

2026 IRC CONFERENCE PRELIMINARY PROGRAM



ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL
a full literacy palette

MARCH 12 - 13, 2026
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

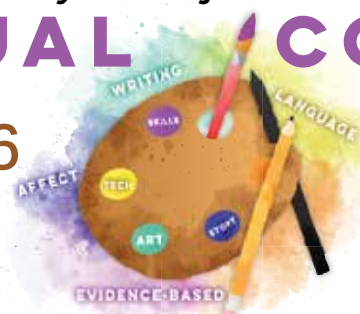
THE ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL

invites you to join us for the

57TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

March 12-13, 2026

Springfield, Illinois



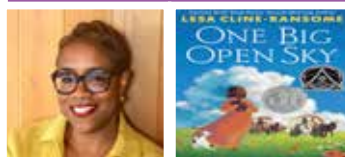
a full literacy palette

Featured speakers include

WILEY BLEVINS



LESA CLINE-RANSOME



TRICIA EBARVIA



LOREN LONG



BETTINA L. LOVE



PAMELA A. MASON



BRIANA MORALES



YUYI MORALES



MARIA NICHOLS



MARC TYLER NOBLEMAN



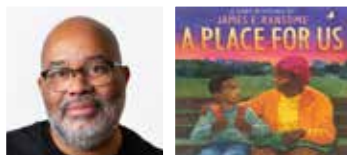
JARRETT PUMPHREY



JEROME PUMPHREY



JAMES E. RANSOME



R. JOSEPH RODRIGUEZ



AISHA SAEED



MARIA WALTHER



BECKY WILKINS



RACHEL ZINDLER



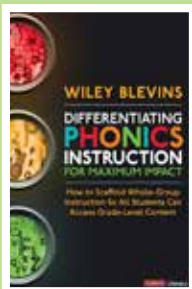
SAMIRA AHMED
2026 PRAIRIE STATE AWARD



**ILLINOIS READS
AUTHORS - 2026**



REGISTRATION AND HOUSING OPEN ONLINE! PROPOSALS TO PRESENT DUE BY DECEMBER 15TH!
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE IRC WEBSITE AT WWW.ILLINOISREADINGCOUNCIL.ORG



Wiley Blevins

Wiley Blevins, Ed.D., studied at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Bowling Green State University. He is an author, educational consultant, and researcher, and has taught both in the United States and South America. Wiley has written over 17 books for teachers, including *A Fresh Look at Phonics*, *Phonics From A to Z*, *Differentiating Phonics Instruction for Maximum Impact*, and *Choosing and Using Decodable Texts*. He has authored several phonics and reading programs and wrote the phonics brief by the International Literacy Association (*Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction*). Wiley's current focus is on adaptive technology, differentiated professional development, and children's literature. Wiley has written over 100 children's books and is SVP and Associate Publisher at Reycraft Books, a new imprint focused on publishing books by authors and illustrators from under-represented groups.



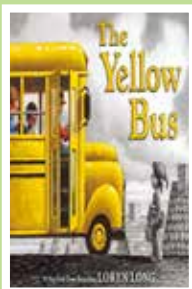
Lesla Cline-Ransome

Lesla Cline-Ransome is the author of numerous non-fiction and historical fiction titles for picture book, chapter book, middle grade and young adult readers. Her work has been named to ALA Notable Books and Bank Street Best Children's Book lists. She has been honored with the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction and received the Coretta Scott King Award Author Honor, for her debut middle-grade novel, *Finding Langston*. Other numerous awards include a 2022 NAIBA Legacy Award, NAACP Awards, Kirkus Best Book, New York Public Library Best Book, SLJ Best Book, CBC Choice Awards, two Top 10 Sports Books for Youth, and an Orbis Pictus Recommended Book. Her verse biography of Harriet Tubman, *Before She Was Harriet*, was nominated for an NAACP image award and received a Jane Addams Honor, Christopher Award and Coretta Scott King Honor for Illustration. She is currently an SCBWI Advisory Council member and host of KidLitTV's Past Present: Giving Past Stories New Life.



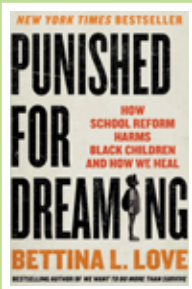
Tricia Ebarvia

A co-founder of #DisruptTexts and co-founder/director of the Institute for Racial Equity in Literacy (IREL), Tricia Ebarvia advocates for literacy instruction rooted in equity and liberation through critical literacy. An educator with more than 20 years of classroom experience, she is currently the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at a PreK-8 independent school in Philadelphia. Previously, Tricia taught and served as English department chairperson at a large public high school where she taught courses in American literature, AP Language, and AP Literature. A National Writing Project teacher consultant, Tricia was the recipient of the 2021 Divergent Award for Excellence in Literacy Advocacy, as well as the NCTE High School Teacher of Excellence award. Tricia's work has been featured in various publications and academic journals. She is the author of a professional book on anti-bias literacy instruction entitled *Get Free: Anti-Bias Literacy Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers* (Corwin).



Loren Long

Loren Long is the author and illustrator of the *New York Times*-bestselling picture books *Otis*, *Otis and the Tornado*, and many other books in the Otis series. He is the #1 *New York Times*-bestselling illustrator of President Barack Obama's picture book *Of Thee I Sing*, Matt de la Pena's *Love*, the re-illustrated edition of *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper, and *Mr. Peabody's Apples* by Madonna. Loren's new edition of Clement C. Moore's *The Night Before Christmas* is a modern, more inclusive take on the classic. His most recent works are *Someone Builds the Dream* by Lisa Wheeler and *Change Sings* written by Inaugural Poet Amanda Gorman. The *Otis* series has been developed as an animated television series, *Get Rolling With Otis*, on Apple TV, which Loren executive produced. Loren's newest book, *The Yellow Bus*, is described as a new modern classic and was named Best Book of the Year by the *New York Times*, *NPR*, *A Kirkus Reviews*, *School Library Journal*, and many more. Children in several states have granted *The Yellow Bus* their state's Mock Caldecott award.



Bettina L. Love

Dr. Bettina L. Love holds the esteemed William F. Russell Professorship at Teachers College, Columbia University, and is the acclaimed author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Punished for Dreaming: How School Reform Harms Black Children and How We Heal*. This groundbreaking work garnered the prestigious Stowe Prize for Literary Activism. Recognized by the Kennedy Center in 2022 as one of the Next 50 Leaders dedicated to fostering inspiration, inclusivity, and compassion, Dr. Love's impact extends far beyond academia. In 2024, she received the Truth Award for Excellence in Education from Better Brothers Los Angeles and The Diva Foundation. Dr. Love actively contributes to the mission of nurturing and empowering educators and parents committed to combating injustice within their educational institutions and communities. Her bestseller *We Want To Do More Than Survive* has sold close to 200,000 copies and has become a staple in classrooms around the country.



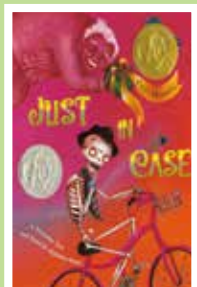
Pamela A. Mason

Pamela A. Mason, Ed.D. is a senior lecturer on education, co-chair of the Literacy and Languages concentration, and director of the Jeanne Chall Reading Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her professional and research interests encompass the role of culturally sustaining pedagogy in promoting literacy achievement, the interaction of text complexity and background knowledge, qualitative and quantitative literacy assessment, and the efficacy of the roles of reading specialists and literacy coaches. Mason has extensive experience as a reading/language arts curriculum coordinator, and she also was an effective elementary school principal, serving in both urban and suburban districts in the Boston area. Mason collaborates with colleagues nationally and globally on preparing reading specialist teachers and literacy coaches, developing the capacity of school leaders as literacy advocates, and evaluating school-wide literacy programs. She is also a leader in several international and national literacy associations.



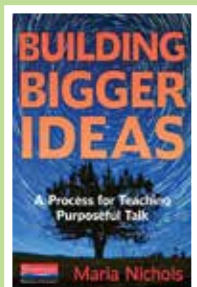
Briana Carlson-Morales

2023 Illinois Teacher of the Year and 2021 NCTE Early Career Educator of Color, Briana Carlson-Morales is a proud Latina and freedom fighter for students in alternative education, where she has spent her career loving and learning alongside students furthest from justice in East St. Louis. As a school board member for the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, she works to elevate the voices of justice-impacted youth. Creating healing-centered spaces where Black and brown students can feel seen, heard, and, one day, be free to be their authentic selves, she founded a nonprofit, (Sister)Hood of Hope, Inc., dedicated to honoring brighter futures for girls of color everywhere. She is currently pursuing an EdD in diversity and equity in education at the University of Illinois.



Yuyi Morales

Yuyi Morales was born in Xalapa, Mexico, the city of flowers and springs. After migrating to the US in 1994, she struggled with English and loneliness in a culture foreign to her but found solace in public libraries, where she read children's books with her son and discovered a renewed interest in stories and art. She is now the author and illustrator of many books, including the *New York Times* bestseller ***Dreamers***, the captivating ***Bright Star***, her most recent book, ***Little Rebels***, and she is a seven-time winner of the Pura Belpre Medal for an outstanding work of literature for children that best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience. Other honors include the Americas Award, the Golden Kite Medal, the Christopher Award, the Jane Adams Award, and the Tomas Rivera Award. In 2015 she received the Caldecott Honor for her book ***Viva Frida***.



Maria Nichols

Maria Nichols was an educational leader for 33 years with the San Diego Unified School District, where she held various roles including classroom teacher, demonstration teacher, literacy coach, and ultimately Director of School Innovation. Today, her passion for transformative teaching and learning, driven by the dynamic power of talk, inspires her work with educators, districts, and organizations both across the U.S. and internationally. Maria is the author of numerous texts and articles focused on engaging students through talk, including ***Comprehension Through Conversation: The Power of Purposeful Talk in the Reading Workshop***, ***Real Talk, Real Teaching***, ***Building Bigger Ideas: A Process For Teaching Purposeful Talk***, and most recently ***Making the Case for Slow Reading***.



Marc Tyler Nobleman

Marc Tyler Nobleman is the award-winning author of books for all ages including ***Bill the Boy Wonder: The Secret Co-Creator of Batman***, which changed history, inspiring the unprecedented Hulu documentary ***Batman & Bill***. He has spoken in almost 20 countries across five continents at venues including the U.S. State Department, the Queen Mary 2 cruise ship, and a TED Talk.



Jarrett Pumphrey

Jarrett Pumphrey is an award-winning author-illustrator who makes books for kids with his brother, Jerome. Their books include *It's a Sign!*, *Somewhere in the Bayou*, *The Old Boat*, and *The Old Truck*, which received seven starred reviews, was named a Best Book of the Year by *Publishers Weekly*, and received the Ezra Jack Keats Writer Award Honor. They also illustrated Jason Reynolds's *There Was a Party for Langston*. Jarrett even restored his own old truck, and with his brother created a series of prints with hand-carved stamps made of plastic recycled from trash they picked up on the side of the road.



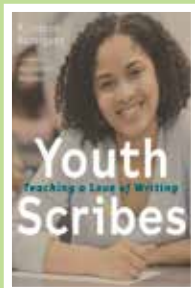
Jerome Pumphrey

Jerome Pumphrey is a designer, illustrator, and writer. His work includes *It's a Sign!*, *Somewhere in the Bayou*, *The Old Boat*, and *The Old Truck*, which received seven starred reviews, was named a Best Book of the Year by *Publishers Weekly*, and received the Ezra Jack Keats Writer Award Honor—all of which he created with his brother Jarrett. They also illustrated Jason Reynolds's *There Was a Party for Langston*. Jerome works as a graphic designer at The Walt Disney Company. He lives in Texas.



James E. Ransome

James E. Ransome has been honored with the 2023 Children's Literature Legacy Award by the American Library Association in recognition of his exceptional contributions to Children's Literature. With a career spanning over 33 years, James has illustrated more than 70 books. His passion for drawing was kindled in Rich Square, NC, and as a teenager, he moved to Bergenfield, NJ, before pursuing a BFA from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. Among his many accolades are several Coretta Scott King Awards, a Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor, ALA Notables, a Jane Addams Award, and NAACP Image awards. He has also showcased his artistry through murals displayed at notable locations such as the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, Poughkeepsie's Adriance Memorial Library, and the Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati. In 2022, his illustrations were featured in the History Channel Documentary "*Black Patriots: Heroes of the Civil War*," narrated by James' childhood basketball idol, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.



R. Joseph Rodríguez

R. Joseph Rodríguez is a secondary language arts teacher at William Charles Akins Early College High School in Austin, Texas. He is the author of numerous books including *Youth Scribes: Teaching a Love of Writing*, *Teaching Culturally Sustaining and Inclusive Young Adult Literature: Critical Perspectives and Conversations*, and *This Is Our Summons Now: Poems*. Joseph is a former editor of NCTE's English Journal, the founder of the literacy initiative Libre con Libros, and along with his students, a reader of banned and challenged books.



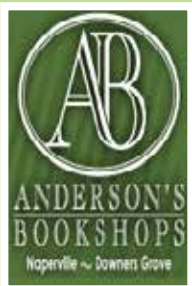
Aisha Saeed

Aisha Saeed is an award-winning and *New York Times*-bestselling author of books for children. Her middle grade novel *Amal Unbound* received multiple starred reviews and was a Global Read Aloud for 2018. Her picture book, *Bilal Cooks Daal*, received an APALA honor. Aisha is also a founding member of the nonprofit We Need Diverse Books.



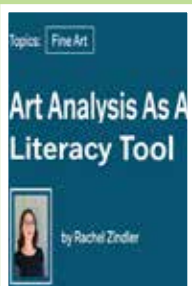
Maria Walther

Maria Walther is a seasoned educator, author, and literacy consultant with over three decades of experience teaching first grade. Her practical, yet engaging approach to classroom instruction has made her a trusted partner for educators seeking effective teaching strategies. With a doctoral degree from Northern Illinois University, Maria is an avid researcher who continues to further her knowledge of literacy instruction. A longtime member of the Illinois Reading Council, she has been presenting at this conference since 1992! All of Maria's books are filled with helpful ideas for busy literacy teachers. Learn more about her consulting work and find other resources at mariawalther.com or connect with her on Instagram as @mariawalther and @ayear4thebooks.



Becky Anderson Wilkins

Becky Anderson Wilkins is synonymous with books. She is recognized worldwide as a leading independent book retailer who has tirelessly promoted the importance of reading and value of book publishing. As the owner of Anderson's Bookshops in Naperville and Downers Grove, Illinois, Becky built the company's reputation to such stature that it attracts prestigious author visits for hundreds of signing events and two annual literature conferences each year. She is committed to the community and partners with local school districts to raise funds for books. Becky won a Hall of Fame Award from the Illinois Reading Council, among many other honors.



Rachel Zindler

For over 25 years, Rachel Zindler has been making an impact in the field of education, from classrooms to universities to multi-media publishing. As an experienced teacher and advocate for equity and inclusive education, she has guided new and veteran teachers in curriculum design, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction. Rachel has authored and presented professional development for teachers and administrators on a range of topics, from behavioral supports and inclusive practices, to incorporating visual art into knowledge-rich curriculum. A former teacher in general education and inclusive co-taught classrooms, she currently generates curriculum as Lead Curriculum Developer for Great Minds and has served as content editor and consultant for multi-media educational outlets such as Sesame Workshop and BrainPOP.com. As an accomplished educator, writer and professional coach, Rachel's greatest asset is her ability to listen attentively to all stakeholders, ask critical questions, recognize areas of strength and need, and provide constructive and practical solutions in a timely and efficient manner.



Illinois Reads Authors

Plan now to attend the **Illinois Reads Author Panels** at the 2026 IRC Conference! Featured authors will be from the **2026 Illinois Reads Books!** There are four panels planned 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, MARCH 12, 2026
11:00 AM TO 12:00 PM BOS CENTER B-11B



Betsy Bird
Birth to Age 4



Ron Keres
Grades K-2



Heidi Bee Roemer
Birth to Age 4



Chelsea Tornetto
Grades K-2



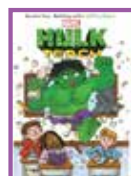
Zach von Zonk
Birth to Age 4

KINDERGARTEN TO 5TH GRADE

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026
1:00 TO 2:00 PM BOS CENTER B-11B



Gina Bellisario
Grades K-2



Jeffrey Brown
Grades 3-5



Veronica Castillo
Grades K-2



Darcy Day Zoells
Grades K-2



Juleesa Espinoza
Grades K-2



Lisa Maggiore
Grades 3-5

3RD TO 8TH GRADE

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026
2:15 TO 3:15 PM BOS CENTER B-11B



Z. Brewer
Grades 6-8



Jessika Fleck
Grades 3-5



Jessie Ann Foley
Grades 6-8



Kate Hannigan
Grades 3-5



Nicole M. Hewitt
Grades 6-8



Kristin Nilsen
Grades 6-8

9TH GRADE TO ADULT

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026
2:15 TO 3:15 PM BOS CENTER B-11C



Adi Alsaid
Grades 9-12



Allison Epstein
Adult



Gene Ha
Grades 9-12



Laurie Lawlor
Grades 9-12



Barb Rosenstock
Grades 9-12

ILLINOIS READS

A READING STATE OF MIND



Join IRC in the 2026 statewide literacy initiative! Six books in each age band, birth to adult, with fun activities, book clubs, author events, and more! Order bookmarks and posters today!

Visit our website for more information
www.illinoisreads.org

Birth-4

Dirt's Journey
by Sally M. Walker
E-I-UFO: Old MacDonald Had a Farm
by Zach von Zonk
Hugged by the Night
by Harold Green III
Inventions to Count On: A Celebration of Black Inventors: A Picture Book
by Dana Marie Miroballi
POP! Goes the Nursery Rhyme
by Betsy Bird
Silly Puppies: Baby's First Giggles
by Heidi Bee Roemer

K-2

Emilia's Corte
by Veronica Castillo and illustrated
by Juleesa Espinoza
Give Back
by Gina Bellisario
Piece Out
by Alex Willan
Seasons on the Farm
by Chelsea Ternetto
Smithy and Me
by Darcy Day Zoells
The Scariest Story You've Ever Heard
by Ron Keres

3-5

Ava the Monster Slayer: Sleepover Superheroes
by Lisa Maggiore
Hulk Teach!
by Jeffrey Brown
Rachel Carson's Wonder-Filled World: How the Scientist, Writer, and Nature Lover Changed the Environmental Movement
by Kate Hannigan
Rock Paper Incisors: A Skunk and Badger Story
by Amy Timberlake
The Curse of Great Winter Academy: Choose Your Own Adventure
by Jessika Fleck
The Gift of Freedom: How Harriet Tubman Rescued Her Brothers
by Glennette Tilley Turner

6-8

How the Ghost Army Hoodwinked Hitler: The Story of American Artistry and Deception in World War II
by Rebecca Siegel
Millie of the Manor: A Graphic Novel
by Karina Evans and illustrated by Andrea Bell
Severe and Unusual Weather
by Jessie Ann Foley
The Chronicles of Viktor Valentine
by Z. Brewer
The Scott Fenwick Diaries: A Novel
by Kristin Nilsen
The Song of Orphan's Garden
by Nicole M. Hewitt

9-12

American Spirits: The Famous Fox Sisters and the Mysterious Fad that Haunted a Nation
by Barb Rosenstock
Before Takeoff
by Adi Alsaid
Dream by the Shadows
by Logan Karlie
Mae: The Definitive Edition
by Gene Ha
Many Voices: Building Erie, The Canal That Changed America
by Laurie Lawlor
The Corruption of Hollis Brown
by K. Ancrum

Adult

Amity: A Novel
by Nathan Harris
Death of the Author: A Novel
by Nnedi Okorafor
Fagin the Thief: A Novel
by Allison Epstein
Remember You Will Die: A Novel
by Eden Robins
The Ex-Girlfriend Murder Club: A Feminist Murder Mystery of Three Women Teaming Up to Solve a Crime and Get Revenge on a Cheating Ex
by Gloria Chao
Tractor Wars: John Deere, Henry Ford, International Harvester, and the Birth of Modern Agriculture
by Neil Dahlstrom



ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL
a full literacy palette

ALL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND!

Welcome Reception

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026
7:00 - 8:30 PM
PAL HOTEL BALLROOM

COMPLIMENTARY APPETIZERS WILL BE SERVED!

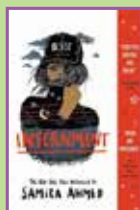
Hear the Authors Read

and Late-Night Autograph Session

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026
8:30 – 10:30 PM PAL HOTEL BALLROOM

Sponsored by Anderson's Bookshops

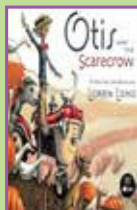
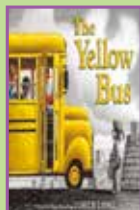
SAMIRA AHMED



LESA CLINE-RANSOME



LOREN LONG



YUYI MORALES



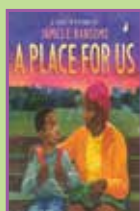
JARRETT PUMPHREY



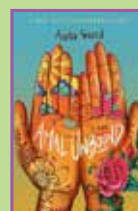
JEROME PUMPHREY



JAMES E. RANSOME



AISHA SAEED



IRC Annual Membership Meeting will be held prior to start of event from 8:30 – 8:45 PM

Pizza Party *for* NEW & Preservice Teachers



Friday, March 13, 2026

3:00 - 4:00 PM

BOS CENTER EXHIBIT HALL

ALL New and Preservice Teachers are invited to the Friday Afternoon Pizza Party. Join us for fun, games, and FREE pizza. Everyone will receive a DOOR PRIZE!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CLOCK HOURS

The Illinois Reading Council is an approved ISBE Professional Development Provider. Registered attendees can earn one (1) clock hour for each session attended. Please note that meal functions and other events are also only one (1) clock hour. Registered presenters can also earn up to eight (8) clock hours for presenting a session. At the end of the conference, plan to submit the sessions that you attended and/or presented via the **Record of Sessions Attended Form** provided by IRC.

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.

Plan now to attend one of the **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 Young Adult (YA) literature and effective instructional practices.

IRC Conference App

Schedule, Handouts, and More

Download the **FREE IRC CONFERENCE APP** from the Apple Store, Android Marketplace, or the IRC Conference Website. The guide will feature an up-to-date conference schedule, exhibitor information, handouts, and more. The guide will be available starting **February 15, 2026**.



CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Registration – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center

5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Welcome Reception – PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon CD

7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Registration – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center

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 Salon CD – *Tricia Ebarvia*

7:00 AM – 8:30 AM

Exhibits – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Teacher's Lounge – Meeting Space will be open for Conversation and Teamwork

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Hall of Councils Raffle Baskets – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center

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

Thursday Luncheon – PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon CD – *Wiley Blevins*

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Thursday Luncheon – PAL Freeport Rooms – *Yuyi Morales*

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Thursday Lunch Sessions – Bank of Springfield Center

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

Thursday PSA Banquet – PAL Freeport Rooms – *Pumphrey Brothers*

6:15 PM – 8:15 PM

IRC Annual Membership Meeting – PAL Hotel Ballroom

8:30 PM – 8:45 PM

Hear the Authors Read and Autographing – PAL Hotel Ballroom

8:45 PM – 10:30 PM

Friday, March 13, 2026

Registration – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center

7:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Friday Breakfast – PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon CD – *Pamela A. Mason*

7:00 AM – 8:30 AM

Hall of Councils Raffle Baskets – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center

8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Exhibits – Exhibit Hall in the Bank of Springfield Center

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Teacher's Lounge – Meeting Space will be open for Conversation and Teamwork

8:00 AM – 4:00 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

Friday Luncheon – PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon AB – *Lesa Cline-Ransome*

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Friday Luncheon – PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon CD – *R. Joseph Rodríguez*

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Friday Lunch Sessions – Bank of Springfield Center

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Sessions/Featured Speakers/Workshops

2:15 PM – 4:30 PM

New and Preservice Teachers' Pizza Party – Bank of Springfield Center Exhibit Hall

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special appreciation is extended to the following professionals for their extensive contributions to the success of the 2026 IRC Conference.

PUBLISHERS & BUSINESSES

Anderson's Bookshops

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

Crossland Literacy

Featured Speaker Books

Heinemann

Featured Speaker Books

Illinois Digital Educators Alliance (IDEA)

Tote Bags

Imagine Learning

Name Tag Lanyards

Lake-Cook Distributors

Student Helpers

Savvas Learning Company

*Pamela A. Mason
Coffee Break in Exhibit Hall
on Friday Morning*

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CHAIRS & STAFF

Deb Augsburger, 2026 IRC Conference Chair

Jennifer Young, Assistant Chair & 2027 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

2025-2026 ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President - **Cindi Koudelka**

President Elect - **Deb Augsburger**

Vice President - **Jennifer Young**

Past President - **Melissa Stinnett**

Treasurer - **Diana Wilkie**

Recording Secretary - **Melissa Wheeler**

ILA State Coordinator - **Amy Davis**

Director of Membership - **Donna Herman**

GENERAL CONFERENCE INFORMATION



Please take a moment to read the information below regarding the 2026 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, 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 and President Abraham Lincoln 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 11 – 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM Thursday, March 12 – 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM Friday, March 13 – 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

- **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, 2026. Requests can also be faxed to (309) 454-3512 or emailed to 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, 2026.

Pre-Conference Sessions Wednesday, March 11, 2026

7:00 – 8:30

Welcome Reception
PAL Hotel Ballroom
Salon CD

Conference Sessions Thursday, March 12, 2026

7:00 – 7:45

Orientation to the IRC Conference (All) Presenters: Sherry Sejnost, Sheila Ruh

7:00 – 8:30

Thursday Breakfast
Perspective Taking Strategies for Antibias Instruction
Featured Speaker: Tricia Ebarvia

SCHOLARSHIPS

PROCEEDS FROM THE

HALL OF COUNCILS
RAFFLE BASKETS

WILL BE FUNDING FIVE (5)
CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS!

APPLY BY **JANUARY 15TH** AT
**WWW.ILLINOISREADINGCOUNCIL.
ORG/CONFERENCE-INFORMATION**

8:30 – 9:30

Heroes With and Without Capes (All) *Presenter:* Marc Tyler Nobleman

You Are A Bright Star Inside Our Hearts (All) *Presenter:* Yuyi Morales

How Books Save Lives (All) *Presenter:* Aisha Saeed

High-Impact Phonics Routines (All) *Presenter:* Wiley Blevins

Using the Essential Literacy Skills to Engage Your Students (4-12, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Peg Grafwallner

Voices in Reading: Practical Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms (PreK-6, Multilingual Learners) *Presenters:* Jessica Valverde, Mayra Romero

Empowering Innovative Minds: Amplifying Student Engagement & Motivation through Reading & Tech (PreK-6, ELL, Spec, Admin, Lib, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenters:* Katy Boehm, Caitlin Kotarski, Gaby Garcia

Emotional Intelligence, Using Children's Literature to Foster, Affective and Cognitive Growth in the Heart, Mind and Will of our Students (PreK-6, ELL, Spec, Admin, Lib, SEL) *Presenter:* Laura Beltchenko

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Book Award: A Full Palette of Wonderful Literature! (Grades 4-9, Univ, Lib, Librarians & Children's/YA Literature) *Presenter:* Ruth Gheysen

What School Leaders Need to Know About the Science of Reading (PreK-6, ELL, Spec, Adults, Univ, Admin, Lib, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenter:* Matt Renwick

Boosting Comprehension Through Fluency (PreK-6, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Tracee Farmer

Reimagining Small Group Instruction for Older Students (4-12, ELL, Spec, SRL) *Presenter:* Katie McKnight

How to Teach Reading in Grades 6-12 (Fast!) — Even If No One Taught You How (6-12, ELL, Spec, Admin, SRL) *Presenter:* Jenny French

Explicit Instruction, Opportunities to Respond, and Feedback are Essential for Effective Intervention: But What Do They Look Like in Practice? (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Kari Harris

Weekend Journals: 4 Simple Steps to Transform K-3 Writing Growth (PreK-3, Writing) *Presenter:* Lauren Nicholas

9:45 – 10:45

Love, Joy, Creativity & the Brain: The Heart of Culturally Responsive Education (All) *Presenter:* Bettina L. Love

You Are A Bright Star Inside Our Hearts (All) *Presenter:* Yuyi Morales

Beyond Diversity 101 (All) *Presenter:* Aisha Saeed

High-Impact Phonics Routines (All) *Presenter:* Wiley Blevins

Empowering YA Readers with Narrative Nonfiction (6-12) *Presenter:* Laurie Lawlor

Bring Poetry into Early Childhood Settings (PreK-3) *Presenters:* Heidi Bee Roemer, Sheila Kerwin

Lit Without Limits: Building a Literacy Palette That Embraces Every Mind and Body (All, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenters:* Cindi Koudelka, Melissa Wheeler, Julie Hoffman

Multimodality, Multiliteracy, and Multilingualism – Oh My! How They Intertwine (All, Multilingual Learners) *Presenter:* Kristin Lems

#NoLimits Shattering Limiting Beliefs (All, SEL) *Presenter:* Shelley Kenow

A FULL Palette, how to make the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan, Performance Descriptors, ELA Standards, and Illinois Assessment of Readiness, Paint a Portrait for a Literacy Program (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Laura Beltchenko

Elevating Every Subject: A Literacy-Focused Approach (PreK-9, ELL, Admin, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenters:* Danielle Cronk, Jamie Reinke

Do This, Not That to Develop Reading Comprehension in the Content Areas (4-12, ELL, Spec, SRL) *Presenter:* Katie McKnight

Building a Better Vocabulary (6-12, ELL, Spec, Adults, Univ, Admin, SRL) *Presenters:* Jennifer Lancaster, Kim Hollis

Techquity in Action: Using AI to Empower Every Learner (PreK-6, Spec, Lib, Technology) *Presenter:* Diana Brannon

Transform Your Writing Instruction from Jackson Pollock to Bob Ross! (All, Writing) *Presenters:* Keta Foltz, Amber Findlay, Christa Curley

11:00 – 12:00

Stories, Stamps, and Secrets: A Candid Creative Q&A with the Pumphrey Brothers (All) *Presenters:* Jarrett Pumphrey, Jerome Pumphrey

Illinois Reads Author Panel for Birth to 2nd Grades (PreK-2) *Presenters:* Betsy Bird, Ron Keres, Heidi Bee Roemer, Chelsea Tornetto, Zach von Zonk

New and Notable Books for Grades K-3 (PreK-3) *Presenter:* Becky Anderson Wilkins

Perspective Taking Strategies for Antibias Instruction (All) *Presenter:* Tricia Ebarvia

Boldly Dreaming, Passionately Cultivating Change (4-12, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenter:* Cindy Gerwin

Developing English Literacy for Arabic Speaking Students (PreK-6, ELL, Multilingual Learners) *Presenter:* Janice Eilken

Beyond Words: Using Literacy to Nurture Social and Emotional Learning (PreK-9, ELL, Spec, Admin, Lib, Reading Engagement) *Presenter:* LaVerne Coke Wright

Formative Assessment as Part of Your Teaching and Weekly Planning (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Gena Lewis, Annette Van Aken

From Camp to Classroom: Activities to Establish a Strong Writing Community in the Classroom (4-12, Adults, Lib, Writing) *Presenter:* Alice McGinty

Differentiated Reading Support: An Overview of Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions at Homewood-Flossmoor Community High School (4-12, ELL, Spec, Adults, Admin, Lib, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Lauren Freeman, Jennifer Rudan

Unlocking the Reading Spark: Inspiring Creativity in the Young Mind (4-9, Reading Engagement) *Presenters:* Katie Howell, Melissa Taguchi, Amanda Nach

Writing Out Loud: How Conversation Cultivates Confident Writers (4-12, Univ, Admin, Lib, SRL) *Presenters:* Kristen Walsh, Kenneth Lakowski

Inside the Reading Gym: Experiencing a Secondary Literacy Workout (6-12, ELL, Admin, SRL) *Presenter:* Laura Johnson

Tech & Lit: The Perfect Pair (PreK-6, Technology) *Presenters:* Juliana Amador, Katy Rudis

Nurturing the Author (PreK-6, Writing) *Presenters:* Rosemary West, Kristi Gray

12:15 – 2:00

Thursday Luncheon
A Fresh Look at Phonics
Featured Speaker: Wiley Blevins

Thursday Luncheon
Do You Want To Be Little Rebels Together?
Featured Speaker: Yuyi Morales

1:00 – 2:00

Heroes With and Without Capes (All) *Presenter:* Marc Tyler Nobleman

Illinois Reads Author Panel for Kindergarten to 5th Grades (K-5) *Presenters:* Gina Bellisario, Jeffrey Brown, Veronica Castillo, Darcy Day Zoells, Juleesa Espinoza, Lisa Maggiore

New and Notable Books for Grades K-8 (K-8) *Presenter:* Becky Anderson Wilkins

Engaging the Eye: Building Knowledge through Visual Art (K-8) *Presenter:* Rachel Zindler

I Think My Student Needs an IEP or a 504, Now What? (All, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenter:* Shelley Kenow

Studying the Impact of Knowledge-Building on Student Reading Outcomes Through Research Partnerships (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Rebecca Vaughn

Not all Decodables are Created Equal! (PreK-3, ELL, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenters:* Shauna Williams, Stephanie Seemann

Why Five Isn't Enough: The Seven Components of Literacy (PreK-6, ELL, Admin, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Ethan Lynn

Read Smarter, Write Better: 4-Steps to Connecting Deep Comprehension to Powerful Writing Instruction (PreK-9, Spec, Admin, Writing) *Presenter:* Terilynn Anderson

Words Matter: Build Vocabulary to Boost Literacy Growth (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Matt Andrews

Building Strong Readers: From Oral Language to Phonics in Early Childhood (PreK-3, ELL, Spec, Admin, Early Childhood) *Presenters:* Karyn Tomkinson, Melinda Cunningham, Jenn Burchfield

2:15 – 3:15

Beneath the Surface: Crafting Layered Visual Narratives
(All) Presenters: Jarrett Pumphrey, Jerome Pumphrey

Illinois Reads Author Panel for 3rd to 8th Grades (3-8)
Presenters: Z. Brewer, Jessika Fleck, Jessie Ann Foley, Kate Hannigan, Nicole Hewitt, Kristin Nilsen

Illinois Reads Author Panel for 9th Grade to Adults (9-Adults) *Presenters:* Adi Alsaïd, Allison Epstein, Gene Ha, Laurie Lawlor, Barb Rosenstock

Perspective Taking Strategies for Antibias Instruction (All)
Presenter: Tricia Ebarvia

Sharing the Buzz on Bees: Helping Students Cultivate a Passion for Pollinators Through Literature (PreK-9, Lib, STEAM)
Presenter: Chris Wyant

Building Background Knowledge Using Culturally Diverse Children's Literature (PreK-6, ELL, Lib, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenter:* Amy Davis

Using LGBTQ+ Inclusive Texts in Elementary Grades (PreK-6, Univ, Lib, Librarians & Children's/YA Literature) *Presenter:* Aimee Ellis

Building Readers Through Book Clubs: Engaging ALL Learners in your Co-Taught Classroom (6-9, Reading Engagement)
Presenters: Amy Jachowicz-Damrow, Steffanie Castro

Opening Doors and Windows: Connecting Students and Igniting a Love of Writing through Shared Experiences and Storytelling (PreK-6, Spec, Lib, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenters:* Anitra Rowe Schulte, Clothilde Ewing

Tea Time Tuesdays @ Earle STEM (PreK-6, Adults, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenter:* Tonya Sims

Books to Builds: STEM Activities to Complement Your Favorite Read-Alouds (PreK-6, STEAM) *Presenter:* Terra Tarango

Transforming Evidence Writing Instruction Across Content Areas (with AI Support, 4-12, ELL, Spec, SRL) *Presenter:* Katie McKnight

A Full Literacy Palette Includes The How and Why of Secondary Literacy Intervention (6-12, ELL, Admin, SRL) *Presenter:* Laura Johnson

Building Fluency in Adolescent Readers (4-12, ELL, Spec, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Jenny French

3:30 – 4:30

What Hath “Gay” Wrought: When “Protecting” Is Harming
(All) *Presenter:* Marc Tyler Nobleman

The Art of Conversation: Compelling Texts and Compelling Talk (PreK-6) *Presenters:* Maria Walther, Maria Nichols

Beyond Diversity 101 (All) *Presenter:* Aisha Saeed

Engaging the Eye: Building Knowledge through Visual Art
(K-8) *Presenter:* Rachel Zindler

A Full Palette of Compassion: Classroom Management that Cultivates Care (PreK-12, Admin, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenters:* Melissa Wheeler, Tim Wheeler

What’s Your Name? Building a Global Perspective through Culturally Diverse Picture Books (PreK-6, ELL, Lib, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenter:* Amy Davis

Painting the Whole Story: Blending Proficiency and Passion for Possibility with Comprehensive Literacy Practices (PreK-12, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Cindi Koudelka

Rebels, Resistance, and Reading: Boosting Middle School Engagement with Dystopian YA Literature (6-12, ELL, Lib, Reading Engagement) *Presenter:* Shiann Papandrea

It’s All Write to Create A Scene (PreK-9, Writing) *Presenter:* Yolanda Williams

Cracking the Code of Reading: Building Teacher Knowledge and Daily Routines for Student Success (PreK-3, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Samantha Caesar

Sparkling Joy: Finding the Fun within Best Practice in Literacy (PreK-6, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenter:* Samantha O’Hara

Creating a Full Palette of Adolescent Readers (6-12, ELL, Spec, Lib, SRL) *Presenters:* Kimberly Hollis, Brenda Engelhardt, Ashley Falkos

Designing Secondary Intervention Programs That Actually Work (4-12, ELL, Spec, Admin, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenter:* Jenny French

5:00 – 6:00

College Instructors of Reading Professionals
(CIRP) Reception

6:15 – 8:15

Thursday Prairie State Award Banquet
Road Trips, Setbacks, and Left Turns: How the Pumphrey Brothers Found Their Creative Path
Featured Speakers: Jarrett Pumphrey, Jerome Pumphrey

8:30 – 8:45

Annual Membership Meeting

8:45 – 10:30

Hear the Authors Read and Autographing

HALL OF COUNCILS RAFFLE BASKETS

**VISIT BOOTH 433
FOR A CHANCE TO
WIN A RAFFLE BASKET!**



**PROCEEDS
WILL FUND
CONFERENCE
SCHOLARSHIPS
FOR NEXT YEAR!**



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!

SAMIRA AHMED

Samira Ahmed is the bestselling author of *Love, Hate & Other Filters*, *Internment*, *This Book Won't Burn*, *Mad, Bad & Dangerous to Know*, *Hollow Fires*, and the *Amira & Hamza* middle-grade duology, as well as a *Ms. Marvel* comic book mini-series. Her poetry, essays, and short stories have appeared in numerous publications and anthologies including the *New York Times*, *Take the Mic*, *Color Outside the Lines*, *Vampires Never Get Old* and *A Universe of Wishes*. She was born in Bombay, India, and grew up in Batavia, Illinois. A graduate of the University of Chicago, Samira has taught high school English in both the suburbs of Chicago and New York City, worked in education nonprofits, and spent time on the road for political campaigns. At the conference, IRC is thrilled to announce that Samira will be the 2026 recipient of the Prairie State Award for Excellence in Writing for Children. Samira will be receiving her award at the Thursday Banquet and also participating in the Hear the Authors Read and Late Night Autographing event. Please join IRC in congratulating her!



Conference Sessions

Friday, March 13, 2026

7:00 – 8:30

Friday Breakfast
Seeing, Hearing, and Valuing our Learners
Presenter: Pamela A. Mason

8:30 – 9:30

History, Lit., Art and Books (All) *Presenter: James E. Ransome*

A Life Making Art, Telling Stories, and Riding the Yellow Bus (All) *Presenter: Loren Long*

Brushstrokes of Healing: Writing as a Palette for Processing Pain, Power, and Purpose (All) *Presenter: Briana Carlson-Morales*

The Scribe's Studio (or Writers' Workshop 2.0) in Your Classroom (All) *Presenter: R. Joseph Rodríguez*

How to Design a Note-taking Lesson for Student Success (4-12, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter: Peg Grafwallner*

A Palette of Literacy Tools Toward Healing from Hardship and Trauma (All, SEL) *Presenter: Julie Hoffman*

Interdisciplinary Lesson Planning: Social Studies, Social Justice, and Literacy Standards (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters: Susan Foster, Jodi Jordan, Vickie Beavers*

Redesigning Learning Through Arts and Literacy: The Five Pillars of C2 Pedagogy (4-9, Admin, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenter: Chyrese Wolf*

Navigating Foundational Reading Skills Instruction in a Kindergarten Professional Learning Community During the Science of Reading Era (PreK-3, Admin, Early Childhood) *Presenters: Deborah MacPhee, Agnes Hatch, Cassandra Mattoon*

From Belief to Impact: Cultivating Collective Teacher Efficacy in Literacy Instruction (PreK-12, Admin, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenter: Faneshia Bolds*

Science of Reading in Action: Replicable Routines That Work (PreK-6, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter: Vanessa Howard*

Chapter by Chapter: A Year of Reading Adventures! (PreK-6, Reading Engagement) *Presenters: Jen Weichle, Jean Erwin, Ryan Schaefer*

Using Collaborative Structures to Engage Students in Complex Texts (6-12, ELL, Spec, Univ, SRL) *Presenter: Kara Kennedy*

Problem Analysis in Action: Leveraging This Essential Step in the Problem-Solving Process to Develop Effective Intervention Plans Every Time (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters: Kari Harris, Kim Spiker*

Rooted and Rigorous: Using Place-Based Literacy to Strengthen Curriculum and Community (4-12, ELL, Spec, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter: Sabrina Alicea*

9:45 – 10:45

Once Upon a Story. A Marriage of Picture Collaborators (All) *Presenters: Lesa Cline-Ransome, James E. Ransome*

A Life Making Art, Telling Stories, and Riding the Yellow Bus (All) *Presenter: Loren Long*

Ink, Impact, and Sisterhood: Girls Writing Our Way to Change (All) *Presenter: Briana Carlson-Morales*

Teachers Who Write from the Classroom: Plan to Publish NOW! (All) *Presenter: R. Joseph Rodríguez*

Sourdough in School: How to Bake Bread in Any Content Area (All, STEAM) *Presenter: Lee Deal*

Vibrant Voices: Centering Joyful Latine Representation in the Literacy Palette (All, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenters: Cindi Koudelka, Melissa Wheeler, Julie Hoffman*

Interactive Read-Alouds: A How-To Manual (PreK-6, Lib, Reading Engagement) *Presenter: Steven Layne*

Encouraging Intellectual Curiosity Through the Complexity of Picture Books (PreK-6, Univ, Admin, Lib, Reading Engagement) *Presenter: Laura Beltchenko*

Engaging with the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan to Build a Culturally Responsive and Evidence-Aligned Local Literacy Plan (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters: Deborah MacPhee, Michael Young*

Implementing Gestures into Vocabulary Instruction to Aid Recall and Retention (PreK-3, Early Childhood) *Presenters: Emma Dilley, Amy Davis*

Dyslexia & Equity: Early Identification That Works — Impact on Student Learning/School Improvement (PreK-9, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Vanessa Howard

New YA Titles to Booktalk: AISLE's Lincoln Book Award (9-12, Lib, Librarians & Children's/YA Literature) *Presenter:* Jennifer Jazwinski

From Support to Ownership: Guiding Students Toward Independent Reading of Complex Texts (9-12, Univ, Admin, SRL) *Presenters:* Paula Di Domenico, Rachel Lesinski-Roscoe

Overwhelmed by Tier 2 and 3 needs? Tier 1 Plans Can Help! Learn How from IL MTSS Network Coaches and Your Colleagues (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Kim Spiker, Kari Harris

Bridging Global Digital Literacy objectives and Local Perspectives: Barriers and Innovative Practices in Ghana's Endowed and Deprived Senior High Schools Toward 2035 Digital Literacy (9-12, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Gifty Edna Anani

11:00 – 12:00

Literacy Coaching: Building Teacher Capacity (PreK-6) *Presenter:* Pamela A. Mason

The Art of Conversation: Compelling Texts and Compelling Talk (PreK-6) *Presenters:* Maria Walther, Maria Nichols

New and Notable Books for Grades K-8 (K-8) *Presenter:* Becky Anderson Wilkins

Engaging the Eye: Building Knowledge through Visual Art (K-8) *Presenter:* Rachel Zindler

Welcome to the Writers Room (All, Writing) *Presenters:* Sarah Aronson, Alice McGinty

Integración – From College Classroom Planning to Concrete Implementation: Building a Stronger Understanding of Multilingual and Bidialectal Learners' Needs (All, Multilingual Learners) *Presenters:* Susan Foster, Barbara Martin

Read, Regulate, Reflect: Using Literacy to Build Self-Regulation in K-3 (PreK-3, SEL) *Presenter:* Lauren Nicholas

The NICCE Framework: Integrating Pedagogies to Achieve Critical Consciousness (All, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenters:* Jennifer Martin, Christopher Lee Harris

Structured, Scripted, and Erased: An Invitation to Recast the Science to Cultivate the Humanity of Readers (PreK-9, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenter:* Michael Young

Recycled Wisdom, Renewed Urgency: Tracing the Evolution of Literacy Discourse Through 15 Years of Reading Leadership Institute Presentations (PreK-6, Admin, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenters:* Hannah Graham, Sophie Degener

Beyond Word Lists: Effective Strategies to Teach Struggling Spellers (PreK-6, Spec, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Terri Michaels

Think Like A Conservationist: Integrating Science Into Your Reading Block (PreK-6, ELL, STEAM) *Presenters:* Christine Blue, Kim Smith

Word Work for Secondary Literacy: Effective Vocabulary and Morphology Instruction to Increase Comprehension (6-12, SRL) *Presenter:* Raquel McGee

AI, Please! (PreK-9, Reading Engagement) *Presenter:* Yolanda Williams

Development of Reading Comprehension Skills Through the Awareness of Text Structure (4-12, ELL, Spec, Univ, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Hallie Cohen, Dorothy Leech

12:15 – 2:00

**Friday Luncheon
Writing the Truth**
Featured Speaker: Lesa Cline-Ransome

**Friday Luncheon
Igniting a Love of Writing with
Our Students: Teachers as Scribes**
Featured Speaker: R. Joseph Rodriguez

TEACHER'S LOUNGE

**MEETING SPACE WILL BE
AVAILABLE FOR CONVERSATION
AND TEAMWORK!**

**THURSDAY FROM 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
FRIDAY FROM 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

1:00 – 2:00

New and Notable Books for Grades 4-8 (4-8) *Presenter:* Becky Anderson Wilkins

High-Quality Instruction, Zero Burnout: A Blueprint for Systemwide Success (All, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenter:* Allyson Mayer

Generating New Thinking Through Writing (6-12, Writing) *Presenter:* Erin Arledge

A Bot & A Hard Place: Writing Instruction for the Age of AI (4-12, ELL, Admin, Writing) *Presenter:* Adam Sparks

Developing Meaningful Relationships with Parents of Neurodiverse Students (All, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenter:* Shelley Kenow

Reimagining the Teaching of Writers: The Importance of Focusing on Voice, Choice and Language Structures (PreK-6, ELL, Writing) *Presenter:* Patricia Pollack

Equity Nudges: The Science and Art of Teaching in the Age of AI (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Brenna Westerhoff

Disciplinary Literacy in Action: Teaching with Thinking in Mind (PreK-6, Admin, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Lindsay Kinsey, Eileen Townsend

Exploring the Green Literacy Handbook to Inspire Environmental Stewardship Through Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing, Grades K-5 (PreK-6, Adults, Lib, Teacher Education & Early Service) *Presenter:* Jen Cullerton Johnson

The Big Seven Come Alive: Multimodal Instruction for Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Writing (PreK-6, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Karyn Tomkinson, Debby Spitzer, Jenn Burchfield

2:15 – 3:15

Pencil, Paper, Possibility: Revitalizing Writing Instruction with Purpose and Joy (PreK-3) *Presenter:* Maria Walther

A Life Making Art, Telling Stories, and Riding the Yellow Bus (All) *Presenter:* Loren Long

Brushstrokes of Healing: Writing as a Palette for Processing Pain, Power, and Purpose (All) *Presenter:* Briana Carlson-Morales

Raising Citizen Scientists In Our Communities: Literature & Insects Are All Around Us (PreK-3, ELL, Spec, Lib, STEAM) *Presenter:* Melanie Uteg

Restorative Literacy as Resistance: Reframing Structured Literacy for Black Bidialectal Learners (6-12, ELL, Spec, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging) *Presenters:* Sara Jozwik, John Corey Steele, Camille O'Quin

Choose the Right Reading Curriculum: A Teacher-Led Review and Selection Process (PreK-6, Univ, Admin, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenter:* Lauren Nicholas

Weaving the Strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope (All, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenter:* Alexandra Owens

Reimagining Leveled Text: Evidence-Based Applications in Science of Reading Classrooms (PreK-6, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Melanie Walski, Amy Butler

Collaborative Partnerships and Ease of Use Promotes Consistency and Literacy Learner Outcomes (PreK-3, Univ, Admin, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Christy Moore, Luke Oliver

The Morphology Advantage: Unlocking Vocabulary Instruction for Lasting Literacy Growth (PreK-6, ELL, Spec, Univ, Admin, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction) *Presenters:* Karyn Tomkinson, Jenn Burchfield, Debby Spitzer

Peeking Behind the Veil of the District-Level Literacy Leader: Does Research Match Reality? (All, Literacy Leadership & Coaching) *Presenter:* Kristel Collins

Differentiating Instruction to Increase Comprehension for Secondary Readers (6-12, Admin, SRL) *Presenter:* Sarah Rosas

Empowering Minds: Brain-Based Teaching & Learning Strategies (All, SEL) *Presenters:* Stephanie Brown, Christina Kienitz, Don Sturm

Reading is Our Only Hope (PreK-9, Admin, Lib, Reading Engagement) *Presenter:* Stefanie Pitzer

3:00 – 4:00

New & Preservice Teachers' Pizza Party

IRC AWARDS

Gene Kramer ICARE for Reading Award

To Be Announced Soon

*Thursday Breakfast at the PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon CD
with Tricia Ebarvia*

Barack Obama Library Award

To Be Announced Soon

*Thursday Luncheon at the PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon CD
with Wiley Blevins*

Family Literacy Award

To Be Announced Soon

*Thursday Luncheon at the PAL Hotel Freeport Rooms
with Yuyi Morales*

Prairie State Award for Excellence in Children's Writing

Samira Ahmed

*Thursday PSA Banquet at the PAL Hotel Freeport Rooms
with Pumphrey Brothers*

IRC Hall of Fame Award

To Be Announced Soon

*Thursday PSA Banquet at the PAL Hotel Freeport Rooms
with Pumphrey Brothers*

IRC Service Award

To Be Announced Soon

*Friday Breakfast at the PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon CD
with Pamela A. Mason*

Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award

To Be Announced Soon

*Friday Luncheon at the PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon CD
with R. Joseph Rodríguez*

Static Sticker Decal Contest

To Be Announced Soon

*Friday Luncheon at the PAL Hotel Ballroom Salon AB
with Lesa Cline-Ransome*

Order your tickets today!

COFFEE BREAK

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026

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

Sponsored by

*in the Exhibit Hall
Refreshment Area*



QR EXHIBIT HALL GAME

**Complete your GAME SHEET
for a chance to win a
FREE REGISTRATION
to the 2027 IRC Conference!**

REMINDER!

Don't forget your device to download
the Conference App as there will only
be a PDF of the Final Program Book.

VISIT THE EXHIBITS

Thursday, March 12, 2026

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Complimentary Refreshments

9:00 – 10:00 AM

3:00 – 4:00 PM

Friday, March 13, 2026

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Coffee Break Sponsored by Savvas Learning Company

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.

*Or, order your **BOXED LUNCH** and head to one of the lunch time sessions
planned from 1:00-2:00 PM in the BOS Center.*



2026 CONFERENCE SHIRT ORDER FORM

Preorder your **2026 CONFERENCE SHIRTS** by February 1, 2026. Only preorders will be available for pick-up at the IRC Conference Registration Area in the Bank of Springfield Center in Springfield, Illinois. Shirts **will not** be available for purchase at the conference.

JERSEY V-NECK T-SHIRT in Silver:



Small.....	\$25.00	X	_____	=	_____
Medium.....	\$25.00	X	_____	=	_____
Large.....	\$25.00	X	_____	=	_____
XL.....	\$25.00	X	_____	=	_____
XXL.....	\$27.00	X	_____	=	_____
XXXL.....	\$27.00	X	_____	=	_____

REGULAR T-SHIRT in Heather Ice Blue:



Small.....	\$25.00	X	_____	=	_____
Medium.....	\$25.00	X	_____	=	_____
Large.....	\$25.00	X	_____	=	_____
XL.....	\$25.00	X	_____	=	_____
XXL.....	\$27.00	X	_____	=	_____
XXXL.....	\$27.00	X	_____	=	_____

HOODED LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT in White:



Small.....	\$35.00	X	_____	=	_____
Medium.....	\$35.00	X	_____	=	_____
Large.....	\$35.00	X	_____	=	_____
XL.....	\$35.00	X	_____	=	_____
XXL.....	\$37.00	X	_____	=	_____
XXXL.....	\$37.00	X	_____	=	_____

TIE-DYED SWEATSHIRT in Rainbow Pastel:



Small.....	\$45.00	X	_____	=	_____
Medium.....	\$45.00	X	_____	=	_____
Large.....	\$45.00	X	_____	=	_____
XL.....	\$45.00	X	_____	=	_____
XXL.....	\$47.00	X	_____	=	_____
XXXL.....	\$47.00	X	_____	=	_____

DUE FEBRUARY 1, 2026

TOTAL DUE _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Make checks payable to IRC and return to:
Illinois Reading Council
1100 Beech Street, Building 8-2
Normal, IL 61761
online at: www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org
or fax to: (309) 454-3512

Method of Payment:

(\$1 fee if pay by credit card.)

☐

Check to IRC

☐

Visa

☐

Mastercard

☐

Discover

☐

American Express

Cardholder's Name _____

Cardholder's Address _____

Credit Card

Expiration Date

CVV Code _____

Mo.

Yr.



BOOK CLUB

To register, return this form with payment by **October 15, 2025** to
Illinois Reading Council, 1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2, Normal, IL 61761
or register online at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org or fax to 309-454-3512

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

Read, reflect on, and respond to *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* by Jonathan Haidt and/or *Rebellion 1776* by Laurie Halse Anderson and/or *La Enseñanza en el Aula Bilingüe: Content, Language, and Biliteracy* by Sandra Mercuri, Sandra Musanti, and Alma Rodriguez.

Beginning **October 19**, educators will participate in online discussions for the next seven-weeks. With *The Anxious Generation*, the book is an investigation into the collapse of youth mental health in the era of smartphones, social media, and big tech with a plan for a healthier and freer childhood. With *Rebellion 1776*, participants will delve into this novel study on a thoroughly researched and emotionally resonant historical fiction middle grade book. With *La Enseñanza en el Aula Bilingüe*, it will help educators who dedicate their work to bilingualism, biliteracy, and equity for bilingual learners as well as strengthen their own academic reading and writing in Spanish. The book is mostly written in Spanish with previews in English.

Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive **15 PD clock hours** for each book club. 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.
- Texts: Books can be purchased from the bookseller of your choice.

Register by **October 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 _____
Membership Number _____ IEIN _____

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

_____ **THE ANXIOUS GENERATION** _____ **REBELLION 1776** _____ **LA ENSEÑANZA EN EL AULA BILINGÜE**

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)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express CVV Code _____

Credit Card Expiration Date Mo. Yr.

Cardholder's Name _____ Address of Cardholder _____



IRC Webinar Series

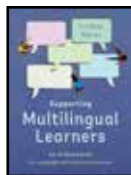
All webinars will begin at 7:00 p.m.

IRC will be offering the Webinar Series for members only in 2025-2026. 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 3, 2025 ~ Lindsey Moses Supporting Multilingual Learners: Practical Strategies for Inclusive Language and Literacy Instruction



As classrooms become increasingly diverse, educators need effective, research-based strategies to support multilingual learners across content areas. This session offers practical guidance for designing inclusive instruction that promotes language and literacy development as well as academic achievement. Dr. Lindsey Moses will share examples and videos of classroom-tested strategies that foster oral language, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and writing across the curriculum.



October 1, 2025 ~ Candace Fleming Nonfiction Fun ... Truly!



Can kids write engaging nonfiction? Absolutely! In this fast-paced presentation, two-time Sibert medalist Candace Fleming will share secrets for creating fun and fascinating nonfiction with young writers. Participants will not only discover strategies for effective research and directed inquiry, but they will also leave with oodles of tips and ideas to help students create exciting "true stories" rather than dull encyclopedic accounts.



November 5, 2025 ~ Colby Sharp Awesometastic New Books!



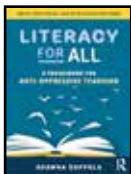
In this session, Colby will book talk some of his favorite 2025 picture books, chapter books, middle grade novels. Colby is the co-founder of *Nerdy Book Club*. He co-hosts *The Yarn* podcast with Travis Jonker. Colby co-authored *Game Changer! Book Access for All Kids* with Donalyn Miller, and he is the editor of *The Creativity Project: An Awesometastic Story Collection*. A *Commonsense Guide to Your Classroom Library* written with Donalyn Miller, is his latest book.



December 3, 2025 ~ Shawna Coppola "Redefining" Writing for Greater Equity, Engagement, and Authenticity!



Many of the ways we've conceptualized literacy need revising if we are to truly challenge some of the inequities that "live" within our educational system. How might this look when considering how we teach our students to write (i.e., to compose texts)? What paradigm shifts are necessary for ensuring that all of our students see themselves as "writers"?



January 7, 2026 ~ Cornelius Minor Being Child Centered in A World That Wants to Center Everything Else



We know the importance of using data to inform instruction and classroom based decision making. And we know that data is not just last year's test score. The most important data points walk into our schools each morning. What children do, how they do it, and what they say in response to our classroom practice is consistent information that we can use when making decisions. In this session, we will explore tools, methods, and practices that enable us to teach powerfully — with what we learn from and about young people at the center.



February 4, 2026 ~ Becky Anderson Discovering the 2026 Illinois Reads Books



Join Becky Anderson as she presents the Illinois Reads books for 2026. Learn more about the Illinois Reads statewide literacy initiative that promotes reading for all Illinois citizens. Six books in each of the 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.



March 4, 2026 ~ Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz Verses of Becoming: Poetry as Radical Self-Discovery



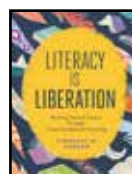
In this webinar, Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz explores poetry as both mirror and doorway—a sacred practice for naming truths, confronting wounds, and reclaiming the fullness of self. Through reading and writing, poetry offers a language for what is often unspoken, helping educators and students give voice to their lived experiences.



April 1, 2026 ~ Kimberly N. Parker Literacy Is Liberation: What Still Matters in Today's Times!



In this presentation, Dr. Parker will reinforce what continues to matter in our literacy work from her book, *Literacy is Liberation: Working Toward Culturally Relevant Teaching*.



May 6, 2026 ~ Whitney La Rocca Look Again! Inviting Students and Teachers into Possibilities for Revision



What happens when we take another look, with curiosity over judgement, at student writing—and when we invite our students to do the same? In this interactive webinar, we'll examine how reframing revision as discovery can help students make meaningful choices as writers. Join us to reflect on your own feedback practices, learn new ways to support revision through three pathways of support (oral language, illustrations, and written language), and engage students in conversations to elevate their writing.



June 3, 2026 ~ Samira Ahmed and Sara K. Ahmed A Summer of Inquiry & Justice: Build Your Stack & Your Inquiry Journal



Dive into "A Summer of Justice," a session focused on diverse fiction and nonfiction book talks—perfect for read-alouds, classroom shelves, or book clubs—stay for the paired research ideas. We'll also share how your own summer "Inquiry Journal" can serve you as a curious learner, then a mentor to student-led research, reflection, and civic engagement in the fall. You'll leave with a collective joy in the spirit of inquiry and a curated list to support your local bookseller, all while gaining renewed inspiration to guide your summer of impactful learning and justice-oriented inquiry.



To register, sign into your IRC Membership Account at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

Illinois Reading Council

CONFERENCE HOUSING RESERVATIONS

Conference Dates – Thursday, March 12, 2026 and Friday, March 13, 2026

Special room rates have been negotiated at the hotels listed below. To obtain these special rates, reservations must be made directly with the hotel either by phone or online by **February 15, 2026**. All conference meetings and meal functions will be held at the Bank of Springfield Center and the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel. Please note there will be no shuttle service from the other hotels to the BOS Center. 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 provided in the Springfield Maps in the Program Books and on the Conference APP.

Go to www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org
Select **Conference** on the menu,
then click on **Reserve Housing Online!**

CONFERENCE HOTELS

Candlewood Suites.....\$90

2501 Sunrise Drive, Springfield, IL 62703
217-522-5100

Group Code: IRC – **Phone Reservations Only**
About 4.7 miles south of the BOS Center

President Abraham Lincoln Hotel.....\$130

701 East Adams Street, Springfield, IL 62701
217-544-8800

Group Code: IRC – Illinois Reading Council
Located adjacent to the Convention Center

Carpenter Street Hotel.....\$99

525 North 6th Street, Springfield, IL 62702
217-789-9100

Group Code: IRC – **Phone Reservations Only**
About 0.7 miles west of the BOS Center

Ramada Springfield North.....\$133

3281 Northfield Drive, Springfield, IL 62702
217-523-4000

Group Code: IRC – **Phone Reservations Only**
About 4.3 miles north of the BOS Center

Drury Inn & Suites.....\$135

3180 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62703
217-529-3900

Group Code: IRC – 10157288
About 5.1 miles north of the BOS Center

Residence Inn.....\$169

2915 Stanford Avenue, Springfield, IL 62703
217-527-1100

Group Code: IL Reading Council
About 4.8 miles south of the BOS Center

Northfield Inn.....\$133

3280 Northfield Drive, Springfield, IL 62702
217-523-7900

Group Code: READ031126
About 4.3 miles north of the BOS Center

State House Inn.....\$110

101 E Adams Street, Springfield, IL 62701
217-528-5100

Group Code: IL Reading Council
About 0.7 miles west of the BOS Center

Special room rates end on February 15, 2026!

Group Registration Rates

Attend the conference with a group of your staff Group Rates per person:	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	10-19	20-39	40-59	60-79	80-99	100+
	Discount		10%	20%	30%	40%	50%
	Registration Fee	\$260.00	\$235.00	\$210.00	\$185.00	\$160.00	\$135.00

The group registration form is available online or register individually on page 31.

Be a Conference Volunteer

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Cell Phone _____

I would like to volunteer to work at the IRC Conference.

1. **While at the IRC Conference, I can volunteer to help for:**

- _____ 1 hour, schedule me as needed. (Circle one or all: Thursday and/or Friday)
- _____ 2 hours, schedule me as needed. (Circle one or all: Thursday and/or Friday)
- _____ 3 hours, schedule me as needed. (Circle one or all: Thursday and/or Friday)
- _____ Thursday morning block (1/2 day)
- _____ Thursday afternoon block (1/2 day)
- _____ Friday morning block (1/2 day)
- _____ Friday afternoon block (1/2 day)
- _____ Anytime, as needed.

2. **I would prefer to help in one or more of the following areas:**

- _____ Collect tickets at a meal function
- _____ Work at the registration booth
- _____ Help with book sales/autographing sessions
- _____ Help with the Tech on Call
- _____ Help with the special events and receptions
- _____ Help with the exhibits
- _____ Assist with putting up or changing room signs
- _____ Serve as a host for featured speakers
- _____ Help with the IRC Membership Booth/Treasure Chest
- _____ No preference, I will help as assigned.

Please send by February 1st to: Illinois Reading Council
1100 Beech Street, Building 8-2
Normal, IL 61761-1836

Or, fill out the online form on the Conference Page at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2
Normal, IL 61761

Phone: 309-454-1341
Fax: 309-454-3512

Email: irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org
Web: www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

1 Please print or complete the form online.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Initial _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ County _____

Home Phone () _____ Bus. Phone () _____

School Name _____ District _____ City _____

or

Business/Institution _____ City _____

Are you a Preservice Teacher? ____ yes ____ no College/University _____

2 List the council(s) you wish to join.

When you join, you receive membership in the IRC, as well as membership in a local or special interest council. You must select at least one of the councils listed on the back.

1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

3 List the dues amount of each council you are joining.

\$50 - One year membership for IRC and one council. If you join more than one council, each additional council is \$15.

\$30 - Preservice Teacher membership and \$5 for each additional council.

4 Option to Purchase Print Journals.

IRC Membership comes with online access to the *IRC Journal*. Current issues will also be sent by email quarterly to you. If you wish to purchase a print journal, it is an additional \$20 per year.

Total Before Optional Print Journal _____

Add \$20 Fee for Print Journal _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE _____

5 Return this form with payment to:

Illinois Reading Council

ATTN: Membership Dept.

1100 Beech St, Building 8, Suite 2

Normal, IL 61761

Paying by credit card? A \$2 service charge is added.

Join Online or Fax: 309-454-3512

Method of Payment: ☐ Check to IRC ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express
(Sorry, no P.O.'s accepted.)

--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

Cardholder's Name _____ Credit Card _____ Mo. _____ Yr. _____

Cardholder's Address _____ Expiration Date _____

CVV Code _____

6 In our continuing effort to provide meaningful services to our members, IRC requests the following information.

Are you a member of the International Literacy Association (ILA)?

a. ____ yes membership # _____ expiration date _____
b. ____ no

Age

a. ____ 18-24
b. ____ 25-39
c. ____ 40-54
d. ____ 55 and over

Years in Education Profession

a. ____ 0-4
b. ____ 5-14
c. ____ 15-29
d. ____ 30 and over

Highest Degree Earned

a. ____ Bachelors
b. ____ Masters
c. ____ Doctorate

Present Position

Classroom Teacher:

a. ____ preschool
b. ____ K-3
c. ____ 4-6
d. ____ middle school/jr. high
e. ____ high school
f. ____ post Secondary

Administrator:

a. ____ curriculum/reading supervisor
b. ____ building principal
c. ____ superintendent
d. ____ other _____

Other:

a. ____ librarian
b. ____ parent
c. ____ special ed. teacher
d. ____ gifted/talented teacher
e. ____ Title I/remedial
f. ____ reading specialist
g. ____ retired

Professional Areas of Interest (Check 3)

a. ____ administration
b. ____ adult literacy
c. ____ affective reading
d. ____ assessment
e. ____ children's literature
f. ____ comprehension
g. ____ content area reading
h. ____ family literacy
i. ____ holistic reading
j. ____ multilingual/multicultural
k. ____ newspapers in education
l. ____ parents and reading
m. ____ reading for gifted students
n. ____ research
o. ____ study skills
p. ____ teacher education
q. ____ technology in reading
r. ____ Title I/remedial reading
s. ____ young adult literature
t. ____ young authors/writing

Illinois Reading Council Membership

Locations of IRC Local & Special Interest Council Regions by Counties

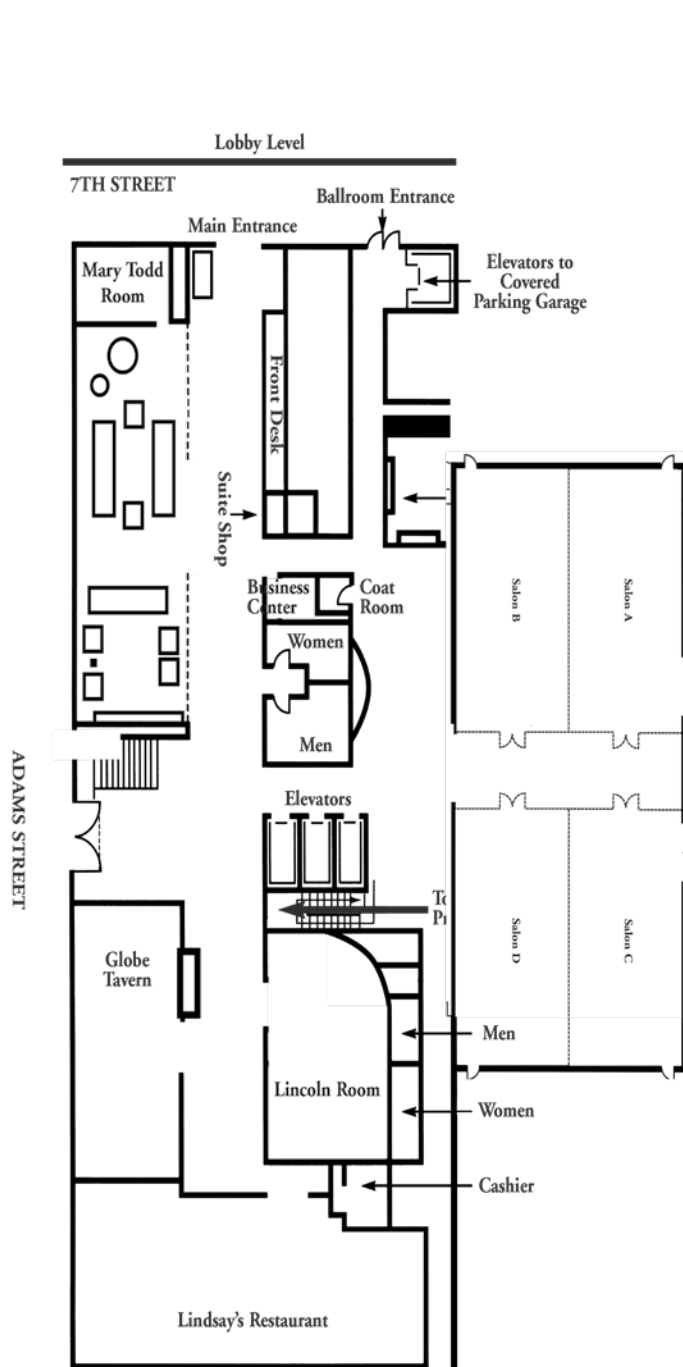
The annual membership of \$50 includes membership in the Illinois Reading Council and a local or special interest council. The annual preservice teacher membership is \$30 for one who has not been certified in the teaching profession and is working toward an initial teaching certificate. Please select the council(s) you wish to join from the list below. Residence in any of the designated council counties you join is not required. If you join more than one local or special interest council at this time, each additional council is \$15. Preservice teachers pay \$5 for each additional council. IRC Membership comes with online access to the webinars, book clubs, *IRC Journal*, and more. The *IRC Journal* and other membership benefits will also be sent by email to you. If you wish to purchase a print journal, it is an additional \$20 per year. Follow the steps on the front of this form.

REGION 1	REGION 4	REGION 7
<p>___ Northern Illinois Reading Council - (Boone, DeKalb, Winnebago, Eastern Lee & Ogle)</p> <p>___ Northwestern Illinois Reading Council - (Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll)</p> <p>___ Sauk Valley Reading Council - (Eastern Whiteside & Henry, Western Lee, Ogle, & Bureau)</p> <p>___ Starved Rock Reading Council - (LaSalle, Grundy, Kendall, Livingston, Eastern Bureau)</p>	<p>___ Black Hawk Reading Council - (Rock Island, Mercer, Western Henry & Whiteside)</p> <p>___ Illinois Valley Reading Council - (Stark, Putnam, Marshall, Peoria, Woodford, Tazewell, Eastern Fulton, Mason)</p> <p>___ Mississippi Valley Reading Council - (Adams, Brown, Pike, Scott, Greene, Calhoun)</p> <p>___ Western Illinois Reading Council - (Henderson, Warren, Knox, McDonough, Hancock, Schuyler, Western Fulton)</p>	<p>___ East Central-EIU Reading Council - (Moultrie, Shelby, Cumberland, Coles, Clark, Edgar, Douglas)</p> <p>___ Illini Reading Council - (Champaign, Piatt, Southern Ford)</p> <p>___ Vermilion Valley Reading Council - (Vermilion)</p>
REGION 2	REGION 5	REGION 8
<p>___ Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA) - (Chicago Area - Cook County within the Chicago city limits)</p> <p>___ Lake Area Reading Council - (Western Lake, McHenry, Northwestern Cook)</p> <p>___ Suburban Council of IRA (SCIRA) - (Eastern Lake, Northern Cook)</p>	<p>___ South Suburban Reading Council - (Those parts of Cook Co. bounded on west by Will-Cook Rd., north by 115th St., and/or Chicago City limits)</p> <p>___ Two Rivers Reading Council - (Kankakee, Iroquois, Northern Ford)</p> <p>___ Will County Reading Council - (Will)</p>	<p>___ Lewis and Clark Reading Council - (Macoupin, Jersey, Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, Washington, Clinton)</p> <p>___ National Road Reading Council - (Bond, Effingham, Fayette, Marion)</p>
REGION 3	REGION 6	REGION 9
<p>___ Fox Valley Reading Council - (Kane)</p> <p>___ Prairie Area Reading Council - (Western DuPage County)</p> <p>___ West Suburban Reading Council - (DuPage County east of Route 83 and those parts of Cook County west of Austin Boulevard excluding all areas within the Chicago city limits)</p>	<p>___ Central Illinois Reading Council - (Logan, Menard, Cass, Morgan, Sangamon, Christian, Montgomery)</p> <p>___ Macon County Reading Council - (Macon)</p> <p>___ MID-State Reading Council - (McLean, DeWitt)</p>	<p>___ South Eastern Reading Council - (Lawrence, Richland, Crawford, Jasper, Edwards, Clay, Wabash, Wayne, White)</p> <p>___ Southern Illinois Reading Council - (Jefferson, Randolph, Perry, Franklin, Williamson, Saline, Gallatin, Union, Johnson, Pope, Alexander, Hardin, Pulaski, Massac, Jackson, Hamilton)</p>
		REGION 10
		<p>___ CIRP - (College Instructors of Reading Professionals)</p> <p>___ ICARE - (Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education)</p> <p>___ SRL - (Secondary Reading League)</p>

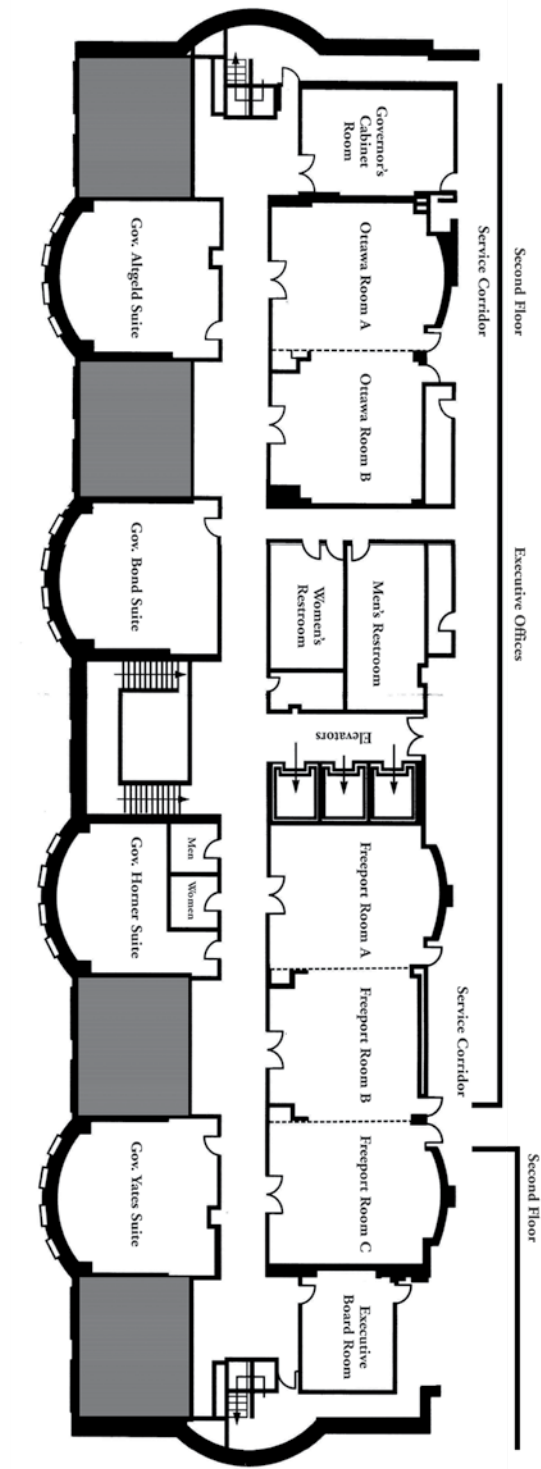
President Abraham Lincoln Springfield

701 E. Adams Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701

(Next door to the Bank of Springfield Center)



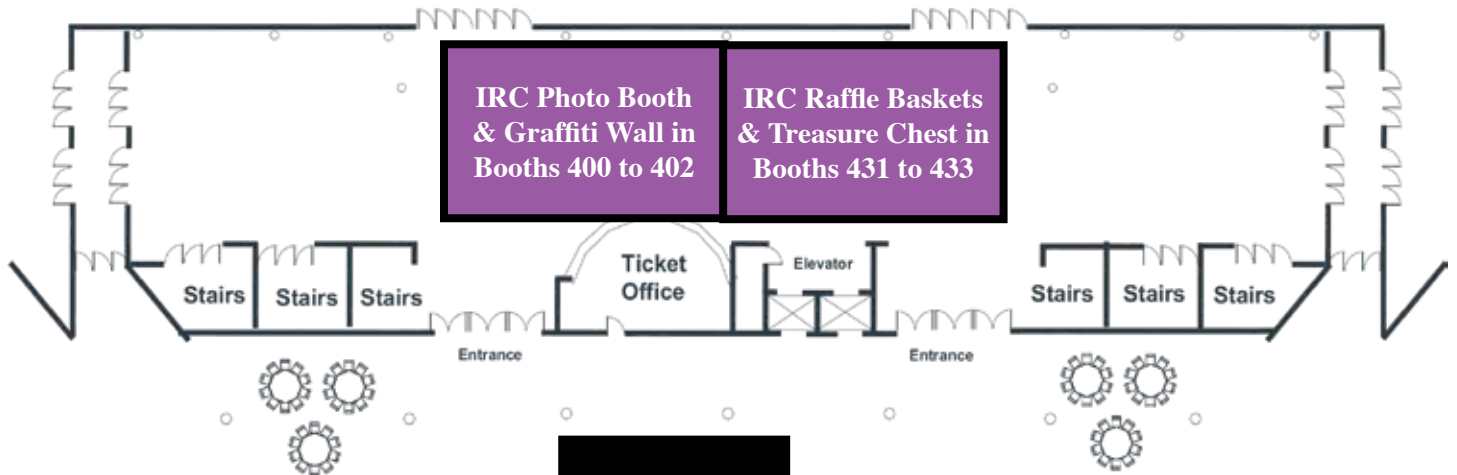
First Floor



Second Floor

Bank of Springfield Center

1 Convention Center Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62701 (next to PAL Hotel)



**Conference
Registration**

**Complimentary
Refreshments**

Concessions

233	300	333	400	433	500	533	600
232	301	332	401	432	501	532	601
231	302	331	402	431	502	531	602
230	303	330	403	430	503	530	603
229	304	329	404	429	504	529	604
228	305	328	405	428	505	528	605
224	309	324	409	424	509	524	609
223	310	323	410	423	510	523	610
222	311	322	411	422	511	522	611
221	312	321	412	421	512	521	612
220	313	320	413	420	513	520	613
219	314	319	414	419	514	519	614

625

624

623

622

619-621

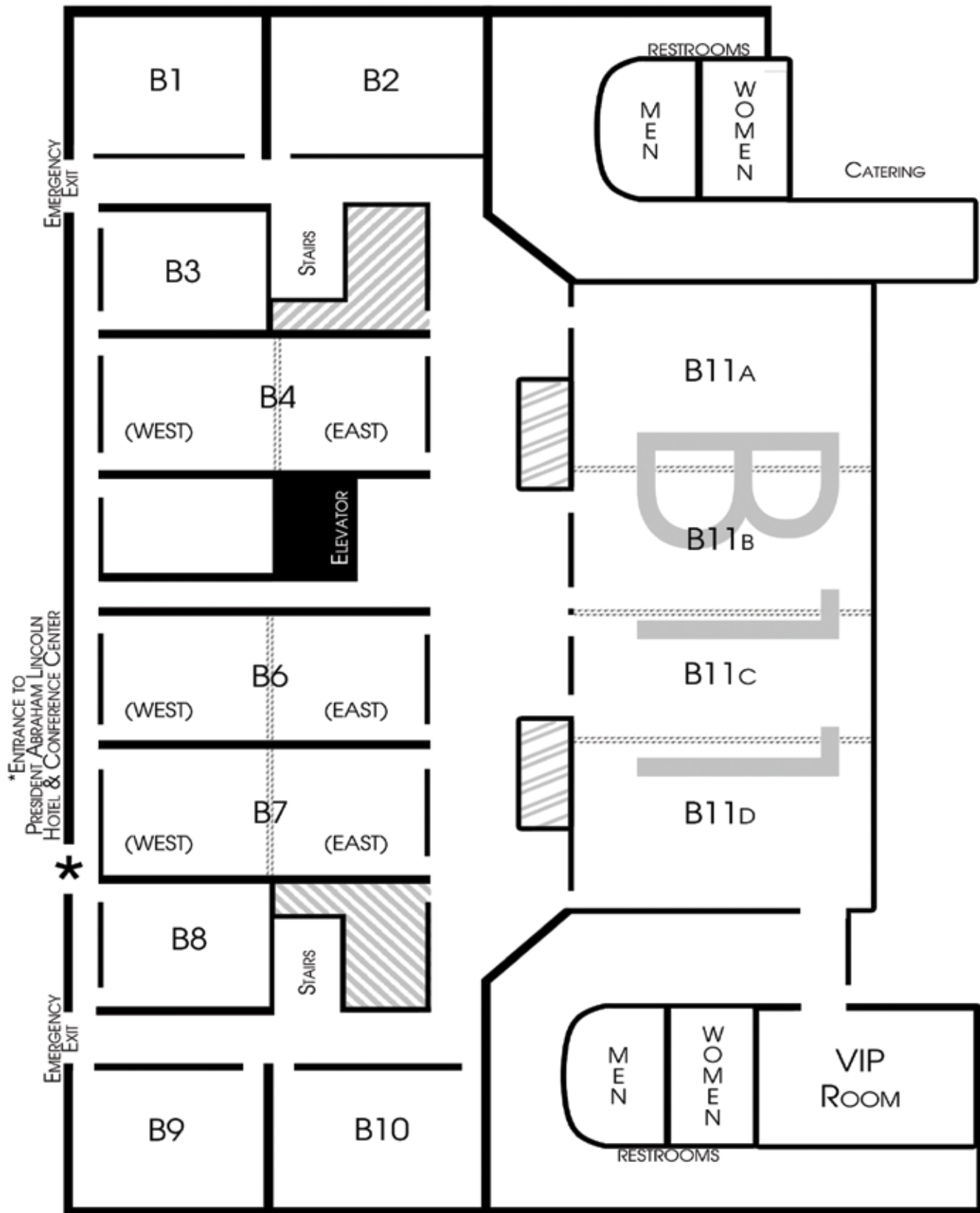
**New & Preservice
Teachers
Pizza Party
Friday at 3:00 pm
in this SE Corner**

Featured Speaker Autographing

Exhibit Hall on First Floor

Bank of Springfield Center

1 Convention Center Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62701 (next to PAL Hotel)



Meeting Rooms in Lower Level

ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL

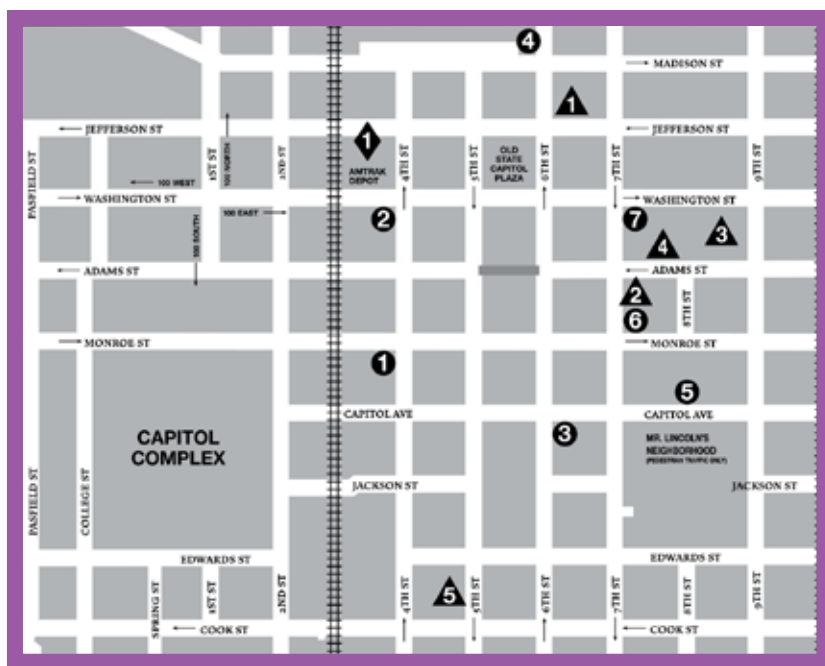
Springfield Overview

▲ HOTELS

1. Candlewood Suites
2. Carpenter Street Hotel
3. Comfort Suites
4. Drury Inn & Suites
5. Hampton Inn
6. Hilton Garden Inn
7. Microtel Inn & Suites
8. Northfield Inn & Suites
9. President Abraham Lincoln Springfield - a DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
10. Ramada Ltd. North
11. Residence Inn
12. Wyndham Hotel - CLOSED

◆ TRANSPORTATION

1. Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport



● PUBLIC PARKING GARAGES & LOTS

1. 4th & Monroe
2. 4th & Washington
3. 6th & Capitol
4. 6th & Madison (Presidential Museum)
5. 7th & Capitol (under public library)
6. 7th & Monroe (Near Hilton Springfield Hotel)
7. 7th & Washington (Near PCCC and President Abraham Lincoln Hotel)

▲ SITES & HOTELS

1. Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum
2. Wyndham Hotel - CLOSED
3. Prairie Capital Convention Center
4. President Abraham Lincoln Springfield - a DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
5. Vachel Lindsay Home

◆ TRANSPORTATION

1. Amtrak



PROVIDED BY THE
SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

109 North Seventh Street
Springfield, IL 62701
800-545-7300 • 217-789-2360
www.visit-springfieldillinois.com



IRC believes...

- ★ literacy is a fundamental human right.
- ★ literacy is a powerful tool for justice and equity and must be protected as a right for all students.
- ★ in diversity, equity, and inclusion because representation matters.
- ★ in protecting reader's rights, which include access to learning in a variety of methods, access to books, and access to choice.
- ★ in the importance of libraries and librarians.
- ★ in promoting the joy of reading, writing, and the power of story for lifelong learning.
- ★ educators need to be equipped with peer-reviewed, sustainable, research-based practices.
- ★ equitable assessment is a blend of informal and formal measures that informs instruction.
- ★ learners have different strengths and needs, and therefore should have access to peer-reviewed, research-based strategies, methods, and practices within differentiated multi-tiered systems of support.
- ★ educators need access to high quality resources and professional development that prepares them to be flexible and adaptable to best serve their students.
- ★ families are an integral part of children's literacy lives.
- ★ in celebrating creators of childrens' literature and young adult literature.
- ★ that education is a valued profession, and therefore educators must be trusted and empowered as decision-makers.
- ★ in community, collaborative conversations, and collegiality.

Illinois Reading Council
1100 Beech Street, Building 8-2
Normal, IL 61761

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 800
Springfield,, IL



Download
Conference App



Download
General
Conference
Information



Phone: 309-454-1341
Fax: 309-454-3512

Email: irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org
IRC Website: www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org
Facebook: [@IllinoisReadingCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisReadingCouncil)
Instagram: www.instagram.com/ilreadcouncil/
Bluesky: bsky.app/profile/ilreadcouncil.bsky.social
Threads: www.threads.net/ilreadcouncil/
X: [@ILReadCouncil](https://twitter.com/ILReadCouncil) #ircreads
Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/illinoisreading/

MISSION

The mission of the Illinois Reading Council is to provide support and leadership to all who promote and teach lifelong literacy.

VISION

The Illinois Reading Council advocates for high-quality literacy opportunities that empower all learners. As a leading literacy organization, the IRC provides access to research, materials, and methodologies to teach literacy and promote lifelong learning. As an active well-organized system of local and special interest councils and state committees, the IRC provides a supportive network for grass-roots involvement and the exchange of information for a diverse membership.