wits
working in the schools

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 are 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

Source: Book Trust; Chicago Literacy Alliance; NAEP Report Card: Reading, 2019; National Institutes of Health
WITS is the literacy nonprofit best positioned to make a significant impact on literacy rates in Chicago.

That’s because **WITS activates the collective power of corporations and community members to meet the needs of school communities.**
WITS aims to instill in students a lifelong passion for reading through its longitudinal programming.

- WITS Kindergarten
  *Kindergarten*
- Mid-Day Mentoring
  *2nd – 3rd grade*
- Workplace Mentoring
  *4th – 8th grade*
- Rochelle Lee Teacher Award
  *Book Grants*
  *Elementary school teachers*

- 38,725 hours of literacy mentorship given
- 30,708 books given
- 61 program partners
WITS programs provide demonstrable literacy and mentorship support to students as they progress along their educational journey.

- **WITS Kindergarten**
  Mentors go into the classroom and read one-on-one with kindergarten students.

- **Mid-Day Mentoring**
  Mentors go into the classroom to read one-on-one with students and work on literacy skills.

- **Workplace Mentoring**
  Students go to workplaces to read one-on-one with mentor and work on literacy skills.

- **Rochelle Lee Teacher Award**
  Awardees receive book grants to foster love of reading in students.

- **66% of WITSK students** surpassed national average for reading level growth.
- **68% of MDM students** surpassed national average for reading level growth.
- **60% of WPM students** reported improvement in willingness to read.
- **100% of our partner teachers** are satisfied with student participation in WITS.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Narrow portfolio to programs with whole-school impact, Realign organization, structure, processes, training to maximize staff talent and efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022 - 2023</td>
<td>Work with external evaluation partner to identify impact, adaptations and training to improve outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2024 - 2025</td>
<td>Scale multiple programs at single schools, Identify expansion opportunities with new schools to reach more high-need students</td>
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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.