

Following passage of SB2243 (Lightford/Mayfield), the State Board of Education (ISBE) recently developed and adopted a Comprehensive State Literacy Plan after undertaking a statewide listening tour, convening focus groups, and soliciting written feedback from the public. The inclusive process demonstrates the thoughtful approach Illinois has taken, engaging the field rather than imposing top-down mandates. **But the plan is just the first step.** ISBE and the Governor proposed \$3 million in their recommended budget, and the literacy coalition plans to advocate for \$45 million in the future to adequately support districts in aligning their literacy practices to the literacy plan. ISBE is also developing tools to support implementation: a curricular rubric, professional development opportunities for educators, and literacy coaching guidance.

WHY EARLY LITERACY?

Students who cannot read by 4th grade are **4x less likely to graduate** high school.

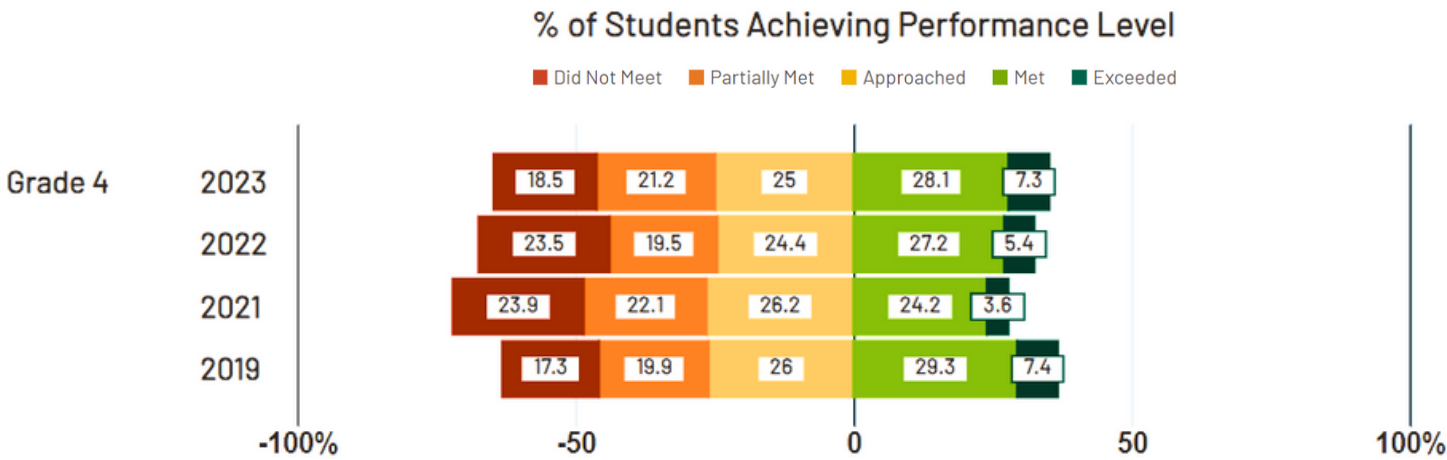
– Annie E. Casey Foundation

Early literacy is an **issue of equity**. Only 46% of Black fourth graders and 55% Hispanic fourth graders in IL public schools can read at a basic reading level, compared to 75% of white fourth graders.

– Illinois Report Card

85% of youth involved in the criminal justice system are **struggling readers**.

– The Literacy Project



Source: Illinois Report Card, IAR Data

For more information, please contact Jessica Handy with Stand for Children

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The IL Early Literacy Coalition proposes a legislative initiative to strengthen equity and implementation of the literacy plan:

Support
HB4902

Support **HB4902** requiring ISBE learning partners, which work with the lowest-performing schools in the state, to align with the literacy plan.

ISBE has an array of approved "learning partners" as a component of its statewide system of support for the lowest-performing schools. These partners, who work directly with schools to support their turnaround efforts, receive federal ESSA funds. Most schools identify literacy as one of the key areas for improvement and many vendors identify English Language Arts as an area of expertise. **Alignment with ISBE's guidance on evidence-based literacy practices is particularly important for the students** in these schools.

Regional Offices of Education and other organizations with specific expertise often serve as approved learning partners. **ISBE's new literacy plan provides clear guidance on practices that are evidence-based and aligned to standards**, along with examples of practices that are not aligned. Vendors that support Illinois' neediest schools, as an extension of ISBE's support for them, should be aligned to these practices.

Illinois Early Literacy Coalition Members



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