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From the Editor's Desk

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From the Editors' Desks

BY PAT GALLANT & MARY JO FINNEY

Dear Readers,

Do you remember what it was like to be a child anticipating the first day of school each fall? After all, that magical day held answers to our ponderings and speculations: "Who will my teacher(s) be?" "Will they be nice?" "Will I make new friends?" "Will the school work be too hard for me?" "How will I fit in?" For some of us, the beginning of a new school year also brought resolutions: "I will listen better." "I will make new friends." "I will study harder." "I will get better grades." "I will make the basketball team." Although it has been many years for most of us, we may still remember both the optimism and the anxiety.

In the lives of teachers, this time of promise and renewal returns when fall approaches. We wonder, "How many students will I have?" "Will we get along?" "Am I ready?" "Who will my colleagues be?" We make promises to our selves such as, "This year, I will be better organized, try some innovative teaching ideas, be more patient, and have the best writing workshop ever in my classroom."

The truth is that our New-School-Year promises can be as hard to keep as our New Year's resolutions to eat healthier, exercise, and lose weight. Pressure from public test scores, time crunches, large class size, student challenges, parental expectations, administrative policies, colleague interactions, and various other factors can wear down even the most optimistic and inspired teacher. How can we nurture and extend our first-day-of-school optimism?

Keep learning. Try new ideas. Connect with other professionals who also love children, teaching, and learning. The possibilities are limitless: Organize a book discussion group with your colleagues. Work together to plan and deliver curriculum that is integrated and motivating for your students. Take a class. Attend a conference or a workshop. Join a professional organization. Read professional literature. Read children's literature.



PAT



MARY JO

Because you are reading *The Michigan Reading Journal*, you have already taken a step in the right direction. Share it with a colleague. Consider the perspectives in each of the articles. Check out the reviews of children's and young adult literature to find out which ones you might use in your classroom. Peruse the professional book reviews for a book about teaching writing that interests you. Register for the MRA conference. Reflect on the power of language throughout our special Hurricane Katrina section commemorating a tragic event that touched our lives and our classrooms in ways we could not have anticipated. The authors poignantly remind us of the courage and resilience that it takes for the teachers and children in New Orleans to start anew.

As the trees transform their color into the vivid hues of fall and as we begin a new school year, feel the sense of hope and appreciate the new beginning. Fall is a time for renewal, change, and transition. Let's keep that energy alive!

Pat

Mary Jo

P.S. How do you renew your energy to teach? Please write to us about your ideas for renewal, and we will share them with readers in our winter issue.

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We welcome Joe Lubig, Suzanne Standerford, and Sue Szczepanski as new editors of the Professional Books of Interest column. They will bring us rich reviews from the upper peninsula of our state.