



MARCH 2020 ISSUE



# IALAS QUARTERLY

To unify and cultivate educational leaders, serving Latinx communities, for the purpose of empowering all students.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear IALAS family:

When we reflect and take inventory of our current climate, we know that we face both challenges and opportunities. The current conversation in our state and across the nation is centered around equity and diversity. In response, the state of Illinois and institutions of higher education have started a plan to increase the number of teachers and administrators of color.

We as a Latinx organization, have a responsibility to do the same. We are in the process of building a foundation to secure funding for scholarships and have been working hard to enhance our mentoring program. This is a call to action for each and every one of us to take an active role in building the Latinx teacher and administrator pipeline.

Developing a viable pipeline of Latinx educators, we ourselves must commit to build the capacity of others and invest in our future leaders. Participating and presenting at our conferences allows us to expand the knowledge of our peers and those we seek to promote. We are extremely proud of the quality of the content and information that our members have presented at our educational conclaves and state conferences. As a collective, we continue to work for positive change. Let us come together and show the world what we are made of. ¡Sí, se puede!

Rodolfo Hernández



## IN THIS ISSUE

### Rethinking Libraries

02

### Professional Book Nook

03

### Executive Board Openings

04

### Spring Conference Information

04

### Scholarship Opportunities

07



## **RETHINKING OUR SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM LIBRARIES**

**BY ZARETTA HAMMOND (FROM THE RBT MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

**FORWARD BY DAN SWARTZ, IALAS HISTORIAN**

*Each month, Research for Better Teaching sends a monthly newsletter to its partner schools reviewing best practices for instruction and leadership. This past month's was particularly impactful for me to the point that I needed to share it with my IALAS Familia.*

*When we seek to raise the voices others, those that are underrepresented and often unheard, we need to examine ALL of our practices as educators; those large elephants in the room such as discipline data and school policies all the way down to smaller, often forgotten parts of our schools to ensure students can see themselves reflected in the curriculum and environment of the school.*

*Those of you who have sat with me, discussing these ideas, have often heard me say, "Kids need to see themselves in books." It is my battle cry. It's a way of focusing our attention on the little things that can often make the biggest impact. I hope you find the article below as important as I did and that you can take one thing back to your building or district to make a difference in the lives of kids.*

**"When we take a simple "multicultural" approach to diversify our libraries, we add books with more brown faces, but we may still be perpetuating stereotypes."**

February is Black History Month, and schools have a variety of ways that they celebrate. I want to suggest that it is a perfect time to revisit your classroom and school library and decolonize rather than just diversify your book collection. Why? When we take a simple "multicultural" approach to diversify our libraries, we add books with more brown faces, but we may still be perpetuating stereotypes. The multicultural approach doesn't position us to analyze our picture books, chapter books, and non-fiction texts for the subtle negative messages and narratives about families of color or immigrant students and families. (Continued on page 5)

## PROFESSIONAL BOOK NOOK

BY MARIA BURGOS, IALAS SECRETARY

### **The Power of Positive Leadership, by Jon Gordon:**

Positive leadership inspires others and helps create an environment of trust. Jon Gordon's book, *The Power of Positive Leadership* provides a framework to guide organizational change in a positive way. In this book review you will find a glimpse of the content of chapter five. The review outlines the chapter by using direct quotes from the book. At the end of the review you will encounter some questions for reflective thought. I hope you enjoy it!

### ***Impactful Cultivate Quotes:***

#### **There is power in positivity...**

- "Being positive doesn't just make you better; it makes everyone around you better."
- "There isn't a problem that can't be solved".
- "Positive leadership is not about fake positivity. It is the real stuff that makes great leaders great."

#### **...and positive leadership**

- "Positive leaders create and share the vision for the road ahead."
- "They lead with optimism and belief and address and transform the negativity that too often sabotages teams and organizations."
- "It takes a lot of work to create a world-class organization."

Positive Leaders Lead with Optimism, positivity, and Belief The most important characteristic of a leader is optimism.--Bob Iger, CEO of Disney

#### **...because change is not always easy**

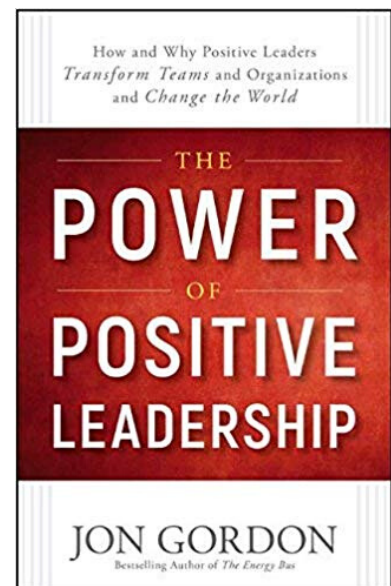
- "Positive leaders know they can't do it alone"
- "There will be days when your vision seems more like a fantasy than a reality."
- "Everyone has a mission statement, but only the great organizations also have people who are on a mission".

#### **...but positive cultures allow change to flourish**

- "Culture is not just one thing. It's everything"
- "Culture starts with the leader living it and inspiring and empowering others to live it as well"
- "Positive leaders drive positive cultures"

#### **....and bring strong teams together.**

- "Culture not only beats strategy, but it also fuels it and drives people and organizations to record growth and performance"
- "When you create a culture worth fighting for and invest in your people to the degree that they want to fight for your culture and for each other, your organization will have the grit and strength to overcome the challenges you have and become an unstoppable and positive force".



# ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE BOARD POSITIONS

Annually, our Executive Board of Directors has a number of positions that come open for election. This year, we have two positions that are up for election including: President and Treasurer. Our vacancies will be open to voting by our membership between March 25th and April 16th, 2020.

Each term runs for three years beginning on July 1st, 2020 through June 30th, 2023. In order to be eligible to be nominated, appointed, or elected to the Board of Directors, an individual must be an active member in good standing for at least one year and reside in or be employed in the service of public Pre-K to 12th school district operating within the state of Illinois. The membership dues for the appointed or elected Board of Directors shall be waived during their role.

We hope that you entertain the idea of becoming one of our Executive Board of Directors Members. This is a great opportunity to help shape the landscape of change for our state in regards to aspiring educational leaders that work towards the promotion of Latino students, teachers, and administrators.

All documents explaining the roles, process, and application can be found on our website,  
[www.ialas.org/executive-board-openings](http://www.ialas.org/executive-board-openings)

## Spring Conference Information BY DAN SWARTZ, IALAS HISTORIAN

The Illinois Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (IALAS) is committed to providing professional development opportunities for its members as well as members of the community-at-large. Our vision and mission statements are geared toward meeting the unique needs of all students, particularly Latino and disenfranchised students.

IALAS is set to host its 5th Annual Statewide Conference. We invite you to submit a REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL to facilitate a breakout session in alignment with our conference theme: Chapter #2 Todos los niños, todos los días, Every Child Every Day. Examples of breakout sessions that would fit into this theme would be topics providing information AND participant discussion on: educational equity, discipline disparities, immigration, English language learning, technology integration, community engagement, gifted program identification or participation, effective instruction and curriculum, educational policies and practices. The 5th Annual IALAS Statewide Conference will take place on:

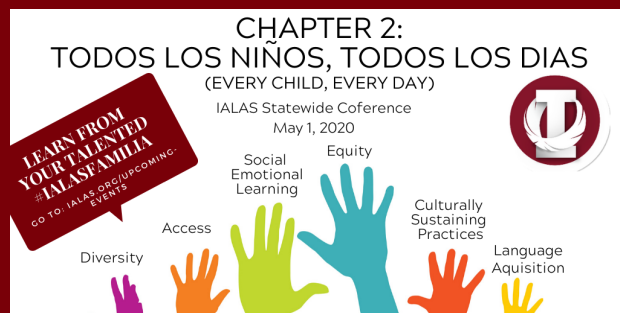
Friday, May 1, 2020

8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Northern Illinois University, Naperville Campus

1120 E. Diehl Road in Naperville, Illinois

We encourage you to share your expertise with your #IALASFamilia by submitting an proposal to speak at this unique confereene. Information can be found at [www.ialas.org/statewide-conference](http://www.ialas.org/statewide-conference). RFPs are due by April 3, 2020.



## RETHINKING LIBRARIES (CONTINUED)

Why does this matter? If we are using books as windows and mirrors, then we need to pay attention to the messages our books give to White students in the majority culture (the windows) so we are not unknowingly perpetuating deficit views of African Americans and other people of color. Currently, we have many mirrors for White children and limited windows for them. What's more, some of the existing windows reflect distorted images of diverse communities. On the other hand, there are not enough mirrors for children of color that are affirming.

In 2015 (and again in 2018), St. Catherine University's Sarah Park Dahlen, associate professor of the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program shared her research in a powerful infographic to highlight that "children's literature continues to misrepresent underrepresented communities." She did the research to disrupt the notion that just adding more brown characters was enough, but that we need to address the inaccuracy and uneven quality of some of those books.

If we are using books as windows and mirrors, then we need to pay attention to the messages our books give to White students in the majority culture (the windows) so we are not unknowingly perpetuating deficit views of African Americans and other people of color.

"Courageous conversations about race will not remedy inequity by design, nor will multi-cultural education or positive interactions across difference by themselves.

Our students also need high-quality cognitive instruction, productive struggle, and strong competence that gets them to believe in themselves."

-Zaretta Hammond

For example, too many of the so-called "diverse" books featuring African Americans have limited themes. Most often they are about buses, boycotts, or basketball. They are storylines that are often about the challenges of "urban or inner-city" living. Or those books center around a "Black Lives Matter" social justice theme, depicting African Americans during slavery or the civil rights era, focusing on "heroes and holidays". Lastly, a common stereotypical theme is Black kids and sports as a way to increase reading engagement, especially among boys. These types of books are not wrong to include, but you don't want them to be the majority of what is in your collection. Because, in reality, Black life is diverse. The Black experience is diverse. Our classroom libraries should reflect that reality too.

So, this month we have the opportunity to move toward being more culturally responsive, and "decolonize" the narratives in our collection. To help, here are a few questions you can use as a protocol to assess whether a book is worthy to be added to your collection (or needs to be removed):

1. Does the book go beyond typical themes about characters of color? Avoid caricatures that reinforce stereotypes like "the hoopster" or "the fatherless son". Dr. Alfred Tatum, author of *Reading for Their Life: (Re)Building the Textual Lineages of African American Adolescent Males*, says we should ensure that texts offer counter-narratives that show students of color as problem solvers, especially boys, and storylines that challenge the "victim mentality". Check the storyline in addition to the images. Are there children of color doing everyday things? Too often dominant racial narratives about who's the smart kid in the book don't include children of color.

(Continued on next page)

## RETHINKING LIBRARIES (CONTINUED)

2. Do the children of color look “authentic”? Meaning, do they have varied shades of brown skin and textured hair and are not just white features painted brown. Check that other visuals are not reinforcing dominant narratives or deficit views.

3. Are the texts , especially fictional stories “enabling” ? Dr. Tatum talks about ensuring texts are “enabling” rather than disabling to students. An enabling narrative recognizes, honors, and nurtures diverse students’ multiple identities: academic/intellectual, cultural/racial, and personal/social. It shows these identities as integrated in a matter of fact way and as common rather than having the high achieving child of color be the exception or characterized as a “nerd” or oddball.

These three questions will help you expand the notion of “mirrors and windows” in ways that are more affirming for African American students as well as expand White students’ exposure to the everydayness of Black life in America and around the world.

Best,  
Zaretta Hammond

## WINTER GALA REVIEW



The Fourth Annual IALAS Winter Educational Gala took place at the Chicago Marriott in Oak Brook, Illinois on February 1, 2020. We had a great turnout! The event was attended by various representatives from school districts and there were opportunities for membership to network with other individuals that value diversity, access, social emotional learning, equity, and culturally sustaining practices. Dr. Jeremy Burnham, Director of Bilingual and EL Dept. of Proviso Township High Schools District 209 was awarded the IALAS Spotlight Leader award for all of his continuous contributions to education. We enjoyed dinner and dancing to live music, Impacto Borricua. Through the raffles and auctions we were able to raise \$1,322 for our Wings to Success-extiende tus alas al éxito Scholarship. Thank you for your continuous collaboration and support! We would like to give a special thanks to our sponsors: Grand Canyon University, Illuminate Education, Swing Education, ACHIEVE 3000, IXL Learning, Curriculum Associates, Imagine Learning, STMath, and KneoWorld. We look forward to seeing you at next year's event!

# SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Please see the attachments, which accompany this newsletter, for a variety of exciting scholarship opportunities. IALAS is so proud to have partnered with Grand Canyon University. As part of that sponsorship, we have been provided the means by which to offer to our current members a one-time scholarship in the amount of \$2,500.00. This scholarship must be used toward online coursework at GCU.

Additionally, it is the goal of the IALAS Scholarship Program to support our vision of unifying and cultivating Latino educational leaders for the purpose of empowering and inspiring all students. It is for this reason that IALAS remains committed to the Wings to Success Scholarship opportunity. These scholarships will be awarded to both undergraduate and graduate applicants to be used toward their current degrees of study in the field of education. Students selected as IALAS - Wings to success; extiende tus Alas al éxito must be bilingual or bilingual majors in the field of education.

The deadline to apply for both scholarship opportunities is Friday, April 3, 2020. Please note that the GCU Scholarship is only available to existing members of our State Affiliate, but the Wings to Success Scholarship is available to all. All scholarship winners must register & attend our 5th Annual Conference on Friday, May 1, 2020.



## Connect with IALAS

P.O. Box 817

Oswego, IL 60543

Web: [www.ialas.org](http://www.ialas.org)

Email: [rhernandez@ialas.org](mailto:rhernandez@ialas.org)

Twitter: @IllinoisALAS

Instagram: @IllinoisALAS



## IALAS EDUCATIONAL CONCLAVE RECAP MARY KASIR, IALAS VICE PRESIDENT

On Saturday, February 1, 2020, IALAS hosted our annual conclave, which featured panelists and presenters from across the state. This year's theme was: Every Child, Every Day (Todos los niños, todos los días). Our presenters took our theme to heart demonstrating the countless ways that our educational communities are embracing our children, their language, and their culture. Presentations ranged from Improving Equity through Transformational Leadership to Seeking Educational Reform, which also requires us to meet our families and communities where they are in order to respond with cultural sensitivity and urgency. The role of the leader was a resonating theme, which pointed to the success of various programs in learning institutions across the state, including but not limited to: Cicero District 99, Elgin Math & Science Academy, Maywood District 89, and Northern Illinois University. And while your role as leaders in these prestigious academies is paramount, perhaps it would be worthwhile to

consider the perspective of Dr. Jeremy Burnham, Spotlight Leader. Our successes are only a result, in part, of leadership, but instead a shared beliefship among our staff, students, communities, and families. May we continue to provide all stakeholders a reason to believe, and may we continue to rely on one another in a collective effort to serve each student, each and every day.

### TODOS LOS NIÑOS, TODOS LOS DIAS (EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY)

IALAS Winter Educational Research Conclave  
February 1, 2020



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

May 1, 2020: IALAS Statewide Conference, ISU Naperville Campus

