

## LONG VERSION: SPEAK UP FOR LITERACY

Good evening to you all; my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to talk about literacy instruction. Thank you all for taking on the responsibilities to improve student achievement and provide fiscal accountability for our school and taxpayers. What I have to say will interest you.

I will refer to data from the New York State Department of Education and Education Consumers Foundation; you can find all this in the brochure. But, first, the facts: did you know that illiteracy costs New York taxpayers around 3-billion dollars per year?

At our district \_\_\_\_\_ in 2019, \_\_\_\_\_ % of third-graders were reading below grade level in total, and \_\_\_\_\_ % were below basic (functionally illiterate).

Third-grade reading proficiency is the single most important indicator of a student's educational progress and the likelihood of academic success. Children who have not mastered reading by that point are educationally disadvantaged for a lifetime. Without remediation, they are unlikely to optimally benefit from their education or become all they could be in life.

Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ students from the 2019 third grade are predicted to drop out. Our district will have \_\_\_\_\_ unprepared graduates from that year, costing taxpayers an extra \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for healthcare, criminal justice, welfare, and education over their lifetimes.

Yet, 95% (yes, 95%) of ALL students with proper instruction can become skilled readers and read at or above grade level.

In New York State in 2019, 55% of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students read below grade level. In addition, 65% of African American/Black students, 84% of children in foster care, and 88% of students with disabilities read below proficient (grade level) or were functionally illiterate.

**This is Our Request:** We respectfully demand that New York State discontinue funding for and disseminating unproven and disproven teaching methodologies by publicly funded institutions. We respectfully demand the complete removal of balanced literacy, including but not limited to Reading Recovery, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Fountas & Pinnell, and Lucy Calkins Units of Study for all students from first to third grade. **The scientific evidence shows that balanced literacy programs negatively impact our children.**

We implore you to safeguard students' academic progress by implementing a District literacy goal: **"95% of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Students Will Read to Grade Level"** in an effort to meet the district's fiscal responsibility to taxpayers and justice for a students' right to read. We need investment in teacher training, early screening and intervention to ensure students at risk of dyslexia do not fall behind, and general education students learn how to read. Evidence confirms that 95% of ALL children can learn to read to grade level or above. We need programs that follow the science of reading: explicit, systematic and structured.

If we choose to continue using balanced literacy, we need to seriously ask ourselves how much of tax payers' money are we willing to misuse? How many lives are we willing to disenfranchise? *Thank you for your time.*