

Spotlight on Books, April 3-4

"Keep Them Reading", by John Coy was the first 2009 Spotlight on Books session. While working in schools, John has surveyed boys' attitudes toward reading. According to his surveys, and additional research, John, and others, concluded there is a gender gap in reading. The following are some statistics John shared. Boys are doing about the same academically as they did thirty years ago, but girls have accelerated. Fourth grade girls have higher reading scores than fourth grade boys. Eighty percent of high school dropouts are boys. The majority of African- Americans who begin high school in this country do not graduate and the majority of dropouts spend some time in prison. Consequently, lack of reading skills is very costly to our society.

John suggests schools do the following:

1. Purchase reading materials that reflect the genuine interests of boys
2. Incorporate movement into the classroom
3. Bring in men and boys as role models
4. Allow self-selection of independent reading materials
5. Get men involved in this issue
 - a. Do events specifically for dads
 - b. Link to "Guys Read" website
 - c. Make reading posters featuring real men
 - d. Book talk non-fiction
 - e. Engage older boys and men as reading coaches

Thank you to NLLN for the opportunity to attend Spotlight on Books. I thoroughly enjoyed the author sessions, previewing and purchasing books, and networking with colleagues. I came home with many autographed books, numerous titles to purchase for my library and ideas to implement.

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