

[INSERT DATE HERE]

Dear Board of Education and District Leadership,

I am so appreciative of the efforts of this school district to provide enriching and engaging learning opportunities for children in our community. I want to ensure that the efforts of the staff are supported by evidence-based curriculum and professional development to maximize the effectiveness of the quality instruction already being provided.

The epidemic of illiteracy in Illinois certainly predates the recent pandemic. According to the [Illinois Report Card](#), on the 2019 Illinois Assessment of Readiness, before Covid, [INSERT DISTRICT IAR DATA HERE] met or exceeded expectations in English-Language Arts. On the 2021 Illinois Assessment of Readiness, [INSERT DISTRICT IAR DATA HERE] met or exceeded the expectations in English-Language Arts. I know we can do better.

Fortunately, there are clear solutions. Over 20 years ago, the National Reading Panel identified the most effective, evidence-based methods for teaching reading. Yet as journalist Emily Hanford documents in her 2022 podcast *Sold a Story: How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong*, many schools across the country continue to rely on practices that are not supported by research—with serious consequences for students. We must ensure this is not the case in [DISTRICT NAME].

In the spirit of the [2021 IASB resolution](#) for pre-service teachers to complete at least one course dedicated to scientifically proven methods of reading instruction, I would like teachers in our district to receive systematic continuing professional development in this area. One such evidence-based continuing education is available through [LETRS Training](#). Additionally, the district should review the current ELA curriculum using [The Reading League's Curriculum Evaluation Tool](#) to see if changes need to be made in the materials being provided to our quality teachers.

Districts in Illinois can also use the [Illinois Literacy Curriculum Map](#), which draws on independent reviews from EdReports, to evaluate whether their curriculum aligns with evidence-based practices.

- **If [DISTRICT NAME] is not aligned:** This highlights the urgent need for curriculum change so our teachers have the right tools to deliver instruction proven to work.
- **If [DISTRICT NAME] is aligned:** That is a strong step in the right direction. However, alignment alone is not enough—teachers also need sustained professional development, coaching, and support to ensure effective implementation.

Furthermore, I encourage the district to ensure that all curriculum decisions align with the [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#) (adopted in 2024), which reflects the state's commitment to high-quality, evidence-based instruction. I also recommend that teachers be offered the opportunity to pursue the state-recognized microcredential in the Science of Reading, which supports professional growth and reinforces best practices in literacy instruction.

[DISTRICT NAME] has the opportunity to address inequitable and ineffective reading practices by strengthening core literacy curricula and ensuring educators receive the training they deserve. These actions will lead to better outcomes for all of our students—the future of our community.

Regards,
[YOUR NAME]