

JOINT STATEMENT ON LITERACY



Literacy is a human right.



May 3, 2021



Literacy is a human right. It is critical for the success and welfare of our community. Low level reading skills are [strongly correlated](#) with unemployment, lower wages, a life in poverty, homelessness, addiction, and poor health. Students that are not effectively taught to read are more likely to drop out of high school and to be incarcerated. Literacy affects every aspect of society; and without it, life is a greater struggle with fewer opportunities.



Despite decades of cognitive research demonstrating that students taught via methodologies aligned with the [science of reading](#) that are explicit, systematic, and cumulative [outperform those taught under the balanced literacy model](#), Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has used balanced literacy for more than 20 years. For the duration, reading scores have remained stagnant and alarmingly low. Although FCPS has renamed and repackaged its reading instruction over the years, the core tenets have not changed and remain ineffective for too many students. Further, FCPS has actively resisted a shift to an evidenced-based, structured literacy methodology for core instruction.



As a community of educators, advocates, and parents, we call on Fairfax County Public Schools to implement a comprehensive, division-wide, structured literacy program aligned with the science of reading as the core instructional model for all students in all settings. This action is imperative to ensure that all FCPS students are on the path to success regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, socioeconomic background, and religious or political beliefs.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF VIENNA

Signed,



Fairfax County NAACP
Fairfax County SEPTA
Decoding Dyslexia Virginia - Fairfax
The Arc of NoVA
Fairfax Education Association
National Korean American Service &
Education Consortium
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Greater Washington

Fairfax County Federation of Teachers
Ethiopian and Eritrean Alliance for Education
First Baptist Church of Vienna
CASA
TJ Alumni Action Group
Edu-Futuro

