Foundations for Literacy

Too many students are not adequately equipped to read and spell well.

Last year, how many of your students were not performing at or above grade level expectations?

What if, this year, every one of our students could made benchmark by the end of the year?

Every. Single. Student.

Of course, it might require that we do some things differently.

We know that what we've always done adequately serves a lot of students. Most students, even.

But what if there is a way to serve *all* students,

AND

<u>better</u> equip those kids who would have been average readers and writers…

Wouldn't it be worth a try?

If, year after year, you have some students who . . .

- are not reading at grade level expectations
- are not strong spellers
- test poorly on standardized tests such as MAP
- when reading, say *and* for *the, said* for *and, was* for *saw, etc.*
- confuse b's and d's
- say things like, "I don't know that word."
- look up in the air to try to *remember* words
- love to be read to but dislike reading on their own
- have parents who are engaged but feel helpless
- don't significantly grow their reading and spelling skills

  and you've tried EVERYTHING . . .

There is hope.

There is plentiful research that reveals highly effective, evidence-based techniques for preventing and overcoming reading difficulties.

And it's not terrible.

In fact, it can be so much fun!
You can begin implementing scientifically proven reading instruction in your classroom right away.

But . . .

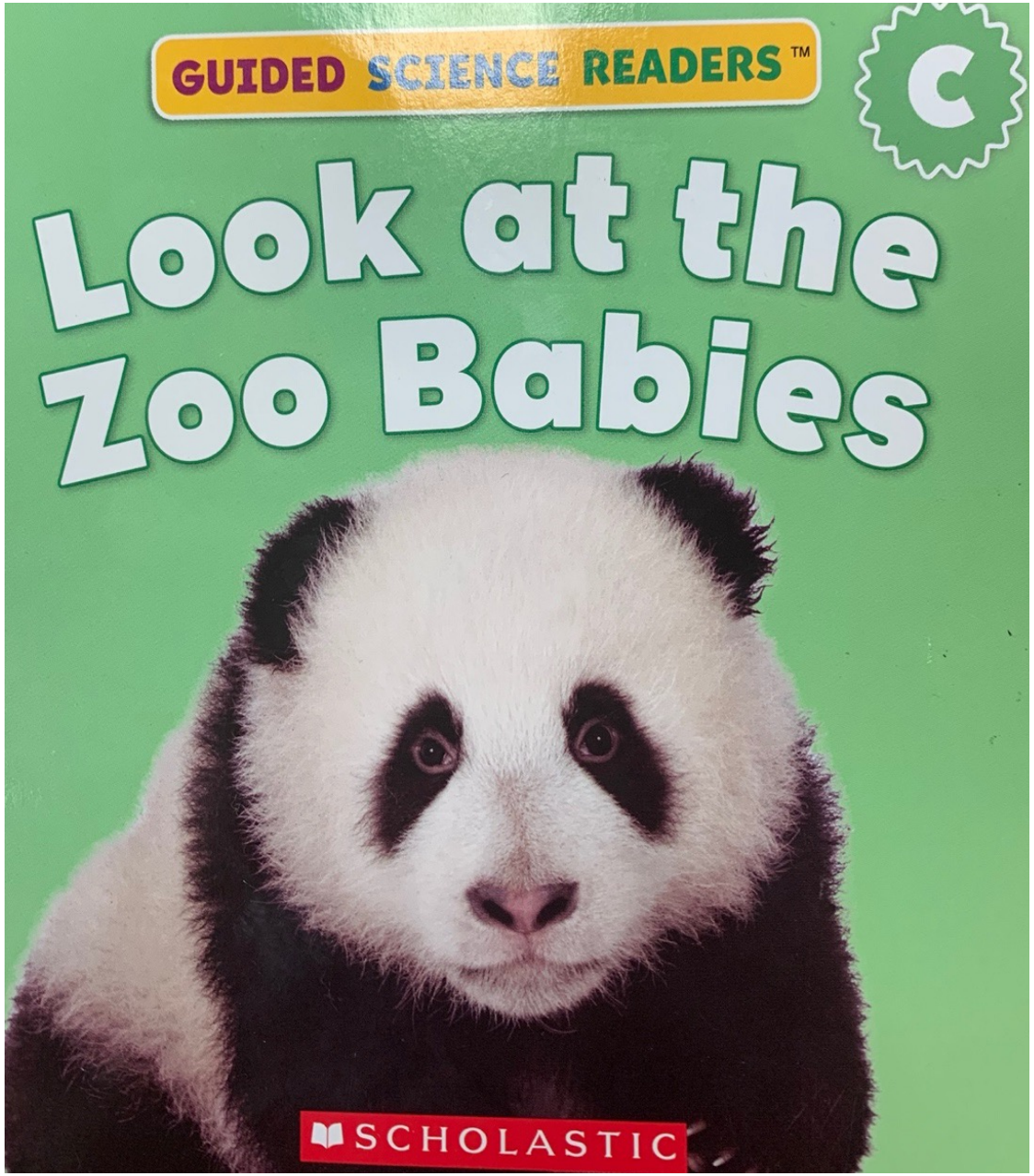
If you use the following tools for teaching kids to read . . .

- picture walks
- sight words
- word walls
- word families
- word rings
- leveled texts
- strategies for guessing words (Eagle Eye, Tryin' Lion, Skippy Frog)

<u>You are going to need to make some changes.</u>

You're probably doing precisely what you've been taught to do in your college courses, and you're probably using resources provided by your district, but . . .

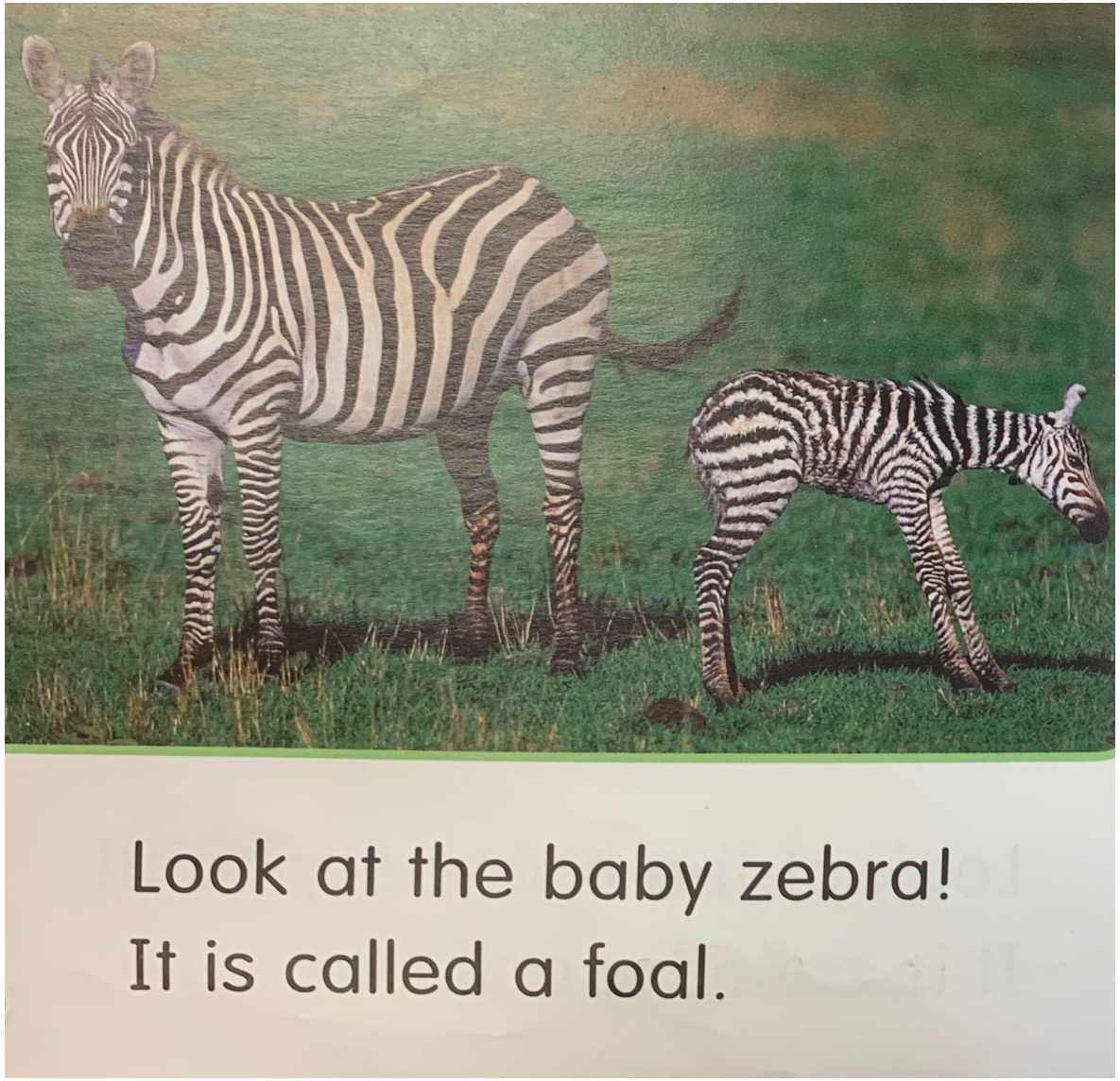
Let me show you something that you may not have thought about before.



Guided Reading Levels

	Scholastic Guided Reading Program Levels
Kindergarten	A
	B
	C
	D
Grade 1	A
	B
	C
	D
	E
	F
	G

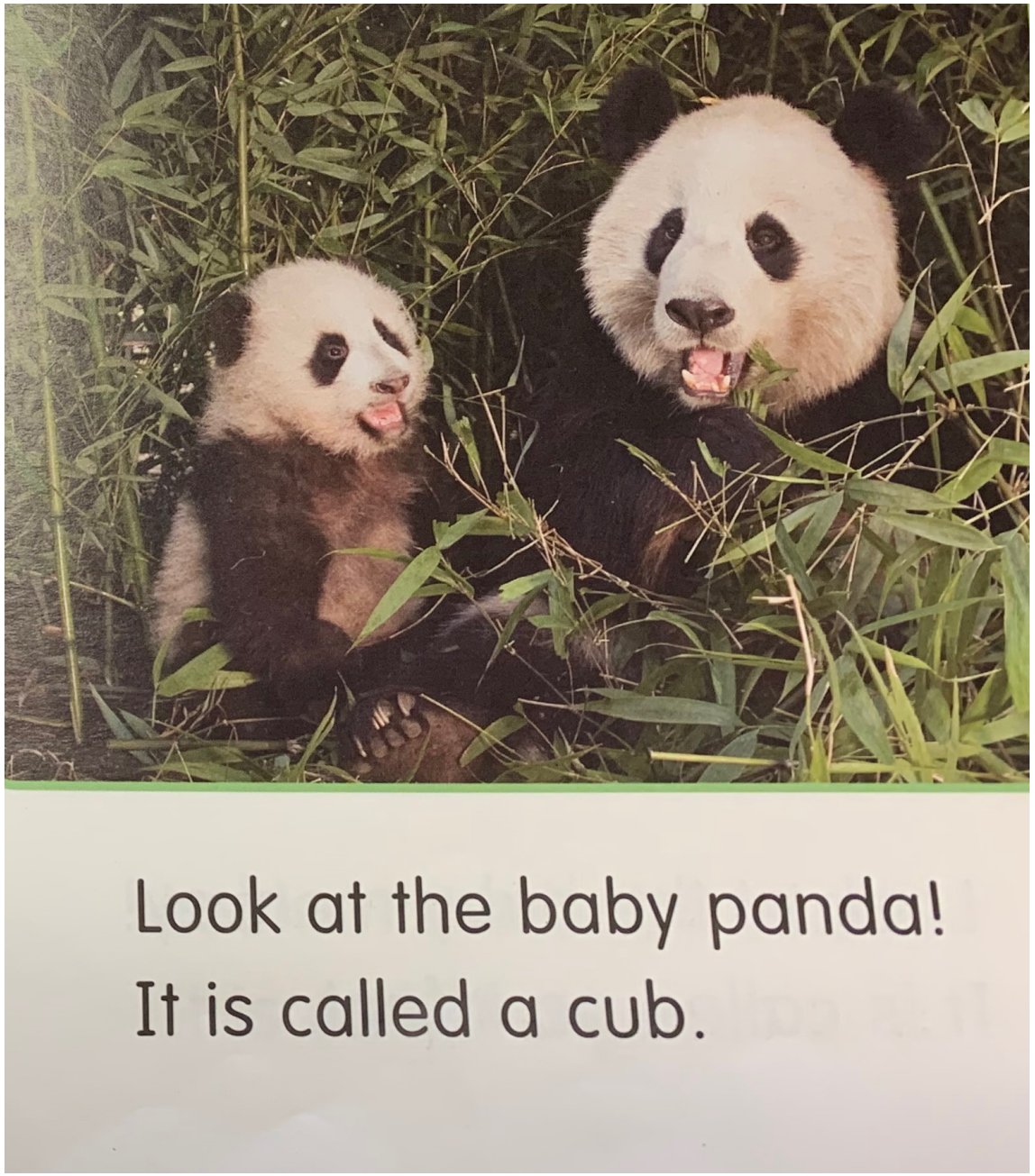
This leveled reader is for K-1 beginning readers, but . . .



Even if kids know the sounds associated with letters a-z, how are they supposed to read the words *look, baby, zebra, called,* and *foal?*

Predictable, repetitive texts assume that young readers will use the pictures and the first letter sounds to *GUESS what the words say.*

High frequency words are repeated in leveled readers with the assumption that as kids "read" them, those words will become words that are recognized "on sight." The problem is that when words are *taught* as wholes, the words are not orthographically mapped to become words instantly known on sight. These words are often confused with *other* words taught as wholes. (I've heard students say *see* for the word *look.* Have you?) And these guessing students are certainly not equipped to <u>spell</u> the words correctly.



Without . . .

1. promoting an awareness of the sounds in words, and
2. providing explicit instruction about the ways sounds can be spelled, and
3. teaching exactly how letters in words can impact one another . . .

How can beginning readers approach words like:

- *baby*
- *zebra*
- *called*
- *foal*

Reading these words requires some sophisticated phonics knowledge.

And when we tell students, when addressing more sophisticated words, to look for little words they know (have memorized) inside of big words, we're setting kids up for failure.

I see the word *of,* but this doesn't say /of-fur/

offer

I see the word not, but this doesn't say /not-hing/.

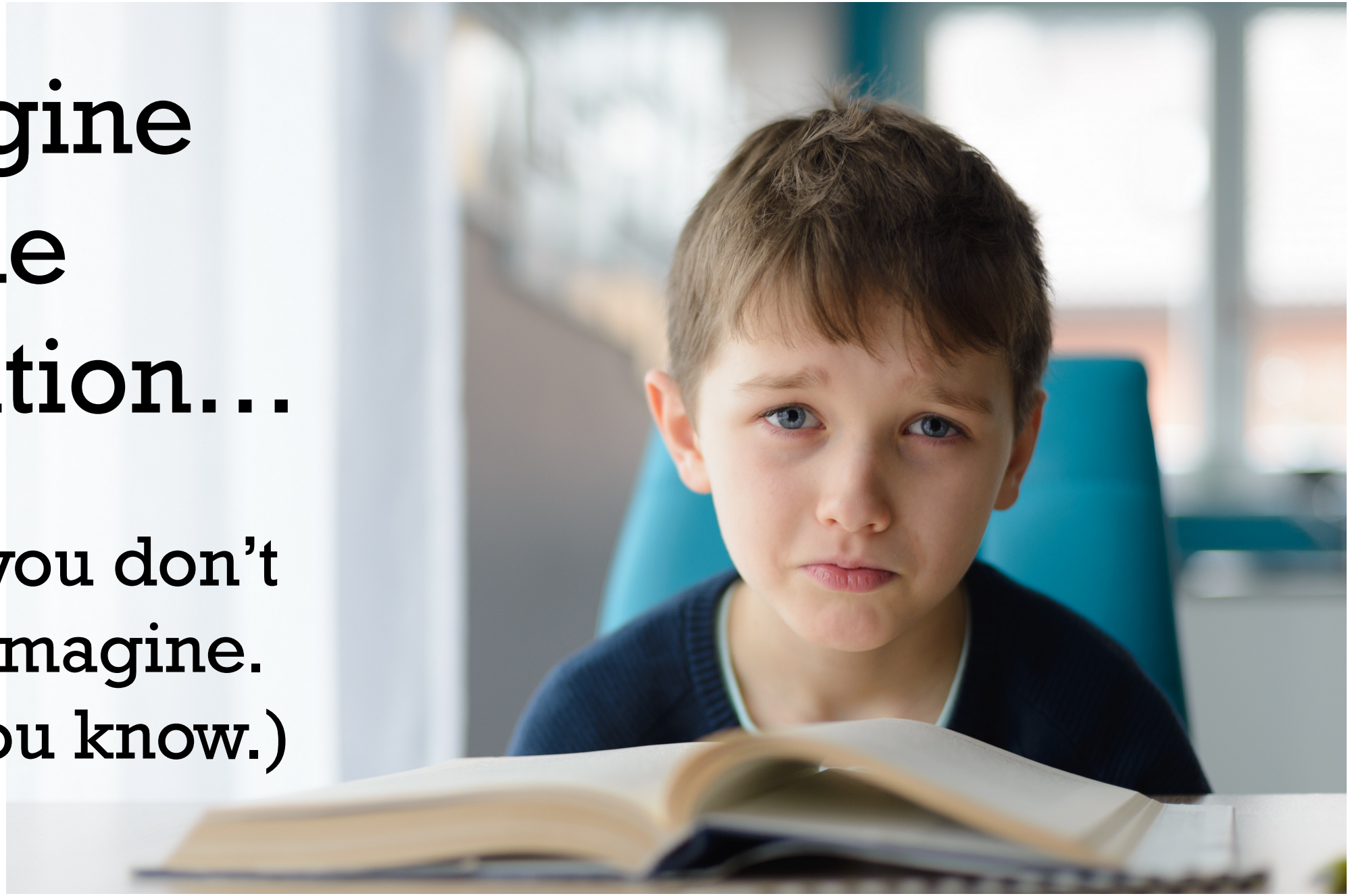
nothing

I see the word *hop*, but this doesn't say *hopping.*

hoping

Imagine the frustration…

(Maybe you don't have to imagine. Maybe you know.)



It is unfair to continually raise the expectation of reading more and more sophisticated words (raise the text demands) without equipping kids with the code upon which our language is based.

We can teach kids to read these words. It's not difficult, and it can even be a lot of fun.

It's true . . .

Some students seem to intuitively recognize words on the page, but even those kids benefit from explicit instruction.

Often, strong beginning readers hate writing because they know that much of what they're writing on their papers is not spelled correctly.

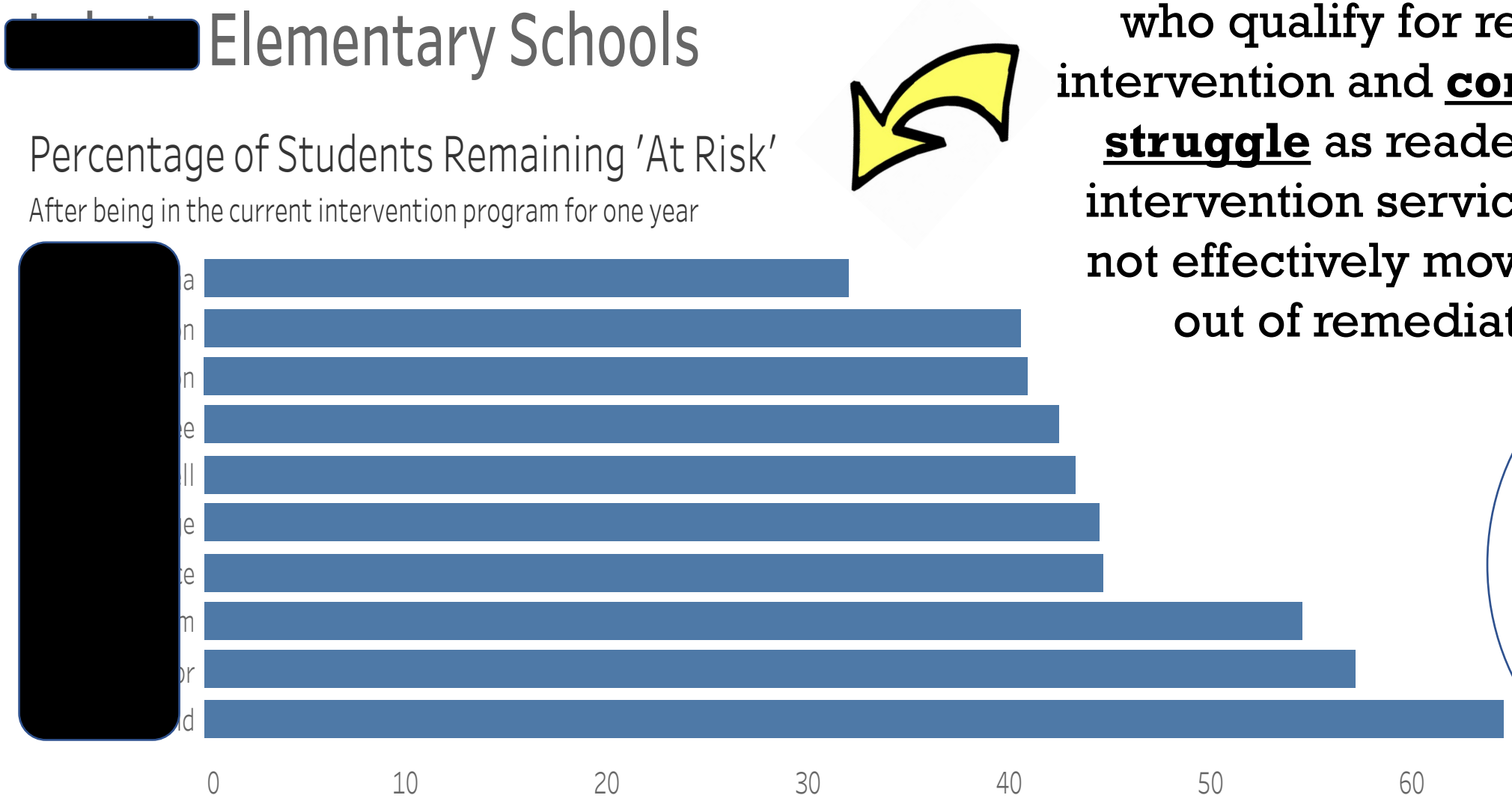
But, without being properly equipped to encode the words they want to write, the whole ordeal is entirely frustrating.

If those kids are required to use pens, it's even more frustrating because the errors are permanent. Students cannot try to fix their glaring errors even if they want to.

Every educator I know can share experiences about kids who just can’t seem to read and/or spell well. No matter what these teachers try, it doesn’t seem to move their students forward. Even intervention specialists struggle to best serve all the kids in their classrooms.

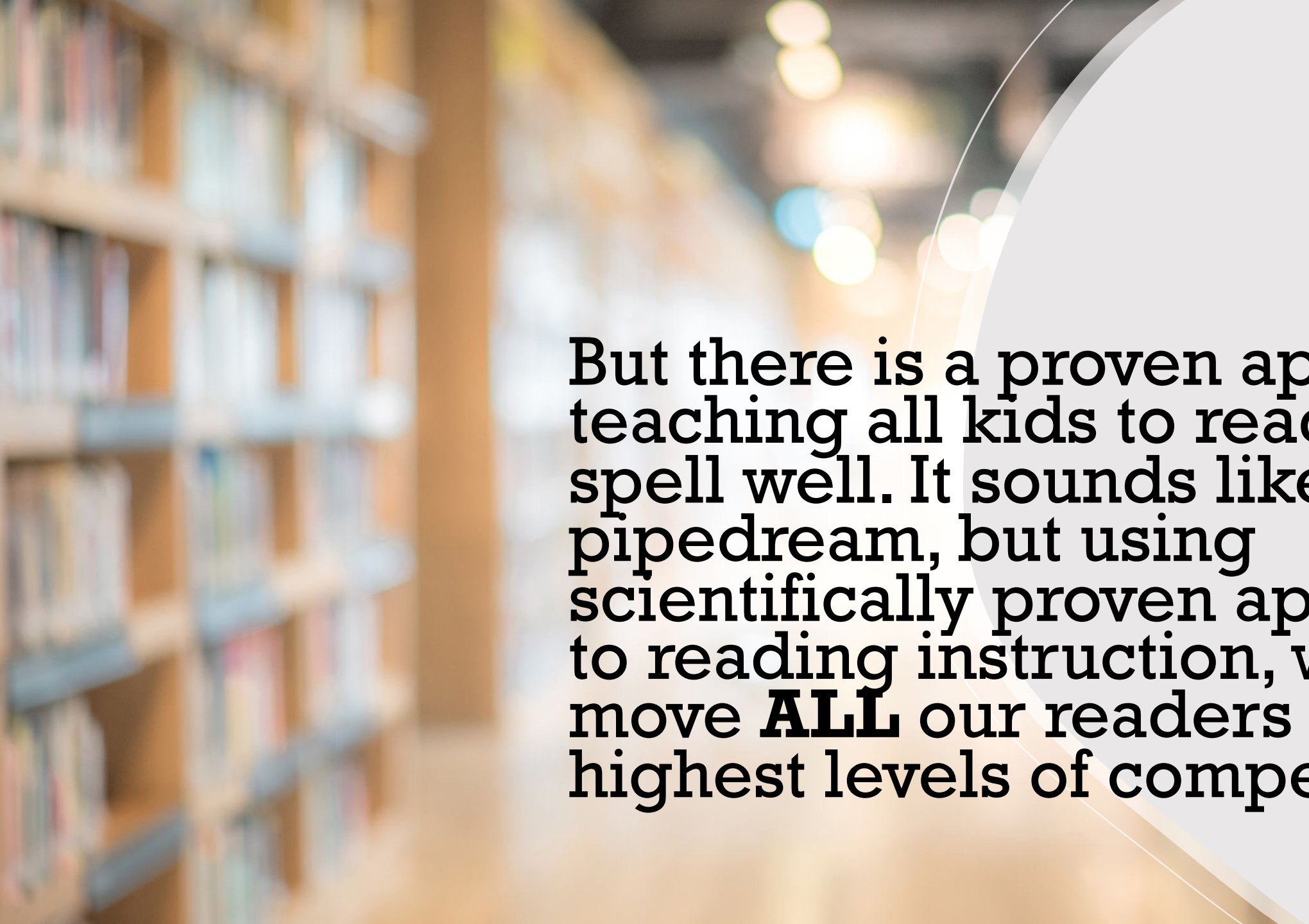
This graph represents data from my district's Ohio Report Card.

(And we're a great district!)



These blue lines represent the percentage of kids, in each elementary building, who qualify for reading intervention and **<u>continue to struggle</u>** as readers. The intervention services have not effectively moved kids out of remediation.

At best, one out of three kids struggling with learning to read continues to struggle—even with expert support. At worst, nearly 70% of those kids continue to struggle.



But there is a proven approach to teaching all kids to read and spell well. It sounds like a pipedream, but using scientifically proven approaches to reading instruction, we can move **ALL** our readers to the highest levels of competency.

Yes. We now know what it takes to equip students for outstanding success.

Not just some students . . .

All of them.

As a doctoral student, I had access to the research, and I spent more than ten years translating research studies with the best outcomes for students, into practical, fun-focused lessons that my students enjoyed and from which **every student benefitted.**

I learned that it takes more than a phonics dance to equip my students to accurately read the words on the pages of the books they long to read.

It takes explicit, systematic phonics instruction (leaning into an awareness of phonemes) that provides deliberate practice with decoding and encoding lots of words.

While serving in first and second grade classrooms, I absolutely found a way to make it FUN!

More important . . . It works.

Let's look at some data.

MAP Data, Fall to Winter

Williams, MAP Data 2018

student	fall	winter	RIT gain
[redacted]	160	170	+10
[redacted]	168	179	+11
[redacted]	176	183	+ 6
[redacted]	177	173	+ 4
[redacted]	170	183	+13
[redacted]	175	186	+11
[redacted]	178	195	+17
[redacted]	177	198	+21
[redacted]	195	198	+ 3
[redacted]	195	199	+ 4
[redacted]	176	201	+25
[redacted]	200**	202	+ 2
[redacted]	182	187	+ 5
[redacted]	178	189	+11
[redacted]	196	192	+ 4
[redacted]	175	194	+19
[redacted]	155	151	+ 4
[redacted]	209*	209	+ 0
[redacted]	150	163	+13
[redacted]	166	170	+ 4
[redacted]	166	170	+ 4

It is difficult to demonstrate RIT gains for the winter MAP assessment. Typically, the greatest growth is revealed in the spring— especially for the higher scoring students. With the Foundations for Literacy curriculum, we spend the first semester solidifying foundational skills so we can enjoy the stretch into more rigorous projects that require strong reading and writing skills the next semester. Stretching PA and phonics lessons across the year is a mistake. We want our students to have mastery ASAP.

In my district, we used the RTI process is for remediating students who need more explicit instruction and deliberate practice than is offered in the classroom (Tier 1).

2nd Grade MAP Reading Achievement Norms, 2020

Fall	Winter	Spring
172.35	181.20	185.57

DR. CHRISTINA WILLIAMS
drchristinawilliams.com

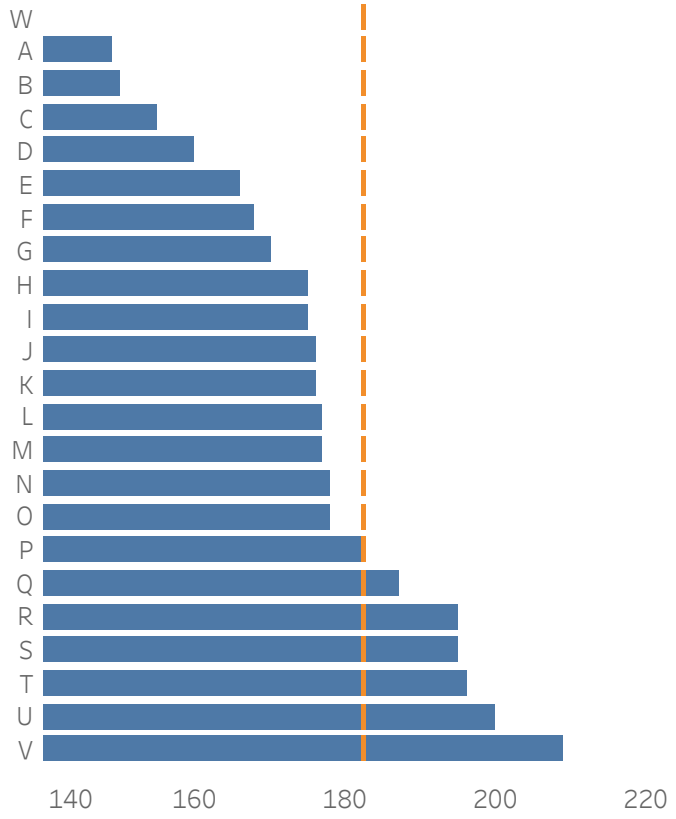
**The student who scored 209 in the fall & winter earned a 221 in the spring.*
***The student who scored 200 in the fall earned a 218 in the spring.*
Strong readers have plenty of opportunity for growth-- far beyond grade level expectations.

Reading Score Improvements

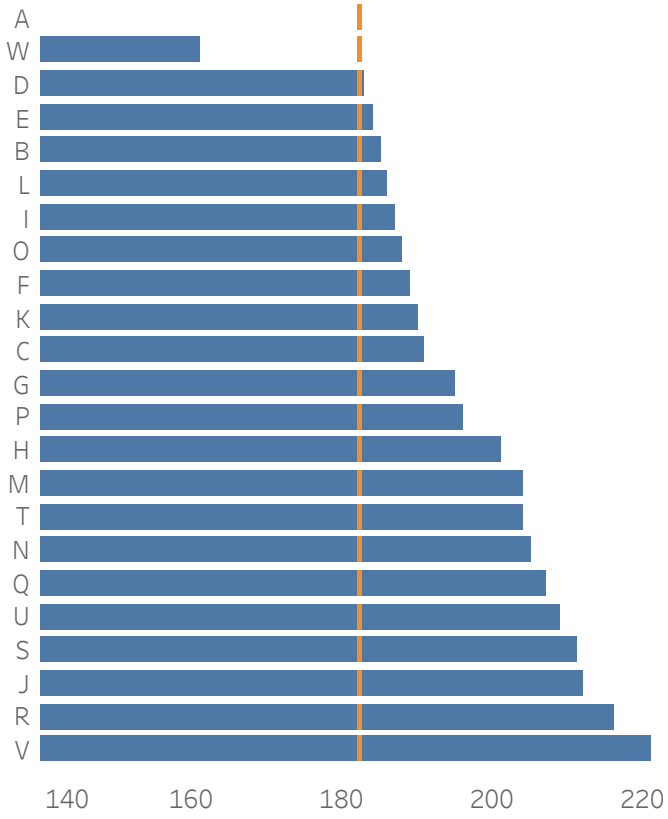
with Dr. Christina Williams

Average Fall Score	Average Improvement	Average Spring Score
177	20	197

Fall Reading Scores



Spring Reading Scores



These are MAP scores from fall to spring, arranged from lowest scoring to highest. Remember, I had every second grader who was struggling with reading. Some were on IEPs, many on RIMPs, and some were diagnosed with dyslexia and/or ADHD.

*Student A was not required to take the MAP test in the spring. Student W was a student who arrived in my classroom in the spring.

2020 Reading Student Achievement Norms						
	Fall		Winter		Spring	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	136.65	12.22	146.28	11.78	153.09	12.06
1	155.93	12.66	165.85	13.21	171.40	14.19
2	172.35	15.19	181.20	15.05	185.57	15.49
3	186.62	16.65	193.90	16.14	197.12	16.27
4	196.67	16.78	202.50	16.25	204.83	16.31
5	204.48	16.38	209.12	15.88	210.98	15.97
6	210.17	16.46	213.81	15.98	215.36	16.03
7	214.20	16.51	217.09	16.21	218.36	16.38
8	218.01	17.04	220.52	16.69	221.66	16.87
9	218.90	19.02	220.52	18.73	221.40	19.03
10	221.47	17.92	222.91	17.81	223.51	18.20
11	223.53	17.73	224.64	17.80	224.71	18.50
12	223.80	19.32	223.85	21.21	224.33	23.08

Note that scores in the low 200s are generally associated with grades 4 (mid-year) and above. Some of my students scored around 210 and those scores are generally associated with grades five and above.

When kids have a strong foundation, they're equipped to move far beyond grade level expectations.

I have been out of the classroom for a couple of years now. I wanted to expand my reach beyond the 25-28 students I could serve in a single year. I have worked with LOTS of students who've made tremendous gains. Here's one student's growth (pre-COVID):

Reading

Alison	MAP 2018-2019		Grade 2, age 7	
fall RIT:	158	percentile: 14	typical growth:	17
winter RIT:	165	percentile: 10	(Don't panic…)	
spring RIT:	202	percentile: 81	actual growth:	44

I began working with Alison just before she entered her second-grade classroom. The school wanted to remove her from second grade and place her into first grade based on her initial MAP data. Her parents did not follow their advice. I worked with Alison, as a tutor, one to two days a week for an hour each session. Look at her growth!

When interviewing for a role leading a district into evidence-based reading and spelling instruction (scientifically supported practice), an interviewer asked, *"How do we know, Dr. Williams, that the gains your students achieved were a result of your curriculum and not on the fact that you're simply an outstanding teacher?"* I didn't have a good answer for that. But now I do. I have trained hundreds of teachers to use the Foundations for Literacy curriculum, and they are experiencing similar gains with their students!

FOUNDATIONS FOR LITERACY

Making Raising Readers Fun!

If you are interested in using the Foundations for Literacy phonics curriculum as a part of your reading and spelling instruction, email me at christy@bookbums.com.

I'm eager to help you get started!