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NYSED Contributing Editor: Kristen Driskill



Issues are published every month except for December-January and June-August combined issues. (Above image from GoogleImages.)

Don't forget, now you can become a friend to NYSRA on *Facebook*! Have you?
Thanks to all who contributed their time and expertise to our issue this month!

**** For email addresses, please delete the space after the @ sign to email the recipient.**

Inside: **NYSRA & Legislative News** by Sandi Kurbiel; **NYSED News** by Kristen Driskill; & **Literacy News/Links of Interest** by Sandi Kurbiel

NYSRA and Legislative News

A Message from Mary Miller, our NYSRA President:

It has come to my attention that a few of our local councils are feeling the side effects of not being able to meet face-to-face. Some are facing challenges with leadership and others are seeing decreases in membership. We are all uncertain about what the future holds, and living under a global pandemic hasn't made that any easier.

As NYSRA's new President, my first "call to action" is to assure all NYSRA members that the individuals of NYSRA's leadership team are here to help.

Members of the digital committee worked hard to set up our new website to make membership renewal easier and credit/debit card compatible.

Others have been working to set up virtual professional development sessions that are free of charge to all NYSRA members. The first two sessions are coming up quickly with a **Teachers As Readers** event with the theme of *21st Century Technology: Children's Books, Sites and More*, scheduled for Wednesday, October 7, at 7:30 pm; and **An Evening with Dr. Donna Scanlon** on Thursday, October 15, also starting at 7:30 pm. CTLE credit is being offered for both sessions. More details about each and the full calendar of NYSRA and local events open to all members can be found on our website at <https://www.nysreading.org/events>.

While these efforts offer quality online resources during the Covid-19 restrictions, we understand that this is not necessarily enough to meet the needs of our councils. If you are a local council leader and find you need assistance, please reach out to me at president@nysreading.org. Depending on your unique situation, we'll set up virtual meetings with NYSRA leaders to offer guidance. If a local treasurer has questions or concerns, either NYSRA treasurer, Larry Kline, or I should be able to help. Not sure how to offer virtual PD? NYSRA VP, Keith Newvine, has some experience with this and is the lead on that for NYSRA. This year offers unique challenges that call for a different set of solutions, and the bottom line is we can all work together to help find the solutions together.

NYSRA Congratulations!

We'd like to congratulate **Kathleen Hinchman**, Professor of Reading and Language Arts in the School of Education at Syracuse University, for her election into the Reading Hall of Fame, an independent organization that recognizes lifetime achievements in the field of reading. We're honored to have you as a long-time member!

We'd also like to thank Past-President **Thea Yurkewecz** and Vice President Keith Newvine for participating in a recent podcast of **The Literacy Advocate**.

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/y42s7zlo> to listen as Thea and Keith talk about what teacher advocacy looks like and how NYSRA advocates for literacy as a human right and assists educators in learning how to advocate for themselves and their students. Nice Job!

[Kathleen Hinchman Elected to Reading Hall of Fame](#)

Congratulations to Kathleen Hinchman on her election into the Reading Hall of Fame. Kathleen presented for Iroquois Reading Council in the Glens Falls area many years ago.

Kudos and best wishes on behalf of IRC,

Bonnie Yanklowitz,
IRC Historian and NYSRA Northeast Regional Director



[Kathleen Hinchman](#), Professor of Reading and Language Arts in the School of Education, has been elected into the [Reading Hall of Fame](#), an independent organization that recognizes lifetime achievements in the field of reading. She is among six new living members and four deceased members who will join the Reading Hall of Fame membership in 2020.

This honor is another notable addition to Hinchman's portfolio of distinctions as a senior scholar in her field. A graduate of the English education B.S. program and reading education M.S. program in the School of Education, Hinchman began her career as an educator nearly 40 years ago as a middle school English teacher at West Genesee Central Schools. She completed a Ph.D. in reading education and a minor in cultural foundations of education, again at the Syracuse University School of Education. After working in several other higher education and school leadership positions, she began her tenure as a faculty member in 1988.

In her time at Syracuse, she has served as the chair of the Department of Reading and Language Arts and as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the School of Education. Her service to the profession and the recognitions she has received for her work have been significant. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Proliteracy Worldwide and is former president of the Literacy Research Association and the New York State Reading Association. Her lengthy list of awards and honors includes the Graduate Teaching Excellence Award, Chancellor's Awards for Public and Community Service, and Literacy Service Awards from local reading councils. Hinchman has maintained a consistent record of publication, authoring or editing over 100 articles, books, and commentaries throughout her career. She is currently co-editor of the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and co-director of the Syracuse University Liberty Partnerships Program, a program offering extracurricular academic support for secondary school students in the Syracuse City School District. Hinchman currently teaches undergraduate and graduate classes in childhood and adolescent literacy. Her research explores youths' and teachers' perspectives on literacy.

"Kathleen Hinchman Elected to Reading Hall of Fame." *Syracuse University School of Education*, 27 July 2020, soe.syr.edu/kathleen-hinchman-elected-to-the-reading-hall-of-fame/.

Charlotte Award Books

by Sharon Kelly, Chair

To All Local Council Planning Committees:

The 2021 Charlotte Award Ballot, if you haven't heard, is done and ready to find some interested teachers and students to read and vote on the books that were picked. There are 10 books in each of four categories: Primary, Intermediate, Middle School, and High School, and we want to share them with your local councils.

One of the charges of the Charlotte Award Committee is to do presentations to local councils about the books on the Charlotte Award Ballot. So, the members of the 2021 Charlotte Award Committee thought that during the pandemic we would do video clips of some of the books. We have made it into a video that we will share with any of your councils as part of a workshop. Right now, it is 32 minutes long, and either another member or I will gladly "Zoom" with you to answer any questions that you might have after seeing the video.

If you are interested in scheduling a time for your members to see the video and learn about the process of the Charlotte Award Ballot, please notify me, Sharon Kelly at sharteach17@ gmail.com. We hope that you take advantage of this opportunity.

To All NYSRA Members:

Here are four books from the Charlotte Award Ballot. There is a description about one book from each category: Primary, Intermediate, Middle School and High School. We hope that you will take the time to read some of these books with your students and then vote on the category that you have read all or some of the books from.

The ballot is found at <https://www.nysreading.org/Charlotte-Awards>. When you are ready to vote, just go to the bottom of this page and click the button that says, "Click here to vote!" by April 15, 2021.

Primary Books

***Moon*, by Britta Teckentrup**



Who doesn't love a peek-through picture book? *Moon*, by Britta Teckentrup, will provide a little magic for young readers who are interested in the phases of the moon. Even though the illustrations are dark, the brightness and power of the moon is evident through every page as we see our planet's partner changing shape. There are animals featured in the story showing the different nighttime activities they partake in, while experiencing the moonlight for themselves.

Submitted by Salamah Mullen

Intermediate Books

***The First Men That Went to The Moon*, by Rhonda Gowler Greene, and illustrated by Scott Brundage**

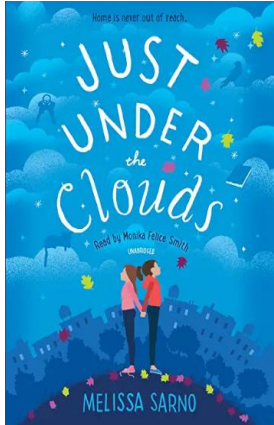


The historic landing of Apollo 11 is recapped in this beautifully illustrated and written book. It tells the journey of Neil Armstrong, Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin, and Michael Collins to the moon and the landing on the moon. It incorporates an interesting story of the three astronauts that went to the moon and the historical facts about their flight and walking on the moon. The pictures add to this wonderful book, as they are full of color and depict the lunar flight and what the astronauts saw on their journey to and from the moon.

Submitted by Sharon Kelly

Middle School Books

Just Under the Clouds, by Melissa Sarno



Cora is a middle schooler who gives us a glimpse into the life of a family who is experiencing homelessness. Cora's dad has passed away, so her mom is the sole provider of Cora and her sister, Adare. Cora's mom struggles to find safe housing, and after moving from one place to another, Cora's mom has no choice but to ask Willa, a close friend, if they can stay with her. Cora finally feels a sense of peace staying with Willa because her home is beautiful, and most importantly, safe. However, when Willa starts questioning Cora's mother about her parenting skills and plans for the future, Cora's life becomes unstable once again.

Submitted by Salamah Mullen

High School Books

Second in Command, by Sandi Van



Second in Command is a unique book in that it is all done in verse. It is a story about a family who sends their mother off for a 6-month deployment on an aircraft carrier. The father is at work constantly, so the 16-year-old son, Leo, is left in charge most of the time. Leo takes care of his brother, Jack, who is 14, and his sister, Reina, who is 6, while trying to keep his grades up so that he can get into the Summer Youth Police Academy. Leo also wants to earn his Eagle Scout Award by doing something good for his community. Things do not go as planned when his brother, Jack, gets involved with the wrong crowd of boys and gets in trouble. How will Leo help his brother? Read this engaging book of poems to find out what Leo does.

Submitted by Sharon Kelly

Advocacy News, October 2020 BOD

by Barbara Vokatis, Ph.D.
NYSRA Advocacy Chair

COVID-19 Education Relief: Congress Hesitates

So far, votes to move partisan bills have not succeeded. President Trump's upcoming nomination of a Supreme Court justice to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg and a close presidential election have dominated and could push a new relief package further down.

COVID-19 Outbreak Alternative Ways of Supporting Students

To help K-12 teachers incorporate remote learning during this time of emergency, SUNY Albany created a special website to provide this support. The website is <http://remoteEd.org/> The website has weekly events to help teachers, leaders, and school stay connected and support one another.

Other resources include the following:

- Krista's story in Natural Curiosity's August newsletter features amazing examples of how to **bring outdoor inquiry and Indigenous perspectives into [virtual teaching](#)**
- Natural Curiosity sets out to demonstrate how an inquiry-based approach could enable educators to meet Ministry expectations to include environmental education throughout the curriculum:
<https://wordpress.oise.utoronto.ca/naturalcuriosity/aboutus/>
- Webinars and resources on transition to returning to school: <https://www.cognia.org>
- Virtual schooling options by either partnering with your local school or homeschooling: <https://michiganvirtual.org>
- PBS educational programming: <http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-and-new-yorks-public-television-stations-announce-expanded>
- A new [Continuity of Learning website](#) launched by NYSED, featuring resources to provide districts and teachers with increased options to keep students engaged in learning

- The New York State Museum for [Virtual Field Trips](#) every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 1:00 p.m. (EDT)
- Site about incorporating virtual field trips:
https://knilt.arcc.albany.edu/Incorporating_Virtual_Field_Trips?fbclid=IwAR0P5D6QsqMcifb_DcSB7YDIOJhqpDdUQcnT4qcr8ntPxewua5AzjIS-obU

School Reopening and Students' Stress:

Lisa Damour, Ph.D., a psychologist and the author of [Under Pressure: Confronting the Epidemic of Stress and Anxiety in Girls](#) and [Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions Into Adulthood](#) offers some important advice:

“Find ways to connect. Children [learn best](#) in the context of warm, authentic connections with their teachers. Powerful student-teacher relationships can be built in a pandemic, but it will take extra effort in online environments or in classrooms where safety protocols weigh heavily. Prioritize using time in class to check in with students about how they are feeling and to point them toward [positive coping strategies](#)—such as finding happy distractions or spending time with people they enjoy—for managing pandemic stress. Helping students understand that they are seen and cared for will put them at ease and open the door to learning.

Give students a sense of purpose. Having a sense of purpose - pursuing personally meaningful activities that have positive consequences for others—[buffers the negative effects](#) of chronic stress in children. Cultivate purpose to your classroom by helping students see the connections between the skills they are developing and their own immediate and long-term goals. Show students how they can apply what they are learning to improve their everyday worlds.

Offer predictability and control. Resilience grows when young people have ways to feel that [not everything is beyond their control](#). An academic day with predictable patterns puts students at ease because they know what to expect. School also comes with opportunities for students to feel a sense of [agency](#). By maintaining reliable classroom routines and giving students choices that let them steer their own learning—even online—you can provide them with stress-buffering structure and sense of control, even as the disruptions associated with COVID-19 persist.”

Dyslexia Legislation

Link that includes the currently used definition of dyslexia:
<https://www.medicinenet.com/dyslexia/article.htm>

Both senate and assembly bills made it to the respective education committee and have remained there as matters related to Covid-19 are prioritized. We continue to encourage members to comment to their local legislators before the bill is introduced and voted in in the New York State.

Link to the proposed legislation:

https://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=&leg_video=&bn=A08697&term=2019&Summary=Y&Actions=Y&Committee%26nbspVotes=Y&Floor%26nbspVotes=Y&Memo=Y&Text=Y

Link to the site listing assemblymen and senators:

<https://www.aqeny.org/find-your-new-york-state-legislators/>

The following points discussed in Dr. Donna Scanlon’s presentation on this topic at the NYSRA conference in November 2019 could be considered in comments to legislators. Dr. Donna Scanlon is a professor at the University at Albany and Director of Child Research and Study Center. Her research focuses on children who experience substantial difficulty in learning to read and on how to prevent and remediate these difficulties. She also leads “Early Literacy Leaders” (ELL) group.

The points on dyslexia legislation to consider:

- While dyslexia is defined as a disability with a neurobiological origin, it is impossible to determine whether a child’s reading difficulty is neurobiological or not (everything we do is neurobiological in origin – the question is whether the difficulties some children experience is due to underlying neurobiological differences or to experiential/instructional differences).
- Word reading difficulties can occur for a variety of reasons, such as limited understanding of the workings of the alphabetic code, limited engagement in meaning making while reading, or limited oral language.
- Dyslexia screening is already required by many states but there is no broadly accepted way to identify someone as being at risk for or being dyslexic. In the research literature there is not a clear distinction between reading difficulties and dyslexia. The terms are used interchangeably.
- While there is no broadly accepted way to identify someone with dyslexia, the dyslexia legislation suggests that multi-sensory sequential phonics is the approach to choose for intervention. However, there is no evidence this approach is superior to other approaches to intervention for word reading difficulties. Research shows that improving in phonics skills alone does not result in improving comprehension (Torgesen et al., 2007).

- There are also potential risks associated with identifying children as dyslexic: lowered expectations and reduced sense of efficacy.

Further resources to consider regarding dyslexia legislation:

- A podcast interview Dr. Scanlon recorded several months ago: <https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/interview-dr-donna-scanlon-dyslexia-reading-difficulties/id1448225801?i=1000444024572>
- A link to a recording of Joe Elliot's (first author of *The Dyslexia Debate*) talk for ACARC from September 2019 (<https://vimeo.com/364608773/4b7d8db0c7>) – which is a powerful commentary on where things currently stand relative to dyslexia legislation and what we should be advocating for.

It is also recommended to read the book by Elena Grigorenko entitled *The Dyslexia Debate*.

New York State Education News

by Kristen Driskill
NYSED Contributing Editor

Reopening Schools: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

New York State has a dedicated website for school personnel and parents to access current information about reopening. You can access the website [here](#).

State Museum to Commemorate 9/11 with Window Display

The New York State Museum is offering programming to commemorate the 19th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Beginning Friday, September 11, 2020, a display of World Trade Center artifacts will be added to the [Windows on New York exhibition](#) in the museum's Madison Avenue lobby window. While the museum facility remains closed to the public, the display can be viewed outside while socially distancing during the closure. Click [here](#) to see more information.

Fifth Series of Emergency Regulations to Ease Burdens on Educators, Students and Professionals in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic

On September 14, 2020, the Board of Regents adopted emergency regulations that afford essential flexibility for educators, students, and professionals to address issues due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The emergency regulations include the continuation of previously adopted amendments as well as new regulatory changes. You can read a summary of the amendments [here](#).

Eighteen Schools Named 2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools

On September 24, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education announced the 2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools. Recognition is based on a school's overall performance or progress in closing the achievement gaps among subgroups of students. Eighteen of those schools earning such a high distinction are in New York, and are listed below:

Byram Hills High School, Byram Hills Central School District
Clayton A. Bouton High School, Voorheesville Central School District
Dobbs Ferry High School, Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District
Dows Lane Elementary School, Irvington Union Free School District
Heathcote Elementary School, Scarsdale Union Free School District
John F. Kennedy High School, Plainview-Old Bethpage CSD
Leonardo Da Vinci High School, Buffalo City School District
Mott Road Elementary School, Fayetteville-Manlius Central School District
Pittsford-Mendon High School, Pittsford Central School District
PS 101 Verrazzano Elementary School, New York City Geographic District #21
PS 134 Elementary School, New York City Geographic District #22
PS 23 The Richmondtown School, New York City Geographic District #31
PS 46 Alley Pond Elementary School, New York City Geographic District #26
PS 94 David D Porter Elementary School, New York City Geographic District #26
South Bronx Classical Charter School, South Bronx Classical Charter School
Wantagh Senior High School, Wantagh Union Free School District
West Islip Senior High School, West Islip Union Free School District
Williamsburg HS for Architecture & Design, New York City Geographic District #14

Literacy News and Links of Interest

by Sandi Kurbiel

ReAD Editor

Distance Learning Resources

Have you seen this amazing collection of distance learning resources that *NYSRA* has compiled on its website? Check it out!

Online Reading and Writing Apps

Find a list of 17 online reading and writing apps recommended by ILA's *ReadWriteThink* website.

Learning Disabilities Awareness Month

October is Learning Disabilities and Dyslexia Awareness Month; find numerous resources from *Reading Rockets*.

Support for Students with Special Needs

Find additional resources by *Reading Rockets* to support students with special needs during the pandemic.

Can They Read the Words but They Don't Understand?

Many students who are good decoders but still struggle with reading comprehension need instruction in vocabulary, thinking skills, and comprehension strategies in *spoken* language first before they will become proficient independent readers.

"Seatwork That Makes Sense"

Want to work with a small group online but want meaningful ways for the other students to improve their reading skills other than just independent reading?

"Teaching with Blogs"

Expand your online literacy community by teaching students how to write blogs on “journal/diary entries, reflections on their writing process, details on their research projects, commentary on recent events or readings, and drafts for other writing they are doing” from *ReadWriteThink*.

"Maslow Before Bloom"

Addressing students' physical and emotional needs is always key in keeping students happy and engaged learners; here are some strategies when working in the virtual learning realm.