



NEWSSTAND

BACK-TO-SCHOOL EDITION

THE OCCASIONAL PUBLICATION FOR PERSISTENT EDUCATION FRIENDS

LITERACY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL ISBE Hosts Six Literacy Plan Listening Sessions

Thanks to Sen. Lightford, Rep. Mayfield, Rep. Faver Dias, and numerous co-sponsors, a new law will require the State Board of Education (ISBE) to create a comprehensive literacy plan for the State. ISBE wasted no time! The agency has dispatched a skillful team to shepherd the plan through its many stages of public comment: from a writing team to put together “drafty” draft of a plan, to six listening sessions around the state, to focus groups for professionals and organizations with expertise in particular areas of literacy. And that’s just the start!

The final listening session concluded on August 4. Stand for Children has been convening a growing group of passionate parents and educators called the Illinois Early Literacy Coalition. Coalition members attended each of the sessions – Springfield, Chicago, Rockford, Mt. Vernon, and two virtual sessions. Some of [our main asks](#) were:

- ▶ Create specific, measurable, attainable goals and a roadmap to achieve those milestones.
- ▶ Be clear about why certain popular literacy buzzwords, like “science of reading” and “balanced literacy,” are avoided.
- ▶ Improve the definition of “literacy” to include reading.
- ▶ Include an easy-to-understand resource that lists examples of evidence-based practices and common literacy instructional practices that are *not* evidence-based.

The listening sessions were uplifting and demonstrated the public’s interest in improving literacy instruction and outcomes. Teachers from dozens of school districts were represented, with many voicing their expertise in specific areas, such as dual language and special education. A few themes came through loud and clear:

- ▶ We do a lot of implementation, but need to do more “de-implementation.” (That is, we need to get rid of the literacy instructional practices that have been debunked by research, rather than continuing to add more and more to an already-full school day and teacher workload.)
- ▶ Foundational skills are really critical....
- ▶ But foundational skills are not enough! We need to have high expectations for our students, expose them to lots of types of text and content-area reading, and use culturally-affirming resources.
- ▶ Oracy matters—and not just for English learners, but for all of our students.

Stand appreciates the sincere outreach efforts ISBE is investing in this plan, and we are excited to continue following the progress. Sign up to join the Coalition at ILEarlyLiteracy.org.

ISBE’S OUTREACH PLAN



CICERO BRINGS TOGETHER DOZENS OF LITERACY-FOCUSED DISTRICTS

Cicero School District 99 has 74% of low-income students and a funding percentage of just 70%. Most of the districts’ 9,228 students are English learners. But in this under-resourced suburban district, big things are happening with literacy!

Cicero invited school districts across the State to join them in July as they hosted a day-long retreat with four national literacy experts. Educators and administrators from sixty-five districts took them up on their offer and the 300 free tickets were quickly sold out. Cicero captured feedback from attendees on their [podcast](#) and two of the featured speakers will reprise their main themes for you here:



DR. CLAUDE GOLDENBERG
Professor Emeritus at
Stanford University Department of Education

- Q:** Give us a quick overview of your Cicero presentation.
- CG:** English Learners (ELs) in the US are either in bilingual or English-medium programs. Bilingual programs offer the possibility of bilingualism and biliteracy, yet most ELs are offered only English instruction. They therefore must learn to read (and write) in a language they are simultaneously learning to speak and understand. Becoming literate in a language you are simultaneously learning is more challenging for students and teachers, but it is actually very similar to learning to read in a language you already know. The basic difference is that learning to read in a new language requires additional instructional support so that students understand the words they are being taught to read and become familiar with the sounds of the language they are learning. The same “circuitry” must be constructed in the brain so that students can connect the sounds in words to the letters representing those sounds, then to the meanings of the words. Effective reading instruction for students who already know English is the foundation of effective reading instruction for students learning to read English as they learn it. But the additional support is critical so that English learners can construct the sound-symbol-meaning brain circuitry that makes literacy possible.
- Q:** What is Cicero doing well with literacy instruction?
- CG:** There is a concerted effort for all Cicero staff—admins and teachers—to understand and be able to apply the most relevant research on enhancing literacy development for all students. Getting good materials and effective professional development (PD) in the hands and heads of teachers is of course essential. Cicero is also going for deep understanding of the knowledge base and the issues we need to work through if schools are to make progress in how teachers teach and for students to make sustained gains in their literacy achievement.
- Q:** IL is currently drafting a state literacy plan. What are your recommendations for a state literacy plan and/or legislation?
- CG:** State literacy plans/legislation should address policies in at least 6 areas:
1. *Literacy curricula and instruction in preK-12 that explicitly and systematically addresses (a) foundational literacy skills essential for word recognition and spelling and (b) language development, cognitive skills, and knowledge essential for reading comprehension and written composition;*

2. *Pre- and in-service education for teachers* that supports conceptual understanding and successful classroom implementation of the literacy curriculum;
3. *Screening, assessment, and assistance/intervention* within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework for students falling behind grade- or age-level expectations;
4. *Equitable support for all students* with diverse strengths and needs, e.g., students with dyslexia or other reading difficulties; English learners/Emergent bilinguals who might be better served in a bilingual program

- but are in English-medium instruction; speakers of social dialects, e.g., African American English or Chicano English; students who would benefit from significantly higher levels of challenge than their peers;
5. *Administrative support and accountability* for bringing together the school and district elements required for successful program implementation; and
 6. *Home, family, and community connections* that take into account students' lived experiences outside of school and build on available resources and assets.



DR. MITCHELL BROOKINS, PhD
Educational Consultant,
Former CPS Teacher And Administrator

Q: Share a brief overview of your Cicero presentation.

MB: School improvement hinges on teacher performance and effective leadership. Effective literacy leaders leverage student data and research on evidence-based practice to guide them as they create instructional initiatives. In this session, I shared my leadership journey, high-impact instructional routines, and effective systems and structures that leaders can employ to advance teacher performance and student learning.

Q: What do you wish you had known about literacy early in your teaching career?

MB: I wish I had known that there is a clear path to supporting students in learning how to read. I was under the impression that it would be through rich literature, discussion, etc., that a child would naturally develop into proficiency. When my struggling readers didn't grow, I assumed it was just a reality I had to accept. I didn't know how to address it, but now, had I known, I could've followed a scope & sequence to

engage students in word-building, encoding, fluency practice...I would've been a force to be reckoned with, and so would have the kids I failed.

Q: IL is currently drafting a state literacy plan. What are the top three things you would advise as we undertake this challenge?

MB: As Illinois undertakes the task to ensure all children get access to this civil right, I'd first start with identifying assessment tools to screen, diagnose, and monitor students' instructional needs. A part of evidence-based instruction is following the evidence that shows where children need support and acceleration. Next, I would select a curricular resource that's simple for teachers to internalize and implement. If a teacher needs years to learn how to implement effectively, something is direly wrong. Finally, teachers and leaders will need ongoing coaching support. Drive-by PD serves no one. We all know that expertise is built over time, so we must invest in long-term professional development to shift mindsets, beliefs, and practices.

whether instruction was provided for specific student populations, including bilingual and bidialectal students and struggling readers.

This report resonated with many Illinois educators, who put together a petition asking the State Board of Education (ISBE) to hold educator preparation programs accountable. ISBE re-authorizes these programs and has a set of literacy standards for elementary teachers that are broadly recognized as high-quality. Nine educators testified at ISBE's June meeting echoing this theme. At August's ISBE meeting, another six testified and presented a petition with 614 signatures of Illinoisans asking the agency to take action.

With the literacy plan under development, this is an opportune time to re-visit this.

"After a bachelor's in English to teach grades 6-8, a master's to be a reading specialist, and coursework to complete an LBS1 endorsement, not one of these areas of study adequately prepared me to teach anyone of any age to learn to read or write. Only my personal determination to figure out where we were failing to grow literate young adults propelled me to learn these essential skills."

Christine Pederson,
Board Member,
The Reading League IL

"I have been the cooperating teacher for 3 preservice teachers in Illinois. All 3 student teachers came from different education programs across the state. Each collegiate program was a little different in its own way; however, not one of the universities taught these 3 student teachers the 5 core components of scientifically based reading."

Heather Lara,
1st Grade Teacher,
Glenview

"As future educators we depended on our teacher prep programs to introduce us to practices that align with reading research, but many of us, after years in the classroom, found that we were ill-equipped to help our students learn the foundational and fundamental skill of reading."

Elana Gordon,
Reading Interventionist,
Cicero District 99

"When future teachers invest their time and money earning a teaching license from a program ISBE has authorized, they should expect that program to at least meet ISBE's literacy standards. Since we began organizing the Illinois Early Literacy Coalition over two years ago, we have heard this message over and over: teachers are shelling out their own money to improve their literacy training because they didn't get what they needed in college."

Katie Scullion,
Outreach Committee Co-Chair,
Illinois Early Literacy Coalition

Juvenile Justice: Youth Court Fees Are Out, But School-Based Municipal Fees Abound

Recently enacted, SB 1463 (Peters/Slaughter) prohibits courts from imposing fines and fees on juveniles, adding Illinois to the growing number of states recognizing that these costs have no rehabilitative value and burden low-income families. (Of course, restitution payments can still be ordered.) As a member of the Debt Free Justice Coalition, Stand celebrates the end to these discriminatory fines and fees.

But as advocates were researching this issue, they came upon another injustice: school-based municipal fines. The Chicago Tribune and ProPublica published [an exposé](#) on these costs last year, writing "During a year of reporting on student ticketing that included attending more than 50 days of hearings, Tribune and ProPublica reporters met dozens of students and parents who paid fines even though they believed police didn't need to be involved in the first place. Some were initially inclined to fight the citations but eventually gave up, worn down by the process." Through FOIA requests the journalists found that between 2018-2021 nearly 12,000 tickets were issued to students from 199 districts, the majority of which were for vaping or possessing tobacco, truancy, or disorderly conduct.

There seems to be general agreement that something should be done to address the most egregious examples – such as school personnel calling police to fine a student for vaping in the school parking lot, which then requires the student to miss school to attend municipal court to pay their fine, which they have no due process rights, rather than addressing the vaping within the school's disciplinary system. But as they say, the "devil is in the details." Efforts to crack down on the most unnecessary school-based municipal ticket referrals hit a roadblock this spring. Schools need to be able to communicate with law enforcement for student safety, and some worried that efforts to ban explicit requests for student tickets might make regular communication more difficult.

Advocates are working this fall to draft a bill that strikes the right balance, strengthening school safety while handling minor disciplinary infractions within the school system. If you have any input or anecdotes about this issue, Aimee Galvin would welcome a conversation with you. She can be reached at 815-341-3471.

FUTURE TEACHERS DESERVE GREAT LITERACY TRAINING. National Report Says They Are Not Getting It.

This summer, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) updated its report grading educator preparation programs on how well they prepare teachers-in-training to teach reading. Of the fifteen Illinois programs that provided the requested materials, nine received an 'F.' There was also one 'A+' (shout out to Olivet Nazarene!), one 'B,' and one 'C.'

The analysis looked at whether programs comprehensively included instruction in the five main components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. "Phonemic awareness" – which refers to the ability to isolate and manipulate sounds in words – remains the most elusive area, with only one program providing adequate coverage. The review also considered whether debunked practices were taught and

BREAKING DOWN SILOS: DUAL CREDIT AND CAREER EDUCATION AREN'T MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE

Nearly half of all Illinois high school students take at least one Career and Technical Education (CTE) course. Students who complete two or more upper-level CTE courses within a program of study have a higher rate of graduation than students who do not. Through CTE pathways, students earn stackable credits and credentials along a continuum of education that begins in middle school, progresses through high school, and leads them to college and ultimately a career. Developing high-

demand, high-skill, high-wage pathways provide students opportunities for career exploration, skill development, and a clear progression to and through college helping keep students in Illinois after graduation.

Districts like Maine Township District 207 and Litchfield High School are rethinking traditional education models and introducing innovative concepts like flexible schedules and career-focused advising to provide

more opportunities for students to take advantage of exciting new CTE opportunities that give students a leg up on their postsecondary plans.

As districts are stepping up to the plate to support CTE, there are concrete steps the State can take to support their efforts: conducting a return-on-investment analysis to better understand CTE's impact, committing to sustainable funding, assessing the needs of CTE facilities, and supporting policies that support individual student college and career goals.

TeachKindness

KINDNESS AWARDS



Teach Kindness is an easy and no-cost way to foster kindness and improve school climate in elementary and middle school. Intentionally teaching social-emotional skills help students develop positive mindsets, strengthens peer relationships, and fosters a kinder school community. Stand for Children has partnered with leading researchers to develop easy-to-access kindness lessons that any teacher can access for free.

In May, Stand recognized three outstanding school communities for their commitment to kindness. Beard, Fiske, and Palmer elementary schools, all of which are Chicago Public Schools, went above and beyond to make teaching kindness part of the fabric of their school culture.

Congratulations!

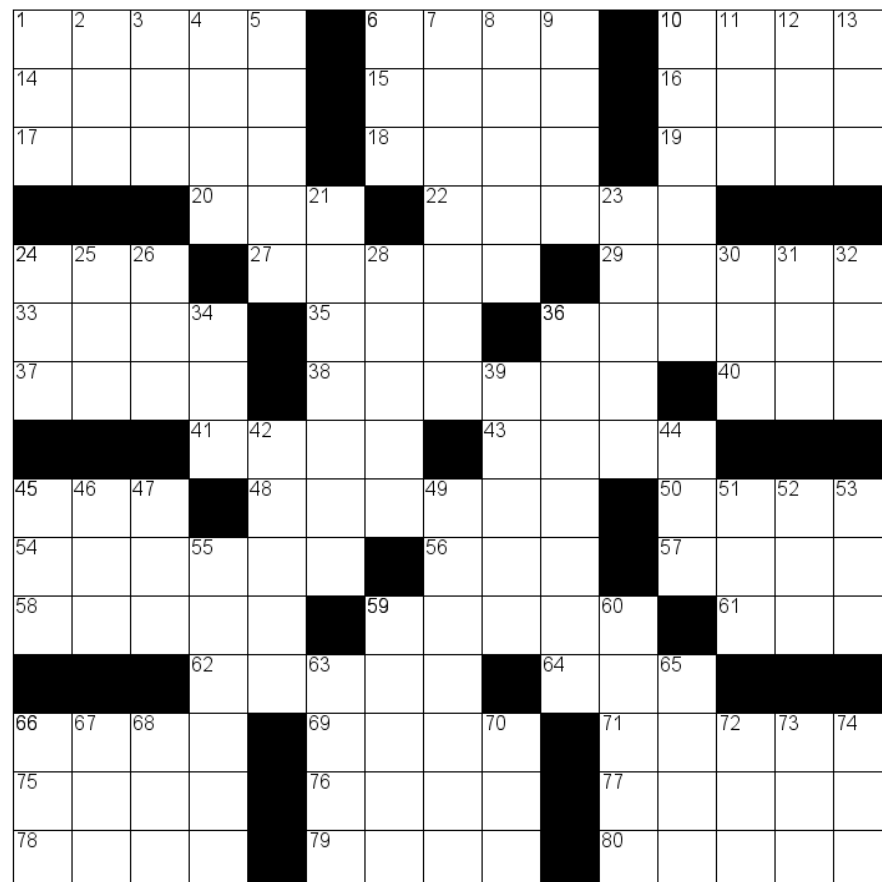
A CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Latch
6. Gets older
10. Employ
14. Cafe offering
15. Rant
16. Selves
17. Drive
18. Emperor
19. *In Peoria or Italy?
20. Bro's sib
22. Cheer up
24. ___ degree
27. Factions
29. Melon exteriors
33. Eye component
35. Lab animal
36. *In Kane or Switzerland?
37. *In Adams or Peru?
38. *In Johnson or Austria?
40. Weird
41. Film _____
43. Promise
45. Before
48. Point-keeper
50. Consumes
54. *In Madison or Italy?
56. 45-inch measure
57. *In Mason or England?
58. Bodily swelling
59. Ponderer
61. Cash out
62. Nervous system hub
64. Papa
66. Small dark berry
69. Glided
71. A young Brownie
75. Gyros ingredient
76. British art gallery
77. Aquatic mammal
78. Transcribe
79. Change from a five
80. Bird residences

DOWN

1. St. agency for ops
2. Parking spaces
3. Pass with flying colors



4. ___ a Lady
5. *In Edgar or France?
6. Curved path
7. Like a Herald, Times, or Post
8. Ass'ts
9. Que _____
10. Included in this text
11. _____ to the hills when my heart is lonely (2 words)
12. ___-com
13. Not WNW
21. Sacrifice
23. Reward
24. Zilch
25. Three-meaning prefix
26. Msaculine pronoun
28. *In Alexander or Egypt?
30. New
31. Post-VHS, pre-DVR
32. Upset
34. *In Logan/Mason or Costa Rica, with Jose
36. Snaggled
39. Gallagher and Fielding
42. De la Renta or the Grouch
44. Center
45. ___ Maria
46. HS diploma alt.
47. Four quarters
49. Get together again
51. Plant fluid
52. Approx. arrival hour
53. Timid
55. Drink
59. *In Rock Island or Italy?
60. Cancer-causing gas
63. Concerning (2 words)
65. Appointment
66. Space neighbor
67. Coral reef island
68. Vol. increase
70. ___ Plains
72. Belonging to
73. Array
74. 12-mo. periods



MEET STAND STAFF: KATHERINE ISSELIN

Operations Coordinator Katherine Isselin is a new addition to the Stand Illinois team!

Education: I attended Arizona State University where I received a bachelor's degree in political science with minors in Italian and Global Studies and a certificate in International Studies. Additionally, I hold a master's in international affairs concentrating in Governance and Rights from The New School in New York.

Family: I enjoy spending time with my husband, my almost two-year-old daughter Giulia, and dog Luca.

Most interesting place you've traveled: I have traveled to many countries, but my two favorite places are Ecuador and Italy. Being of Ecuadorian descent, I love to visit family that still lives there and continue to learn more about my culture. Italy will always be a magical place for me, as it is not only the place I studied abroad, but also my husband proposed to me on the Ponte Vecchio in Florence.

Something surprising about you: I love to learn languages. I speak

Spanish fluently as it is my native language, but I also speak Italian. Additionally, I studied French and Arabic in college and while I do not remember much, I would eventually like to try and learn them again.

What excites you about Stand?: Knowing that the work we do seeks to make a positive impact on people's lives. I understand the importance that education has played in my life and like to give back to the community so that they may have the same opportunities.



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ABOUT STAND FOR CHILDREN

Stand for Children is a unique catalyst for educational equity and racial justice to create a brighter future for us all.

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