

The Exemplary Reading Program Award is sponsored by the International Literacy Association (ILA) to recognize outstanding reading and language arts programs at all grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school). Its purpose is to call the public's attention to outstanding programs in schools throughout North America. Each participating state and province can choose one winning school.

Each state/provincial chapter participating in the program will have an Exemplary Reading Program Award Chair/Committee (minimum of 3 individuals). The state/provincial committee will review applications and apply the criteria and guidelines listed here using a standardized scoring procedure. Selected schools will be visited by representatives of the state/provincial Exemplary Reading Program Award Committee. The name of the winning school and a description of the qualifying program will be sent to ILA by the required due date as noted below.

## Reminders

- Applications for the 2025 Exemplary Reading Program Award are due by **December 31, 2024**, and must be submitted electronically.
- Schools are recognized for accomplishments during the previous year (**July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024**).
- Your uploaded file must be smaller than 50MB. *Note: If your file is larger than 50MB, send the attachment via email to [chapters@reading.org](mailto:chapters@reading.org) with the subject line EXEMPLARY READING PROGRAM AWARD ATTACHMENTS.*
- Please contact [chapters@reading.org](mailto:chapters@reading.org) for assistance with your award submission.

## Objectives

- To improve literacy in our society.
- To recognize school staff who demonstrate excellence in reading and literacy programs.
- To encourage the development and refinement of exemplary reading/language arts programs.
- To report to the public noteworthy efforts to improve reading/language arts.
- To disseminate specific information about high-quality programs so that other professionals can use it to improve their own instructional efforts.

## Criteria

- All public, private, and parochial elementary and secondary schools are eligible for the award if the school staff has at least one ILA member.

- The school must apply with its entire reading program, not just one segment (i.e., Title I, resource room, library/media, teacher, one grade, etc.).
- A letter of recommendation signed by the chief school officer (e.g., superintendent) is required.
- The winning program should serve as a model for other schools and teachers.
- A school receiving the award cannot apply again within a period of five years.
- A school is not eligible to apply if a current state or provincial chapter officer is employed in the school.

### To participate

To participate in the program, complete the [ILA Exemplary Reading Program Award application form](#). You will be required to submit a description of your program that covers the 10 expectations listed below.

### Please limit the description to five pages.

*NOTE: Additional materials—photos and supplemental resources—can be submitted in electronic format. Please email these materials to [chapters@reading.org](mailto:chapters@reading.org).*

### Expectations

For consideration as an Exemplary Reading Program, your school should demonstrate the following:

1. The reading program is consistent with sound theory, research, and practice.
  - Instruction is based on current research.
  - The design of the program is based on a needs assessment and includes recommendations of participants, teachers, administrators, and supervisors as an ongoing process.
  - Teachers are provided with time for action research, planning, executing, and reporting new ideas.
  - Staff are routinely provided with information regarding valid research and current practice. Teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, whole-class teaching, small-group instruction, and integrated reading are used. Give three examples.
  - Evidence of changes that have occurred in the program because of recent research is apparent.
2. The reading program facilitates student learning.
  - The design of the program is based on a needs assessment and includes recommendations of participants, teachers, administrators, and supervisors.
  - The program includes training that prepares teachers to observe and coach one another.
  - The program is based on what we know about children and how they learn.
  - Staff is routinely provided with information regarding valid research and best practices.

- Time and resources for staff development are provided in and outside of the school day.
  - Teachers have opportunities to interact with other professionals regarding student learning and best instructional practices.
3. Students have access to a wide variety of reading materials.
    - Time is provided daily for independent reading.
    - There is evidence of open access to and wide use of library books. Data must be given to support usage.
    - Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to read are evident.
    - Teachers and other adults read aloud to students.
    - Students read and share books with their peers.
    - Money is provided for books to promote recreational reading.
    - Time is allowed for students to choose books from both the classroom and school library.
    - There are special celebrations for reading.
    - There are opportunities for teachers, administrators, and students to share reading interests.
  4. Students demonstrate success in reading.
    - Data is used to promote continuous improvement in reading instruction.
    - Individual, as well as group, diagnosis is provided.
    - There is evidence of data regarding attitudes of faculty, parents/community, and students toward reading.
    - A variety of ongoing assessments are used.
    - Teachers take responsibility for teaching each child to read.
  5. Comprehension strategies are taught and applied across the curriculum.
    - Comprehension strategies are taught as basic reading instructional practices.
    - A core of comprehension strategies is taught in the content areas.
    - There is evidence of direct reading instruction in the content areas.
  6. Listening, speaking, viewing, and writing are integrated into and support the reading program.
    - There are at least three indicators of an integrated reading program.
    - The school has allocated time for reading.
    - Literature is used beyond the basal reading in a reading program (i.e., literature-based, novels as part of the program, etc.).
    - Children write books and share them with other students.
    - There are extended activities that combine literature and language arts.
  7. Administrators and teachers provide leadership and vision for the building and/or district reading program. Administrators should
    - Analyze and use evaluation data.
    - Assist with involvement of the classroom reading program.
    - Provide human and material resources to attain district/school reading program goals.

- Provide time, encouragement, and resources for teachers to participate in professional development activities.
8. The school and/or district offer support services to the program.
    - Special services are provided for students with reading difficulties.
    - The reading staff members are certified and trained in reading instruction and development.
    - Focus is placed on early intervention of at-risk students who are beginning to learn to read.
    - Enrichment programs are provided for the more advanced readers.
  9. Literacy activities occur outside of school.
    - Reading assignments are provided for students.
    - Library assignments such as research, outlining, studying, reading books, etc., are evident.
    - There are at least four indicators of literacy activities that occur outside of school.
  10. The community, including parents, is involved in the reading program.
    - School involves volunteers in a variety of ways.
    - Community advisory groups provide input into the reading program.
    - The community is kept informed through various means of communication.
    - The business community is involved through such avenues as community-school partnerships, business partnerships, volunteers, tutoring, etc.
    - Parents are informed of a child's progress through a variety of methods.
    - Parents are a part of recreational reading programs.
    - The school provides support for parents and provides family literacy experiences.

## TIMELINE

- Application submission deadline: **December 31, 2024.**
- Validated visits by state/provincial Exemplary Reading Program Award Committee members will be completed: **March 15, 2025**
- State/provincial Exemplary Reading Program Award Committee chairs will notify ILA headquarters of winners: **April 1, 2025**
- ILA headquarters will notify recipients of the award: **April 30, 2025.**