smore Share Accessibility 49

SECONDARY READING LEAGUE

November 2026

SRL's Day of Reading with Dr. Jenny French



The 47th **Day of Reading** is in the books! This year's Secondary Reading League's 47th Day of Reading proved to be one of the best in recent history! Participants walked away with a wealth of information and a renewed vigor for improving instructional practices!

Below, you will find a button that will bring you to a website that has Dr. French's handouts and slides from her presentation. Please feel free to explore those resources. You will also find a link to purchase her latest book entitled *The Science of Reading for Grades 4 - 12: Every Subject, Every Day!* co-authored with last year's DOR presenter Dr. Katie McKnight.

Additionally, Jenny didn't mention it during her presentation, but she has also just recently published another book entitled *Charting Your Path: Navigating Your Vision and Purpose.* This is a text designed to move you from a life lived by default to a life lived by design through guided reflections and practical thinking activities. Whether you're considering a career change, feeling burned out, or longing for something more, this workbook gives you the space and structure to

figure out what's next and the confidence to pursue it. Check it out!

Please feel free to reach out to us at Secondary Reading League if you have questions or ideas about how to improve this day of professional development, or if you have thoughts or suggestions about future events.

Together, we will empower each other to create pathways for increased learning and literacy for all!

Contact Dr. Jenny French at Engaging Learners

Jenny's latest title: Chart Your Path: Navigating Your Vision and Purpose





Check out the 47th Day of Reading Vendors



Derelict Books

Michael Adams of Derelict Books entertained the crowd with fresh fantasy from fairies to farts!



Brinks in Time

Tom Rogal returned to highlight his latest 4th installment of the Brinks in Time series which explores the world of Gyyerlith through its epic fantasy and character-driven storytelling.



Art Owles

Art returned to honor his late wife Carol's literacy project which sells beautiful hand-crafted items in which the profits support literacy in Guatemala.



95% Group

Jenny Reuland shared her wealth of knowledge and brought some excellent titles from 95% Group to support morpheme instruction as well as other foundational literacy supports for adolescent learners.

A Special Thanks

Secondary Reading League would especially like to that **Saddleback Publishers** for their extremely generous donation for everyone swag bags as well as several raffle prizes!

Thank you also to **Read Naturally** who sponsored another large raffle prize.



Engaging Learners

Dr. Jenny French highlighted her newest title The Science of Reading for Grades 4 - 12: Every Subject! Every Day! co-authored with her business partner Dr. Katie McKnight. Participants were delighted to meet her husband and son!

Did you enjoy SRL's Day of Reading?

Help us plan the next one!



Email us at srlexecboard@gmail.com. Write **Join DOR committee** in the subject line.



SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
DECEMBER 15, 2026

SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL TODAY!

Let's build a dynamic conference together!

Call for Presenters!!

2027 IRC CONFERENCE
March 11-12, 2027 Springfield, Illinois

Secondary Reading League is looking for an *additional 4 presenters* to share their knowledge at the upcoming Illinois Reading Council Conference. Please consider submitting a proposal today! Proposals are due December 15, 2026.

SRL will once again be sponsoring rooms that highlight the needs of adolescent readers. Join us! Share your knowledge, and then stay for the fun!

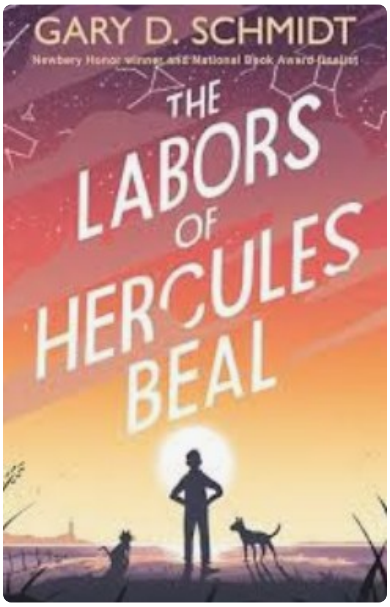
When submitting your proposal, please be sure to *select the SRL strand*!

Submit a proposal for the SRL strand!



💭 IMAGINATION INTERLUDE 💭

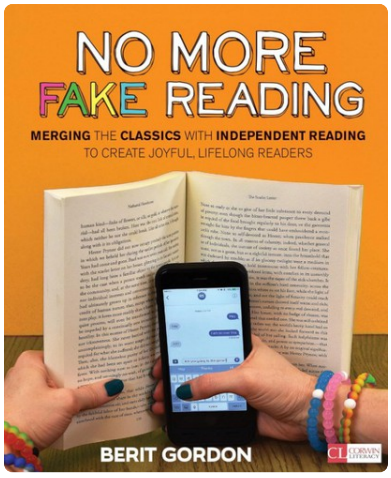
The Labors of Hercules Beal by Gary D. Schmidt



The familiar middle-grades literature trope of a kid on his own gets the Gary Schmidt treatment here. Hercules Beal is a 12 year old who lost both of his parents in a car accident a year before the story begins. He lives with his older brother, who has returned home to run their parents' nursery on Cape Cod. Hercules starts at a new school, and his homeroom and English teacher (who gives the grammar assignments we'd all like to give) is a retired Marine lieutenant colonel who comes off as gruff and scary at first, but you know is going to be super influential. He assigns each student an individual classical mythology project. Our main character's task? He must recreate the 12 labors of Hercules and write a reflection on each one. The ways he navigates this assignment while dealing with weather, surviving business problems, and grieving his parents are delightful. Readers will find themselves viewing their own lives through new eyes, and healing along with Hercules.

Review by Mara Southorn: Vice President of SRL

🏫 INSTRUCTIONAL INSIGHTS 🏫



No More Fake Reading: Merging the Classics with Independent Reading to Create Joyful, Lifelong Readers, by Berit Gordon

It seems all secondary literacy educators look for ways to motivate their students to engage with texts and build that all-important life-long reading habit. We are constantly pulled in seemingly opposing directions when our curriculum tells us students must read the classics, and research tells us choice reading is the way to go. Both elements have value. But how do we motivate high schoolers to pick up classic literature? If they won't read these assigned texts, how do we teach them to be skilled consumers of text? Berit Gordon, author of *The Joyful Teacher,* proposes a solution in *No More Fake Reading.* In this instructional gem, Berit presents a blended literacy structure where teachers lead close examination of key passages in those important 'curriculum' texts to teach

students what to notice or dig into in their choice texts. Students practice the skills they're learning by applying the strategies to their choice reading. The concept pulls together the instructional structures of whole-class novels, anchor texts, and book clubs. This book lays out a step-by-step process for setting up this structure in your English Language Arts classroom and provides resources to help along the way. Give it a read for a fresh look and possible solution to an age-old issue.

Review by Kim Hollis: President-Elect of SRL



SRL Classroom Literacy Grants

The Secondary Reading League is pleased to announce the availability of **two (2) $500 Literacy Grants for current SRL members**. These grants are designed to support educators in creating new, or enhancing existing, innovative literacy initiatives within their schools or classrooms.

Interested SRL members are invited to complete the two-page grant application. A committee of SRL members will review all submissions using the rubric provided with the application and will select one or more projects for funding.

Applications are due March 1, 2027.
Winners to be announced at the SRL Spring Book Talks in April!

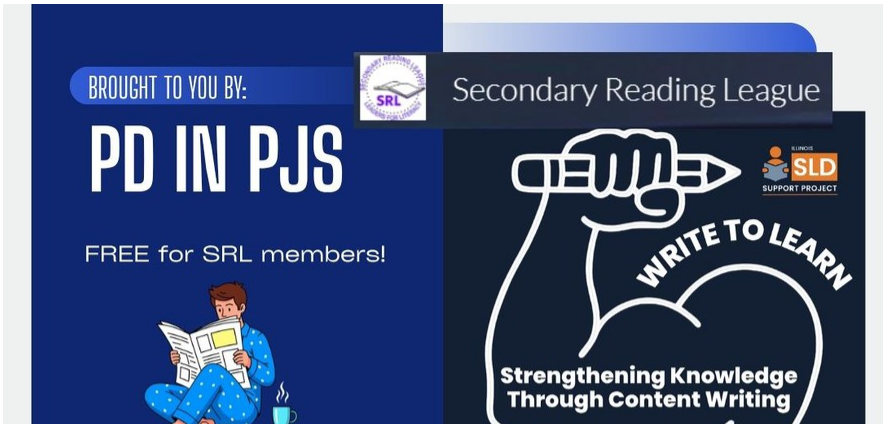
Submit your Literacy Grant Proposal here!

Please join us for a FREE online event as SRL hosts guests from SLDSP





Supporting struggling readers in secondary settings requires targeted instruction that addresses students' specific needs while maintaining access to rigorous, grade-level learning. This professional learning session will explore evidence-aligned practices for identifying reading needs, matching instruction to student data, and providing explicit support in word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Participants will leave with practical strategies for supporting adolescent readers across content areas and within an MTSS framework.





Strong writing skills don't develop in isolation or in a single content area. They are built through consistent, meaningful opportunities to write across the school day. This session focuses on how to integrate writing into everyday instruction so that it functions as a tool for thinking and learning, not just a task to complete. Participants will examine practical, classroom-ready strategies for embedding purposeful writing, along with approaches that support student confidence and lead to stronger writing outcomes across subjects

Illinois Reading Council now has automatic membership renewal!

Take advantage of the new feature for IRC membership! By registering online, you can opt for auto-renewal saving time and effort! Keep your eyes open for this new feature!
Then, once you renew, be sure to select *Secondary Reading League* as your council of choice!



Professional Learning Opportunity with IRC

Join educators from all over the state in the online **Fall 2026 IRC Book Club**! Choose one, two, or all three books!
Read, reflect on, and respond to ***War Games*** by Alan Gratz and/or ***Trauma-Responsive Pedagogy*** by Arlène Elizabeth Casimir, Courtney N. Baker, Nell K. Duke, and M. Colleen Cruz and/or ***Growing***

Language & Literacy by Andrea Honigsfeld.

Beginning October 18, educators will participate in online discussions for the next seven-weeks. With the ***War Games*** book club, participants will learn how to hold book clubs with their own middle grade classrooms based on this historical fiction novel about Olympic gold, Nazi gold, and a daring heist during the 1936 Berlin Olympics. With the ***Trauma-Responsive Pedagogy*** book club, participants will be provided an actionable guide that offers research and inclusive frameworks to help create a trauma-responsive classroom with the tools needed to support their students through challenges. With the *Growing Language & Literacy* book club, participants will choose between ***Growing Language & Literacy: Strategies for English Learners*** that provides K to 8th Grade Teachers with strategies to support EL students' academic language and literacy development based on the TESOL framework of language acquisition **OR** ***Growing Language & Literacy: Strategies for Secondary Multilingual Learners*** that provides secondary 6th to 12th grade teachers practical strategies to support adolescent multilingual learners across all grade levels and content areas.

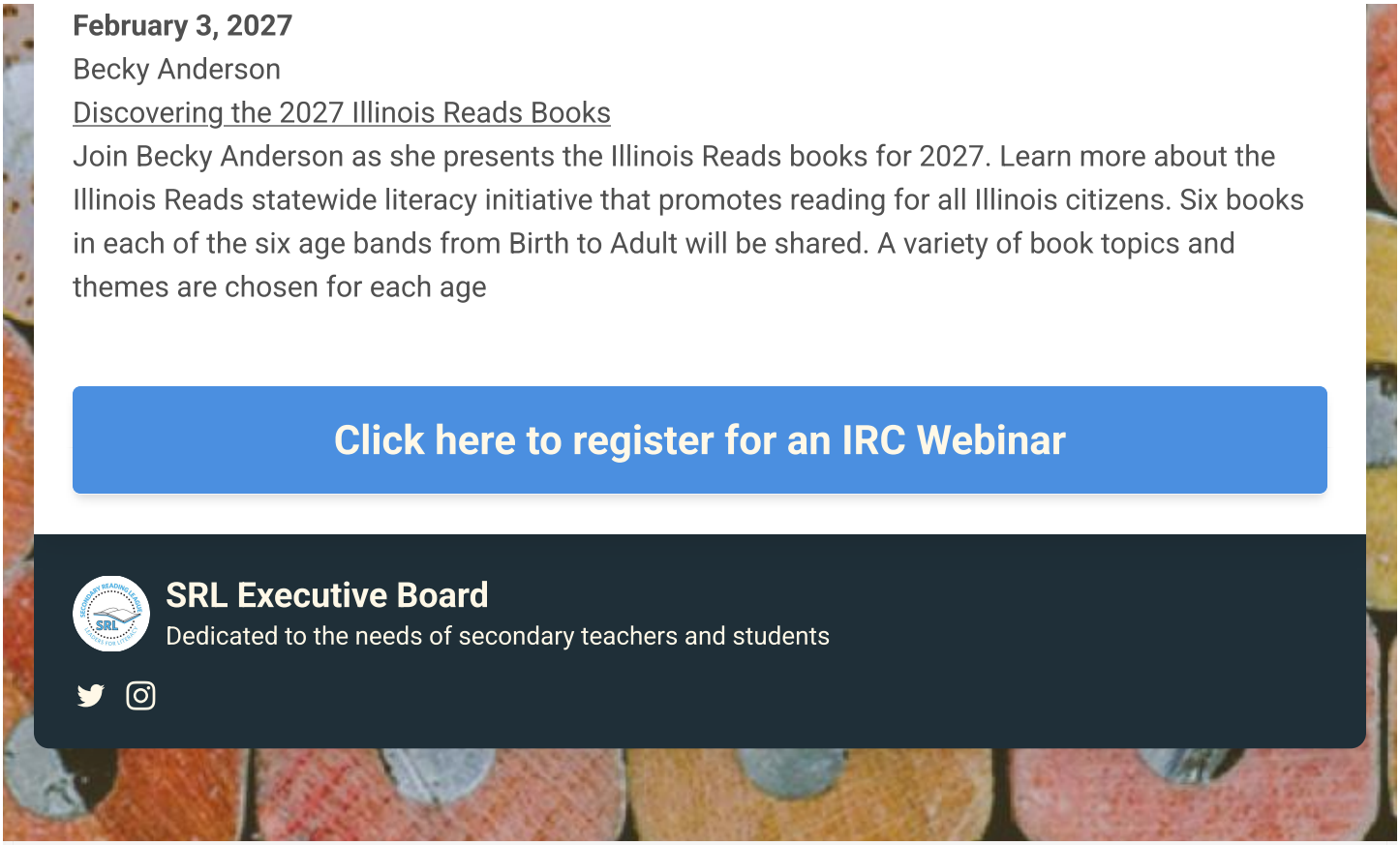
Click here to explore the Fall 2026 IRC Book Clubs

IRC Webinars



December 2, 2026
Andrea Honigsfeld
Wait, Don't Just Translate: Multidimensional Strategies for Multilingual Learners
To translate or not to translate, is that the question? Or is it more important to explore ways to use translation intentionally while implementing carefully designed, scaffolded lessons? This session is designed to explore how does translation help throughout the school day, especially in the earliest stages of language development and what strategies other than translation can be used to support newcomers' academic, language, literacy, and social-emotional growth.

January 6, 2027
Maria Walther
Squeeze It In! Making Time for Meaningful Read-Aloud Experiences
Even on the busiest school days, interactive read-alouds can build knowledge and strengthen language comprehension. Join Maria to discover simple, effective ways to weave meaningful readaloud experiences into your instructional day, even when you're using a published reading program. Explore recently published picture books and leave with practical, classroom-ready strategies that help students ponder and engage in purposeful conversations



February 3, 2027

Becky Anderson

Discovering the 2027 Illinois Reads Books

Join Becky Anderson as she presents the Illinois Reads books for 2027. Learn more about the Illinois Reads statewide literacy initiative that promotes reading for all Illinois citizens. Six books in each of the six age bands from Birth to Adult will be shared. A variety of book topics and themes are chosen for each age

Click here to register for an IRC Webinar

SRL Executive Board

Dedicated to the needs of secondary teachers and students

Created with smore

Communicate quickly and effectively with interactive newsletters.

Smore empowers educators to connect with their community, streamline school communications, and increase engagement.

Create a newsletter

