



## **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at the Tinley Park High School, 6111 175<sup>th</sup> Street, Tinley Park, Illinois**

The **Illinois Reading Council** is excited to share that we will be hosting a new version of the Illinois Statewide Young Authors Conference at the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival**.

At the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival**, the Illinois Reading Council will be celebrating the written work of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade along with the Illinois Reads Authors. All students in kindergarten through twelfth grade, including those in special programs, are invited to participate. Each spring, schools are encouraged to select their Young Authors who will attend and be celebrated at the Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival.

The **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival** is a fun and free event for **ALL** families, students, and book lovers and **ALL** are invited to attend from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. During the Book Festival, the Young Authors, chaperones, and other book festival participants will attend sessions led by Illinois Reads Authors from the 2026 Illinois Reads Book List.

During the **Young Authors Celebration**, the Young Authors will be provided a lunch and can meet with an Illinois Reads Author where they can share their book. Young Authors will also receive their **Illinois Reads Young Author Certificate** and their manuscript will be officially affixed with the seal as an honored **Illinois Reads Young Author**. Please note that all schools must provide chaperones who will accompany their Young Authors attending the Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival.



## SCHOOL GUIDELINES

1. Every school in Illinois is invited to make a **Young Authors Program** available to all students in grades K-12. Children of all ages and ability should be encouraged to participate.
2. It will be the responsibility of the school to select the participants who will attend the **Young Authors Celebration** held at the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival**. Selection criteria should reflect the principles of authoring cycle, growth, and development in the writing process, and representations of the best efforts of students. Please note that space is limited at the Young Authors Celebration so plan to register early.
3. Schools may select one Young Author to attend AND/OR Young Authors to attend from each grade level OR one Young Author from each of the suggested age bands.
  - Grades K to 2
  - Grades 3 to 5
  - Grades 6 to 8
  - Grades 9 to 12
4. The school is responsible for notifying the selected Young Authors and informing them of the school's preferred registration procedures. On the next pages, IRC has provided a student congratulatory letter and packet, tentative schedule, required waiver form, and frequently-asked-questions packet to distribute to all selected Young Authors. Please note that IRC will not send materials to the participants.
5. Manuscripts that are authored and/or illustrated by *more than two* children can be accepted as two separate registrations. Dictated books may also be typed or handwritten by an adult, but must be in the student's own words. Manuscripts must also have a **COVER** that has the manuscript title and author name on it. On the back of the cover, it is also recommended to affix the Manuscript Identification Card that is available later in this packet. **The Young Authors are to bring their original manuscripts with a cover to the conference.**
6. **It is mandatory that each participating school bring volunteers to chaperone the Young Authors and any other students attending from their school.** It is suggested to have **1 volunteer for every 3 students**. These students must stay with their chaperone at all times and can attend author sessions during the Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival. Chaperones can be the administrators, teachers, teacher's aides, and/or parents/guardians.

7. **Young Authors Celebration Registration Form**: This online form must be submitted by **April 5, 2026** for each Young Author and chaperone who will be attending the **Young Authors Celebration**. Please note that space is limited, so register early!
- A fee of **\$50** is required for each Young Author attending the Young Authors Celebration. Each Young Author will receive a t-shirt, book, and lunch.
  - It is also recommended that chaperones preorder a lunch for **\$20** to guarantee availability.
  - The fees can be paid online via credit card or by check. After submitting the Young Authors Celebration Registration Form, an invoice will be emailed to the Main Contact Person at the school. Checks can also be paid by the parents if required by the school.
  - Prior to submitting this form, please have the parents for each Young Author sign and return to you the **Parental/Guardian Waiver Form**. These forms must be scanned and attached as one (1) PDF document when you submit the Young Authors Celebration Registration Form.
  - Please make sure that **all information is correct** when submitting this form. This includes the spelling of student names, grade levels, and manuscript titles. Name tags, certificates, and other conference materials will be prepared from this form. *Corrections will not be possible at the event.*
8. If you have any questions about the **Young Authors Celebration** and/or the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival**, please feel free to contact the Illinois Reading Council by phone at 309-454-1341 or at [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org).



Dear Young Author,

Congratulations! In recognition of your writing efforts, you have been selected to represent your school at the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival** to be held on **Saturday, April 25, 2026** at the Tinley Park High School, 6111 175<sup>th</sup> Street, Tinley, Illinois.

At the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival**, the Illinois Reading Council will be celebrating the written work of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade along with the Illinois Reads Authors from the **2026 Illinois Reads Book List** found at [www.illinoisreads.org](http://www.illinoisreads.org)

During the Book Festival, the Young Authors, chaperones, and other book festival participants will attend sessions led by the Illinois Reads Authors. From 1:00 to 2:00 pm, the Young Authors and their chaperones will be invited to attend the special **Young Authors Celebration** held in their honor. At the **Young Authors Celebration**, the Young Authors will have lunch with one of the Illinois Reads Authors where they can share their book, receive their **Illinois Reads Young Author Certificate**, and their manuscript will be officially affixed with the seal as an honored **Illinois Reads Young Author**.

Plan to **bring your original manuscript** with you. The manuscript must include a **cover** that has your manuscript title, author name, and contact information on the back of the cover.

To assist you and your family in planning for the Book Festival, we have included the following with this document:

- Tentative Schedule
- Parental/Guardian Waiver Form (*must be signed and returned by April 5, 2026*)
- Frequently Asked Questions

Please note that **registration is required for the Young Authors Celebration** and your school will be providing the details on how to register. The Illinois Reading Council hopes that you can attend and enjoy the fun activities being planned for the Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival.

Sincerely,

Illinois Reading Council  
1100 Beech Street, Building 8-2  
Normal, Illinois 61761  
Phone: 309-454-1341  
Fax: 309-454-3512  
Email: [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org)  
Website: [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org)



## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at the  
Tinley Park High School, 6111 17th Street, Tinley Park, Illinois

**10:00 – 10:20      Opening Ceremony**

**10:30 – 12:45      Illinois Reads Author Book Talks  
and Author Book Signings**

**11:00 – 1:00      Exhibits Open**

- Anderson's Bookshop ~ *Illinois Reads Books for Sale*
- NIU STEAM Activities
- Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom
- IRC Guatemala Handicraft Project
- Illinois Reading Council ~ *Free Illinois Reads Bookmarks & Posters*

**1:00 to 2:00      Lunch with Authors**

- Young Authors will be given a ticket for lunch
- Chaperones who preorder lunch will be given a ticket
- Lunch will be available for purchase by other attendees





## PARENTAL/GUARDIAN WAIVER FORM

This form must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian for each student planning to attend the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival** on **Saturday, April 25, 2026**. **Please note: Young Authors will not be registered for the Young Authors Celebration until the signed waiver is received.**

Student's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Student \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact (in case you cannot be located):**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**School's Contact Information:**

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School's Main Onsite Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

The law requires that parental permission be obtained for medical or surgical procedures for unmarried minors under 18 years of age. The following consent form must be signed by parents so that procedures may be promptly carried out and so that no unnecessary delays will occur with treatment. However, no emergency surgical procedure or operation will be performed in a local hospital without parents being contacted, fully informed and their consent obtained. I understand any medical expenses are my financial responsibility. I also authorize my student's school and the main school contact named above to release information of such care to my health insurance carrier for the purpose of reimbursement and authorize assignment of insurance benefits to the designated service provider for any care provided.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian—original signature required

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, minor, also do hereby release, acquit, and forever discharge the officers, employees, and representatives of the Illinois Reading Council and the Tinley Park High School from any and all claims, causes of action, damages, or judgments, whether in contract or in tort, for any injuries including personal that may be incurred arising out of or in any way connected to \_\_\_\_\_'s participation in the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival** held on **Saturday, April 25, 2026**. Also, unless notified in writing, this waiver constitutes an agreement that the registrant's image, likeness, and appearance can be used in photographs and videos for promotional purposes of the Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian—original signature required

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Will my child be supervised at the event?

Yes. Each school must provide chaperones who will be attending the Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival. These students must stay with their chaperone at all times and can attend author sessions during the Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival. Chaperones can be the administrators, teachers, teacher's aides, and/or parents/guardians.

### Will my child receive lunch at the event?

Yes. All Young Authors will receive a lunch. The cost of lunch is included in the registration fee, which was paid when students were registered for the event. Chaperones have the option to also preorder a lunch.

### What should my child wear to the event?

We suggest that children wear clothing that will be comfortable as they move through the day's activities.

### May I stay with my child and bring my other children to the Book Festival?

Yes. The **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival** is a fun and free event for **ALL** families, students, and book lovers and **ALL** are invited to attend from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

If you have any additional questions about the **Young Authors Celebration** and/or the **Illinois Reads and Young Authors Book Festival**, please feel free to contact the Illinois Reading Council by phone at 309-454-1341 or by at [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org).

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### MANUSCRIPT IDENTIFICATION CARD

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Name of coauthor (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Manuscript \_\_\_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

School District Number \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_