

The SDSL School Library Monthly Update

August 2026

Celebrating Excellence in SD School Libraries

Each year, the South Dakota State Library recognizes outstanding school library programs through the School Achievement Through Libraries (SATL) Award. The award celebrates schools that demonstrate exemplary practice in the areas of Program, Place, and Professional, while also serving as

models for school librarianship across the state. This month, we're pleased to announce the 2026 SATL recipients. Throughout the coming year, we'll introduce these award-winning libraries and highlight the innovative work, leadership, and impact happening in each of their school communities.

Inspired by this Year's Recipients?

Your school library could be next! Applications are now open for the 2027 SATL Award. Whether you're ready to apply this year or simply looking for a framework to strengthen your library program, the SATL Award is designed to recognize excellence while guiding continuous growth in the areas of Program, Place, and Professional.

Learn more about the award, eligibility, and the application process on page 3.

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



2026-2029 Award Recipients

School Library	Librarian	Administrator
Alcester-Hudson Elementary School	Nola Conner	Courtnee Ronning
Alcester-Hudson Jr High/High School	Nola Conner	Jason Van Engen
Custer Elementary School	Doris Ann Mertz	Joey Kortemeyer
Custer Junior/Senior High School	Doris Ann Mertz	Tobey Cass
Dakota Valley Upper Elementary and MS	Erin Nilges	Nichole Herzog and Michael Whittlef
Harrisburg Freedom Elementary School	Tyler Muth	Jay Swatek
Harrisburg High School	Eve Langerock	Ryan Rollinger and Kay Bass
Harrisburg Journey Elementary School	Jen Rinken	Rob Sylliaasen
Hermosa Elementary School	Doris Ann Mertz	Forrest Paris
Pierre T.F. Riggs High School	Pamela Chamberlain Kringel	Kelly Hansen
Sioux Falls Patrick Henry Middle School	Wendy Nelson	Jeffrey Noll Ryan Hall
Sioux Falls RF Pettigrew Elementary School	Nicole Ulvestad	Tim Wagner
Tri-Valley High School	Kay Dahl Hobart	Chris Larson
Tri-Valley Middle School	Kay Dahl Hobart	Derik Fossum
Tri-Valley Colton Elementary School	Kay Dahl Hobart	Zach Gors
Tri-Valley Crooks Elementary School	Kay Dahl Hobart	Josh Carda

Could Your School Library Be Next?

The School Achievement Through Libraries (SATL) Award recognizes South Dakota school libraries that demonstrate exemplary practice in the three pillars of school librarianship:

- **Program:** Providing high-quality instruction, resources, and learning opportunities that support students and educators.
- **Place:** Creating welcoming physical and virtual library spaces that inspire learning, exploration, and reading.
- **Professional:** Demonstrating leadership, collaboration, and ongoing professional growth.

More than a recognition of excellence, the SATL Award also provides a clear framework for building and sustaining a strong school library program. The award criteria highlight best practices and can help school librarians celebrate successes, identify opportunities for growth, and strengthen the impact of their libraries.

Applications for the 2027 SATL Award are now open. The program is self-paced, allowing you to complete requirements as they fit your schedule. Applications submitted by July 1, 2027 will be recognized at the beginning of the 2027–2028 school year and at the annual fall conference. Award recipients also earn 15 CECHs, and the award is valid for three years.

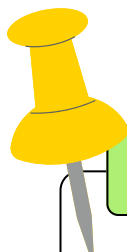
We encourage every South Dakota school library to explore the SATL program. Whether your goal is recognition this year or using the criteria as a roadmap for future growth, SATL provides an opportunity to celebrate the important work happening in your library.

Ready to get started? Visit the [SATL Award webpage](#) for application materials, requirements, and helpful resources.



BACK TO SCHOOL

DATABASE CHECK



PLAN YOUR 1ST LESSON

The first few weeks of school are the perfect time to introduce (or reintroduce) students to your library's online resources. Even a brief lesson can help students understand the difference between a database and a search engine, where to find reliable information, and how these resources can support classroom assignments throughout the year.

A simple 10–15 minute demonstration or a quick scavenger hunt using one or two databases can build student confidence and make future research projects much smoother. Establishing these routines early helps students know where to turn when they need trustworthy information, not just for one assignment, but all year long.

Check out the complete listing of [SDSL's Electronic Resources](#).



REMINDER

Make sure your students can access the SDSL databases once they are back in the classroom! Don't wait until the last minute (or during class). Get a jump start on ensuring your students have everything they need. Download the [Back to School Database Check handout](#).



COMING SOON

Each month this school year, we'll feature one SDSL database with ideas for classroom use, time-saving tips, and hidden features you may not have discovered. Whether you're introducing a new resource or revisiting an old favorite, our monthly spotlight will help you make the most of the tools available.

CONTACT INFO

Questions? Contact [Kim Bonen](#).

