

November 9, 2023

To: Interested Parties

Fr: Brian Stryker, Impact Research / Robert Blizzard, Public Opinion Strategies

Re: Findings from National Poll of K-5 Parents

Nearly half of parents report their children are struggling to read or have struggled to read, and a plurality of parents believe kids' reading skills have declined compared with past generations. When told how bad the problem is, parents see a crisis in reading education.

Parents already agree with the science of reading: they intuitively understand phonics is the way kids should learn, and nearly 80% favor ending cueing and moving fully to phonics to teach reading.

- **Reading education is far and away the top education priority for K-5 parents.** 77% of parents ranked reading as the #1 most important priority for their child's education, over math (16%, science (4%), or social studies (3%).
- **Nearly half of parents say their child struggled with learning to read at some point and think reading skills have declined compared with the past.** 47% say their child is either currently struggling with learning how to read or did at some point in the past. A similar share, 46%, said kids in K-12 on average are reading worse than in the past, while only 27% say they are reading better.
 - After being informed of 2022 NAEP reading proficiency scores among 4th graders, parents are deeply concerned about reading instruction. A 61% majority say reading is going poorly or in a crisis, with 37% calling it a full crisis.
- **Parents are teaching their kids to read primarily through phonics.** 86% have heard of "phonics" and 92% have heard of "sound-it-out" as techniques of teaching kids to read. Currently, 71% of K-5 parents say their child's school uses "sound-it-out" to teach kids to read, though the survey does not confirm whether that is actually happening or merely a parent perception.
- **Three-fourths or more of parents support teaching phonics instead of cueing in reading instruction.** Overall, 80% support their state teaching phonics, not cueing, in reading instruction, and 74% support their local school district doing so.

These findings are based on the results of an online poll of n=800 K-5 parents nationwide conducted by Impact Research in conjunction with Public Opinion Strategies. Survey interviews were collected between October 2-9, 2023.

Do you favor or oppose your _____ teaching phonics, not cueing, in reading instruction?

