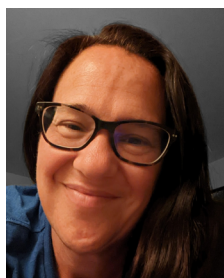


Member Profiles

Compiled by Sarah Jo Zaharako



Mindy Perry



Susie Isaac



Kristy Kilfoyle

Enjoy these profiles of ALSC members sharing their expertise and skills in school settings.

Mindy Perry, District 65 Dawes Elementary Librarian

What is your favorite part about working in a school setting?

Every day is a new day to collaborate with fellow district librarians, teachers, students, and the community; sharing literature and exploring new ways of learning. School libraries are dynamic places to read, explore, tinker, problem solve, create and think outside the box.

How has your job evolved as a result of the pandemic?

When the pandemic hit and we went to remote learning, many school librarians were concerned about copyright issues surrounding read-alouds posted online. Myself and fellow district librarians virtually met with Kim Hamilton, copyright librarian at Northwestern University to discuss the importance of getting stories and books into the hands of students, but in the safest way possible. Engagement and student attendance via Zoom became a priority while providing read-alouds, e-books, and virtual resources for teachers and students. Being back in person, I try to find the balance between print and virtual resources while welcoming students back into the physical library space.

Describe a library event, program, or outreach initiative that is important to you and why?

Maker Madness is a reading and making initiative. During the pandemic, a virtual Family Maker Madness night was kicked off with a reading of *The Story of Snow* by Jon Nelson. Families broke off into groups and could choose building a sled ramp, designing ice crystals, or performing experiments with ice. Another piece to Maker Madness happens during checkout. If a student checks out one of the twenty-five diverse books tagged as a Maker Madness book, they get a kit with materials to construct things like building a rainbow bridge, making origami stars, or creating a paper plate dragon. Students take the book and kit home to read and complete individually or with their families. Maker STEM bins are also a popular student choice activity because they get to create with their friends in the library after checkout.

Maker Madness is continuously being developed as I grow as a lifelong learner. My first year as a school librarian, I participated in ILEAD USA (Innovated Librarians Explore, Apply, and Discover) where I learned how to respond to patron needs and the idea of makerspaces. I've participated in STEM workshops and curriculum design events hosted by Northwestern's TIILT (Technological Innovations for Inclusive Learning and Teaching) center. Conferences such as AISLE and IdeaCon host STEM sessions where I learned how to use the latest technologies in the library.

What is your favorite book to read aloud?

Dragons Love Tacos by Adam Rubin. It's just so silly and fun to read. The illustrations of the dragons partying make me smile. Plus, who doesn't like tacos?

What do you do to reset during stressful times?

Escaping into a fantasy book always helps. I also need creative and physical outlets to handle stress. I love my Cricut machine for making whatever my brain can dream up. I've also incorporated boxing into my workouts and love it!

What are you most passionate about in school librarianship?

Purchasing books that are windows and mirrors for my students and providing students creative ways to respond to their reading. It fosters problem solving, ingenuity, and teamwork while incorporating STEAM. Multi-disciplinary learning while having fun.

Susie Isaac, Teacher, Cherry Creek (CO) School District

Why did you join ALSC?

I joined ALSC seven years into my school library position when I met another member who was then serving on the Newbery Committee. She encouraged me to form a mock Newbery club. The club had such a positive impact on my school and my career.

What is your favorite part about working in a school setting?

I love the relationships I build with my students. My reader's advisory is fully based on those relationships.

How has your job evolved as a result of the pandemic?

My school district was in the midst of an underfunding crisis in early 2020, and the pandemic only accelerated that. Our superintendent gave the directive to cut nonessential positions, and librarians were the first positions listed in that category. I was told my position would be eliminated three months before I was elected to serve on the 2022 Newbery Committee. Talk about career highs and lows! I had to make the choice between staying in my district and pension program or taking a pay cut elsewhere to continue as a school librarian. I couldn't afford to make the change. As a result, I had to make a mid-career change into a Gifted and Talented Teacher role.

Describe a library event, program, or outreach initiative that is important to you and why?

I love running a Mock Newbery club. Students become so invested in campaigning for the book they feel should win the award, and it creates such an engaged, active reading culture. Whenever possible, I try to connect our club with a person serving on the Newbery Committee, so the students have an opportunity to share their feedback and learn what that experience is like. This past year was my first at my current school, and we had more than forty-five third through fifth graders in the club; many classroom teachers and parents told me they'd never seen such enthusiasm about reading before that year. I use the ALSC Mock Newbery Toolkit: <https://www.ala.org/alsc/mock-newbery-toolkit>.

What is your favorite book to read aloud?

I love watching the reactions on children's faces when books surprise them or make them think deeply. I love the way Jon Klassen's illustrations in *Sam and Dave Dig a Hole* and *This Is Not My Hat* pull his audience in.

What do you do to reset during stressful times?

I refresh by spending time being active outdoors, either walking, hiking, kayaking, cross-country skiing, or snowshoeing. I'm lucky to live in Colorado, where I can do all of these things frequently.

Kristy Kilfoyle, Canterbury School Director of Libraries, Fort Myers, FL

What is your favorite part about working in a school setting?

I particularly love seeing connections across our curriculum and working with colleagues who are equally psyched about new discoveries. The more I read, learn, and grow, the more I see that everything is connected.

Describe a library event, program, or outreach initiative that is important to you and why?

This past year, my favorite project-based learning initiative was a long unit based on Kate DiCamillo's *The Beatryce Prophecy*. The third graders learned all about life during the Middle Ages, and I tied in nonfiction titles that discussed what that time period was like in different areas of the world. The kids designed their own crest—one that represented who they are—and translated their names into the Viking alphabet using clay and styluses. They also learned about Mansa Musa, the wealthiest man to ever live, and we examined a close up of the map that depicts him.

What is your favorite book to read aloud?

I adore reading *Dory Fantasmagory* by Abby Hanlon. The kids just die over that book. I'm quite proud of my Mrs. Gobble Gracker voice.

What do you do to reset during stressful times?

I take out the paddleboard or go for a walk with the Peloton App. The Outdoor Audio workouts bring me so much joy.

What are you most passionate about in school librarianship?

I'm most passionate about one-on-one interactions with kids. When I get bogged down with the rest, one great conversation with a kid can perk me right up. &