



The 2026 IDA-GA Leadership in Literacy Award

IDA Georgia is pleased to present the 2026 Leadership in Literacy Award to Helen Robin Hilker, Lead Reading Curriculum Specialist at the Wardlaw School of the Atlanta Speech School, in appreciation and recognition of her dynamic and creative leadership in education and outstanding efforts to promote and encourage literacy, reading, and student achievement.

Robin Hilker was born in White Plains, New York, and grew up in Montvale, New Jersey, before moving with her family to Georgia, where she completed high school. She attended the University of Georgia, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and later a master's degree in Learning Disabilities.



Robin began her teaching career in Fitzgerald, a small town in South Georgia, where she discovered her passion for helping children learn and thrive. She then taught for Fulton County Schools in Atlanta, gaining valuable experience working with students from diverse backgrounds and strengthening her commitment to meeting the needs of all learners. Upon completing her master's degree, she joined the Atlanta Speech School, where she is currently in her 40th year of service.

For 39 years, Robin taught first, second, third, fifth, and sixth grade. Throughout those years, she dedicated herself to creating engaging learning environments where students could build strong academic foundations and develop a love of learning. Her work has been especially focused on literacy, helping students become confident and capable readers.

Robin's educational philosophy is grounded in the belief that every student should have the opportunity to achieve at their own level, feel successful, and enjoy school. She believes practice is key to growth and understanding, and that steady progress through effort helps students build self-confidence. This philosophy has guided her work throughout her career and continues to influence her role as a Reading Curriculum Specialist. Through four decades in education, Robin has remained committed to helping students, teachers, and families experience the transformative power of literacy and lifelong learning.