

June 2, 2016

My name is Eddie Oliver. I am the Director of Research and Program Partnerships at the Baltimore Lab School. Since 2002, I have worked at Lab, which was founded by the illustrious and brilliant Sally L. Smith, my greatest teacher and mentor. Sally taught me so very much:

1. Kindergarten readiness and its measures are aligned with exploratory, research-based multi-sensory strategies that help reading. Rote worksheets which are standard practice, rarely deliver such mastery.
2. Kids don't always need more of what they're worse at. They always need more of what they're best at.
3. Brilliance and struggle co-exist, and in fact may be part of the same construct. Reading problems cut across race, income and the theoretical construct of intelligence.
4. Academic frustration, discouragement and learned helplessness are co-morbid. As you've heard from the parents testifying here, there is rarely a "pure" joy when you're not reading like your peers. That experience is painful and frustrating. There is no "pure" dyslexia.

These truths change students, families, and futures.

Like most certified teachers, I didn't learn these truths in graduate school, or when studying for my licensure as a psychologist in Maryland, Virginia *OR* Delaware. Therefore, as a psychologist at Lake Clifton High School, when called to weigh upon as reading as a "primary disability"—I wasn't prepared. As for me and many of us, learning disabilities were at the bottom of the syllabus in one class... like Cognitive Psychology. And we may have run out of time to get to that topic. I learned this because of my own need, interest and curiosity. Master's degree level school psychologists have even less formal experience in many cases.

Members of this committee—I am convinced, now more than ever, of what **Right to Read-Maryland** Chairperson, Barbara Donick, opined in the November 3rd issue of the Baltimore Sun —we have “a cure for a disease and [are] locking it in a vault!!”

There are still certified teachers who think that dyslexia is simply reversing your d's and b's {I heard this as a certified teacher's testimony in a due process hearing in February} There are still certified special educators who think that reading problems

are “expected and commensurate with a student’s ability”. [I heard this \*yesterday\* in an IEP meeting.]

It is time to move forward. Scientific practices (systematic, explicit and multi-sensory) have published outcome studies that are yellowing in the journals. Please act to revise and correct the standards for certification for all certified teachers and special educators. Please act forcefully to save children and their families from needless struggle. Please help to spread the cure.

Thank you for your time, today.

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