

In Maryland, 63 percent of 4th grade students are below proficient in reading. Scientific research has provided us the "vaccination" to prevent illiteracy, but we are not using this research because some people do not believe in "immunology."

It is fiscally beneficial to prepare our elementary teachers with the research based, foundational skills necessary to teach reading. Many of the students we teach become "special needs" students because they are victims of ineffective reading instruction in the general classroom. It is a fact that cost-per-pupil in the general education classroom is significantly lower than special education.

Op-ed writer Buzzy Hettleman refers to the work of the Kirwan Commission, which is looking for innovations to make our schools better and has the goal of Maryland having the best schools for our children (["A long overdue civil right to literacy."](#) June 12). Marc Tucker of the National Center on Education and Economy made clear to the commission that more funding is not the solution without fundamental changes in structure.

We have the knowledge to improve teacher preparation in Maryland by setting standards for the delivery of evidence-based reading instruction for pre-service teachers as well as by requiring the assessment of this knowledge for certification. We are losing generations of students by not providing the adequate instruction they deserve.

Barbara Donick