



Jeanne Conte

President's Report

Numbers! What a fun theme for this issue of *The Teaching Librarian*. When reduced to semantics, the notion of metrics or performance indicators in the school library sounds pretty dry. That said, we school library folk have a way of taking thematic content and kicking it up a notch or two...or ten if need be.

Of course we all know that applying standards of measurement to book circulation reports, assessing patron access to the library, or tracking database usage is important. This information drives our decisions toward keeping print and digital resources current and relevant to the school communities we serve.

Ministries of education all over the world have been focused on numbers by means of collecting data geared at measuring student success, much of it geared at student acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. Not surprisingly, research continues to show that the combination of access to well-resourced

school libraries with qualified library staff correlates positively with student success. Sadly, these numbers are often ignored by senior administrators who are tasked with balancing budgets.

Recently, People for Education has challenged the direction of the data collected by educational institutions, opting instead to look at criteria in the areas of health, creativity and innovation, social emotional skills, citizenship and quality of learning environments. OSLA council was excited to explore this work for the purpose of making direct links to *Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons: a Vision for the 21st Century*. We are pleased to report that we received a positive response from People for Education, so hopefully school libraries will figure into the equation somehow.

One of my favourite picture books was *1+1=5: and Other Unlikely Additions* by David LaRochelle, illustrated by Brenda Sexton. In the book, LaRochelle

explores number sets that don't add up...or do they? $1 \text{ unicorn} + 1 \text{ goat} = 3 \text{ horns!}$ This book challenges the reader to create equations that go beyond the obvious. Hmm...what might this look like when applied to school library? How about $1 \text{ teacher-librarian} + 1 \text{ classroom teacher} = (30 \text{ students} \div 2) = 15 \text{ students with access to a teaching professional!}$ Or, $1 \text{ class of students} + \text{equitable access to rich print and digital resources} = \text{an infinite number of student inquiry possibilities!}$

And, speaking of infinite possibilities, that's what I think of when contemplating the amazing changes that are happening in school libraries today. The school library learning commons is exactly that: a place of infinite possibilities where learning communities gather to create, innovate and inspire each other. Here's wishing everyone a year filled with #creation, #innovation, and #inspiration. ■

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