

## 2017-18 Library Curriculum Report

June 2018

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### Philosophy and Approach

The mission of the library program is to support students in their growth by developing an appreciation of literature and the skills to seek information. The goals that support the mission are:

- Promote and encourage students to be critical thinkers and effective users of information
- Support students as they become lifelong readers and learners
- Provide a supportive environment that is rich with learning materials — print, digital, and visual/tactile
- Collaborate across classrooms and disciplines in efforts to build connections and enrich the learning experience
- Reflect the mission of the Miquon School
- Connect with the physical environment and the community

This year, the library curriculum is centered around the essential question of “*Who Am I As a Reader?*” The goals are to:

- Inspire and help develop strong reading identities in the students
- Expose students to as many books, authors, and genres as possible
- Empower kids to find just-right books (more related to their interests than reading levels)
- Promote reading for pleasure



Inspired by [Responsive Classroom](#) practices and Miquon's all-school year-long theme of **How To and Why**, the work in the first two months of school centered around developing competencies in navigating the library and using materials. The outcomes of this work are that students can:

- Locate books that appeal to their interests and information needs
- Check out a book independently (using new self-checkout system). This applies to students in first grade and up.
- Understand METIS - the new classification of the library collection
- Keep track of, take care of, and return checked-out library books
- Comfortably use materials and resources in the library
- Happily work with others during class time and lunch choice

## METIS

Last year's big projects included evaluating the library collection and weeding unwanted items. This laid the groundwork to begin a very large project--reorganizing the library based on a new classification system called [METIS](#). Prior to this, the library used the Dewey Decimal System; a system that is very much the norm in public libraries and school libraries. METIS was created by librarians at a progressive elementary school in Manhattan, [Ethical Culture Fieldston School](#).

This system eliminates much of the confusion and complexity of the Dewey Decimal System. Instead of long numeric codes with decimals, METIS is based on basic alphabetization, larger categories that drill down into smaller sub-categories, and the use of whole words in call numbers. The structure is intentionally easier so that younger students can navigate with ease. It also relies on colorful bright picture labels to identify the categories.

Each book in the library's 10,000-volume collection needed to be evaluated, physically moved to a new section, labeled with two new labels, and re-cataloged with a new call number. This project took a full year. The students are enjoying the new system and book circulation has increased this year. The collection is much more accessible and conducive to independent browsing.



## Nursery & Kindergarten

Nursery and Kindergarten students visit the library for weekly 40-minute classes. The routine involves sharing a song or rhyme, enjoying one or two stories, and then browsing and checking out books. The students have time after this for quiet reading.

During read-alouds, the students are building important literacy skills. They recognize patterns, make inferences and predictions, connect story elements to their lives or to other texts, and learn to share the space with their peers. They are growing their base of knowledge around children's literature and connecting with new and familiar stories.

The students are learning how to independently select and borrow a library book, and the responsibility of caring for their books.

Here is a sample of the stories the Nursery and Kindergarten have enjoyed in library class:

- **Strictly No Elephants** by Lisa Mantchev
- **Mother Bruce** by Ryan T. Higgins
- **Alfie** by Thyra Heder
- **The Jacket** by Kirsten Hall
- **Jabari Jumps** by Gaia Cornwall
- **My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood** by Tameka Fryer Brown
- **The Little Red Fort** by Brenda Maier
- **The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet** by Carmen Agra Deedy
- **When's My Birthday?** by Julie Fogliano



## First & Second Grades

The students in first and second grades visit the library once a week for 45-minute sessions. The routine of library class is fairly consistent. We begin with a read-aloud and discussion and leave time at the end of class for browsing, checking books out, and quiet reading.



In the winter, we prepared for our annual Caldecott Medal Mock Election by reading and evaluating fifteen picture books published in 2017. The study culminated in a school-wide mock election and an unveiling of the official Caldecott Medal winners.

We deeply study the books, focusing on:

- the quality and technique of the illustrations
- the impact of illustrations on our understanding of the story
- how well the story and illustrations support one another

The students chose these three titles as the best picture books of the year:

- 1st Place: **Claymates** by Dev Petty
- 2nd Place: **The Legend of Rock, Paper, Scissors** by Adam Rex
- 3rd Place: **The Antlered Ship** by The Fan Brothers



Here is a sample of the stories the first and second graders have enjoyed in library class:

- **Strictly No Elephants** by Lisa Mantchev
- **Mother Bruce** by Ryan T. Higgins
- **Alfie** by Thyra Heder
- **All the Way to Havana** by Margarita Engle
- **The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet** by Carmen Agra Deedy
- **The Little Red Fort** by Brenda Maier
- **The Wolf, The Duck, and the Mouse** by Mac Barnett

### Third & Fourth Grades

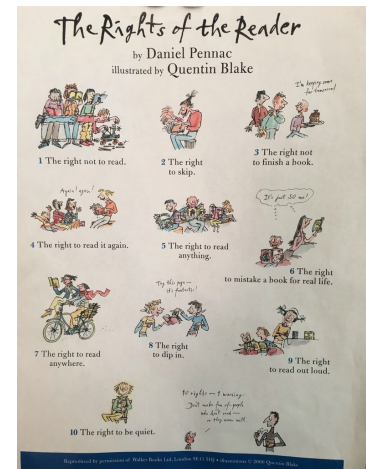
Third and fourth graders visit the library twice a week for 45-minute classes.

It was important that we begin the year discussing what it means to be a reader. Each of us is different in this regard and approaches reading in an individual manner. We talked about the rights of the reader (ie: you have the right to not finish a book you don't like), and we talked

about our specific interests. We studied the parts of a book. I promoted books by giving book talks, putting recommended books out for browsing, doing weekly read-alouds, and purchasing new books to support student's interests. We also engaged in book browsing activities: watching book trailers, giving short book talks to one another, and holding a "Book Pass" in which students moved from station to station to browse new books in short increments of time.

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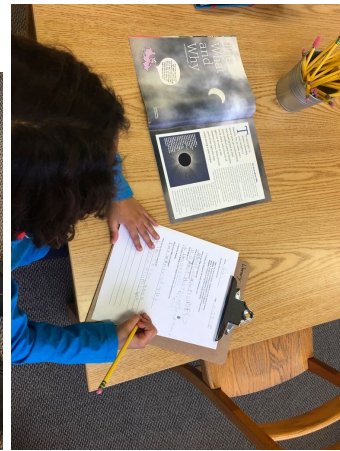
In the spring, we wrote poetry inspired by the book **My Cold Plum, Lemon Pie, Bluesy Mood** by Tameka Fryer Brown. The students each chose an emotion and wrote descriptive responses to prompts like "What color do you see when you think of this emotion?" and "What sounds do you hear when thinking of this emotion?"

Additionally, throughout the year, I taught shorter lessons inspired by specific read-alouds. To support the language arts study of fairy tales happening in the classrooms, I read aloud a collection of fairy tales called **Brave Red, Smart Frogs** to the students. Inspired by images of

beautiful libraries around the world, we imagined what would be in our “dream libraries”, in support of the upcoming capital campaign.

We read many picture books throughout the year. Here is a sample of the offerings:

- **Mother Bruce** by Ryan T. Higgins
- **Alfie** by Thyra Heder
- **All the Way to Havana** by Margarita Engle
- **The Wolf, The Duck, and the Mouse** by Mac Barnett
- **Jingle Dancer** by Cynthia Leitich Smith
- **Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut** by Derrick Barnes
- **A Different Pond** by Bao Phi
- **The Book of Mistakes** by Corinna Luyken
- **The Antlered Ship** by the Fan Brothers
- **Wolf in the Snow** by Matthew Cordell



### **Fifth & Sixth Grades**

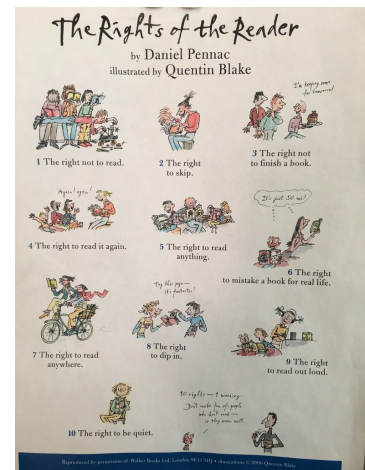
Fifth and sixth graders visit the library once or twice a week for 45-minute classes (Louis and Jeri's group has an optional time slot for a second weekly library session).

It was important that we begin the year discussing what it means to be a reader. Each of us is different in this regard and approaches reading in an individual manner. We talked about the rights of the reader (ie: you have the right to not finish a book you don't like), and we talked about our specific interests. We studied the parts of a book. I also promote books by giving book talks, putting recommended books out for browsing, doing weekly read-alouds, and purchasing new books to support student's interests. The students also promote books to one another and the monthly book club generates a lot of excitement over specific books and authors.



The students also have time to browse and check books out each week. I promote books to them by giving book talks, putting recommended books out for browsing, doing read-alouds, and encouraging students to join the fifth and sixth grade book club.

In December, the students embarked on a research project in which they studied and wrote letters to their favorite authors. First, the students completed biographical research on that author - finding out where and how they trained, creating bibliographies, finding out what the author is working on presently, and much more. Then came the letter writing. I asked the students to imagine they were meeting this author. What specific questions or comments would they have for the author? What are they dying to know? The students mailed off their letters and awaited responses. In many cases, they received responses back from the authors, which was very informative and gratifying.



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In the spring, I read aloud from the book called **The Creativity Project**. In it are writing prompts created by well-known children's book authors. In some cases, the prompts were given to other authors who then created amazing responses. Other prompts are left to the readers to take and make something with. The students enjoyed taking these prompts and creating lovely and often very funny drawings, poems, and short stories. In many cases, it gave them a window into the life and mind of a beloved author as well.



### Book Club

The fifth and sixth grade book club is a fun and rewarding experience for everyone who participates. We met for an hour once a month to have lunch and discuss a book. This is a voluntary activity and the participation varies from month to month. Our Language Arts and Learning Support Coordinators Jen Curyto and Rossana Zapf and I helped to facilitate, although the students don't need much to generate and sustain great conversations about books. We usually run out of time! This is a safe and positive space to learn from one another and test out theories and interpretations of a story.

This year we read and discussed:

- **The Apothecary** by Maile Meloy
- **The London Eye Mystery** by Siobhan Dowd
- **York: The Shadow Cipher** by Laura Ruby
- **Hello Universe** (2018 Newbery Medal Winner) by Erin Entrada Kelly
- **Bob** by Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead





### Minicourses & Choice Time

Minicourses are an excellent opportunity to build relationships with students and interact with them in new settings and ways. In the winter, Mike Batchelor, Kate Shapero and I offered a Ukelele minicourse to students in third through sixth grades. It was a bit hit! Our newly formed Ukulele group mastered essential beginner chords, and learned a few songs together, including “Three Little Birds” by Bob Marley and “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” by Bobby McFerrin. We performed one of the songs at assembly. This spring, I am supporting a group of eight sixth graders in the design and construction of the annual Miquon Yearbook.

Throughout the year, the library was open to students during lunch choice. Many students use the library to read, play cards and games, draw, write stories, practice using Google Docs, work on Scratch coding projects, and a host of other activities. They make small projects with found materials outside or some basic materials in the library. They are self-directed, productive and curious in their work. It’s a wonderful time and space for the students.



### **Assemblies & School-Wide Events**

One of my roles at Miquon is to organize the Friday all-school assembly. Stories, music, theater, and dance are incorporated into these events. I organized several “How To, and Why” assemblies, tying into the year-long theme around campus. I invited back a wonderful musician and performer named Sangue Mbeke, a Senegalese musician and performer, to share his music and drums with us. The talent show is an opportunity for all students to share something they like to do, whether it be playing the piano, telling jokes, or building with Legos. Everyone is welcome and everyone who performs is applauded and supported.

I also helped to organize a second Cozy Read-In, inspired by the [African American Read-Ins](#) happening all over the country during the month of February. We showcased African American authors and illustrators for this event, with an emphasis on introducing newer book titles to the community. We selected twelve titles, briefly introduced them to the children, and then the students chose the books they would like to read. The following week, students spread out all over campus to participate in teacher-led small group readings. It was a big success, and students and staff appreciated being mixed up by ages, and getting to visit new classrooms, and listening to wonderful stories.

### **Conclusion**

It has been a busy and successful year! METIS was completed, and the collection is more appealing and accessible to the students. Circulation numbers (just one way to evaluate a collection and program) increased from 4600 in the 2016-17 school year to 5400 in the 2017-18 school year. Anecdotally, I have witnessed more excitement and connections being made between students and books. I’ve also heard many more students reflect that they have enjoyed reading more this year, or that they have found great new books to read. I feel proud of the work that we all did this year.

There is so much to do during the summer, and one of the best things you can do is sit down and read with your child. Let them see you reading, and read some great stories together! Take a look at this wonderful [resource](#) that the *New York Times* put together last summer.

And please take a look at the summer reading lists I sent home with students. They are also located [here](#). Public libraries have fabulous summer events, including summer reading programs. Have a wonderful summer, and happy reading!