

## SHORT 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.

Our data is from New York state Education Department and the Education Consumers Foundation. Here are some 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.

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

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 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 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 and the district's fiscal responsibility to taxpayers by investing in teacher training and mentoring. We ask for early screening and intervention and teacher training to ensure students at risk of dyslexia do not fall behind. Evidence confirms that **95%** of ALL children can learn to read, WITH explicit, systematic, structured literacy to grade level and above.

If we choose to continue using balanced literacy, we need to seriously ask ourselves how much of tax payer's money are we willing to misuse? How many lives are we willing to disenfranchise?

Thank you for your time.