Testimony – 9-17-2020

Good morning, my name is Angie Schreiber, and I am a member of the Dyslexia Task Force. I am also a mother of a dyslexic son and I am the wife of Representative Mark Schreiber.

Helping dyslexic children has become a life-long mission for me since my son was diagnosed in 1993 when he was in the third grade. The members of the Task Force would laugh and then roll their eyes, whenever I would say "In the past 25 years" this or that has not changed.

One of the biggest changes for me in the past 25 years was to teach my son to read, watch him graduate from Kansas State University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and accept a job he loves and that has taken him around the world.

He told the State Board of Education and I quote "I have worked as a construction engineer on four continents putting up over half a billion dollars' worth of construction. I was the lucky one, I learned to read, I made it back onto grade level and followed my dreams."

One thing has not changed and that is parents (usually moms) are still teaching their children how to read and/or paying private tutors to teach their children how to read. But these kids are the lucky ones. The ones born into a class of parents who can afford tutoring or teacher training. But it shouldn't be this way – not when we know how to teach 95% of ALL children how to read.

One thing that has not changed significantly in 22 years is our NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) scores. In 2019, 34% of Kansas 4th graders scored at or above the proficient level. in 1998, the percentage was the same 34%. The gaps between White and Black students, the gap between White and Hispanic students and the gap between students eligible for free and reduced lunch and those not eligible have not significantly changed.

Economically and socially, illiteracy is harmful to the country and our state.

From Children of the Code (2020) (https://childrenofthecode.org/Tour/c1/index.htm)

"In the U.S. alone approximately one hundred million children and adults have difficulty reading. The cognitive, linguistic, academic, emotional, social, and physical health consequences of their reading difficulties significantly diminish their

opportunities in school, work, and life. In the aggregate, reading difficulties skew our democracy, drag our economy, perpetuate poverty, and cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars each year. Reading improficiency is our nation's most wide-spread and costly learning disability and nothing short of a complete REFRAME in how our society thinks about 'what's at stake' and 'what's involved' is going to improve the situation.

In McKinsey & Company's The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools, "Black and Latino students are roughly two to three years of learning behind White students of the same age." McKinsey's research showed that that the achievement gap can lead to "heavy and often tragic consequences, via lower earnings, poorer health and higher rates of incarceration." This achievement gap becomes an opportunity gap, an economic gap, and a racial gap, which gets passed on generation to generation unless it's disrupted.

The United States is facing a literacy crisis. Yes, crisis. It isn't new, but its impacts upon our kids, our economy, and our society are far-reaching and expanding. How bad is it? Take a look at some numbers.

- More than 30 million adults in the United States cannot read, write, or do basic math above a third-grade level. — *ProLiteracy*
- Children whose parents have low literacy levels have a 72 percent chance of being at the lowest reading levels themselves. These children are more likely to get poor grades, display behavioral problems, have high absentee rates, repeat school years, or drop out. — *National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)*
- 75 percent of state prison inmates did not complete high school or can be classified as low literate. — *Rand Report: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education*
- Low literacy is said to be connected to over $230 billion a year in health care costs because almost half of Americans cannot read well enough to comprehend health information, incurring higher costs. — *American Journal of Public Health*

https://resilienteducator.com/news/illiteracy-in-america/

A crisis should drive change – At least we would hope so, but changing all schools and universities is hard, it is like trying to steer the Titanic away from the iceberg. But we must keep trying for our children, our state, and our country.

What else needs to change so our kids, state and country and economy are better?

Parents need to hear the truth and should never hear, "Your child will grow into reading." "Your child just needs to develop." If these sentences were true, we would see

children catching up with their peers in 3rd or 4th grade or beyond as they were developing and growing. Consistently, teachers tell parents their child is not behind. But when asked if the child can read 47 words correct per minute with 95% accuracy at the end of first grade and answer comprehension questions, many teachers will tell you "No." They do not know that is the benchmark for end of the year 1st grade. But do not blame the teacher, you cannot implement what you do not know. Teachers in classrooms need professional development on data and how to analyze the data.

If we want to shift the teaching paradigm, we have to put money into making sure everyone is on the same page. We have to stop expecting teachers to do what they have not been trained to do.

Nancy Young created "The Ladder of Reading," which in a straightforward graph demonstrates in broad percentages how children learn to read. At the top of the ladder are 5% of children who seem to learn with no effort at all, many of these children come to school already knowing how to read. On the next rung down, are 35% of children who will learn to read relatively easily with broad instruction. Together these two categories account for about 40% of all children. The students we are now teaching to read.

The next two rungs make up the remaining 60% of children. Between 40 to 50% of children need structured literacy to learn to read proficiently. These are the students who now "sorta" learn to read. But they do not read well enough to enjoy it. They squeak by and get pushed along by the system.

And then at the bottom of the ladder are the 10% to 15% of the students who are dyslexic and the only way they will learn to read is by using a code-based explicit, systematic, sequential, and diagnostic instruction with many repetitions. This type of instruction is called Structured Literacy.

No matter where a student is on the Reading Ladder they benefit from Structured Literacy. Opponents argue not all kids need phonics. But structured literacy is more than just phonics or learning sound to symbol. Students also learn how the code of the English Language works which improves vocabulary and spelling skills. Students study of morphology (units of meanings) in words including prefixes, suffixes, and root words. They explore syntax, and semantics. Each part of Structured literacy is layered onto the

Many of our schools continue to use programs such as "Balanced Literacy," "Fountas and Pinnell – Guided Reading," "Lucy Calkins -- Readers and Writers Workshops" and "Reading Recovery." None of these programs/curriculums are grounded in the science of reading. Once again, to switch from these curriculums will take professional development for staff, including administration.

Teachers must be provided the knowledge base in order to teach reading effectively to all of the children in their classrooms. I hope you take the time to read the article, "Teaching Reading is Rocket Science 2020, What Expert Teachers of Reading Should Know and Be Able to Do" by Louisa Moat.

One thing that is totally new for everyone – COVID-19. The Pandemic has been an eye-opening experience for many. Some common concerns from Blue Valley parents include:

1) they are seeing first-hand what their students are actually struggling with and wondering how their kids make it through a school day since they are not able to read and write

2) parents are struggling with being asked to help progress monitor themselves,

3) some parents are receiving requests to delay evaluations during this time, and some are receiving requests to modify services e.g. less direct service time or less 1:1 service time because they are providing remote services

Presently, the Federal Government has not relaxed IDEA regulations. Our students still deserve FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education

When our children do not receive FAPE, parents have choices to make. One is to file a due process complaint. Having gone through this, I don't recommend it as the parents and the school become adversaries since both sides hire lawyers and spend lots of money deciding who is right. If the parents prevail, the district may have to pay both sides attorney fees.

Sometimes parents do not want to walk alone, so they band together and file a systemic complaint. This happened in Upper Arlington, Ohio. On page 13 of the article, "Teaching Reading is Rocket Science," this district is references as one district that has increased its reading scores. That is a result from the finding of this complaint.

My goal as a member of the Task Force, is too keep the ship turning and to help not only dyslexic children but all children in the state. Once teachers learn structured literacy and see for themselves the powerful affects it has on students learning they become believers.

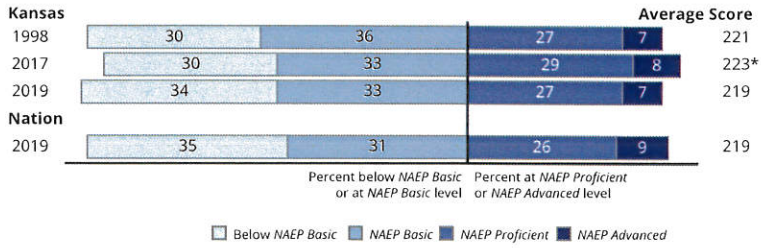
My other hope is to stop not just Systemic Complaints but all complaints by parents because their dyslexic child is not being served. And from my talks with parents Systemic Complaints are coming. Parents are tired of waiting for their children's needs to be recognized and served.

Imagine how great Kansas would be if we taught all children to read! Consider how much money we would NOT be spending on prisons. NOT be spending on health care. How industry would be scrambling to come to our state because everyone was literate. It is not a dream – we can make it a reality with support for change for our teachers, school districts, and universities.

Overall Results

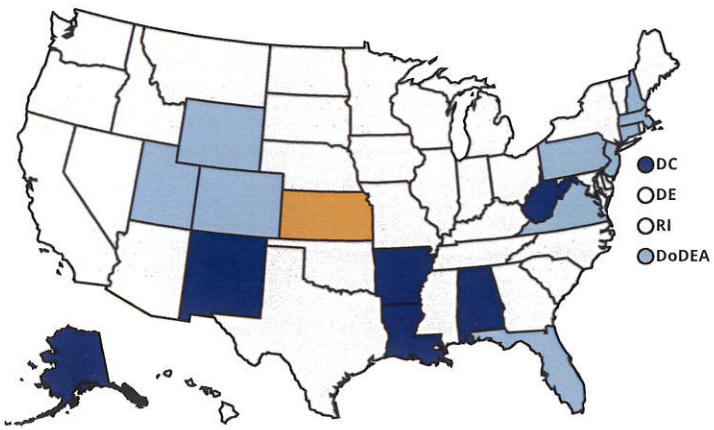
- In 2019, the average score of fourth-grade students in Kansas was 219. This was not significantly different from the average score of 219 for students in the nation.
- The average score for students in Kansas in 2019 (219) was lower than their average score in 2017 (223) and was not significantly different from their average score in 1998 (221).
- The percentage of students in Kansas who performed at or above the *NAEP Proficient* level was 34 percent in 2019. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2017 (37 percent) and in 1998 (34 percent).
- The percentage of students in Kansas who performed at or above the *NAEP Basic* level was 66 percent in 2019. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2017 (70 percent) and in 1998 (70 percent).

NAEP Achievement-Level Percentages and Average Score Results



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from state's results in 2019. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.
NOTE: NAEP achievement levels are to be used on a trial basis and should be interpreted and used with caution. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

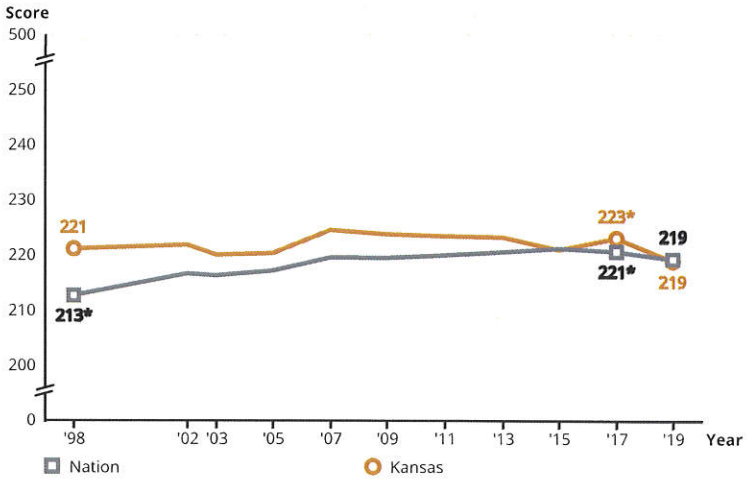
Compare the Average Score in 2019 to Other States/ Jurisdictions



In 2019, the average score in Kansas (219) was
- lower than those in 11 states/jurisdictions
- higher than those in 7 states/jurisdictions
- not significantly different from those in 33 states/jurisdictions

DoDEA = Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools)

Average Scores for State/Jurisdiction and Nation



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2019. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.

Results for Student Groups in 2019

Reporting Groups	Percentage of students	Avg. score	Percentage at or above *NAEP* *Basic*	Percentage at or above *NAEP* *Proficient*	Percentage at *NAEP Advanced*
Race/Ethnicity					
White	63	225	72	40	9
Black	6	199	46	15	2
Hispanic	22	208	55	21	3
Asian	3	‡	‡	‡	‡
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	‡	‡	‡	‡
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Two or more races	5	220	68	34	6
Gender					
Male	51	215	63	30	6
Female	49	223	70	37	8
National School Lunch Program					
Eligible	49	206	52	20	3
Not eligible	48	233	81	48	11

Rounds to zero.
‡ Reporting standards not met.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding, and because the "Information not available" category for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free/reduced-price lunches, is not displayed. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

Score Gaps for Student Groups

- In 2019, Black students had an average score that was 26 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (30 points).
- In 2019, Hispanic students had an average score that was 16 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (25 points).
- In 2019, female students in Kansas had an average score that was higher than that for male students by 8 points.
- In 2019, students who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), had an average score that was 27 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (23 points).

ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences

NOTE: The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Results presented in this report are based on public school students only. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Score gap results for "White," "Black," and "Hispanic" presented in this report are based on the 6-category race/ethnicity variable with data available starting in early 1990s. Read more about how to interpret NAEP results from the reading assessment at interpret results. For more information and additional comparisons please visit the Nation's Report Card and NAEP Data Explorer.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1998-2019 Reading Assessments.

Good morning. I'm Ben Schreiber and 25 years ago I was a 3rd grader who was unable to read. Math, Science, History no problem. Reading just wouldn't click. Lucky my parents did not take the standard line from the school that nothing was wrong and kept looking for answers. It took years of hard work to catch up with my class. When you are behind you have to make more progress than others to catch up.

It worked and 16 years ago I graduated high school, then I followed that up with a degree in Mechanical engineering from Kansas State. Since then I have worked as a construction engineer on 4 continents putting up over half a billion dollars worth of construction. I was a lucky one I learned to read, I made it back onto grade level and followed my dreams.

25 years ago the attitude of the school was just get him through though this grade, he'll eventually graduate and the community will always need ditch diggers.

Not much has changed in 25 years at schools because the attitude seems to be for the community still needs ditch diggers.

The world has changed though. We don't dig ditches with picks and shovels any more. We use heavy construction equipment. And today that is loaded with multi-level touch screens displays, and GPS guidance. To operate it you have to know how to read.

I know I have seen it. There isn't a job on one of my projects that I don't expect the person to know how to read. Whether it was in the Sahara Desert in Africa, Eastern Europe, the mountains of Asia, or even here in the mid West. To work construction you have to know how to read. Those who couldn't were the last hired and the first dismissed. They are limited to the lowest paying jobs if they are hired at all.

Bottom line, the old community ditch diggers don't exist anymore.

Just like a construction project, Schools operate on a schedule. Kids to are scheduled to know how to read by the end of 3rd grade. They have 4 years to learn to read. If they lose a year during this time they just lost 25% of the time allotted to learn to read. And that is just clock time. It does not include how hard it is to correct issues as kids get older.

After 3rd grade kids have 9 years till they graduate high school during which they are expected to improve their reading proficiency. Each year lost here represents 11% of the time allotted to improving their reading proficiency. To say nothing of the extra work they must put in to catch up with their class.

Just like my construction projects are these kids are on a schedule. And just like my clients are waiting for their building. The workplace is waiting for these children. Bottom line there won't be a place for them if they can't read.

Please don't delay these children's hope another year. Their futures depend on it.

Thank you.

The Ladder of Reading

5% Learning to read seems effortless

35%

Learning to read is relatively easy with broad instruction

40 to 50%

Learning to read proficiently requires code-based explicit, systematic, and sequential instruction

10 to 15 % (Dyslexia)

Learning to read requires code-based explicit/systematic/sequential/diagnostic instruction with many repetitions

Advantaged by a structured literacy approach

Structured literacy approach essential

www.nancyyoung.ca

© N. Young, 2012 (Updated 2020)

Artwork by Dean Stanton

(Lyon, 1998; NRP, 2000; IDA, 2015; Hempenstall, 2016)

Nancy Young
B.A., M.Ed.

What is STRUCTURED LITERACY? A primer by Nancy Young (nancyyoung.ca)

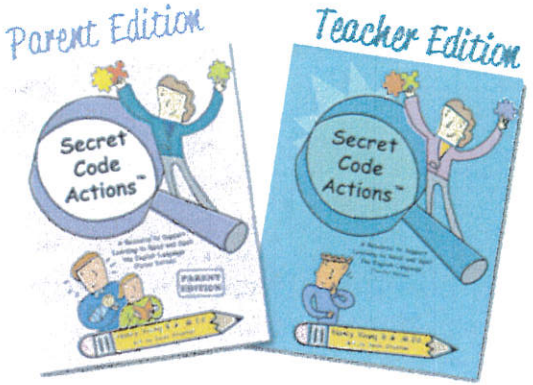
A structured approach to teaching the structure of written text.
Explicit, systematic & cumulative. Needs-based emphasis.

Encompasses

Phonology	Awareness of the sound structures within spoken language underlies reading and spelling mastery, from awareness of individual words and syllables to the individual speech sounds (phonemes) within words. Explicit instruction/practice strengthens **phonemic awareness**, from identification and segmentation to the higher-level skill of phoneme manipulation.
Orthography	Reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding) require **knowledge of the written code**. Written symbols (graphemes) which represent the phonemes in spoken words are taught in a sequence (read-aloud materials aligned as needed), addressing features such as allowable grapheme positions, syllable types, word origin, and the rationale for certain spellings.
Morphology	As well as learning about phonemes and graphemes, learning about **the units of meaning – morphemes – in words** underlies reading/spelling mastery. This includes understanding words can be made up of just one or combined units of meaning (e.g. adding one or more affixes to a free or bound base), possibly resulting in changed grapheme pronunciation.
Syntax	Reading and writing proficiently requires knowing that words can be arranged in various ways. Instruction addresses **parts of speech** (e.g. verb, noun, preposition), how written words are organized into **sentences and paragraphs** in different **forms of text,** and the role of **punctuation**. Writing is a vital part of reading instruction, building from the foundational stages.
Semantics	Instruction focuses on the **many different meanings that words can represent** in various forms of text. As reading and writing skills grow, vocabulary and background knowledge are continually built up. Comprehension (both spoken and written language) is steadily developed and strengthened. A rich language learning environment grounds all learning.

PHONICS

Sources:
Wolf (2009), Kilpatrick (2015), IDA (2018)
Links to these resources and additional supporting resources for educators and parents can be found at www.nancyyoung.ca

Nancy's book *Secret Code Actions™* contains Clues, Alerts and Detective Enrichment relating to the above skills PLUS creative actions and games offer ways to enhance any program of instruction by weaving in specific movements for code-based concepts during lessons and/or practice sessions. Children need to move more; moving while learning can make code mastery more engaging and fun for all ages and stages. A win-win!

Find out more, and see specific examples, at www.SecretCodeActions.com