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NEW JERSEY LEGACY OF LITERACY COALITION



2023 LITERACY CAMPAIGN

We are ringing a statewide alarm to address the troubling literacy levels in New Jersey's public schools. Our goal is to advance policies and laws around 5 key principles crucial for students' success:

1. Science of Reading (SoR) training for educators;
2. Teacher Preparation programs aligned to SoR;
3. Universal Screeners to see where students' fall along the reading continuum;
4. Formal notification to Parents of Students identified with Reading Deficiencies based on a statewide standard;
5. District Adoption of high-quality instructional materials.

Some children will read well without explicitly being taught. Most will not without effective reading curriculum and instruction. Learning bright spots in New Jersey show that Science of Reading instruction yields results.

By the end of 2022, 29 states and Washington, D.C. had passed laws or implemented policies related to evidence-based reading instruction. New Jersey was not one of them.

Any serious effort to stem the tide of undereducation and the hefty price we pay for it must prioritize literacy.

WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

51.1%

of students were below proficient in reading on the 2022 NJSLA.

69.4%

of disadvantaged students across NJ are not proficient in reading.

70%

of incarcerated people scored "basic" or "below basic" on literacy tests based on a statistic from the National Center for Education.

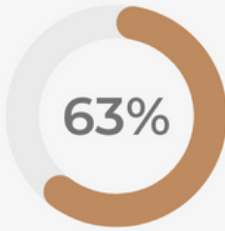
90%

of disengaged youth were struggling readers in 3rd grade according to a report by Annie E. Casey Foundation.

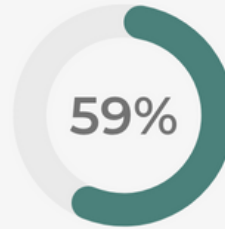
WHY LITERACY? WHY NOW?

PARENTS WANT BOLD CHANGE

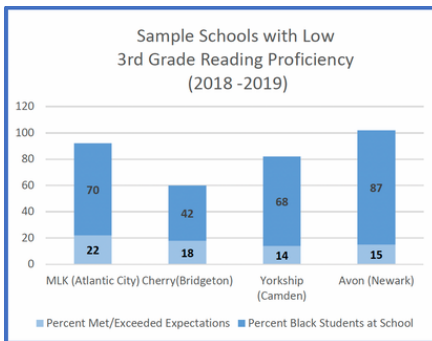
63% parents want to see new federal funding for education used to make bold changes instead of returning to the old normal.



59% of parents want to see more instructional time and strongly support tutoring and individualized learning plans.



JerseyCAN Parent Survey 2020



NJ 2018-2019 State Data

New Jersey is the 1st state in the country to mandate K-12 information literacy to help students discern fact from opinion and evaluate whether information sources are legitimate sources or not. This is laudable yet in many of our communities,

7 out of every 10

children walking down their school's halls cannot even read at their grade level standard. And unlike Massachusetts, which provides a state advisory list of evidence-based core reading programs, New Jersey has little guidance or state involvement in governing reading curricula or instruction.

Poor reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade places children at risk of:

high school dropout, low earnings, teen pregnancy, poor emotional and physical well-being, and incarceration.

With comprehensive legislative-based reform in reading, Mississippi has gone from the bottom of the heap to now surpass dozens of states in literacy outcomes, and Hispanic fourth graders in Mississippi recently outscored similar New Jersey students in reading.

WE NEED CHANGE NOW.

We have identified necessary policy solutions to right the reading ship. Our work now is to ensure that these policy solutions can gain maximal traction and thus become realized.



WHAT ARE THE FACTS FOR NJ KIDS?

THESE ARE THE FACTS

- NJ ranked lowest among states for early childhood reading proficiency progress in 2019.
- On the most recent NJSLA 3rd-grade reading comprehension of Black children performed 27 points lower than White children.
- In Essex County, about 21 schools reported that less than 25% of their students met or exceeded 3rd-grade reading expectations.