

# Our Request

We respectfully demand that New York State discontinues funding for and dissemination of 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 with disabilities and general education students from first to third grade. The scientific evidence shows that programs that use balanced literacy negatively impact our children.

We implore public school representatives to safeguard student's academic progress, and the district's fiscal responsibility to taxpayers by investing in teacher training and mentoring. Teachers need to explicitly teach literacy foundational skills to all students, and instruct students with dyslexia with the intensity that they need.

## Board Members & Superintendents

You are not powerless! It is your job! Find out **how** to improve learning outcomes at your school district: The Literacy Advocates ([www.dyslexiaadvocacyactiongroup.org](http://www.dyslexiaadvocacyactiongroup.org))

## Dyslexia Advocacy Action Group

**TAKE ACTION:** Testify to your public-school representatives; the Board of Education (BOE), Panel for Education Policy (PEP), and Community Education Council (CEC). Please share the link to our campaign on social media & email. Share videos on YouTube of your testimonies – let's do this! **DONATE:** Send a check or take a photo of the QR code on the mailing envelope. Thank you.

# Donate & Contact Us

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# Speak Up for Literacy

The National Reading Panel identified five key concepts at the core of every effective reading instruction program: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. In addition, instruction programs should be explicit, systematic, and well planned (structured literacy).

Yet, the literacy programs used by most schools' lack many of these components, and the reading outcomes that they produce are disastrous.

**How does your school compare to top performers in the State & is YOUR school complicit in the school-to-prison pipeline?**

Look at data charts attached:

- Cost of Failure to Teach Reading
- Your District's Progress Reports
- Reading by District Bar-Graphs.

\*Fill-in the blanks using New York State Education Department & Education Consumers Foundation 2019 (3<sup>rd</sup>-grade) data.

**Name of School District:**

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% of 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade below grade-level: \_\_\_ %

**Predicted Dropouts:** -----

**# Unprepared Graduates:** -----

**Cost to Taxpayer: \$** -----

95% of ALL students, if given proper instruction are capable of reading to grade level (proficient) or above.

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## Advocate for literacy

Be a steward of your district's children and tax dollars: advocate for screening to identify at-risk students, early intervention, and teacher training in tested and proven reading instruction (structured literacy). Ensure that ALL students receive explicit, systematic, and cumulative reading instruction and develop the foundational skills to become skilled readers. Join us and advocate for public education and an educated public.

## Why use 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade data?

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. An estimated 70% of below-proficient third graders are likely to graduate from high school unprepared for college or drop out of school entirely.

## How well are New York's children taught to read?

According to pre-COVID 2019 NYSED third to eighth-grade students' data, **51%** of native English-speaking students and **55%** of all students read below grade level (i.e., below the "proficient" level). Appallingly, **65%** of African American/Black students, **84%** of children in foster care, and **88%** of students with disabilities cannot read to a proficient level or are functionally illiterate. That said, **95%** of ALL students have the potential to become skilled readers and read at or above grade level if they receive effective Pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade instruction--i.e., instruction containing phonological awareness, phonemes, phonics, and building fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

## What's the overall impact of illiteracy?

Illiteracy costs New York taxpayers an estimated 3-billion dollars per year. Three out of four people on public assistance have weak literacy skills. 80% of people in prison have inadequate literacy skills, 40% of people in prison have dyslexia and 80% of youths brought before courts have weak literacy skills.

Literacy is essential to becoming a full member of society. Children who do not learn to read and write well without remediation are destined to become socially and economically disenfranchised.

## Why are children missing key

### foundational skills?

Tested and proven reading instruction has been available for decades, so why are children missing foundational reading skills? New York is one of the remaining 20 states to lack basic literacy laws such as screenings for risk of dyslexia. Neither are teacher trainers required to disseminate science-based reading instruction strategies. Furthermore, one of New York's most popular reading programs is a now-discredited "three-cueing" method of reading instruction—a form of reading instruction employed by at least a third of the U.S. educational market.

Three-cueing prompts students to "guess" unknown words by looking at cues such as pictures or phrases in the text rather than sound them out using phonics—it promotes a strategy used by struggling readers. But, ultimately, it results in children failing to learn how to decode words by looking at the print—a significant impediment to understanding more advanced texts and acquiring vocabulary. Furthermore, instructing students to guess words (rather than decode) is biased against underprivileged students who often lack a rich background knowledge due to less exposure to travel, museums, out-of-school clubs, and camps.

## What's the solution?

New York needs general and special education teachers trained in structured literacy programs, i.e., following reading science principles established by the National Reading Panel in 1998. To fully understand how the reading brain works and teach reading effectively requires at least sixty hours of professional development. Special education teachers need to complete a practicum and more than six hours of expert mentoring. Furthermore, early screening and early literacy intervention prevent **95%** of students from experiencing learning loss and associated trauma. The State also needs to discontinue funding for and dissemination of unproven and disproven teaching methodologies by publicly funded institutions. These include but are not limited to Reading Recovery, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Fountas & Pinnell, and Lucy Calkins Units of Study. Reading science clarifies that far more effective alternatives are available but not effectively used in the classroom. With demonstrably effective structured literacy instruction, a vastly larger percentage of N.Y.'s children can emerge from their schooling on grade level or above and ready for college or the workplace.