



In Celebration of Manitoba's School Libraries

The Honourable Peter Bjornson, Minister of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth declared 23 October as Manitoba School Library Day for all 700 schools across the province. In addition, he, among other government officials, participates in reading and discussion programs in several schools during the day.

However, the highlight for most teacher-librarians and educators was the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Instructional Resources Unit (IRU) of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Under the guidance of Myrtle Taylor Lewis, the first Departmental Librarian appointed in 1920, this library grew from a single room in the Legislative Building to house the largest collection of education resources in the province.

The IRU's multi-faceted mandate is to provide a foundation for student learning through the provision of resource and services that support curriculum implementation, educational research and professional learning.

The activities of the IRU focus on educational outcomes: improvement in teaching practices and student learning; the increased use of research and practice to improve decision-making in the classroom and in educational administration; and an emphasis on resource-based learning as an educational model in schools.

As we celebrated these milestones, the Minister spoke about the importance of school libraries and their impact on student achievement. John Tooth, Coordinator of IRU, noted that the decisive aspect of student achievement occurred through the development of new-century literacy skills. Students developing information literacy, through a process of inquiry, planning and questioning, gather and making sense, producing to show understanding, communicating, and reflection on their learning, was a key focus of the exhibits at the reception that was held for approximately 100 people at the afternoon celebration.

An outstanding PowerPoint was presented showing the history of the IRU (1916-2006) and the people who have contributed to its growth and development over the years. Other exhibits showed landmarks in the development of resource management and school library development in the province.

To learn more about the IRU, consider checking out the website at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/iru/index.html>

Heartiest congratulations to the staff at IRU, and to the Minister for marking both ISLD and the 90th anniversary. We wish them continued success in school library and information services development across the province and across all the curricula.

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