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LRB102 30000 LAW 42189 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Literacy is not only critical for individuals'
3 ability to earn income, secure housing, participate in their
4 healthcare, support their children's education, pursue
5 happiness, and navigate the world but also collectively
6 foundational to our community and democracy; and

7 WHEREAS, The World Literacy Foundation found that low
8 literacy is a major contributor to inequality and increases
9 the likelihood of poor physical and mental health, workplace
10 accidents, misuse of medication, participation in crime, and
11 welfare dependency, all of which have substantial additional
12 social and economic costs; and

13 WHEREAS, Fifty percent of Illinois' third graders met,
14 exceeded, or approached learning standards in English language
15 arts according to the Illinois Assessment of Readiness with
16 the other half of students not meeting or partially meeting
17 standards; this represents a ten percentage point swing from
18 the 2019 pre-pandemic rates when 60 percent of students met,
19 exceeded, or approached learning standards; and

20 WHEREAS, Thirty-three percent of Illinois' fourth graders
21 achieved proficient or advanced reading scores on the 2022
22 National Assessment of Educational Progress with another 29

1 percent meeting basic reading proficiency and the remaining 38
2 percent scoring below basic reading proficiency; and

3 WHEREAS, Research from the Annie E. Casey Institute found
4 that students who are not proficient readers in third grade
5 are four times more likely not to finish high school; if those
6 students are from low-income families, they are more than six
7 times more likely not to finish high school; and

8 WHEREAS, Research consistently finds that a diverse,
9 well-trained, and expanding pool of teachers, in conjunction
10 with curricula responsive to the strengths and needs of
11 diverse student populations, improves educational outcomes for
12 all students; and

13 WHEREAS, An appropriate curriculum blends the learning
14 needs of students with their developmental needs and increases
15 in complexity with every new stage of childhood; and

16 WHEREAS, Oral language development is a prerequisite for
17 reading and writing that is nurtured from birth through
18 talking, reading, story-telling, singing, nursery rhymes, and
19 other language exposure and, as younger children develop,
20 through intentional dialogue with rich vocabulary; home
21 visiting programs, access to books, high-quality childcare and
22 preschool, and lived experiences strengthen students'

1 opportunity to build oracy skills, vocabulary, and background
2 knowledge, leading to higher-level cognitive thinking; and

3 WHEREAS, Reading builds new neural pathways in the brain
4 as people, usually children, learn to connect the sounds in
5 language to letters on a page to the meaning of the text;
6 however, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to literacy,
7 as learners will require different dosages within different
8 areas of literacy instruction to meet their individual needs;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Reading and writing have a reciprocal
11 relationship as each strengthens the other, and students
12 benefit when their instruction is closely intertwined; and

13 WHEREAS, English learners benefit from a comprehensive
14 literacy approach that recognizes the value of multilingualism
15 by enveloping all areas of literacy instruction with a deep
16 focus on oral language development and encouraging students to
17 make connections between English and their home language; and

18 WHEREAS, Teachers deserve the tools to be knowledgeable
19 about the cultural practices and language system of the
20 children they serve, including those children who speak
21 language variations of English, such as African-American
22 English (AAE); AAE has a linguistic structure that is a

1 systematic and rule-governed variation of General American
2 English (GAE); and

3 WHEREAS, Research shows that direct, systematic,
4 cumulative, and explicit reading instruction that is focused
5 on the foundational reading skills of phonemic awareness,
6 phonics or decoding, spelling or encoding, vocabulary
7 development that includes morphology, oral language
8 development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension that
9 includes syntax and building background or content knowledge,
10 is highly effective in teaching young children to read; and

11 WHEREAS, High literacy achievement across all demographic
12 groups is an essential indicator of educational equity within
13 the State of Illinois; strengthening early literacy
14 instruction and supports for students in Illinois will pay
15 dividends in the future by empowering students, providing the
16 skills they will need to graduate, find fulfilling careers,
17 and be productive members of their communities and of our
18 democracy; and

19 WHEREAS, Ensuring that every child has access to
20 high-quality, research-aligned, developmentally-appropriate
21 reading instruction implemented using a comprehensive approach
22 is a foundational component of Illinois' public education
23 system and a responsibility shared among federal, state, and

1 local education agencies; and

2 WHEREAS, The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) held
3 a literacy summit on October 25, 2022 to bring education
4 professionals and advocates across Illinois together to share
5 ideas and best practices to support literacy development for
6 Illinois' children while also recognizing the complexity of
7 literacy development and potential pitfalls of adopting
8 incomplete or simplistic policy solutions; therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
10 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the Illinois
11 State Board of Education to share findings from the literacy
12 summit held on October 25, 2022 as progress towards promoting
13 research-aligned, developmentally-appropriate literacy
14 practices across grades and subject areas, developing a
15 comprehensive literacy plan through continued collaboration
16 with other relevant agencies and stakeholders, supporting
17 alignment of early childhood programs, curriculum, educator
18 training, professional development, and student supports to
19 Illinois' standards, and ensuring that closing literacy
20 opportunity gaps among demographic groups be prioritized; and
21 be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
23 presented to ISBE with our appreciation for the agency's

1 efforts to advance literacy and with our support for the
2 continuation of such efforts.