



June 16, 2026

**Public Comment on the Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions: Proposed Priority 1 – Evidence-Based Literacy**

Dear Secretary McMahon,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Secretary's Supplemental Priorities. As Principal Investigator of the [Center for Early Literacy and Responsible AI](#) (CELaRAI)—a new national R&D center funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES)—I write in strong support of Proposed Priority 1: Evidence-Based Literacy, which rightly underscores the importance of grounding literacy instruction in the science of reading.

Our mission—*Transforming the Science of Early Reading through Responsible AI Solutions*—positions CELaRAI at the forefront of research and development where early literacy science intersects with generative AI innovation. We are designing tools and practices to strengthen instructional quality during the formative years when children are learning to read.

CELaRAI focuses on grades K–2, when foundational reading skills such as phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are most effectively developed. The latest NAEP findings—showing significant literacy deficits among 4th and 8th graders—underscore the urgent need to strengthen early reading instruction. Our flagship tool, the AI Reading Enhancer (AIRE), is designed to improve children's learning during independent reading time—a key moment for consolidating reading skills. AIRE integrates students' formative and summative literacy data to generate appropriately leveled and personalized reading materials, monitors learner engagement, and provides real-time scaffolding tailored to individual learning needs.

At our recent official kickoff and team retreat, we demonstrated an early prototype of AIRE's personalized text generation system, which was well received by local school curriculum and IT leaders and teachers. Findings from our national survey of K–2 teachers further affirm the alignment between CELaRAI's design goals and real classroom needs. Teachers consistently cited the need for individualized instructional support and high-quality reading materials that align with structured literacy practices—validating both the urgency and relevance of our work.

In summary, CELaRAI fully aligns with the goals of Proposed Priority 1 by advancing foundational literacy through rigorous integration of the science of reading and responsible AI. Our work also supports the Administration's broader commitment to education-focused AI innovation. We strongly encourage the Department to continue investing in initiatives like CELaRAI.



The CELaRAI team would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss how our work can further support the Department's goals. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to continuing to support the Secretary's vital work in advancing the science of reading through responsible, evidence-based innovation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine Wang".

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