



**Building
Communities.
Empowering
Readers.**

2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan



There is an **opportunity for WITS** to make a significant impact on literacy rates in Chicago



There are currently **low literacy rates** in Chicago...

24%

of 4th grade CPS students

were at or above proficiency levels



...but **early intervention** can help reverse this trend...

95%

of children who have trouble learning

can reach grade level if they receive specialized help early on



...and **prevent long-term academic harms**

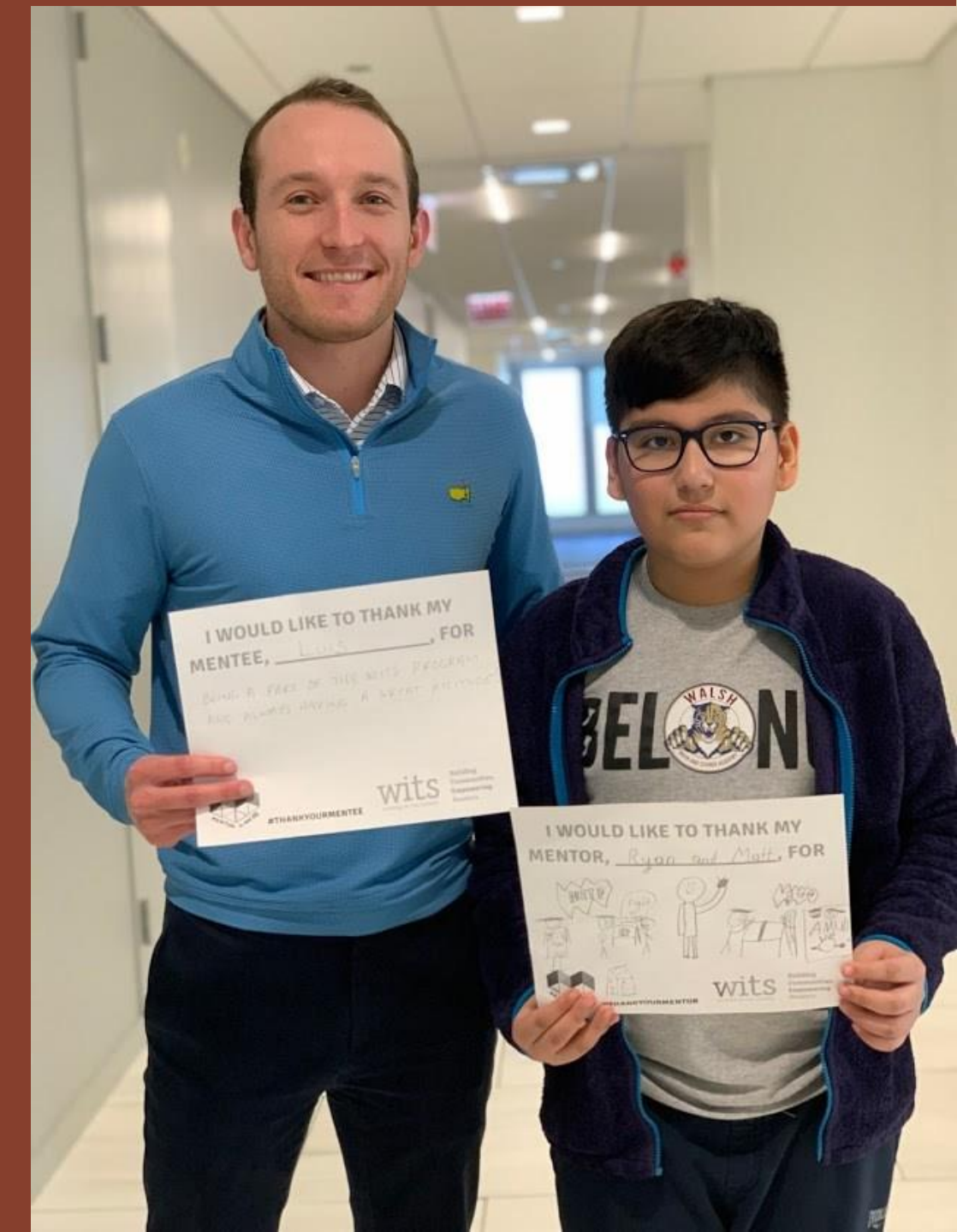
4x

more likely to drop out of high school

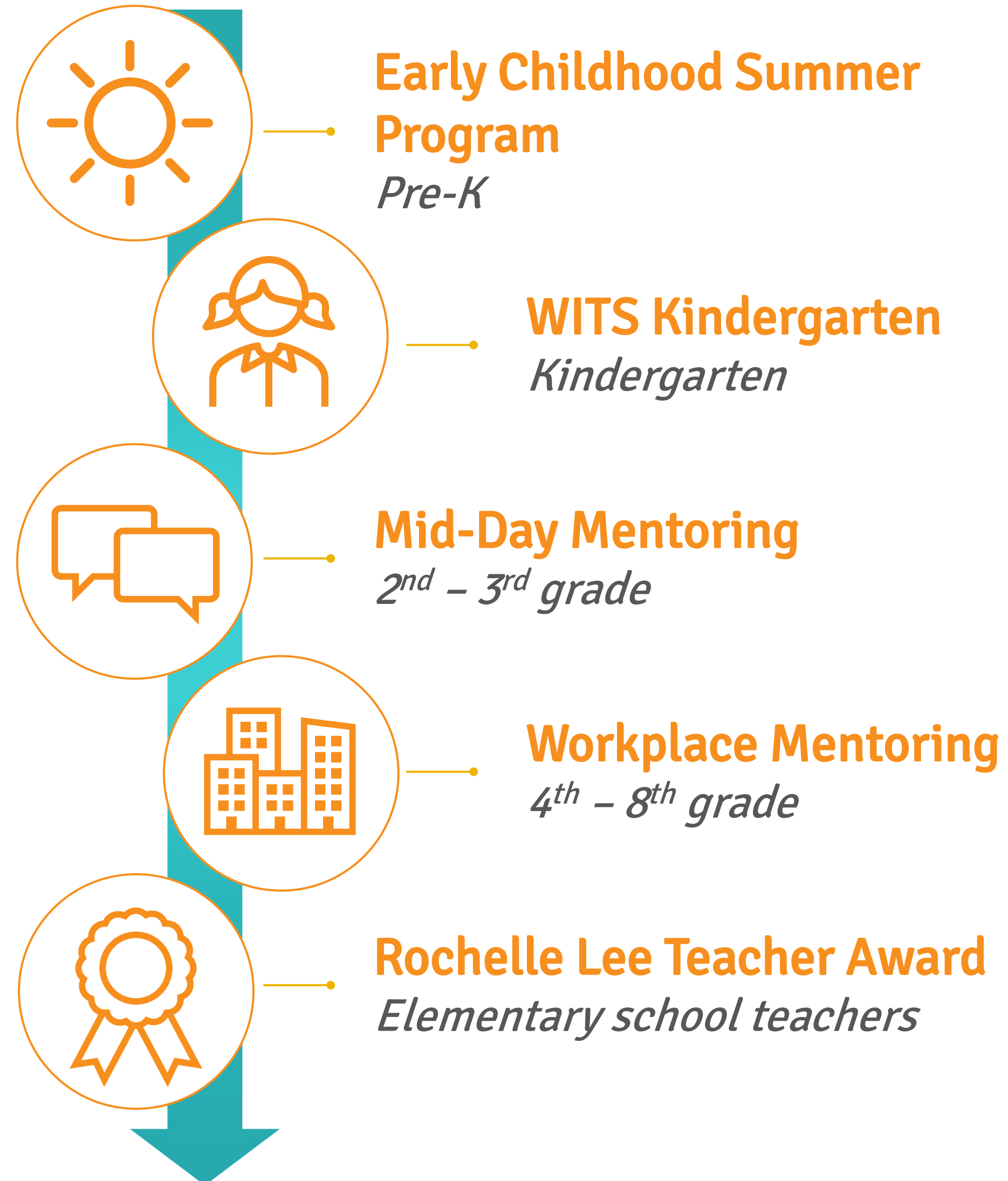
if not reading at grade level by the end of third grade

WITS is the only literacy nonprofit best positioned to make a significant impact on literacy rates in Chicago.

That's because WITS provides whole-school enrichment by **layering student and teacher literacy programming.**



WITS aims to instill in students a lifelong passion for reading through its **longitudinal programming**



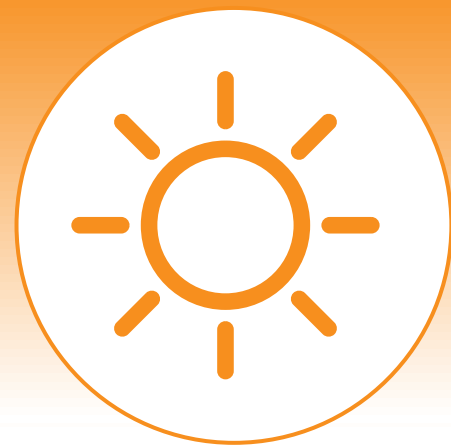
38,725
hours of
literacy
mentorship
given

30,708
books given

61
program
partners



WITS programs provide demonstratable literacy and mentorship support to students as they progress along their educational journey



Early Childhood Summer Program

Mentors work with a classroom of Pre-K students to build literacy and classroom readiness skills



ECSP students jumped from 21% to **61%** in book and print awareness proficiency



WITS Kindergarten

Mentors go into the classroom and read one-on-one with kindergarten students



66% of WITSK students surpassed national average for reading level growth



Mid-Day Mentoring

Mentors go into the classroom to read one-on-one with students and work on literacy skills



68% of MDM students surpassed national average for reading level growth



Workplace Mentoring

Students go to workplaces to read one-on-one with mentor and work on literacy skills



60% of WPM students reported improvement in willingness to read



Rochelle Lee Teacher Award

Awardees receive professional development and books grants to foster love of reading in students



90% of teachers reported the Summer Institute workshops were relevant to their teaching practice



3

Stages of
strategic
focus to help
make **WITS**
even better
than ever

1 Quality and Impact

Evaluate & drive quality;
focus portfolio on highest
impact programs



Focus portfolio

Invest in impact evaluation

Work on improving
operations

2 Reimagination

Re-imagine WITS literacy
delivery through creative
design



Continuous improvement
via evaluations

Expand parent
involvement

3 Scale and Reach

Expand reach to greatest
of students with highest
need



Scale up volunteer-
programs

Build out community
volunteer pipeline

Five-year road map to implement strategic focus.



2021

Narrow portfolio to
programs with whole-
school impact

Realign organization,
structure, processes,
training to maximize staff
talent and efficiency



2022 - 2023

Work with external
evaluation partner to
identify impact,
adaptations and training
to improve outcomes



2024 - 2025

Scale multiple programs
at single schools

Identify expansion
opportunities with new
schools to reach more
high-need students

All strategic plan initiatives will be designed through an antiracist lens focused on centering Black and Brown voices, encouraging diversity through HR processes, and training all stakeholders.