

The Mississippi "*Miracle*"

For the past decade, quiet educational reform has been evolving in the State of Mississippi. While it's been termed a "*miracle*," there's really nothing miraculous about it. Mississippi has simply adopted the same methods of reading instruction that were used for centuries to successfully educate people like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt.



Over the past decade, Mississippi's fourth-graders jumped from 49th in the nation to **NINTH** in reading on the *National Assessment of Educational Progress* (NAEP.) Comparing only *low-income* students, Mississippi's fourth-graders ranked **FIRST** in the nation on the NAEP's reading section. Likewise, comparing only *Hispanic* fourth-graders, Mississippi also ranked **FIRST** in reading. Its *black* students did nearly as well in reading by placing **THIRD** in the nation among black kids. If you control for family income and race, Mississippi's fourth-graders actually placed **FIRST** in the nation in reading.

At a time when the entire fourth-grades of several large, urban school systems in **BLUE** states are functionally illiterate -- or test several grade levels below their age -- Mississippi has shown the way to legitimate, no

nonsense education reform. Not surprisingly, the state has received scant attention from the fake news media for its successful reform efforts. The fake news media has been too busy praising the "*successes*" of the *American Federation of Teachers* (AFT) and *National Education Association* (NEA) to notice. Meanwhile, the NEA and AFT have been too busy handing out "*educational excellence*" awards to each other.



"Destroying American Education, One Pupil at a Time"

The formula for improving reading skills is not some dark secret, and has been around for centuries. In fact, Phyllis Schlafly tirelessly promoted it for more than 50 years in her publications. First, it requires school systems to adopt **Phonics** as its method of reading instruction. Second, it requires that schools set **high standards** and emphatically enforce them, rather than teach at the level of the *lowest common denominator*. And Third, this requires that schools also engage in **grade-retention** of students whose skills do not merit advancement.

For decades, the "**reading wars**" raged on between advocates of *phonics* and those who promoted the *whole language* (or "*look-say*") method of reading instruction. Based on the evidence, phonics prevailed long ago, but the imbeciles who staff the **U.S. Department of Education** and their

allies in the NEA and AFT fought tenaciously against any method of instruction that actually works! The education industry prefers curricula laced with *Critical Race Theory* and "*Math with no wrong answers*," and was too busy promoting gender dysphoria and "*correct*" pronouns.

Phonics

For many years, following the release of results from the NAEP or other standardized testing, educators in low-performing states could breathe a sigh of relief and utter "*Thank God for Mississippi*" when their own states didn't place last. That's no longer the case, and Mississippi has actually set a new and higher standard for education reform in the other 49. In fact, Alabama, Tennessee and Louisiana have adopted similar literacy reforms and are experiencing similar gains.

There are reasons for caution, however: refusing to advance poor readers from the third grade to the fourth grade gives Mississippi an advantage over other school systems that automatically promote slow-learners. In other words, Mississippi has already "*skewed*" the distribution of its test-takers by selecting its more skilled readers to take the fourth-grade NAEP.

Here's an additional concern: the belated recognition of the value of phonics should not be allowed to become a weapon for corrupt and imbecilic teachers' unions to displace the movement for ***school choice***. Phonics works just as well in charter schools, private schools, and home-school settings as it does in Mississippi's public schools.

In any event, insisting on phonics to teach reading can **ONLY** be beneficial to any school system, just as Phyllis Schlafly tirelessly and patiently tried to explain to educators for 50 years.

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