

Sense of the Congress Resolution on Literacy

September 27, 2023

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that virtually every American student should be able to read at grade level or better.

Whereas literacy is an essential skill for success in America;

- “Every adult needs a range of literacy skills to achieve his or her personal goals, pursue a successful career, and play an active role as a citizen. High levels of literacy also enable individuals to keep pace with changing educational expectations and technologies and support the aspirations of their families.”
 - <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED518670>
- “Literacy provides a valuable set of indicators of performance in higher education, informing such issues as the relationship among educational experience, literacy, and preparedness for the job market.”
 - <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED518670>
 - The Eric.ed.gov database is the online platform for the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), which is an extensive digital library of educational literature and resources.
- “Reading comprehension—the ability to understand the meaning of text—is a foundational ability that enables children to learn in school and throughout life. Children who struggle with reading comprehension in the third or fourth grade are at high risk for dropping out of school, with detrimental effects on their future employment, income, and participation in the social and political aspects of life.”
 - <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/central/Ask-A-REL/20042>
 - IES.ed.gov refers to the website of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), which is a branch of the U.S. Department of Education. IES is responsible for conducting research and providing data and statistics related to education in the United States.
- “2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare. Over 70% of America’s inmates cannot read above a 4th grade level.”
 - DoSomething.org article “11 facts about literacy in America”
<https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-literacy-america>
- “Our concern however goes well beyond matters such as industry and commerce. It also includes the intellectual, moral and spiritual strengths of our people which knit together the very fabric of our society. The people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skill, literacy and training essential to this new era will effectively disenfranchised, not simply for the material rewards that accompany competent

performance, but also from the change to participate fully in our national life. A high level of shared education is essential to a free, democratic society and to the fostering of a common culture, especially in a country that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom.”

- A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education United States Department of Education by The National Commission on Excellence in Education <http://edreform.com> ›
[A Nation At Risk 1983](#)
- Adult illiteracy directly affects an individual’s employment options, likelihood to live in poverty, likelihood to be incarcerated, access to adequate health care and health outcomes, and life expectancy. Generational illiteracy makes it increasingly difficult to escape these circumstances, and [millions of Americans](#) face this reality every day.
 - <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/improving-literacy-united-states-recommendations-increasing-reading-success/>

Whereas illiteracy is the largest and most solvable issue in America;

- “In the U.S., a key problem is not that adults with poor literacy skills lack intelligence, capability, or motivation, but that too few—only 10%—receive help for their learning needs.”
 - <https://dalberg.com/our-ideas/adult-low-literacy-opening-the-book-on-americas-silent-crisis/#:~:text=Some%20describe%20it%20as%20a,not%20even%20identify%20as%20such.>
 - Dalberg (dalberg.com) is a global development advisory firm that provides consulting services related to various fields, including education.
- Illiteracy is a solvable problem,” says Pamela Good, co-founder and CEO of Beyond Basics. “We must respond with what works.”
 - <https://www.crainsdetroit.com/giving-guide-2023/beyond-basics>

Whereas illiteracy has been a silent epidemic which has not been addressed in America for decades and now finds us at a crisis level;

- “Some describe it as a “silent crisis” because most people are unaware of the extent or detrimental effects of poor literacy, and many of those with poor literacy do not even identify as such. On top of that, it is surrounded by a pervasive sense of shame and secrecy, as well as fears of being stigmatized or denied opportunities. As a result, one of the most important aspects of supporting people with low levels of literacy is to increase their self-esteem and persuade them of the benefits of improving their reading and writing.”
- “The subject has limited visibility in the U.S. and funding from governments, the private sector, foundations and donors is hopelessly inadequate to address the size and scope of the challenge. Furthermore, the body of knowledge on adult low literacy remains sparse, lacking

the high-quality datasets needed for research that can be translated into cost-effective, replicable solutions. Without strategic action, the situation will only get worse.”

- like the U.S., many countries have not seen significant improvement in literacy levels over the past 30 years or more.
 - <https://dalberg.com/our-ideas/adult-low-literacy-opening-the-book-on-americas-silent-crisis/#:~:text=Some%20describe%20it%20as%20a,not%20even%20identify%20as%20such.>
 - Dalberg (dalberg.com) is a global development advisory firm that provides consulting services related to various fields, including education

Whereas a literacy gap nationwide – measuring 8th grade students who are reading below proficiency – are well over 50 percent.

- “In 2022, thirty-one percent of eighth-grade students performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level on the reading assessment, which was 3 percentage points lower compared to 2019, the previous assessment year.”
 - <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading/nation/achievement/?grade=8>
 - The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) website, located at nationsreportcard.gov, is considered a highly credible source for information on the educational performance of students in the United States. NAEP is often referred to as the "Nation's Report Card" because it provides comprehensive and reliable data on the academic achievement of students in various subjects and grade levels across the country.
 - NAEP assessments are conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which is a part of the U.S. Department of Education. The assessments are rigorous, standardized, and designed to provide unbiased and accurate information about student performance, making them a trusted source for educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public interested in education in the United States

Whereas children who struggle to read, become adults who struggle in society; leading to a cycle of poverty;

- 82% of children whose parents have less than a high school diploma live in low-income families.
 - DoSomething.org 11 facts about literacy in America: America”
<https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-literacy-america>
- 75% of Americans who receive food stamps perform at the lowest 2 levels of literacy and 90% of high school dropouts are on welfare.

- DoSomething.org 11 facts about literacy in America: America”
<https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-literacy-america>
- “In the U.S., there are 43 million adults—nearly one in five – who read below a third-grade level, and over half of all adults read below a sixth-grade level. Low literacy is pervasive and entrenched, and those who experience it generally have poorer health, significantly lower incomes and prospects — and their children are more likely to face the same future”
 - <https://dalberg.com/our-ideas/adult-low-literacy-opening-the-book-on-americas-silent-crisis/#:~:text=Some%20describe%20it%20as%20a,not%20even%20identify%20as%20such.>
 - Dalberg (dalberg.com) is a global development advisory firm that provides consulting services related to various fields, including education.

Whereas literacy transforms the lives of students and creates strong communities;

- Literacy builds self esteem and overall quality of life. If nothing else, literacy builds self-esteem. Readers who struggle are more likely to have difficulty expressing themselves, even verbally. This can lead to anxiety, depression, or other issues that impact an overall quality of life. The more able a person is to express themselves, the greater their confidence, their self-esteem, and their chance at living a happy, healthy life.
- Literacy is a powerful tool against poverty. If all students in [low-income countries](#) had basic reading skills, 171 million people could escape extreme poverty. Illiteracy comes at a high price. According to the World Literacy Foundation, illiteracy costs the global economy \$1.5 trillion annually. Currently, there are 192 million people unemployed around the world. Even more people have jobs but struggle with poor pay or poor working conditions (or both). In both cases, a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills means that many people are immediately disqualified from a high number of decent livelihoods.
 - <https://concernusa.org/news/benefits-of-literacy-against-poverty/#:~:text=Literacy%20promotes%20democracy%20and%20peace&text=When%20citizens%20are%20literate%2C%20they,participating%20in%20their%20local%20democracy.>
 - This charity's score is 92%, earning it a Four-Star rating

Whereas a literacy curriculum with a structured literacy approach that includes multisensory, phonics, and decoding components paired to immediate application in books are foundational reading skills;

- Teaching experience supports a multi-sensory instruction approach in the early grades to improve phonemic awareness, phonics, and reading comprehension skills. Multi-sensory instruction combines listening, speaking, reading, and a tactile or kinesthetic activity
- Multi-sensory activities provide needed scaffolding to beginning and struggling readers and include visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile activities to enhance learning and memory. As students practice a learned concept, the multi-sensory scaffolds are reduced until the student

is using only the visual for reading. Employ the multi-sensory techniques to fix errors and then practice without the scaffold.

- [Center for Effective Reading Instruction, International Dyslexia Association](#)
- [Phonics Instruction: the Value of a Multi-sensory Approach | Reading Rockets](#)

- Work with teacher preparation programs approved pursuant to ss. 1004.04 and 1004.85 to integrate effective, research based and evidence-based reading instructional and intervention strategies, including explicit, systematic, and sequential reading strategies, multisensory intervention strategies, and reading in content area instructional strategies into teacher preparation programs
 - <https://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7539/urlt/DyslexiaSciReadStructuredLit.pdf>
 - The website fl DOE.org is the official website of the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), which is a government agency responsible for education in the state of Florida. Government agency websites like FLDOE are generally considered reputable sources for information related to education policies, regulations, and resources specific to their jurisdiction.

Whereas literacy programs that include an individual diagnostic assessment by a certified teacher are best set to improve;

One of the key benefits of a diagnostic assessment is it allows the teacher and student to highlight and address knowledge gaps. When you have a clear idea of a student's level of knowledge, you can restructure your teaching program to address their most pressing challenges

1. It helps you to tie learning outcomes to specific goals and objectives.
 2. Diagnostic assessments provide substantial data for creating an effective curriculum that improves learning outcomes for students.
 3. It makes the teaching and learning process more efficient by zeroing in on content that needs to be taught.
 4. Diagnostic assessment allows the teacher to individualize instruction. From the data, you can identify students who need extra tutoring on a particular portion of a unit or course of study. In the same vein, if a teacher discovers that a group of students has already mastered a large portion of a unit of study, he can design activities that allow that group to go beyond the standard curriculum for that topic through independent or small group study.
- <https://www.formpl.us/blog/diagnostic-assessment#:~:text=One%20of%20the%20key%20benefits,address%20their%20most%20pressing%20challenges.>

Whereas students who are tutored one-on-one, five days a week achieve grade-level movement in reading

<https://www.crainsdetroit.com/giving-guide-2023/beyond-basics>

- “Approximately 85 percent of the 3,553 participating students experienced improvements in their grade level reading, according to Beyond Basics, which operates free literacy centers in

some Detroit Public Community District Schools and the Durfee Innovation Society next to Central High School”

- <https://www.dbusiness.com/daily-news/report-shows-progress-among-readers-using-beyond-basics-program/>

Whereas individuals who can read at least at a high school level are more likely to be hired in the job force;

The OLS results indicate that after controlling for observable characteristics, there is a 21.25% increase in wages for individuals who become literate

- Whether the gap between our nation’s existing literacy resources and its literacy needs will widen remains an open question; the evidence to prove or discredit such predictions is scarce. Many believe, however, that we must respond to the literacy challenge if we are to preserve our nation’s economic vitality and ensure that every individual has a full range of opportunities for personal fulfillment and participation in the economy and society. This view was reaffirmed at the historic education summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, where the nation’s governors — including then Governor Clinton — met with then-President Bush to establish a set of national education goals for the twenty-first century. As adopted in 1990 by members of the National Governors’ Association, one of the six goals states: By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
 - <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs99/1999470.pdf>
 - National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website, located at nces.ed.gov, is considered a highly credible source for education-related data and statistics in the United States.
- The Ohio Literacy Resource Center estimates that there are 44 million people in the United States that are unable to fill out an application, read a food label, or read a simple story to a child.
- "Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics consistently show that a lack of education is a setback in the job market and strongly correlates with lower median earnings and higher unemployment rates," Sikora said. "Locally, those of us that work in this field know that low literacy is associated with a variety of unfavorable labor market outcomes, such as finding even entry level employment or going to school for a basic employment credential."
- "A great interview isn’t always enough. Those assessments are used to determine reading, math, and problem-solving abilities to analyze how the worker will respond on the job," Sikora said. "There are a lot of individuals who lack the basic literacy skills to complete a job application
 - <https://www.daily-jeff.com/story/news/local/2020/12/10/literacy-issues-often-real-problem-far-reaching-impacts/3752420001/>

- Overall, we rate The Daily Jeffersonian as Left-Center Biased based on editorial positions that slightly favor the left. We also rate them High for factual reporting due to proper sourcing and a clean fact-check record
- 43% of adults at *Level 1* literacy skills live in poverty compared to only 4% of those at *Level 5*
 - <https://www.begintoread.com/research/literacystatistics.html>

Whereas individuals who can read at least at a high school level are less likely to be incarcerated in prison;

- According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of the fourth grade will end up in jail or on welfare
- 85% of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are [functionally low literate](#).
- Juvenile incarceration [reduces the probability of high school completion and increases the probability of incarceration](#) later in life.
- Students who dropout of high school are [5 times more likely than high school graduates](#) to be arrested in their lifetime.
- Students who dropout of high school are [63% more likely to be incarcerated](#) than their peers with four-year college degrees.
 - <https://governorsfoundation.org/gelf-articles/early-literacy-connection-to-incarceration/>
 - <http://www.begintoread.com/research/literacystatistics.html>
 - is a website that provides resources and materials for early childhood literacy and reading instruction. While it offers educational materials for young readers and educators, it may not be considered a primary or authoritative source for academic research or comprehensive educational data.
 - <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs94/94102.pdf>
 - National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website, located at nces.ed.gov, is considered a highly credible source for education-related data and statistics in the United States.

Whereas Junior ROTC students who are reading at grade level or better are more likely to be accepted into the military;

- “The JROTC curriculum, which fully or partially addresses a number of national academic standards – to include Common Core State Standards (CCSS) – includes course work on leadership, civics, geography and global awareness, health, and wellness, language arts, life skills, and U.S. history. The curriculum is based on the principles of performance-based, learner-centered education and promotes development of core abilities: capacity for life-long learning, communication, responsibility for actions and choices, good citizenship, respectful treatment of others, and critical thinking techniques”
 - “Every learning experience in the curriculum addresses Core Abilities, Program Outcomes, and Course Competencies; building on their developing skills and abilities, which are critical to success in high school and post-secondary career.”
 - “Core Abilities describe the broad, life-long skills that every Cadet needs for success in future life and career endeavors. The core abilities are a result of the goals and values that drive the JROTC program and are built upon the program’s four years through integrating various lesson competencies and skills throughout the JROTC curriculum. The Core Abilities are:
 - Apply critical thinking techniques
 - Build your capacity for life-long learning
 - Communicate using verbal, non-verbal, visual, and written techniques
 - Do your share as a good citizen in your school, community, country, and the world
 - Take responsibility for your actions and choices
 - Treat self and others with respect”
- <https://www.usarmyjrotc.com/jrotc-curriculum-overview/>

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

- (1) recognizes that every American student should be able to read at grade level or better;
- (2) ensures that literacy programs should be set up to include one-on-one tutoring for each student diagnosed with a literacy gap of one year or more, five days per week until the student is reading at grade level;
- (3) encourages State and local agencies working with Private Organizations with proven literacy programs to work together to identify and establish solutions to illiteracy;
- (4) and encourages these same government agencies, private organizations to establish adult literacy programs to help adults who have reading gaps below eighth grade.