

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

press@reading.org

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION CANCELS 2020 CONFERENCE AMID COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION *Organization shifting focus toward expanding digital learning opportunities*

NEWARK, Del. (May 13, 2020) — The International Literacy Association (ILA) announced today the cancellation of the ILA 2020 Conference, scheduled to take place Oct. 15–18 in Columbus, OH.

“Although this is a difficult announcement, it was not a hard decision to make because we knew it was the right decision,” said ILA Executive Director Marcie Craig Post. “The safety and health of our attendees, as well as everyone who helps shape the event, from speakers and sponsors to exhibitors and staff, is of the utmost importance.”

Before the detrimental effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the ILA 2020 Conference was expected to draw some 4,000 literacy professionals and educators from around the world. However, with schools and universities closed and travel restrictions in place, continuing to plan for an education conference “was not the right move for a professional development organization at this time,” Post said.

Post cited continuing challenges around budgets as another factor in the decision, as well as the critical task of students’ academic recovery following what’s been dubbed “the COVID slide.”

“Our members and all those who traditionally attend our conference need our support but not in the form of an in-person conference they likely wouldn’t be able to attend,” Post said.

Instead, ILA is focused on expanding its virtual learning options. Last month, ILA offered a free replay of six top sessions from the ILA 2019 Conference and held its first ILA Edcamp Online, becoming one of the first organizations to bring the popular, participant-driven “unconference” into a digital space.

The organization also launched on May 3 ILA at Home, a new series of webinars, beginning with Timothy Shanahan. The event attracted more than 1,400 registrants in 10 days. The second in the series, featuring Donalyn Miller, takes place May 31.

At the center of this slate of digital events is a new, progressive model of professional development ILA will announce next month.

“Nothing can compare to the experience of actually being at a face-to-face ILA conference,” Post said. “So rather than try to replicate it in a virtual space, we felt it made more sense to design something meant to be virtual from the start—something that maximizes the benefits of delivering PD on a digital platform.”

For more information, visit [the Digital Events page](#) of the ILA website.

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 146 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.

###