

WHY WITS MATTERS



WITS IS A NON-PROFIT THAT FACILITATES LITERACY PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS



THE NEED

- Our work has never been so crucial. Just think—a current third grader hasn't had a normal day of school since kindergarten.
- It is estimated that only 20% of third graders met literacy benchmarks last year compared to 40% in 2019. Chicago Public Schools need organizations like WITS that provide free, accessible programs to give students the boost they need.
- The past two years have been challenging. WITS used the unusual circumstances as an opportunity to adapt, innovate, and find accessible ways to deliver our mission.



OUR OUTCOMES

- **81%** of students agreed that participating in WITS made them want to read for fun more often.
- **87%** of students were more open to reading new types of books after participating in WITS.
- **92%** of students reported feeling good or very good about discussing books with their mentors.



OUR COMMUNITY

- Our partner principals and educators are asking for in-person enrichment programs, and WITS is here to answer the call.
- Our corporate partners are eager to get back to in-person programming. Employers have identified the in-person mentorship opportunities that WITS provides as an incentive to return to the office. Over the next year WITS is determined to re-engage Chicago volunteerism to support as many students as possible.



WHAT OUR TEACHERS & STUDENTS SAY

ROCHELLE LEE TEACHER AWARDEES

“The RLTA program has encouraged me to continue my learning and [develop] my love of learning inside and outside of the classroom. I love the skills and strategies that I have learned while being involved in the RLTA program. I use things I have learned on a daily basis in my classroom and that is why the RLTA program is so beneficial. I actually use the things I have learned!”

Carrie – Edison Park Elementary School



“Each year of receiving this award, I have attended the Summer Institute to learn new strategies to engage my students in learning. I have implemented reading strategies that have helped to increase and enhance student comprehension in reading. I am able to share the ideas from the Summer Institute with my colleagues to increase knowledge of strategies beyond my classroom.”

Cyntria – Oscar DePriest Elementary School

“Participating in this study group allowed for me to have regular access to colleagues for help and different perspectives. It allowed me time to bounce my ideas off colleagues when I was very isolated. I literally revamped the way I taught with the help of the study group.”

Crystal – Charles H. Wacker Elementary School



OUR STUDENTS

“One of my favorite parts about WITS is reading books. You get to choose which books you read and they are really fun and interesting. You also get to make new friends and see new people.”

WITS 3rd Grader

“We learn a lot about each other at WITS. Personalities and favorite book types. We can be open and comfortable with being ourselves also.”

WITS 5th Grader

“If you’re stuck on a word or question, [mentors] are understanding and will help you. They listen to your thoughts and opinions.”

WITS 5th Grader