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## **INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION PARTNERS WITH AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION TO ELEVATE STUDENT VOICES IN DISCUSSIONS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY**

NEWARK, Del. (April 10, 2024) — The International Literacy Association (ILA) partnered with the American Educational Research Association (AERA) on a unique initiative to amplify student voices in the realms of social justice, educational research and reimagining literacy education—work that will be on display during their cosponsored Presidential Session this weekend at the AERA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, Pa.

Through the joint initiative, ILA and AERA invited K–12 students from across the country to participate in a dialogue about equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice. Students were provided with writing prompts that encouraged them to reflect on their lived experiences and envision a more just world.

Hundreds of submissions were received from schools across the United States (and a few from outside the U.S.). Select responses will be on display during a session entitled “[Re/Reading and Re/Writing the Wor\(l\)d: Engaging in Racialized Conversations to Reimagine Literacy Engagement for Justice](#),” which takes place on Saturday, April 13.

This session, which is providing a platform for students to share their perspectives and insights with educators, researchers, and policymakers from around the world, is part of the AERA Presidential Session Series of the conference, being held from April 11–14 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Attendees will be invited to participate in a gallery walk, during which they will be able to read the submitted responses.

“Students are not just passive recipients of education; they are active agents of change,” said Nicola Wedderburn, executive director of ILA. “By elevating their voices, we are not only enriching the educational research landscape but also empowering students to become advocates for justice and equity.”

The ILA and AERA partnership underscores both organization’s shared commitment to inclusivity, diversity and empowering the next generation to shape conversations surrounding education and social justice.

“In today’s complex educational landscape, it is imperative to center student experiences and perspectives. By providing a platform for students to share their insights, challenges and aspirations with us, ILA and AERA are paving the way for more meaningful and impactful outcomes in education,” said Jevon D. Hunter, Woods-Beals Endowed Chair for Urban Education at SUNY Buffalo State and 2023–2024 American Educational Research Association Program Cochair.

For more information, read [this blog post](#) from Hunter and Patricia A. Edwards, a past president of the International Reading Association (now ILA), in which they expand on the origins of the writing project and how they hope it “[illuminates] the courageous and creative ways youth imagine and participate in acts to promote a more just world.”

### ***About the International Literacy Association***

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a professional membership organization of literacy educators, researchers and experts spanning 128 countries. For more than 65 years, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated, connecting research and practice to improve the quality of literacy learning across the globe. Through its Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals, ILA 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, which include three peer-reviewed and edited journals—The Reading Teacher, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy and Reading Research Quarterly. Learn more at [literacyworldwide.org](http://literacyworldwide.org).

### ***About the American Educational Research Association***

The American Educational Research Association (AERA), founded in 1916, is concerned with improving the educational process by encouraging scholarly inquiry related to education and evaluation and by promoting the dissemination and practical application of research results. AERA's more than 25,000 members are faculty, researchers, graduate students, and other distinguished professionals with rich and diverse expertise in education research. They work in a range of settings from universities and other academic institutions to research institutes, federal and state agencies, school systems, testing companies, and nonprofit organizations. Based on their research, they produce and disseminate knowledge, refine methods and measures, and stimulate translation and practical application of research results. Learn more at [aera.net](http://aera.net).

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