



Director's Report
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Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN)
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nlln.org

Deb Keena's Retirement

As of August 15, 2025, NLLN's longtime bookkeeper, Deb Keena, will retire. Deb has worked with Northern Lights Library Network for twenty-four years, maintaining a steady and consistent inspection of NLLN's financial processes and reports. Deb is admired throughout the NLLN region and an admired and beloved colleague. Her work was exceptional and she will be greatly missed. Thank you, Deb, for your outstanding and admirable service to libraries in Minnesota.

Bookkeeping

NLLN's bookkeeping is now processed electronically through a bookkeeper and two CPA accountants at Olsen, Thielen, and Associates. NLLN's financial records will be secured and documented through longstanding accounting procedures. In addition to bookkeeper and accountant oversight, NLLN conducts a yearly audit with Carpenter, Evert, and Associates, submits financial reports to MDE, and includes ongoing board and executive director oversight.

Board Member Service

Term limits are up for Glenn Heinecke, President and School Library Representative; Linda Holecek, LARL Representative; and Kevin Baggett, NLLN Treasurer and Academic Library Representative, after three two-year terms of excellent service on the NLLN Governing Board. Thank you so very much for your service to our fellow Minnesotans.

Library Media Census

The State of School Libraries in Minnesota: A 2024 Census of K – 12 School Libraries is complete and on NLLN's website at: nlln.org. The report defines a school library media center according to Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 124D.911:

According to state statute, a school library or school library media center must have the following characteristics:

- ensures every student has equitable access to resources and is able to locate, access, and use resources that are organized and cataloged
- has a collection development plan that includes, but is not limited to, materials selection and deselection, a challenged materials procedure, and an intellectual and academic freedom statement

- is housed in a central location that provides an environment for expanded learning and supports a variety of student interests
- has technology and internet access
- is served by a licensed media specialist or licensed school librarian

(Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 124D.911)

81% of schools in Minnesota reported having a media center; yet, 46% do not have a licensed media specialist. *The State of School Libraries in Minnesota* notes that, “In Minnesota, a media specialist must hold a k – 12 Library Media Specialist license issued by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board.”

Licensed Media Specialist (LMS) Scholarships

In 2023, the Minnesota Multicounty, Multitype Library Systems (MCMTs) received funding to conduct the census and to create a mechanism to bring licensed media specialists back into Minnesota’s school libraries. The MCMTs are working with Dr. Michelle Wang, Education Director, Resource Training & Solutions (one of nine service cooperatives located in Sartell, MN, see: <https://www.mnservcoop.org/>) and Dr. Jenny Hill, Graduate Director of the School Library Media Program, St. Cloud State University, to design a model similar to the Special Education licensure tuition support used by the nine Minnesota service cooperatives. (See: <https://www.resourcecoop-mn.gov/programs-services/special-education-pipeline-grant>) to pay tuition for educators in one of the three licensure programs in Minnesota: St. Cloud State University, Minnesota State University Mankato, and the University of St. Catherine.

The appropriation states Laws of MN 2023, chapter 55, article 9, section 18, subd.5:

Subd. 5.

Licensed library media specialists.

(a) For aid to multicounty, multitype library systems to increase the number of licensed library media specialists:

\$ 1,000,000 2024..... 2024

\$ 0 2025..... 2025

(b) The aid awarded under this subdivision must be used for activities associated with increasing the number of licensed library media specialists, including but not limited to conducting a census of licensed library media specialists currently working in Minnesota schools, conducting a needs-based assessment to identify gaps in licensed library media specialist services, providing professional development opportunities for licensed library media specialists, and providing tuition support to candidates seeking to attain school library media specialist licensure.

(c) This is a onetime appropriation.

The appropriation will be extended through 2027.

Resource Training & Solutions and The Minnesota Multicounty Multitype Library Systems Program to Develop a Pipeline of Trained, Licensed, School Media Specialists

The Licensed Media Specialist Pipeline program is to develop a pipeline of trained, licensed school media specialists. Goals:

By July 31, 2025, design a high-quality Licensed Media Specialist Pipeline Program that primarily serves teachers in Minnesota. Paraprofessionals and other non-licensed staff members will be a secondary focus of this grant.

By July 31, 2025, design a recruitment and retention plan for participants within the Licensed Media Specialist Pipeline program.

Throughout the course of the funding timeline, Resource Training & Solutions will collaboratively work with Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) academic support departments and finance departments to develop guidance and continued support for each student within the pipeline program.

Establish a formative and summative evaluation process to create continuous improvement of recruitment, retention, and program components.

Total Scholarships, \$550/credit: 600,000.00

Administrative Costs: \$43,499.46

“Better Together” Workshop

When librarians and educators come together, we thrive!

Wednesday, June 11, 2025
40 people attended

Lakes Country Service Cooperative
1001 East Mouny Faith Avenue
Fergus Falls, Minnesota

8:30 a.m. Coffee and Rolls

9 a.m. – 10 a.m. Conversation: *All Things That Bring Us Together*

Lynette Schwagerl, Campbell School
Glenn Heinecke, Roseau School
Kathy Enger, Northern Lights Library Network

10 a.m. – 11 a.m. Author David LaRochelle and Illustrator Mike Wohnoutka

David LaRochelle and Mike Wohnoutka work together to publish award winning children's books, including *Moo* and *See the Cat: Three Stories about a Dog*. LaRochelle's narratives draw young readers into a simple understanding of the mystery of words, while Wohnoutka's illustrations vibrantly contextualize LaRochelle's narrative.

11 a.m. – 11:45 p.m. Minitex Presentation

Minitex provides Minnesotans with an extensive array of resources, including interlibrary loan, Ebooks Minnesota, eLibrary Minnesota, among many other valuable resources. Minitex staff, Maggie Snow and Beth Staats brought us up-to-date.

11:45 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. **LeAnne Bjerken, Poet**

LeAnne Bjerken from the Fergus Falls Public Library introduced us to her new book and read from her poems.

12:10 p.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch and Conversation

1 p.m. – 2 p.m. A.I. and Information Literacy with Sara Kelley-Mudie

An experienced librarian and educator, Sara Kelley-Mudie has studied the role librarians play in bringing Information Literacy to learners during the seismic shift in education toward Artificial Intelligence. Holding onto the values of technological advancement while determining its intersection with reliable sources through information literacy is an essential tool at this time.

2 – 3 p.m. Conversation: *Your Ideas are Welcome Here!*

Lynette Schwagerl, Campbell School
Glenn Heinecke, Roseau School
Kathy Enger, Northern Lights Library Network

3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Louie Lauer and *All Things Children's Literature*

This isn't your typical neighborhood story time. Louie Lauer carefully and intellectually drew us into the essence of the world's latest in children's literature.

Workshop and Lunch are Free. 6 CEUs

A very special thank you to Lynette Schwagerl for planning and leading the workshop this year!
Comments from the workshop:

"A very good day = everything." "Keep up the good work."

"I really enjoyed the authors visits. I also liked the discussion hour to get ideas to take with me – I found helpful. I also really liked Louie's presentation. Got book suggestions from him."

"I really enjoyed the variety of programming. The open room conversations were helpful and inviting."

“Enjoyed the author presentations and enjoyed/found useful the open discussions and local resources.”

“Loved having David LaRochele and Mike Wohnoutka speaking. It was fun and interactive and modeled how to incorporate their books into our schools and libraries. Also, really loved having two different slots for discussion.”

“Like nice mix of topics! I’ve always wondered about Minitex! Good lunch. Great discussion/open conversations.”

“Keep having it every year.”

Suggested having the workshop in August so more public librarians could attend (summer reading programs), along with time for breaks.

Communities Collaborative Brain Conference, August 12 – 14, 2025

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/21st-annual-communities-collaborative-brain-development-conference-tickets-1303429074449>

From the website: “Join us for a day of insightful discussions, innovative ideas, and networking opportunities at the **Shooting Star Casino**. This event brings together experts in the field to share their knowledge and experiences in brain development.

Discover the latest research, best practices, and strategies for promoting healthy brain development in children from birth through school age. Whether you're a healthcare professional, educator, parent, or community member, this conference offers valuable insights for everyone.

Don't miss this chance to connect with like-minded individuals, gain new perspectives, and contribute to the advancement of brain development initiatives in education. Mark your calendar and secure your spot at this must-attend event!”

Scholarships

The total commitment for NLLN Scholarships this fiscal year was \$11,738.42.

March 5 Advancing Library Excellence Workshop

NLLN sponsored a library excellence workshop for MSUM, Concordia, and NDSU. A benefit of sponsoring the workshop is that members of NLLN were invited to attend. 41 librarians attended from Lake Agassiz Regional Library, Moorhead Public Schools, MState, Pelican Rapids, University of Minnesota, MSU Moorhead, Concordia, and NDSU. Executive Director, Kathy Enger presented updates from NLLN. Presentations also included material on book bans, library career development, professional learning, leading through change, an AI overview and. Opportunities, teaching and learning with AI. NLLN received a special signed thank you from the three college directors after the workshop was finished.

Collection Support

NLLN supported the Northwest Regional Library System (NWRL) with \$5,000 in eBook support. The 138 titles were purchased for a total cost of \$5,012.30:

Northwest Regional Library System

Title

The Boys in the Boat

Fair Weather

The Nightingale

Confess

Throne of Glass

Crown of Midnight

Heir of Fire

Maybe Not

Every Last Word

Queen of Shadows

Empire of Storms

The Whistler

Witness to a Trial

A Court of Wings and Ruin

A Court of Frost and Starlight

Beach Read

The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes (A Hunger Games Novel)

Deal with the Devil

The Thursday Murder Club

The Midnight Library: A GMA Book Club Pick

A Court of Wings and Ruin

A Court of Silver Flames

A Court of Frost and Starlight

The Devil You Know

From Blood and Ash

Remarkably Bright Creatures

Book Lovers

Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow

Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow

Mad Honey

Mad Honey: A GMA Book Club Pick

I Who Have Never Known Men

Demon Copperhead

I'm Glad My Mom Died

Verity

Weyward

Dance with the Devil

Edgedancer

The Wager

Homecoming

Go as a River
Happy Place
Hello Beautiful (Oprah's Book Club)
Happy Place
Yours Truly
Dog Man: Twenty Thousand Fleas Under the Sea: A Graphic Novel (Dog Man #11): From the Creator of Captain Underpants
The Wager
Yours Truly
The Friendship Club
The Only One Left
Meet Me at the Lake
The Seven Year Slip
The Only One Left
Zero Days
Love, Theoretically
Love, Theoretically
The Covenant of Water (Oprah's Book Club)
The Collector
Everyone Here Is Lying
Tom Lake
Happiness
After That Night
Mother-Daughter Murder Night
North Woods
Judgment Prey
Second Act
The Secret
The Secret
Happiness Falls: A GMA Book Club Pick
The Armor of Light
Judgment Prey
Check & Mate
Off to the Races
The Exchange
The Exchange
Long Island Compromise
Stuart Woods' Smolder
The Guest
The Frozen River: A GMA Book Club Pick
The Ball at Versailles
Robert B. Parker's Broken Trust
The Frozen River

Cat Kid Comic Club: Influencers: A Graphic Novel (Cat Kid Comic Club #5): From the Creator of Dog Man
Claudia and the Bad Joke: A Graphic Novel (The Baby-sitters Club #15)
Upside Down
First Lie Wins: Reese's Book Club
The Bright Spot
She's Not Sorry
First Lie Wins
The Summer Book Club
Fangirl Down
Fangirl Down
The Mystery Guest
The Mystery Guest
The Chaos Agent
Three-Inch Teeth
Happily Never After
James
The Truth about the Devlins
How to Solve Your Own Murder
James
Real Americans
How to Solve Your Own Murder
The Husbands: A Read with Jenna Pick
Table for Two
The Demon of Unrest
Toxic Prey
Just for the Summer
Dog Man: The Scarlet Shedder: A Graphic Novel
Lies and Weddings
The Rom-Comers
This Summer Will Be Different
The Life Impossible
The Sunlit Man
Shelterwood
Look on the Bright Side
Good Material: A Read with Jenna Pick
Blood at the Root
Not in Love
No Brainer (Diary of a Wimpy Kid #18)
The Wedding People
Sandwich
Middle of the Night
Resurrection

The Midnight Feast
A Death in Cornwall
The Au Pair Affair
Joy
All the Colors of the Dark: A Read with Jenna Pick
All the Colors of the Dark
By Any Other Name
Tell Me Everything: Oprah's Book Club
Counting Miracles
By Any Other Name
Here One Moment
Here One Moment
Sunrise on the Reaping (A Hunger Games Novel)
Sunrise on the Reaping (A Hunger Games Novel)

Funded by the Minnesota Legislature through the Minnesota Department of Education, Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) is one of seven Minnesota multicounty, multitype library cooperative systems. NLLN is comprised of two hundred eighty academic, public, school, and special libraries in twenty-three counties in North-Central, Northwest, and West-Central Minnesota. NLLN works at the grassroots level to bring together all types of libraries and collections in the region to discover, enhance, and share resources through administrative, technological, and educational support.

Northern Lights Library Network covers a geographic region of 26,950 square miles (Minnesota is comprised of 86,939 square miles), and includes the following twenty-three counties: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin.

The Northern Lights Library Network system consists of four regional public library systems; academic libraries on two campuses of the University of Minnesota at Crookston and Morris; Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System institutions on four campuses, including Minnesota State University Moorhead, Bemidji State University, Northland Community College, Minnesota State Community and Technical College, all located across the region in Moorhead, Bemidji, Thief River Falls, Wadena, and Fergus Falls; numerous private colleges; three tribal colleges, including Leech Lake, Red Lake, and White Earth; the Maamigin Achigaazo Community Library at White Earth; one hundred-eighty-five school libraries in seventy-nine school districts, including public and charter schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and private schools; and a rich variety of special libraries in museums, county law libraries, hospitals, churches, and early childhood programs.

Northern Lights Library Network reduces duplication of services by enhancing coordination among libraries. As resources are shared among libraries, services are expanded, and efficiency

is improved. As a result, libraries offer services or programs they may not otherwise be able to afford.

All of the work performed by Northern Lights Library Network affects the direct service of its members, and has an exponential effect on its client base. Northern Lights Library Network exists to recognize the kinds of library services people need at the local level and to determine the supporting structures required for local library systems to function successfully, taking into account the unique needs of people at the local level and the different types of libraries served.

A primary goal of Northern Lights Library Network is to bring resources from the state and national level to the local level. Another goal is to discover resources within the region and to share them universally.

Northern Lights Library Network is one of seven multi-county, multi-type library systems in Minnesota mandated by Minnesota Statute 134.351 to develop and maintain services including, but not limited to, “referral of users, intra-system reciprocal borrowing, cooperative collection development, cooperative reference services, staff development, research and development, cooperative storage facilities, and publicity and community relations.”

The five goals outlined in Minnesota Statute 134.351 for multi-county, multi-type systems include:

- Sharing Resources Among all Participating Libraries*
- Providing Long-range Planning for Cooperative Programs*
- Developing a Delivery System for Services and Programs*
- Developing a Bibliographic Database*
- Maintaining a Communications System Among all Cooperating Libraries*

The seven multi-county, multi-type systems perform the following functions: Develop library staffs professionally; improve local library collections; sponsor and support funding for libraries; champion libraries; create, develop, and maintain library programs that enrich the lives of Minnesotans; move the discipline of Library and Information Science forward; and lead and administer their own nonprofit agencies. The seven systems are governed by regional boards.

There are twelve regional public library systems in Minnesota that serve public libraries, while the seven multi-type systems serve all types of libraries.