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News Release



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## **Children's Literacy Initiative Names New Executive Director to Drive an Expanded Vision**

**April 11, 2014, Philadelphia, PA** – With an organizational focus clearly fixed upon raising its profile within targeted groups of key, national, decision-makers, the [Children's Literacy Initiative \(CLI\)](#), which trains teachers to achieve literacy education for children in high-poverty, high-minority school districts, by the third grade, today announced that it has completed an intensive national search for a new executive director, and has named Joel Zarrow, Ph.D. to the position.

Dr. Zarrow, who has dedicated his nearly 20-year career to improving the quality of education in public urban schools, and to closing the achievement gaps found there, most recently launched and led the New Jersey Department of Education's efforts to effect an academic turnaround in 220 of the state's lowest-performing schools. Under his leadership, New Jersey established six Regional Achievement Centers, staffed with a range of educational experts, who were focused on providing direct support to schools and districts.

Prior to that, Dr. Zarrow was employed in the private sector as a management consultant, working with global, Fortune 1000 firms on leadership and performance issues. In addition, he has been very actively involved, throughout his career, with a wide range of non-profit organizations that have been committed to improving urban public schools and districts.

Dr. Zarrow is also a founding board member of Envision Schools, a charter management organization in the San Francisco area. Having earned his doctorate at Stanford University, he has presented at national and international conferences, and has multiple publications to his credit.

Commenting on Zarrow's appointment, CLI Chair Christine S. Beck said that her board saw Dr. Zarrow as an ideal top executive for the 26-year-old literacy training organization, one who could lead the effort to have educational decision-makers fully recognize the organization's proven superior outcomes within its teacher-training and literacy niche.

“Based on a recent two-year study by the American Institutes for Research,” said Beck, “we now have clear evidence that our CLI Model Classroom program has produced best-in-category results for literacy-related teacher training. Our challenge, now, is to continue those category-leading outcomes, while moving our awareness levels up from being the “best kept secret” in early childhood literacy training, and expanding our national footprint. We are confident that Dr. Zarrow will lead us in both of those strategic efforts.”

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Dr. Zarrow said he was attracted to CLI's mission because of its importance in producing better-educated students and more successful adults, in low-income communities. "As is widely believed," he said, "ensuring all children are literate by the third grade, is the single most important objective in education. It's a mission I share with the dedicated personnel of this organization. This is an exciting and urgent time for programs such as this one, and I'm energized by the challenge."

### **About Children's Literacy Initiative**

Established in 1988, the Children's Literacy Initiative is headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and provides personalized, one-on-one teacher coaching, research-based literacy training, small group coaching, and leadership coaching for principals and teacher-leaders. In addition to Philadelphia, the organization also maintains offices and provides training services in Camden, N.J., Newark, N.J., and Chicago, Illinois.

### **Photo 1**



### **Caption 1**

Joel Zarrow, Ph.D., (pictured), executive director, Children's Literacy Initiative.

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