



7:30–8:00am
Registration Opens

8:00am
Welcome Address

8:15–9:45am

All Together Now: Art with Mike Duffy

This year's conference will kick off with a hands-on art session led by Mike Duffy. Mike's workshops inspire creativity through fun, accessible projects that teachers and librarians can easily bring back to their classrooms and libraries. He uses recycled materials, inexpensive art supplies, and found objects in his work, and often incorporates elements of pop culture to keep projects engaging and relevant for students.

9:45–10:00am
Break

10:00–10:50am

Keynote Address

Weaving Worlds Together with Elizabeth Zunon

Elizabeth Zunon brings both real and imagined stories to life on the page through her work as an illustrator and author. In her keynote, Elizabeth will share the many ways readers, writers, and illustrators can connect themselves to a story, make it their own, and give it new life and personal meaning. Participants will explore how personal experiences, perspectives, and imagination can shape storytelling and inspire deeper connections with books and art.

10:50–11:00am
Break

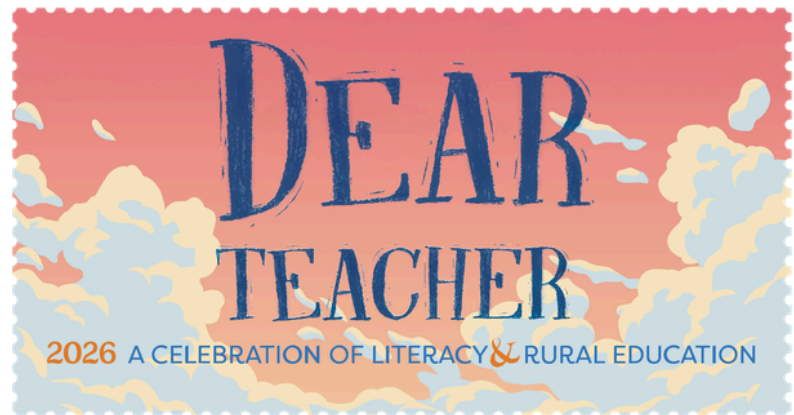
11:00–12:15
Session 1 Workshops

Reflecting the World in Short Poems, with Holly Thompson

Short poems reflect our changing world. This writing workshop for K–12 educators and librarians introduces Japanese short-form poetry, including its origins, related forms, and continued relevance today.

Designed to make short-form poetry approachable without oversimplifying it, the workshop engages participants in quick, hands-on writing exercises—both solo and collaborative—while exploring the versatility of the three-line poem and related forms such as haiku, senryu, tanka, haibun, and renbun.

Participants will also discuss classroom applications and share ideas for collaborative possibilities and community outreach project ideas.



Centering Youth, Schools and Community: Vision & Strategy with Val Peacock

Connecting curriculum and students to community is becoming more important—and more challenging—than ever. In this workshop, Val will take some time to develop a vision for deeper connections and participants will learn how to maximize their outcomes while minimizing their constraints. Expect to leave this workshop with a personal vision, a strategic map to create connections, planning tools, concrete examples and inspiration to help students develop deeper connections to themselves and their place.

Place-Based Writing as a Literacy Tool with Josephine Cameron

This workshop offers practical tools to jumpstart all levels of writing and pre-writing literacy projects—starting with each participant’s intimate knowledge of a favorite place. A 2020 study published in Reading Psychology found that prior knowledge is “foundational to increasing competency in reading.” As research continues to show how the brain processes and makes sense of information, the importance of background knowledge in literacy and reading comprehension is becoming increasingly clear. Author and educator Josie will lead a hands-on exploration of background knowledge and idea-generation tools that will help students of all ages engage with reading and writing.

***Networking Session: Novel-Based Learning for Middle Grades led by Martina Wallace**

Our networking sessions are lightly-led, themed conversations. About Martina: Martina Wallace has been teaching for 10 years, and holds an EdS in Reading & Literacy Assessment. She reads between 150–250 books a year! Martina is currently teaching through novel-based learning in ELA.

**Our networking sessions are lightly-led, themed conversations.*

12:15–1:00pm

Lunch

1:00–2:15pm

Session 2 Workshops

Reflecting the World in Short Poems with Holly Thompson

Centering Youth, Schools and Community: Vision & Strategy with Val Peacock

Comics in the Classroom with Marek Bennett

Join teaching artist Marek Bennett for a hands-on professional development workshop for educators. With over 20 years of experience in comics and teaching, Marek will share practical, classroom-ready approaches to comics and cartooning. Participants will explore basic cartooning techniques, sample classroom projects and templates, and the power of graphic literacy and visual storytelling. The workshop also includes ideas for lesson and unit planning to support ongoing student creativity and self-publishing. Discover what’s possible in your classroom, and surprise yourself with what you can create, too!

***Networking Session: A Moment for Mindfulness with Ashley McLean**

About Ashley: Ashley is the Circulation Manager at the Southwest Harbor Public Library in Southwest Harbor, ME. Prior to beginning at the library, Ashley was a Montessori educator for 12 years. During her time as a teacher, Ashley found that she had a passion for bringing mindfulness into the classroom. She has presented about mindfulness, as well as other subjects, at conferences in Massachusetts and Texas. When Ashley is not at the library, she is reading, writing, crafting, out hiking, or spending time with her family.

**Our networking sessions are lightly-led, themed conversations.*

2:15–2:30pm

Break

2:30–3:45pm

Session 3 Workshops

Reflecting the World in Short Poems with Holly Thompson

Place-Based Writing as a Literacy Tool with Josephine Cameron

Comics in the Classroom with Marek Bennett

***Networking Session: Strategies for Storytime, led by Celine Martin**

About Celine: Celine is IRW's Literacy Coordinator. Before coming to IRW, she was an educator for 30 years in Washington and Hancock County, teaching many young learners how to read. Literacy and sharing the love of learning is her passion and she is excited to continue that at IRW.

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