

Good morning, my name is Dr. Audra Melton and I am a recently retired teacher and administrator from the Troy School District. I also live in Troy and have a dyslexic son that just graduated from the district. I am sharing my experience from Troy because I want to make sure you understand that reading proficiency is a serious concern, even in a top ranked district in the state.

Despite guidance from the MDE on appropriate screeners for reading, Troy has ignored this guidance and chooses to use a reading screener that does not pick up on the characteristics of dyslexia. Despite the most current research on effective reading instruction, Troy chooses to use Tier 1 instruction that is not in line with the science of reading and has been proven ineffective for students with dyslexia and other reading challenges. Despite research showing that interventions based in the science of reading are the most effective for struggling readers and those with dyslexia, Troy chooses to use outdated interventions that are ineffective for these students.

The school board and central office administration in Troy believe that having 66% of all 3rd graders proficient on the 22-23 MSTEP is a reason to maintain the status quo because it's better than the county and state average. While the Troy School District administration does not present subgroup information publicly or to their school board, the subgroup statistics I am sharing are available on mischooldata.org. These are the percentages of 3rd grade students that are NOT MSTEP proficient in reading:

Black Students- 61%

Economically Disadvantaged Students- 59%

English Learners- 47.0%

Students with Disabilities- 77% Not Proficient

For over a decade, parents in Troy have requested changes to instruction, assessments, and interventions to help their children and have consistently been told no. Parents of struggling students are sent away and are forced to look for outside help. That help for my son came in the form of Orton-Gillingham reading tutoring and came at a cost of \$60,000.00 dollars. What has been created in Troy, and likely in many cities across Michigan, is a case of haves and have nots. Because districts can choose to keep using ineffective screeners, instructional practices, and interventions, parents must pay for the instruction their kids need. For parents that don't have the money, their kids continue to go down a spiral of learning loss as content reading complexity increases and their ability to engage decreases.

Simply providing guidance to do the right thing has not worked. Not even in seemingly high performing districts like Troy. We need these bills, with the current language intact, to ensure students are provided the screening and instruction they need to become successful readers.