphic fantasy
Loved history?→Try historical graphic nonfiction

Fan of humor?→Try graphic memoirs or comics