

Candidates for Vice President of the Board



Kenneth Kunz

Assistant Professor
Monmouth University, NJ
Director
For the Love of Literacy

Views on Board Service and ILA: We are drawn to the ILA community to stand at the intersection of authentic learning and joy, knowledge of research and practice, and a “why” rooted in equity and every child’s right to read. As an active ILA member and current member of the Board of Directors, I am honored to be nominated for this role, standing by these principles. I accept this nomination fully aware of the challenges we face but believe in ILA’s mission and leading force advancing literacy in the world. It is our inclusive membership and programs, scholarly works, and international outreach that is ILA.

Education: EdD in Teacher Leadership, Rutgers University, NJ; EdM in Reading Specialization, Rutgers University; BA in Elementary Education and English, Kean University, NJ. Certified as a principal, supervisor, reading specialist, elementary teacher, English teacher, and teacher of ESL.

Contributions to ILA and On-the-Ground Literacy Efforts: With ILA, my service began as a member of the past Advisory Committee of Teachers. Shortly thereafter, I worked with ILA leadership to resurrect the NJ Literacy Association (NJLA) under ILA’s new EIN and transition from IRA to ILA. Leading as president of NJLA, I became intricately involved in ILA’s mission in my home state and wanted to bring that passion to the Board of Directors. The past three years, I have served as chair of the Program Committee and Subcommittee Taskforce on Journals. I continue to serve on the Finance Committee and recently joined the 5-Year Plan Task Force.

Contributions to the Profession: In addition to ILA Board service, my contributions to the field of literacy are outcomes of my experiences as a teacher, literacy coach/consultant, school/district leader, teacher educator, researcher, and author. I have published two books related to organizing and managing an exemplary and comprehensive literacy day while bringing joy to our daily practices as literacy changemakers. Passion for this work has led to multiple contributions to ILA’s publications, presentations at state and national conferences, providing ongoing literacy professional development to teachers, creating a literacy teaching and learning center, and invitations to develop diverse and inclusive curriculum for learners.



Stephanie Laird

Instructional Coach and
Fifth-Grade Teacher
Southeast Polk Community
School District

Views on Board Service and ILA: Throughout my time as a member of ILA, the organization has continually adapted and innovated to meet the needs of a changing world, and although this year’s dual pandemics required further transformation, one constant was the importance of literacy and education. Offering webinars, connecting practitioners to share instructional ideas on social media, and engaging dialogue around equity allowed ILA to maintain its status as the premier source for educators to connect, collaborate, learn, and grow as professionals. If elected, I will bring a growth mind-set and practitioner experience to the Board as we work collectively to push literacy education forward.

Education: I earned both an MEd specializing in Curriculum and Instructional Technology in 2013 and a BS in Elementary Education in 2008 from Iowa State University. Currently, I am a doctoral student emphasizing on Literacy at Iowa State University.

Contributions to ILA and On-the-Ground Literacy Efforts: ILA’s mission is one of advocacy and service, two things I strive to do in my daily work in education. While serving on the ILA Board of Directors from 2016 to 2019, I chaired the Audit Committee and was a member of the Investment, Membership, Evaluation, and Program Committee. In addition to my Board service, I chaired the Regie Routman Teacher Recognition Grant Committee and contributed to ILA’s 20 Research Articles for 2020 collection. I have written for *Literacy Daily* blog, ReadWriteThink, and an ILA E-ssentials article on sharing student writing with a global audience.

Contributions to the Profession: I have served as an advocate of literacy throughout my career including presenting at conferences and facilitating professional development at the state and national levels. My literacy work was recognized by ILA (then the International Reading Association) in 2014 when I received the Technology in Literacy Award. I am a past president of the Iowa Reading Association, and I share my experiences in literacy, technology, and education on platforms including *Literacy Daily*, ReadWriteThink, ILA E-ssentials, and self-published e-books. Furthermore, as an elementary teacher and instructional coach, I partner with educators to impact student learning, and literacy is woven into our conversations and actions.

Candidates for At-Large Member of the Board



Frances L. Gonzalez-Garcia

Executive Director
Trinity Elite Education & Co.

Views on Board Service and ILA: I am deeply committed to supporting ILA's strategic direction in leveraging a global network of members and advancing literacy across sectors and global boundaries. Having served in multiple literacy and leadership roles, I hope to contribute to the ongoing and transformative efforts in building capacity inclusive of access to literacy for and by all, providing quality and relevant professional learning opportunities, contributing to forward-thinking resources and standards, promoting broad and diverse partnerships, and elevating member engagement. My experiences in the education sector and in serving on numerous boards and affiliations allow me to strategically support ILA, its constituents, and its members.

Education: BS, Interdisciplinary Studies/English; MS, Reading/Master Reading Teacher and Reading Specialist; MS, Educational Technology; PhD, Curriculum and Instruction/Literacy. All degrees and certifications were obtained from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Contributions to ILA and On-the-Ground

Literacy Efforts: I actively present at ILA conferences and review for *The Reading Teacher*. By invitation, I presented at ILA Next Professional Interactive Learning, served on the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* editorship search committee, served as a panel facilitator for ILA's Children's Literature Day, and was a review captain for the ILA 2019 Conference. Through ILA affiliates, I served as a Board member for the Texas Association for Literacy Education and as president/president-elect for the CCIRA council. Through these capacities, I assisted multiple committees, editorial boards, and review boards. Outside of ILA, I have served on additional leadership and literacy advisory boards.

Contributions to the Profession: As a literacy advocate, I am dedicated to establishing inclusive partnerships and empowering others. In fulfillment of these efforts, I spearheaded the LEAP & SOR Community Literacy Project in response to and in support of bridging research and practice in collaboration with a diverse community of leaders. Additionally, in addressing inequities and accessibility to both literacy and professional learning, the Giving Back to Literacy and Readership initiative was established to afford book donations for schools and children in need, provide virtual book chats and books to the general public, and offer professional learning sessions to educators across the United States.



Carol Jago

Associate Director
California Reading and
Literature Project
UCLA

Views on Board Service and ILA: ILA's work championing literacy has never been more urgent. With the pandemic disrupting instruction, we have a choice. We can return to "normal" or devote all our energy to providing equitable educational opportunity for every child. Such a project will entail rethinking our practices, our texts, and our relationships with students and parents. It will require reflecting on research from a broad range of scholars who have in the past been overlooked. This is work that no teacher can successfully undertake alone. We need active professional communities as never before. I am keen to lend my back to the task.

Education: BA, English, University of California, Santa Barbara; MS, Education, University of Southern California; Secondary Education Credential, University of Southern California

Contributions to ILA and On-the-Ground

Literacy Efforts: I have been an active member of ILA's Adolescent Literacy Interest Group (ALIG) special interest group, receiving the group's Thought Leader Award, presenting at ALIG's workshops at conference, and serving as ALIG vice president. After contributing as a panelist to the NAEP Reading and Writing Frameworks, I was invited to be a member of the National Assessment Governing Board.

Contributions to the Profession: I taught middle and high school in the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District for over 30 years. During this time, I wrote an education column for the *Los Angeles Times* attempting to provide the reading public a window into classroom practice in all its glorious messiness and wonder. Many of my discoveries and experiences found their way into the professional books I have written for Heinemann from *With Rigor for All* to *Beyond Standards, Cohesive Writing* and, most recently, *The Book in Question: Why and How Reading Is in Crisis*.



Jan Lacina

Professor of Literacy
and Associate Dean
for Graduate Studies
Texas Christian University

Views on Board Service and ILA: I am passionate about connecting research and practice to improve the quality of literacy instruction across the globe. I am committed to strengthening the international reach of the organization by working with ILA affiliates and ILA publications. I am committed to mentoring and supporting young scholars within ILA. With the pandemic, we have seen how technology has expanded our reach for literacy professional development. I would like to see a continued focus on professional development for reaching teachers across the globe with important global topics. The past year has brought many challenges, but this presents an opportunity for innovation.

Education: BS, Baylor University; MEd Texas Woman's University; PhD University of Kansas

Contributions to ILA and On-the-Ground

Literacy Efforts: I presented at the ILA and United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA) conferences for many years. I was coeditor for *The Reading Teacher* from 2015 to 2021. I serve as U.S. Ambassador for the UKLA and present and publish with colleagues around the world. For more than a decade, I led a large literacy camp in collaboration with an urban school district. I lead my college as program coordinator for Deans for Impact, helping to better prepare teacher candidates and improve student learning outcomes. I am also a program coordinator for Holmes Scholars, a mentorship professional development program for doctoral students of color.

Contributions to the Profession: I am dedicated to advocating for equity in literacy instruction and teacher education. I authored more than 100 publications, including four books. My work is published in journals such as *The Reading Teacher*, *Language Arts*, *Voices From the Middle*, *Young Children*, *English Journal*, and the *Journal of Literacy Research*. I served as editor for the *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* and was on the editorial board for *Early Childhood Education Journal* and *Literacy*. For six years, I was a columnist for the journal *Childhood Education*. I am a teacher/scholar and value how research can inform teaching practices.

Candidates for At-Large Member of the Board



Lotta Larson

Associate Professor
Kansas State University

Views on Board Service and ILA: As a former classroom teacher and current teacher educator, I understand and support ILA's goals of making literacy education accessible around the globe and continuously improving the quality of literacy education for all. The needs of ILA members are constantly changing as we adapt to current trends and expectations in education. Today, this is particularly prevalent, both in schools and in online learning spaces. As a member of the Board, I will strive to provide ILA members with access to the research-based expertise and resources they need and deserve, to help bridge gaps within and across the global literacy community.

Education: I received a BS in Elementary Education in 1999, followed by a MS in Reading and Language Arts in 2003. In 2007, I earned a PhD from Kansas State University in Curriculum and Instruction, focusing on New Literacies.

Contributions to ILA and On-the-Ground

Literacy Efforts: As a longtime member of ILA, I've had an opportunity to attend and present at multiple ILA conferences and events, both within the United States and globally. For the past few years, I've served on the ILA Children's and Young Adults' Book Awards Committee, and I am an editorial review board member for *The Reading Teacher* and *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. At a local level, I work closely with school districts and teacher preparation programs to support implementation of ILA's *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* in order to establish high and effective standards for literacy.

Contributions to the Profession: Every day, I share my passion for literacy with teachers and students! I have conducted extensive research on e-books, digital reading strategies, and remote teaching and learning. I help teachers implement global literacy projects that provide students with unique learning experiences. My research has been published in book chapters and journals such as *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, and *Educational Leadership*. A longtime resident of Kansas, I grew up in Sweden and maintain Swedish citizenship. I would welcome the opportunity to bring my diverse background and expertise to the ILA Board to help promote literacy worldwide.



Molly Ness

Associate Professor
Fordham University

Views on Board Service and ILA: As a Board member, I will aim to strengthen ILA's international presence and to increase membership in both breadth and diversity. I hope to help steer the Board in determining our post-COVID-19 future, so that we may reach the largest possible audience. I am eager to listen to many viewpoints and empower educators through community and collaboration. I hope to add to the creation of high-quality resources including leadership briefs, webinars, and other virtual and face-to-face offerings. During COVID-19, I worked with ILA to offer virtual learning events, and as a Board member, I will offer that experience, flexibility, and passion.

Education: I graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Johns Hopkins University. I earned my master's in English Education and my doctorate in Reading Education from the University of Virginia.

Contributions to ILA and On-the-Ground

Literacy Efforts: In 2020, I provided an ILA at Home Webinar and presented for the ILA Next Intermediate Pathway. I am a frequent contributor to *Literacy Today* and have published several articles in *The Reading Teacher*. I serve on the review board for *The Reading Teacher*. I am the author of an ILA literacy leadership brief published in 2018. I have served as an area chair for the ILA 2019 Conference and as the committee head of the Diane Lapp & James Flood Professional Collaborator Award. I have been a reviewer for the ILA Literacy Glossary and the annual What's Hot report.

Contributions to the Profession: For the past 15 years, I have been a teacher educator at Fordham University, supporting preservice and early career teachers in literacy education. In 2019, I created the End Book Deserts podcast and nonprofit platform to bring awareness to the issue of book access and literacy equity. In summer 2021, I will offer the first-ever virtual conference for literacy activists working to promote book access to our nation's underresourced and overlooked communities. I serve on the Penguin Random House Elementary Education Advisory Board.



Dana A. Robertson

Associate Professor
University of Wyoming
Executive Director
Literacy Research Center
and Clinic

Views on Board Service and ILA: ILA is positioned to make literacy accessible to all and to advance literacy nationally and internationally through a global network. I see ILA as an organization that can lead the way in embracing epistemological diversity; embracing approaches to literacy that disrupt deficit mind-sets; promoting evidence-tested, culturally responsive instructional approaches; and investing in priorities that represent the collective ideals of an international organization focused on advancing literacy. As a Board member, I will be a boundary spanner that seeks to build relationships, facilitate action, connect members, and leverage talent and resources as we work collectively to meet ILA's short- and long-term goals.

Education: I am a former fifth-grade teacher, K-5 literacy specialist, and K-5 literacy coach; Boston University, EdD Developmental Studies: Literacy and Language; University of Massachusetts, Boston, MEd Elementary Education; Berklee College of Music, Boston, BA Music Performance.

Contributions to ILA and On-the-Ground

Literacy Efforts: I was membership director and state coordinator for the Wyoming State Literacy Association. With ILA, I was part of the author team for ILA's *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* and lead author of the Coaching Assessment Protocol. I was a member of the ILA Nominations Committee (2020) and a reviewer for the Certificate of Distinction (since 2019). I am also a reviewer for *The Reading Teacher*, the Annual Conference, Literacy Coaching Credential, and ILA's journals and book program from 2014 to 2016. My ILA publications include *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *Literacy Today*, the Instructional Practices collection, and numerous Annual Conference presentations.

Contributions to the Profession: I conduct research on professional learning, coaching, and whole-school literacy reform. I am also currently helping to develop a dual immersion curriculum on the Wind River Reservation in efforts to revitalize the Northern Arapaho language and culture. I was named an Emerging Scholar with the Reading Hall of Fame, and I spend most of my professional time with schools and clinical contexts working with teachers and children in agentic ways to advance evidence-tested and equitable instructional practices. My work has been published in two books (a third forthcoming), four chapters, several leading journals, and in Wyoming policy and guidance documents.

The opportunity to nominate and vote for candidates in the ILA 2021 Board Election is open to every individual member of the International Literacy Association whose membership was in good standing at the start of the election at **9:00 a.m. ET on March 29, 2021**. Election information appears on ILA's website at literacyworldwide.org/vote.

Please review the information about each candidate carefully, discuss the merits of the candidates with other members, and then make your decision and vote. Ballots must be submitted by **5:00 p.m. ET on May 7, 2021**.

Ballot Count Procedures

The ILA 2021 Board Election will be conducted online. This means that individual ILA members in good standing with valid email addresses will receive an emailed link to vote using their online ballot. Members in good standing who do not have email addresses or whose email addresses are not current may find voting instructions at literacyworldwide.org/vote.

The ILA 2021 Board Election will be handled by Intelliscan, an independent firm whose staff members oversee the distribution of electronic ballots, receive the electronically returned ballots, count the ballots electronically, and certify the results.

As an organization, the International Literacy Association disallows campaigning for office by candidates, other individuals, or chapters or affiliates. All candidates in this election have agreed to this policy. If you received campaign materials or solicitations, please keep this in mind when you vote.

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 128 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught, and evaluated. ILA's *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. 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. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, and *Reading Research Quarterly*, which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.



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