

# 2025 IRC CONFERENCE FINAL PROGRAM



ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL

## **LIBERATING LITERACY**

Embrace Love, Joy, & Empowerment

March 13 - 14, 2025  
Springfield, Illinois

## GENERAL CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Please take a moment to read the information below regarding the 2025 IRC Conference.

- **IRC Conference is an Open Forum**

The IRC Conference serves as an open forum and exchange of ideas and opinions. Opinions that are expressed by featured speakers, program presenters, exhibitors, and participants do not reflect endorsements by the Illinois Reading Council.

- **Conference Sessions**

All conference sessions will be held in the Bank of Springfield Center, President Abraham Lincoln Hotel, and Wyndham Hotel.

- **Pre-Registration & Registration**

Pre-registered conferees may obtain their registration packets at the Registration Desk in the Exhibit Hall at the Bank of Springfield Center. On-site registration is also available. Hotel reservations and meal function tickets should be secured prior to arrival in Springfield. Registration Hours: Wednesday, March 12 – 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Thursday, March 13 – 7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Friday, March 14 – 7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

- **ISBE PD Clock Hours**

IRC is an approved ISBE Professional Development Provider. Registered conference attendees can earn up to one clock hour for each session attended. Registered presenters can also earn up to eight clock hours for presenting a session. At the end of the conference, plan to submit your clock hours for the sessions that you attended and/or presented at the conference via an online form. The ISBE Evidence of Participation will be sent to you about two weeks after the conference.

- **Admission to Meetings**

Paid conferees receive a badge with their registration packet. Badges are required at all times and for all conference functions. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Pre-purchased tickets are required for all meal functions.

- **Special Accommodations**

Individuals who need special accommodations should make specific requests in writing to the IRC office three weeks prior to the conference in order for their needs to be met.

- **Food**

All scheduled meal functions require pre-purchased tickets. The concession area in the Bank of Springfield Center will be open during exhibit hours. Springfield restaurant information will be available at the hospitality table in the Exhibit Hall at the Bank of Springfield Center.

- **Hospitality & Information Table**

A hospitality and information table is located in the Exhibit Hall at the Bank of Springfield Center.

- **Message Board**

There will be a message board for conferees to leave notes in the registration area in the Exhibit Hall at the Bank of Springfield Center. A phone line (309-454-1341) has been established at the Registration Desk to receive emergency phone calls.

- **Lost and Found**

Inquire at the Registration Desk in the Exhibit Hall at the Bank of Springfield Center regarding lost and found items. IRC is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

- **Parking Options**

Downtown Springfield has many public parking options that cost anywhere from \$5 to \$10 a day to park. Details on the public parking will be available under the Resource Tab in the Conference APP.

- **Program Book and Conference APP**

In accordance with ILA guidelines, individuals have not been designated by titles. Acknowledgments to publishers and other companies for sponsoring speakers and special events are current as of this printing. Information in this program is subject to change. **Don't forget to bring a device to download the Conference App or the PDF of the Final Program Book as there will not be a printed Final Program Book.**

- **No Smoking**

In consideration of others we request your cooperation in observing the NO SMOKING regulations inside buildings.

- **Cell Phones**

Please silence phones during sessions at the conference.

- **Videotaping/Audiotaping/Photos**

Unless notified in writing, registration to the conference constitutes an agreement that the registrant's image, likeness, and appearance can be used in photographs of such events and activities. It is also not permitted to videotape, audiotape, or take photos of conference speakers without the speaker's consent.

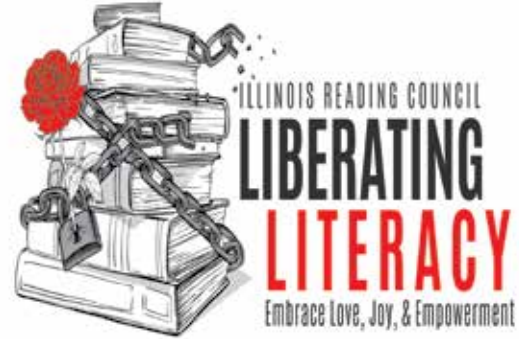
- **Anti-Harassment Policy**

The Illinois Reading Council (IRC) does not allow harassment or discrimination of any kind at any IRC affiliated event. IRC and its affiliates will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy including removal from the event. To report an issue, please visit the Event Registration Desk.

- **Cancellation/Refund Policy**

Conference refund requests must be in writing and postmarked by February 1, 2025. Requests can also be faxed to (309) 454-3512 or emailed to [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org). A \$25 processing fee will be assessed. Please note that membership fees are non-refundable. Conference registrations are transferable, but replacement names must be requested by March 5, 2025.

# Welcome to the 56th Annual Illinois Reading Council Conference



**“Reading is not walking on the words;  
it’s grasping the soul of them.” — Paulo Freire**

Dear Literacy Advocates and Friends,

Welcome to the Illinois Reading Council’s 56th Annual Reading Conference, Liberating Literacy: Embrace Joy, Love, and Empowerment! We are thrilled to have you join us for this exciting gathering of educators, authors, illustrators, and literacy enthusiasts. Together, we celebrate the transformative power of literacy in fostering joy, love, and empowerment in every classroom and community.

This year’s conference promises to be one of our most dynamic yet, with over 200 engaging sessions led by local educators designed to inform, inspire, and empower. We are honored to feature 21 renowned authors and educators who will confirm, challenge, and expand our thinking alongside 21 talented Illinois Reads authors whose stories and voices capture the essence of our state’s work in protecting representation and access to literature. I squealed with joy every time one of these amazing humans agreed to join us to share their work with us. I love the inclusivity and range of our lineup, and I know you will, too. Together, they will explore topics and stories spanning all grade levels, diverse life experiences, and the seven essential components of literacy, ensuring there’s something meaningful for everyone.

We’re excited to introduce some new features this year! Be sure to stop by our interactive photo booths and/or express yourself on the graffiti wall, where you can share your joy, creativity, and reflections while leaving your mark on this incredible event. PLUS, stop by the membership booth and bid on the local council’s raffle baskets. Our opening session on Wednesday featuring Darius Phelps will include the opportunity for brave souls to participate in a poetry slam. These new spaces are designed to amplify the love and connection we all feel as a community of literacy leaders.

Don’t forget to include time to join us for “Hear the Authors Read,” to explore the exhibit hall, to thank the countless volunteers who make this conference possible, and to network with friends you don’t yet know. As we gather to exchange ideas, celebrate stories, and deepen our practices, let’s embrace the energy and possibilities this conference holds. Whether this is your first time attending or you’ve been with us for many years, we hope you leave inspired, uplifted, and ready to empower your students, colleagues, and communities through the gift of literacy.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Let’s liberate literacy together!

In the spirit of literacy, love, and learning

Cindi Koudelka, Ed.D.  
IRC President-Elect  
2025 Conference Chair



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# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

## Wednesday, March 12, 2025

<b>Registration</b> – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center	5:00 PM – 9:00 PM
<b>Welcome Reception</b> – Wyndham Hotel Ballroom – <i>Darius Phelps</i>	7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

## Thursday, March 13, 2025

<b>Registration</b> – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center	7:00 AM – 2:00 PM
<b>Orientation for New Participants</b> – PAL Hotel Bond Room	7:00 AM – 7:45 AM
<b>Thursday Breakfast</b> – PAL Hotel Ballroom – <i>Dan Santat</i>	7:00 AM – 8:30 AM
<b>Exhibits</b> – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
<b>Hall of Councils Raffle Baskets</b> – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
<b>Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops</b>	8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
<b>Refreshments in Exhibit Area</b> – Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall	9:00 AM – 10:00 AM
<b>Thursday Luncheon</b> – Wyndham Hotel Ballroom – <i>Laurie Halse Anderson</i>	12:15 PM – 2:00 PM
<b>Thursday Luncheon</b> – PAL Hotel Ballroom – <i>Liz Kleinrock</i>	12:15 PM – 2:00 PM
<b>Thursday Lunch Sessions</b> – Bank of Springfield Center	1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
<b>Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops</b>	2:15 PM – 4:30 PM
<b>Refreshments in Exhibit Area</b> – Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall	3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
<b>Thursday PSA Banquet</b> – PAL Hotel Ballroom – <i>Alicia D. Williams</i>	6:15 PM – 8:15 PM
<b>Hear the Authors Read and Autographing</b> – Wyndham Hotel Grand Ballroom	8:30 PM – 10:30 PM

## Friday, March 14, 2025

<b>Registration</b> – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center	7:00 AM – 2:00 PM
<b>Friday Breakfast</b> – PAL Hotel Ballroom – <i>Darcie Little Badger</i>	7:00 AM – 8:30 AM
<b>Exhibits</b> – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center	8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
<b>Hall of Councils Raffle Baskets</b> – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center	8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
<b>Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops</b>	8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
<b>Refreshments in Exhibit Area</b> – Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall	9:00 AM – 10:00 AM
<b>Friday Luncheon</b> – Wyndham Hotel Ballroom – <i>Duncan Tonatuih</i>	12:15 PM – 2:00 PM
<b>Friday Luncheon</b> – PAL Hotel Ballroom – <i>Ernest Morrell</i>	12:15 PM – 2:00 PM
<b>Friday Lunch Sessions</b> – Bank of Springfield Center	1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
<b>Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops</b>	2:15 PM – 4:30 PM
<b>New and Preservice Teachers' Pizza Party</b> – Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall	3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
<b>IRC Annual Membership Meeting</b> – Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall	4:45 PM – 5:15 PM

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special appreciation is extended to the following professionals for their extensive contributions to the success of the 2025 IRC Conference.

### PUBLISHERS & BUSINESSES

**Anderson's Bookshops**

*Hear the Authors Read  
Featured Speaker Books  
New & Notable Books  
with Becky Anderson Wilkins*

**Crossland Literacy**

*Shamari Reid  
Kristin Ziemke*

**Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Illinois**

*Complimentary Refreshments in the Exhibit Hall*

**Heinemann**

*Featured Speaker Books*

**Illinois Digital Educators Alliance (IDEA)**

*Tote Bags*

**Imagine Learning**

*Name Tag Lanyards*

**Lake-Cook Distributors**

*Student Helpers*

**Monsters on Mill Street**

*Complimentary Refreshments in the Exhibit Hall*

**Savvas Learning Company**

*Ernest Morrell  
Coffee Break in Exhibit Hall  
on Friday Morning*

**Visit Springfield/SCVB**

*Illinois Reads Author Panels*

### CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CHAIRS & STAFF

**Cindi Koudelka**, 2025 IRC Conference Chair

**Deb Augsburger**, Assistant Chair & 2026 Chair

**Pat Braun**, Meal Tickets

**Barb Chrz-White**, Registration

**Lynette Evans**, New & Preservice Pizza Party

**Karen Kortkamp**, Exhibits

**Brenda Kraber**, Autographing

**Greg Micek**, Greeters/Hospitality

**Roxanne Owens**, Autographing

**Carol Owles**, New & Preservice Pizza Party

**Sheila Ruh**, Technology

**Katie Russell**, Greeters/Hospitality

**Sherry Sejnost**, Technology

**Carrie Sheridan**, Executive Director

**Alaina Weatherford**, Signs

**Melissa Wheeler**, Meal Tickets

**Cindy Wilson**, Autographing

**Jennifer Young**, Special Events



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks are extended to the exhibitors for their continued support and sponsorship of presentations at the 2025 Conference.

## EXHIBITORS

<b>3 Click Spelling</b>	<i>Dick Briggs</i>
<b>95 Percent Group</b>	<i>Samantha Chatman, Antonio Fierro , Meri Havenar, Laura Stewart</i>
<b>American Reading Company</b>	<i>Keteshia Melendez, Lauren McDonald, Kelly Zimmerman</i>
<b>Benchmark Education</b>	<i>Shauna Williams</i>
<b>Books del Sur</b>	<i>Heather Robertson-Devine, Paz Corral Yagman</i>
<b>Center for the Collaborative Classroom</b>	<i>Kristy Rauch</i>
<b>Eyewords Inc.</b>	<i>Jennifer Orr</i>
<b>Great Minds</b>	<i>Lainie Augensen, Katherine Chuu</i>
<b>hand2mind, Inc.</b>	<i>Jennifer Burchfiel, Debby Spitzer, Karyn Tomkinson</i>
<b>Heggerty</b>	<i>Laura Castro, Lori Jurjovec, Erica Suarez</i>
<b>i-Ready   Curriculum Associates</b>	<i>Lindsay Kinsey</i>
<b>Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom</b>	<i>Kevin Daugherty, Chris Wyant</i>
<b>Illinois SLD Support Project</b>	<i>Tari Jansen</i>
<b>Mike Lockett: Storyteller/Author</b>	<i>Michael Lockett</i>
<b>Read Side by Side Publications LLC</b>	<i>Sarah Collinge</i>
<b>Reading Horizons</b>	<i>Ethan Lynn</i>
<b>SCBWI Illinois</b>	<i>Sarah Aronson, Alice McGinty, Anitra Schulte</i>
<b>Schoolwide</b>	<i>Pat Pollack</i>
<b>Shelley Kenow IEP Consultant</b>	<i>Shelley Kenow</i>
<b>Silver Strong &amp; Associates   Thoughtful Classroom</b>	<i>Sharon Nepote</i>
<b>Thinking Habitats</b>	<i>Florian Feucht</i>



## Illinois Reading Council 2024 – 2025 Executive Committee



**Melissa Stinnett**  
President



**Cindi Koudelka**  
President Elect



**Deb Augsburger**  
Vice President



**Julie Hoffman**  
Past President



**Melissa Wheeler**  
Recording Secretary



**Amy Davis**  
ILA State Coordinator



**Donna Herman**  
Director of  
Membership Development

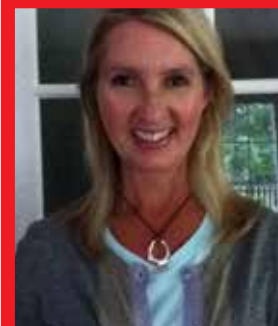


**Diana Wilkie**  
Treasurer

## Illinois Reading Council Office Staff



**Carrie Sheridan**  
Executive Director



**Karen Kortkamp**  
Public Relations Coordinator



## Illinois Reading Council Board of Directors

### Regional Directors

Region 1  
**Alaina Weatherford**

Region 2  
**Becky McTague**

Region 3  
**Sherry Sejnost**

Region 4  
**Lynn Keck**

Region 5  
**Pat Braun**

Region 6  
**Katie Russell**

Region 7  
**Melissa Wheeler**

Region 8  
**Amy Hewing**

Region 9  
**Teresa Burdin**

Region 10  
**Camille Lutz**

### Special Committee Chairs

AISLE Liaison  
**Leslie Forsman**

Advocacy  
**Jennifer Martin**

Book Club  
**Stephanie Benson**

Educational Media  
**Sheila Ruh**

Family Literacy  
**Barbara Ashton**

ILA Exemplary Reading Program  
**Diana Wilkie**

Illinois Reads  
**Sherry Sejnost**

International Projects  
**Carol Owles**

IRC Communicator Editor  
**Marjorie Henseler**

IRC Journal Editor  
**Roxanne Owens**

IRC Literacy Support Grants  
**Teresa Burdin**

ISBE Liaison  
**Kimberly Johnson**

Jerry Johns Reading Educator  
of the Year  
**Melissa Wheeler**

Obama Literacy Fund  
**Jena Kent**

Prairie State Award  
**Cindy Wilson**

Professional Learning  
**Laura Beltchenko**

Publicity and Publication  
**Sherry Sejnost**

Rebecca Caudill Rep  
**Ruth Gheysen**

### Council Presidents

Blackhawk - **Michael Carton**

Central Illinois - **Andrea Trexler**

Chicago Area (CARA) - **Miyoshi Brown**

East Central-EIU - **Melissa Wheeler**

Fox Valley - **Camille Lutz**

Illini - **Elizabeth Goldsmith-Conley**

Illinois Valley - **Kelli Ballard**

Lake Area - **Stacie Noisey**

Lewis & Clark - **Andy Mayer**

Macon County - **Cara Burkhart**

MID-State - **Elana Heinonen**

Mississippi Valley - **Leslie Forsman**

National Road - **Amy Hewing**

Northern Illinois - **Jacqueline Cleven**

Northwestern Illinois - **Open**

Prairie Area - **Sheila Ruh, Sherry Sejnost**

Sauk Valley - **Kimberly Bork**

South Eastern - **Tambree Krouse**

South Suburban - **Terri Campos**

Southern Illinois - **Teresa Burdin**

Starved Rock - **Alaina Weatherford**

SCIRA - **Buffy Stauffer**

Two Rivers - **Sherri Silva**

Vermilion Valley - **Lynette Evans**

West Suburban - **Kari Pawl**

Western Illinois - **Jennifer Young**

Will County - **Donna Herman**

CIRP - **Shadrack Msengi**

ICARE - **Roxanne Owens**

ILLC - **Leslie Forsman**

SRL - **Kimberly Hollis**

### Standing Committee Chairs

Budget, Finance, and Strategic Planning  
**Melissa Stinnett**

Bylaws, Policies & Procedures  
**Deb Augsburger, Julie Hoffman**

Conference  
**Cindi Koudelka**

District PD  
**Julie Hoffman**

Membership  
**Donna Herman**

Nominating  
**Julie Hoffman**

Organization/Council Bylaws  
**Amy Davis**

Personnel and Grievance  
**Melissa Stinnett**



## IRC Reading Hall of Fame

Robert Hillerich,  
P. David Pearson, 1983  
William Durr,  
Dolores Durkin, 1984  
David C. Rhoads,  
Kathryn Ransom, 1985  
Dale D. Downs, 1986  
Donna Ogle, 1987  
William Powell, 1988  
Jerry Johns, 1989  
Jane Davidson, 1990  
Gene Blair, Gene Cramer, 1991  
Carol Winkley, 1992  
Taimi Ranta, 1993  
Roberta Berglund, 1994  
Camille Blachowicz,  
Marrietta Castle, 1995  
John Logan, 1996

Peter Fisher, 1997  
Margaret Richek, 1998  
Susan Davis Lenski, 1999  
Timothy Shanahan, 2002  
Pamela J. Farris, 2006  
Larry Pennie, 2009  
Steven L. Layne, 2010  
Lou Ferroli, 2011  
Roxanne Owens, 2012  
Pamela Nelson, 2013  
Becky Anderson Wilkins, 2014  
Roberta Sejnost, 2014  
Kathy Barclay, 2015  
Maria Walther, 2016  
Pat Braun, 2017  
Joyce Jennings, 2021  
Kathleen Sweeney, 2024  
**Laura Beltchenko, 2025**

## IRC Service Award

*(Formerly known as the IRC Certificate of Recognition)*

Carol Winkley, Don Meints,  
Kathryn Ransom, Jeanette Massey,  
Peg Livesay, David Rhoads, 1981  
Marian Oleson, Agnita Wright,  
Mary Christopherson, 1982  
Geneva Andrews, Mary Williams, 1983  
Gene Cramer, Barbara Wyne, 1984  
Donna Ogle, Jerry Johns, 1985  
Otilie Womack, Taimi Ranta,  
Kay Spalding, 1986  
Hattie Miller, Jane Davidson, 1987  
Jim Coe, Evelyn Jackson,  
Larry Pennie, 1988  
Gene Blair, Anna Sanford, 1989  
Wilma Deal, James Walker,  
Arlene Pennie, 1990  
Nancy Venegoni, 1991  
Roberta Berglund, 1992  
Marlene Fletcher, Eunice Greer,  
Barbara Seaman, Tom Sexton, 1993  
Lynne Rauscher-Davoust,  
Kathleen Sweeney, 1994  
Jack Barshinger, Barbara Chrz-White, 1995

Paula Schoenfelder, 1996  
Barbara Johnson, 1997  
Joyce Jennings, 1998  
Sheila Diaz, 1999  
Laura Megown, 2000  
Lynette Mehall, 2003  
Pat Carlson, 2006  
Roberta Sejnost, 2007  
Patti Foster Baker, 2010  
Carol Owles, Cheryl Walker, 2012  
Susan Cisna, Ronda Brown, 2013  
Tammy Swinford-Potts, 2014  
Sheila Ruh, Sheryl Sejnost, 2014  
Leslie Forsman, 2016  
Melinda Grimm, 2017  
Boomer Crotty, 2018  
Gail Huizinga, 2019  
Joyce Jennings, 2021  
Christy Ziller, Steven L. Layne, 2022  
Stephanie Benson, 2023  
Kevin Daugherty, Bonnie Matheis, 2024  
**Diana Wilkie, 2025**

## Illinois Reading Council Past Presidents

1968 - 1969 <b>William Powell</b>	1987 – 1988 <b>Jean Clem Bailey</b>	2006 – 2007 <b>Pam Nelson</b>
1969 – 1970 <b>Mary Serra</b>	1988 – 1989 <b>Gene Cramer</b>	2007 – 2008 <b>Donna Monti</b>
1970 - 1971 <b>Mary Ellen Batinich</b>	1989 - 1990 <b>Linda Fuller Farruggia</b>	2008 – 2009 <b>Roxanne Owens</b>
1971 – 1972 <b>David Bear</b>	1990 – 1991 <b>Kathleen Sweeney</b>	2009 – 2010 <b>Christine Boardman Moen</b>
1972 – 1973 <b>Wilson Stone</b>	1991 – 1992 <b>Lorri Davis</b>	2010 – 2011 <b>Susan Cisna</b>
1973 – 1974 <b>David Rhoads</b>	1992 – 1993 <b>John Logan</b>	2011 – 2012 <b>Cindy Wilson</b>
1974 – 1975 <b>Kathryn Ransom</b>	1993 – 1994 <b>Paula Schoenfelder</b>	2012 – 2013 <b>Pat Braun</b>
1975 – 1976 <b>Sister Cor Marie</b>	1994 – 1995 <b>Susan Hanks</b>	2013 – 2014 <b>Tammy Swinford-Potts</b>
1976 – 1977 <b>Robin Carr</b>	1995 – 1996 <b>Jeff Hildreth</b>	2014 – 2015 <b>Cindy Gerwin</b>
1977 – 1978 <b>Agnita Wright</b>	1996 – 1997 <b>Susan Davis Lenski</b>	2015 – 2016 <b>Lou Ferroli</b>
1978 – 1979 <b>Gene Blair</b>	1997 – 1998 <b>Claudia Anne Katz</b>	2016 – 2017 <b>Patricia Tylka</b>
1979 – 1980 <b>Donna Ogle</b>	1998 – 1999 <b>Barb Haas Bender</b>	2017 – 2018 <b>Janel Sebeny</b>
1980 – 1981 <b>Lawrence Pennie</b>	1999 – 2000 <b>Hattie Spires</b>	2018 – 2019 <b>Priscilla Dwyer</b>
1981 – 1982 <b>Jerry Johns</b>	2000 – 2001 <b>Marsha Strader</b>	2019 – 2021 <b>Stephanie Benson</b>
1982 – 1983 <b>James Coe</b>	2001 – 2002 <b>Mike Ellerman</b>	2021 – 2022 <b>Katie Russell</b>
1983 – 1984 <b>Dale Downs</b>	2002 – 2003 <b>Beth Arthur</b>	2022 – 2023 <b>Leslie Forsman</b>
1984 – 1985 <b>Nancy Venegoni</b>	2003 – 2004 <b>Barb Vines</b>	2023 – 2024 <b>Julie Hoffman</b>
1985 – 1986 <b>Anna Sanford</b>	2004 – 2005 <b>Ronda Mitchell</b>	
1986 – 1987 <b>Sharon Neste</b>	2005 – 2006 <b>Steven Layne</b>	



# Illinois Reads Authors

Plan now to attend the **Illinois Reads Author Panels** at the 2025 Illinois Reading Council Conference! Featured authors will be from the **2025 Illinois Reads Books!** There are three panels planned for Birth to 2nd Grade, Kindergarten to 5th Grade, and 6th to 12th Grade during the conference. Come participate in this exciting chance to meet and greet Illinois Reads Authors as they share the inspiration for their stories and current projects they are working on, and ask questions you've been anxious to know about your favorite characters. Following the sessions, authors will also be autographing their books in the Exhibit Hall at the Bank of Springfield Center. Books will also be available for purchase in the exhibit hall.

## BIRTH TO 2ND GRADE

**Thursday**  
11:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
in BOS Center B-11D



**Doug Cenko**  
Grades K-2



**Kat Chen**  
Birth to Age 4



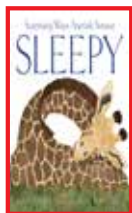
**Molly Cranch**  
Birth to Age 4



**Jacob Grant**  
Grades K-2



**Ruth Spiro**  
Grades K-2



**Jennifer Ward**  
Birth to Age 4

## KINDERGARTEN TO 5TH GRADE

**Thursday**  
1:00 to 2:00 PM  
in BOS Center B-11A



**Nadia Ahmed**  
Grades K-2



**Lisa Katzenberger**  
Grades 3-5



**Janet Nolan**  
Grades K-2



**Fiona Cook**  
Grades 3 to Adult



**Kelly Leigh Miller**  
Grades 3-5



**Barb Rosenstock**  
Grades 3-5

## 6TH TO 12TH GRADE

**Thursday**  
2:15 to 3:15 PM  
in BOS Center B-11A



**Ronni Davis**  
Grades 9-12



**Sharelle Byars Moranville**  
Grades 6-8



**Jeff Miller**  
Grades 6-8



**Ray Nadine**  
Grades 6-8



**Wendy Parris**  
Grades 6-8



**Sherri L. Smith**  
Grades 9-12



**Ann Zhao**  
Grades 9-12

**AUTOGRAPH SCHEDULE****Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall**

Prior to each autographing session, please purchase the books you wish to be autographed. Books are available at each author's publisher's booth or Anderson's Bookshops booths in the exhibit area. Most authors will be signing in the designated area located at the back of the exhibit hall. A separate line will be formed for each author.

Due to the number of authors and scheduling, **it will not be possible for books to be left for later autographing.** Some authors will sign only their name and do no personalizing.

Each author will sign a maximum of three books per person when that person is in the author's line. If an individual would like to have more than three books signed by an author, there are two options:

- Bring purchased books to Authors Signing Booth and ask for bookplates. (There are limited quantities.)
- Go to the end of the line and wait to have three more books signed by the author. The author may or may not have time to sign additional books because authors agree to sign for specific time periods.

Presentations by authors are listed on the Conference APP.

**Thursday****Friday****9:00 – 10:00 AM**

Dan Santat

**2:15 – 3:15 PM**

Nadia Ahmed

Laurie Halse Anderson

Fiona Cook

Lisa Katzenberger

Liz Kleinrock

Kelly Leigh Miller

Janet Nolan

Barb Rosenstock

Stephen Shaskan

Trisha Speed Shaskan

**9:00 – 10:00 AM**

Darcie Little Badger

**9:45 – 10:45 AM**

Stephen Shaskan

Trisha Speed Shaskan

**9:45 – 10:45 AM**

Dwayne Reed

Shamari Reid (*Booth 300*)**11:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Dare Coulter

Kass Minor

Alicia D. Williams

Kristin Ziemke (*Booth 300*)**11:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Cozbi A. Cabrera

Adam Peterson

Duncan Tonatiuh

Julia Torres

**1:00 – 2:00 PM**

Doug Cenko

Kat Chen

Molly Cranch

Jacob Grant

Ruth Spiro

Jennifer Ward

**3:30 – 4:30 PM**

Cozbi A. Cabrera

Dare Coulter

Ronni Davis

Sharelle Byars Moranville

Jeff Miller

Ray Nadine

Wendy Parris

Sherri L. Smith

Alicia D. Williams

Ann Zhao

**12:15 – 1:15 PM**Shamari Reid (*Booth 300*)**2:15 – 3:15 PM**

Duncan Tonatiuh

**Locations**

**Autographing on Thursday and Friday will take place at the back of the Exhibit Hall or at the noted exhibitor's booth in the BOS Center.**

**Books will be available for purchase at the conference from Anderson's Bookshops (*Booth 409*) or Heinemann (*Booth 300*).**

**A special autograph session after the Hear the Authors Read will take place from 9:30 – 10:30 PM on Thursday in the Wyndham Ballroom. Books will be available for purchase at the event.**



# ILLINOIS READS

## A READING STATE OF MIND



**Saturday, April 26, 2025**

Midwest Athletic Center

409 Hardin Avenue

Jacksonville, Illinois

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Join IRC at the 2025 Illinois Reads Book Festival! Plan now to bring your families, students, and all book lovers to this fun and free event. Authors will be present. Bring your books and have them signed at this event! Books will also be available for purchase from Anderson's Bookshops.

Visit our website for more information at [www.illinoisreads.org](http://www.illinoisreads.org)

### Birth-4

*Can You Dance Like a Peacock?*

by Rekha S. Rajan

*Hide-and-Seek*

by Molly Cranch

*Moms Can Do It All!*

by Ted Maass

*Sleepy: Surprising Ways Animals Snooze*

by Jennifer Ward

*Painting the Sky with Love: A Celebration of*

*Love and Community*

by Mary E. Haque

*Play Outside with Me*

by Kat Chen

### 3-5

*Cloud Puppy*

by Kelly Leigh Miller

*Detective Sweet Pea: The Case of the*

*Golden Bone*

by Sara Varon

*It Belongs to the World: Frederick Banting*

*and the Discovery of Insulin*

by Lisa Katzenberger

*Legendarios: Wrath of the Rain God*

by Karla Arenas Valenti

*One Cool Duck #1: King of Cool*

by Mike Petrik

*The Great Lakes: Our Freshwater Treasure*

by Barb Rosenstock

### 9-12

*American Wings: Chicago's Pioneering Black*

*Aviators and the Race for Equality in the Sky*

by Sherri L. Smith and Elizabeth Wein

*Dear Wendy*

by Ann Zhao

*Last On His Feet: Jack Johnson and the Battle*

*of the Century*

by Youssef Daoudi and Adrian Matejka

*This Book Won't Burn*

by Samira Ahmed

*This Night Is Ours*

by Ronni Davis

*We Shall Be Monsters: A Novel*

by Alyssa Wees

### K-2

*Bats Beneath the Bridge*

by Janet Nolan

*Love Grows*

by Ruth Spiro

*Somebody Needs to Do Something About*

*That Monster!*

by Doug Cenko

*The Ghost Who Was Afraid of Everything*

by Nadia Ahmed

*The Heartbeat Drum: The Story of Carol*

*Powder, Cree Drummer and Activist*

by Deidre Havrelock

and illustrated by Aphelandra

*Umami*

by Jacob Grant

### 6-8

*Forget-Me-Not Blue*

by Sharelle Byars Moranville

*I Felt Myself Slipping*

by Ray Nadine

*Kareem Between*

by Shifa Saltagi Safadi

*Rare Birds*

by Jeff Miller

*Stage Fright*

by Wendy Parris

*The Labors of Hercules Beal*

by Gary D. Schmidt

### Adult

*By Water Beneath the Walls: The Rise of the*

*Navy SEALs*

by Benjamin H. Milligan

*Star Wars Dad Jokes: The Best Worst Jokes*

*and Puns from a Galaxy Far, Far Away . . .*

by Kelly Knox and

illustrated by Johnny Sampson

*The Best Lies*

by David Ellis

*The Great Divide: A Novel*

by Cristina Henriquez

*The Wheel of the Year: An Illustrated Guide to*

*Nature's Rhythms*

by Fiona Cook

*Woe: A Housecat's Story of Despair: (A*

*Graphic Novel)*

by Lucy Knisley



**All Conference Attendees are invited to attend!**

# Welcome Reception

with Darius Phelps



presenting *Embracing Every Hue: Using Our Narratives to Cultivate Healing*  
with an open mic poetry slam to follow his presentation

**Wednesday, March 12, 2025**

**7:00 – 8:30 PM**

**Wyndham Hotel Ballroom**

**Complimentary appetizers will be served!**

# Conference Sessions

## Wednesday, March 12, 2025

### 1. 7:00 – 8:30 PM

#### Welcome Reception: Embracing Every Hue: Using Our Narratives to Cultivate Healing

Darius Phelps  
Educator, The Center for Publishing & Applied Liberal Arts,  
New York University, New York, New York



All Conference Attendees are invited to attend the opening reception and connect with other conferees. Light appetizers will be served. IRC also welcomes Darius Phelps, who will be using his personal narrative as a testimony. This keynote session will showcase how teachers can use their stories to reflect, strengthen their literacy instruction, and cultivate a space of bravery, healing, and love in their classrooms. Following his presentation, Darius will lead an open mic poetry slam.

**Audience:** All ~ No Ticket is Required

**Location:** Wyndham Ballroom

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# CONFERENCE STRANDS

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

Sessions focus on issues, research, and practices related to education from birth to age eight and foundational literacy.

### EQUITY, INCLUSIVITY, & BELONGING

Sessions focus on affirming & responsive teaching practices that create an inclusive learning environment and sense of belonging for all students.

### EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Sessions focus on comprehensive, high-quality, & evidence-based instructional practices that support the seven literacy components and differentiated needs of all children.

### LITERACY LEADERSHIP & COACHING

Sessions focus on issues, research, and practices related to administrators, school board members, curriculum coordinators, teacher leaders, literacy coaches, reading specialists, and other literacy leaders working to support systemic transformation for student success.

### MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Sessions focus on issues, research, and asset-based educational practices that responsively and equitably support EL/ML students.

### READING ENGAGEMENT

Sessions focus on fostering engagement and motivation in reading through relevancy, choice, and innovative practices to support dormant, disengaged, or disinterested readers.

### SECONDARY READING LEAGUE (SRL)

Sessions focus on issues, research, and practices related to adolescent literacy and secondary or post-secondary education..

### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Sessions focus on supporting resilient mental health and using trauma-informed practices to create welcoming and empathetic classroom and school environments.

### STEAM

Sessions focus on research, instruction, and innovative practices that embed literacy within Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and/or Math.

### TEACHER EDUCATION & EARLY SERVICE

Sessions focus on issues, research, and practices related to teacher education, preservice and mentoring programs, and professional development.

### TECHNOLOGY

Sessions focus on issues, research, and practices related to leveraging technology, virtual reality, and AI responsibility and equitably enhancing and expanding students' media literacy, computer literacy, and understanding of AI's impact to guide them toward becoming productive, ethical, and empathetic digital citizens.

### WRITING

Sessions focus on research, instruction, and innovation in teaching writing.

### YA & CHILDREN'S LITERATURE/LIBRARIANS

Sessions focus on issues, research, and practices related to librarians or teachers building classroom libraries to promote current, diverse, high-quality children's or YA literature and effective instructional practices.



**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**



# BOOK CLUB

To register, return this form with payment by March 15, 2025 to  
Illinois Reading Council, 1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2, Normal, IL 61761  
or register online at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or fax to 309-454-3512

Join educators from all over the state in the online **Spring 2025 IRC Book Club**! Choose one, two, or all three books!

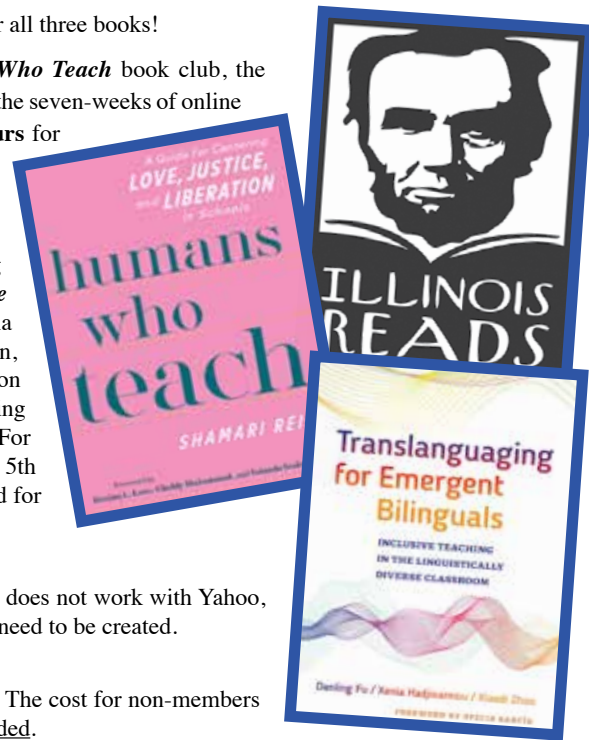
Beginning **March 23**, participants will be reading, reflecting on, and responding in the *Humans Who Teach* book club, the *Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals* book club, and/or the *Illinois Reads* book club during the seven-weeks of online discussions. Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive **15 PD clock hours** for each book club.

For the *Humans Who Teach: A Guide for Centering Love, Justice, and Liberation in Schools* book club, the book was written by Shamari Reid. This book club will be exploring the complicated humanity of those who teach and how within their humanity lies the transformative possibilities for cultivating lives and classrooms characterized by love. For the *Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals: Inclusive Teaching in the Linguistically Diverse Classroom* book club, the book was written by Danling Fu, Xenia Hadjioannou, and Xiaodi Zhou. The book club participants will be examining the development, evolution, and current realities of educating emergent bilinguals and where the future of emergent bilingual education lies in an inclusive translanguaging pedagogy. For the *Illinois Reads* book club, participants will be selecting books from one of the age bands of the 2025 Illinois Reads list to prepare lesson plans and activities. For Birth to 2nd Grade, participants will select a new book each week for a total of six books; for 3rd to 5th Grade, participants will select three books; for 6th to 8th Grade, participants will select two books; and for 9th to 12th Grade or the Adult age band, participants will select one book.

Required for participation:

- Gmail address (free at <https://mail.google.com/>). The Book Club uses Google Classroom, which does not work with Yahoo, AOL, Hotmail, etc. School gmail accounts may also not work and a personal gmail account will need to be created.
- Texts: Books can be purchased from the bookseller of your choice.

Register by March 15, 2025, to participate in the book club. Registration is FREE for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$50, which includes IRC membership for one year. PLEASE NOTE: The cost of book is not included.



**ONE NAME ON EACH FORM** Please print or type. Form may be reproduced.

Name (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Gmail Address Required \_\_\_\_\_  
Are you an IRC member? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

**BOOK CHOICE** (Check one, two, or all three books):

\_\_\_\_\_ **HUMANS WHO TEACH** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMERGENT BILINGUALS** \_\_\_\_\_ **ILLINOIS READS** (select grade level below)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Birth-2nd \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd to 5th \_\_\_\_\_ 6th-8th \_\_\_\_\_ 9th-Adult

**REGISTRATION** (Check one):

**IRC Members:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **BOOK CLUB** ..... **FREE FOR IRC MEMBERS**

**Non-Members:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **BOOK CLUB AND IRC MEMBERSHIP** ..... **\$50.00**

(From IRC Membership Form, indicate local council choice \_\_\_\_\_)

**METHOD OF PAYMENT**

(\$2 service charge is added if paying by CC!)

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check (payable to IRC)

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☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express CVV Code \_\_\_\_\_

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# Thursday, March 13, 2025

**Registration** - Bank of Springfield Center Lobby 7:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**Orientation for New Participants** - PAL Hotel Bond Room 7:00 AM – 7:45 AM

**Thursday Breakfast** - PAL Hotel Ballroom - *Dan Santat* 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM



**Exhibits** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

**Hall of Councils Raffle Baskets** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

**Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops** 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**Refreshments in Exhibit Area** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

- Sponsored by *Dolly Parton's*  
*Imagination Library of Illinois*



**Thursday Luncheon** - Wyndham Hotel Ballroom - *Laurie Halse Anderson* 12:15 PM – 2:00 PM



**Thursday Luncheon** - PAL Hotel Ballroom - *Liz Kleinrock* 12:15 PM – 2:00 PM



**Thursday Lunch Sessions** - Bank of Springfield Center Lower Level 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

**Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops** 2:15 PM – 4:30 PM

**Refreshments in Exhibit Area** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

- Sponsored by *Monsters on Mill Street*



**Thursday PSA Banquet** - PAL Hotel Ballroom - *Alicia D. Williams* 6:15 PM – 8:15 PM



**Hear the Authors Read & Autographing** - Wyndham Hotel Ballroom 8:30 PM – 10:30 PM

*Laurie Halse Anderson, Darcie Little Badger, Cozbi Cabrera, Dwayne Reed,  
Dan Santat, Duncan Tonatiuh, Alicia D. Williams*

- Sponsored by **AB ANDERSON'S**  
**BOOKSHOPS**



# Conference Sessions

## Thursday, March 13, 2025

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7:00 – 7:45 AM

2. 7:00 – 7:45

### Orientation

Sherry Sejnost

Sheila Ruh

You just downloaded the Conference APP and/or the digital IRC Program Book. There are over 200 sessions, meal functions, special events, exhibits, and author autographing. How do you begin to plan to attend all that is offered? Attend this special session by seasoned IRC conference attendees. They will share their tactics, tricks, and survival skills for an IRC conference.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** PAL Bond

8:30 – 9:30 AM

4. 8:30 – 9:30

### Sharp Truth in a Distant Mirror

Laurie Halse Anderson

Author

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



The people who lived in Boston in 1776 knew a few things about political divisions, uncertainty and fear. They endured the devastation of the British occupation and celebrated the Patriot victory that caused the British to flee. But before they could rebuild their town, smallpox threatened and a massive inoculation effort was necessary. I'll discuss my research process for my new historical novel *Rebellion 1776*, and what the people who lived in Boston in 1776 can teach us about our world today.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11A

7:00 – 8:30 AM

### Thursday Breakfast

3. 7:00 – 8:30

### A Slow Growing Mass of Tangible Thoughts

Dan Santat

Author

San Marino, California



Dan will discuss his upbringing and how he became an artist. He will also share his inspirations for some of his most popular titles including *The Adventures of Beekle*, *Are We There Yet?*, *After the Fall*, and *A First Time For Everything*.

**Audience:** Ticket Required

**Location:** PAL Ballroom

**Gene Kramer ICARE for Reading Award**

will be presented at the Thursday Breakfast to

**Jennifer Mangayao**

Award will be presented by Roxanne Owens, ICARE President

## PHOTO CONTEST

**POST A FAVORITE CONFERENCE PIC**  
**under IRC SOCIAL on the APP!**

One attendee who submits a photo will be selected to **WIN A FREE REGISTRATION** to the next conference! Be creative and look for those picture-perfect spots at the conference venues!

Also, post on your **OWN SOCIALS** and tag **IRC at @ilreadcouncil & #ircreads!**

**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**



**5. 8:30 – 9:30****CANCELED****Turning Students Into Nonfiction Detectives**

Candace Fleming  
Author  
Oak Park, Illinois



Today's students are used to information on demand. But authentic research requires more than the ability to retrieve "google-able" facts. Students need to become "nonfiction detectives," analyzing, inferring and making connections to primary sources. In this fun, fast-paced session author Candace Fleming will share practical ideas and engaging activities for turning your students into the Sherlock Holmes of research.

**Audience:** PreK-9**Location:** BOS Center B-11B**6. 8:30 – 9:30****Characters! Comics! Collaboration!**

Trisha Speed Shaskan  
Author  
Minneapolis, Minnesota



Stephen Shaskan  
Author  
Minneapolis, Minnesota



Using examples from *Pizza and Taco*, *Punk Skunks*, and *Q and Ray*, Stephen Shaskan and Trisha Speed Shaskan will share how they collaborate while creating picture books and graphic novels. With an emphasis on collaboration, they'll share tips and tools you can use to teach students to write and illustrate stories.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11C**7. 8:30 – 9:30****Antibias Instruction Through an Inquiry Lens**

Liz Kleinrock  
Author  
Washington, DC



In this session, participants will learn about creating foundations for antibias and antiracism practices in their classrooms and school communities that incorporate the ELA by utilizing an inquiry lens based on student prior knowledge and guiding questions.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11D**8. 8:30 – 9:30****Daily Doses of Digital Literacy to Spark Reading, Writing, and Thinking!**

Kristin Ziemke  
Educator/Author  
Chicago, Illinois



How do we inspire students to keep thinking? We engage them in daily doses of digital literacy by teaching them the skills they need to locate, access, read, and create digital content. All learners need explicit instruction on how to use devices as tools for thinking. In this workshop, we'll unpack the nuances of digital reading and writing and help educators adapt and adopt instructional practices to teach students the new skills they need to interact with information. This jam-packed session will provide strategies that will help you plan interactive lessons, differentiate with resources, and excite students with ownership and purpose.

**Audience:** PreK-9**Location:** Wyndham Rendezvous**Sponsored by Crossland Literacy****DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**

**9. 8:30 – 9:30****Exploring the Greater Literacy Landscape:  
Activating the Teaching and Learning Lives  
that We Want and Our Students Need**

Kass Minor  
Author  
Brooklyn, New York



In the world of education, the conversation on what the literacy landscape should look like changes on a daily basis. However, the way in which kids learn has largely remained the same—through motivation, curiosity, connectedness, and importantly, instructional choices that are both research-based and intentionally chosen. In this session, Kass Minor will engage educators with an exploration of the expansiveness of literacy landscapes as they pertain to teaching and learning in school spaces, interacting with our past, present, and future “whys” behind our choices to be in the teaching profession. Notably, participants will leave with an activated sense of their teacher-selves, creating opportunities for intentional, student-centered literacy choices in their classroom spaces.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** Wyndham Plaza 3

**10. 8:30 – 9:30****An Oral and Written Learning Design Model for  
ELD Middle School Students**

Mary Strong  
Widener University, Chester, PA  
Dorothy Idris  
Widener University, Chester, PA

This session will provide a model for teaching diverse middle school students to expand their vocabulary and writing skills. Included are procedures for implementing lessons including visual stimuli images, strategies for re-teaching and reinforcement activities, and insight into how to utilize motivating games to enhance instruction. Student examples augmented with a middle school student’s case study will be examined. Samples of informal assessments, reinforcement, and reteaching activities will be included. Handouts will be distributed providing a list of additional resources combined with practical activities teachers can use in their classrooms.

**Audience:** 4-9, ELL, Univ

**Strand:** Multilingual Learners

**Location:** BOS Center B-1

**11. 8:30 – 9:30****CANCELED****When Art and Reading Collide: Using Picture  
Books to Enhance Classroom Instruction**

Sherry Abdelhadi

Art Inspires Hope, Mokena

Let’s explore the powerful synergy between picture books and classroom instruction. Picture books offer rich visual narratives, inspiring students’ creativity, and critical thinking. They ignite imagination, teaching diverse artistic styles, techniques, and cultural contexts. Integrating picture books into your curriculum fosters empathy, connecting art with broader societal themes. They serve as catalysts for discussions, encouraging students to explore concepts deeply. Let’s harness this dynamic tool to enrich our curriculum and nurture young minds!

**Audience:** PreK-6, Spec

**Strand:** Early Childhood

**Location:** BOS Center B-2

**12. 8:30 – 9:30****CANCELED****Teaching Consent Through YA Literature**

Genevieve Sherman

Zion-Benton SD #126, Zion

Deborah Will

Zion-Benton SD #126, Zion

This presentation will take a look at teaching consent through various books. We will define consent, look at songs that both ask for and ignore consent, and dive into books that allow readers to seek the four aspects of consent used for this unit. Teachers will leave with a unit of work that is valuable and engaging.

**Audience:** 9-12

**Strand:** Reading Engagement

**Location:** BOS Center B-3

**13. 8:30 – 9:30****How to Embed the Seven Essential Literacy Skills  
into Your Content Area**

Peg Grafwallner

Solution Tree/CESA, Germantown

All learning is based on the mastery of essential literacy skills, and in this interactive presentation, educators will discover tools they need to embed literacy into all subjects. Comprehension is based on skill-building strategies that encourage purpose and engagement; as a result, educators can effectively teach those literacy skills to support developing students as they learn to read, write, and think critically. In this presentation, I will share the seven essential literacy skills and educators will discover how to: expand their teaching methods to include literacy skills, introduce literacy into daily lesson planning, embed reading comprehension into any subject area, and scaffold instruction using literacy strategies to boost subject-area comprehension.

**Audience:** 4-12

**Location:** BOS Center B-4

**14. 8:30 – 9:30****Breaking the Writing Barrier: Understanding Reluctance and Strategies to Inspire Engagement**

Kristen Walsh

SD #308, Oswego

Incorporating conversation into the teaching of writing transforms the writing process from a solitary task into an interactive, collaborative experience. By engaging students in meaningful discussions before, during, and after writing, educators can foster critical thinking, enhance idea development, and reduce writing anxiety. Discussions encourage students to articulate their thoughts, receive feedback, and refine their ideas in a supportive environment, leading to richer, more authentic writing. This approach not only improves writing skills but also builds confidence and student agency, creating a classroom culture where students see writing as a dynamic, communicative, and accessible tool. Attendees will leave with practical applications for the classroom.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-6**15. 8:30 – 9:30****Hosting a Successful Book Club at Your School**

Rebecca Meisinger

Lincoln Elementary, Oak Park

Nefret Stringham

Hatch Elementary, Oak Park

Interested in hosting a book club for students at your school but don't know where to start? In this session, we will go over the logistics and details of how we host our 3rd-5th grade book clubs and share high interest novels that have led to rich discussions among students. Participants will leave with creative ideas, a number of excellent titles, and a feeling of empowerment to host their own inclusive and equitable book clubs!

**Audience:** PreK-6, Lib**Location:** BOS Center B-7**16. 8:30 – 9:30****Observing and Coaching Explicit Instruction in the Classroom**

Tari Jansen

Illinois SLD Support Project, Charleston

This focused professional development session is designed to enhance your skills in observing and coaching explicit instruction in the classroom. This session will provide educators, instructional coaches, and administrators with practical strategies and tools to support teachers in implementing effective explicit instruction techniques.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-8*Sponsored by Illinois SLD Support Project***17. 8:30 – 9:30****Co-Teaching in the Middle School ELA Classroom: Where do WE Start?**

Amy Jachowicz-Damrow

Mannheim Middle School, Melrose Park

Steffanie Castro

Mannheim Middle School, Melrose Park

Education is changing and so are our classrooms. Statistics show that our diverse learners are benefiting from co-taught sections as well as general education students. In this setting, not only does the student learning improve but the ability to collaborate with other educators makes teachers more powerful in the delivery of quality instruction. Co-teaching involves BOTH teachers equally. Co-teaching models show how to be collaborative, be vulnerable, and be creative and develop a strong partnership. Learning isn't just for our students.

**Audience:** 4-9**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-9**18. 8:30 – 9:30****Emergent Literacy and Joint Attention Development in Autistic Preschoolers**

Brooke Sawyer

Loyola University, Chicago

Denise Davidson

Loyola University, Chicago

Although autistic children show strengths in some code-related emergent literacy skills (e.g., letter naming and sounds), they also show difficulties with print concept, phonological awareness, and name writing skills (Misiunaite et al., 2024; Westerveld & Roberts, 2017). Struggles with joint attention activities that encourage emergent literacy development may account for some of these difficulties (Misiunaite et al., 2024). Thus, a parent-led joint attention program was developed targeting code-related emergent literacy skills. This program incorporates a multimodal approach instead of a literacy-specific approach to appeal to autistic children's strengths. Program specifics and pilot findings will be discussed.

**Audience:** PreK-3, Spec**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-10

**Visit Booth 432 to see  
if your key unlocks  
the Treasure Chest  
for a prize!**



**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**



**19. 8:30 – 9:30****Simplify Reading for All Students**

Tasha Squires

Downers Grove SD #58

Learn how to create reading success by providing students with an accessible format of curriculum-friendly and high-interest titles with no professional development required! See how evidence-based practices, supports, and strategies using this format ensure all students get the reading support they need, as well as actually changing how students feel emotionally about reading. Students love it, teachers embrace it and it has led to better engagement, and over time, higher comprehension skills. These findings are also supported by a nationwide study. Learn how you can help all your students!

**Audience:** 6-12, ELL, Spec, Lib**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center VIP**20. 8:30 – 9:30****Beyond Beginning Reading: Advanced Phonics and Morphological Awareness**

Melanie Walski

Purdue University Northwest, Hammond,  
Indiana

Amy Butler

Piper Elementary School, Berwyn

This session focuses on expanding the scope of word recognition for students by incorporating morphemic analysis into ELA instruction. Takeaways include how to teach structural analysis that supports decoding, morphological awareness, and vocabulary development; criteria for choosing roots, bases, and affixes for instruction according to developmental progression; and effective methods for building word-consciousness into daily instructional routines.

**Audience:** PreK-9, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** PAL Ottawa AB**21. 8:30 – 9:30****Using Literature Circles with English Language Learners**

Kristin Lems

National Louis University, Chicago

Literature Circles have changed the way our students approach reading, and they've created more engaged and collaborative language arts classes. New forms of multimodal expression make the range of roles even wider and more compelling. Here are some creative extensions and adaptations of literature circles that can engage multilingual learners at several stages of language proficiency and in several different learning settings including the dual language or translanguage classroom.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** PAL Altgeld**22. 8:30 – 9:30****Once Upon A Time ... Fairy Tales and Fun**

Meg Billhartz

Wesclin CUSD #3, New Baden

Kristal Lewis

Wesclin CUSD #3, New Baden

Fairy tales open up a whole new world and enrich our love of reading. Utilizing fairy tales to target basic reading skills is a great way to improve engagement, vocabulary, imagination, and fun. We utilized fairy tales as the theme to our Family Reading Night. Join our session to learn how you can incorporate fairy tales into your read-aloud time or even plan a fairy tale reading event!

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Bond**SNACK BREAK****THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025****9:00 to  
10:00 AM**

*Sponsored by*  
*in the Exhibit Hall*  
*Refreshment Area*

**(Booth 513)**



**23. 8:30 – 9:30****GRRRRing Our Way Through Middle School ELA**

Marissa Stratton

Riverton School District, Riverton

Jill Mutzbauer

Riverton School District, Riverton

Join us for this session to see how we have implemented the best practice of gradual release of responsibility in our classrooms. This change has lead to less homework (and less grading), but also higher levels of student mastery. In addition, we will share some of our favorite online resources, and discuss ways we have found to easily differentiate (higher or lower) while teaching all students from the same novel/texts.

**Audience:** 6-9**Location:** PAL Freeport AB**24. 8:30 – 9:30****Timeless Tools for Teaching: Using Picture Books in Literacy Instruction**

Kari Pawl

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest

Samantha Caesar

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest

Participants will discover the timeless value and versatility of picture books in literacy instruction across grade levels. This presentation will explore how picture books can be used effectively to teach the various domains of literacy, including oracy, phonological awareness, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. For each domain, participants will learn practical strategies and specific examples of how picture books can be integrated into instruction to engage students and improve learning outcomes.

**Audience:** PreK-3**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Freeport C**25. 8:30 – 9:30****Race to Successful Writing**

Jennifer Jacknewitz

SD #118, Belleville

This session will examine composing short response answers, extended responses, essays, and research papers all utilizing versatile writing techniques paired with graphic organizers.

**Audience:** 4-9, Spec**Strand:** Writing**Location:** PAL Yates

**Heinemann  
Books are  
in Booth 300**

**9:45 – 10:45 AM****26. 9:45 – 10:45****Historical Facts + Imagination = Engaged Readers and Writers**

Laurie Halse Anderson

Author

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Reading and writing historical fiction opens many doors for kids. It helps them learn about the past, of course, but it's also an opportunity to explore the differences between information and misinformation, and refine their understanding of whose stories have been left out of most historical narratives. I'll also discuss a project template based nearly thirty years of historical research, writing and revision.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11A**27. 9:45 – 10:45****CANCELED****Writing Great Nonfiction With Kids**

Candace Fleming

Author

Oak Park, Illinois



Can kids write engaging nonfiction? Absolutely! In this fast-paced presentation, award-winning author Candace Fleming will share her secrets for creating fascinating nonfiction. Participants will not only discover strategies for effective research and directed inquiry, but they will also leave with tips to help students create exciting "true stories" rather than dull, encyclopedic accounts.

**Audience:** PreK-9**Location:** BOS Center B-11B

Visit  
**AB ANDERSON'S  
BOOKSHOPS**  
in Booth 409

**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**

**28. 9:45 – 10:45****How Do You Tell a Story That Hurts and Still Loves?**

Dare Coulter  
Author  
Raleigh, North Carolina



History is full of difficult moments, and every day brings new challenges. Join Coretta Scott King Award-winning Illustrator Dare Coulter in conversation about how art has been used to navigate difficult topics, the importance of considering children as active members of hard discussions, and lessons learned from being open to difficult discourse while doing school visits during a book tour for Kwame Alexander's *An American Story*--a book about slavery and resilience.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11C

**29. 9:45 – 10:45****No Child Left Behind**

Alicia D. Williams  
Author  
New York, New York



This phrase has been made popular with the goal of reaching all of our children. Since the pandemic, teachers are faced with the challenge of keeping students engaged, especially in reading. Alicia D. Williams will walk through the lives of others and share her work as a teacher, teaching artist of arts-integration, and author to help spark a renewal of energy, inspiration, and creativity for classroom teachers.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11D

**30. 9:45 – 10:45****Daily Doses of Digital Literacy to Spark Reading, Writing, and Thinking!**

Kristin Ziemke  
Educator/Author  
Chicago, Illinois



How do we inspire students to keep thinking? We engage them in daily doses of digital literacy by teaching them the skills they need to locate, access, read, and create digital content. All learners need explicit instruction on how to use devices as tools for thinking. In this workshop, we'll unpack the nuances of digital reading and writing and help educators adapt and adopt instructional practices to teach students the new skills they need to interact with information. This jam-packed session will provide strategies that will help you plan interactive lessons, differentiate with resources, and excite students with ownership and purpose.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** Wyndham Rendezvous

*Sponsored by Crossland Literacy*

**31. 9:45 – 10:45****Unpacking Struggle: Finding Strengths Within a School for Complex Learners**

Kass Minor  
Author  
Brooklyn, New York



How we respond to children, and what we say about children, matters. The ways in which difference shows up in our classroom is both an opportunity for learning and a challenge for us to work through. In this session, we will explore how complex learners show up in our school communities, and will practice working through strength-based perspectives, as well as developing learning opportunities that embrace differences. Additionally, participants will continue to consider inclusive literacy practices through the lens of joy and justice. (appropriate for all content areas).

**Audience:** All

**Location:** Wyndham Plaza 3

**QR EXHIBIT HALL GAME**

Complete your **GAME SHEET** for a chance to win a **FREE REGISTRATION** to the 2026 IRC Conference!

**32. 9:45 – 10:45****Teachers Helping Students Think Critically:  
Aligning Read-Aloud Questions to Bloom's  
Taxonomy**

Amy Davis

Eastern Illinois University, Charleston

Critical thinking develops over time and teachers can help to foster this thought by the quality of questions they pose during a read aloud. Reading aloud benefits students in many ways; it allows them to listen to a fluent reader and then think critically about text and illustrations. The latter is dependent on the question quality teachers create that align to Bloom's taxonomy. The purpose of this presentation is to show teachers how to generate questions based on the revised version of Bloom's taxonomy, provide an example using a specific text, "*Patchwork*" by Matt de la Pena, and offer suggestions for practitioners.

**Audience:** PreK-3**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-1**33. 9:45 – 10:45****Building Strong Readers: Bridging Gaps in  
Language Comprehension**

Danielle Beliveau-Derion

Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, North Carolina

Effective reading extends beyond simply decoding words; it involves understanding and interpreting the deeper meaning within texts. This session focuses on strategies to enhance language comprehension, aiming to improve reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Participants will explore the challenges that students commonly face in language comprehension, including vocabulary development, sentence structure, and contextual understanding.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-2**CANCELED****34. 9:45 – 10:45****From Classroom Storytellers to Best Sellers:  
Empowering Educators to Unlock their Author  
Potential**

Tiffany "Fenyx Blue" Washington

Wisdom Works, LLC from SD #161, Flossmoor

Join teacher and author Tiffany "Fenyx Blue" Washington for an engaging presentation that transforms teachers into published authors! This session will explore the journey from educator to writer, highlighting essential skills like leadership, writing techniques, mindset, and time management. Attendees will learn problem-solving strategies, discover publishing avenues, and understand how to accommodate diverse learning styles in writing. Research shows that when teachers share their stories, students become more engaged and inspired (Graham & Perin, 2007).

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-3**35. 9:45 – 10:45****The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan (ICLP)  
and What it Means for Advanced and Accelerated  
Literacy Learners**

Laura Beltchenko

North Cook Intermediate Service Center,  
Libertyville

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan and its implications support differentiated literacy instruction for ALL learners providing districts and schools "flexibility and local autonomy" in a "no one size fits all" literacy learning program. This session will place a lens on the ICLP and its applications for "Constructivist and Discovery" models of literacy instruction. Lesson demonstration will focus on aspects of the "7 Competencies of Literacy" and how they apply to advanced literacy learners.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-4**36. 9:45 – 10:45****An Introduction to AI: Harnessing AI for the  
Classroom**

Wendy Streit

Romeoville High School, Romeoville

Welcome to our introductory AI class, where we embark on an exciting journey into the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its transformative power in education. In this introductory course, you will: Gain a basic understanding of AI, Explore popular AI platforms, Demystify AI sites and tools, and Streamline operations. By the end of this class, you will be equipped with practical knowledge and skills to harness the potential of AI. Discover how AI can revolutionize the way you approach your classroom! (written with AI)

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Technology**Location:** BOS Center B-6

37. 9:45 – 10:45

**CANCELED****Diversity Matters: Learn How to Build a Virtual Library to Allow Your Students Mirrors and Windows to the World!**

Diana Brannon

Elmhurst University, Elmhurst

Diverse books are essential because they allow children to see themselves and understand their world. We hear this all of the time. But, books are expensive! Learn how to use a digital platform to create FREE libraries in your classroom that allow children to explore, learn, and understand diverse races, genders, family structures, cultures, body images, and more. Extensive book lists and details about how to set up a virtual library in your classroom for FREE will be given. This is a presentation you won't want to miss!

**Audience:** PreK-6, Lib**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-7

38. 9:45 – 10:45

**Building and Crossing the Bridge in Supporting Neurodiverse Learners**

Lindsey Sanderson

New Leader Academy, Streamwood

Wambui Ojo

Little Friends Inc., Warrenville

As neurodiversity awareness grows, educators play a key role in creating inclusive environments. This presentation explores how attitudes toward neurodiversity impact teaching practices and classroom culture. We've developed a survey using the Neurodiversity Attitudes Questionnaire to assess attitudes in non-public outplacements, where students with greater support needs often thrive. We will showcase assistive technology tools that bridge the gap between educators and neurodiverse students, improving communication and learning outcomes. Participants will gain insights into how attitudes shape inclusion and leave with actionable strategies and tools to foster inclusive, innovative classrooms where neurodiverse learners succeed.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-8

39. 9:45 – 10:45

**Building the Foundation for Successful Readers in Only 10 Days!**

Christine Swiderski

Palmer Elementary, Chicago

Hailey Rovetuso

Palmer Elementary, Chicago

Mary Anne Flanigan

Palmer Elementary, Chicago

Discover the mini-lessons and anchor charts that will set your year off right in only 10 days! We know that building the foundation for strong readers is essential. Join us to find out how we do this successfully within our diverse classrooms. We will share how we embed our mini-lessons with anchor charts driven by student ideas. This gives students a voice and ownership in their journey to become successful independent readers. Examples provided will be from a gifted classroom teacher and two general education classroom teachers whose rooms include English language learners and diverse learners.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-9

40. 9:45 – 10:45

**Collaboration Is More Than Interaction: How to Create a Collaborative Culture that Strengthens the Alignment and Impact of Tiered Instruction**

Kari Harris

IL MTSS-Network/Northern Illinois University,  
DeKalb

Kim Spiker

IL MTSS-Network/Northern Illinois University,  
DeKalb

Collaboration is a high leverage practice that maximizes student learning. True collaboration requires intention, effort, and skill. A skillful collaborative team culture unleashes the creativity and resourcefulness of teachers to better serve their students across all tiers, in the classroom and intervention room for both high-performing and struggling schools. When educators see and speak to each other regularly, it's easy to have the impression that collaboration is happening. However, interaction alone does not necessarily result in effective collaboration that benefits students. In this session, attendees will learn more about creating a collaborative culture to strengthen the alignment of tiered instruction.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-10



**41. 9:45 – 10:45****The ESSENTIAL Roles of Engagement, Interest, Attitude, Motivation & Collaboration in Successful Reading, & Strategies that Work!**

Sarah Elizabeth

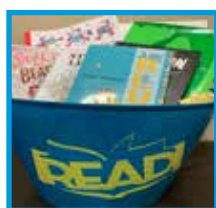
Roosevelt University, Chicago

Multiple factors aside from discrete skill mastery impact children becoming proficient readers, including interest, attitude, motivation, engagement, social goals, and collaboration. This session will include how students' social motivation, and their relations with their peers, strongly influences their academic performance (Juvonen & Wentzel, 1996). This interactive session will introduce a new successful collaborative approach for heterogenous small groups of children, which allows children to maintain a stronger internal locus of control, which research has shown has correlated with higher achievement (Findley & Cooper, 1983), and greater autonomy, whose relationship with reading achievement has been well documented (Guthrie, 2006).

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Admin**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center VIP

# HALL OF COUNCILS RAFFLE BASKETS

RAFFLE BASKETS ARE IN **BOOTH 433** AT THE BOS CENTER



**Tickets are**  
**1 for \$5**  
**5 for \$20**  
**or 10 for \$35**

**HOW TO PLAY:**

- Purchase your raffle tickets at the **Registration Desk**.
- Place your raffle ticket in the container in front of the basket you would like to win by **Friday at Noon**.
- A winning ticket will be pulled for each basket.
- Winners will be called to **pick up their basket before leaving the conference**.

**PROCEEDS WILL BE FUNDING CONFERENCE  
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NEXT YEAR!**

**Thank You for Your Support and Good Luck!**

**42. 9:45 – 10:45****Orthographic Mapping in First and Second Language Decoding and Spelling**

Kristin Lems

National Louis University, Chicago

Samantha Contreras

CSD #300, Algonquin

Jen Parisi

CUSD #220, Barrington

We learn to read, write and spell through the medium of a writing system, or orthography. The parameters of our first language writing system is influential on how easily we learn to read, write and spell. When children acquire and learn an additional language, in this case, English, different orthographic conventions will affect their literacy development. Interesting original research using orthographic mapping with second-grade students in two instructional settings (all English and TWDL) shows that English spelling improves, but differently for L1 English and L2 English learners. We'll examine these differences, with recommendations for best uses of orthographic mapping.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** PAL Altgeld**43. 9:45 – 10:45****Making Reading Accessible to Newcomers, ELs and Multilinguals**

Jessica Valverde

SD #102, La Grange

Mayra Romero

SD #102, La Grange

We will share tools and resources that you can use to create engaging and meaningful reading experiences for your Newcomers, EL's and Multilingual students. You will leave with ideas on how to guide and maximize your students' understandings and skills in reading to positively support their dynamic bilingualism.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** PAL Bond**44. 9:45 – 10:45****Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Book Award: Embracing the Love, Joy, and Empowerment of Student Choice**

Ruth Gheysen

CCSD #46, Grayslake

Come hear about the new books on the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Award 2026 Master List! We'll book talk the 20 new titles on our list, discuss ways you can incorporate the Caudills within your school or library, and share how you, too, can become a reader/evaluator for our future lists.

**Audience:** 4-9, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin, Lib**Strand:** Librarians & Children's/YA Literature**Location:** PAL Freeport AB



**45. 9:45 – 10:45****Building Literacy Foundations: Content Knowledge and Instruction for Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction**

Samantha Caesar

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest

In this session, participants will deepen their understanding of phonemic awareness and phonics and how these essential skills form the foundation for proficient reading. The distinctions between phonemic awareness and phonics, their importance, and their role in reading development will be examined. Attendees will gain insight into the content knowledge required for both domains and instruction that is explicit, systematic, and research-based. Educators will leave equipped with the knowledge and strategies to confidently teach these foundational literacy skills.

**Audience:** PreK-3, Spec**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** PAL Freeport C**46. 9:45 – 10:45****Writing: Let's Puzzle It Out Together!**

Keta Foltz

Eastland CUSD #308, Shannon

Amber Findlay

Iroquois County CUSD #9, Watseka

Christa Curley

SD #314, West Carroll

Drop into our session to learn how to "Tetris" the essential writing pieces into place. With the writing process as your foundation, slide, move, and rotate strategies to explore fun new ways to get your students writing, banking new words, and scoring big as authors.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Writing**Location:** PAL Yates**VISIT THE EXHIBITS**

**THURSDAY,  
MARCH 13, 2025  
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM**

*Refreshments will be served from  
9:00 – 10:00 AM and from  
3:00 – 4:00 PM  
in the Exhibit Hall*

**IRC AWARDS****Gene Kramer ICARE for Reading Award**

Jennifer Mangayao

*Thursday Breakfast at the PAL Ballroom  
with Dan Santat*

**Family Literacy Award**

Sherrie Blackford and Dawn Wiles

*Thursday Luncheon at the Wyndham Ballroom with  
Laurie Halse Anderson*

**Barack Obama Library Award**

Ceté Brewton-Wilkin

*Thursday Luncheon at the PAL Ballroom  
with Liz Kleinrock*

**Prairie State Award for Excellence in Children's Writing**

Cozbi A. Cabrera

*Thursday PSA Banquet at the PAL Ballroom  
with Alicia D. Williams*

**IRC Hall of Fame Award**

Laura Beltchenko

*Thursday PSA Banquet at the PAL Ballroom  
with Alicia D. Williams*

**IRC Service Award**

Diana Wilkie

*Friday Breakfast at the PAL Ballroom  
with Darcie Little Badger*

**Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award**

Cindy Gerwin

*Friday Luncheon at the PAL Ballroom  
with Ernest Morrell*

**Static Sticker Decal Contest**

Augie Brandt, St. Libory Grade School

*Friday Luncheon at the Wyndham Ballroom  
with Duncan Tonatiuh*

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## 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

## 47. 11:00 – 12:00

**The Little Things**

Dan Santat  
Author  
San Marino, California



Dan will discuss the subtle mechanics of creating a book like *Beekle*, *After the Fall*, and other titles to demonstrate how subtle changes in text and visuals can completely change the interpretation of a scene and story.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11A

## 48. 11:00 – 12:00

**Finding the Heart**

Cozbi A. Cabrera  
Author  
Chicago, Illinois



Where do you begin? Patricia McKissack's character urges her young daughter to "look for the heart." Cozbi shares some advice that can be applied to any creative project or profession.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11B



Register for the  
Spring 2025  
IRC Book Club

## 49. 11:00 – 12:00

**New and Notable Books for Grades K-3**

Becky Anderson Wilkins  
Anderson's Bookshops  
Naperville, Illinois



This is a presentation of new and notable books recommended for classroom reading. A variety of genres, including picture books, poetry, fiction, and informational books will be presented, and books will be available for inspection.

**Audience:** PreK-3

**Location:** BOS Center B-11C

**Sponsored by**  **ANDERSON'S BOOKSHOPS**

## 50. 11:00 – 12:00

**Illinois Reads Author Panel for Birth to 2nd Grade**

**Doug Cenko**  
Grades K-2



**Kat Chen**  
Birth to Age 4



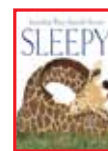
**Molly Cranch**  
Birth to Age 4



**Jacob Grant**  
Grades K-2



**Ruth Spiro**  
Grades K-2



**Jennifer Ward**  
Birth to Age 4

Join the authors of the 2025 Illinois Reads Books at the IRC Conference! During this panel, authors from Birth to 2nd Grade books will be highlighted. Come participate in this exciting chance to meet and greet Illinois Reads authors as they discuss the inspiration for their stories, current projects they are working on, and ask questions you've been anxious to know about your favorite characters.

**Audience:** PreK-3

**Location:** BOS Center B-11D

**Sponsored by**  **Springfield Illinois**  
WE'RE MORE THAN ONE DAY



**51. 11:00 – 12:00****Excavation Leads to Emancipation: The Power of Poetry in English Education**

Darius Phelps  
Educator, The Center for Publishing  
& Applied Liberal Arts (PALA)  
New York University  
New York, New York



This session will discuss the power of poetry in English Education and its ability to foster meaning-making, social-emotional learning, and liberation. I will emphasize the importance of poetry in building a sense of community and belonging, as well as its role in transforming students' social-emotional skills. Overall, exploring the potential of poetry to create a more inclusive and empowering educational experience.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** Wyndham Rendezvous

**53. 11:00 – 12:00****Embrace Oracy: Empower All Children to Find Their Voice and Build a Foundation for Literacy**

Heidi Marchetti

SD #47, Crystal Lake

K. Mallery Keenan

Glacier Ridge Elementary, Crystal Lake

Students come to school with varying degrees of expressive and receptive language and all learners benefit from opportunities to build oracy. Multilingual students may need increased attention to bridge between languages. With the growing use of technology in homes, children may have limited opportunities to increase vocabulary and engage in meaningful conversations. Purposeful attention to strengthening oral language is vital to building a strong foundation for literacy learning. Participants will gain the rationale, research, and resources needed to get started assessing students and planning these groups to build essential early literacy skills.

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec, Admin

**Strand:** Multilingual Learners

**Location:** BOS Center B-1

**54. 11:00 – 12:00****Cultivating a Culture of Reading by Curating a Collection**

Cindy Gerwin

Bridging Perspectives, LLC, Lisle

Choice, voice, and access are three keys to cultivating a culture of reading. When we give students the power to choose their own books, it gives them voice. As educators, we know that readers need access to a variety of inclusive multimodal texts that not only reflect their own identities, but also mirrors the world around them. A variety of options will be presented on how to entice readers by curating a classroom library, both physical and digital, that contains a wide variety of carefully selected literature – both classic and current.

**Audience:** PreK-9, Lib

**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging

**Location:** BOS Center B-2

**52. 11:00 – 12:00****Energize End-of-Year Literacy Learning: Fresh Strategies for the Final Stretch**

Maria Walther

Maria P. Walther LLC, Aurora

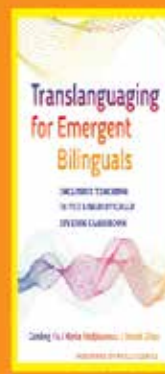
Explore innovative strategies to revitalize interactive read-alouds and empower students to independently apply reading strategies. Learn practical approaches that infuse joy into literacy routines while boosting learning and engagement. Set students up for summer reading success by fostering a love of reading that extends beyond the classroom. Leave with actionable strategies to invigorate your year-end literacy instruction.

**Audience:** PreK-6

**Strand:** Reading Engagement

**Location:** Wyndham Plaza 3

Register for the  
Spring 2025  
IRC Book Club



Register for the  
Spring 2025  
IRC Book Club

**55. 11:00 – 12:00****Breaking the Language Barrier: Best Practices for Developing Reading and Writing Proficiency for English as Second Language Learners**

Briana Young

Literacy Logic, Detroit, MI

The student population 20 years ago is very different from the population we have today. There is a new trend of English as a Second language learner students migrating to the United States school system. According to the National Center of Education Statistics, in fall 2021 there were 5.3 million ESL learners entering into the US school system. With this diverse population, schools and teachers are finding it challenging to educate these new students from diverse backgrounds. The fear of having the lack of tools and training to meet their academic needs make them question their abilities as educators.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL, Admin**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** BOS Center B-3**56. 11:00 – 12:00****IL Authors and Agriculture**

Kevin Daugherty

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom,

Bloomington

The list of amazing children's books on farming, gardening, and agriculture continues to grow. But did you know that many of these popular books were written by IL authors? This interactive session will show you how to incorporate these engaging texts and their authors into an assortment of content areas and grade levels.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Location:** BOS Center B-4*Sponsored by Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom***57. 11:00 – 12:00****Author Visits: Beyond the Basics, Beyond the Books**

Alice McGinty

SCBWI Illinois Author, West Bloomfield, MI

Sarah Aronson

SCBWI Illinois Author, Chicago

Teachers use goal setting to direct many elements of the curriculum. Why not author visits? Experienced authors and presenters Alice B. McGinty and Sarah Aronson share a new approach to planning and implementing author visits, including a checklist of social-emotional and curriculum goals designed to help educators work with authors to plan visits that facilitate and scaffold their curriculum objectives. Participants will come away with specific "beyond the basics, beyond the books" techniques of goal setting, preparation, and follow-ups to liberate literacy and provide students with what we all wish for in author visits: empowering, meaningful interactions and valuable takeaways.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Librarians & Children's/YA Literature**Location:** BOS Center B-6*Sponsored by SCBWI Illinois***58. 11:00 – 12:00****Writing Woes: Searching for Focus in Student Writing**

Steven Layne

Wheaton College, Wheaton

Have you reviewed a piece of student writing and thought, "I have no idea what this is even about?" Award-winning author and educator Steven Layne will share his specific lesson sequence for teaching the skill of writing "focus" to students.

**Audience:** 4-12, Admin**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-7**59. 11:00 – 12:00****The Wizardry of Words: Casting Spells for Vocabulary Mastery and Curiosity**

Suzanne Weider

Seth Paine Elementary School, Lake Zurich

Kristen Robinson

Seth Paine Elementary School, Lake Zurich

Unlock the secrets of effective vocabulary instruction with The Wizardry of Words: Casting Spells for Vocabulary Mastery and Curiosity! In this workshop, educators will delve into practical strategies for teaching vocabulary, from understanding morphology and etymology to effectively using context clues. Participants will learn the distinctions between Tier 1, 2, and 3 vocabulary and explore methods to incorporate Tier 2 vocabulary across content areas. This session will help you inspire curiosity and empower students to engage with new words confidently and independently.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL, Lib**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-8**60. 11:00 – 12:00****Book Clubs: Liberation from the Canon**

Kathryn Jones

SD #186, Springfield

Brandon Thompson

SD #186, Springfield

Strategies of how to facilitate an engaging, effective book club will be shared. I will explain how I organize and schedule an entire unit, and I will offer strategies and examples for mini-lessons. Part of the presentation will be about suggestions on how to select text, garner excitement, and arrange student groups. I will explain the difference between literacy circles and authentic book clubs. This type of collaborative learning is worthwhile as it builds skills necessary for life outside the classroom while maintaining academic rigor.

**Audience:** 6-12**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-9



**61. 11:00 – 12:00****CANCELED****Heart Books to Inspire Readers**

Katie Russell

CUSD #186, Murphysboro

Greg Micek

Maercker School, Clarendon Hills

This session focuses on how to incorporate authentic and inclusive texts to develop self-awareness and coping skills, build empathy, and deal with trauma while meeting literacy standards.

**Audience:** PreK-9, ELL, Spec, Lib**Location:** BOS Center B-10**62. 11:00 – 12:00****Read, Draw, Write: Unlocking Math Word Problems for All Learners**

Elizabeth Buglio

Strassburg Elementary School, Sauk Village

Rebecca Ehman

Strassburg Elementary School, Sauk Village

Read, Draw, Write: Unlocking Math Word Problems for All Learners Word problems can be challenging for students, especially those struggling with language or math concepts. Read, Draw, Write offers a simple, effective strategy to help all learners succeed. This presentation demonstrates how reading for understanding, drawing to visualize, and writing to solve builds confidence and problem-solving skills. With tools like tape diagrams and graphic organizers, participants will explore ways to support diverse learners, including English language learners. Attendees will gain practical resources and strategies to make math accessible, engaging, and equitable, empowering every student to approach word problems with success.

**Audience:** PreK-9, ELL, Spec, Adults, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center VIP**63. 11:00 – 12:00****CANCELED****Unveiling the Education Code: Cultivating Equitable Learning Environments**

Larue Fitch

National Louis University, Chicago

This session focuses on amplifying student voices, particularly those from marginalized communities, by implementing practical strategies to encourage participation and ensure inclusivity. Participants will explore techniques to create classrooms where all students feel valued and empowered. We will identify and dismantle common educational barriers, using case studies and real-world examples of successful inclusive practices. Additionally, the session will guide educators in designing curricula that equip students with essential skills for global citizenship, integrating culturally relevant pedagogy to address diverse needs and ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed.

**Audience:** PreK-9, Admin**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** PAL Ottawa AB**64. 11:00 – 12:00****Unpacking Oracy: Enhancing Literacy Practices through Intentional Implementation**

Kari Pawl

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest

Annette VanAken

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest

In this interactive presentation, participants will enhance their understanding of oracy and explore ways to integrate new approaches with existing literacy practices. The session will introduce strategies to help educators intentionally incorporate oracy as a key learning component, while effectively mapping it within their schedules, structures, lessons, and even unstructured moments. Participants will strengthen their observation, assessment, and reflection practices to deepen their practical skills.

**Audience:** PreK-3**Location:** PAL Altgeld**65. 11:00 – 12:00****Meeting the Literacy Needs of Our PreK-2 Learners**

Anastasia Gruper

SD #47, Crystal Lake

Elise Dean

SD #47, Crystal Lake

Rebecca Morton

SD #47, Crystal Lake

Through our curriculum review process, we identified a need to improve our literacy instruction for our PreK through second grade students. Join us, a building principal, a director of literacy, and a director of multilingual learners, as we share our journey to create a guaranteed and viable curriculum aligned to standards along with our professional learning plan to improve instructional practices.

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Admin**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Bond**66. 11:00 – 12:00****Boundless Book Clubs: Engaging Readers Through Choice**

Brian Roach

CUSD #201, Westmont

Anna Jakubowski

Westmont High School, Westmont

Attendees will learn how the presenters approach independent reading in the classroom to embrace student choice, encourage social interaction, and build communication skills.

**Audience:** 9-12**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Freeport AB



67. 11:00 – 12:00

**Books for Struggling Readers Grades 5-12**

Elizabeth Goldsmith-Conley

D.R.E.A.A.M. Academic Excellence

Committee, Urbana

Tambree Krouse

Edwards County High School, Albion

Leslie Forsman

Tropia District Library, Chapin

Dawn Taylor

Carbondale High School, Carbondale

The Struggling Readers Committee will share this year's recommendations by IRC members for books that engage older struggling readers. Participants receive handouts that include titles and reading levels. The session includes best practices for choosing books. Participants will be encouraged to share their own suggestions.

**Audience:** 6-12, Lib**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Freeport C

68. 11:00 – 12:00

**No Time to Lose: Tips for Engaging Your Learners to Make the Most of Instructional Time**

Angie Levan

Carlinville Primary School, Carlinville

There is not enough time in the day, so every minute counts! Tuned out, unengaged students aren't learning. This presentation will give simple ways to ensure that students are engaged and learning. Topics will include ways to keep everyone involved in whole group instruction, the perfect method for small reading groups, and great procedures for partner reading to keep both readers involved. Ideas will also be given for differentiated reading and writing practice during independent literacy centers. Attendees will also leave with some great open-ended games that keep students engaged.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Yates

# IRC PHOTO BOOTH & GRAFFITI WALL



Leave your mark to Liberate Literacy  
with kind words and pics of  
Love, Joy, & Empowerment!

Visit the **IRC PHOTO BOOTH & GRAFFITI WALL**  
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and at the Wyndham Ballroom!

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**IRC APP** under **IRC SOCIAL**. One photo will be selected to  
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12:15 – 2:00 PM

## Thursday Luncheon

69. 12:15 – 2:00

## Antibias Instruction Through an Inquiry Lens

Liz Kleinrock  
Author  
Washgton, DC



In this session, participants will learn about creating foundations for antibias and antiracism practices in their classrooms and school communities that incorporate the ELA by utilizing an inquiry lens based on student prior knowledge and guiding questions.

**Audience:** Ticket Required

**Location:** PAL Ballroom

**Barack Obama Library Award**  
will be presented at the Thursday Luncheon to

**Ceté Brewton-Wilkin**

Award will be presented by Jena Kent, Chair

## Thursday Luncheon

70. 12:15 – 2:00

## Finding Your Courage When Things Fall Apart

Laurie Halse Anderson  
Author  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Join Laurie Halse Anderson as she shares how to find your courage when things fall apart.

**Audience:** Ticket Required

**Location:** Wyndham Ballroom

**Family Literacy Award**  
will be presented at the Thursday Luncheon to

**Sherrie Blackford and Dawn Wiles**

Award will be presented by Barb Ashton, Chair

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# HUNGRY?

## The BOS Center Concession Stand is Open!

**Purchase lunch and take it to one of the lunch time sessions  
planned from 1:00 – 2:00 PM in the BOS Center**

**Concessions are Open:**  
**Thursday** 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
**Friday** 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

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1:00 – 2:00 PM

## 71. 1:00 – 2:00

## Illinois Reads Author Panel for Kindergarten to 5th Grade



**Nadia Ahmed**  
Grades K-2



**Fiona Cook**  
Grades 3 to Adult



**Lisa Katzenberger**  
Grades 3-5



**Kelly Leigh Miller**  
Grades 3-5



**Janet Nolan**  
Grades K-2



**Barb Rosenstock**  
Grades 3-5

Join the authors of the 2025 Illinois Reads Books at the IRC Conference! During this panel, authors from Kindergarten to 5th Grade books will be highlighted. Come participate in this exciting chance to meet and greet Illinois Reads authors as they discuss the inspiration for their stories, current projects they are working on, and ask questions you've been anxious to know about your favorite characters.

**Audience:** PreK-6

**Location:** BOS Center B-11A

Sponsored by



## 72. 1:00 – 2:00

## Characters! Comics! Collaboration!

Trisha Speed Shaskan  
Author  
Minneapolis, Minnesota



Stephen Shaskan  
Author  
Minneapolis, Minnesota



Using examples from *Pizza and Taco*, *Punk Skunks*, and *Q and Ray*, Stephen Shaskan and Trisha Speed Shaskan will share how they collaborate while creating picture books and graphic novels. With an emphasis on collaboration, they'll share tips and tools you can use to teach students to write and illustrate stories.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11B

## 73. 1:00 – 2:00

## Book Gossip

Becky Anderson Wilkins  
Anderson's Bookshops  
Naperville, Illinois



What are the hottest new adult titles for your reading pleasure? Come to the Book Gossip to hear about great reads for grown ups!

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11C

Sponsored by **AB ANDERSON'S BOOKSHOPS**



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Visit **Booth 433** for a  
chance to win an  
IRC Hall of Council  
Raffle Basket!



**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**



**74. 1:00 - 2:00****Improving Reading Skills Through Storytelling**

Michael Lockett

Educator/Storyteller/Author, Normal

Research-proven and joyful way to teach. Plan to laugh and play as you learn how one of the oldest and most effective teaching techniques in the world can help build vocabulary and reading skills while improving student listening, speaking and reading comprehension. Not your typical conference lecture. The speaker will encourage you to participate so you can leave this session knowing how to most effectively use storytelling with your students. Participants will be given access to over 250 stories, 20+ storytelling videos, 40+ lesson plans for using storytelling in the classroom and more.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec, Admin, Lib**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** BOS Center B-11D**Sponsored by Mike Lockett: Storyteller/Author****75. 1:00 - 2:00****From Letting It Happen to Making It Happen: A School District's Journey Through Implementation**

Samantha Chatman

95 Percent Group, Lincolnshire

Meri Havenar

SD #186, Springfield

Implementation is both an art and a science, focusing on impact and alignment with a district's core values, leading to transformational change. The first step is creating a team to move from "letting it happen" to "making it happen." This session explores Springfield Public Schools – District 186's journey. Collaboration based on implementation science equips teachers to turn knowledge into action. We'll guide you through implementing high-quality, evidence-aligned instruction, sharing successes, roadblocks, and next steps towards effective implementation.

**Audience:** PreK-6, Admin**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-1**Sponsored by 95 Percent Group****76. 1:00 - 2:00****Helping Minimize the Cognitive Workload of the English Learner: An Overview Along with a Special Focus on Cross-Linguistic Connections**

Antonio Fierro

95 Percent Group, Lincolnshire

Over five million English learners are in U.S. schools nationwide, all with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, making each learner's language acquisition journey unique. The instructional approaches and resources chosen must match the cognitive and linguistic workload faced by our language learners. This session will focus on positioning instructional approaches supporting the linguistic assets that our students bring to the classroom (translanguaging). Distinctions will also be made between those linguistic assets that may transfer partially, those that transfer entirely, and those that may cause cognitive dissonance between Spanish and English. A cross-linguistic comparison between both languages' phonological, orthographic, and phonetic systems will also be made.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** BOS Center B-2**Sponsored by 95 Percent Group****77. 1:00 - 2:00****Supporting Writing Mini-lessons Using Your Benchmark Advance Resources**

Shauna Williams

Benchmark Education, New Rochelle, NY

This session is perfect for Coaches and Teachers using Benchmark Advance and wanting to perfect their writing mini lessons. We will examine the types of writing mini-lessons including writing in response to reading. We will explore the writing mini-lessons and how they support students as they grow as a writer. We will model a writing lesson. We will deepen our understanding of the different writing lessons and development of lessons over the year.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-3**Sponsored by Benchmark Education**


LIBERATING LITERACY  
EMBRACE LOVE, JOY, & EMPOWERMENT

**Visit  
Booths 331-333  
for the IRC Photo Booth  
& Graffiti Wall!**

**78. 1:00 - 2:00****Sound Walls & Decodables: The Dynamic Duo for Literacy Success**

Ethan Lynn

Reading Horizons, Peoria Heights

This session will explore the powerful combination of sound walls and decodable texts in fostering literacy success. Attendees will learn how to effectively implement sound walls to support phonemic awareness and how decodable texts can reinforce phonics instruction. This dynamic duo is essential for closing the gap between sound recognition and fluent reading. Participants will leave equipped with practical strategies to apply these techniques in their classrooms, enhancing student reading fluency and overall success.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-4*Sponsored by Reading Horizons*

**SNACK BREAK****THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025****3:00 to  
4:00 PM***Sponsored by**in the Exhibit Hall  
Refreshment Area***Monsters  
on Mill Street**

(Booths 519-520)

**79. 1:00 - 2:00****Agency and Identity: Pathways Towards Developing Writers**

Pat Pollack

Schoolwide Inc, Tappan, NY

The Comprehensive Literacy Plan provides educators with descriptors that invite us to rethink our approaches to supporting our developing writers. By using phrases such as “a tool for cognitive development,” “structuring ideas,” and “reflection and critical thinking,” as well as “complementing reading,” and “enhancing language understanding,” the plan offers additional insights that help distinguish between simply teaching and assigning writing from actively developing and nurturing writers. During this session, educators will discover how fostering habits of mind, agency, and identity can serve as critical entry points for teaching writers. **Audience:** PreK-6, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin

**Location:** BOS Center B-6*Sponsored by Schoolwide***80. 1:00 - 2:00****Connecting the Art of Teaching with the Science of Reading**

Lindsay Kinsey

i-Ready | Curriculum Associates, Chicago

Come learn how to incorporate strategies to shift your foundational instructional practices. This session will focus on embedded strategic routines, content-rich decodable texts, and targeted assessments to teach foundational skills efficiently and effectively.

**Audience:** PreK-6, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-7*Sponsored by i-Ready | Curriculum Associates***81. 1:00 - 2:00****Building Foundational Literacy Using a Multisensory-Phonemic Approach**

Jennifer Orr

Eyewords Inc., London, Ontario

Participants are invited to attend a professional learning session focused on scaffolding foundational literacy skills. This session merges multisensory learning with systematic phonics, reinforced by hands-on activities. Expect to explore practical ideas and resources, including strategies for integrating multisensory-orthographic high frequency word instruction into structured literacy programs tailored for K-2 learners, English language learners, and those needing reading intervention. Additionally, discover an innovative multisensory-phonemic method and resources for teaching the alphabetic code, enhancing mastery of letter-sound correspondences through a mnemonic approach. Groundbreaking research findings will also be shared during the session. Audience Level: Beginner

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-8*Sponsored by Eyewords Inc.***CANCELED****DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**



**82. 1:00 - 2:00****Learning to Improve: Developing Effective Leadership Systems**

Ketesha Melendez

American Reading Company, Berkeley

Lauren McDonald

American Reading Company, Berkeley

Kelly Zimmerman

SD #87, Berkeley

Leaders use disciplined inquiry to drive improvement. Systems created accelerate learning through networked communities for all stakeholders.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-9*Sponsored by American Reading Company***83. 1:00 - 2:00****Bring the Magic of Kinesthetic Learning to Your Literacy Instruction**

Jennifer Burchfiel

Instructional Strategy Director, Dallas, Texas

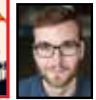
Our ultimate instructional goal is ENGAGEMENT! Most often, we incorporate manipulatives and hands-on learning during our math and science instruction, but there are so many simple ways to engage our students with those same hands-on materials during our literacy block and those strategies can be the secret sauce to maximizing engagement in literacy instruction. By providing students with simple, hands-on applications of key comprehension and word work skills reading instruction will be enhanced.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-10*Sponsored by hand2mind, Inc.***84. 1:00 - 2:00****From Scavenger Hunts to Interactive Note Making: How Practical Instructional Tools Can Help You Nurture Proficient Readers in Every Classroom**

Sharon Nepote

Thoughtful Classroom, Sauk Village

As teachers, the most critical academic skill we can help students develop is their proficiency as readers. This is true in ELA and every classroom, regardless of grade level or content area. If we want students to engage deeply with texts, collect and evaluate textual evidence, attend to important text features, and make meaningful notes, then we need to build their skills and confidence as proficient readers who regularly process texts in these ways. In this session, participants will explore two reading tools designed to engage students and empower them to address even the most rigorous literary and informative texts.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center VIP*Sponsored by Silver Strong & Associates/Thoughtful Classroom***2:15 – 3:15 PM****85. 2:15 – 3:15****Illinois Reads Author Panel for 6th to 12th Grade****Ronni Davis**  
Grades 9-12**Sharelle Byars**  
Grades 6-8**Jeff Miller**  
Grades 6-8**Ray Nadine**  
Grades 6-8**Wendy Parris**  
Grades 6-8**Sherri L. Smith**  
Grades 9-12**Ann Zhao**  
Grades 9-12

Join the authors of the 2025 Illinois Reads Books at the IRC Conference! During this panel, authors from 6th to 12th Grade books will be highlighted. Come participate in this exciting chance to meet and greet Illinois Reads authors as they discuss the inspiration for their stories, current projects they are working on, and ask questions you've been anxious to know about your favorite characters.

**Audience:** 6-12**Location:** BOS Center B-11A*Sponsored by*

**Visit Booth 431  
for FREE Illinois  
Reads Bookmarks!**

**86. 2:15 – 3:15****How to Locate Your Voice in Picture Book Making**

Cozbi A. Cabrera  
Author  
Chicago, Illinois



Some thoughts about cultivating a point of view and tools for the story telling kit – visual and literary.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11B

**87. 2:15 – 3:15****Out of the Picture: Artists' Responsibility for Pain in Cultural Contexts**

Dare Coulter  
Author  
Raleigh, North Carolina



Pictures are worth a thousand words, but sometimes the things that aren't in the frame are worth even more. This presentation by Coretta Scott King Book Award-winning Illustrator Dare Coulter explores the way selected artists have explored painful subjects, and discusses artistic decisions that are made in the process of creating artworks featuring difficult subject matter or complex cultural context.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11C

**88. 2:15 – 3:15****Our Lives are Stories**

Alicia D. Williams  
Author  
New York, New York



Our lives are shaped by the stories we tell ourselves, ones we experience, and the ones we learn from others. Our stories are gifts that we offer one another to inspire, encourage, and build steps of empathy and understanding. Alicia D. Williams will share her storytelling journey through the specific stories that have shaped her. You will be inspired to mine your own life for stories as well.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11D

**89. 2:15 – 3:15****From Scribbles to Stories: Empowering Developing Writers with Traditional and Digital Tools**

Kristin Ziemke  
Educator/Author  
Chicago, Illinois



Join this interactive session, as we explore strategies to cultivate authentic writing experiences for students in preschool through Grade 8 emphasizing both traditional and digital platforms. By prioritizing authenticity, we aim to foster a deep connection to the written word, empowering learners to articulate themselves with confidence and creativity.

Participants will delve into methods that promote student agency in the writing process, encouraging children to take ownership of their ideas and narratives. From journaling to collaborative storytelling, to AI, educators will discover practical approaches that honor each child's unique voice and perspective.

**Audience:** PreK-6

**Location:** Wyndham Rendezvous

*Sponsored by Crossland Literacy*

**90. 2:15 – 3:15****Thought Sanctuary**

Kass Minor  
Author  
Brooklyn, New York



Thought Sanctuary™ is a gathering space curated by The Minor Collective for educators to meet joyfully, safely, and powerfully, generating ideas that are dream-based, yet reality-laden. Characterized by this thoughtful approach, participants in Thought Sanctuary™ can look forward to making connections with other conference attendees, via a variety of means (including art-making!) sharing abundant ideas, staying curious, and also, having some fun! Here, everyone will work together to help all the powerful learning from keynotes, conversations, and workshops land, touching the realities of everyday classroom life. Kass Minor, Co-founder of The Minor Collective and author of *Teaching Fiercely: Spreading Joy and Justice Across Our Schools* will host Thought Sanctuary™.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** Wyndham Plaza 3



**91. 2:15 – 3:15****I Think My Student Needs an IEP or a 504, Now What?**

Shelley Kenow

Shelley Kenow IEP Consultant, Albers

Approximately 15% of students in the United States are eligible for special education. Learn more about what special education is and is not, how to refer someone for special education, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) document, and your roles and responsibilities when you have a student with an IEP or Section 504 in your classroom.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-1*Sponsored by Shelley Kenow IEP Consultant***92. 2:15 – 3:15****CANCELED****Using Disaster Stories to Engage Students while Meeting SEL Standards**

David Wood

Lewis Lemon Elementary, Rockford

Using disaster stories in the classroom is an excellent way to engage learners while also promoting the Illinois State SEL standards. Participants will learn the rationale for utilizing disaster stories, examples of ways to use these stories in the classroom, and how these stories connect to the Illinois State SEL standards. An extensive list of children's book titles sharing disaster stories will be provided. Book talks of many of these titles will identify how these stories align with each of the Illinois State SEL standards.

**Audience:** PreK-9**Strand:** Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**Location:** BOS Center B-2**93. 2:15 – 3:15****Taming Inquiry: Taking the Chaos out of the Classroom with Investigation**

Elaina O'Hara

Iroquois West Upper Elementary School,  
Thawville

A resource collection to explore the standard of inquiry to create lifelong learners. Explore inquiry in the classroom with scaffolding and guidance! Take the chaos out of the classroom by allowing inquiry to become more manageable and successful for both teachers and students.

**Audience:** 4-9**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-3**94. 2:15 – 3:15****Moving From Rigor to Vigor in Writing**

Peg Grafwallner

Solution Tree/CESA, Germantown

For many students, writing is an almost "mysterious" process. This presentation will take the "mystery" out of the writing process to empower all students of all abilities toward writing success. I will define rigor and explain why all teachers want to employ writing VIGOR. I will explain authentic writing and how to write for an authentic audience. In addition, I will demonstrate how to utilize the writing process giving students the opportunity to use their voice, and finally, I will show how to design writing scaffolding tools meant to engage all writers in a culturally responsive and respectful way.

**Audience:** 4-12**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-4**95. 2:15 – 3:15****Read, Write, Action: Engaging Adolescents Through the Power of Multimedia Memoir**

Kristen Walsh

SD #308, Oswego

Donna Werderich

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Teaching multimedia memoir to adolescents merges traditional storytelling with digital tools, allowing students to express their identities in dynamic ways. By integrating text, images, audio, and video, students can craft deeply personal narratives that resonate with their experiences. This approach not only enhances engagement by tapping into their digital fluency but also broadens their understanding of narrative structure and voice. Multimedia memoirs empower adolescents to explore their creativity, develop technical skills, and build confidence in their storytelling abilities, resulting in a more meaningful and relevant learning experience that bridges literacy and digital expression.

**Audience:** 4-12, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Technology**Location:** BOS Center B-6**96. 2:15 – 3:15****Book Joy for Neurodivergent Readers: Creating an Environment Where Developmentally Delayed Readers Feel Comfortable with Books**

Nancy Roop

Developmental Texts, LLC, Troy, Michigan

How a student feels inside their body and mind impacts whether they are ready to engage with books. If not ready, they may refuse due to a flood of emotions that reverberates through them as anxiety which is difficult to manage. Educators can teach and support students' agency with their social, emotional, sensory, and cognitive regulation so they can be ready to read and experience Book Joy!

**Audience:** PreK-9, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-7

**IRC WEBINAR SERIES**  
Members, don't miss  
the 10 live or recorded  
webinars in the series!





**97. 2:15 – 3:15****Joyful Liberation: Centering Queer Representation in Classroom Literature**

Melissa Wheeler

Mattoon Middle School, Mattoon

Julie Hoffman

Springfield Public Schools, Springfield

Cindi Koudelka

Fieldcrest CUSD 6; Aurora University

Join us as we share our favorite books that center and celebrate Queer Joy in Literature! We will highlight joyful, liberating, and identity-affirming literature that spans all ages in a fast-paced jubilee. Links to purchase books from independent bookstores will be provided! Books will be onsite to explore! Door prizes will be given! Come and make a new TBR list for your classroom with us!

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-8**98. 2:15 – 3:15****Using Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Texts to Teach Across All Components of Literacy**

Mary Lyons

Knox College, Galesburg

Culturally relevant and sustaining texts provide rich contexts for supporting oracy (speaking/listening), building vocabulary, deepening comprehension, and inspiring writing. How can culturally relevant texts also be used to cultivate phonological and phonemic awareness, explicitly teach phonics skills, and boost oral reading fluency? In the early elementary grades, culturally relevant texts are often reserved for read aloud time and are rarely considered as part of systematic and explicit structured literacy curricula. However, these texts can be utilized to teach across all components of literacy. Come to this session to learn more!

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Univ, Admin, Lib**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-9**99. 2:15 – 3:15****Help, My Students Need More! How Do I Choose an Effective Literacy Intervention and How Will I Know it Worked?**

Kari Harris

IL MTSS-Network/Northern Illinois University,  
DeKalb

Kim Spiker

IL MTSS-Network/Northern Illinois University,  
DeKalb

Feeling overwhelmed with the amount of intervention material choices, or not sure what materials to use with a certain student? We can help! This session will help you learn how the power of data can be used to make impactful decisions and select high quality evidence-based materials for instruction and intervention for your students. Whether you are looking for new resources, or choosing from what you already have available, you will gain insight into what indicators to look for when evaluating and how to choose the best fit for instructional needs at the Core, Targeted, and Intensive levels.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-10**100. 2:15 – 3:15****Enhancing Critical Thinking through Reflection in an AI-Centric World**

Kourtney Hake

Sparta Lincoln School, Sparta

Paige Timmerman

Salem High School, Salem

Are your students merely completing assignments without engaging in critical analysis? Are your students using AI to do their thinking for them? Join us for a session that addresses this crucial issue. In this workshop, we will delve into the significance of reflection as a tool for fostering critical thinking, particularly in the context of an AI-dominated era. We will explore how reflection can deepen students' engagement with course material and discuss six practical strategies for integrating reflection into your writing instruction. Through interactive discussions and practical examples, participants will leave with actionable insights to empower students as critical thinkers.

**Audience:** 6-12**Strand:** Technology**Location:** PAL Ottawa AB**PHOTO CONTEST****POST A FAVORITE CONFERENCE PIC  
under IRC SOCIAL on the APP!**

One attendee who submits a photo will be selected to **WIN A FREE REGISTRATION** to the next conference! Be creative and look for those picture-perfect spots at the conference venues!

Also, post on your **OWN SOCIALS** and tag **IRC at @ilreadcouncil & #ircreads!**



**Visit Booth 433 for a  
chance to win an  
IRC Hall of Council  
Raffle Basket!**



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**101. 2:15 – 3:15****How to Create Feedback that Feeds Student Growth**

Gena Lewis

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest

Annette VanAken

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest

In this presentation we learn from research how to use feedback to grow student literacy work in the classroom. We will practice feed that does its part in the feedback process. Join us with samples of your own literacy feedback to work through the best practices to harness the power of feedback for student literacy growth.

**Audience:** All**Location:** PAL Altgeld**102. 2:15 – 3:15****Enhancing Literacy Intervention to Move Students Forward: Strategies for Tutoring Under-Performing Students**

Margaret Policastro

Roosevelt University, Chicago

Noreen Wach

Roosevelt University, Chicago

Heather Cook

Roosevelt University, Chicago

Mark Valencia

Roosevelt University, Chicago

This session will report on a university partnership that entails tutors working in schools with under performing students. There will be audience participation that highlights specifically promoting love, joy and passion for reading. Further, interventionists' strategies will be featured that include: Getting to know our students as the heart of differentiating tutoring, using culturally relevant diverse books and implementing the Interactive Read-Aloud with culturally relevant texts (with exit slips & feedback). Examples of tutor to student feedback to move students forward in real-time will be featured. Also included, will be the development of students' self-monitoring of their own learning; examples of exit slips where tutors self monitor their learning will be promoted.

**Audience:** PreK-9, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin, Lib**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Bond**103. 2:15 – 3:15****Building a Better Vocabulary**

Jennifer Lancaster

SD # 129, Aurora

Kim Hollis

Geneva Middle School, Geneva

Adolescent readers struggle with comprehension when they aren't able to lift the words off the page, but what happens when they are fluent, but they still don't understand what they read? Explicit vocabulary instruction is an essential strand in the Reading Rope. This session aims to share ways to support vocabulary acquisition while supporting comprehension as a Tier I intervention. Participants will walk away with ready-to-use strategies to increase vocabulary, and even build some background knowledge in the process!

**Audience:** 6-12, ELL, Spec, Adults**Strand:** Secondary Reading League (SRL)**Location:** PAL Freeport AB**104. 2:15 – 3:15****We Can't Do This Alone: How Educators and Librarians Can Work Together to Offer Free Professional Development for Teachers and Teacher Candidates Around Building Inclusive Classroom Libraries**

Jennifer Shah

North Central College, Naperville

Nicole Lawton

Downers Grove Public Library, Downers Grove

During this workshop, attendees will learn about how the presenters worked together to create free in-person and virtual professional development workshops for practicing teachers and teacher candidates regarding inclusive classroom libraries. Professional development workshop topics included Decolonizing Thanksgiving and the TEAACH Act in Illinois among others. We will share our workshop format, procedures, resources, and highlight how working together bolstered our work. We hope to encourage educators and librarians to work together to host such free workshops related to diversity, equity, and inclusion topics that matter most to them. We will discuss feedback from the last three years of workshops.

**Audience:** PreK-9, Spec, Univ, Lib**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** PAL Yates**QR EXHIBIT HALL GAME**

Complete your **GAME SHEET** for a chance to win a **FREE REGISTRATION** to the 2026 IRC Conference!



**Visit Booth 432 to see if your key unlocks the Treasure Chest for a prize!**



3:30 – 4:30 PM

**105. 3:30 – 4:30****Teaching Graphic Novels For Kids**

Dan Santat  
Author  
San Marino, California



Dan will discuss various titles that inspired his love for the graphic medium as well as how you can help kids get started in the craft of making their own comics.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11A**106. 3:30 – 4:30****Characters! Comics! Collaboration!**

Trisha Speed Shaskan  
Author  
Minneapolis, Minnesota



Stephen Shaskan  
Author  
Minneapolis, Minnesota



Using examples from *Pizza and Taco*, *Punk Skunks*, and *Q and Ray*, Stephen Shaskan and Trisha Speed Shaskan will share how they collaborate while creating picture books and graphic novels. With an emphasis on collaboration, they'll share tips and tools you can use to teach students to write and illustrate stories.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11B

**Visit Booth 432  
to receive a FREE  
IRC Journal**  
while supplies last!

**107. 3:30 – 4:30****New and Notable Books for Grades 4-8**

Becky Anderson Wilkins  
Anderson's Bookshops  
Naperville, Illinois



This is a presentation of new and notable books recommended for classroom reading. A variety of genres, including picture books, poetry, fiction, and informational books will be presented, and books will be available for inspection.

**Audience:** 4-9**Location:** BOS Center B-11C*Sponsored by Anderson's Bookshops***108. 3:30 – 4:30****Antibias Instruction Through an Inquiry Lens**

Liz Kleinrock  
Author  
Washington, DC



In this session, participants will learn about creating foundations for antibias and antiracism practices in their classrooms and school communities that incorporate the ELA by utilizing an inquiry lens based on student prior knowledge and guiding questions.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11D**109. 3:30 – 4:30****A Place Where Souls Can Rest: Black Girl Freedom, Liberation, and Emancipation**

Darius Phelps  
Educator, The Center for Publishing  
& Applied Liberal Arts (PALA),  
New York University  
New York, New York



With my session, I will emphasize Divine Love and showcase how educators may help black girls to finally rest and embrace all aspects of (re)cognizing of themselves through the awakening of their true power and purpose when (re)membering (Dillard, 2012) the journeys of their divine ancestors through personal narratives and storytelling and through poetry activities.

**Audience:** All**Location:** Wyndham Rendezvous**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**

### 110. 3:30 – 4:30 Teach, Play, Learn!

Adam Peterson  
Author  
Morris, Illinois



Ever feel like you're bogged down with curriculum, standards, and new manuals? Well, never fear, Adam is here! Using tried and true methods, Adam will have you laughing, moving, playing, and learning as you explore ways to make your standards more fun than ever before. With simple tweaks and classroom hacks to board games, card games, and more, you can have your students of any age learning through play in so many ways!

**Audience:** PreK-3  
**Location:** Wyndham Plaza 3

### 112. 3:30 – 4:30 Bringing Writing to Life: The Essential Components of Effective Writing Instruction

Kristy Rauch

Center for the Collaborative Classroom, Chicago

Join us to unpack the research and find out how teaching writing as a separate content area provides a critical pathway for fostering effective communication skills as well as nurturing creativity and critical thinking, which are essential skills for both academic and personal success. During this session, participants will: 1) Explore ways to engage students in daily, purposeful writing for genuine audiences, 2) Learn approaches to help students sharpen their technical writing skills and develop writing fluency and confidence, and 3) See the value of connecting reading with writing to enhance student learning.

**Audience:** PreK-6, Admin

**Strand:** Writing

**Location:** BOS Center B-2

*Sponsored by Center for the Collaborative Classroom*

### 113. 3:30 – 4:30 Using Benchmark Universe to Enhance Learning

Shauna Williams

Benchmark Education, New Rochelle, NY

This session is ideal for Benchmark Advance & Adelante users. Teachers and coaches will examine the online resources that help support instruction and allow opportunities for interactive, engaging practice. Teachers will walk away with added confidence using the digital tools to bring more technology into the classroom. We will show you how to customize, assign, and create exciting lessons using your Benchmark Advance digital tools.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL

**Strand:** Technology

**Location:** BOS Center B-3

*Sponsored by Benchmark Education*

### 114. 3:30 – 4:30 I Can Read ... Music!

Yolanda Williams

Newton County Schools & WHIRL, LLC, Covington, GA

Enjoy an interactive session filled with music from various genres to explore literature, social studies, and language arts through close reading and music lyrics analysis. You will discover strategies to assist struggling readers with fluency that range from easy to challenging to support fluency differentiation and student progress. Close reading and music lyrics analysis annotations provide a new view of music lyrics for great reading of literature, language arts, and social studies content. Get ready to close the generation gaps during this time machine workshop! You're sure to leaving singing and dancing because you can now "read" MUSIC!

**Audience:** 6-12, ELL, Spec, Adults, Univ

**Strand:** Reading Engagement

**Location:** BOS Center B-4

### 111. 3:30 – 4:30 Understanding Behavior: Lessons for a Lifetime

Shelley Kenow

Shelley Kenow IEP Consultant, Albers

Every day our interactions are based on many different bits of information. Our behaviors are the communication of those bits of information. Not just our behaviors, but the behaviors of every person with whom we interact. Every behavior, whether wanted or unwanted, is communicating something. How we respond to that communication will determine the outcome. Participants will learn how to recognize their own communication as well as those around them while learning ways to improve their mental health and develop a classroom environment where every student feels welcome and safe. This will create more wanted behaviors from your students.

**Audience:** All

**Strand:** Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

**Location:** BOS Center B-1

*Sponsored by Shelley Kenow IEP Consultant*

## PHOTO CONTEST

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Also, post on your **OWN SOCIALS** and tag **IRC at @ilreadcouncil & #ircreads!**

**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**



**115. 3:30 – 4:30****Building a Foundation for Literacy: The Power of Sound Walls**

Karyn Tomkinson

Hand2Mind, Decatur, IN

Have you contemplated integrating sound walls into your classroom? Do you grasp the differences between sound walls and word walls? Join this interactive session to explore the research supporting sound walls and learn techniques for shifting away from traditional word walls. Attendees will gain an understanding of the logic behind sound walls, acquire valuable strategies for successfully transitioning their teaching approach, and see how these tools fit into the broader scope and sequence of your curriculum.

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-6*Sponsored by hand2mind, Inc.***116. 3:30 – 4:30****Playing with Purpose: The Importance of Play and Crafting Child-Led Centers for Standards-Aligned Learning**

Debby Spitzer

Debby Spitzer Consulting, Fort Worth, TX

Play is a powerful instructional method for PreK that leads to rigorous learning for students across all backgrounds and abilities. For teachers, it can be a challenge to balance standard-driven benchmarks and specific learning objectives with opportunities for child-led play. This session takes a closer look at center time to explore ways that teachers can intentionally craft opportunities for child-directed play that hits on key early learning concepts and skills. Learn easy to implement strategies that guide student inquiry and cultivate meaningful play experiences with standard-aligned outcomes.

**Audience:** PreK-3**Strand:** Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**Location:** BOS Center B-7*Sponsored by hand2mind, Inc.***117. 3:30 – 4:30****3 Secret Weapons of Secondary Reading Comprehension: Knowledge, Vocabulary, and Fluency**

Raquel McGee

Oak Park and River Forest High School, Oak Park

This session will provide secondary educators with effective, evidence-based techniques for ensuring strong comprehension in secondary classrooms with the use of knowledge-building, vocabulary instruction, and fluency practice, three components that are woefully neglected in many secondary classrooms. Educators will be provided with a practical framework for building knowledge-rich units, teaching for long-term vocabulary acquisition, and using oral reading fluency as a bridge to meaningful comprehension.

**Audience:** 6-12, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-8**118. 3:30 – 4:30****Unleashing the Power of the Reading Journal: A Toolkit for Teachers**

Jennifer Burns

Building A Reader LLC, Ankeny, IA

The reading journal is a powerful tool for enhancing student engagement and comprehension. However, it often remains a static collection of texts. This session will equip educators with practical strategies to transform their reading journals into dynamic learning hubs. Participants will explore seven approaches to activate texts. Through engaging demonstrations and collaborative activities, participants will gain the knowledge and confidence to implement these strategies in their classrooms, fostering deeper student learning and a love of reading.

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec**Location:** BOS Center B-9**119. 3:30 – 4:30****Embracing SoR Shifts with Discourse Routines**

Beth Cook

Cooperative Educational Service Agency 6, Oshkosh, WI

Our brains are wired for speaking, so in the context of reading, discourse can help students build vocabulary, build background knowledge, activate prior knowledge, develop oral language skills, and organize ideas before writing. When discourse routines are scaffolded, modeled and practiced they can help empower students to engage with content and become competent sense-makers, motivating students to develop language skills which leads to achieving higher academic goals. Experience a variety of high-leverage discourse routines that are applicable for a wide-range of content and grade levels. Walk away with educator tools including over 25 discourse protocols, self-reflections for teachers and students, rubrics for formative assessment, as well as ways to scaffold implementation.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-10

**QR EXHIBIT HALL GAME**

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**120. 3:30 – 4:30****Liberating Student Voices: Project Ideas to Jumpstart Your Narrative Unit**

Kourtney Hake

Sparta Lincoln School, Sparta

Paige Timmerman

Salem High School, Salem

Struggling to balance test prep with the need for personal narrative in your classroom? Unsure how to effectively incorporate student stories into your teaching? Discover how harnessing student voices through personal narrative can transform your writing instruction and reinvigorate student engagement. Join us for a dynamic session where you'll gain practical lesson ideas designed to cultivate essential writing skills while celebrating the unique voices of your students. You'll leave with numerous project ideas to ignite narrative writing in your classroom.

**Audience:** 6-12**Strand:** Writing**Location:** PAL Ottawa AB**121. 3:30 – 4:30****5 Finger Syllables and SPORGLE: A New Way of Chunking Syllables and Flexing the Vowels**

Dick Briggs

Independent Consultant, Bloomington

Research has recently questioned the need to explicitly teach the most common six syllabication rules for decoding and encoding polysyllabic words (Moats). This presentation will review that research, review new trends (Kearns and Seidenberg) and present a model that addresses the chunking trend as well as demonstrate a statistical model for vowel flexing. As part of the discussion, the infamous schwa may take the center stage. Many presentations leave the audience with concepts and/or theories. This presentation will discuss multiple sources to put the chunking and vowel flexing strategies into teaching activities.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** PAL Altgeld*Sponsored by 3ClicksSpelling.com***122. 3:30 – 4:30****Hip, Hip, Hooray for Oracy!**

Becky McTague

DePaul and Roosevelt University, Chicago

Language development is sometimes overlooked at a fundamental element in literacy, however oracy is one of the most important. Oracy, the academic language needed to communicate about concepts or the words used to make sense of others, develops prior and with literacy acquisition. This presentation will share concepts about language development as well as strategies to support students with oracy development for preschool and school age students. Special emphases will be on vocabulary development for both diverse learners including English language learners and gifted students

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Early Childhood**Location:** PAL Bond**123. 3:30 – 4:30****Empowering Literacy: Secondary Intervention Strategies that Ignite Learning**

Laura Johnson

Glenbard East High School, Glenbard

This session will explore literacy intervention strategies tailored for secondary students. Participants will delve into the unique challenges faced by adolescents in developing reading and writing skills and how these barriers can be transformed into opportunities for growth and empowerment. Let's embrace evidence-based literacy strategies that empower students and help them take ownership of their literacy journey.

**Audience:** 6-12, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** PAL Freeport AB**124. 3:30 – 4:30****Barista Books**

Charmonique Joiner

Indian Prairie SD #204, Aurora

Barista Books, a cafe-inspired equity-focused after school club utilizes literature authored by diverse individuals paired with hands-on activities to engage struggling elementary students. Barista Books was created by literacy coordinator, Charmonique, to meet the needs of low-income families and students of color at a Title I school. This semester-long club emphasizes student collaboration, utilizes critical thinking skills and introduces the construct of windows and mirrors. Windows and mirrors are equity-driven literary experiences empowering students to view the world differently through carefully curated text (windows) and see themselves reflected in the literature (mirrors). Books and lessons will be shared!

**Audience:** PreK-6, Lib**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging; Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Yates**PHOTO CONTEST****POST A FAVORITE CONFERENCE PIC  
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Also, post on your **OWN SOCIALS** and tag **IRC at @ilreadcouncil & #ircreads!**





FOR EXCELLENCE IN WRITING FOR CHILDREN

The **Prairie State Award for Excellence in Writing for Children** honors an Illinois author whose body of work demonstrates excellence, engenders a love of literature, and embraces an important part of the Illinois Reading Council Mission – to promote lifelong literacy.

## Congratulations!

# COZBI A. CABRERA



This year's Prairie State Award winner, Cozbi A. Cabrera, finds joy in creating things that provide a place of sense and memory. After receiving a BFA from Parsons School of Design, Cozbi was an art director creating music packaging in New York. She

left her dream job to make handmade collectible cloth dolls (Muñecas) in honor of her Honduran heritage. Her dolls and other textile work have been featured on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Martha Stewart Living*, catalogues, as well as the Jewish Fund Gallery, Ernest Rubenstein Galleries, and the Lincoln Center Education Art Gallery. Her talent also translates to books. She is the author/illustrator of *Me & Mama*, which won a 2021 Coretta Scott King Honor and a Caldecott Honor and *My Hair is a Garden*. She has also collaborated with authors such as Suzanne Slade (*Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*), Leslé Honoreé (*Brown Girl, Brown Girl*), Patricia McKissack (*Stitchin' and Pullin' A Gees Bend Quilt*), and Nikki Grimes (*Thanks A Million*).

5:00 – 10:30 PM

125. 5:00 – 6:00

**CIRP Reception**

Shadrack Msengi, CIRP President

Audience: CIRP Members

Location: PAL Lincoln Room

**CANCELED****Thursday Banquet****126. Banquet 6:15 – 8:15****We Are the Dreamers of Dreams**

Alicia Williams

Author

New York, New York



"We are the changemakers . . . we are the dreamers of dreams." Alicia D. Williams will discuss her books and how they came to be. Through her presentation, audience members will come to realize the quote is true, "You are capable of more than you know."

**Audience:** Ticket Required**Location:** PAL Ballroom

### Prairie State Award for Excellence in Children's Writing

will be presented at the Thursday Banquet to

**Cozbi A. Cabrera**

Award will be presented by Cindy Wilson, Chair

**IRC Hall of Fame Award**

will be presented at the Thursday Banquet to

**Laura Beltchenko**

Award will be presented by Julie Hoffman, IRC Past President

127.8:30 – 10:30 PM

**Hear the Authors Read**

Audience: All

Location: Wyndham Grand Ballroom

Sponsored by **ABANDERSON'S BOOKSHOPS****DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**

# Hear the Authors Read

and Late-Night Autograph Session

Thursday, March 13, 2025

8:30 – 10:30 PM

Wyndham Hotel Ballroom

Sponsored by Anderson's Bookshops

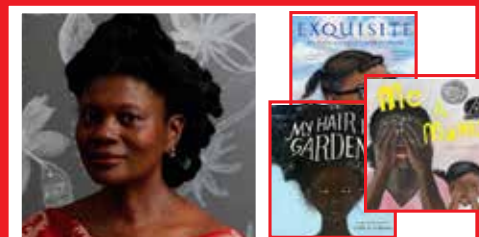
**Laurie  
Halse Anderson**



**Darcie  
Little Badger**



**Cozbi  
Cabrera**



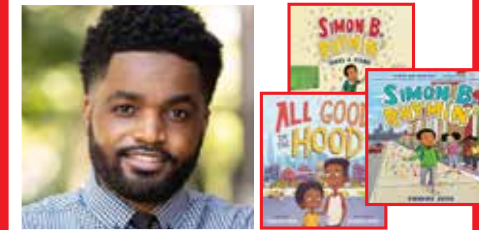
**Candace  
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**Liz  
Kleinrock  
CANCELED EVENT ONLY**



**Dwayne  
Reed**



**Dan  
Santat**



**Duncan  
Tonatiuh**



**Alicia  
Williams**



## IRC Awards & Grants

Are you interested in learning how to nominate individuals from your area for IRC awards or how to benefit from grant money that is available each year for various educational activities? To find out more about these IRC Awards and Grants, please visit [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org).

### IRC Awards & Grants

**Barack Obama Library Award.** This award is a classroom library, valued at over \$1000, which was created in 2006 through a generous gift to the IRC from (then) Senator Obama. This collection is comprised of carefully selected literature that is “culturally relevant” for African-American readers and targets students in the middle-school (5th-8th) grade range. The award will go to a teacher in a predetermined IRC Region. Each year, the region will be announced on the IRC Website. Nominations are due by November 1st.

**Family Literacy Award.** This award recognizes an IRC member who promotes and supports parent involvement in children’s reading. Nominations should be postmarked by November 1st.

**Gene Cramer ICARE for Reading Award.** The Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education recognizes an educator who has performed in an outstanding manner to show concern for the affective domain and who has performed lifelong reading habits among students. The Nomination Form is due by November 1st.

**Hall of Fame Award.** The IRC has designed the Hall of Fame to recognize significant contributions to reading or reading education. The award will be given at the annual conference. The immediate Past President shall receive the nomination forms and final determination will be made by the Executive Committee no later than 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting. Deadline: All Nomination Forms must be received by November 1st.

**International Grant.** The International Committee of the Illinois Reading Council has created a grant to promote literacy projects internationally. The maximum amount per grant is \$1,000. The application deadline is May 1st.

**IRC Service Award.** The IRC will present the IRC Service Award (formerly known as the Certificate of Recognition) at the annual statewide conference. Certificates are awarded to the most deserving individuals who meet the criteria listed. Deadline: All Nomination Forms must be received by November 1st.

**Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award.** This award recognizes outstanding teachers who make contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities. Application Form, letters of recommendation, and your philosophy statement are due by November 1st.

**Literacy Support Grant.** The Illinois Reading Council will award financial grants to local and special interest councils and individual council members for the purpose of promoting literacy development in the school and community, and/or providing professional development opportunities related to the improvement of reading and writing instruction. Application deadline will be May 1st.

**Prairie State Award for Excellence in Writing for Children.** This award recognizes an Illinois Children’s/Young Adult Author whose body of work demonstrates excellence, engenders a love of literature, and embraces an important part of the mission of the Illinois Reading Council—to promote lifelong literacy. All Nomination Packets must be postmarked by June 15th.

**Static Stick Decal Design Contest.** Students in grades 4, 5, or 6 are encouraged to create an original design promoting reading. The winning design is printed on static stick decals. Entries must be postmarked no later than January 15th.



# IRC Webinar Series

All webinars will begin at 7:00 p.m.

IRC will be offering the Webinar Series for members only in 2024-2025. All webinars will begin at 7:00 p.m. Members who watch the live or recorded webinars can earn professional development clock hours. Mark your calendars and register to take part in this convenient, free IRC membership benefit. Members will receive monthly emails with links to register. Nonmembers can join online and email for the registration link.

## September 4, 2024 ~ Peter H. Johnston

### Classroom Talk and Literacy Learning



The ways in which we talk with students and arrange for them to talk with each other have substantial effects on their literacy learning. This webinar examines the relationships among classroom talk, student engagement, and individual and collective student development. It shows how the classroom choices we make, particularly our language choices, influence the qualities of the classroom learning community along with students' literate, social and emotional development.

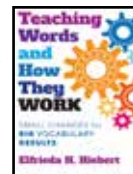


## February 5, 2025 ~ Elfrieda H. Hiebert

### Applying the Science of Reading in Vocabulary to Build Comprehension and Engagement



In this presentation, Freddy will share valuable insights from recent scholarly research, highlighting how vocabulary instruction can effectively support students in three key areas: expanding their word knowledge, enhancing their ability to comprehend complex texts, and facilitating the construction of knowledge from these texts. Freddy will delve into the research that shows how students can have strategies and enthusiasm for deciphering the meanings of unfamiliar words within complex texts.



## October 2, 2024 ~ Priten Shah

### AI in the Literacy Classroom: Friend or Foe?



Is Artificial Intelligence a revolutionary tool for literacy instruction or a threat to traditional teaching methods? This webinar explores the dilemma of AI in education. We'll examine how AI can enhance learning and save time and discuss concerns about over-reliance on technology and potential biases. Join us to critically assess AI's role in shaping the future of literacy education and decide: Is AI a valuable ally or a challenging adversary in our classrooms?

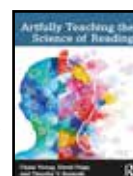


## March 5, 2025 ~ Chase Young

### Developing Fluent Readers



Embark on a journey to develop confident readers in this immersive session. Learn and practice strategies to boost reading fluency, from pacing to expression. Discover effective ways to overcome obstacles and personalize instruction for every learner. Leave equipped to empower students with the fluency skills they need to thrive academically and beyond.



## November 6, 2024 ~ Jan Hasbrouck

### Understanding, Assessing, and Teaching Our Students with Dyslexia



Dyslexia is a disorder with emotional, behavioral, and social impacts. Our understanding has deepened with new technologies being used by researchers to study the complex brain functions involved in reading and writing. While the IDA has developed a definition of dyslexia based on a convergence of reading science, there still is not universal agreement on how to define it. A number of myths and misunderstandings continue to persist regarding this neurobiological disorder which must be addressed and dispelled.



## April 2, 2025 ~ St. Clair Detrick-Jules

### Empowerment Through Storytelling



St. Clair Detrick-Jules will share her journey to becoming an author, photojournalist, and public speaker. She'll touch on her writing process, finding subjects to include in her work, and creating spaces for people to share their stories. Themes will include representation of marginalized groups in media, cultivating community empowerment, and narrative storytelling as a vehicle of self-empowerment and social change.



## December 4, 2024 ~ Kelly B. Cartwright

### Why Don't My Best (Word) Readers Comprehend Text? Reading Science to Support Self-Regulated Comprehension



Some students seem to have the necessary skills they need to be good readers, yet still struggle with putting all of these things together in order to comprehend texts. In this session, we will look beyond these familiar skills to explore essential thinking skills, called executive skills, that support successful word reading and reading comprehension. Executive skills are self-regulatory skills that help students manage their thoughts, emotions, actions, and involve things like working memory, self-control, and mental flexibility.

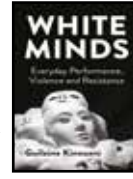


## May 7, 2025 ~ Guilaine Kinouani

### African Conceptualizations of Trauma



Group analysis has much to contribute to our understanding of ourselves and the world. It requires us to be deliberate, effortful and reflective; so we may start to see forms of violence which often go unnoticed and within been which we are all implicated. In this talk, we will do just that as we explore the importance of witnessing and storytelling for the survival of black groups across the globe. Trauma constitutes a form of (a)temporal and (a)spatial bodily archives which ensures that the memory of the suffering of those who came before us is kept alive across timespace and geopolitical boundaries.



## January 8, 2025 ~ Becky Anderson

### Discovering the 2025 Illinois Reads Books



Join Becky Anderson as she presents the Illinois Reads books for 2025. Learn more about the Illinois Reads statewide literacy initiative that promotes reading for all Illinois citizens. Six books in six age bands from Birth to Adult will be shared. A variety of book topics and themes are chosen for each age band, highlighting the work of Illinois Authors.



## June 4, 2025 ~ Rachel Lesinski-Roscoe

### Students Should OWN It! Fostering Secondary Students' Ability to Independently Navigate Complex Texts



Our goal is always for students to be able to navigate this world independently by applying what they learn from us. We can support that goal by not only teaching students how to use strategies, but how to independently transfer those strategies to new and unfamiliar texts. Join us in learning how to foster students' independence when working with complex text.





# Friday, March 14, 2025

**Registration** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 7:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**Friday Breakfast** - PAL Hotel Ballroom - *Darcie Little Badger* 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM



**Exhibits** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM


**Hall of Councils Raffle Baskets** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

**Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops** 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**Coffee Break in Exhibit Area** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 8:30 AM – 9:30 AM

- Sponsored by SAVVAS  
LEARNING COMPANY

**Refreshments in Exhibit Area** - Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

- Sponsored by 

**Friday Luncheon** - Wyndham Hotel Ballroom - *Duncan Tonatiuh* 12:15 PM – 2:00 PM



**Friday Luncheon** - PAL Hotel Ballroom - *Ernest Morrell* 12:15 PM – 2:00 PM

- Sponsored by SAVVAS  
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**Friday Lunch Sessions** - Bank of Springfield Center Lower Level 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

**Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops** 2:15 PM – 4:30 PM

**Preservice Teachers' Pizza Party** - PAL Hotel Ballroom 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**IRC Annual Membership Meeting** - PAL Hotel Lincoln Room 4:45 PM – 5:15 PM

# Conference Sessions

## Friday, March 14, 2025

7:00 – 8:30 AM

### Friday Breakfast

128. Breakfast 7:00 – 8:30

#### Perseverance

Darcie Little Badger  
Author  
San Marcos, Texas



Before my debut novel was published, I asked my father—an English professor and the head of WCSU’s creative writing program—for advice. “I’m going to be on a podcast for new writers,” I said. “What should I talk about? What subject would be most helpful for people like your students?” In this keynote, I describe the most important lesson my father taught me, how it has impacted my career (before and after publication), and how his wisdom applies to any creative goal.

**Audience:** Ticket Required

**Location:** PAL Ballroom

### IRC Service Award

will be presented at the Friday Breakfast to

**Diana Wilkie**

Award will be presented by Julie Hoffman, IRC Past President

8:30 – 9:30 AM

129. 8:30 – 9:30

#### The Shape of Picture Books

Duncan Tonatiuh  
Author  
Laredo, Texas



Picture books are a unique art form in which text and images work together. Just as it is important to think critically about the written words in a book it is also important to develop visual literacy. In this session we will analyze endpapers, fonts, colors, jackets and other design decisions in order to better understand the visual side of picture books and highlight the value they add to the reading experience.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11A

130. 8:30 – 9:30

#### Humans Who Have Self-Regard And Teach From Love

Shamari Reid  
Educator/Author  
Columbia University  
New York, New York



In this session, we will explore the importance of cultivating a healthy sense of self-regard as a human who teaches in the current sociopolitical climate. In addition, we will work together to create self-love plans focused on addressing our human needs and classroom materials and resources grounded in love.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11B

*Sponsored by Crossland Literacy*

**QR EXHIBIT HALL GAME**

Complete your **GAME SHEET** for a  
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to the 2026 IRC Conference!

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# COFFEE BREAK

**FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025**

**8:30 to  
9:30 AM**

*Sponsored by*

*in the Exhibit Hall  
Refreshment Area*



## VISIT THE EXHIBITS

**FRIDAY,  
MARCH 14, 2025  
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

*Refreshments will be served  
from 9:00 – 10:00 AM  
in the Exhibit Hall*

**131. 8:30 – 9:30**

### **Reading that Lifts and Liberates: Empowerment Through Youth Literature**

Julia Torres  
Educator/Author  
Brighton, Colorado



In this session, librarian and veteran educator Julia E. Torres will discuss how to develop courses that inspire creativity and youth empowerment. Merging the best of language arts instructional moves with key elements of library science (such as reader's advisory and bibliotherapy) this session will leave participants feeling refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready to approach the work of supporting young people as they craft lives filled with literature that lifts and liberates.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11C

**132. 8:30 – 9:30**

### **Being the Educator Your Scholars Need**

Dwayne Reed  
Author  
Chicago, Illinois



This session will inspire your staff to be the educators they always needed! Filled with tons of SEL (social-emotional learning), restorative justice, and trauma-informed talking points, Reed will help educators re-discover their WHY of teaching, and will emphasize the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships with scholars, both in and outside of the classroom. Each participant will leave with dozens of practical, relationship-building strategies which can immediately be implemented in their classroom.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11D



**Visit  
Booths 331-333  
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& Graffiti Wall!**



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**133. 8:30 – 9:30****Building Knowledge with Close Reading**

Amy Stewart  
Educator/Author  
Chicago, Illinois



Students' reading comprehension and, more importantly, their understanding of the world around them are supported by a foundation of knowledge. This session will support educators as they use close reading of content-rich texts to build knowledge along with decoding and other language comprehension skills. Participants will walk away with practical, classroom-ready ideas for using close-reading experiences to deepen thinking and connect readers to the world.

**Audience:** PreK-6

**Location:** Wyndham Rendezvous

**134. 8:30 – 9:30****Model, Motivate, Write, Repeat!**

Adam Peterson  
Author  
Morris, Illinois



From tried and true techniques to publishing books with your students, this session has it all! Adam uses personal classroom experiences to give you all the help you need to create engaging lessons that will excite your students about writing. Through easy modeling, engaging motivational activities, and simple, creative books, your students will be ready to write like never before!

**Audience:** PreK-3

**Location:** Wyndham Plaza 3

**135. 8:30 – 9:30****When Students Won't/Can't Write ... Now What?**

Wendy Streit

Romeoville High School, Romeoville

Getting students to write a paper can be daunting. We will discuss the ways to effectively prepare students to write a paper, organize it, and get it turned in on time.

**Audience:** 6-12, ELL, Spec, Adults, Univ

**Strand:** Writing

**Location:** BOS Center B-2

**136. 8:30 – 9:30****One Book One School: How to Turn a Simple Text into a Lifelong Memory for Your Students!**

Ryan Schaefer

SD #47, Crystal Lake

Jennifer Weichle

Coventry Elementary School, Crystal Lake

Jean Erwin

Coventry Elementary School, Crystal Lake

A librarian, a teacher, and an assistant principal walk into a school. Sounds like an opening to a bad joke. In reality, it was the beginning of an experience that students would talk about all year long. Come join Coventry Elementary as they share their experiences in elevating the traditional One Book One School model. We will discuss the initial planning, launch assembly, Family Reading Night, and author visits that have made this a truly special event for our students and their families! We also would love to hear from audience members on what they have done in their schools!

**Audience:** All

**Strand:** Reading Engagement

**Location:** BOS Center B-1

**137. 8:30 – 9:30****A Beginner's Guide to AI!**

Lisa Schwartz

Learning Technology Center, Champaign

Join us as we cut through the AI buzz and examine the implications of artificial intelligence in an educational setting. AI tools aren't just for students, either. We will explore how teachers can streamline time-consuming tasks with AI-powered content creation tools.

**Audience:** All

**Strand:** Technology

**Location:** BOS Center B-3

**138. 8:30 – 9:30****What Does the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Mean for Me and My Students?**

Diana Brannon

Elmhurst University, Elmhurst

Learn what the new Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan means for you and your students. Find out about practical, hands-on instructional strategies aligned with evidence-based practices to help ensure that all students, regardless of their individual challenges or backgrounds, have the opportunity to develop strong literacy skills. You will learn about multisensory, explicit, sequential structured literacy approaches that emphasize the foundational skills of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

**Audience:** PreK-6

**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction

**Location:** BOS Center B-4



**139. 8:30 – 9:30****From Reading to Understanding: Transformative Techniques for Content Comprehension**

Katherine McKnight

Engaging Learners, Antioch

Are your students finding it challenging to grasp the complex meanings behind texts in their academic courses? While many students can read the words, understanding the deeper significance often eludes them. In this session, we'll delve into proven, classroom-ready strategies to captivate students with rigorous texts and show you how to build relationships that nurture a supportive reading-focused environment in content-area classrooms.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** BOS Center B-6**140. 8:30 – 9:30****STEAM-Powered Read-Alouds: Igniting Curiosity and Expanding Knowledge**

Maria Walther

Maria P. Walther LLC, Aurora

Picture books have the power to illuminate complex STEAM concepts, making them accessible and engaging. Join Maria, a passionate read-aloud advocate, to discover classroom-tested techniques that seamlessly integrate read-aloud experiences into STEAM instruction. Learn strategies to spark inquiry, build critical content knowledge, and foster joy. Walk away with practical ideas and an extensive book list.

**Audience:** PreK-6, Lib**Strand:** STEAM**Location:** BOS Center B-7**141. 8:30 – 9:30****Strengthening the Reading Rope: Evidence-Based Coaching Cycles for Literacy Success**

Julianne Januszyk

Berwyn South SD #100, Berwyn

This presentation will guide teachers, coaches, and school leaders through a framework using Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001) as a universal structure for coaching, teaching, and learning. The approach begins with identifying a universal need in a classroom, determining which strand best fits that need, reviewing a variety of instructional strategies aligned with the strand, and creating a clear action plan to support student growth in that category. Embedded in this work are coaching tools, data analysis protocols, and methods of routine, practice, and reflection.

**Audience:** PreK-9, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-8**142. 8:30 – 9:30****Building Community Within a Grade Level Divided**

Hailey Rovetuso

Palmer School, Chicago

Christine Swiderski

Palmer School, Chicago

Mary Anne Flanigan

Palmer School, Chicago

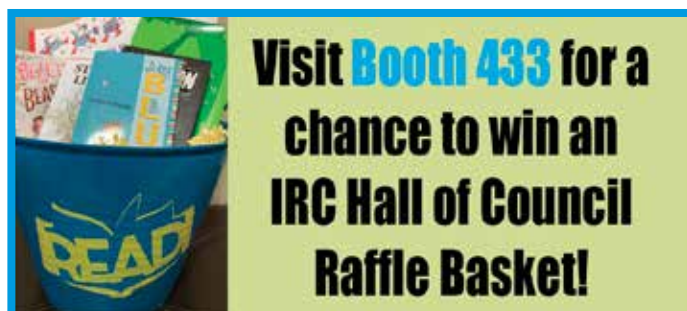
In a school community where students are divided by achievement levels/ability, attendees will be presented with multiple ways to bridge the social gap of being academically divided. Attendees will explore activities and strategies that are used to bring gifted learners, diverse learners, English language learners, and all students in between to create a community built on equity. Attendees will learn how to foster communities where students build and learn from each other's strengths realizing that everyone brings something valuable to the table. Real-life examples, along with the strategies used by the presenters within their grade-level will be shared. Learn how to break down the academic barriers so students are invested in their work using collaboration.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-9**143. 8:30 – 9:30****What Do I Do When Things Don't Go as Planned?: Workable Ways to Check the Fidelity of Instruction and Intervention**

Kari Harris

IL MTSS-Network/Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Sometimes things don't go as planned. When that happens, effective teams investigate the reason why. Fidelity is an important aspect of intervention, but it is often an overlooked component of the problem solving process. Lack of student progress in an intervention may not have to do with the intervention at all. It may be that a well matched, research-based activity was not delivered as planned. Session attendees will learn how to purposefully include fidelity checks when creating an intervention plan, as well as considerations for monitoring and evaluating fidelity to inform next steps for students.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-10

**144. 8:30 – 9:30****All About the Libros: Developing Equitable Spanish Book Collections**

Heather Robertson-Devine  
Books del Sur, Antioch

Paz Corral Yagman  
Editorial Zig-Zag, Santiago, Chile

The increasing number of dual-language, bilingual, and English Language Learners calls for more books in other languages. In this session, you will learn about the different types of Spanish books – translations, bilingual, and authentic books published in Spanish-speaking countries. Literary Projects Director, Paz Corral, from the oldest and largest publishing house will discuss the nuances of Spanish reading levels and dialect or regionalisms, and the International publishing world. Finally, we will share how to build a Spanish book collection that engages and excites your bilingual reader and aligns with your school or district's biliteracy goals.

**Audience:** PreK-9, ELL, Admin Lib

**Strand:** Reading Engagement

**Location:** BOS Center VIP

**Sponsored by Books del Sur**

**145. 8:30 – 9:30****The Power of the Think-Aloud**

Saranja Hicks  
South Cook Intermediate Service Center,  
Chicago Heights

The think-aloud strategy is a powerful tool for improving student comprehension, critical thinking, and problem-solving. This presentation examines how verbalizing thought processes during tasks, such as reading or problem-solving, helps model cognitive strategies like predicting, questioning, and summarizing. Practical applications across disciplines will be shared, with a focus on scaffolding the technique for diverse learners, including those with special needs or language barriers. Attendees will gain actionable insights and strategies to implement think-alouds effectively, fostering metacognition and deeper learning in the classroom.

**Audience:** PreK-9, ELL, Spec

**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction

**Location:** PAL Ottawa AB

**PHOTO CONTEST**

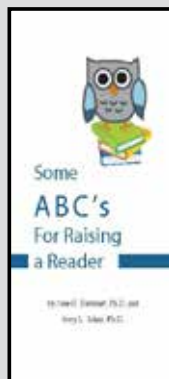
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Also, post on your **OWN SOCIALS** and tag **IRC at @ilreadcouncil & #ircreads!**

**IRC Publications**

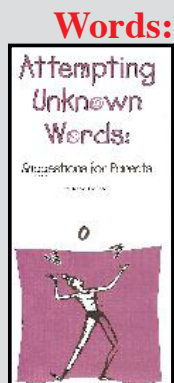
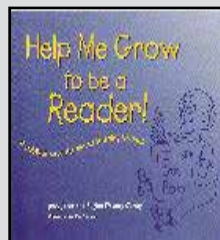
The Illinois Reading Council offers many resources to their members. Take advantage of these great materials to share with organizations, parents, or teachers! The items listed below can be ordered from the IRC Office by phone at 309-454-1341. Prices and order forms are available on the IRC website.

**Some ABC's for Raising a Reader**

Parents are their child's first teachers, and it's never too soon to introduce your child to books. By reading aloud to your child, you provide the sounds of written language, demonstrate book handling skills, develop your child's expectation that the print and pictures carry a message and build positive attitudes toward reading. Use this ABC listing of ways that you can encourage a love of reading and make reading fun for your child.

**Attempting Unknown Words: Suggestions for Parents**

As the parent of a young child, you are a very important person for your child's reading and language development. You are your child's first teacher! This tri-fold brochure will provide strategies to aid your child as s/he attempts unknown words.

**Help Me Grow To Be A Reader**

This little 16-page booklet helps parents understand how children grow to be readers, as told from the child's point of view. Strategies for helping young readers develop their reading skills are outlined in a fun format.

**146. 8:30 – 9:30****Scaffolding Tools to Integrate Phonology, Orthography and Morphology to Create Sentences Using Subject Pronouns + Irregular Verbs + Inflectional Suffixes**

Dick Briggs

Independent Consultant, Bloomington

The ultimate goal of this session is for students to create simple to complex spoken and written sentences. Many times, a student may use phonemic awareness, phonological, orthographic and morphological skills in isolation while identifying individual words. The ultimate goal is using the word(s) in oral or written sentences. This session will introduce a series of tools that a student may utilize as “study aids” along the continuum of sounding out a word, spelling it, applying inflectional suffix rules and determining which irregular verb to use with subject pronouns to create simple and complex sentences.

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** PAL Altgeld*Sponsored by 3ClicksSpelling.com***147. 8:30 – 9:30****Mashing It Up In Middle School**

Bridgot Loesch

SD #3, Fox River Grove

What can we do to support middle school readers, especially struggling readers, to be successful in both the ELA classroom and Content Area Literacy? We mash it up! In this session, strategies for improving foundational, comprehension, and writing skills of middle school readers in ALL content areas will be shared. Participants will leave with a toolbox of strategies that can be integrated into any middle school classroom from ELA classes, to content area classes, and even to specials. This session is ideal for teachers and specialists looking to encourage disciplinary literacy in their buildings.

**Audience:** 4-9**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Bond**148. 8:30 – 9:30****New YA Titles to Booktalk: AISLE’s Lincoln Book Award**

Jennifer Jazwinski

Algonquin Area Public Library District,  
Algonquin

Amy Phillips

Riverside Brookfield High School, Riverside

Lincoln Award committee members will book talk the 2026 master list of nominees. We’ll give you keys to participating in and promoting the program in your school, ideas for collaboration with public librarian partners, plus unlock ways for you and your students to help in the selection process.

**Audience:** 9-12, Lib**Strand:** Librarians & Children’s/YA Literature**Location:** PAL Freeport AB**149. 8:30 – 9:30****Building Capacity with Learning Walks**

Beth Cook

CESA 6, Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Explore the transformative potential of Learning Walks in K-12 classrooms. Gain a comprehensive understanding of the Learning Walk routine as a high-leverage leadership strategy that fosters collaboration and growth. Understand essential leadership strategies to assess system readiness for effective Learning Walk implementation, and identify actionable next steps for your school to enhance literacy practices aimed at creating inclusive and engaging environments that inspire educators and students to thrive.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** PAL Freeport C**150. 8:30 – 9:30****Using Preschool Data to Facilitate Effective Transitioning into Kindergarten**

Kelly Marie Tough

Indian Springs SD #109, Justice

As students who are in preschool programs begin the transition into kindergarten, how are they placed in classrooms? If assessments are being used, how is that information used to inform decisions about placement into kindergarten?

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**Location:** PAL Yates



9:45 – 10:45 AM

151. 9:45 – 10:45

**Picture Books and Social Justice**

Duncan Tonatiuh  
Author  
Laredo, Texas



Books for children can address difficult subjects like segregation and immigration. One of the challenges though is crafting a book in such a way that young readers will be able to relate to the story. In this session Duncan Tonatiuh will share his revision process for making books that promote social justice. He will also share insight on how to confront book bans.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11A

153. 9:45 – 10:45

**Liven Up Your Library: Youth Engagement in Libraries and Classrooms**

Julia Torres  
Educator/Author  
Brighton, Colorado



In this session, librarian and veteran educator Julia E. Torres will offer highlights from her co-authored ISTE title: *Liven Up Your Library: Engaging and Inclusive Programs for Tweens and Teens*. She will discuss the practical application of library work rooted in diversity, equity, access, and inclusion as well as offer opportunities for participants to discuss methods to sustain reading engagement in a rapidly changing and increasingly technological learning landscape.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11C

152. 9:45 – 10:45

**A Creative Journey: Finding the Breadcrumbs Along the Way**

Cozbi A. Cabrera  
Author  
Chicago, Illinois



If you're embarking on a journey, do you start off with a map or a compass? What if you have no idea where you're going? Cozbi shares a little of her origins, musings and findings along the way on her creative journey as a reminder that you are exactly where you need to be, no matter where you're headed.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11B

154. 9:45 – 10:45

**Writing Great Nonfiction With Kids****CANCELED**

Candace Fleming  
Author  
Oak Park, Illinois



Can kids write engaging nonfiction? Absolutely! In this fast-paced presentation, award-winning author Candace Fleming will share her secrets for creating fascinating nonfiction. Participants will not only discover strategies for effective research and directed inquiry, but they will also leave with tips to help students create exciting "true stories" rather than dull, encyclopedic accounts.

**Audience:** PreK-9**Location:** BOS Center B-11D

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**155. 9:45 – 10:45****Word Study Routines for the Busy Classroom**

Amy Stewart  
Educator/Author  
Chicago, Illinois



Word recognition requires application of and fluency within several different areas, including phonics, spelling, morphology, and vocabulary. This session will focus on high-utility routines and activities (and where they fit in a busy day) that will support students as they learn the alphabetic principle from letters and sounds to syllables and beyond. If you're wondering which word study moves to make in your learning space, let this session be your guide.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Location:** Wyndham Rendezvous**156. 9:45 – 10:45****Whoa! What Happened To Our Room?!**

Adam Peterson  
Author  
Morris, Illinois



What?! Wow! Awesome! Those are words every teacher loves to hear, right? Make books and lessons more engaging than ever before with simple, budget-friendly room flips! Students will explore reading strategies, story elements, writing, and more while learning in environments that look nothing like their usual classrooms!

**Audience:** PreK-3**Location:** Wyndham Plaza 3

**Visit Booth 433 for a  
chance to win an  
IRC Hall of Council  
Raffle Basket!**

**157. 9:45 – 10:45****It's a "Good Day" to Make Inferences: Helping Emergent and Reluctant Readers**

Amy Davis  
Eastern Illinois University, Charleston

A skilled reader can understand and connect to relationships that are not explicitly stated in text. The process of making inferences can be divided into two categories: text and prior-knowledge-based. This presentation offers examples of inference questions using the picture book, *"It's a Good Day"* by Kevin Henkes, that teachers can use during shared book readings with emergent and reluctant readers.

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-1**158. 9:45 – 10:45****Books That Celebrate Kids' Joy! A Retrospective and Look Forward**

Deb Augsburg  
Lewis University, Naperville

Hear about great picture books and novels that have featured and spread joy for all. From the sheer pleasure in *Jabari Jumps* to the sublime joy of Melody's first dance in *Out of My Heart*, let's celebrate old and new titles that show kids being joyful and fully themselves. Participants will receive a list of all of the titles featured in our IRC column: Finding Common Ground: Understanding Ourselves and the World through Literature for the last 10 years.

**Audience:** PreK-12, Lib**Strand:** Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**Location:** BOS Center B-2**159. 9:45 – 10:45****The People Behind the Names on the Biggest Awards in Children's Literature**

Gregory Bryan  
University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

John Newbery, Hans Christian Andersen, Kate Greenaway, and Randolph Caldecott are all recognized by having some of the biggest awards in the field of children's literature named in their honor. Yet, today the life and work of each person is little known. This presentation discusses the lives and work of these influential figures, illuminating the past so that we can better understand and appreciate the present. In knowing about the lives behind the names on awards, teachers can highlight these people and awards, promoting a classrooms culture in which reading is celebrated.

**Audience:** PreK-6, Lib**Strand:** Librarians & Children's/YA Literature**Location:** BOS Center B-3

**160. 9:45 – 10:45****Illinois Reads Books and STEAM Activities – The Perfect Combination For Student Engagement**

Sheila Ruh

Educational Consultant, Darien

Sherry Sejnost

Educational Consultant, Downers Grove

This session will share ideas for how to incorporate the elements of STEAM using the 2025 Illinois Reads titles. Participants will leave the session inspired with new ideas and resources to improve student engagement.

**Audience:** PreK-9, Lib**Strand:** STEAM**Location:** BOS Center B-4**161. 9:45 – 10:45****Every Language is a Pathway to Knowledge: Supporting Multilingual Learners in the Content Classroom**

Katherine McKnight

Engaging Learners, Antioch

Our classrooms and communities are enriched by the invaluable diversity and perspectives brought by multilingual learners. In this session, we'll explore ways to harness multilingualism as a powerful tool for cultivating literacy skills and comprehensive content understanding. Discover strategies for fostering a collaborative learning environment that encourages metacognition, reflection, and a willingness to take risks. Delve into the symbiotic relationship between collaboration and literacy advancement in subject-specific classrooms. Gain insights into effective, research-backed instructional methods designed to boost multilingual learners' confidence, enhance literacy competencies, and deepen content knowledge.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** BOS Center B-6**PHOTO CONTEST**

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One attendee who submits a photo will be selected to **WIN A FREE REGISTRATION** to the next conference! Be creative and look for those picture-perfect spots at the conference venues!

Also, post on your **OWN SOCIALS** and tag **IRC at @ilreadcouncil & #ircreads!**

**162. 9:45 – 10:45****CANCELED****Bringing the Joy Back: Creating Spaces for Readers and Writers to Find Their Identities Within a District Mandated Reading Curriculum**

Karen Biggs-Tucker

Wild Rose Elementary School, St. Charles

Are you looking to find a balance between a district mandated program and what your heart tells you that learners need to do to find the joy in their daily literacy experiences? There is hope if you do what we ask our students to do and persevere in finding what is important in the work that we do each day in our classrooms. Come and find lessons that you can use with your readers and writers to engage them through the big ideas that exist in your curriculum. Leave with great book titles that will connect you, your students, with the joy that comes with experiencing a lot of reading and writing in meaningful ways each day.

**Audience:** 4-6**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-7**163. 9:45 – 10:45****Building Stronger Readers Together: Family Reading Nights, Parent Workshop Ideas, and Beyond**

Natalie Biancalana

Butler SD #53, Oak Brook

Are you responsible for your school's Family Literacy Night? Do you need to give a parent workshop? This session will share some previously successful ideas for those events and will include time for participants to collaborate on what has worked in their schools. Beyond one-time events, two models for yearlong family and school partnerships focused on including multilingual families which led to sustained, collaborative home-school relationships will also be shared. Research, including our own IRCJ's monthly column, shows us how important family engagement is. Let's explore ways to take it to the next level together!

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-8**164. 9:45 – 10:45****The Magic of Interactive Read-Aloud**

Cindy Gerwin

Bridging Perspectives, LLC, Lisle

Every read-aloud is a unique opportunity to cast a spell by engaging learners in the magic of reading. An interactive read-aloud incorporates multiple components of a balanced literacy lesson within an authentic context allowing educators to maximize their time (without the use of a time traveler), increase retention, and improve student outcomes. Reading aloud, every day (#classroombookaday), also supports the creation of a magical community filled with pure JOY by providing readers access to a variety of inclusive texts that not only reflect their own identities, but also mirrors the world around them.

**Audience:** PreK-9, Lib**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-10**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**

**165. 9:45 – 10:45****How Media Literacy and Reading Local News Can Empower Students to Take Action in Their Communities**

Florian Feucht

Thinking Habitats, Detroit, Michigan

Explore our federally-funded media literacy unit that connects reading and thinking skills with the writing process using a student-centric, project-based approach. See how local news can be used as a motivational hook to empower students to learn about their communities and engage in collaborative problem-solving to address issues they care about. Participants will learn a reliable process for evaluating news articles in a non-biased manner. They will explore materials, including reading and writing activities, grading rubrics, student work, and notes from teachers who have taught the unit. This cross-disciplinary program can be tailored to meet the needs of any classroom.

**Audience:** 9-12, ELL, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center VIP*Sponsored by Thinking Habitats***166. 9:45 – 10:45****Spring into Literacy: Activities & Ideas to Encourage Student Learning & Engagement**

Danica Luttrell

Rochester Junior High School, Rochester

Jen Newton

Rochester Junior High School, Rochester

ELA classroom teacher Danica and District Librarian Jen have worked together these past two years to enhance and promote literacy instruction and activities at the Junior High. Jen and Danica will share these ideas, strategies, and activities that have taken place in both the classroom and the library. Their session will share and discuss a district-wide literacy push and middle-level streamlined literacy philosophy; book tastings and speed-dating; paired texts, text sets, and mentor texts. Their hope is that all attendees will leave this session with a next-step in mind!

**Audience:** 4-9**Location:** PAL Ottawa AB**167. 9:45 – 10:45****Nurturing an Empowered Classroom Community Through Poetry**

Maureen Daley

James Hart School, Homewood

Ellen Noonan

James Hart School, Homewood

Amy Richardson

James Hart School, Homewood

We will demonstrate how to use hands-on, research-based techniques to engage students with poetry. We will present a thematic framework that will nurture your students as they grow as writers. Whether you are nervous about teaching poetry or have done so for years, we have tools to help your practice. All subject area teachers are welcome to attend to learn how to better use poetry in the classroom.

**Audience:** 6-12, ELL, Spec, Adults**Strand:** Writing**Location:** PAL Altgeld**168. 9:45 – 10:45****Chronic Absenteeism**

Christy Ziller

SD #209U, Wilmington

Chronic absenteeism is defined as students missing 10% or more school days. There has been an uptick in student chronic absenteeism since the return to in-person classes post-pandemic. All schools have been affected. This has been threatening the academic recovery in schools of all sizes and demographic makeups across the country. This is a nationwide concern. This effort provided a toolkit for district leaders to help communicate the importance of attending school with children, families and educators. Also included are strategies that schools and community groups can utilize with students' families and educators to help cultivate a deeper culture of learning at school and at home that may increase attendance.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**Location:** PAL Bond**169. 9:45 – 10:45****In the Door and Out with a Book: Getting Teens to Re-Engage with the Library and Re-Discover Reading**

Aimee Miller

Batavia High School, Batavia

For a variety of reasons, reading takes a back seat for many high school students. How do we reengage students in reading? This presentation will discuss tips and tricks for getting teens into the library and hopefully out with a book.

**Audience:** 9-12, Lib**Strand:** Librarians & Children's/YA Literature**Location:** PAL Freeport AB**CANCELED****QR EXHIBIT HALL GAME**

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**170. 9:45 – 10:45****Reading Intervention at the Intermediate Level**

Britain Pluester

CUSD #1, Roxana

This session will focus on a multitude of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and writing strategies for grades 3-5 in an intervention, or small group setting.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Freeport C**171. 9:45 – 10:45****Read Allowed**

Kristin Richey

CUSD #201, Westmont

This session will be filled with tried and true middle level read-alouds AND the endless benefits of using them. We'll dive into the wonder of the adolescent brain and the research that supports reading aloud in the classroom. You'll leave with new ideas for using read-alouds to support your middle school classroom and all those nostalgic, "come to the carpet" feels!

**Audience:** 6-9**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Yates

## Let the IRC Professional Learning & Development Team be your PD Partner!

The Illinois Reading Council is a premier professional reading organization that offers a Professional Learning Cadre of educators available for on-site and technical assistance with tools and resources to match your school professional learning needs.

IRC PL&D utilizes the educational professionalism, understanding the adult learner, and blends that with research-based teaching and student learning strategies. The professional learning and development service providers are informed by years of experience and subject matter expertise.

IRC PL&D offers custom programs, exceptional engaging speakers, timely topics, and informative programs to assist you and your school and district faculty in reaching all your educational goals.

Sessions communicate a range of topics including but not limited to:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
- Vocabulary Development
- Questioning Techniques
- Process and On Demand Writing
- Literacy Curriculum Support
- Technology and Digital Learning
- Literacy Intervention
- Gifted and Accelerated Literacy Learners

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## 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

## 172. 11:00 – 12:00

## Weaving Our World Into Fantasy

Darcie Little Badger  
Author  
San Marcos, Texas



In this talk, Darcie Little Badger discusses the many ways science and society are reflected in her fantasy novels. Whether she's writing about fairie rings that behave like invasive plant species or hurricanes in alternate-universe Texas, Darcie weaves her background in geoscience throughout every book she writes. How closely does the fantastic represent our reality? And how does genre fiction help us explore the world?

**Audience:** 6-12

**Location:** BOS Center B-11A

## 173. 11:00 – 12:00

## Humans Who Have Self-Regard And Teach From Love

Shamari Reid  
Educator/Author  
Columbia University  
New York, New York



In this session, we will explore the importance of cultivating a healthy sense of self-regard as a human who teaches in the current sociopolitical climate. In addition, we will work together to create self-love plans focused on addressing our human needs and classroom materials and resources grounded in love.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11B

*Sponsored by Crossland Literacy*

**IRC WEBINAR SERIES**  
**Members, don't miss**  
**the 10 live or recorded**  
**webinars in the series!**



## 174. 11:00 – 12:00

## New and Notable Books for Grades K-8

Becky Anderson Wilkins  
Anderson's Bookshops  
Naperville, Illinois



This is a presentation of new and notable books recommended for classroom reading. A variety of genres, including picture books, poetry, fiction, and informational books will be presented, and books will be available for inspection.

**Audience:** PreK-9

**Location:** BOS Center B-11C

*Sponsored by Anderson's Bookshops*

## 175. 11:00 – 12:00

## Being the Educator Your Scholars Need

Dwayne Reed  
Author  
Chicago, Illinois



This session will inspire your staff to be the educators they always needed! Filled with tons of SEL (social-emotional learning), restorative justice, and trauma-informed talking points, Reed will help educators re-discover their WHY of teaching, and will emphasize the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships with scholars, both in and outside of the classroom. Each participant will leave with dozens of practical, relationship-building strategies which can immediately be implemented in their classroom.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11D

## 176. 11:00 – 12:00

## Back to Life!: A 1st-Year Librarian's Journey to Revitalize a Stagnant School Library

Jennifer Connolly

Granite City High School, Granite City

A new Librarian (veteran teacher) shares the ups and downs of taking over a stagnant library space and learning the ropes – one step at a time. Includes advocacy issues, reorganization issues, programming, and public/school relations.

**Audience:** 6-12, Admin, Lib

**Strand:** Librarians & Children's/YA Literature

**Location:** Wyndham Rendezvous



**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**

**177. 11:00 – 12:00****Nurturing and Sustaining Fledgling Readers**

Rosemary West

Parkside Elementary School, Lawrenceville

Leann Williamson

Parkside Elementary School, Lawrenceville

Unlocking the potential of young minds is a shared responsibility. Meeting pupils where they are by embracing their abilities is essential to advocate for their right to read. Igniting a lifelong love of reading can be empowering and joyful. Let's revisit strategies and techniques to kindle our youngsters' enthusiasm to learn.

**Audience:** PreK-6, Lib**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** Wyndham Plaza 3**178. 11:00 – 12:00****Bringing Joy Back to Writing Instruction**

Sophie Degener

National Louis University, Chicago

Tina Curry

Chicago Public Schools, Chicago

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan includes writing as one of seven components of effective literacy instruction, acknowledging its importance in literacy learning. In our session, we'll connect writing instruction to the Literacy Plan's Guiding Values for Literacy, which name agency, identity, and choice as features of equitable literacy instruction. This session is for teachers looking to reimagine their writing instruction and discover the joy and creativity that writing can bring their students and themselves when they center student voices. We'll introduce a writing instruction framework, share student writing examples and classroom video clips, and offer hands-on writing activities for participants.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL, Spec, Univ**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-2**179. 11:00 – 12:00****Productive Struggle in an Inclusive Classroom**

Peg Grafwallner

Solution Tree/CESA, Germantown

Every student is on an individual learning journey, observing and reacting to setbacks and obstacles from their perspective. How can we transform our school culture to support their distinctive learning process and set the foundation for their unique learning ability and their ability to face a challenge? Let's personalize the learning, connect students with each other, and show empathy as we support all students in accepting and embracing productive struggle.

**Audience:** 4-12, Spec**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-4**180. 11:00 – 12:00****Enhancing Literacy and Learning: The Role of Learning Centers for Students in Grades 4-12**

Kristen Walsh

SD #308, Oswego

Katherine McKnight

Engaging Learners, Antioch

This presentation explores the pivotal role of literacy centers in enhancing educational outcomes for students. Learning centers provide a dynamic environment where students can develop critical literacy skills. The presentation will delve into the diverse range of opportunities offered by these centers. It will also highlight the benefits of a collaborative learning space, where students can engage in peer learning and receive support from the teacher as well. Attendees will gain insight into best practices for implementing and optimizing learning centers, ensuring that students have the support they need to excel academically, and develop a lifelong love for literacy.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL, Spec, Admin**Location:** BOS Center B-3**181. 11:00 – 12:00****Writing Tips for Reluctant Writers**

Sarah Aronson

SCBWI Illinois Author, Chicago

Anitra Schulte

SCBWI Illinois Author, Geneva

Some kids love writing. Some kids don't! Writing can be intimidating. But it doesn't have to be. It can actually be fun! Authors Sarah Aronson and Anitra Schulte will offer ten tips for helping kids get over their writing fears and embrace their own stories and imaginations with joy and enthusiasm! Writing creatively facilitates learning, expression, and reduces stress. The writers will include strategies for working with kids with disabilities and unique strengths. An extensive hand out will accompany this presentation.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec, Lib**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-6*Sponsored by SCBWI Illinois***182. 11:00 – 12:00****Writing Woes: Searching for Focus in Student Writing**

Steven Layne

Wheaton College, Wheaton

Have you reviewed a piece of student writing and thought, "I have no idea what this is even about?" Award-winning author and educator Steven Layne will share his specific lesson sequence for teaching the skill of writing "focus" to students.

**Audience:** 4-12, Admin**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-7

**183. 11:00 – 12:00****Building Foundational Literacy in K-2 Learners Using a Multisensory-Phonemic Approach**

Jennifer Orr

Eyewords Inc., London, Ontario

Participants are invited to attend a professional learning session focused on scaffolding foundational literacy skills. This session merges multisensory learning with systematic phonics, reinforced by hands-on activities. Expect to explore practical ideas and resources, including strategies for integrating multisensory-orthographic high frequency word instruction into structured literacy programs tailored for K-2 learners, English language learners, and those needing reading intervention. Additionally, discover an innovative multisensory-phonemic method and resources for teaching the alphabetic code, enhancing mastery of letter-sound correspondences through a mnemonic approach. Groundbreaking research findings will also be shared during the session.

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-8*Sponsored by Eyewords Inc.***184. 11:00 – 12:00****Leveraging Culturally Responsive Practices to Achieve Literacy Excellence**

La Tasha Fields

Madison College, Madison, WI

This presentation explores the transformative impact of culturally responsive practices on literacy achievement. By integrating students' diverse cultural backgrounds into the curriculum, educators can foster an inclusive learning environment that enhances engagement and comprehension. The session will highlight evidence-based strategies for incorporating cultural relevance into literacy instruction, address common challenges, and share success stories from various educational settings. Participants will leave equipped with practical tools and insights to elevate literacy outcomes and empower students through culturally resonant teaching methods.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-9**QR EXHIBIT HALL GAME**

Complete your **GAME SHEET** for a  
chance to win a **FREE REGISTRATION**  
to the 2026 IRC Conference!

**185. 11:00 – 12:00****For the Love of Literacy: Intentionally Inspiring Students to Become Readers Through Intersectional Anti-Ableist Teaching**

Sarah Brakenbury

Williamsfield Middle School, Williamsfield

Jess Howard

Williamsfield Middle School, Williamsfield

This presentation explores ways in which we strive to intentionally inspire the love for literacy in our students through an intersectional feminist lens, embracing anti-ableist practices. As neurodivergent educators, we recognize the importance of inclusive approaches. We will discuss strategies for promoting diverse literature that authentically represents marginalized experiences without resorting to inspiration porn. We will address combating genre and format shaming, ensuring all forms of literacy are valued and promoted. We'll provide a curated list of representative books and a checklist for recognizing ableism in literature. We aim to empower ALL students to find joy and representation in reading.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec, Lib**Location:** BOS Center B-10**186. 11:00 – 12:00****The Science of Reading: Insights for Biliteracy Instruction**

Laura Castro

Heggerty, Elgin

Erica Suarez

Heggerty, Arlington Heights

In this session, we will apply the science of reading to biliteracy. What does this body of research reveal about literacy development in general and what are the implications for biliteracy programs? We will unpack what it takes to become biliterate in English and Spanish. We will explore the relationship between oral language and written language and the instructional implications of learning to read and write in two alphabetic codes simultaneously. Contrastive analysis of both languages' oral and written systems will reveal essential instructional components unique to biliteracy.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL, Adults, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center VIP*Sponsored by Heggerty***187. 11:00 – 12:00****What Does the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Tell Us About What to Prioritize With Writing?**

Erika Lukasik

West 40 ISC #2, Maywood

Participants will explore the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Writing Component and walk away with an understanding of what the plan includes, excludes, and prioritizes. They will leave the session having set a reasonable goal for the next steps in their literacy journey with writing focused specifically on writing across the curriculum.

**Audience:** PreK-12**Strand:** Writing**Location:** PAL Ottawa AB

**188. 11:00 – 12:00****Poetry Inside Out**

Brandon Barr

Twain Elementary, Chicago

Albert Burford

Twain Elementary, Chicago

Mark Hauber

Twain Elementary, Chicago

“Poetry Inside Out” is an interdisciplinary program that merges poetry, translation, and cultural studies to enhance language learning and critical thinking. This session will engage participants in hands-on activities from the free teacher toolkit and model collaborative exploration of poetic texts from around the world. By translating poetry, attendees explore linguistic and cultural nuances, fostering global literacy and empathy. This innovative approach aligns with current educational research and offers new perspectives on integrating the arts into multicultural education, promoting a more inclusive and interconnected classroom experience.

**Audience:** 6-12, ELL, Spec, Lib**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** PAL Altgeld**189. 11:00 – 12:00****Play On, Player! How Manipulatives and Play Can Help Scholars Enhance Comprehension**

Claudia Gates

Read + Write Education Services, Chicago

The session will identify how scholars can use manipulatives and play to enhance sensory development, critical thinking, and critical reading to strengthen reading comprehension.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Bond**190. 11:00 – 12:00****For the Love of Reading: Motivating Independent Readers**

Rebecca Pabst

Parkside Junior High School, Normal

Cindy Coyle

Parkside Junior High School, Normal

Do you feel like your ELA classroom is stagnant, and your students don't want to read? Learn easy ways to breathe life into your classroom, reading program, and students by focusing on independent reading. We'll discuss a variety of ideas that you can implement immediately – First Chapter Fridays, Author of the Month, reading challenges and incentives, book talks, trailers, and digital bookshelves, locker bookmark bingo, teacher reads posters, book displays, student conferences, reading cafes, and partnering with your IMC specialist!

**Audience:** 6-12**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** PAL Freeport AB**191. 11:00 – 12:00****Our Focused Fairies: A Case Study of Community-Based Liberatory Literacy Practices with Girls of Color in Chicago**

Darryca Brim

Governors State University, University Park

Karla Manning

Governors State University, University Park

This case study centers on the liberatory literacy practices of Black & Brown girls in community-based educational spaces, highlighting their agency, resistance, and creative expression as acts of empowerment. Grounded in critical literacy and Black feminist frameworks, the study explores how these practices challenge dominant narratives and affirm cultural identities. Through storytelling, reflective artifacts, poetry, and multimodal projects, the girls articulated lived experiences, interrogated societal inequities, and imagined liberated futures. The findings reveal how culturally sustaining pedagogies create opportunities for Black girls to reclaim voice, develop critical consciousness, and disrupt traditional notions of literacy.

**Audience:** 4-12**Strand:** Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**Location:** PAL Freeport C**192. 11:00 – 12:00****Empowering Students to Become Word Problem-Solvers: Instructional Methods for Teaching Morphology**

Sara Sukalski

DePaul University, Chicago

Proficient reading requires the ability to analyze words for various properties, including pronunciation, meaning, and syntactical function. Morphological instruction gives students the knowledge and skills to analyze words for these different properties. This presentation will explore instructional methods to help build students' understanding of the morphemic construction of words by focusing on learning prominent Latin roots and affixes and explicit morphological analysis strategies. These instructional methods were used in a research study of 63 sixth grade students that showed significant gains in students' abilities to use morphological analysis to determine the pronunciation, meaning, and syntactical function of novel words.

**Audience:** 4-9**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** PAL Yates

**Heinemann**  
Books are  
in Booth 300



12:15 – 2:00 PM

**Friday Luncheon****193. Luncheon 12:15 – 2:00****Research-Based Literacy Practices to Increase Love, Joy, and Empowerment**

Ernest Morrell  
Educator/Author  
University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, Indiana



Join Ernest Morrell, author and educator from the University of Notre Dame as he shares research-based practices for creating joyful and engaging literacy classrooms that empower all students. Ernest Morrell has an extensive resume of experience on the topic and will share not only his knowledge, but his passion for the subject. Come explore new ideas for critically questioning texts with a focus on media literacies. Also collaborate on connecting writing to student-choice projects and student voice to help create literacy classrooms that are inclusive for all students.

**Audience:** Ticket Required

**Location:** PAL Ballroom

*Sponsored by Savvas Learning Company*

**Jerry Johns Reading Educator  
of the Year Award**

will be presented at the Friday Luncheon to

**Cindy Gerwin**

Award will be presented by Melissa Wheeler, Chair

**Friday Luncheon****194. Luncheon 12:15 – 2:00****Contemporary Codices**

Duncan Tonatiuh  
Author  
Laredo, Texas



Duncan Tonatiuh will discuss his journey to becoming a published author-illustrator. He will highlight how his Mexican background plays a key role in the themes of his books and how the ancient art of Mesoamerican cultures influenced his illustration style. He will share the importance of multicultural literature and share resources that can help educators use his books in the classroom.

**Audience:** Ticket Required

**Location:** Wyndham Ballroom

**ICARE Static Sticker Decal Contest**  
will be awarded at the Friday Luncheon to

**Augie Brandt**  
**St. Libory Grade School**  
**St. Libory, Illinois**

Award will be presented by Kathlwnn Sweeney, ICARE President

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Y**VISIT THE EXHIBITS****FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025****8:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

*Refreshments will be served  
from 9:00 – 10:00 AM  
in the Exhibit Hall*



Illinois Reading Council  
Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education

1:00 – 2:00 PM

**195. 1:00 – 2:00****Building Knowledge with Close Reading**

Amy Stewart  
Educator/Author  
Chicago, Illinois



Students' reading comprehension and, more importantly, their understanding of the world around them are supported by a foundation of knowledge. This session will support educators as they use close reading of content-rich texts to build knowledge along with decoding and other language comprehension skills. Participants will walk away with practical, classroom-ready ideas for using close-reading experiences to deepen thinking and connect readers to the world.

**Audience:** PreK-6

**Location:** BOS Center B-11A

**196. 1:00 – 2:00****New and Notable Books for Young Adults**

Becky Anderson Wilkins  
Anderson's Bookshops  
Naperville, Illinois



This is a presentation of new and notable books recommended for classroom reading. A variety of genres, including picture books, poetry, fiction, and informational books will be presented, and books will be available for inspection.

**Audience:** All

**Location:** BOS Center B-11C

*Sponsored by Anderson's Bookshops*

**197. 1:00 - 2:00****Developing Meaningful Relationships with Parents of Neurodiverse Students**

Shelley Kenow

Shelley Kenow IEP Consultant, Albers

The relationship between educators and parents is vital to the education of all students, particularly those who are neurodiverse. Studies show parents of those with learning differences have the least amount of parental involvement and the worst relationships. This session will teach the "know, like, and trust" factors necessary to create meaningful relationships.

**Audience:** All

**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging

**Location:** BOS Center B-11B

*Sponsored by Shelley Kenow IEP Consultant*

**198. 1:00 - 2:00****Literacy Adventures with Books about Gardening, Nature, and Agriculture**

Chris Wyant

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom,  
Bloomington

Pair engaging texts with compelling reading strategies and classroom activities to engage students with gardening, agriculture, and the natural world around them, while also growing their literacy skills. This interactive session will include book recommendations, activities and resources ready for your classroom, and insights into additional free resources from IL Ag in the Classroom.

**Audience:** PreK-9

**Location:** BOS Center B-11D

*Sponsored by Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom*

**HUNGRY?**

**The BOS Center  
Concession Stand  
is Open!**

**Purchase lunch and take it to  
one of the lunch time sessions  
planned from 1:00 – 2:00 PM  
in the BOS Center**

**Concessions are Open:**  
**Thursday 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM**  
**Friday 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

FRIDAY

**199. 1:00 - 2:00****The Science of Reading: What It Is and Why It Matters**

Laura Stewart

95 Percent Group, Lincolnshire

This session addresses this compelling call to action by addressing these big ideas: 1. Learning to read is not a natural skill and therefore instruction really counts; 2. There are key conceptual models and neuroscientific evidence which can inform our understanding of the process of reading so that instruction can be effectively delivered and assessed, with targeted instruction as indicated; and 3. There are seven essential “must-haves” for instruction.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-1*Sponsored by 95 Percent Group***200. 1:00 - 2:00****Leading Curriculum Change**

Lainie Augensen

Great Minds, Chicago

Katherine Chuu

Armour Elementary, Chicago

How can leaders embrace curricular change as a process, rather than as one event? What key actions can leaders take? And how can leaders maintain a clear focus on equity of student outcomes? In this session, Katherine Chuu, Principal at Armour Elementary in Chicago Public Schools and Lainie Augensen, Success Lead at Great Minds, seek to answer these questions through sharing their story of implementing a new literacy curriculum with the goal of greater equity in student outcomes.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-2*Sponsored by Great Minds***201. 1:00 - 2:00****Exploring Small-Group Lesson Instruction with Benchmark Advance Resources**

Shauna Williams

Benchmark Education, New Rochelle, NY

Benchmark Advance users will review small-group resources used to differentiate practice and application. They will explore the purpose and types of small groups and examine the intention of other small-group opportunities. This is a great opportunity to become an expert pulling small groups.

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-3*Sponsored by Benchmark Education***202. 1:00 - 2:00****Drawing Connections: Utilizing Comics to Foster Multiliteracies in the Classroom**

Nate Olson

Optimist Comics LLC, Chicago

Graphic novels are the fastest growing addition to the YA literature landscape and educators across the country have taken note by incorporating more comics into the curriculum. This workshop explores actionable, evidence-based strategies to take this learning even further with the implementation of visual storytelling (the art of making comics) as a tool for project-based ELA instruction. By sharing the findings from the first two years of “Comics in the Classroom” programming, we detail the ways in which adapting literary texts into comic books achieves Common Core standards and translates into a well-rounded multiliteracies education.

**Audience:** 4-9**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-4**203. 1:00 - 2:00****Solving the Tier I Literacy Problem: Working Together to Support Student Learning**

Karyn Tomkinson

Hand2Mind, Decatur, IN

Do you say, “This is simply a Tier 1 problem?” Do your interventionists see their caseloads increasing each year? We invite you to our solution-focused session if any of these questions resonate! Description: Drawing upon current research on the Big Five in Reading, we will explore evidence-based practices that have proven effective in Tier I settings. Participants will gain insight into instructional strategies, such as explicit instruction, differentiated learning supports, and multimodal approaches, that can be tailored to meet the needs of diverse learners within the Tier I framework. Participants will understand how assessments inform instruction and support student growth.

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-6*Sponsored by hand2mind, Inc.***204. 1:00 - 2:00****A Hands-on, Multisensory Approach to Teaching Phonemic Awareness and Phonics**

Debby Spitzer

Debby Spitzer Consulting, Fort Worth, TX

Are you looking for ways to incorporate phonemic awareness and phonics into your small group instructional time? Come learn tips and techniques that will engage your students and help them master sound and spelling relationships and decoding strategies to become successful readers.

**Audience:** PreK-3**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-7*Sponsored by hand2mind, Inc.*

**205. 1:00 - 2:00****Teach with Chapter Books to Increase Motivation and Comprehension**

Sarah Collinge

Read Side by Side, Snohomish, WA

Increase reading motivation with a text-structure approach to comprehension! This session will teach how to break chapter book reading into manageable steps. Participants will be taught how to use the CIA (collect, interpret, and apply) approach to help ALL students access longer more complex text with confidence and competence! Each participant will be given a chapter book to use in the session and will be guided through the steps. Learn how to cover all reading standards as you help your students think more deeply as they read.

**Audience:** 4-6**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-8*Sponsored by Read Side by Side Publications LLC***206. 1:00 - 2:00****Helping Adolescent Striving Readers Access Content Area Text with Evidence-Based Practices**

Sophie Weich

American Institutes for Research, Chicago

Lauren Artzi

American Institutes for Research, Chicago

Alida Hudson

American Institutes for Research, Chicago

PACT (Promoting Adolescents' Comprehension of Text) is a set of evidence-based literacy practices designed to increase general literacy and content area text comprehension. The examples of these practices discussed in the session will be from middle school U.S. History classrooms, but the framework is applicable to other subjects as well. Presenters from a federally funded project will share the PACT practices and job-embedded coaching techniques used to support implementation of research into the PACT practices. Session participants will engage in discussions about the use of these practices in their own classrooms and the implications for students with the greatest need.

**Audience:** 6-9**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-9**207. 1:00 - 2:00****Tips, Tools, & Techniques for Teaching Early Readers**

Jennifer Burchfiel

Instructional Strategy Director, Dallas, Texas

Reinforcing phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency skills through explicit, multisensory strategies will enable early learners to build confidence in their early literacy development. A wide variety of learning styles such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic techniques are needed to create a multimodal experience for students. These components will help students segment, decode, encode, and begin to read fluently so that they are successful in learning how to read.

**Audience:** PreK-3**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-10*Sponsored by hand2mind, Inc.***208. 1:00 - 2:00****Let Me Entertain You! Using TV Show Theme Songs to Improve Fluency & Comprehension**

Yolanda Williams

Newton County Schools & WHIRL, LLC,  
Covington, GA

This K-5 session will afford you an enjoyable time while becoming familiar and confident with using nursery rhymes, television shows, and sitcom theme songs to support students with fluency, reading comprehension, and content integration. You will discover strategies to assist struggling readers with fluency that range from easy to challenging to support fluency differentiation and student progress. Nostalgia is the driving force of this session. Come! You will leave entertained and motivated to look at television programs in a whole new way!

**Audience:** PreK-6, ELL**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center VIP



2:15 – 3:15 PM

**209. 2:15 – 3:15****Weaving Our World Into Fantasy**

Darcie Little Badger  
Author  
San Marcos, Texas



In this talk, Darcie Little Badger discusses the many ways science and society are reflected in her fantasy novels. Whether she's writing about fairie rings that behave like invasive plant species or hurricanes in alternate-universe Texas, Darcie weaves her background in geoscience throughout every book she writes. How closely does the fantastic represent our reality? And how does genre fiction help us explore the world?

**Audience:** 6-12**Location:** BOS Center B-11A**211. 2:15 – 3:15****School and Library Partnerships That Work: Effective and Practical Methods**

Julia Torres  
Educator/Author  
Brighton, Colorado



In this session, librarian and veteran educator Julia E. Torres will discuss practical partnerships between public school districts and library systems. Specific topics discussed will include: funding models, marketing and outreach practices, and best practices for youth engagement. This session is best for those in the field of education wanting to know more about how to initiate and sustain partnerships with their local public library.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11C**210. 2:15 – 3:15****Humans Who Have Self-Regard And Teach From Love**

Shamari Reid  
Educator/Author  
Columbia University  
New York, New York



In this session, we will explore the importance of cultivating a healthy sense of self-regard as a human who teaches in the current sociopolitical climate. In addition, we will work together to create self-love plans focused on addressing our human needs and classroom materials and resources grounded in love.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11B*Sponsored by Crossland Literacy***212. 2:15 – 3:15****Being the Educator Your Scholars Need**

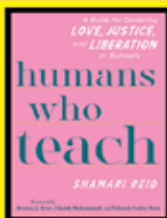
Dwayne Reed  
Author  
Chicago, Illinois



This session will inspire your staff to be the educators they always needed! Filled with tons of SEL (social-emotional learning), restorative justice, and trauma-informed talking points, Reed will help educators re-discover their WHY of teaching, and will emphasize the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships with scholars, both in and outside of the classroom. Each participant will leave with dozens of practical, relationship-building strategies which can immediately be implemented in their classroom.

**Audience:** All**Location:** BOS Center B-11D

**Register for the  
Spring 2025  
IRC Book Club**



**Register for the  
Spring 2025  
IRC Book Club**

**DOWNLOAD CONFERENCE APP FOR ABSTRACTS AND MORE**

**213. 2:15 – 3:15****Partnering with AI: Creating High-Interest Texts for Skill Building with Striving Readers**

Christina Mada

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Michelle Harris

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Identifying high interest texts that meet the needs of a given reader and provide an appropriate level of challenge can be both time-consuming and difficult for educators. In this session, participants will explore the potential of AI-powered tools for adapting or creating texts capable of targeting specific literacy skills, building content and vocabulary, and engaging reluctant readers. Presenters will share examples of AI-generated texts built with particular student needs in mind. Furthermore, presenters will elaborate on design principles and processes to be considered when partnering with AI to create customized reading material for learners across disciplines and grade levels.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-1**214. 2:15 – 3:15****Experiencing Authentic Learning Through STEAM Stories**

Jessica Winn

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Kristin Brynteson

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Often educators from different disciplines see connections between their standards but don't have the knowledge to make those ties become something more. One of the many ways NIU STEAM has worked to reduce siloed education is through the generation of lessons, activities, and units called STEAM Stories, where we use literacy to connect science, technology, engineering, art, and math. These standards aligned units focus on helping educators create lessons that bridge the different subjects. In this session we will work through STEAM Stories lessons at all grades, K-12 to give educators a launching pad for creative literacy and STEAM connections.

**Audience:** PreK-12, ELL, Spec**Strand:** STEAM**Location:** BOS Center B-2**215. 2:15 – 3:15****The Impact of Historical Notions of Children and Childhood on the Development of Early Children's Literature**

Gregory Bryan

University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

Historical views of children and childhood inhibited development of children's literature prior to the 18th century. Children were considered different from their elders in size, but little else. Because they were not seen as different, there was little need for books intended specifically for them. In 1693 John Locke proposed "gentle ways" to teach children to read with "some easy and pleasant book." Influenced by Locke's thinking, fifty years later John Newbery recognized the commercial possibilities of publishing reading materials directed towards children. This presentation reminds us that thoughts about childhood and children influence how, and with what, we teach.

**Audience:** PreK-6, Lib**Strand:** Librarians & Children's/YA Literature**Location:** BOS Center B-3**216. 2:15 – 3:15****Combatting Curriculum Punishment, Embracing Fugitivity, and School-Based Trauma: Literacy for a Reckoning**

Jennifer Martin

UIS, Springfield

Jen Brooks

UIC, Chicago

This presentation explores literacy practices aimed at addressing and dismantling educational trauma, and investigates how writing can impact the well-being and healing of our students, particularly those pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline. It highlights how traditional schooling, which often marginalizes Students of Color, can lead to their disengagement and diminished self-worth. By employing the Homeplace Literacies Framework – focusing on safety, belonging, resistance, and healing – this session proposes a writing curriculum that recognizes and affirms the humanity of Students of Color.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-4**217. 2:15 – 3:15****Implementing Family Book Clubs in Middle School**

Brittany Shreffler

CUSD #5, Gibson City

Deanna Leitz

CUSD #5, Gibson City

Encouraging families to read together at home and creating a space at school for the families to discuss and share by providing meaningful books that meet the needs of our population.

**Audience:** 4-9, Lib**Strand:** Reading Engagement**Location:** BOS Center B-6

**218. 2:15 – 3:15****Leveraging Why AI Matters in Education**

Elaine Roberts

Judson University, Elgin

The Gartner Hype Cycle has five stages. In 2023, Gartner indicated that education-related tools were in the Trough of Disillusionment and would take a few years to reach the Plateau of Productivity. Most educators are well aware of the AI hype because of the proliferation of AI-related products and experts. Is AI really worth the hype? Yes, and no. What is worth the hype, and how and why might AI matter at all to students? How can we leverage why AI matters in education to ensure our students' preparedness for how and why AI matters in the world?

**Audience:** 6-12, ELL, Univ, Admin, Lib**Strand:** Technology**Location:** BOS Center B-7**219. 2:15 – 3:15****Igniting the Spark: Evidence-Based Strategies to Cultivate a Passion for Writing in the Classroom**

Angela Schaal

A Plus Educational Consulting, Ottawa Hills, Ohio

In today's diverse educational environment, cultivating a passion for writing is essential for empowering students to succeed. In this session, educators will discover evidence-based strategies that reignite the joy of writing. Participants will leave equipped to apply effective writing routines in their classrooms. We will explore key elements of writing instruction and practical approaches for teaching students to write across different genres.

**Audience:** PreK-6, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Writing**Location:** BOS Center B-8**220. 2:15 – 3:15****Infusing Educator Preparation Programs for the Education of English Learners: The Literacy Curriculum and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Standards**

Susan Foster

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Barbara Martin

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

An opportunity gap exists between English learners (EL) and their English proficient peers. This gap has been characterized as "a persistent and seemingly intractable educational problem" (Leider et al., 2021, p. 3). In response, this presentation outlines practical ways educator preparation programs (EPP) can infuse mainstream teacher preparation with minimum content knowledge and pedagogical expertise necessary to meet the needs of ELs. Curriculum infusion includes theoretical grounding, literacy instruction and assessment strategies, and field experiences nurturing culturally responsive dispositions. Discussion includes implications for policy, practice, and integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Standards (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.).

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Multilingual Learners**Location:** BOS Center B-9**221. 2:15 – 3:15****Skin, Speech, and Surveillance: Dystopian YA Literature Through a Raciolinguistic Lens**

Jennifer Erickson

Alice Gustafson School, Batavia

I present a discourse analysis of five young adult dystopian fiction novels. The novels were published between 2008-2022, marketed to youth 13-17 years of age. Two novels were written by white female authors: Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008) and B.B. Brighton's *Neverborn* (2022). Three novels were written by female authors of color: Asian-American Marie Lu's *Legend* (2011), Indigenous-American Rebecca Roanhorse's *Trail of Lightning* (2018), and Mexican-American LGBTQ Tehlor Kay Mejia's *We Set the Dark on Fire* (2019). I explore how a racially and religiously diverse sample of female authors depicted characters of color, language, and surveillance.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL, Adults, Univ, Admin, Lib**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-10**CANCELED****PHOTO CONTEST****POST A FAVORITE CONFERENCE PIC  
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## 3:00 – 4:00 PM

**222. 3:00 – 4:00****New and Preservice Teachers' Pizza Party****Audience:** Tickets Required**Location:** BOS Center Exhibit Hall

## 3:30 – 4:30 PM

**223. 3:30 – 4:30****CANCELED****How Using Technology with Intentionality Can Ignite New Possibilities for Literacy**

Stacy Stewart

Leading Educators, Chicago

Building from an innovative literacy and technology pilot in New York's Harlem Community School District, a Chicago-based educator, former CPS Network Deputy Chief of Schools, and instructional improvement strategist will explore how intentional use of technology can help literacy educators personalize learning for all students and expand access to content-rich literacy instruction. Attendees will learn promising practices for regaining time and capacity, increasing the effectiveness of instruction, and pushing the boundaries of the status quo to create new experiences that can only be offered with technology in alignment with reading science.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-2**224. 3:30 – 4:30****A Place for Paul Goble in Classrooms**

Gregory Bryan

University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

As a non-Indigenous teller of Indigenous stories, the work of Paul Goble is today dismissed by some as cultural appropriation. Yet there is still room for the Caldecott Medal list in schools. Watercolors are often used in art rooms and Goble's watercolor art is of the highest quality. His attention to detail and skillful use of color provide a strong model. Furthermore, the improvement in the work across his career—improvement borne of commitment to his subject—is inspirational. What is also evident is that his life's work was inspired by love of Indigenous cultures of the Great Plains.

**Audience:** PreK-6**Strand:** Librarians & Children's/YA Literature**Location:** BOS Center B-3

**IRC WEBINAR SERIES**  
Members, don't miss  
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webinars in the series!

**225. 3:30 – 4:30****Liberation from Trauma: Literacy as a Tool for Inclusivity and Healing**

Julie Hoffman

Springfield Public Schools, Springfield

Healing from trauma can be scary, messy, and complicated. Fortunately, the power of story can help. We have been passing stories on to each other for centuries. Stories of hope and resilience are the best ones to share with each other. This session will cover some of the basics regarding trauma, including a review of the physiological responses (fight, flight, freeze). Expect read-alouds and discussions about how certain books can be used to teach SEL goals, in general, or toward healing from trauma. You just might find yourself filling your bookstore cart during the presentation!

**Audience:** 4-12, Spec, Univ, Admin, Lib**Strand:** Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**Location:** BOS Center B-4**226. 3:30 – 4:30****An Empowerment Model for Coaching Students in Social and Emotional Learning**

Linda Hopper

SD #186, Springfield

Coaching is a powerful medium for delivering social and emotional learning but to date has been underutilized in the classroom. In this session, Linda Hopper will define the coaching mindset, how it differs from teaching, and how with just a shift in focus and a minimal investment of time, the teacher/coach empowers students to take responsibility for their own personal growth and development. She will share the empowerment model of coaching she used to move students to a deeper level of self-awareness and to take responsibility for their own well-being.

**Audience:** 4-12, ELL, Spec**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-6**227. 3:30 – 4:30****The Impact of Reading and Writing Practices on Students' Social Justice Stances**

Hannah Graham

National Louis University, Chicago

Greg Bartley

Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan

This session presents a cross case study analysis of two year-long ethnographies which sought an answer to the question: How do students experience literacy instruction in classrooms dedicated to social justice? During the course of the session, we will outline the specific, classroom-embedded ways two teachers (one middle grades, one high school) with similar goals quashed and encouraged a consideration of social justice amongst their students.

**Audience:** 6-12, Adults, Univ**Strand:** Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging**Location:** BOS Center B-7



**228. 3:30 – 4:30****“Decodable Texts vs. Leveled Readers: Building a Strong Foundation for Early Literacy”**

Lori Jurjovec

Heggerty, Oak Park

Erica Suarez

Heggerty, Arlington Heights

This presentation examines the critical differences between decodable texts and leveled readers in supporting early literacy development. Participants will explore how decodable texts align with phonics-based instruction to build foundational reading skills, while leveled readers prioritize comprehension and text variety. Through evidence-based insights and practical examples, attendees will gain insight on how each type of text can be used effectively in the classroom. The session will also address common misconceptions and provide strategies for implementation. Educators will leave equipped to make informed decisions that strengthen young readers decoding skills and overall literacy success.

**Audience:** PreK-3, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-8*Sponsored by Heggerty***229. 3:30 – 4:30****Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies in Elementary School to Strengthen Reading Performance in an Era of Challenging Standards**

Billie Day

American Institutes for Research, Chicago

Elise Strongin

American Institutes for Research, Virginia

Sophie Weich

American Institutes for Research, Chicago

PALS (Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies) for Reading helps teachers differentiate reading instruction and provide support to students who benefit from practicing key literacy skills. Developed by researchers at Vanderbilt University, PALS pairs students to practice decoding, fluency, and reading comprehension skills while reading together. One student acts as the tutor and the other as the tutee. PALS has been shown to improve student achievement, including students with disabilities. This presentation will describe key features of PALS, present open-access resources available to educators, and describe research behind PALS including two studies currently taking place with PALS Reading (kindergarten and 4th grade).

**Audience:** PreK-3, ELL, Spec, Admin**Strand:** Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction**Location:** BOS Center B-9**230. 3:30 – 4:30****Models and Approaches to Teacher Retention and Student Literacy Attainment**

Chyrese Wolf

Chicago State University, Chicago

This session will present the models and approaches demonstrated through research to enhance teacher retention and improve upon the related effects on student literacy attainment. The Four-Capital Framework (Mason and Matas, 2015) that examines human, social, structural, and positive psychological capital will provide, in part, the framework for a facilitated discussion on the topic as will other models and frameworks proven effective across educational contexts. Educational equity for at-risk readers is directly impacted by teacher attrition factors. A problem-solving approach to addressing the topic will be applied during the session so that participants have suggestions to take to their unique school contexts.

**Audience:** All**Strand:** Literacy Leadership & Coaching**Location:** BOS Center B-10**4:45 – 5:15 PM****231. 4:45 – 5:15 PM****Annual Membership Meeting****Audience:** IRC Members**Location:** BOS Center Exhibit Hall

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## VISIT THE EXHIBITS

**Thursday, March 13, 2025**

**8:00 AM – 5:00 PM**

*Complimentary Refreshments sponsored by*

**9:00 AM ~ Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of IL**

**3:00 PM ~ Monsters on Mill Street**

**Friday, March 14, 2025**

**8:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

**Coffee Break sponsored by Savvas**

**8:30 - 9:30 AM**

**Complimentary Refreshments**

**9:00 - 10:00 AM**

# Hungry?

***The BOS Center Concession Stand will be open in the Exhibit Hall.***

***Grab lunch and head to one of the lunch time sessions planned from 1:00 – 2:00 PM in the BOS Center.***

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Dick Briggs  
3 Sable Oaks Court  
Bloomington, IL 61704  
309-531-8502  
[3ClicksSpelling.com](http://3ClicksSpelling.com)  
Booth 511

## 95 Percent Group

Jenny Reuland  
Leslye Moraski Erickson  
Shanitra Deas  
Erin Fosco  
475 Half Day Rd #350  
Lincolnshire, IL 60069  
847-499-8200  
<https://www.95percentgroup.com>  
Booth 403-404

## Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

Cindy Klenke  
Abigail Bussey  
212 North Sixth Street  
Springfield, IL 62701  
217-558-8935  
<https://presidentlincoln.illinois.gov/>  
Booth 321

## AISLE - Association of Illinois School Library Educators

PO Box 110  
Seneca, IL 61360  
815-357-6023  
<https://aisled.org/>  
Booth 313

## American Reading Company

Keteshia Melendez  
480 Norristown Rd  
Blue Bell, PA 19422  
610-992-4150  
[americanreading.com](http://americanreading.com)  
Booth 610

## Amplify

Justin Boyter  
Erin Williams  
Katie Galvin  
55 Washington Street #800  
Brooklyn, NY 43021  
800-823-1969  
[amplify.com](http://amplify.com)  
Booth 405

## Anderson's Bookshops

Becky Anderson  
Laura Evans  
123 W. Jefferson Avenue  
Naperville, IL 60540  
630-820-0044  
[www.andersonsbookshop.com](http://www.andersonsbookshop.com)  
Booth 409-414 & 419-424

## Benchmark Education

Stephanie Seemann  
Shauna Williams  
149 Huguenot Street, 8th Floor  
New Rochelle, NY 10801  
855-232-1960  
[benchmarkeducation.com](http://benchmarkeducation.com)  
Booth 505

## Books del Sur

Jimmy Moorhead  
Heather Robertson-Devine  
690 Drom Ct  
Antioch, IL 60002  
224-267-2167  
[booksdelsur.com](http://booksdelsur.com)  
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## Booksource

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Booth 625

## Collaborative Classroom

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<https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/>  
Booth 228

## Crossland Literacy

Bert Crossland  
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Booth 303-305

## Curriculum Associates

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Jeff Brill  
Paul Somers  
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Booth 309-310

## Delta Kappa Gamma, IKey Women Educators, Illinois State Organization

Mary Stayner  
Louann Harms  
Christine Hobbs  
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217-473-1790  
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## Discovery Toys, Independent Play Advisors

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## Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Illinois

Audra Cottrell  
Patti Schonauer  
111 E. Main Street, 2nd Floor  
Sevierville, TN 37862  
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## Educational Environments (Frank Cooney)

David Cichosz  
Kevin Sietsema  
700 Touhy Avenue  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
630-694-8800  
[www.edu-env.com](http://www.edu-env.com)  
Booth 605

# EXHIBITORS

## Empowering Writers

Terilynn Anderson  
Jennifer Seaton  
731 Main Street, Suite 110  
Monroe, CT 6468  
203-452-8301  
[www.empoweringwriters.com](http://www.empoweringwriters.com)  
Booth 611

## Eyewords Inc

Jennifer Orr  
501 Grangeover Crescent  
London, Ontario,  
519-282-5862  
<https://www.facebook.com/eyewordslearning>  
Booth 530

## Great Minds

Julie Long  
Lainie Augensen  
Katherine Chuu  
55 M Street SE, Suite 340  
Washington, DC 20003  
202-223-1854  
[www.greatminds.org](http://www.greatminds.org)  
Booth 533

## hand2mind, Inc.

Katie Leff  
500 Greenview Court  
Vernon Hills, IL 60061  
800-445-5985  
<https://www.hand2mind.com/>  
Booth 502-503

## Heggerty

Ben Packard  
Lori Jurjovec  
Laura Castro  
Erica Suarez  
805 Lake Street #293  
Oak Park, IL 60301  
586-306-9021  
[heggerty.org](http://heggerty.org)  
Booth 604

## Heinemann

Bert Crossland  
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847-767-4822  
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Booth 300-302

## HMH

Missy Sinclair  
Stephannie Parris  
Jessica Leonette  
Amy Waller  
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Boston, MA 2110  
617-351-5000  
<https://www.hmhco.com/>  
Booth 529

## Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom

Kevin Daugherty  
Chris Wyant  
Lee Deal  
Stephanie Hospelhorn  
1701 Towanda Avenue  
Bloomington, IL 61701  
309-212-2905  
<https://www.facebook.com/agintheclassroom>  
Booth 323-324

## Illinois ASCD

Ryan Nevius  
133 S. 4th Street, Suite 203  
Springfield, IL 62701  
618-203-3993  
[IllinoisASCD.org](http://IllinoisASCD.org)  
Booth 522

## Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS)

Dr. Mark Klaisner  
415 Lexington Street  
Maywood, IL 60153  
331-231-1361  
[www.iarss.org](http://www.iarss.org)  
Booth 223

## Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Lorna Shuman  
Joe Bauer  
James Matthew  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL 62702  
217-524-4126  
<https://dnr.illinois.gov/education.html>  
Booth 322

## Illinois Digital Educators Alliance (IDEA)

Heather Woomer  
2735 Hassert Blvd., Suite 135 PMB 304  
Naperville, IL 60564  
630-628-1088  
[ideaillinois.org](http://ideaillinois.org)  
Booth 504

## IRC Graffiti Wall

1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2  
Normal, IL 61761  
309-454-1341  
[www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org](http://www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org)  
Booth 331-332

## IRC Hall of Councils Raffle Baskets

1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2  
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309-454-1341  
[www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org](http://www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org)  
Booth 433

## IRC Illinois Reads

1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2  
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309-454-1341  
[www.illinoisreads.org](http://www.illinoisreads.org)  
Booth 431

## IRC International Project - Guatemalan Handicrafts

1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2  
Normal, IL 61761  
309-454-1341  
[www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org](http://www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org)  
Booth 430

## IRC Photo Booth

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309-454-1341  
[www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org](http://www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org)  
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## IRC Treasure Chest

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Normal, IL 61761  
309-454-1341  
[www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org](http://www.IllinoisReadingCouncil.org)  
Booth 432



## EXHIBITORS

**ISU College of Education**

Kelli Appel  
 Maria Zamudio  
 250 South University Street  
 Normal, IL 61761  
 309-438-5415  
<https://education.illinoisstate.edu/>  
 Booth 602

**IXL Learning**

Christine Albano (Chicago Metro)  
 Ryan Knott (Central/Southern Illinois)  
 Stacy Rubly (Northern Illinois)  
 777 Mariners Island Blvd  
 San Mateo, CA 94404  
 855-255-8800  
[ixl.com/us/illinoisrosettastone.com/schools](http://ixl.com/us/illinoisrosettastone.com/schools)  
 Booth 233

**Jewelry to Go**

Shelley Kowalewski  
 2103 Mint Spring Lane  
 Wildwood, MO 63038  
 636-236-1130  
 Booth 222

**Jolly Learning**

Jim McVety  
 Deb Bible  
 82 Winter Sport Lane  
 Williston, VT 5495  
 215-858-8820  
[www.jollylearning.com](http://www.jollylearning.com)  
 Booth 612

**Laprea Education**

Jim Burnette  
 Pleasantville, NY 10570  
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<https://www.facebook.com/LaPreaEducation>  
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**Libraria (formerly known as Children's Plus, Inc.)**

Linda Peterson  
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 Beecher, IL 60401  
 800-230-1279  
[www.libraria.com](http://www.libraria.com)  
 Booth 229

**Loyola Press**

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 Chicago, IL 60631  
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<https://languagearts.loyolapress.com/>  
 Booth 428

**Marian University Center for Vibrant Schools**

Stephanie Kneeland  
 Michael Keyes  
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 Indianapolis, IN 46222  
 317-955-6741  
[lessonsinlanguage.com](http://lessonsinlanguage.com)  
 Booth 613

**Mike Lockett/Storyteller and Author**

Mike Lockett  
 Jan Lockett  
 2001 Foxwood CC Run  
 Normal, IL 61761  
 309-310-2299  
[www.mikelockett.com](http://www.mikelockett.com)  
 Booth 509

**Monsters on Mill Street**

Sarah (Sparks) Minnis  
 665 Alexandria Drive  
 Naperville, IL 60565  
 309-472-9819  
[www.MonstersOnMillStreet.com](http://www.MonstersOnMillStreet.com)  
 Booth 519-520

**National Louis University**

William Vavrin  
 122 S. Michigan Avenue  
 Chicago, IL 60603  
 888-658-8632  
<https://nl.edu/>  
 Booth 232

**NEXT LEVEL Libraries**

Bert Crossland  
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 847-767-4822  
[www.crosslandliteracy.com](http://www.crosslandliteracy.com)  
 Booth 328

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 847-767-4822  
[Crosslandliteracy.com](http://Crosslandliteracy.com)  
 Booth 329-330

**Olivet Nazarene University**

Cynthia Veronda  
 1 University Avenue  
 Bourbonnais, IL 60914  
 815-928-5515  
[olivet.edu](http://olivet.edu)  
 Booth 521

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Mariah De La Fuente  
 1000 North Second Avenue  
 Logan, IA 515461061  
 201-708-2331  
<https://www.perfectionlearning.com/>  
 Booth 614

**ProLearning**

Samantha Echebelem  
 7205 S Cooper Street #111  
 Arlington, TX 76001  
 682-561-5876  
[prolearningservices.com](http://prolearningservices.com)  
 Booth 523

**Read Naturally**

Peter Hodges  
 1284 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 600  
 St. Paul, MN 55121  
 651-286-8718  
[www.ReadNaturally.com](http://www.ReadNaturally.com)  
 Booth 524

**Read Side by Side Publications LLC**

Sarah Collinge  
 Sadie Collinge  
 9514 180th St SE  
 Snohomish, WA 98296  
 425-412-3724  
 Booth 609

**Reading Horizons**

Lisa Bufka  
 Ethan Lynn  
 1194 West Flint Meadow Drive  
 Kaysville, UT 84037  
 800-333-0054  
<https://www.readinghorizons.com/>  
 Booth 532

# EXHIBITORS

## Renaissance

Daisy Becker  
Mallory Hartnett  
Sam St. Clair  
2911 Peach Street  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494  
800-338-4204  
<https://www.renaissance.com/>  
*Booth 531*

## Roxy & Lola

Erica Schrock  
8756 Hickory Hills Drive  
Argenta, IL 62501  
217-620-9964  
<https://www.roxyandlola.com>  
*Booth 429*

## Savvas Learning Company

Chrissie Maleska  
Susan Campbell  
Thad Murphy  
Mora Arnold  
3075 W. Ray Road  
Chandler, AZ 85226  
480-271-4340  
<https://www.facebook.com/SavvasLearning>  
*Booth 500-501*

## Scholastic Book Fairs

Lisa Mallis  
Dawn Isenhardt  
Cherie Filipos  
301 Gary Avenue, Unit A  
Roselle, IL 60172  
877-245-0903  
[ScholasticBookFairs.com](https://www.scholasticbookfairs.com)  
*Booth 603*

## SERP Institute

Akilah Hawkins  
Kimberly Chase  
1100 Connecticut Ave NW #1310  
Washington, DC 20010  
202-223-8555  
<https://www.serpoinstitute.org/>  
*Booth 622*

## Shelley Kenow IEP Consultant

Shelley Kenow  
Lou Jansen  
301 West Hendricks Street  
Albers, IL 62215  
314-541-2181  
<https://www.facebook.com/helleyKenowIEPconsultant>  
*Booth 402*

## SLD Support Project

Tari Jansen  
5837 Park Drive  
Charleston, IL 61920  
844-999-9001  
[www.sldsupports.org](http://www.sldsupports.org)  
*Booth 224*

## Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators-Illinois

Jennifer Wagh  
Louann Brown  
Alison Marcotte  
Pamela Morgan  
1403 Riverlanding  
Normal, IL 61761  
708-305-4744  
<https://www.scbwi.org/regions/illinois>  
*Booth 312*

## Sophia Renee Designs

Nancy Iwankovitsch  
30221 Lakeland Rd  
Deer Creek, IL 61733  
309-370-5302  
[www.sophiareneedesigns.com](http://www.sophiareneedesigns.com)  
*Booth 320*

## Sundance Newbridge

Jim Jenkins  
33 Boston Post Road West, Suite 440  
Marlborough, MA 1752  
586-255-7468  
[www.SundanceNewbridge.com](http://www.SundanceNewbridge.com)  
*Booth 401*

## Sylvan Learning Center

Laura Vollmer  
Anna Ostmann  
Shawna Stewart  
Vanessa Ross  
2735 S 6th Street  
Springfield, IL 62703  
217-546-0009  
*Booth 400*

## Teachers' Retirement System

Lauren Bails  
2815 W. Washington, PO Box 19253  
Springfield, IL 627949253  
217-814-2034  
[www.trsil.org](http://www.trsil.org)  
*Booth 601*

## The National Board Resource Center at Illinois State University

Sherri Bettis  
Christine Komnick  
Rebecca Long  
Manuel Gaerlan  
Campus Box 5390  
Normal, IL 61790  
309-438-1835  
<https://www.facebook.com/nbrclilstu.edu/>  
*Booth 319*

## The Teacher Truck

Megan Austin  
11746 Dundee Drive  
Belvidere, IL 61008  
815-289-6193  
[teacher-truck-100107.square.site](http://teacher-truck-100107.square.site)  
*Booth 619-621*

## Thinking Habitats x Thinking Pro

Florian Feucht  
4444 2nd Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48201  
313-202-9000  
[www.ThinkingHabitats.com](http://www.ThinkingHabitats.com)  
*Booth 510*

## VariQuest

Howard Shaw  
7200 93rd Ave, Suite 120  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445  
224-297-1466  
<http://www.variquest.com/>  
*Booth 221*

## Vista Higher Learning

Jennifer Blankenship  
500 Boylston Street, Suite 620  
Boston, MA 02116  
787-529-8035  
<https://vistahigherlearning.com/>  
*Booth 623-624*

## Wilson Language Training

Melissa Strum  
Tanya Kay  
47 Old Webster Road  
Oxford, MA 1540  
508-368-2399  
<https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/>  
*Booth 219-220*

## Zaner-Bloser

Jim Burnette  
1800 Watermark Drive  
Columbus, OH 43215  
800-421-3018  
<https://www.facebook.com/ZanerBloser/>  
*Booth 231*

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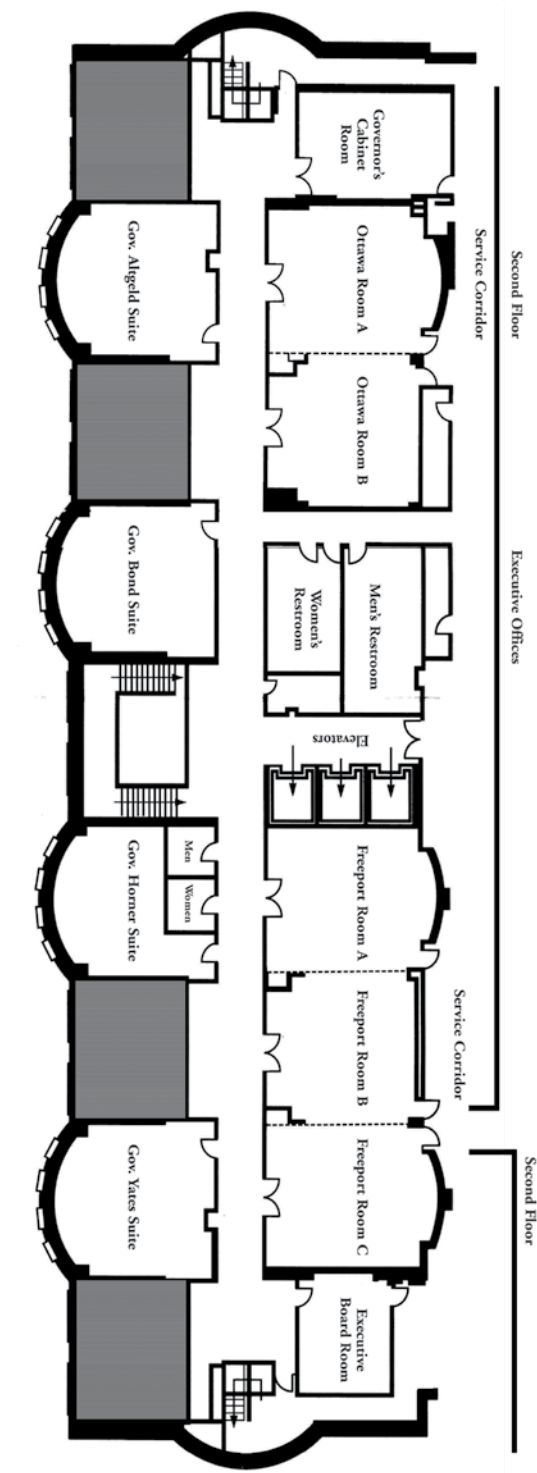
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(Next door to the Bank of Springfield Center and across street to the Wyndham Hotel)



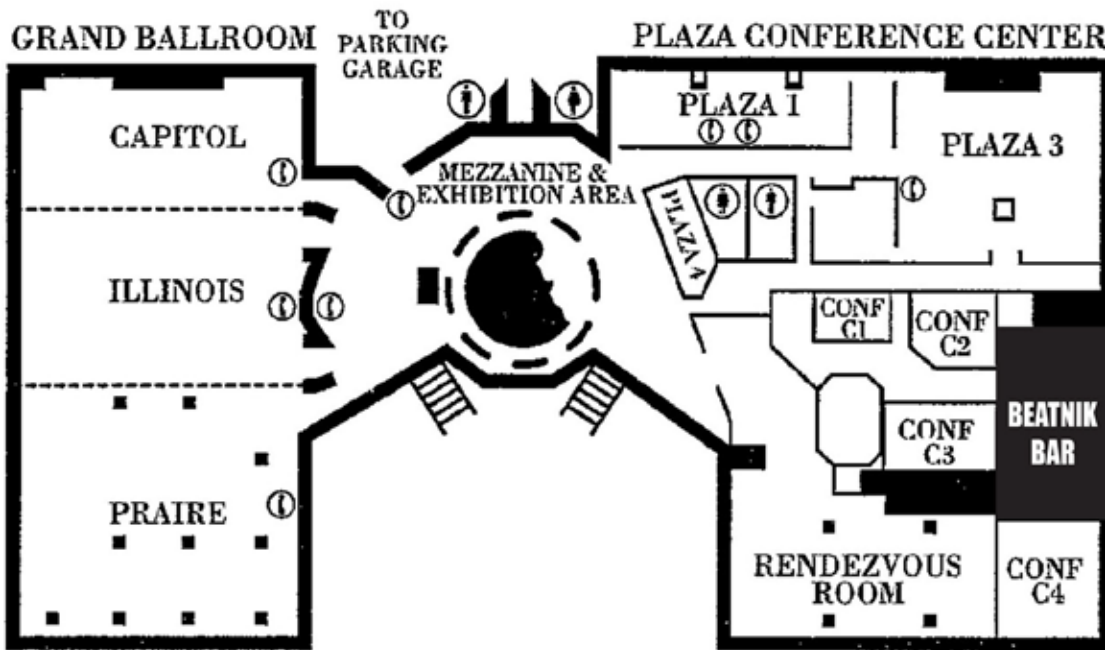
## Second Floor

# Wyndham Hotel

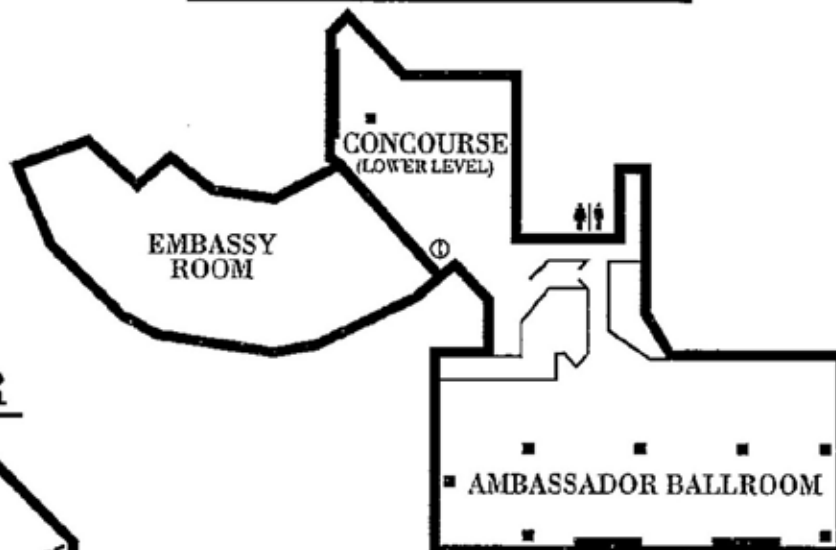
700 E. Adams Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701

(Across the Street from the PAL Hotel)

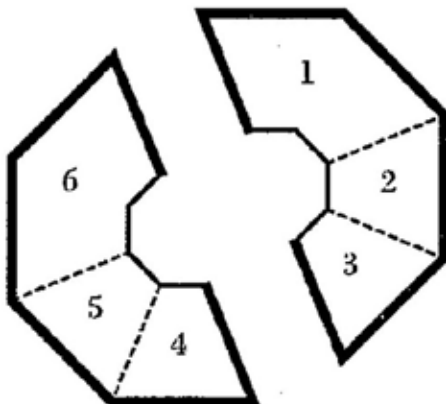
## MEZZANINE LEVEL



## CONCOURSE LEVEL



## 29<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR



# Bank of Springfield Center

1 Convention Center Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62701 (next to PAL Hotel)

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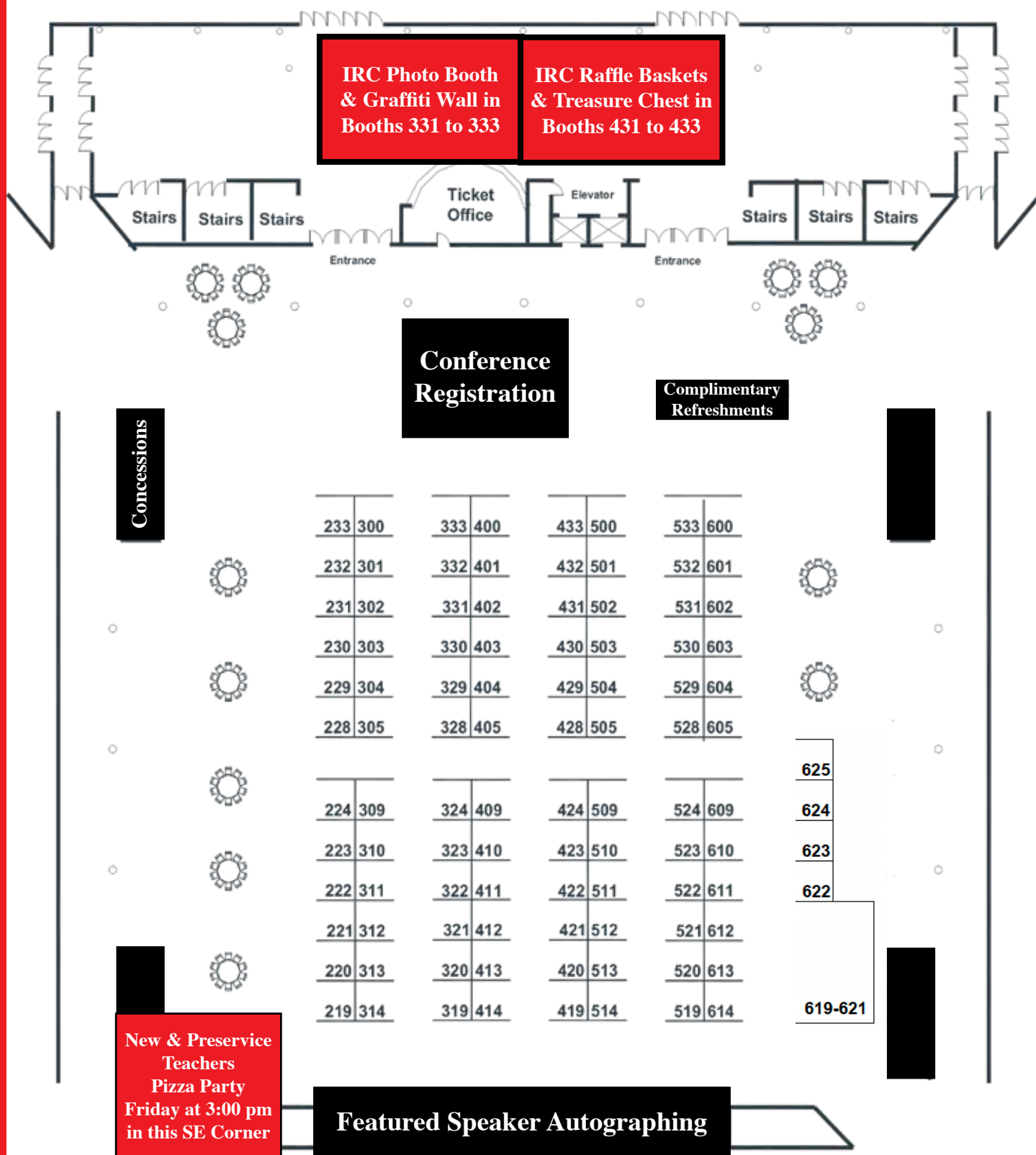
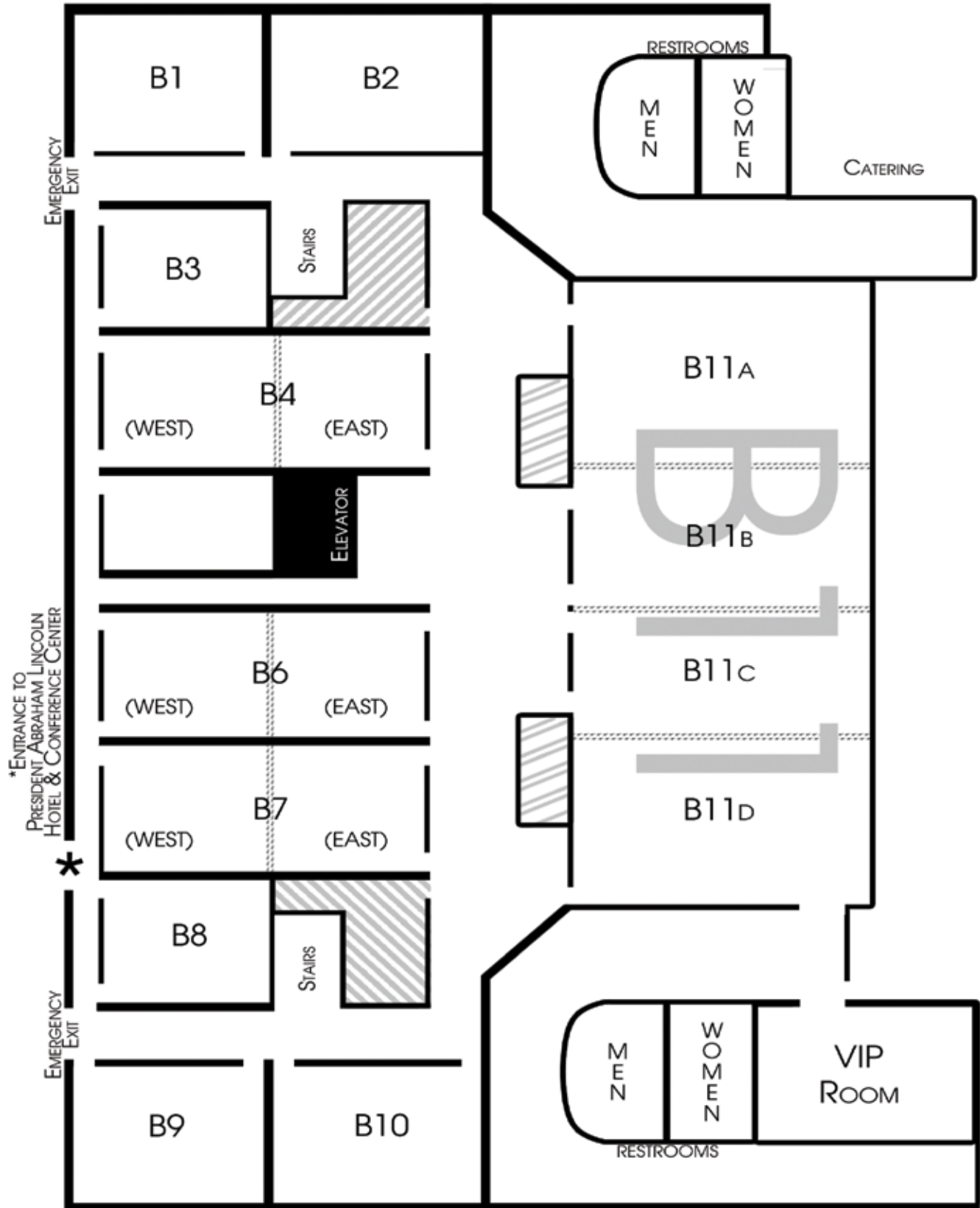


Exhibit Hall on First Floor

# Bank of Springfield Center

1 Convention Center Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62701 (next to PAL Hotel)



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Meeting Rooms in Lower Level



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CLOCK HOURS

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The Illinois Reading Council is an approved ISBE Professional Development Provider. Registered attendees can earn one clock hour for each session attended. Please note that meal functions and other events are available for one (1) clock hour only. Registered presenters can also earn up to eight (8) clock hours for presenting a session. At the end of the conference, plan to submit your clock hours for the sessions that you attended and/or presented at the conference via one of two options.

**OPTION 1 – ONLINE CLOCK HOUR FORM:** You can enter your **Record of Sessions Attended** and **Conference Evaluation Forms** via the online form at: <https://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/IRC-Conference-Evaluation-Form>.

**OPTION 2 – PRINT PDF COPY OF THE CLOCK HOUR FORMS:** You can print the **Record of Sessions Attended** and **Conference Evaluation Forms** prior to your arrival at the conference and drop off the completed forms at the Registration Desk in the Exhibit Hall. The forms can also be mailed or faxed to the IRC Office within one week after the conference. The PDF Form is available at: <https://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/assets/docs/Clock Hour Forms.pdf>.

Please review your personal License Renewal Plan to determine which sessions fit. Be sure that your goals are broad enough to include a variety of literacy topics. The Illinois Reading Council is merely the provider. The responsibility for determining which sessions agree with your plan and are granted credits by your school district is yours.

The Illinois Reading Council will process the forms following the conference. Your clock hours will be entered directly into the **ISBE PD Plus System**. When entered, you will receive an email notification to log into your **ISBE ELIS Account** to complete the **ISBE Evaluation Form** through the ISBE PD Plus System. Once completed, you can print off your **ISBE Evidence Form** to keep for your records and your clock hours will be automatically added to your ISBE ELIS Account.

## IRC Record of Clock Hours Earned Form

**You must complete both sides of this form and place in an evaluation box.**

**Instructions:** Each registered participant must complete both sides of this form. This form must be signed and placed in an evaluation box prior to leaving the conference. Failure to complete this form or failure to turn it in may result in loss of professional development credit. For each session attended, you must list the session number, the title of the session, and the presenter(s) name. As a presenter, you may also earn additional clock hours. Other activities may also be listed. **Participants earn one (1) PD hour per hour of participation at the conference. For meal functions and special events, only one (1) PD hour is earned for the presentation and not the meal or autographing. Following the conference, the ISBE Evidence of Completion Form with your verified clock hours will be mailed to registered participants.**

Session #

Title of Presentation

Name of Presenter(s)

**THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025**

7:00 AM		
8:30 AM		
9:45 AM		
11:00 AM		
12:15 PM		
1:00 PM		
2:15 PM		
3:30 PM		
6:15 PM		
8:30 PM		

**FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025**

7:00 AM		
8:30 AM		
9:45 AM		
11:00 AM		
12:15 PM		
1:00 PM		
2:15 PM		
3:30 PM		

**TOTAL NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL HOURS EARNED:** \_\_\_\_\_

*I state, to the best of my knowledge, that this form is true, correct and complete.*

Signature of participant \_\_\_\_\_ IEIN # \_\_\_\_\_

Name of participant (Must be registered to earn PD hours) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## HELP US PLAN FOR 2026

Please use this form to evaluate this year's conference. Your reactions and suggestions are valued and will help us plan subsequent conferences with your preferences in mind.

Drop this in one of the evaluation boxes located at the Registration Desk (Thursday and Friday) OR complete the online form on the Conference App OR return to: Illinois Reading Council, 1100 Beech Street, Building 8-2, Normal, IL 61761.

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1. Overall, I was satisfied with the <b>2025 Conference</b> .	4	3	2	1
2. Conference offered a wide <b>variety of speakers/activities</b> .	4	3	2	1
3. <b>Author/illustrator</b> presentations were enjoyable.	4	3	2	1
4. <b>Featured educational speakers</b> were valuable & relevant.	4	3	2	1
5. <b>Teachers</b> sharing their classroom practices were valuable.	4	3	2	1
6. <b>Research-based</b> presentations were valuable & relevant.	4	3	2	1
7. Who would you like to see present at a future IRC Conference?				

Name:

Topic/Area

Contact info (if available):

8. I attended the Conference on (circle all that apply):      **Wed.**      **Thurs.**      **Fri.**

9. I especially enjoyed this special event/program:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	
A. Wednesday evening <b>Welcome Reception</b>	4	3	2	1	N/A
B. Thursday <b>Illinois Reads Author Panels</b>	4	3	2	1	N/A
C. Thursday evening <b>Hear the Authors Read</b>	4	3	2	1	N/A
D. Other _____					

10. In the Exhibit Hall, I would like the following products and services to be available: \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

	<b>Strongly <u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b>Somewhat <u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>	
A. Overall, the exhibits were helpful and informative.	4	3	2	1	N/A
B. The complimentary refreshments were good.	4	3	2	1	N/A
D. How much time did you spend in the exhibit hall?	1 hour or less	1-3 hours	3-6 hours		N/A

11. **Additional comments or suggestions about presentations, special events and/or the conference:**

(Please remember that IRC has limited control over issues such as parking, hotel accommodations & service.)

---



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12. **Please tell us about yourself.**

**Age Range:**

\_\_\_ 18-24  
\_\_\_ 25-39  
\_\_\_ 40-54  
\_\_\_ 55 and over

**Years in Education:**

\_\_\_ 0-4  
\_\_\_ 5-14  
\_\_\_ 15-29  
\_\_\_ 30 and over

**Distance Traveled:**

\_\_\_ less than 100 miles  
\_\_\_ 101-200 miles  
\_\_\_ 201-300 miles  
\_\_\_ 300 + miles

**Current Position (Select One)**

**Administrator:**

\_\_\_ Principal  
\_\_\_ Superintendent  
\_\_\_ Curriculum Supervisor  
\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Classroom Teacher:**

\_\_\_ Preschool  
\_\_\_ K – 3  
\_\_\_ 4 – 6  
\_\_\_ Middle/Jr. High  
\_\_\_ High School  
\_\_\_ Post Secondary

**Other:**

\_\_\_ Pre-service Teacher  
\_\_\_ Title I/Remedial Teacher  
\_\_\_ Reading Spec./ Lit. Coach  
\_\_\_ Gifted Teacher  
\_\_\_ Spec. Ed. Teacher  
\_\_\_ Librarian/Media Specialist  
\_\_\_ Speech/Language Pathologist  
\_\_\_ Teacher Aide/ Paraprofessional  
\_\_\_ Substitute Teacher  
\_\_\_ Retired Teacher  
\_\_\_ Homeschool Teacher  
\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**District Type:**

\_\_\_ Urban  
\_\_\_ Suburban  
\_\_\_ Small City  
\_\_\_ Rural/Small Town



# THE ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL

*invites you to join us for the*

## 57TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

March 12-13, 2026

Springfield, Illinois



## ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL

*a full literacy palette*

## INTERESTED IN PRESENTING?

*Program Proposals are being accepted online until September 1st!*

*Featured speakers include*

Wiley Blevins  
Lesa Cline-Ransome  
Loren Long  
Bettina L. Love  
Yuyi Morales  
Jarrett Pumphrey  
Jerome Pumphrey

James Ransome  
R. Joseph Rodriguez  
Aisha Saeed  
Becky Anderson Wilkins  
Rachel Zindler  
Illinois Reads Authors  
And Many More to Come!

**REGISTRATION AND HOUSING OPENS ON OCTOBER 1ST!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE IRC WEBSITE AT [WWW.ILLINOISREADINGCOUNCIL.ORG](http://WWW.ILLINOISREADINGCOUNCIL.ORG)