

## Messaging for Teachers

At the heart of the “Literacy is for life” message is the idea that improved literacy improves a child’s chance at success in everything. And that means in all school subjects, as well. It is important to convey a sense of inclusion for all teachers, not just English teachers or reading coaches. Literacy involves reading, writing, listening and speaking—skills which are used in every classroom, no matter what the subject matter.

Wherever appropriate, in regular communications to teachers that are already in place, consider including messaging about the importance of literacy in all classrooms. After all, in order for students to be engaged, teachers must be engaged first.

### Sample messaging for teachers (can be used as is, or edited as needed):

*The more that we, as teachers, can do to encourage the improvement of our students’ literacy (reading, writing, speaking and listening), the better prepared they will be for the next stage—a new grade level, college, a career, all of it. For years, literacy has been in the purview of English teachers and reading coaches, but we now know that encouraging literacy across all subjects only helps these critical skills.*

*Research has shown that there is a large group of students out there in “literacy limbo.” They consider themselves “literate enough” for the tasks at hand and for the future they envision for themselves. These are the students that we can reach by emphasizing literacy in all areas. Small measures can make a big difference.*

### Facts of importance for teachers:

- Only 40% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders in PA read at or above proficiency. –The Nation’s Report Card
- Only 42% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in PA read at or above proficiency. –The Nation’s Report Card
- The percentage of Pennsylvania adults who struggle with basic literacy is around the national average and remains unchanged from 1992. –National Center for Education Statistics
- 21% of adults in the U.S. read below a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level. –U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy
- Kids who don’t read proficiently by 4th grade are 4 times likelier to drop out of school. –The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- 2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare –U.S. Department of Justice
- 53% of 4th graders admitted to reading recreationally “almost every day,” while only 20% of 8th graders could say the same. –National Center for Educational Statistics

- In today's tech-centric world, basic literacy skills simply aren't enough. –Pew Internet and American Life Project
- To determine how many prison beds will be needed in future years, some states actually base part of their projection on how well current elementary students are performing on reading tests. –The Justice Project
- Between 1973 and 2008, the share of jobs in the U.S. economy requiring postsecondary education increased from 28% to 59%. –Washington, DC: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce
- 85% of juvenile offenders have problems reading. –U.S. Department of Education
- Nearly half of America's adults are poor readers, or "functionally illiterate." –National Adult Literacy Survey