

## *A Reader's Bill of Rights*

Whereas, all students need access to the kinds of reading opportunities that will allow them to grow up to be successful members of society, and

Whereas, it is everyone's responsibility to offer support for providing these opportunities, and

Whereas, the ultimate goal of reading education is to create communities of readers where each student can fulfill his or her potential and experience the joy of reading,

Now, therefore, be it resolved that all students have certain inalienable Reading Rights:

- I. **Success as a reader.** Every child is capable of learning to read. Every student is entitled to quality instruction in reading, designed to meet his/her specific needs. This belief must be shared by all and form the foundation of all approaches to reading education.
- II. **Access to appropriate books.** Every child can enjoy reading. Appealing books for a wide variety of interest, and covering all reading levels, must be available in classrooms, homes, schools and public libraries.
- III. **Time to read.** Reading, like any other skill, must be practiced to be perfected. Schools must provide dedicated time during the school day to read for a variety of purposes—for pleasure, for information, for exploration.
- IV. **Read-aloud experiences.** All children must have regular opportunities to hear books read aloud to them. At early ages, reading aloud introduces them to the magic of print. As they grow, read-aloud encounters stretch their vocabulary, introduce them to new ideas, and demonstrate to them that adults highly value reading.
- V. **Time for book discussions.** Discussing books is one of the strongest ways to build communities of readers, and to develop students' thinking skills. Schools must make time for book discussions—not only between teacher and student, but among students sharing books they have enjoyed.
- VI. **Reading role models.** In a community of readers, all adults in school, home and across the community show by example how they value reading and guide young people to make reading a priority in their lives. Peers and older students can also serve as reading role models.
- VII. **Literacy-rich environments.** Everything in students' surroundings must show that books and reading are valuable, from the presence of books in the classroom and open access to the library, to posters, bulletin boards, public recognition, and community events celebrating reading.
- VIII. **Library support.** Libraries must not be storage places for books. They must be dynamic places providing services specifically designed to engage young people's interest in reading. Both school and public libraries must play their part in building communities of readers.
- IX. **Family support.** Parents, grandparents, and other family members must be involved in reading to and with their children. Opportunities must be created for families to participate in reading activities at school and community levels.
- X. **Community support.** Programs involving all adults, not just parents, must be developed to give the community meaningful ways to be involved with reading development. Providing funding for books and reading events is one way for businesses and other community members to get involved.