

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES COALITION
DURING FIRST LEADERS FOR LITERACY DAY ON APRIL 14TH**

Gathering brings together literacy leaders from across sectors for a panel discussion and virtual dialogue on what is needed to accelerate literacy outcomes

NEWARK, Del. (April 15, 2015) – The International Literacy Association (ILA), a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all, convened its first Leaders for Literacy Day on April 14, 2015. The day brought together literacy leaders through both a panel discussion in New York City and a global virtual dialogue focused on defining best practices and scalable solutions to accelerate literacy outcomes for the more than 800 million illiterate people in the world.

The convening also marked a first step in the creation of a coalition of education, business, community and not-for-profit organization leaders who will examine what is working to advance literacy worldwide, what is not and what is needed to close the gap.

“It is clear that no single organization or entity can address the literacy gap alone. We know that we need to enlist and inspire a broader community of leaders if we want to change the status quo,” said Marcie Craig Post, Executive Director, International Literacy Association, during the panel discussion in New York City. “As leaders, we need a willingness to collaborate with partners of all kinds – governments, the business community, NGOs, educators and families – to collectively, constructively and critically examine what is needed to create sustainable change.”

Titled “Literacy For All: Accelerating Outcomes Through Collective Impact,” the panel discussion took place at the Institute of International Education, located on UN Plaza in New York City, and convened more than 100 thought leaders to discuss approaches to advancing literacy:

“What really matters is context and a fundamental respect for families and communities. What works in one area does not necessarily work in another,” said Susan Neuman, professor and chair of the Teaching and Learning Department at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development at New York University and former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education.

“When looking at literacy programs, we need to ask ourselves if we’d want this for our own children,” said David Kirp, professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley.

“As a company, we started to listen and we learned that we can’t just provide solutions, we must allow communities to build them,” said Steven Duggan, director of worldwide education strategy for Microsoft Corporation.

“When it comes to print versus digital content, it is not an either/or. We must privilege both,” said Bernadette Dwyer, a lecturer in literacy studies at St. Patrick’s College, Dublin City University.

Other speakers included Dr. Allan Goodman, president and CEO of the Institute of International Education; Lily Valtchanova, liaison officer for UNESCO New York and International Literacy

Association President Jill Lewis-Spector. Liz Willen, editor-in-chief of The Hechinger Report, moderated the panel discussion.

To extend the reach of this critical discussion, as part of Leaders for Literacy Day, ILA encouraged virtual contributions from across the globe through blog posts and social media engagement under the hashtag #AgeofLiteracy. Contributors included:

Andreas Schleicher, Director, Directorate for Education and Skills of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), writes about what can be done to promote better literacy skills for all: [Literacy for Life](#).

Christie Vilsack, senior advisor for international education at United States Agency for International Development (USAID), explores the critical role literacy plays in addressing issues faced by developing countries: [Young Storytellers and the Power of Literacy](#).

Vicki Phillips, director of college-ready education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, examines the powerful connection between teachers and students: [Supporting all Teachers in Becoming Literacy Teachers](#).

Ben Hecht, president and CEO of Living Cities, attests to the power of collective impact in education and social change: [#AgeOfLiteracy: The Promise of Cross-Sector Collaboration](#).

Pam Allyn, executive director of LitWorld, believes that nurturing a love of reading and writing empowers communities to create a thriving literacy culture: [We Are All Leaders for Literacy](#).

Mariana Haynes, senior fellow at the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE), looks at the challenges facing diverse learners—and how to overcome them: [Birth-through-Grade-Twelve Comprehensive Literacy Program](#).

Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow, wrote this post for the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) about the importance of ed tech: [Using Digital Tools to Increase Literacy Development: Innovative Best Practices in Chicago](#).

Rima Kupryte, director of Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), believes utilizing public libraries is the key to building literacy across the globe: [How Public Libraries Can Help 120 Million Illiterate Young People](#).

David Evans, executive director of the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), focuses on the need for educators to underscore for students the significant connections between science and literacy: [Science and Literacy: Reflections on Time](#).

Twitter chats were also hosted throughout the day on key topics including student engagement, professional development, and advocacy.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers and experts across 75 countries. With 60 years of experience in the field, ILA believes in the transformative power of literacy to create more successful societies, healthy communities and prosperous economies. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students and inform policymakers. The

International Literacy Association publishes several peer-reviewed journals, including The Reading Teacher, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy and Reading Research Quarterly. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.

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