

Rebuilding After the COVID Fire Hit the Forest of Reading

By Diana Maliszewski

- Expanding the engagement of students in making and doing in the physical and virtual LLC
- Outreach to the school community to inspire reading and learning

The Forest and the Fire - Context and Problem

The Ontario Library Association's Forest of Reading program is the largest recreational reading program in Canada (Ontario Library Association, 2022, 2021b). It first began with the Silver Birch Awards in 1994 (Ontario Library Association, 2021a). Since then, it has grown into a combination of ten reading programs, all named after various trees - Blue Spruce, Silver Birch (Express and Fiction), Yellow Cedar, Red Maple, White Pine, Peuplier, Meleze, Tamarac, and Evergreen. Participating in the Forest of Reading involves reading at least five of the ten nominated books in one of the programs for that year. This qualifies readers to vote for their favorite title; schools and organizations that register with the Ontario Library Association will have their readers' votes count towards declaring a winner.

My school, Agnes Macphail Public School, in Toronto, Ontario, had participated actively in the Forest of Reading even before I arrived there as the teacher-librarian in 2004. The students were such avid readers and "Forest Fans" that an article published in 2014 described the positive influence the Forest of Reading had on the school's reading culture (Maliszewski, 2014). It described the use of "passports" - students would arrange to have conversations with an adult school community member who had read the same book and collect the signature of the adult in their passport if there was sufficient evidence gathered from the chat that indicated that the student had read and understood the book. The students enjoyed many aspects of the program, from meeting personal goals of collecting a certain number of signatures, to attending one of the culminating events celebrating the reading such as the "Quiz Bowl" or "Harbourfront trip" (Maliszewski, 2014).

The Silver Birch Quiz Bowl is a local celebration organized first by a few teacher-librarians in what was then known as the "NE4 FoS" (Northeast 4 Family of Schools) region of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in 2009, although a local general

celebration had been held since 2005 (Maliszewski, 2022, April 18). It was a whole day event and a more affordable and geographically closer way to honor the junior division student readers who had qualified to vote, as tickets to the official Forest of Reading Festival (held annually at Harbourfront in downtown Toronto and at various satellite events in other cities in Ontario) could be rather expensive.

A similar local event for older students is the Red Maple Marketing Event. This celebration began in 2012; six schools participated back then, and it was held at the Malvern branch of the Toronto Public Library. Students form teams and each team is given a title from the current list of Red Maple nominees for that year. The student teams must devise an effective marketing campaign. The teams had a set time of just five minutes to present their campaign ideas to the other teams and to representatives from an advertising agency. The advertising executives would choose the best campaign and the winning team would receive a prize. (Maliszewski, 2022, April 18)

The 2020 Forest of Reading program already faced issues prior to the COVID pandemic. Elementary and secondary educators undertook work-to-rule actions as part of their contract disputes with the school boards and provinces, eliminating extracurricular activities. Depending on the methods used by various school library professionals to operate their Forest of Reading programs (i.e., run as an optional club vs part of a class reading instruction approach), the strike-related actions limited some school libraries in their ability to run their regular programs (Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, 2019, November 26). Rotating strikes also altered school schedules, which then impacted the ability to smoothly run the Forest of Reading programs (Rocco, 2020, January 21). When the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools in March 2020, the initial arrangements - few to no synchronous meetings, independent assignments, no in-person gatherings - meant that it was challenging to continue the programs in the same way.

The 2021 Forest of Reading program faced even more challenges, especially in the Toronto District School Board, when it was announced that there would be no elementary school library staffing allocations for the 2020-21 school year (Maliszewski & Burch-Jones 2021, Freibauer, 2020). At my own school, I became the Grade 6-7 in-person teacher, and after a reorganization period in October, I became the Grade 5-6 teacher.

Elementary teacher-librarians were reinstated in the TDSB for the 2021-22 school year. Although there were still many restrictions in place (Toronto District School Board, 2022) the hope was to re-establish a modified version of many of the programs and activities we had prior to the pandemic. The question then became: How might I

organize and run the Forest of Reading program, Quiz Bowl and Red Maple Marketing Events while still operating under pandemic-related restrictions?

Preparing and Planting - Literature Review

There has been a surprising number of articles published about the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on reading.

a) The Concerns

Kolb focuses on John Dewey's "constructivist approach to learning, emphasizing social learning, real-world experiences, interactive hands-on activities, and higher level thinking in classrooms. She worries that "digital isolation in schooling is a potential hazard of remote learning when the learning is completely asynchronous" (Kolb, 2021, pp. 26-27).

Tranjan, Oliveira and Robinson express concerns that the "COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated education inequities between lower- and higher-income students in Ontario". They explain that "economically secure families have more financial resources to invest in educational resources such as books, private tutors, technology, and extracurricular activities" (Tranjan, Oliveira and Robinson, 2022, p.7).

Levenson positions the situation as an issue of leadership, noting "COVID-19's lasting impact includes millions of students who fell further behind academically, millions more who feel disengaged and disinterested in school, and educators who are stressed, burned out, and unfortunately leaving the profession" (Levenson, 2022, p.43).

Zirogiannis notes that "students' access to print collections could be drastically impacted by capacity limitations and the need to follow health and safety protocols regarding book distribution." (45). She asserts that "there is a lot at stake when there is a significant disruption to a building's culture of reading", and "we need to preserve that culture, so we aren't fighting to build it back up in September" (Zirogiannis, 2021, p.45).

Grint is a classroom teacher. In her article, she says, "I realized that my students had all the tools they needed to be successful with online learning, but they didn't have the skills to navigate through it all" (Grint, 2021, p. 11).

Teacher-librarian Jennifer makes note of different types of readers and how the pandemic could negatively affect both: "For those kids who have already found a home

among the stacks, remote or hybrid learning during a global pandemic may have affected their ability to access reading material or to focus on reading during this stressful time. ... For those who have yet to discover their inner reader, the effects of infrequent, or even severed, access to a school library and teacher librarian may prove much more damaging” (LaGarde, 2021, p. 12).

b) The Benefits

The use of ebooks and a growing respect for the format surged due to the pandemic. Ofgang cites statistics that show “between March 2020 and February 2021, ebook usage at schools increased dramatically, according to a recent white paper from OverDrive Education.” He explains further that “checking out physical books was often difficult and sometimes impossible. This helped convert more readers and educators to the benefits of ebooks, and now that they are familiar with ebooks, they seem likely to continue reading those along with physical books” (Ofgang, 2021, p. 28).

Other texts suggest that reading frequency improved over the pandemic. Claire Smith surveyed a sorority related to book use and found “Mu Chapter members not only read more and more widely, but they also seized the opportunity to fill in gaps in their reading” (Smith, 2021, p. 35). Clark and Picton under the auspices of the National Literacy Trust Research Report in the United Kingdom, reports that “children are reading and enjoying reading more during lockdown.” (1) How? Why? “Lockdown has given many children the opportunity to discover or rediscover themselves as readers, due to having more time to read (due to less competing priorities) and increased access to stories online” (Clark & Picton, 2020, p. 2). They conclude, “If we are to support and sustain children’s newly re-discovered love of reading, it is essential that we create the conditions that children tell us support them. This includes, at the most basic level, the time and space to read, and access to books and stories, whether in print or digital format” (Clark & Picton, 2020, p.16).

c) The Role of the School Library

i) E-books / Technology / Technology Infused Services

In the articles written by or referencing school libraries, many suggest that the pandemic made the institutions even more vital. Anita Brooks-Kirkland (Brooks-Kirkland, 2021) proclaims that the school library plays a critical role for learning, especially during the

pandemic. Ziropiannis' article lists duties such as "making book deliveries, arranging curbside pickups, growing her e-book collection, and supporting students through her Zoom office hours" (Ziropiannis, 2021, p. 46) as well as "the important work of digital citizenship instruction, videoconferencing, book talks, read-alouds, database tutorials, and technology support" (Ziropiannis, 2021, p. 48). LaGarde provides a similar list: "From curbside checkout to curated virtual bookshelves, remote learning provides teacher librarians with the opportunity to create additional on-ramps for readers whose access to books has been affected by the pandemic" (LaGarde, 2021, p. 13).

Warnke makes the link between school library and technology clear: "Enlisting the help of our school librarian, the students learned how to request books from the school library and how to return them safely ... Key this year was providing students with information about the library's collection of e-books. Additionally, students were given a list of websites where they could download free young adult and children's books, along with information on how to sign up for and access the free library card program in my state, which would allow them access to e-books and audiobooks" (Warnke, 2021, p. 55).

LaGarde sees the use of technology as a helpful way to access data to assist in targeted intervention. She states, "Ensuring meaningful access to books also means identifying the barriers that stand between readers and the resources they need. For teacher librarians, this work begins by analyzing circulation/ participation data to determine which readers are not connecting with the library's resources. Because so many resources are accessed online, this data can be easy to curate by tracking clicks, downloads, and online checkouts. Once we know who those missing readers are, we must then identify the obstacles that are keeping them from participating" ((LaGarde, 2021, p. 14).

ii) Relationships / Wellness & Mental Health

Another aspect that teacher-librarians and other school library professionals can leverage, even when not specifically listed in the literature, is attending to the social and emotional health of learners. Levenson says "We need to make a major push to re-engage students and convince them someone at school cares" (Levenson, 2022, p. 45). Part of his vision included "relationship building between teachers and students by starting with student agency" (Levenson, 2022, p. 47). Grint confides that "we might have the physical applications and tools, but we do not have the mental tools necessary to do tasks we once thought as routine, like reading a book. Therefore, building up our students' social-emotional health should be a priority in our curriculum moving forward. Students need to be taught how to be resilient, how to cope with stress or loss, and how

to navigate situations that they find uncomfortable” (Grint, 2021, p. 11). Fisher and Frey mention other students with disrupted learning, such as Louisiana learners after Hurricane Katrina, and they state “what seems to have made a difference in both of these cases was the responsiveness of caring educators to students’ academic and social-emotional needs” (Fisher & Frey, 2020, p. 341).

Watering and Waiting - Methodologies


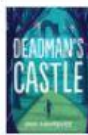








A) Methodologies for School Program

The techniques attempted to try and regrow the Forest of Reading program in my school were not as measured or methodical as the title of this subsection may suggest.

The teachers and I attempted to use technology and strategically placed displays as much as I could to help facilitate the student-staff conversations.

Passports were still used by students, as they were in demand and tangible artifacts, but they were also supplemented with online tracking forms. Different teachers used different methods for tracking student participation (e.g., tables in documents, spreadsheets, etc.).

Silver Birch Fiction

Reader										
Aron				✓					✓	
Edmond					✓					
Ella		✓	✓					✓	✓	
Forsto	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓
Hannah	✓								✓	
Jalaal										
Jaden		✓								
Jerry										
Kamiyah									✓	
Liyah		✓							✓	✓
Luke		✓			✓				✓	✓
Rainie	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓
Sandy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Sathurjan									✓	
Sophia										
Thuvi					✓				✓	
William										

Diana Maliszewski, 2022, April 17, Lisa Daley's Google Classroom

2022 Forest of Reading Virtual Passport Teacher Tracker - Gr 6 V

TEACHER NAME	STUDENT NAME	DATE	BOOK TITLE	FOREST CATEGORY	SIGNATURE EARNED
R. Keberer	Ruby Cai	Jan 13, 2022	Walking with Water	Silver Birch Express	Yes!
	Ruby Cai	Jan 13, 2022	111 Trees	Yellow Cedar	Yes!
	Ruby Cai	February 10, 2022	In the Dark: The Science of What Happens at Night	Yellow Cedar	Yes!
	Ruby Cai	February 11, 2022	Snooze-O-Rama: The Strange Ways That Animals Sleep	Silver Birch Express	Yes!
	Ruby Cai	February 25, 2022	Wednesday Wilson	Silver Birch Express	Yes!
	Ruby Cai	February 25, 2022	Duck Days	Silver Birch Express	Yes!
D. Maliszewski	Ruby Cai	Fri. Jan. 21/22	No Vacancy	Silver Birch Fiction	Yes!
B Kim	Ruby Cai	Feb 3, 2022	Raymond the Buffalo	SB Express	Yes :)
L Daley	Ruby	Mar 1, 2022	The International Day of the Girl	Yellow Cedar	Yes!
			This is Your Brain on Stereotypes	Yellow Cedar	Yes!
F Wadia	Ruby	Mar 29	Power of Style	Yellow Cedar	Yes!

Diana Maliszewski, 2022, April17, Shared document with Brenda Kim and Renee Keberer

Gr. 7/8 Forest of Reading Tracking Sheet

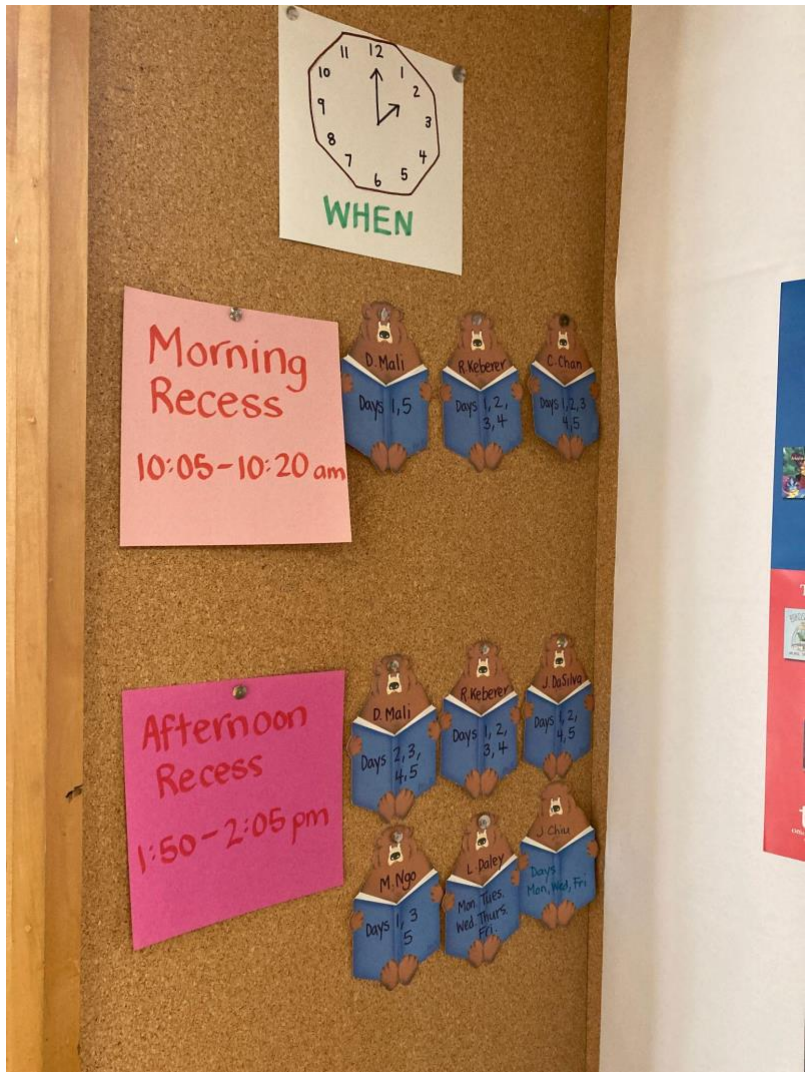
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help Last edit was made on 21 January by Farah Wadia

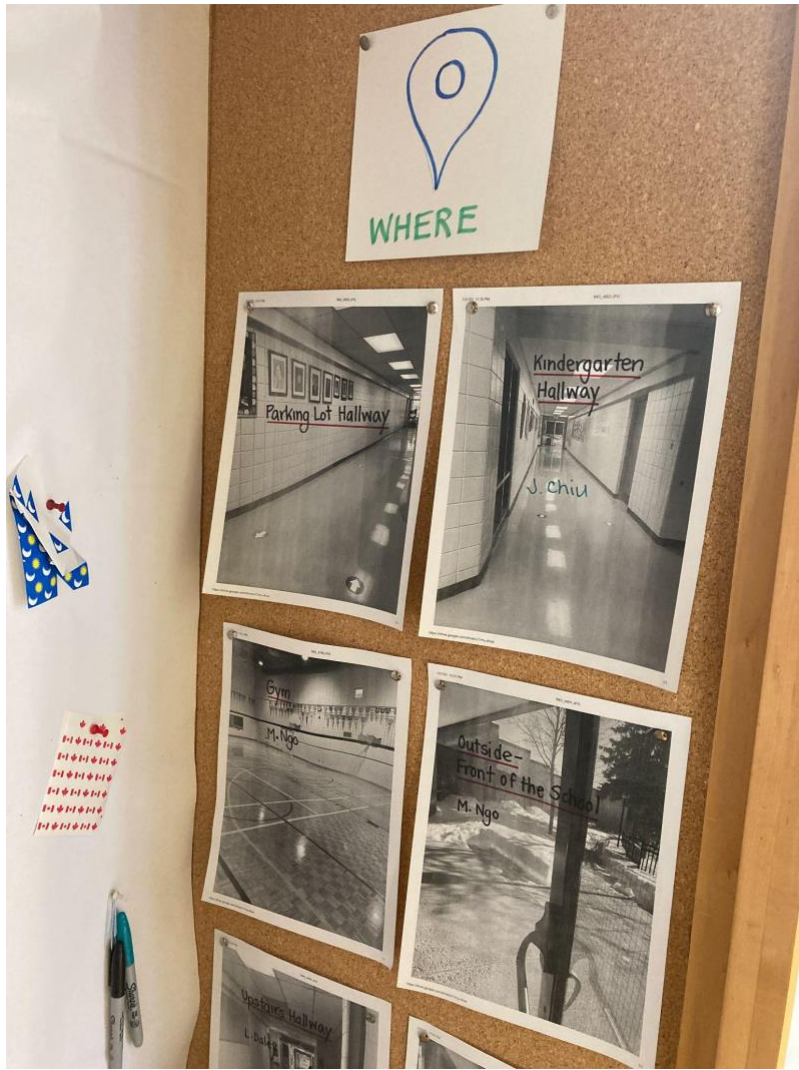
100% £ % .0 .00 123 Default (Ari... 12 B I A

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Name:	Silver Birch Express	Silver Birch Fiction	Yellow Cedar	Red Maple
2	Sohlai				
3	Natalie				
4	Edward				
5	Andy				
6	Kathryn				
7	Ivan				
8	Malakai				
9	Hilary				
10	Jathushan				
11	Harry				
12	Ceejay				
13	Mohsin				
14	Tristan				
15	Stephen				
16	Ally				
17	Priyanti				
18	Mia				
19	Neda				
20	Rishabh				
21	Joanna				
22	Maggie				
23	Ying				
24	Skye				
25	Amran				
26	Thea				
27	Jessica				
28					
29					

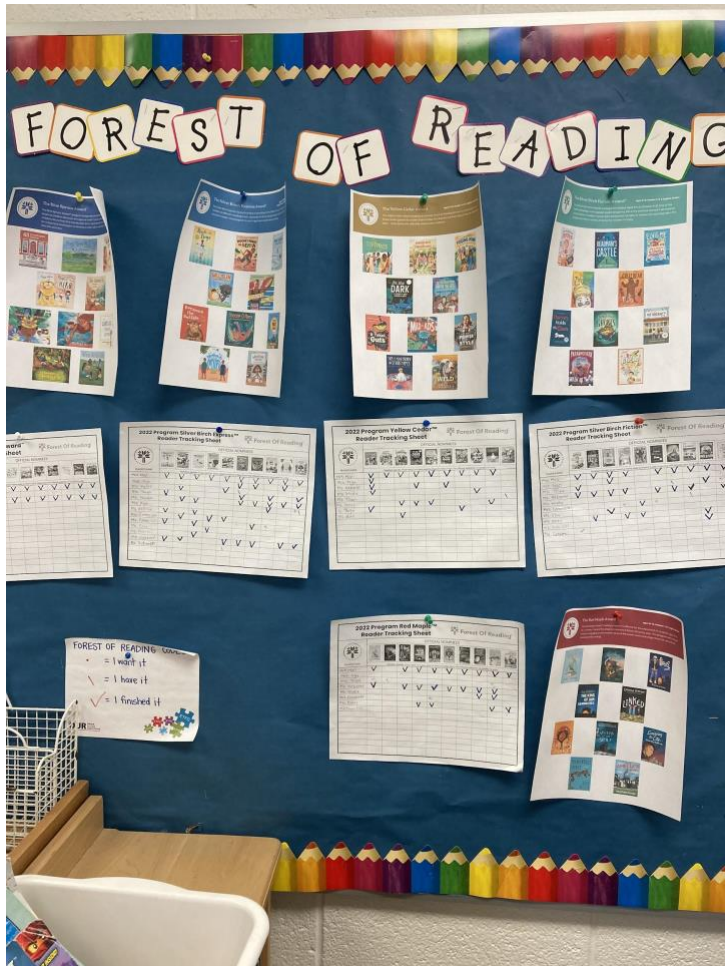
Diana Maliszewski, 2022, April 17, Farah Wadia's 2022 Forest of Reading folder

Multiple displays were posted in various spots in the building, such as the upstairs junior/intermediate hallway, the main foyer, and the library, so students could see who had read what books and how the adults could be accessed. In previous years, a single display was sufficient, but COVID restrictions meant that students could not move as freely throughout the halls and stayed mostly outside or in the classrooms with their cohort.

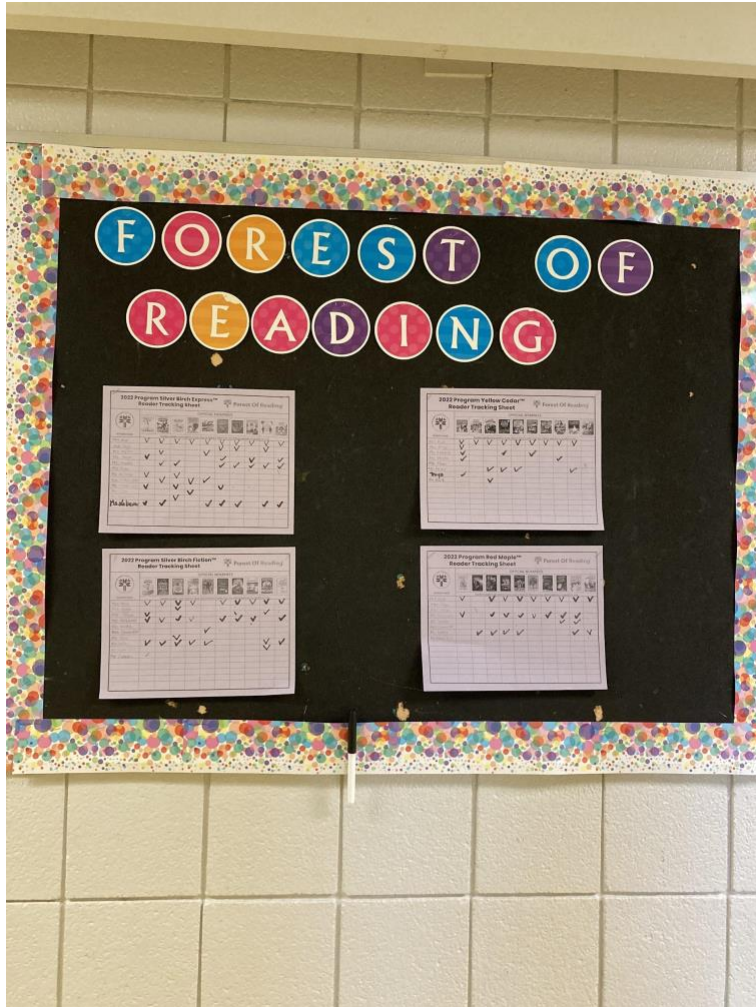




Diana Maliszewski, 2022, January 30



Diana Maliszewski, 2022, January 30

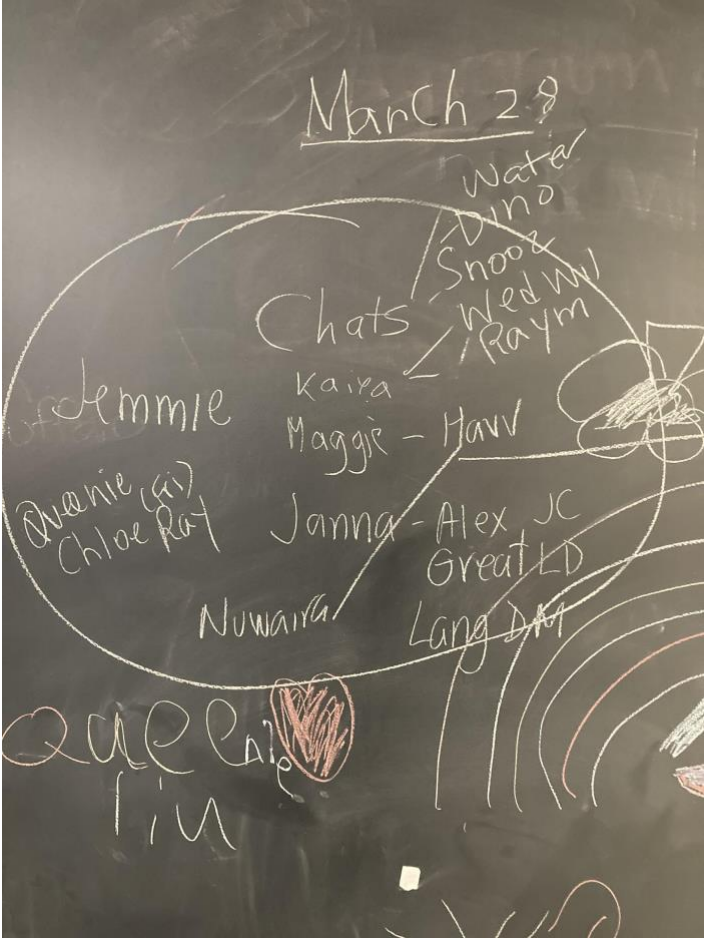


Diana Maliszewski, 2022, April 19

The difficulties with these strategies were that real-time interactions were much quicker for the students and preferred by them. Students had plenty of technology available to them as every student from Grades 4-8 had their own Chromebook to use at school but they did not attempt to email a teacher to request a chat. Their preferred method to initiate a chat was to tell me, the teacher-librarian, in the hall or during recess while I had supervision duty.

It then became my responsibility to help broker or arrange the chats; however, since students were not allowed to enter an area that did not belong to their cohort, it meant that I did the organizing. This robbed the students of the agency they once enjoyed seeking out adults to have conversations and book their times based on their own availability. This shift did not go unnoticed by staff used to the previous protocols. One teacher noticed that this year, she mainly had book talks only with the students in her

immediate class; another teacher in the primary division commented that she had much fewer chats than she had in previous years.



Diana Maliszewski, 2022, March 29

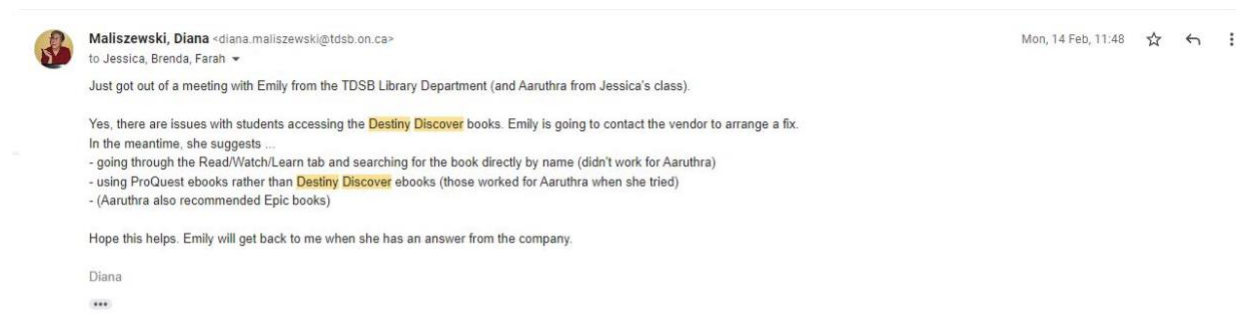
Fri
 AM or PM
 Janna (Alex) ————— Cadavez?
 Ayden melly } — Mali
 Hockley } Thurs AM
 4 Nights }
 Abigail Duck ————— pm recess
 L Chan?
 Kaiya
 Chloe Snooze ————— Ngo?
 Queenie " ————— Fri AM recess
 Crystal ————— Kim? outside

Diana Maliszewski, 2022

Kaiya Wed. Wilson with Ms. Bird	Chloe Raymond the with Ms. Wyles Fri	Janna Alex Beck's R... with Mrs. Cadavez lunch	Kaiya Raymond the... with Ms Wyles Wed. AM	Niwaira Harvey Holds... with Mrs. Mali Tues PM library
Jemmie Race with Me with Mr. Sotiaf	Jemmie Snoozeorama with Ms. Ngo Tues PM	Janna The Great Bear with Ms. Daley	Kaiya That's No Dino with Ms Kim Tues AM outside	Kaiya Snoozeorama with Mrs. Ngo Tues. PM
Kaiya Walking for... with Ms Wadis	Olivia Walking for... with Ms Wadis	Janna The Lang. of... with Ms Mali Wed AM library	Maggie Harvey Holds... with Mrs. Mali Tues PM library	Queenie Raymond the... with Ms Wyles Fri.

Diana Maliszewski, 2022

Access to the books, as lauded in the literature, did not go smoothly at my school. Destiny Discover often malfunctioned, giving students a frustrating “Oops” error message. I established contact with someone from the central TDSB Library Department, who provided some strategies to work around the issues, (Maliszewski, D., personal communication, February 14, 2022), but in April 2022, these issues were still occurring.



Voting for the 2022 nominees used Google Forms rather than paper ballots. This was in line with our 2020 attempts to become more efficient and environmentally friendly as the Google Forms calculated the results automatically without relying on physical objects. In 2022, other TDSB teacher-librarians shared their Google Form ballots, saving others time and effort to build their own.

B) Methodologies for School Celebrations

I also used technology, such as the TDSB TL Google Currents online community, to offer the opportunity to become involved in the Quiz Bowl and Red Maple Marketing.



Diana Maliszewski Chair, Elementary
8w ago in TDSB Teacher Librarians



Silver Birch Quiz Bowl - Want to Participate in a Virtual Version?

Wondering how to celebrate Silver Birch participation with your school?
Attached is a document that describes "Silver Birch Quiz Bowl".
Some of us are considering bringing Quiz Bowl back in virtual form.
Read the attached document that describes how we used to do it.
If you are interested in participating this year, respond to this post or email
diana.maliszewski@tdsb.on.ca

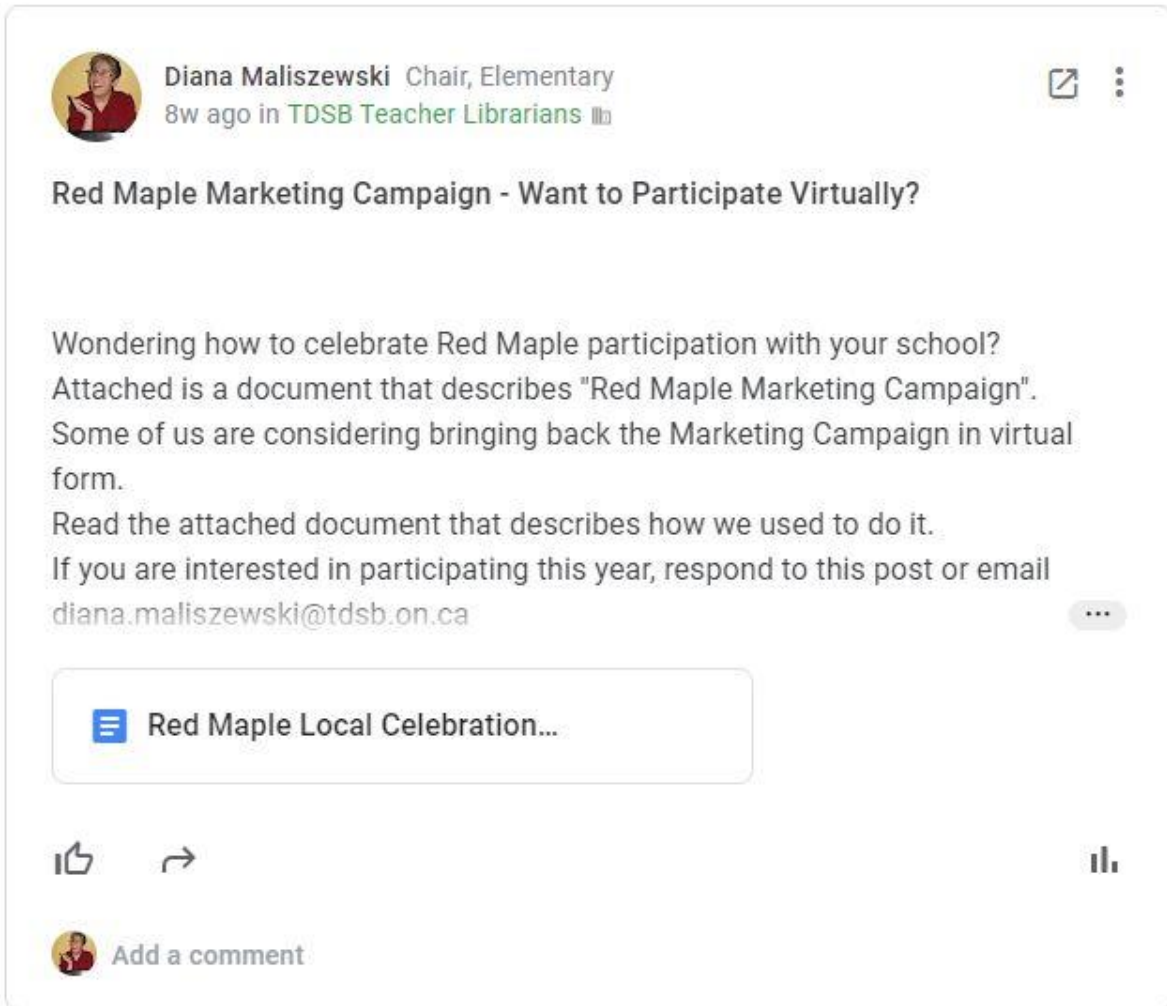
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1z6iUGKwsK2uAJlucXQPclGyWC4rh6ykr/edit?usp=sharing&oid=102963297946496800323&rtpof=true&sd=true>

 Silver Birch Quiz Bowl Regulations.doc



Add a comment

Diana Maliszewski, 2022, April 17, originally posted February 2020



The image is a screenshot of a Facebook post. At the top left is a circular profile picture of Diana Maliszewski. To its right, the text reads "Diana Maliszewski Chair, Elementary" and "8w ago in TDSB Teacher Librarians". In the top right corner, there are icons for sharing and a menu. The main text of the post is: "Red Maple Marketing Campaign - Want to Participate Virtually? Wondering how to celebrate Red Maple participation with your school? Attached is a document that describes 'Red Maple Marketing Campaign'. Some of us are considering bringing back the Marketing Campaign in virtual form. Read the attached document that describes how we used to do it. If you are interested in participating this year, respond to this post or email diana.maliszewski@tdsb.on.ca". Below the text is a document attachment titled "Red Maple Local Celebration...". At the bottom of the post, there are icons for liking, sharing, and a comment button that says "Add a comment".

Diana Maliszewski, 2022, April 17, originally posted February 2020

However, no one answered this post. It was only when I reached out via email to the past participants of the events that I received any response (Maliszewski, D., personal communication, 2022, March 3).

Bringing Back Silver Birch Quiz Bowl (Virtually) ✕ 🖨️ 📧



Maliszewski, Diana <diana.maliszewski@tdsb.on.ca>
to Taunya, Jackie, Tracey, Allison, Sara, Kim, Lindsay, Kahlille, Lisa, Salma, Samantha ▾

Thu, 3 Mar, 08:00 ☆ ↶ ⋮

Greetings!

I am emailing you because, back in the long-ago days of May 2019, you or your school participated in what was then the 10th anniversary of a TDSB East tradition - the Silver Birch Quiz Bowl. 9 schools participated in a fun time celebrating the Ontario Library Association Forest of Reading Silver Birch books with a friendly competition and an author visit.

This is a "reaching out" email. Do you think you and your school might be interested in participating in this event this year? Naturally, things would be a bit different. In the past, we'd get together at one of our schools. This year, we'd do it virtually via Google Meet or Zoom. However, many aspects would still be the same. We can still have teams buzzing in to answer questions on books created by participating TLs. The cool new thing is that I already have an author lined up AND it would be completely free! (In the past, we all used to share the cost of an author. This year, I have some connections and so we are getting the author of "Elvis, Me and the Lemonade Stand" to attend.)

Please reply (not reply>all) to this message and let me know if you are interested. Then we can start deciding on the best day to hold the event and which TLs could make questions for which books. If you are not interested but you know a TL or a school that would be interested in participating, please forward this email to them. If you need more details about the program, I posted a document outlining the logistics in the TDSB TL Google Currents community, or you can email me for details.

Fingers crossed we can resurrect a fun tradition,

Diana Maliszewski, TL @ Agnes Macphail PS

—
D. Maliszewski
Teacher-Librarian, Agnes Macphail P.S. (LC3)
"It's nice to be important, but more important to be nice." - Anonymous

The only new participants we received were due to the efforts of Salma Nakhuda, who personally contacted the new teacher-librarian at her previous school and gave a specific invitational push to participate (Nakhuda, personal communication, March 3, 2022).



Nakhuda, Salma <salma.nakhuda@tdsb.on.ca>
to me ▾

Thu, 3 Mar, 08:46 ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Diana,

I'm IN!!! But you knew that! lol. I will forward the email to Jen from Macklin as well. Thanks for organizing this Diana! :) Let me know if I can help.
Regards,
Salma Nakhuda
Teacher-Librarian/Gr 3 Virtual
Percy Williams Jr PS

Bringing Back Red Maple Marketing Campaign (Virtually) ✕ 🖨️ 📧



Maliszewski, Diana <diana.maliszewski@tdsb.on.ca>
to Alison, Jennifer, Tracey, Jackie, Tamara, Jennifer, Samantha ▾

Thu, 3 Mar, 08:00 ☆ ↶ ⋮

Back in June 2019, there was this engaging event that schools in the east region of TDSB used to do - the Forest of Reading Red Maple Marketing Campaign. Here's a reflection of the last one we had.

<http://mondaymollymusings.blogspot.com/2019/06/7th-annual-red-maple-marketing-campaign.html>

It first started in 2012 and has involved schools such as Brookside, Milliken, Macklin, Stirling, Carr, Macphail and Lewis.

I'm just wondering if you might be interested in reinstating this celebration. We probably wouldn't be able to travel to the public library like we used to do to share our presentations, but it might actually be easier to do our "5 minute promotional plans" online, and our advertising executive judges could participate from their offices. The other incentive is that I already have an author lined up to participate for free. (In the past, TPL used to pay for our author visit and we'd just give a \$10 fee to pay for the prize for the winners. This time, I have made an arrangement and we would have Phillipa Dowding, author of "Firefly", to speak with us.)

Can you email me to let me know if you want to participate? If you know of other schools that have Grade 7-8 students that might like to be a part of it, go ahead and forward this email to them. It would be really nice to reunite, even if it is in a modified format.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Diana Maliszewski (TL @ Agnes Macphail PS)

—
D. Maliszewski
Teacher-Librarian, Agnes Macphail P.S. (LC3)
"It's nice to be important, but more important to be nice." - Anonymous

We planned the events via Zoom call on April 4 and 11 for the Red Maple Marketing Campaign and on April 7 for the Quiz Bowl Competition.

The 2022 Red Maple Marketing Campaign (D. Maliszewski, personal communication, May 26, 2022).

The 2022 Forest of Reading Quiz Bowl was held on May 27, 2022.

Measuring and Mulching - Data

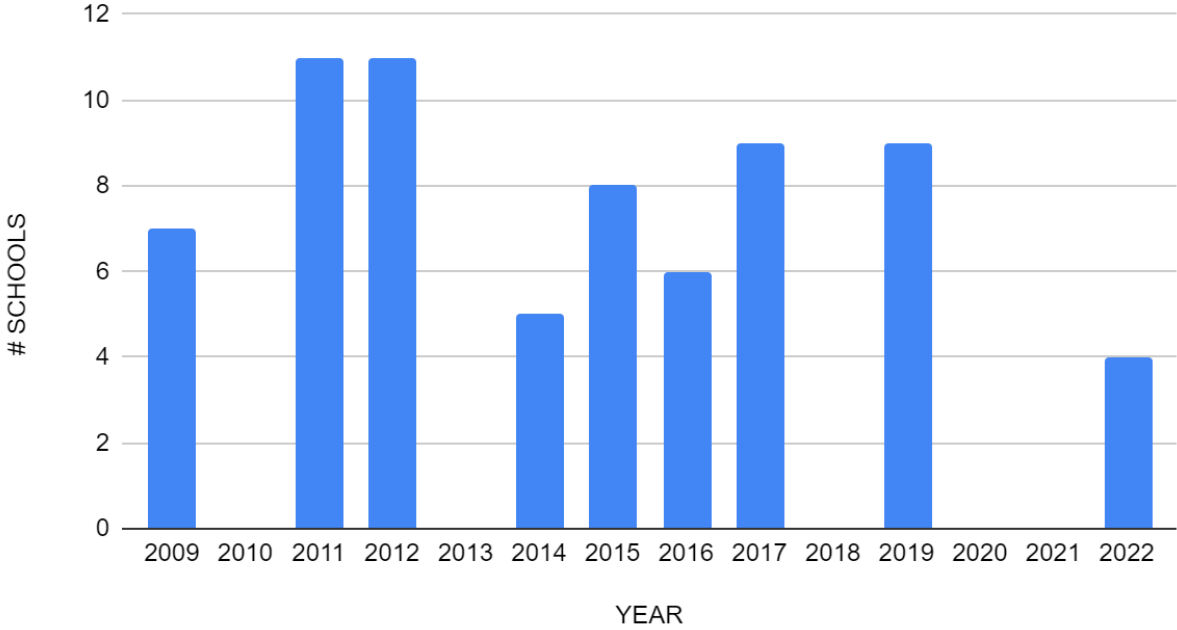
The subsequent statistics might look discouraging at first glance, especially compared with the previous data.

School Participation in Local Forest of Reading Celebrations

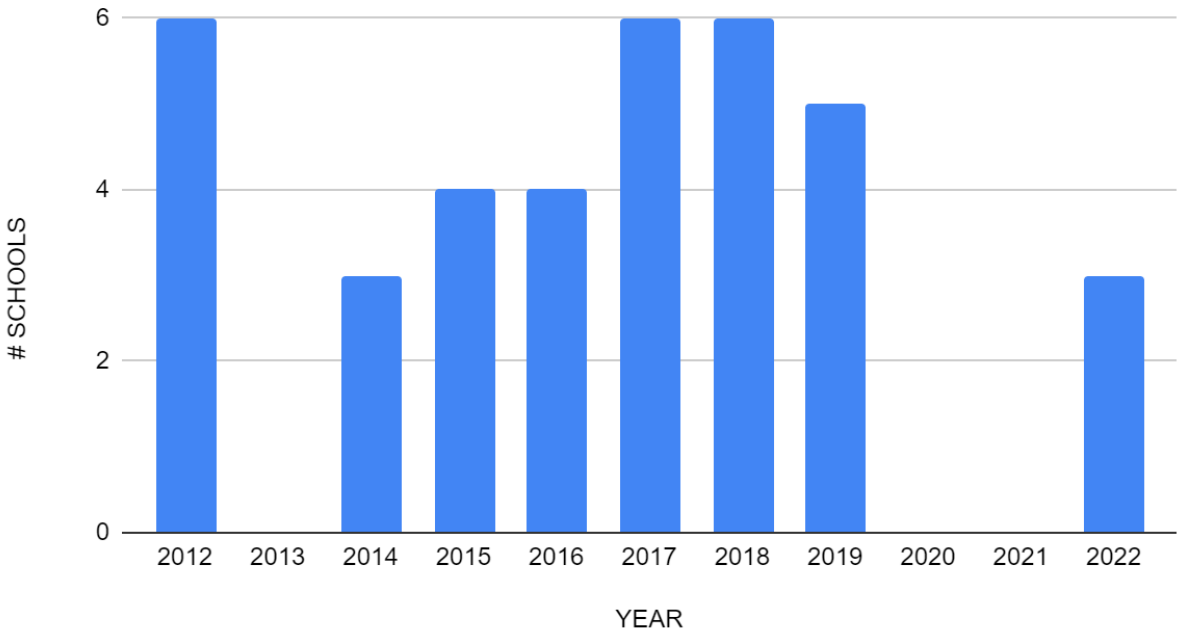
	Silver Birch Quiz Bowl	Red Maple Marketing
2009	7 schools participated	n/a
2010	#s not recorded	n/a
2011	11 schools participated	n/a
2012	11 schools participated	6 schools participated
2013	data missing	data missing
2014	5 schools participated	3 schools participated
2015	8? schools participated	4 schools participated
2016	6 schools participated	4 schools participated
2017	9 schools participated	6 schools participated
2018	#s not recorded	6 schools participated
2019	9 schools participated	5 schools participated
2020	No event held	No event held
2021	No event held	No event held

2022	4 schools participated	3 schools participated
------	------------------------	------------------------

Quantity of Schools in Quiz Bowl



Quantity of Schools in Red Maple Marketing



Readers that Participated and/or Qualified to Vote in Forest of Reading

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Blue Spruce		170 participants 163 voters (96%)	151 participants 137 voters (91%)	142 participants 138 voters (97%)	126 participants 105 voters (83%)	113 participants 110 voters (97%)	94 participants 89 voters (95%)
Silver Birch	<u>Fiction</u> 117 participants 53 voters (45%)	Fiction 108 participants 36 voters (33%)	Express 99 participants 48 voters (48%)	Express 89 participants 45 voters (51%)	Express 62 participants 31 voters (50%)	Express 36 participants 21 voters (58%)	Express 90 participants 63 voters (70%)
	Non-Fiction 117 participants 61 voters (52%)	Non-Fiction 108 participants 63 voters (58%)	Fiction 71 participants 28 voters (39%)	Fiction 84 participants 22 voters (26%)	Fiction 87 participants 22 voters (25%)	Fiction 58 participants 11 voters (18%)	Fiction 51 participants 22 voters (43%)
			Non-Fiction 71 participants 43 voters (61%)	Non-Fiction 89 participants 49 voters (55%)	Non-Fiction 87 participants 35 voters (40%)	Non-Fiction 57 participants 10 voters (18%)	Non-Fiction 35 participants 22 voters (63%)

Red Maple	<u>Fiction</u>	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	<u>Fiction</u>	<u>Fiction</u>
	33 participants	32 participants	37 participants	90 participants	79 participants	77 participants	19 participants
	8 voters	12 voters	6 voters	14 voters	24 voters	21 voters	8 voters
	(24%)	(37.5%)	(16%)	(15.5%)	(30%)	(27%)	(42%)
	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	<u>Non-Fiction</u>	Non-Fiction
	33 participants	Not run this year	37 participants	Not run this year	79 participants	Not run this year	13 participants
	3 voters		6 voters		17 voters		9 voters
	(9%)		(16%)		(21.5%)		(69%)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Blue Spruce	120 participants	151 participants	181 participants	173 participants	229 participants	209 participants	168 Participants
	117 voters	151 voters	167 voters	161 voters	209 voters	130 voters	156 voters
	(97.5%) +	(100%) +	(92%) -	(93%) +	(91%) -	(62%) -	(93%) +

Silver Birch	Express	Express	Express	Express	Express	Express	Express
	60 participants	62 participants	59 participants	76 participants	142 participants	122 participants	94 participants
	23 voters	52 voters	56 voters	64 voters	69 voters	59 voters	52 voters
	(38%) -	(84%) +	(95%) +	(84%) -	(49%) -	(48%) -	(55%) +
	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction
	60 participants	42 participants	38 participants	14 participants	68 participants	58 participants	71 participants
	10 voters	14 voters	20 voters	10 voters	15 voters	19 voters	19 voters
	(16%) -	(33%) +	(52%) +	(71%) +	(22%) -	(33%) +	(27%) -
	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction
	60 participants	40 participants	44 participants	20 participants	51 participants	39 participants	35 participants
	23 voters	27 voters	21 voters	16 voters	13 voters	10 voters	5 voters
	(38%) -	(67%) +	(47%) -	(80%) +	(25%) -	(26%) +	(14%) -
Red Maple	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction	Fiction
	12 participants	8 participants	43 participants	20 participants	42 participants	36 participants	38 participants
	8 voters	7 voters	25 voters	14 voters	19 voters	3 voters	36 voters
	(66%) +	(87%) +	(58%) -	(70%) +	(45%) -	(8%) -	(95%)
	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction	Non-Fiction
	No category this year	8 participants	No category this year	20 participants	No category this year	22 participants	No category this year
		3 voters		7 voters		1 voter	
		(37%) -		(35%) -		(5%) -	

2018-2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022
-----------	-------------	-------------	-------------

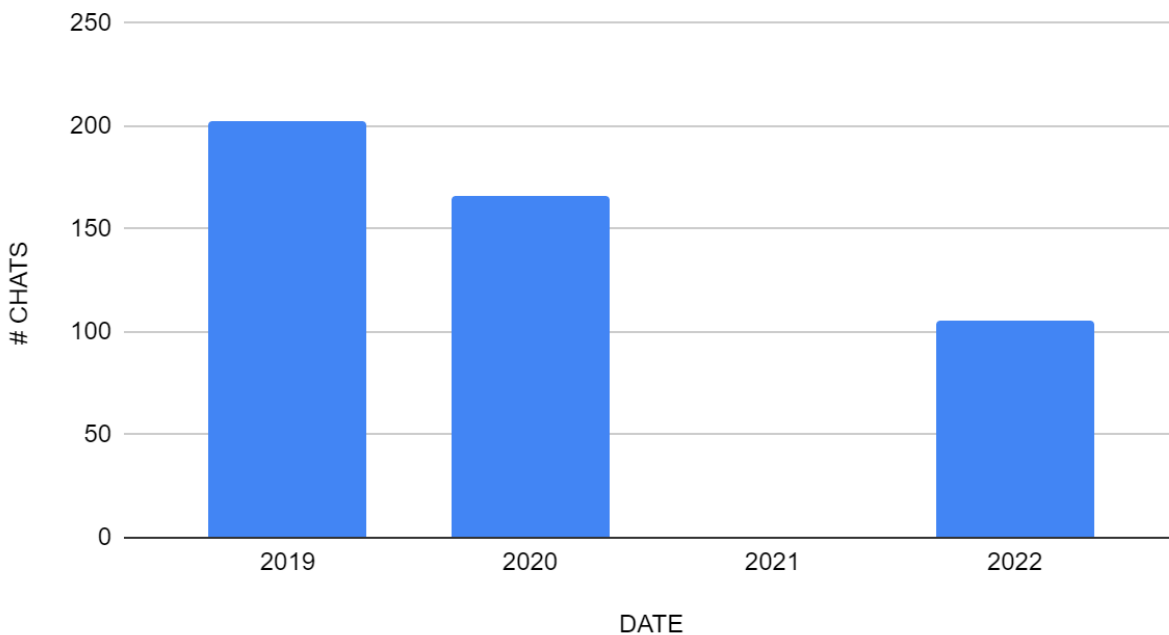
Blue Spruce	176 participants, 155 voters (88%) -	180* participants 62 voters (34%) -	0 participants 0 voters	145 participants 123 voters (85%)+
Silver Birch	Express - 84 participants, 38 voters (45%) - Fiction - 67 participants, 21 voters (31%) + Non-Fiction - 37 participants, 7 voters (19%) +	Express 50* participants (55) 13 voters (23%) - Fiction 50* participants (46) 13 voters (28%) - Non-Fiction = Yellow Cedar 50* participants (25) 10 voters (40%) +	Express 0 participants 0 voters Fiction 0 participants 0 voters Non-Fiction 0 participants 0 voters	Express 48 participants 15 voters (31%)+ Fiction 43 participants 14 voters (33%)+ Non-Fiction = Yellow Cedar 27 participants 4 voters (15%)-
Red Maple	Fiction - 52 participants, 6 voters (11.5%) - Non-Fiction – chose not to run	Fiction 50* participants (45) 24 voters (48%)+ Non-Fiction – included with Yellow Cedar (53%) +	0 participants 0 voters	20 participants 9 voters (45%)-

Note: The Forest of Reading program did not run in 2020-21.

Number of Chats Conducted by Teacher-Librarian

For 2022 = **105** (compared to **166** in 2020 and **202** in 2019)

Forest of Reading Chats Conducted by TL



Seeing the Forest for the Trees - Findings and Next Steps

I am satisfied with the results of our revitalization strategies. Even in non-pandemic times, participant to voter ratios fluctuated within a certain range. (e.g. Silver Birch Express had a high of 95% of participants qualifying, a low of 23% of participants qualifying and current score of 85% of participants qualifying; Silver Birch Fiction had a high of 71%, low of 16% and current score of 33%; Silver Birch Non-Fiction / Yellow Cedar had a high of 80%, low of 14% and current score of 15%; Red Maple had a high of 95%, low of 8% and current score of 45%).

We will continue to use Google Forms for ballots. In the future, I will not have to broker as many chats and can conduct many more myself.

Focusing on the quantity of schools that participated in local celebrations does not capture the joy or energy that the events generate, so this data set may not be as useful as it initially seems.

When it comes to reading more ebooks, Ofgang said, “We know that pre-pandemic, most kids preferred a physical book to an ebook. I would be very interested, now that they have become such a part of classrooms, whether that’s changing” (Ofgang, 2021, p. 30). We will continue to offer ebooks but be prepared to trouble-shoot accessibility issues related to the platform, because “book access is critical to a positive culture of literacy” (Zirotiannis, 2021, p. 48).

Sometimes, forest fires are helpful to trigger new growth. The same could be said for the impact of the pandemic on the Forest of Reading, for “although the pandemic has required a shift in library practices, many of these adjustments and what was learned from them will help school librarians serve students in new and innovative ways long after school libraries reopen” (Zirotiannis, 2021, 48).

Works Cited

Brooks-Kirkland, A. (2021). Voices for School Libraries: Advocacy in Pandemic Times. *Canadian School Libraries Journal*, 5(2). Retrieved from <https://journal.canadianschoollibraries.ca/voices-for-school-libraries/>

Clark, C., & Picton, I. (2020). *Children and young people’s reading in 2020 before and during the COVID-19 lockdown*. National Literacy Trust. Retrieved from https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/National_Literacy_Trust_-_Reading_practices_under_lockdown_report_-_FINAL.pdf

Durkin, K. (2021). Design thinking in reading workshop: Flexible strategies for sparking empathy in middle school readers in the time of COVID-19. *Voices from the Middle*, 29(1), 42–48.

Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario. (2019, November 26). ETFO puts government’s feet to the fire with Phase 1 work to rule strike action starting today. Retrieved from <https://www.etfo.ca/news-publications/media-releases/etfo-puts-government-s-feet-to-the-fire-with-phase-1-work-to-rule-strike-action-starting-today>

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2020). Lessons from pandemic teaching for content area learning. *Reading Teacher*, 74(3), 341–345.

Freibauer, C. (2020). Future of the School Library Learning Commons: Will the COVID-19 pandemic forever change school libraries? *Canadian School Libraries Journal*. 4(3).

Retrieved from <https://journal.canadianschoollibraries.ca/future-of-the-school-library-learning-commons/>

Grint, M. (2021). Reading in a pandemic: How did it suddenly become so difficult? *California English*, 26(3), 11.

Kolb, L. (2021). From 1916 to 2021: What would John Dewey say about remote learning? *Teacher Librarian* 48(5), 26-29.

Lagarde, J. (2021). Reading as buoys during tumultuous times: Helping real readers grow remote reading lives. *Teacher Librarian*, 48(3), 12–17.

Levenson, N. (2022) Different Leadership for a Different Time. *Educational Leadership* 79(6), 42-47.

Maliszewski, D. (2014) Reading Choice is Reading Engagement. *ETFO Voice*, 16(3). 6-23. Retrieved from <https://etfovoice.ca/feature/reading-choice-reading-engagement>

Maliszewski, D. (2017, May 22). *Exhilaration and Disregulation* [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://mondymollymusings.blogspot.com/2017/05/exhilaration-and-disregulation.html>

Maliszewski, D. (2018, May 28). *Innovation Exists Here: 4 Examples* [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://mondymollymusings.blogspot.com/2018/05/innovation-exists-here-4-examples.html>

Maliszewski, D. (2022, January 24). *Return to the Forest of Reading* [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://mondymollymusings.blogspot.com/2022/01/return-to-forest-of-reading.html>

Maliszewski, D. (2022, April 18). *It Takes Teamwork* [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://mondymollymusings.blogspot.com/2022/04/it-takes-teamwork.html>

Maliszewski, D. & Burch-Jones, W. (2021). Losing Libraries. *ETFO Voice* Winter 2021, 14-19. Retrieved from <https://etfovoice.ca/feature/losing-librarians>

Nguyen, T. A. (2020). Reading aloud, building community: How reading together allows us to build worlds together during COVID-19. *Literacy Today* (2411-7862), 38(1), 30–33.

- Ofgang, E. (2021). Student ebook reading surges during the pandemic. *Tech & Learning*, 28–30.
- Ontario Library Association. (2021a). *History of the Forest*. Retrieved from <https://forestofreading.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2022-Forest-of-Reading-History.pdf>
- Ontario Library Association. (2021b). *Welcome to the Forest of Reading*. Retrieved from <https://forestofreading.com/about-the-forest/>
- Ontario Library Association. (2022). *Forest of Reading Festival*. Retrieved from <https://forestofreading.com/festival/>
- Rocca, R. (2020, January 21). Ontario teachers' strike: A timeline of key events and actions taken. *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/6433115/ontario-teachers-strike-timeline/>
- Smith, C. (2021). Reading in the time of pandemic. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 88(2), 35–37.
- Tarc, A. M. (2021). Coming up for air: On reading in a global pandemic. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 19(1), 16–21.
- Toronto District School Board. (2022). In-Person Learning: Questions and Answers. Retrieved from <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/In-Person-Learning/Questions-and-Answers>
- Tranjan, R., Oliveira, T. & Robinson, R. (2022). *Catching Up Together: A Plan for Ontario's Schools*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Monitor. Retrieved from <https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Ontario%20Office/2022/02/Catching%20Up%20Together.pdf>
- Warnke, T. (2021). Independent reading under the mask: Engaging students in independent reading in the COVID-19 era. *Literacy Today (2411-7862)*, 38(6), 54–55.
- Zirogiannis, B. (2021). #BOOKLOVE in the time of COVID: How school librarians have worked to maximize students' access to books during a pandemic. *Literacy Today (2411-7862)*, 38(6), 44–47.

