



## IRC NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK

By Marjorie Henseler, Editor of the *IRC Communicator*

IRC is looking for your input. We would like to know about any ideas, suggestions, likes and dislikes for the newsletter this coming year. Maybe you have an idea for a regular column, or would like to write an occasional article. Are there topics you'd like to see covered in the newsletter? Do you know someone who might be interested in writing an article, or someone who is doing something that would be of interest to the membership? We are looking for feedback and now is your chance to let us know what you'd like in your newsletter.

Any ideas, comments, suggestions for writers or columns, etc., can be sent to the *IRC Communicator* Editor at [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org).

## SENATE BILL 2243

By Nancy Oesterreich, IRC Treasurer

Senate Bill 2243 has been passed by the Illinois General Assembly and is awaiting signature by Governor Pritzker to make it law.

This bill requires the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop and adopt a comprehensive literacy plan by Jan 31, 2024. This plan must include:

- Core instructional practices as well as practices for specific at-risk populations
- Provide guidance on screening students and interpreting data in order to identify at-risk students
- Provide guidance on K-2 literacy intervention for at-risk students and 3-12 intervention for students with reading difficulties
- Address the impact of second language learning and bilingual education on reading instruction
- Define key terminology
- Contextualize how the plan and existing laws will interact

ISBE is also required to create a curricular rubric, a district wide literacy plan template, and guidance for best literacy coaching practices by July 1, 2024. Additionally, the bill requires the state to develop literacy training opportunities for educators by January 1, 2025.

Future elementary teachers who will teach students in first through sixth grade will now be required to be tested on their literacy teaching knowledge on a content area exam. Passing this exam will be required

for any teaching candidate before they can receive a teaching license. The new testing requirement takes effect July 1, 2026.

Organizations across Illinois created the Early Literacy Coalition, which has spearheaded the push for a literacy plan for Illinois students. In 2022, only 29.9% of Illinois's third through eighth grade students met or exceeded state standards in reading. The plan will include evidence-based reading curriculum for schools, which will include phonics instruction, and will move away from balanced literacy and whole language approaches.

ISBE has already begun drafting the required literacy plan, and plans to present its first draft at the June 21 board meeting. A listening tour is planned for the summer months, with a second draft of the plan to be drafted by fall 2023.

## FAMILY LITERACY BOOKSHELF

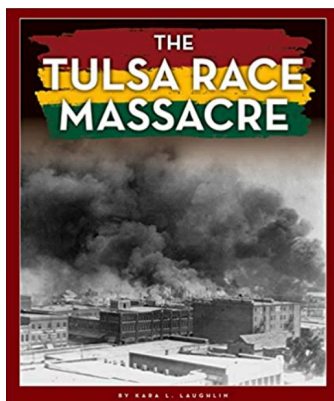
By Barb Ashton, IRC Family Literacy Committee Chair

The school year is ending. Teachers and students are headed out the door for a well-deserved enjoyable summer break. The arrival of June not only signals the official start of summer but also warmer sunny days, enjoyable outdoor activities, graduations, weddings, etc. June is LGBTQ Pride and Alzheimer's Awareness month. We also honor our fathers on Father's Day and celebrate Juneteenth, the new federal holiday.



This year, America will honor and celebrate the new federal holiday Juneteenth on June 19th, the date that marks when enslaved people in Texas finally heard the news that they were free. To understand about Juneteenth, read ***The Juneteenth Story: Celebrating the End of Slavery in the United States*** by Alliah L. Agostini. The book is told through the eyes and voice of a contemporary African American family who are shown reading a book to their daughter about Juneteenth. As important milestone events unfold in the history of Juneteenth, the family becomes witnesses to the Emancipation Proclamation, the Civil War and reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights movement, Black Lives Matter, and the various celebrations (Jubilee Day) that took place over the years. While there is much sadness and joy intertwined with Juneteenth, the author and illustrator convey these feelings through their text and illustrations. Throughout the story, the reader is made aware of the African American community's struggles for social justice. *The Juneteenth Story* supports discussion and writing in the classroom,

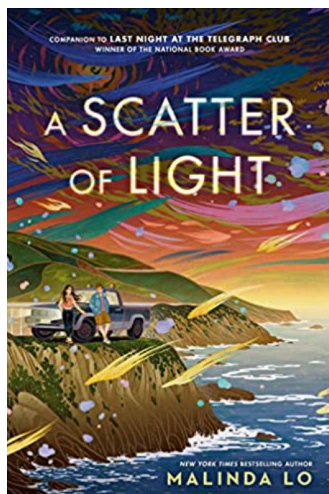
library, book club, and is an easy way for parents to talk and discuss with their children about racism and social justice. The back of the book has a wonderful timeline of the history of Juneteenth and slavery. The author's note provides her personal connection to the early Juneteenth celebrations and festivities. *The Juneteenth Story* can also be viewed on YouTube.



Over the past few years Americans have learned about a well kept secret that occurred in Tulsa, Oklahoma on May 31 and June 1, 1921. This is now known as the Tulsa Race Massacre. A wonderful nonfiction book that provides an introduction to this horrific event is ***The Tulsa Race Massacre (Black American Journey)*** by Kara L. Laughlin. The author introduces readers to the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma, a prosperous African American community. The people who lived here formed businesses and provided services and opportunities to the people and families who migrated to Greenwood to escape the harsh living in other southern states. Greenwood prospered and became known as the "Black Wall Street." Many white citizens of Tulsa didn't like the fact that African American citizens were becoming wealthy. This anger escalated when a young white elevator operator accused a young black boy of assault. He was put in jail and expected to be lynched before his trial was to take place. A few black

men tried to rescue him but were met by an angry white mob. Violence broke out and with no response from the police and other officials, the white mob burned, looted, and destroyed the Greenwood District. Many African Americans and families lost their lives, businesses, and homes. Eventually, over time

Greenwood was rebuilt including a Memorial Wall and Museum that reflects what Greenwood was, became, and the future for the area. *The Tulsa Race Massacre* is told in text, original photographs, sidebars, and detailed captions. The back of the book provides some good critical thinking questions for discussion or writing, a timeline, glossary, websites, and additional resources for further reading.



Pride Month is observed during June. *A Scatter of Light* by Malinda Lo returns to San Francisco in what is billed as a companion novel to *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*. While the setting is basically the same the time period has changed from the 1950's to 2013. *A Scatter of Light* tells the story of Aria Tang West who is part Chinese and part white. Aria is looking forward to spending summer break with her besties on Martha's Vineyard before heading to MIT in the fall. But a graduation party goes wrong when a boy photographs her without her shirt on and publishes them on the internet. With plans for Martha's Vineyard being cancelled, Aria's parents send her to spend the summer with her widowed grandmother Joan, who is a prominent photographer and painter. While staying with her grandmother Aria meets Steph, a gender queer musician and her grandmother's gardener. Steph also introduces her to Lisa and Mel who also happen to be queer as well. This is a whole new experience for Aria especially after the girls invite Aria to a Pride event in downtown San Francisco. As the summer moves along, Aria assists her grandmother with various projects and is developing strong feelings for Steph, but there is a hitch as Steph is already in a relationship with Lisa. The summer is coming to an end.

What will Aria do? In spite of all that has happened this is still a story about Aria and coming to terms with who she is and her own feelings and emotions. *A Scatter of Light* is a good YA read. It also mirrors LGBTQ teens today and teens of Asian heritage can see themselves reflected in the story.



On June 6th, we remember D-Day where the brave and courageous allied soldiers landed on the beaches at Normandy to begin the defeat of Germany and help bring an end to World War II. *What Was D-Day?* by Patricia Brennan Demuth is an informational book about how the military leaders planned and executed the invasion at Normandy, despite problems with the weather, challenges of crossing the English Channel, and above all keeping the plan a Top Secret. There's even a chapter that describes how the planners fooled Hitler by setting up a phony army base in Dover, England by using rubber tanks, jeeps, planes, and ships. The use of carrier pigeons with messages attached to their claws, misleading reports and radio signals, and miniature dummy paratroopers dressed in full uniform all contributed to saving many lives and helped to make the invasion a success. *What Was D-Day?* Is an easy read that engages the reader in the historical content of this important day. The use of detailed illustrations and maps with additional text boxes all contribute to make D-Day a good visual reality. The back of the book contains two detailed and comparative timelines of D-Day

and WWII, a bibliography, videos, and websites for further reading. *What Was D-Day?* can be read by all students but would be especially helpful for your special needs students, struggling readers, and ESL/bilingual students.

## Looking Ahead

**June is Caribbean American Heritage Month** – Read some stories to learn about their heritage

**June is Dairy Month** – Grab your favorite ice cream treat while enjoying and reading a good book

**June is Audio Book Month** – Get a few audio books to take along on your summer travel

**June 6:** Visit the **National D-Day Memorial Virtual Field Trip** on World War II and D-Day

**June 14: Flag Day** – Display our American Flag

**June 18: Father's Day** – Share with the fathers in your family how much you love and appreciate them

**June 19: Juneteenth** – Enjoy some festivities with family on this new federal holiday

**June 21: Summer** officially begins

Join educators from all over the state in the online **Summer 2023 IRC Book Club!** Choose one, two, or all three books!

Read, reflect on, and respond to ***Teaching Fiercely: Spreading Joy and Justice in Our Schools*** by Kass Minor and/or ***The Final Strife: A Novel*** by Saara El-Arifi and/or ***Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: Conceptos Fundamentales*** by David Schwarzer, Mary Petron, and Clarena Larrotta.

Beginning **June 25**, these seven-week online discussions will revolutionize the way you negotiate the realities of childhood education and/or you can explore the first book of a visionary fantasy YA trilogy that will offer ways to model book clubs with your students as you prepare plans with other books of your choosing. With ***Bilingualism and Bilingual Education***, a book with text written in both English and Spanish simultaneously, the underlying understanding is that ALL your language resources are welcome when it comes to discussing your ideas, understandings, and aha moments. We will be encouraging participants to feel comfortable using their best language assets and language as they use their bilingualism on a daily basis in social and academic settings.



Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive **15 PD clock hours** for each book club. Participants will also be able to complete ***Teaching Fiercely*** and/or ***The Final Strife*** in the Fall as these books will be repeated. Please note that the ***Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*** book club will not be repeated in the Fall.

**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 **June 15, 2023**, to participate in the book club. Registration is FREE for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$45, which includes IRC membership for one year. PLEASE NOTE: The cost of book is not included.

Register by June 15th

## PROGRAM PROPOSALS FOR THE 2024 IRC CONFERENCE

By the Illinois Reading Council

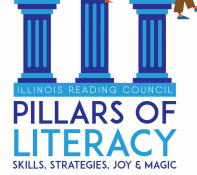
The Illinois Reading Council is excited to share plans for the 2024 IRC Conference,





**PILLARS OF LITERACY:  
SKILLS, STRATEGIES, JOY & MAGIC**

**March 14-15, 2024  
in Springfield, Illinois.**



The following speakers will be joining us at the conference:

**Kimberly Brubaker Bradley  
Jan Burkins  
Lesa Cline-Ransome  
Lynne Dorfmann  
J. Richard Gentry  
Emily Hanford  
Timothy Rasinski  
Pam Muñoz Ryan**

**John Schu  
Jennifer Serravallo  
Nic Stone  
Clare Vanderpool  
Becky Anderson Wilkins  
Illinois Reads  
Author Luncheon  
And More To Come!**

IRC is currently accepting Program Proposals to present at the 2024 IRC Conference. Proposals are due by **September 1, 2023**. Teachers, researchers, librarians, administrators, and others interested in promoting reading and related literacy areas are encouraged to submit program proposals. Please take a moment to review the 2024 Program Proposal format, general information, and criteria for selection that are available online.

The Preliminary Program with the Conference Registration and Housing Forms will be available on the IRC Website by October 1st. We hope to see you at the 2024 IRC Conference!

[Submit a Program Proposal by September 1st](#)

## **UPCOMING PD EVENTS**

By the Illinois Reading Council

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **June 7, 2023: IRC Webinar on Reading as a Secret Tool** with **Blue Balliett** from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **June 15, 2023: Suburban Council of IRA (SCIRA)** will host the SCIRA Summer Conference with **Kass Minor** from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at the Holiday Inn Northshore-Skokie, 5300 W. Touhy, Skokie, Illinois.
- **June 15, 2023: Summer 2023 IRC Book Club** registrations are due.
- **June 15, 2023: IRC Prairie State Award** nominations are due.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

## **QUICK LINKS**

[Visit the IRC Website](#)

[Full IRC Events Calendar](#)

[Latest on the IRC Conference](#)

Available IRC Awards and Grants

Bring IRC PD to your School District

Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

