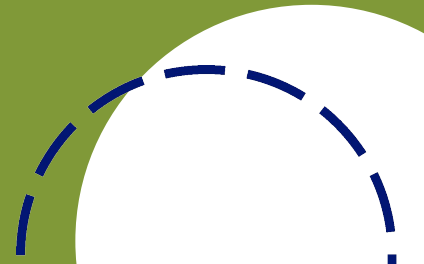




# 3rd Grade Pilot & ELA Resource Recommendation

Update to Board of Education  
February 2026



# Aligning Literacy Instruction



**D65 Strategic Goal 1:** Implement an innovative educational program that provides every child with what they need to progress academically, achieve their goals, and develop their interests while supporting their health and well-being.

## **Illinois Literacy Plan**

Ensure every child receives high quality, evidence based literacy instruction

# Moving Forward in Literacy



## 2015-Present

- Using a variety of resources to design curriculum

## Challenge:

- Required significant supplementation.
- Knowledge Building still a gap.
- Implementation can be inconsistent.
- Lacking vertical coherence.



## Key Questions:

Are we providing a coherent experience for every student, every day?

Is this sustainable?

## Conclusion:

**We need a more unified system.**

- Integrate foundational reading skills, reading, writing standards along with knowledge building.

# Multi-Year Process



**Phase 1: Building Expertise**

**Phase 2: Program Review**

**Program Selection**

# Multi-Year Process



Phase 1: Building Expertise

Phase 2: Program Review

Program Selection

- Release of Illinois Literacy Plan in 2024
- Guaranteed Viable Transparent Curriculum Work
- Unpacking Standards, gaining deep understanding
- Looking at student data and identifying gaps
- Professional learning to understand Science of Reading, including LETRS Training for all K-1 staff

# Multi-Year Process



Phase 1: Building Expertise

Phase 2: Program Review

Program Selection

- Evaluate programs against criteria including:  
Science of Reading Alignment- systematic phonics, knowledge building  
Standards alignment
- Need for a coherent system
- Site visits

#### Resources Reviewed:

- HMH Into Reading
- Great Minds (Wit & Wisdom and Arts & Letters)
- Really Great Reading
- Collaborative Classroom
- From Phonics to Reading

# Multi-Year Process



Phase 1: Building Expertise

Phase 2: Program Review

Program Selection

Amplify CKLA

# Validating the Choice: 3rd Grade Pilot

→ **Pilot Context:**  
2025-2026 School Year  
Grade 3

→ **Why 3rd Grade?**  
A pivotal transition year from  
“learning to read” to “reading to  
learn”

→ **Resource Used:**  
CKLA 3rd Edition  
(Update from 2nd edition -  
Streamlined pacing, improved  
writing)

## **Implementation Philosophy: Instructional Integrity over Strict Fidelity**

We still recognize the need to adapt a resource to our needs, layering in additional opportunities for writing, assessment, and choice where necessary.

# What is Core Knowledge Language Arts? (CKLA)

## Skills Strand

Explicit, Systematic instruction in phonics, decoding, and writing mechanics.

## Knowledge Strand

Builds comprehension through content-rich learning in history, science, geography, and literature.



**Connecting reading and writing skills with deep background knowledge.**

# Knowledge Building



## Literature & the arts

Star Light, Star Bright:  
Nursery Rhymes and Fables

See, Hear, Smell, Taste, Touch:  
The Five Senses

Underdogs and Heroes: Stories

See How They Grow: Plants

Moo, Cluck, Oink: Farms

Deep Roots: Introduction to  
Native American Cultures

All Around the World: Geography

Royal Tales: Monarchs

or  
National Icons: Presidents  
and American Symbols

Our Planet: Taking Care of the Earth

or  
Rain and Rainbows: Seasons and Weather

Shaped by Nature: Art and the World Around Us

The Moral of the Story: Fables and Tales

From Nose to Toes: How Your Body Works

Common Threads: Different Lands,  
Similar Stories

Reach for the Stars: Astronomy

Charting the World: Geography

A World of Homes: Animals and Habitats

A New Nation: American Independence

Once Upon a Time: Fairy Tales

or  
Our Planet: The History of the Earth

From Babylon to the Nile:

Early World Civilizations  
or  
Early Americas: Maya, Aztec, and Inca

Adventure Stories: Tales from the Edge

Fortunes and Feats:  
Fairy Tales and Tall Tales

The Birthplace of Democracy:  
Ancient Greece

Legends and Heroes: Greek Myths

Our Planet: Cycles in Nature

Butterflies, Bees, and Beetles: Insects

A House Divided: The American Civil War

Sounds and Stanzas: Poetry

Making a Difference: Creating Change

or  
Journeys to America: Immigration

Building Blocks: All About Nutrition

or  
Early Asian Civilizations: India and China

Taking Flight: The Age of Aviation

Timeless Tales: Classic Stories

Fur, Fins, and Feathers:  
Animal Classification

Rhythm and Rhyme: Poetry

Rise and Fall: Ancient Rome

Our Solar System and Beyond: Astronomy

Regions and Cultures: Native Americans

Novel Study: Charlotte's Web

or  
Novel Study: Stella Díaz Has  
Something to Say

Systems and Senses: The Human Body

or  
From Glow to Echo: Light and Sound

From Blues to Bebop: All That Jazz

My Story, My Voice: Personal Narratives

Knights and Castles: Europe's Middle Ages

Meaning and Metaphor: Poetry

Eureka! Student Inventor

Our Planet: Geology

Road to Independence:  
The American Revolution

Novel Study: From the Mixed-Up  
Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler

or  
Novel Study: The Season of Styx Malone

Adventure on the High Seas: Treasure Island

or  
Crafting Stories: A World of Tales

Inspiration and Ingenuity:  
American Innovation

**Important to note: Learning content in the areas of science and social studies does not replace the need for science and social studies instruction. The Enrichment team will be able to focus more time and energy on the NGSS and Social Science Standards that emphasize inquiry skills, critical thinking, and communication.**

# Recommendation for Adoption

## → **Proposal: Amplify CKLA for Grades K-4**

### 5th Grade:

Continue to evaluate 5th grade ELA alignment during 26-27 school year  
Consider roll-up with current 3rd grade cohort based on data and feedback

## → **Timeline: Full K-4 implementation beginning 2026-2027 School Year**

## → **Financial Impact: \$15,000 per grade level cost x 4 = \$60,0000 (Does not include 3rd grade)**

### Includes:

- Print materials (teacher guides, student readers and workbooks)
- Digital license and platform access
- Professional Development
- \*Ongoing consumable costs annually

# Building a Unified Literacy System

## Vertical Alignment

Skills and knowledge build logically

## Equity

Every student receives the same  
knowledge-rich foundation

## Support

Aligns with Science of Reading and  
Illinois Literacy Plan



**Questions?**