

RESOLUTION

On Adolescent Literacy

WHEREAS adolescents entering the adult world today will do more reading and writing tasks than at any other time in human history, they will need reading and writing to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will also need to use literacy to feed their imaginations so that they can create the world of the future. In a complex, diverse, and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read is crucial — essential not only to help them survive, but also to help them thrive; and

WHEREAS, the reading, writing, and language development of adolescents is just as important and requires just as much attention as that of beginning readers, and even when they have mastered the basics of reading and writing, adolescents still have much to learn about spoken and written language; and

WHEREAS, despite the need for reading instruction to continue during the adolescent years, state and federal funding for middle and high school reading programs has decreased (For example, fewer and fewer schools are able to hire reading specialists, who help individual students and also help teachers of all subjects become more effective teachers of reading. The limited number of reading education courses currently required for middle and high school certification will not sufficiently prepare teachers to respond to the escalating need of adolescent learners.). Be it therefore

RESOLVED, that, because of the expanding literacy demands placed upon adolescents, the International Reading Association believes they deserve

- Access to a wide variety of reading material that they can and want to read;
- Instruction that builds both the skill and the desire to read increasingly complex materials;
- Assessment that shows them their strengths as well as their needs, and that guides their teachers to design instruction that will best help them grow as readers;
- Qualified teachers who model and provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension, critical reading, and studying strategies across the curriculum;
- Reading specialists who assist individual students having difficulty learning how to read;
- Qualified teachers who understand the complexities of individual adolescent readers, respect their differences, and respond to their unique characteristics; and
- Homes, communities, and a nation that will not only support their efforts to achieve advanced levels of literacy, but also provide the resources necessary for them to succeed.

(Adopted May 1999)