



Moving From a Wish List to an Advisory Group:

I have listened to my students' reading wishes and collected titles my students would like to read from the first days of my career as a teacher-librarian. What began as a list on the wall at my book fair became a little red book I kept on the counter. My recent creation of a school library blog moved the wish list to an on-line format. Linda Longfield's article, "Books for Boys" in *The Teaching Librarian* was bang on! It inspired me to consider inviting boys to an "unveiling" of new books in an attempt to develop infectious engagement. (Longfield, 2010) Ontario's province-wide literacy test (EQAO) scores indicate just 51% of males at my school scored at or above the provincial standard in reading, compared to 64% of females. (EQAO, 2010) Our school literacy goal is to increase provincial test scores in reading by 5%, with a focus on engaging male readers. School library circulation statistics for the five months between September 2010 and January 2011 identify male readership as 30% less than female, and it decreases from grade 6 to grade 8 by 42%. Unsurprisingly, many boys say they don't read or hate to read. Mike McQueen

wrote in his blog that when he questioned boys who say they hate reading, they agree that they don't hate to read comic books, magazines, websites, newspapers, or nonfiction. He continues: "For the stubborn ones, I ask them to tell me about their hobbies, favorite musicians, sports figures, etc. Then I suggest, "What if I told you that I had a book right here all about your favorite topic? Would you still say that you hated to read it?" (McQueen, n.d.) Our library needed an infusion of boy-recommended, boy-selected, boy books.

A passionate plea for support in my attempt to engage our boys was timely, as our principal had decided to focus budget and energy on boys' literacy. My administrator recognized that "access to reading materials in school libraries predicts motivation to read and reading achievement". (Haycock, 2003, p.28) We discussed this need, the selection of books by the boys, and an unveiling. Her idea to book a bus, take the boys to buy the books and add pizza to the lunchtime unveiling enhanced the plan. We created a blog for the boys and linked it to the school library blog, with pages for news, reviews, and a wish list. Informal after-school socialization in the library, combined with an invitation to on-line sharing, and the Boys Book Advisory Team (BBAT) began to generate interest. The idea was rolled out to staff and an e-announcement was produced, inviting interested boys to sign up in the library. BBAT blog address business cards were given to more than forty boys from all three grades who registered.

To help draw the boys in for a selection meeting, I brought in a collection of graphic novels from the Peel District School Board professional library. Using cookies and an afternoon

