


Illiteracy: Education and Economic Impact

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Mississippi Literacy Summit, 2019

1

Major Sources on Importance of Early Literacy

1. Annie E. Casey Foundation - *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, 2010
2. Annie E. Casey Foundation - *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*, 2012
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018
4. National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) - Sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

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2

Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters

Summary

- **Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a crucial marker in a child's educational development.** Failure to read proficiently is linked to higher rates of school dropout, which suppresses individual earning potential as well as the nation's competitiveness and general productivity.
- **Low state standards mask the extent of America's low reading proficiency.** Each state sets its own standard and uses its own test to measure proficiency. Children in many states may be nominally proficient but still lack the skills to actually read at the level required to learn efficiently in fourth grade and beyond.
- **Several factors contribute to low reading proficiency.** At a minimum, children must be ready to succeed when they get to school before they can learn there. They need to show up and have high quality learning opportunities, beginning at birth and continuing in school and during out-of-school time, including summers, in order to sustain learning gains and not lose ground.
- **Getting more young children to read proficiently is no mission impossible.** Much is already known about how people learn to read and how to impart reading skills. The problem is that policies and funding streams are too fragmented, programs too segmented by children's age and grade, and key interventions too partial to get widespread, positive results.
- **Due to many education factors at the time, it was determined it was the right time to take on the challenge** of dramatically increasing the number of children, especially from low-income families, who read proficiently.

Annie E. Casey Foundation - Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters, 2010



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3

3

Double Jeopardy

How Third-Grade Reading Skills And Poverty Influence High School Graduation

Background:

- Educators have long recognized the importance of mastering reading by the end of third grade
- Students who fail to reach this milestone often falter in the later grades and drop out of school
- **Double Jeopardy is the first national study to confirm the link between third grade reading skills/poverty rates and high school graduation**

The Study:

- National databased of 3,975 students born between 1979-1989
- Children's parents were surveyed every two years to determine family's economic status and other factors
- Children's reading progress was tracked using the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) Reading Recognition subtest.
- The database reports whether students have finished high school by age 19, but does not indicate whether they actually dropped out.
- Researchers divided the children into three reading groups that correspond roughly to the skill levels used in NAEP: proficient, basic or below basic.
- Children were also divided by family income and the poverty levels in the neighborhoods they lived in.



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4

4

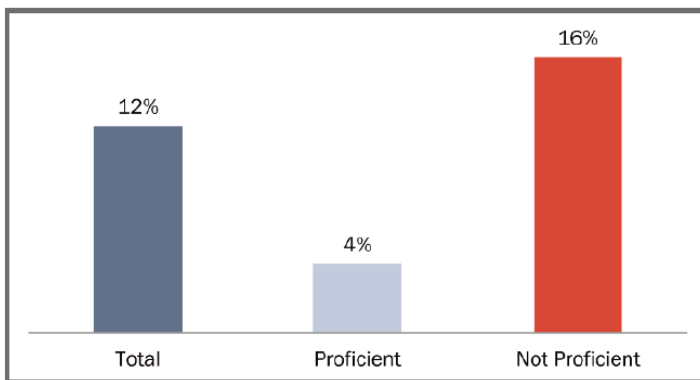
Double Jeopardy



How Third-Grade Reading Skills Influence High School Graduation

- 1 in 6 children who are not reading proficiently in 3rd grade fail to graduate from high school
- That's 4 times the rate for children with proficient 3rd grade reading skills

Children Not Graduating from High School by Age 19



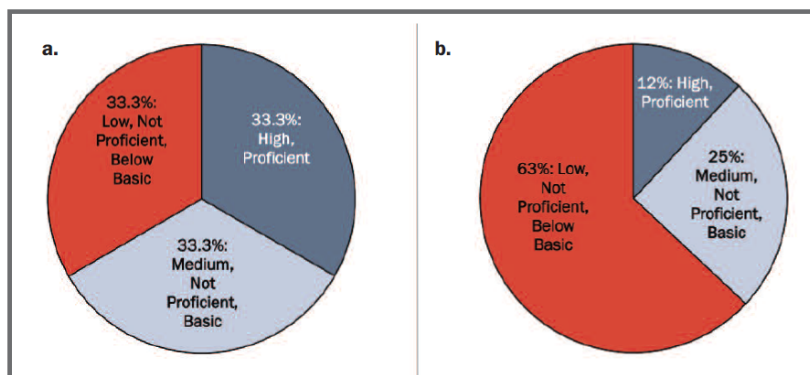
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Double Jeopardy



How Third-Grade Reading Influence High School Graduation

- a. 3rd Grade Reading Test Scores, All Children b. Children Not Graduating High School by 3rd Grade Reading Test Scores, All Children



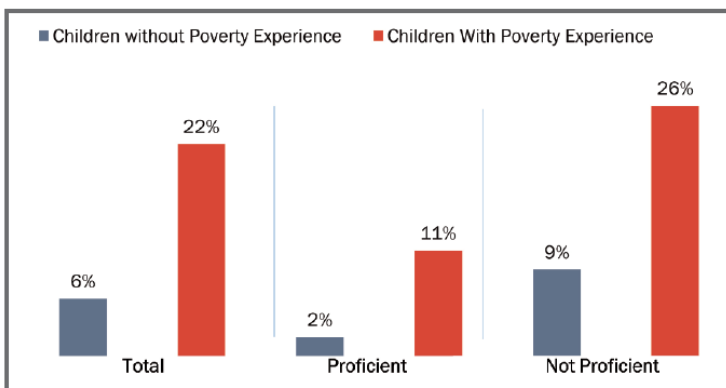
88% of students who failed to earn a high school diploma were struggling readers in third grade.

6

Double Jeopardy



Children Not Graduating from High School by Age 19, by Poverty Experience and Reading Proficiency



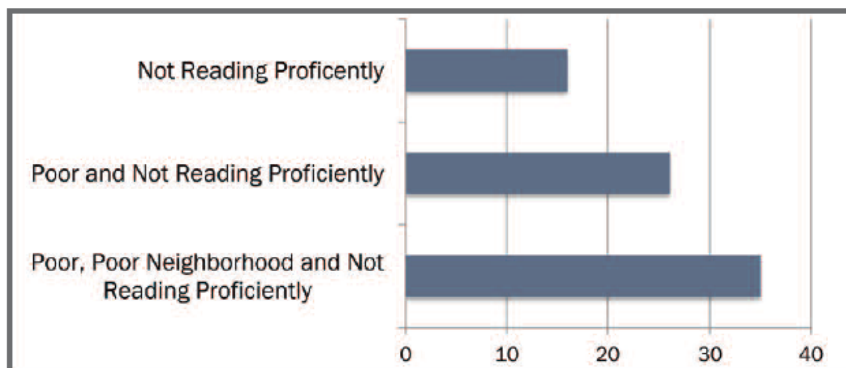
Chances of not graduating high school for children with poverty experience and not reading proficiently **nearly triples** those not proficient in reading without a poverty experience.

7

Double Jeopardy



Likelihood of Not Graduating from High School Based on Risk Factors



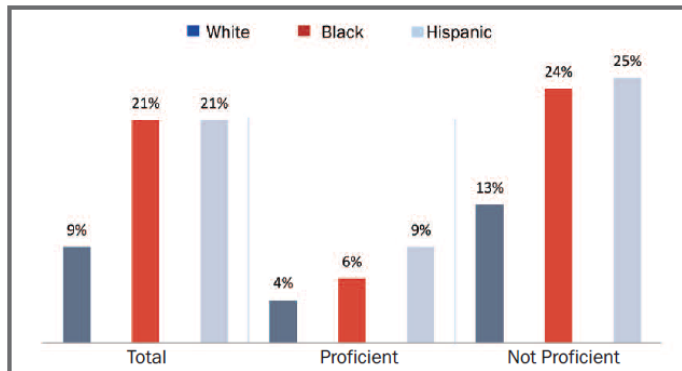
The more risk factors the more likely a student will not graduate from high school.

8

Double Jeopardy



Children Not Graduating by Race-Ethnicity & Reading Ability



White – inability to read triples chance of not graduating high school

Black – inability to read quadruples chance of not graduating high school

Hispanic – inability to read nearly triples chance of not graduating high school

9

Double Jeopardy



How Third-Grade Reading Skills And Poverty Influence High School Graduation

Summary of Findings

- About 16% of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate 4 times greater than that for proficient readers.
- Overall, 22% of children who lived in poverty do not graduate from high school, compared to 6% of those who have never been poor. The figure rises to 32% for students spending more than half of their childhood in poverty.
- About 31% of low-income African-American students and 33% of low-income Hispanic students who did not hit the third-grade proficiency mark failed to graduate.

Major finding:

The racial and ethnic graduation gaps disappear when students master reading by the end of third grade and are not living in poverty.

10

Reading is Both an Education and Economic Problem

Dropping out of high school is correlated with lower employment prospects, teen and young adult pregnancy, and incarceration.

- Every student who does not complete high school costs our society an estimated \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes, and productivity. (Early Warning!)
- High school dropouts also are more likely than those who graduate to be arrested or have a child while still a teenager. (Early Warning!)
- There is a strong connection between early low literacy skills and our country's exploding incarceration rates. (<https://literacymidsouth.wordpress.com/2016/03/16/incarceration-and-low-literacy/>)
- Based on [recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), high school dropouts are nearly three times more likely to be unemployed than college graduates.
- High school dropouts potential yearly earnings is more than 50% less than that of someone who earns a Bachelor's Degree. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters

11

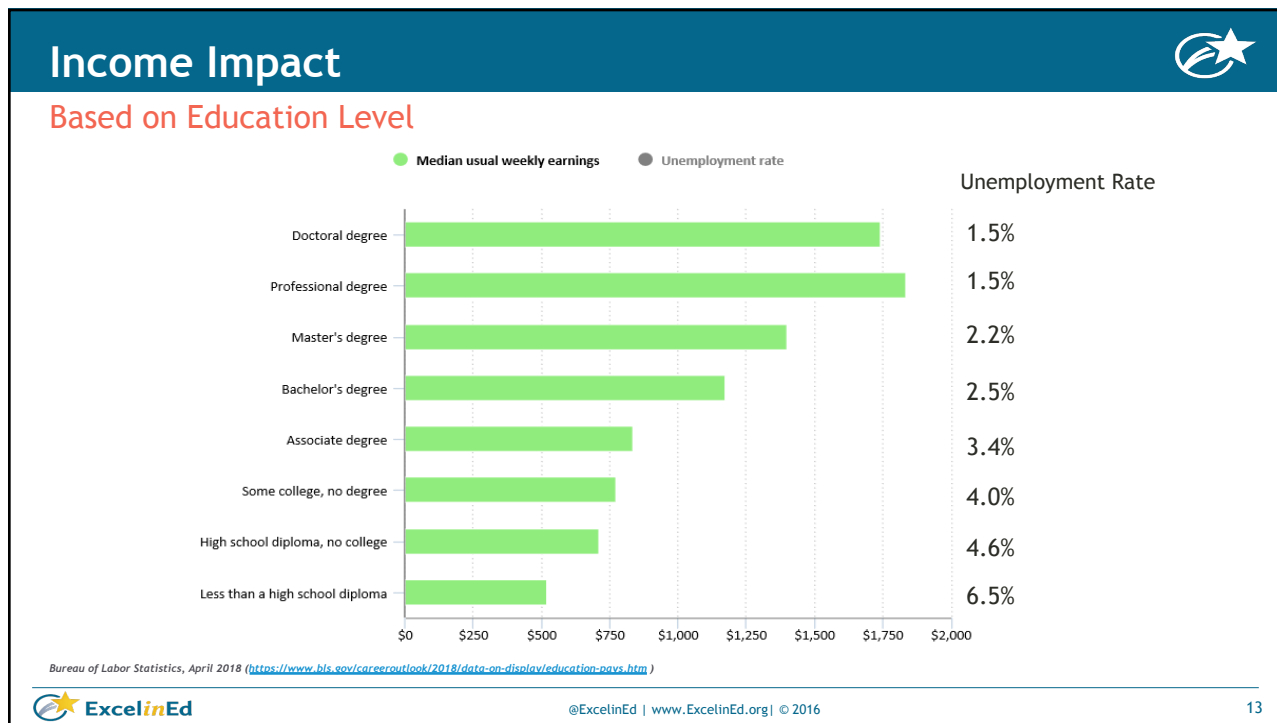
The Relationship Between Incarceration and Low Literacy

Politicians and journalists often claim prison planners use third grade reading scores to predict the number of future prison beds needed. While it has been found this claim is [mostly urban myth](#), there is in fact a strong connection between early low literacy skills and our country's exploding incarceration rates. Compelling statistics underscore this connection:

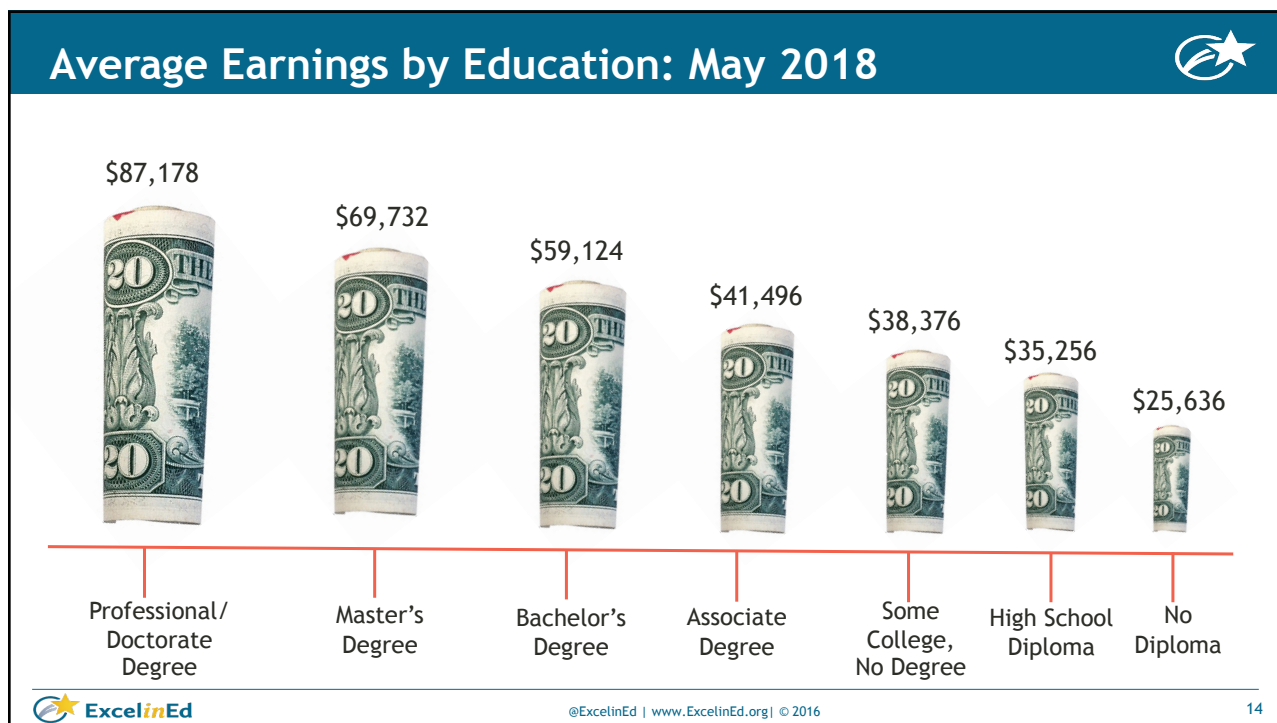
- 85 percent of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are [functionally low literate](#).
- Juvenile incarceration [reduces the probability of high school completion and increases the probability of incarceration](#) later in life.
- High school dropouts are [3.5 times more likely than high school graduates](#) to be arrested in their lifetime.
- High school dropouts are [63% more likely to be incarcerated](#) than their peers with four-year college degrees.
- Mississippi has the [second highest incarceration rate in the nation](#). The average adult inmate reads on a sixth-grade level when admitted. Half of the state's inmates never finished high school.

<https://literacymidsouth.wordpress.com/2016/03/16/incarceration-and-low-literacy/>

12




13




14

Reading is Both an Education and Economic Problem



Students who are not reading proficiently in third grade:

- 4 x Are four times more likely to not to graduate high school.
- 6 x African American and Hispanic students not reading proficiently in third grade are six times more likely to drop out or fail to graduate from high school.
- 8 x Low-income minority students not reading proficiently in third grade are eight times more likely to drop out or fail to graduate from high school.




7 out of every 10 inmates cannot read above a fourth grade level

High School Dropouts:

Aren't eligible for
90%
of the jobs in the economy.

Yearly earnings is more than
50%
less than that of someone who earns a Bachelor's Degree.

Make-up nearly
50%
of all heads-of-households on welfare.



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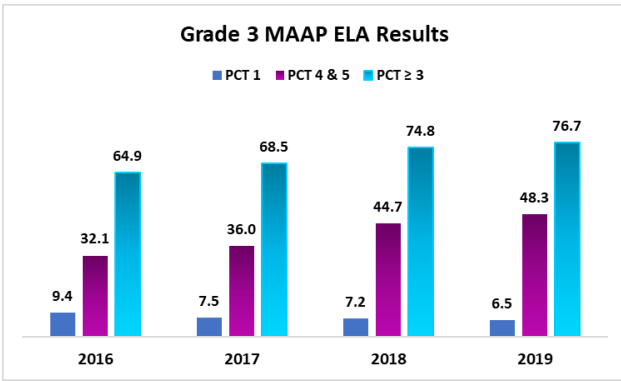
15

15

So, What Can We Do About This?


Make Early Literacy Your Number 1 Priority

The Literacy-Based Promotion Act is a great start!



Year	PCT 1	PCT 4 & 5	PCT ≥ 3
2016	9.4	32.1	64.9
2017	7.5	36.0	68.5
2018	7.2	44.7	74.8
2019	6.5	48.3	76.7

Brainstorm: In your role, what can be done to improve grade level reading by the end of third grade? (Business leader, grass-roots organization, district, school, principal, teacher, coach, parent, community members, etc.)



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16

16



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Thank You!

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17