**Resolution # 90** **Literacy and Dyslexia**

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**Resolution to promote the Science of Reading (aka Structured Literacy) throughout our district, making it understood and used by as many parents, students, teachers, principals and administrators as possible.**

**Co-sponsors**

**Whereas** the novel coronavirus and COVID19 have both shone a bright light on and exacerbated the literacy crisis in our city;

**Whereas** literacy is inextricably linked to health and mental health, economic security[[1]](#footnote-1) and democracy;

**Whereas** the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), sometimes called “the nation’s report card”, is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subjects.[[2]](#footnote-2) In the latest report, released in 2020, only 35% of all 4th graders and 34% of all 8th graders in the United States scored at or above NAEP Proficient: those who demonstrate solid academic performance and competency over challenging subject matter, which is down from the previous report.[[3]](#footnote-3) In D5, 71% of third graders are not reading proficiently at grade level[[4]](#footnote-4);

**Whereas** not learning to read or to read well is associated with depression, anxiety, bullying, delinquent behavior, increased suspension and/or expulsion, increased high school dropout rates, and the school to prison pipeline.[[5]](#footnote-5) The link between reading problems and incarceration is well known[[6]](#footnote-6) as shown in a [1993 report](https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/141324NCJRS.pdf) which concluded that "reading failure is most likely a cause, not just a correlate, for the frustration that can and does result in delinquent behavior;"[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Whereas** because of the Matthew Effect explained above, children who are still struggling with reading at the end of first grade rarely catch up and can easily grow into adulthood without knowing how to read[[8]](#footnote-8). And about 16 percent of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade [do not graduate from high school](https://www.aecf.org/resources/double-jeopardy/), a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers[[9]](#footnote-9);

**Whereas** overall the rates of people with dyslexia in the general population are much lower than the rates of dyslexia in the prison population[[10]](#footnote-10). One predetermining factor of dyslexia is poor word attack skills. The results of the study showed that 47.8% of the entire inmate sample had scored below the 25th percentile for word attack examinations, which is twice the general population The results are even more significant with individuals who are still of school age. In an alternative study[[11]](#footnote-11), the authors note that with a sample of 163 students from 22 institutions more than 70% show problems in reading and spelling. While not all of these individuals would be diagnosed with dyslexia these percentages should not be overlooked. Similar research is being done currently in other prisons;

**Whereas** marginalized communities, in particular Black students, have a long history of being prevented from learning to read as a form of institutionalized racism through anti-literacy laws[[12]](#footnote-12), segregation[[13]](#footnote-13), inequality[[14]](#footnote-14) and inequity[[15]](#footnote-15) which directly prohibited and prevented slaves and post-emancipation Black children from learning to read. Other institutional systems of oppression also contribute to the prevention of skilled reading without the Science of Reading[[16]](#footnote-16);

**Whereas** many children who manage skilled reading have socio-economic advantages, such as a parent who has attained higher education, and/or access to resources not available to all[[17]](#footnote-17).

**Whereas** the global pandemic and the ensuing economic meltdown caused by the novel coronavirus, has forced NYC public schools to slash budgets, including a hiring freeze, and the threat of further cuts[[18]](#footnote-18), and as such, every dollar we spend on teaching becomes more precious than ever.

**Whereas** scientists have spent the past 90 years [[19]](#footnote-19)studying how children learn to read and have “come to an emerging consensus from many related disciplines, based on literally thousands of studies, supported by hundreds of millions of research dollars, conducted across the world in many languages” about how to best deliver reading instruction that maximizes number of children who to learn to read[[20]](#footnote-20);

**Whereas** two linguistics and curriculum PhD specialists came up with a formula called the Simple View of Reading (**Decoding (D) x Language Comprehension (LC) = Reading Comprehension (RC)**) to show the widely accepted view that reading has two basic components: word recognition (decoding) and language comprehension and without automaticity in decoding, children will not become skilled readers (1x0=0, 0x1=0, 1x1=1)[[21]](#footnote-21); Further, in 2001, Hollis Scarborough produced the infographic “The Reading Rope” outlining what goes in to each side of the Simple View;

**Whereas** reading does not develop without intentional instruction: there are **not** “many different ways” to learn to read, nor do you learn to read by being read to, being in a print rich environment, or by acquiring background knowledge alone[[22]](#footnote-22) and 55-65% of readers must be taught to read through a structured literacy approach in order to become a skilled reader[[23]](#footnote-23);

**Whereas** educational experts have proven that once you are able to decode well, general knowledge allows you to become an even more proficient reader[[24]](#footnote-24);

The 35-45% of children who learn to decode well despite broad instruction end up reading more, and through this reading acquire more knowledge. Conversely, children who do not learn to become skilled decoders tend to read substantially less and therefore do not accumulate the knowledge that makes them even better readers; thus, the problem is compounded over time, sometimes known as the Matthew Effect[[25]](#footnote-25). The knowledge gap grows faster and wider as time goes on;

**Whereas** other approaches to literacy education, including but not limited to, Three Cueing System, MSV (meaning, structure, visual)[[26]](#footnote-26), "Guided Reading”, sustained silent reading for children who are not yet fluent, context cues, using illustrations to read, word substitution, guessing, or other methods outside the Science of Reading, are not only proven to be ineffective, but in many cases **actually impair** reading skills, and can do harm to student’s reading development.[[27]](#footnote-27) If introduced before decoding is strong, leveled reading systems like Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) leveled readers and Guided Reading can have the negative effect of encouraging poor reading strategies, thus having a negative compounding effect on skill acquisition[[28]](#footnote-28).

**Whereas** the most powerful instruction is systematic, explicit, sequential, multimodal and intensive, designed to appropriately integrate elements of oral language development, phonemic awareness, phonics and decoding, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension and skills and strategies[[29]](#footnote-29), along with orthographic mapping[[30]](#footnote-30).

**Whereas**

* “Systematic” includes but is not limited to consistent instructional routines used to guide students to correct responses, instructional time carefully allocated to maximize time on task, assessments where errors are categorized for additional instruction and support and there is cumulative review;
* “Explicit” includes but is not limited to new skills which are directly modeled, students are guided to the correct response, error responses include the immediate corrective feedback, and skills are practiced to mastery and automaticity;
* “Sequential”and “Cumulative” include but are not limited to skills taught in order from easier to harder, prerequisites are taught first, component or foundational skills taught directly to support higher-order skills, all skills are reviewed to insure mastery, and intentional sequence within and across lessons; within and across grades; and,
* “Multimodal” includes but is not limited to: teaching that includes and engages more than one sense at a time; using sight, hearing, movement, and touch. At the same time that students must learn to decode to read, it also is very important that they learn to encode (spell) and write, as the structures of writing reinforce reading skills[[31]](#footnote-31). And while Structured Literacy for reading begins with the smallest units within a word, there is an explicit, systematic way to teach writing pioneered by long time educators Judith Hochman and explained by journalist, Natalie Wexler, and others, which focuses on breaking down the smallest unit, the sentence[[32]](#footnote-32).

**Whereas** *all* children taught to read using these foundational pillars of structured literacy thrive[[33]](#footnote-33).

**Whereas** with all of the research being done in reading and writing, “Compelling evidence from a convergence of reading research is indicating that 90%-95% of all students can achieve literacy skills at or approaching grade level. These statistics include students with dyslexia and other learning disorders”, if taught using the appropriate reading instruction.[[34]](#footnote-34)

**Whereas the** NYS Department of Education issued a guidance memo **[[35]](#footnote-35)** on dyslexia.

**Whereas** the NYCDOE will help underwrite materials and training based on structured literacy and the science of reading

**Therefore be it resolved that:**

District 5 should educate and inform parents, SLT’s, PTA’s, teachers, principals, and DOE administrators on the Science of Reading and its impact on student achievement.

District 5 should audit current reading practices within the district, with a focus on the elementary level to understand the landscape of early literacy practices and curriculum within the district.

District 5 should create a path to literacy for older students.

Principals, superintendents and schools are encouraged to identify free offerings through the DOE, grants, federal, state and/or city monies or any other funds and be empowered to fund and implement professional development and teacher training, curriculum and other science of reading and writing systems which align with the most current scientific thinking.

All teachers, but especially special educators, kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade teachers, should be empowered to receive an in-depth and comprehensive digest of the science of reading, support and professional development to phase in the curriculum and pedagogy of structured literacy supported by the science of reading and writing.

Pre K and Three K teachers should be able to teach the building blocks of literacy, including but not limited to phonemic awareness.

Budgetary dollars be they District 5, individual school, PTA, administrative or otherwise, should not be used to advance any curriculum or pedagogy that does not directly align with the Science of Reading.

District 5 Superintendent, and principals, with an immediate focus on early elementary grades, are urged to phase out reading and writing curriculum, pedagogy, materials and practices (such as F&P, guided reading, LLI, Reading Recovery, Whole Language, Balanced Literacy, Readers and Writers Workshop and more) or any other systems that do not directly align with the Science of Reading.

The District 5 Superintendent is encouraged to work with school leaders and staff to phase in reading and writing systems (decodable readers (aligned with sequenced phonics programs), SIPPS, PAF, Wilson, S.P.I.R.E., Writing Revolution, Orton Gillingham based programs, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, among many others) that are in alignment with the current science, and phase in systems aligned to best practices and the Science of Reading.

1. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/146/1/e20193046> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. What is NAEP?: [nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “The Condition of Education 2020 A Publication” of the National Center for Education Statistics at IES, Executive Summary, At a Glance, pg. xxiii: [nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020144.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020144.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://education-consumers.org/research-areas/consumer-tools/efc-cost-calculator/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Can reading problems affect mental health?](https://thinkingreadingwritings.wordpress.com/2019/04/22/can-reading-problems-affect-mental-health/); [Mental wellbeing, reading and writing](https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/mental-wellbeing-reading-and-writing/); [Do Poor Readers Feel Angry, Sad, and Unpopular?](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4500191/); [Reading Problems and Depressed Mood](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1022534527021); A [longitudinal analysis](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11145-020-10023-7) of the alignment between children’s early word-level reading trajectories, teachers’ reported concerns and supports provided [Reading Problems, Psychiatric Disorders, and Functional Impairment from Mid- to Late Adolescence](https://jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(09)61954-7/fulltext); [Suicidality, School Dropout, and Reading Problems Among Adolescents](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00222194060390060301); [Behavioral Engagement and Reading Achievement in Elementary-School-Age Children](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265384545_Behavioral_Engagement_and_Reading_Achievement_in_Elementary-School-Age_Children_A_Longitudinal_Cross-Lagged_Analysis); [Are reading difficulties associated with bullying involvement?](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317429921_Are_reading_difficulties_associated_with_bullying_involvement); [Are Reading and Behavior Problems Risk Factors for Each Other?](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4422059/); [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/141324NCJRS.pdf> and other studies on the prevalence of reading problems among inmates can be found [here](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10876375) and [here](http://www.jfa-associates.com/publications/srs/DyslexiaFinal.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [Highlights from the U.S. PIAAC Survey of Incarcerated Adults](https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016040.pdf); [The Relationship Between Incarceration and Low Literacy](https://literacymidsouth.wordpress.com/2016/03/16/incarceration-and-low-literacy/); [Reading Difficulty in Young Children Linked to Later Trouble With the Law](https://jjie.org/2016/07/18/reading-difficulty-in-young-children-linked-to-later-trouble-with-the-law/).; [Double Jeopardy](https://www.aecf.org/resources/double-jeopardy/). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. At a Loss for Words, *by Emily Hanford* <https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2019/08/22/whats-wrong-how-schools-teach-reading> and What the Words Say, by Emily Hanford; <https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2020/08/06/what-the-words-say> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [*Prevalence of Dyslexia among Texas Prison Inmates*](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10876375/)*,* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [*The Prevalence of Reading and Spelling Difficulties among Inmates of Institutions for Compulsory Care of Juvenile Delinquent*](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318184851_The_prevalence_of_reading_and_spelling_difficulties_among_inmates_of_institutions_for_compulsory_care_of_juvenile_delinquents)*s* [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-literacy_laws_in_the_United_States> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_v._Board_of_Education> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Nice White Parents, episode 2, by Chana Joffe-Walt <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/podcasts/nice-white-parents-serial-2.html?action=click&module=audio-series-bar&region=header&pgtype=Article> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2018/2018-01-10-Education-Inequity.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. [What Explains White-Black Differences in Average Test Scores?](https://edopportunity.org/discoveries/white-black-differences-scores/); [Is Separate Still Unequal? New Evidence on School Segregation and Racial Academic Achievement Gaps](https://edopportunity.org/papers/wp19-06-v092019.pdf); [Recent Trends in Income, Racial, and Ethnic School Readiness Gaps at Kindergarten Entry](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2332858416657343) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [The Knowledge Gap](https://nataliewexler.com/the-knowledge-gap/) *by Natalie Wexler* [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2020/7/22/21334981/education-budget-cuts-hiring-freeze> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <https://www.ortonacademy.org/resources/what-is-the-orton-gillingham-approach/> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A Conversation About the Science of Reading and Early Reading Instruction with Dr. Louisa Moats: [collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/a-conversation-about-the-science-of-reading-with-dr-louisa-moats/#:~:text=Louisa%20Moats%3A%20The%20body%20of,a%20specific%20component%20of%20instruction.](https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/a-conversation-about-the-science-of-reading-with-dr-louisa-moats/#:~:text=Louisa%20Moats%3A%20The%20body%20of,a%20specific%20component%20of%20instruction.) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.905.7606&rep=rep1&type=pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Why Reading Is Not a Natural Process, *by G. Reid Lyon*: [ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar98/vol55/num06/Why-Reading-Is-Not-a-Natural-Process.aspx#:~:text=From%20Research%20to%20Practice&text=We%20know%20from%20research%20that,be%20taught%20directly%20and%20systematically.](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar98/vol55/num06/Why-Reading-Is-Not-a-Natural-Process.aspx#:~:text=From%20Research%20to%20Practice&text=We%20know%20from%20research%20that,be%20taught%20directly%20and%20systematically.) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Nancy Young, B.A. M.Ed., Ladder of Reading infographic [dyslexiaida.org/ladder-of-reading-infographic-structured-literacy-helps-all-students/](https://dyslexiaida.org/ladder-of-reading-infographic-structured-literacy-helps-all-students/) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. How Knowledge Helps, *by Daniel T. Willingham* [aft.org/periodical/american-educator/spring-2006/how-knowledge-helps](https://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/spring-2006/how-knowledge-helps) [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. “Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy”: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/u81/Stanovich__1986_.pdf>; also, Dr Kerry Hempenstall, Senior Industry Fellow, School of Education, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia: <https://www.nifdi.org/news-latest-2/blog-hempenstall/399-what-are-these-matthew-effects> [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Experts say widely used reading curriculum is failing kids, by Emily Hanford

    <https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2020/01/27/lucy-calkins-reading-materials-review> [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. “AVOID any program that includes drawing shapes around words, making alphabetic word walls, teaching the “cueing systems” approach of appealing to context to guess at unknown words, or that does not follow a clear scope and sequence where one skill is built upon another” Dr. Lousia Moats, EdD, the nationally recognized researcher and authority on literacy education. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. [Whole Language Lives On: The Illusion of 'Balanced' Reading Instruction](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED449465.pdf). [The Three-Cueing System: Trojan Horse?](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247528543_The_three-cueing_system_Trojan_horse), [Ten Myths of Reading Instruction](http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/v14n03/2.html), [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Scarborough’s Reading Rope Infographic: <https://dyslexiaida.org/scarboroughs-reading-rope-a-groundbreaking-infographic/> [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Orthographic Mapping: What it Is and Why It's So Important *by Maria S. Murray, PhD*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfRHcUeGohc> [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. “The Writing Revolution”, *by Peg Tyre* <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/10/the-writing-revolution/309090/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwv7L6BRDxARIsAGj-34pScBDMU_obZY-TSiVravABBRzn9vl3GJImEoL3eHX3CeY0anzTK3AaAlXxEALw_wcB> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The Need for Explicit Instruction in Teaching Students to Write Well *By Judith C. Hochman, Natalie Wexler*

    <https://www.aft.org/ae/summer2017/hochman-wexler> [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Nancy Young, B.A. M.Ed., Ladder of Reading infographic [dyslexiaida.org/ladder-of-reading-infographic-structured-literacy-helps-all-students/](https://dyslexiaida.org/ladder-of-reading-infographic-structured-literacy-helps-all-students/) [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The Science of Reading: An Overview, *by Dr. Jan Hasbrouck*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTvHSgoTeZE&feature=youtu.be> [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/guidance-on-chapter-216-of-the-laws-of-2017.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-35)