



Nominee: *Ciro Scardina*
P.S. 18--The John G. Whittier School
Staten Island, New York

Nominator: *Donna Desantis*

1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award. What sets him/her apart?

Mr. Scardina has been at our school for three short years, but he has managed to be transformative on several different levels. I have seen many administrations come and go. We have had quite a few librarians in that time but no other librarian has created the feeling of community that *Ciro* has managed to cultivate. At P.S. 18, the library is the heart of the school. All circuits in the school lead to the library and Mr. Scardina has created the warmest, most pleasant environment for our students, faculty, and parents. *Ciro's* willingness to serve the entire school community immediately set him apart from any librarian or teacher I have met in my 25 year career at P.S. 18. His zest and love for his job is enviable and completely apparent. He brings an infectious vitality and vibrancy to P.S. 18 with his out of the box thinking and his uncanny way of getting a point across on even the most obtuse topics.

I am sure that when you complete reading this nomination, you too will think that *Ciro Scardina* is an amazing person. This is why I Love my Librarian. I think you will, too.

2. How has the nominee helped you and/or students at school? For example, did the nominee help you with a project, recommend resources or collaborate with you to enhance student learning?

I am a UFT Teacher Center Trainer. My job here at P.S. 18 is that of staff developer and it is a truly wonderful job. Most of my planning work is done in isolation, but I have been collaborating with *Ciro* the past few years and he has made my job more enjoyable. Having been a fourth grade teacher for 9 years prior to becoming a librarian, Mr. Scardina is a very knowledgeable and capable when it comes to administering and analyzing running records. He is also one of the more knowledgeable teachers on the staff when it comes to Common Core Standards. He is indispensable in choosing a picture book to highlight a specific reading strategy as well as deciphering text complexity, range and quality.

Mr. Scardina is a deep thinker and a practitioner of Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge. I call on Ciro often to create stimulating and thought-provoking questions to deepen their understanding and comprehension. The way he engages students in conversation and discussion techniques is a wonder to see. He provides students with the proper support and a gradual release of responsibility so that their ideas are truly their own. We might have to start with lower level questioning, but most classes are asking and answering higher order thinking questions by year's end.

A few summers ago, Ciro and I worked together for READ Alliance to remediate struggling students in grades K and 1 using predictable phonics-based texts. The program is canned and he and I worked together to present literacy lessons aligned with arts lessons to highlight the book's topic. Our students showed 2-3 level gains by the end of the 5 week period. Working on art as hobby, Mr. Scardina is able to seamlessly integrate literature with arts lessons and demonstrate arts concepts to make them more palatable by the students.

Working with Ciro Scardina these past few years has been a lovely experience. He and I get along very well and I feel he is a real kindred spirit. Since most of the work I do is teacher-centered, Mr. Scardina's assistance has a vicarious effect on the students. I feel that our students have benefitted from Mr. Scardina's input, modeling, coplanning, coteaching, and debriefing sessions for their teachers. Through their teachers' success in instruction, students are getting a lot more out of their lessons and it shows in many different ways.

3. How does the nominee make the school a better place? Please be specific

Since joining our staff in 2011, Mr. Scardina has made many changes in the school library which have altered the school community most favorably. Some changes have been cosmetic while others reach much deeper levels.

Always the consummate researcher, Ciro came across an announcement for a grant offered by Target and Heart of America. The grant allowed a needy library to have a full redesign, complete with new books, furniture, and everything a 21st century library needs. I sit on the Library Advisory Board, and assisted Ciro with ideas for and the writing of this grant. We saw the whole process through together from the beginning and we were overjoyed to hear we had made the final cut to three schools. After a day of interviews and walk-throughs of all schools, the final decision was made. A phone call came through at 3:30...the exact time we were told we would get the call. P.S. 18 was not the winner.

At about 3:40, Ciro picked up the phone and called the librarian of the winning school. He was genuinely happy that she won. He knew that the winning school did not have a library to speak of and this grant would allow them to create one. His grace and aplomb, evident in this instance are commendable.

A year later, Ciro's dream came full circle. Target and Heart of America, armed with

another grant, approached Mr. Scardina and offered to put his grant proposal back on the table, back in the top three. Another round of interviews. Another day of waiting. Once again, just when expected, the call came through. P.S. 18 won!

Mr. Scardina was in constant contact with the Program Manager from start to finish. He assisted on architectural layout, design and colors and furniture choice. He was extremely hands-on throughout the entire process. He even documented the library's progress on Twitter, garnering likes and favorites from Target and Heart of America. The renovation was major and massive. The entire process took over a year, and on November 4, 2014, a beautiful library was born! She is 2,000 square feet, bright and accommodating. Everyone loves her.

In addition to the renovation, the library increased its collection with 3,000 new books. Every child in the school went home with 7 books to begin their own home library, and some great swag from Target. Former NYC Chancellor Walcott made a speech, it was covered by print and television media, and was celebrated by every member of the school with a huge kickoff party sponsored by Target.

The changes that the grant made to the look of the library are obvious, but the secondary portion of this grant was nearest and dearest to Mr. Scardina's heart. Although not written into the original grant agreement, Mr. Scardina fought hard to form a partnership with the Food Bank of New York. Working in a high poverty school surrounded on all sides by public housing developments, hunger is a perennial issue at P.S. 18. His desire to nourish their bodies as well as their minds paid off. Thanks to Mr. Scardina, the last Friday of each month is Target Food Distribution Day. Every child in the school is eligible to receive 22 pounds of food. This includes fresh produce and dairy products. The gym is set up grocery-style, with their choices for them to choose independently. If a family has two children at P.S. 18, they receive 44 pounds, and so on.

The P.S. 18 food bank is a boon to our community. No matter the weather, the line wraps around the block on the last Friday of the month. Mr. Scardina volunteers at each food distribution to interact with the families and get to know the parents of his students. He uses his limited Spanish wonderfully to reach every parent, whether it is totally correct or not! He has recruited many of his colleagues to volunteer, as well. He has created a feeling of stewardship among his colleagues that is admirable.

A multi-faceted librarian, Mr. Scardina calls upon his vocal talents to motivate students to read fiction. With the push toward the common core and the prevalence of the nonfiction genre, Mr. Scardina noticed that interest in fiction was waning. He decided to merge his love of the read aloud with his fascination with old-time radio shows. The product is a collection of podcasts that he produced for the books *Coraline* by Neil as well as *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* and *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo. He recorded the narration, provided the character voices, and added sound effects, and audio tracks. He edited the podcasts on GarageBand and published them on iTunes.

Through Ciro's talents as a writer, orator, and technophile, P.S. 18 is a much better place.

4. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and the learning process?

The newly renovated library is an amazing place to read and learn. Not only is it a beautiful space, but has been outfitted with some wonderful technology. Mr. Scardina is a fan of gadgets that support learning. Using grant funds, he purchased a Promethean Board, AppleTV, 30 iPads, and a student response system. He puts all this technology to fantastic use.

In the vein of technology, Mr. Scardina introduced the school to Libguides two years ago. I cannot say how positive the response has been. The Libguide acts as the library homepage and contains links to the amazing units of study that Ciro designs on the site (<http://ps18lmc.libguides.com/home>). When our school transitioned to ReadyGen, Mr. Scardina was ready with his first Libguide, Charlotte's Web by E.B. White. His literary guides are packed with information that is highly useful and trustworthy. In the upper grades, Mr. Scardina packs his Libguides with support for tough texts like the Tarantula Scientist by Sy Montgomery and Hiawatha by Longfellow. His work on his Libguides is appreciated by students and teachers, alike.

Ciro has a limited schedule so that he is able to make appointments with teachers for advanced study in the library, but one grade that he is sure to stop everything for is pre-kindergarten. You would never know that P.S. 18 is Mr. Scardina's first foray into educating children of this age. His creativity and spirited delivery have been captivating our youngest readers since Mr. Scardina's arrival at P.S. 18 in 2011. Ciro sees the library as a necessary stepping stone to future literacy, and teaches cultural and academic vocabulary. Our students come from poverty and the number of meaningful words heard per hour is severely low. Because of this, Mr. Scardina scaffolds all of his read alouds with a focus on vocabulary. Understanding their inclination toward kinesthetic learning, Ciro is literally all over the room keeping their attention through library songs and puppets; sometimes with one on each hand. He has a special place in his heart for puppets, having been raised on Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood and Sesame Street. His focus on vocabulary and nursery rhymes prepare these youngsters for the rigors of kindergarten in a way that is entertaining and memorable.

Mr. Scardina was nominated in 2014 for a Library Journal Movers & Shakers award. We as a staff were overjoyed for Ciro when he found out that he won! He was awarded a prize for his advocacy of the P.S. 18 Library. Library Journal said that he had a "...flair for funding." The link to view this article can be seen here:

<http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2014/03/people/movers-shakers-2014/ciro-scardina-movers-shakers-2014-advocates/> No one deserved that award more than Ciro. He even went to Las Vegas in June 2014 to attend the ALA National Conference and accept his award. I notice a positive change in Ciro since attending ALA. He is even more effective and amazing with these new skills under his belt.

I know I have mentioned Mr. Scardina's affinity for technology previously in this narrative. He creates awe-inspiring interactive lessons that employ several modalities of delivery but the one that kids love the most is his use of technology. A serious fan of educational apps, Mr. Scardina is always on the cutting edge with his use of apps in the classroom. He is always school his colleagues on practical uses for new and unusual apps. Recently, he created a PowToon (a mashup of a PowerPoint Presentation and a cartoon) to highlight his rules for the library (<http://www.powtoon.com/show/dgTHsZazPiM/library-rules/>). It is very exciting for students to get excited when a hum drum lesson takes on a different life. The level of involvement that his use of technology creates is something very impressive.

Mr. Scardina knows the name of every child in the school. I understand this might not seem like a big deal, but it has an amazing effect on students' morale and self-esteem. There are about 680 kids in the school and he might not see every student every week. I do not know how he does it, but he knows first and last names as well as siblings (who many times have different last names). Our students are emotionally needy and Mr. Scardina fills a void in each of them. He seems to know exactly what they need and they are more than willing to take it.

5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the school community?

As soon as Mr. Scardina arrived at P.S. 18, it was obvious that he would be an instructional leader. He carries himself with confidence and he is authoritative without being overbearing or bossy. He has facilitated several professional development activities per the school principal. His PD sessions are library centric, even if they are not library based. He has been instrumental in providing staff with development in areas that they are lacking. Some examples of his PDs are: An Introduction to Outlook, Creating Digital Portfolios, and Searching NovelNY Databases. Every PD he leads is timely and carries great value.

Because of his prowess as a presenter, Mr. Rodriguez, the school principal placed Mr. Scardina as moderator of a faculty book club. Close to 100% of our students come from poverty while close to 100% of our faculty are middle class. To even up the playing field, Mr. Scardina this year introduced P.S. 18 faculty to our first professional book club. We are reading *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* by Ruby Payne. Bringing technology into the equation, Mr. Scardina created an Edmodo group for a virtual presence of the bookclub. He posts questions and ancillary articles for the staff to comment on in a style similar to FaceBook. It is his hope that understanding where our kids are coming from will leverage the differences in our social classes and make our population easier to understand as students in an academic world. Every faculty member that takes part in this book club enjoys the work immensely. It is really giving them a chance to get a view into the heads and hearts of these kids.

No librarian that we have ever had has instituted a Library Advisory Board (LAB), but 2012 was our inaugural year. I sit on the LAB and we convene about 4 times a year to discuss timely topics to the library and ways that the library could support school initiatives. The school administration has been so impressed by Mr. Scardina's desire to

include them as well as faculty in decisions that he makes for the library. Ciro is a wonderful leader for the entire school community.

Rounding out Mr. Scardina's school leadership, he is the chairperson of our yearly Literacy Night. Last year, the theme of Lit Night was mysteries. The name of the event was "Who read it?" We highlighted the work of Chris Van Allsburg and had many activities that centered on works of mystery. There were read alouds and a light dinner provided for all participants. The night was a huge success with over 100 people in attendance. The 2015 Literacy Night has the theme of the Academy Awards with books receiving "Oscars." Mr. Scardina chairs the team for Lit Night, but also sits on the committees for Math Night, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Black History Month. He offers a literacy component for all events whether he is on the committee, chairing, or just an attendee.

No matter what Mr. Scardina attempts, he is a professional. He puts in 100% effort for everything he approaches. From working closely with Ciro, I know that half-way work will not cut it. His colleagues respect him because he has a way of talking to them, not at them. It is his style of leadership that make him such an indispensable faculty member.