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NATIONAL READING PANEL
SUPPORTS PHONICS

HON. DAVID M. McINTOSH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2000

Mr. McINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, a parent in Indiana shared with me this touching story, "When my son was in first grade, he used to say, 'I hate school, how old do you have to be to quit.' He was so frustrated because he couldn't read. The school did not 'believe' in phonics. When my son learned the Direct Approach, he got the 'tools' he needed to read. The logical approach made sense to him. He started reading on his own instead of me reading to him. With only one year of the smart chart, in second grade, he scored 4th grade reading equivalency on the Stanford Achievement test. Pretty amazing!"

This success story could be repeated again and again if schools took the initiative this caring parent took to help her child learn to read by teaching him phonics. Unfortunately, many elementary schools do not teach phonics and more than a few teacher colleges do not teach teachers this instruction technique.

Recently, however, I became optimistic that many more schools will choose to adopt phonics. My optimism stems from the release of the National Reading Panel's report on successful reading strategies. On April 13, 2000, the Congressionally mandated National Reading Panel released its findings which support the teaching of phonics, word sounds, and giving feedback on oral reading as the most effective way to teach reading.

The Panel, selected by the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in consultation with the U.S. Secretary of Education, was composed of 14 individuals including leading scientists in reading research, representatives of colleges of education, reading teachers, educational administrators, and parents. During the past two years, members reviewed thirty years of reading research studies.

The panel found that for children to read well, they must be taught phonemic awareness—the ability to manipulate the sounds that make up spoken language and phonics skills—an understanding of the relationship between words and sounds.

The panel concluded that research literature provides hard evidence that phonics provides significant benefits to children from kindergarten through the 6th grade and to children with learning difficulties. The panel recommends systematic phonics instruction which provides the greatest improvements. Systematic phonics consists of teaching a planned sequence of phonics elements, rather than highlighting elements as they happen to appear in a text.

The importance of these findings cannot be overstated. America suffers from a reading deficit. The 1998 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) has found that 69% of 4th grade students are reading below

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

the proficient level. Minority children have been particularly hard hit by reading difficulties. According to NAEP, 90 percent of African American, 86 percent of Hispanic, 63 Percent of Asian students were reading below the proficient level.

The cost to those who never learn to read adequately is much higher than that. Job prospects for those who cannot read are few. Americans who cannot read are cut off from the rich opportunities this nation has to offer. And the tragedy is that students who can't read often end up in juvenile hall, or on the street susceptible to drugs, or school drop outs.

Many students will not get a second chance. Andrea Neal, the Chief Editorial Writer for the Indianapolis Star who has been closely following this issue puts it this way, "It is reasonable and necessary to require elementary teachers be trained in the most effective phonetic programs. To do otherwise is to commit educational malpractice on our children."

The National Reading Panel's report provides teachers and teacher colleges information to prevent instructional malpractice. As the most comprehensive evidenced-based review ever conducted of research on how children learn reading, this report can be a powerful tool in fight against ineffective reading instruction and illiteracy, if we choose to use it.

I urge my colleagues to read the report and disseminate its findings through their respective districts.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ADELPHI
UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL
WORK

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2000

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, social workers are the people who translate their education and training into commitment to making a difference in all aspects of people's lives. They are everywhere: in the courts, healthcare settings, schools, public and private agencies, congressional offices and industry, just to name a few. Often the public decries social problems that they would like solved; these are the people who work on a daily basis with individuals affected by them.

In order for social workers to maintain their high standard of care, they need the knowledge and skills required to assess the biological, interpersonal, environmental, cultural, and organizational components of people's problems. Adelphi University's School of Social Work has spent the past five decades educating and training individuals for roles and careers in the social welfare system.

The School of Social Work first opened its doors in 1949 in response to the increased need for social and community services. Over the past 50 years, it has sent countless professional social workers into the world to facilitate social as well as individual change with families, groups communities, and individuals. Graduates of Adelphi's School of Social Work have become practitioners, executives, administrators, faculty members and deans of professional schools.

May 3, 2000

By recognizing the increased demand for social work education, Adelphi has created numerous programs over the 5 decades to accommodate the needs of its students. The list includes part-time study, weekend and evening classes. A curriculum continuum from undergraduate to graduate education was created in 1969, and a Doctorate of Social Welfare program was adopted in 1975.

The school's staff is widely published, and they continue to provide superior professional education to future generations of social workers. They have a history of concern for social policy and social welfare. This is reflected by the operation of Adelphi's social agency by faculty, students, community professionals and volunteers. Current programs include the Breast Cancer Support Program and Hotline, the Refugee Assistance Program (RAP), and the Long Island Coalition for Full Employment.

In 1949, the School of Social Work admitted 25 students, and in 1951 graduated 23. It now boasts four campuses with nearly 850 students enrolled in Bachelor, Master and Doctoral programs. As the Adelphi School of Social Work celebrates its 50th anniversary, I applaud its strong commitment to the ongoing enhancement of social work knowledge, values, and skills, and its successful preparation of countless professionals who continue to meet the needs of an ever-changing society.

TRIBUTE TO STAN SMITH

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to my friend Stan Smith, who is retiring after 25 years of distinguished service for San Francisco's working families as the Secretary Treasurer/Business Representative of the San Francisco Building & Construction Trades Council.

Stan's lifelong commitment to organized labor began in 1955 when he entered the building trades as an apprentice glazier. He became a journeyman in 1958. His exceptional skills and devotion to assisting his fellow workers were recognized in his election as President of Glaziers Union Local #718 in 1958, an office he held until 1965. Stan's selfless dedication to the causes of organized labor was further demonstrated when he was elected Field Representative of Local #718 in 1965. In this position, he was tireless in the pursuit of justice, and he was masterful in settling grievances, bargaining, and resolving disputes arising during the collective bargaining process.

Mr. Speaker, Stan Smith's stellar career culminated in his election to the office of Secretary Treasurer/Business Representative of the San Francisco Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO. In this position, Stan has worked tirelessly to bring prosperity and security to Bay Area working families. He was an exceptionally able steward of all of San Francisco's construction unions, and in this position assured their full participation in the prosperity that we have enjoyed in the Bay Area.