



Message from the NJLA President

Greetings to my fellow literacy leaders! It is with great excitement that we can celebrate the New Jersey Literacy Association's energized new beginning, as we recently received our official charter through the International Literacy Association. Our mission has not changed. We seek to empower, support, and inspire literacy role models in New Jersey making a difference in the lives of readers and writers. Members like you are a crucial cornerstone to this mission, so continue to look for information shared through our email list-serv, a new website (being launched), our newsletter, and upcoming events.

So, what's new in 2018? ILA's "What's Hot" list shows that early literacy remains at the top along with assessment, differentiation, and digital literacy. While research-based best practices for reading and writing continue to become more improved and refined, I have come to realize that many individuals get caught up in seeking out the "new" without reflecting on what really works. Recently, a teacher approached a colleague and me prior to our presentation with the hopes of getting a copy of our handouts. Although she was not attending our session, she wanted to leave with a new idea and move on. This struck me, particularly because we know that it is not about the latest products or new ideas that impact student achievement in reading or writing, but rather the way in which we **coordinate** and **integrate** our instruction. In 2018, we find that so much information is readily made available. Quite frankly, you would have to be lazy to find no classroom resources for teaching and learning in today's digital age, but the highest quality teachers move beyond online freebies to strategically coordinate (rank and position what's most important for the students at any given moment) and integrate (bring the curriculum together in motivating and engaging ways that makes sense) so that the best teaching and learning can take place. Our intentions are so important.

This is what excites us most about the New Jersey Literacy Association. Our work is shared among others who have a similar passion for working tirelessly to help students shine as readers and writers. Based on what we know about quality literacy teachers, I created the chart below to help guide discussions among our literacy network through the lens of where we stand now in 2018.

I look forward to hearing from you as we continue to embark on this exciting journey and wish you and your family a happy and healthy 2018 as the school year continues to unwind.

Dr. Kenneth Kunz

President, NJ Literacy Association

What Makes an Exemplary Literacy Teacher?	
A “top ten” teacher...	Questions to Consider in 2018
1. Understands the importance of home-school communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways am I engaging the families of my developing readers and writers? • Is reading about compliance (i.e. signed reading logs) or something more special?
2. Engages students through small group, whole group, and cooperative learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often am I meeting with small groups? • How might I change up my partner/group work activities mid-year?
3. Allows time for independent reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many books have my students successfully finished?
4. Teaches skills through authentic and scaffolded high-quality reading and writing instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do 60% or more of my kids need right now?
5. Teaches skills explicitly and spontaneously	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I’ve collected data, but what is it telling me my students need?
6. Encourages self-regulation through a well-managed classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My classroom is a well-oiled machine, so who might I share tips with in my building? district? state?
7. Integrates literacy across the content areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies provide the best integration for this year’s learners? • How are these strategies displayed and referenced in my classroom?
8. Has high expectations for all learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does a “growth mindset” take shape in my classroom?
9. Creates print-rich classroom environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does my literacy environment say about what I value as a reader or writer?
10. Articulates his or her reasoning behind all instructional decisions made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What am I looking to learn next to continue to refine and improve my teaching?
<i>Adapted from the Teacher Education Research Study Group (TERSG) at the Literacy Research Association (LRA)</i>	