

Episode Title: The Science of Reading: A Conversation with Beaver Run Elementary

You are listening to the Maryland EdCast. On Maryland EdCast, State Superintendent of Schools, Mohammed Choudhury, discusses education practices, priorities, and policies with a wide range of Marylanders. Superintendent Choudhury is laser focused on transformational education, research, and best practices to ensure all Maryland students realize their full potential.

Superintendent Choudhury: Welcome! I am Mohamed Choudhary, State Superintendent of Maryland Schools and host of Maryland EdCast. Today, I am talking with educators from Beaver Run Elementary in Wicomico County about their experience implementing the science of reading. It is important for the State Board and MSDE to understand the science of reading from a practitioner's perspective since this is a flagship strategy for our ready to read strategic plan priority that ensures every student is proficient in reading by third grade.

Throughout the conversation, we'll prioritize the most impactful practices and think through the implications for policymaking. Joining us are second grade teacher, Mrs. Ashley Johnson, and Salisbury University graduate and former intern, Ms. Lexi Swink from Beaver Run Elementary. Before we dive into our discussion, I want to give them a chance to introduce themselves. Would you like to start, Ms. Johnson?

Ashley Johnson: Hi, my name is Ashley Johnson. I am a second-grade teacher over at Beaver Run Elementary School. I've been teaching here for 10 years. Eight years was in kindergarten before I made the awesome jump into second grade, so I just finished my second year in second.

Lexi Swink: I'm Lexi Swink, a former Salisbury University intern. I just graduated in the winter, and I will be teaching in Frederick County.

Superintendent Choudhury: Awesome. Just making sure you're staying in Maryland and you're not going off somewhere else. So that's important. Thank you for joining me today. I really appreciate the time you guys make, have made, especially going into the summer. This discussion is very important to me because one, we know that research shows that the development and mastery of early literacy skills are a strong predictor of later school reading and math. Achievement, and we also have strong research showing just life outcomes as well. Um, it's crucial that all Maryland students are able to successfully transition from learning to read to reading to learn, especially between third and fourth grade.

Reading proficiently is increasingly important after third grade and students that are behind are at higher risk of not finishing high school, college and career ready. Thousands of Maryland children reach fourth grade without learning to read proficiently, so we have a lot of work to do, and our best shot is especially in those early grades, and, and, and definitely by the time they leave elementary school, because it just gets harder and harder after that.

The shortfall is especially pronounced among our students who are economically disadvantaged, so we have work to do. Failure to read proficiently is linked to higher rates of school dropout, which limits individual earning potential, as well as Maryland's competitiveness and productivity. Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a crucial marker for Maryland's educational, a child's educational development.

Um, we know even our, um, State tests in mathematics is a literacy test as well, right? It's very heavy on content. So, all those things matter, given the power of reading. So today, We're really here to really get the practitioner's perspective and around your journey around the science of reading. We've known this for decades.

It's not anything new. It's just, you know, reading has kind of gone through these, what I'm going to call a culture war of sorts, where it's like, hey, you know. We're not going to teach reading this way, we're going to do it this way, even though the science has, has said for many, many years that we have. So, there's been a reckoning nationally over the last several years, and that reckoning has that coined the phrase science of reading, but it's one thing to say it out loud.

It's another thing to execute it, especially when you think about veterans who may have not. Been doing it and being able to unlearn things and add new strategies, not sure where your journey was in that maybe you came out of a prep program and we're in schools that already equipped to you and you were an island to yourself, given everything else going on.

Or maybe you did have to go through that, that shift in changing practices. So really interested in hearing that. So again, what we're most interested in is hearing your individual journey in this, and all of this has policy implications for us. Because remember, the State Board and I are in the business of policymaking.

At the end of the day, Policies set the conditions for our students and teachers to thrive, or policies set the conditions to make people lost and confused, or limit their ability to grow and thrive, right? So, all those things matter. And so, why don't we start with you, Ashley? Tell us about your training in the science of reading and what your current understanding and development and journey has been of it. And then from there, we'll go off to what Lexi's experience has been as an intern in your classroom as she goes off to Frederick County.

Ashley Johnson: Yeah, absolutely. You mentioned about some of those more veteran teachers having to unlearn certain things that they've been teaching all this time. I guess what I consider a great thing for that change.

Into the science of reading. So, I started my first year in second grade, not exactly knowing how to teach second grade. So, I immediately was trained in letters. Um, they are a science of reading based training company that teach you. They start with a background knowledge of science of reading the why we're going with it and the Scarborough's reading rope.

Right? So, you're learning all of the mechanisms of the brain and how students learn to read. So that was really good to start my year off because it just made everything that we started to implement make sense. We started with looking at our data from I ready testing because we administer that three times a year and are really seeing a deficit and phonological awareness.

Students can't manipulate sounds. So, what did we do? We implemented a new program called integrity and students practiced 10, 15 minutes a day, just listening to sounds. There wasn't anything they needed to look at. They just needed to listen. You could see the struggle that they were going through, trying to hear a word now, change the beginning sound to something else, or hearing the ending word or a word at the end, and changing the ending sound.

They struggled with it, but this explicit teaching from Haggerty, you could see them finally growing and from the second year, then we moved into more extensive. Well, not logical awareness and their test scores are reflecting it. They started off with in second grade, it being a deficit. Now it's something that they master.

Superintendent Choudhury: Wow. That is amazing. Now you threw out some nerdy terms. So, for our, for our viewers or listeners, I should say, I would like for you to define one of them. So, one of the things that you often hear in science of reading is Scarborough's rope, right? And, and so. Can you, for the most, you know, in the most simplest way, just explain what is that concept and, and what it gets at and what, and its implications?

Ashley Johnson: I don't know if there's really a simple way to say it other than think of the individual strands in a rope and how one strand by itself is not very strong. But then you incorporate more strands together, woven together, and that's when you get the tight rope. It's strong. It's gonna endure a lot of tension to it.

So, the different strands, you know, background, knowledge, vocabulary, decoding, verbal reasoning, all of those connected together is what is what's going to make our readers stronger or students stronger.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. Got it. Thank you, Lexi. So, you fresh out of ed prep, you know, ed prep has also had to go through some of them through a reckoning as well. Right. And so interested in your experience and how you feel like your coursework has prepared you one of the things that the blueprint, the state board, and I recently promulgated some new regulations in January that officially makes it official. Like all of ed prep in Maryland. Must make sure all of their coursework is aligned to the science of reading like that hadn't happened. It was more so, you know, maybe they got there on their own and such so I'm curious about your program and what you felt was great there or you and you can also be real right like what you wish you had more of and then and then specifically would love to know what your classroom experience was and that really you, you feel like really helped you practice and apply these signs of reading practices going into Frederick County now.

And, and so does that all make sense in terms of the question? So, start with your ed prep experience and talk about your classroom experience and what did Ashley do that really made it like, man, I feel prepared coming out of this. Cause I saw you in action during the read aloud. I saw you in action. You were smooth and cool, calm and collected. And so clearly you guys are a dynamic duo. So would love to know what, what enabled all that.

Lexi Swink: Yeah. So, uh, at Salisbury university in the teaching program, I was in the dual program. So, I was also learning early childhood along with elementary. Um, so we got a lot of, uh, building a classroom community and differentiation and scaffolding and building those relationships with your

students and your and staff and families, um, and classroom management. I will say we didn't get a lot. I don't think I ever heard of science of reading really in any of my courses. So, I think that's something that definitely could help me seeing Ms. Johnson do these things. I was like, wow, why aren't we being taught these things in our class? Like this would help me so much.

Superintendent Choudhury: There you go. That's real as it gets. So, what about what, what, what enabled you to, what really helped in terms of your clinical experience in her classroom? What does she do that really helped you? Like you feel confident, like, man, I Picked up some essential things that I didn't pick up just from reading my books and taking my classes. And her, her class was a class in and of itself that, so can you kind of talk about some of those highlights, some of the things that you guys had, and maybe you guys had like every week you did this or you game plan, like what was the approach that you guys had in, in that she helped you to be the best new teacher that you can be going into Frederick County.

Lexi Swink: I think something I struggled with a lot was just confidence getting up there in front of everyone, especially being an intern. And it can be really scary. You have this teacher who knows what they're doing, or you, you assume they all know what they're doing, but you kind of learn that you're both in the same boat and that helps you work as a team.

And I think that's why Mr. Johnson and I work so well together, but it's, it's nerve wracking to get up there and just kind of. I don't know, you're left with their minds in your hands and you don't know what to do and you're worried that you're going to give them the wrong impression or do something wrong, but those moments are what you use, as I've seen Ms. Johnson do, to teach the kids, like, it's okay to make mistakes, this is how we learn. Learning is making mistakes, and I really enjoyed her classroom management strategies because that's something that I don't think university prepared me enough for, um, just how she manages her classroom and the chart kind of system where each kid's responsible for their own behavior.

And I think that also helped ease my mind knowing that these kids were, they felt responsible for their own actions, I guess. Yeah, their actions and their behaviors. So that kind of kept them in check cause they wanted to be their best learner and their best self and they want to impress the teacher at the end of the day. So, I think all of that together.

Superintendent Choudhury: No, no, that's all great. You know, classroom management is also one of the things that people say. That they wish knew more of or learned more of coming out of ed prep. So, it sounds like a lot of what you have learned about literacy instruction really happened in her classroom. Like you, you didn't get as much as you would have hoped in through your coursework and textbooks and such. Is that right?

Lexi Swink: Definitely. Yeah.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. Got it. Got it. One of the things I really enjoyed watching is how she I saw you do a read aloud and you know, you were asking very intentional questions of students and everything else.

And, and if there was something that you maybe didn't ask that you should have asked, she found a very artful way to get you to think about it. And then you were able to bring that to the, I saw that

happen live and it was so just. Thank you. Natural, right? Like, and it didn't like, stop, Lexi, don't do that.

Right. Like it wasn't like that. And so, I really loved watching that and watching you guys in action when we were reading that story that read aloud, let's switch one, my last question on this topic was going to be, how do you know it's impacting students, but it's Johnson, you've, you've shared it. You've closed out your comments, but like, it works, it is working.

Like you are seeing it, like we need to. Scale this more and, and, and it, and it works for, for the vast majority of your kids. And, and for those who need more interventions, you get them there. And so that's what I'm hearing. Would you agree, Ms. Johnson, your data shows that it is working or is there something I'm missing there?

Ashley Johnson: Yeah, absolutely. Um, our data is incredible this year. Um, and it's not just me. We've done a lot of different interventions within the whole second grade, um, grouping. I don't know if I'm going to touch base on this in a different question, but I can go ahead and now we actually for because there's a classroom here, 4 of us.

Did a walk to intervention model starting in February, March and did that to the end of the year. So, with that, we looked at our data and said, 1 teacher is going to take all of the students that are working on a kindergarten level, their letters and their sounds and she worked with a group.

There was an Esau teacher in that group. There was a special ed assistant in that group. There's an intervention teacher in that group. They had a lot of growth that needed to be made. And then the 2nd group had some that we're working on skills just a little bit below level and then my group had the students that were on grade level.

Working on their skills and then above and then other teacher was working with the students that have gone above and beyond second grade and they're working on chapter books and writing in response and just higher-level thinking and the data that we've been able to have from those four classrooms far exceeds the rest of the classrooms that didn't get to do this model.

Superintendent Choudhury: Oh wow, that's amazing. There you have it and it's year-round work. It's not a, like, one and done thing. So, listeners, that's not what she's sharing. She's saying, like, it's year-round, intentional work. It's meaningful tier one and then going down to tier two, tier three levels of instruction. Let's shift to my next topic.

So, our new strategic plan that the state board and the department are adopting, right? Ready to read is one of our priorities. That's what we call it. Ready to read, right? To make sure that every classroom in in Maryland, right? Especially in our elementary grades, but also at the secondary, but especially at elementary is equipped to implement evidence-based reading instruction and has the necessary tools.

So, I want to ask you, and we'll start with you, Ms. Johnson, like based on your training and implementation of the science and reading, are there any best practices that you think we can do to, like you've seen with your colleagues or newer colleagues, or maybe you've connected with that you see that they didn't get the experience that you got?

Like, are there things that we should be doing? That make sure that the scales faster and that this is reinforced. And there is no classroom where this is still a mystery. Like, what would you recommend based on your training experience that I should bottle up with the state board and spread like wildfire?

Ashley Johnson: Yeah, I mean, it all boils down to consistency, right? You want everyone to be on the same playing field. And in order for that to happen, we all need to be trained on the exact same thing, whether that's letters. Maybe it's not. Let's decide you want to go with something else that also teaches us the science of reading. Every single teacher, every single intern needs to be trained on the exact same thing.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it, got it. So, you're, you're saying like, this is one of those things where it's like, don't go down your own path. Like, this is, there's a playbook for it. Yeah, you can choose different text, and you can do different read aloud, and you can do, you can have your own flair.

But at the end of the day, in executing reading, we need to make sure that we're not saying, oh, this approach works versus that approach. No, there is a playbook. Like, you would agree on that approach. This is one of those that more, there's more of a, I hate to use the word script, but there is a tighter script in how this happens.

Ashley Johnson: We all need to be teaching explicitly. So, we need to find a program or multiple programs in our case, because it's not just Hagerty that we're using. It's a, it's a bunch of different ones combined together that are teaching explicitly. So, I do, we do, you do. You really want to keep that in mind. That everyone is just explicitly teaching.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. That's very helpful. Thank you. Lexi, based on your experience, I gotta ask this question. What improvements are needed to better prepare our new teachers to enter the classroom to, to implement the Science of Reading Aligned Instruction? Like, what would you say? I think one of your answers, based on your previous answer is Make sure you talk about it and, and do it, but, but if you can get a little more tangible, like, what would help? Like, what would you want more of, especially around this literacy piece? What would you say?

Lexi Swink: I, like, like you said earlier, definitely more instruct, like, exposure to science of reading. I don't, I can't even really think of a time where we really, even we're exposed to it, like getting down to sit, like getting the opportunity to sit down and watch a veteran teacher or a teacher, just a teacher in general, do these things.

Like we said earlier, it helps a lot more than just sitting there and reading about it. And like a lot of my classes would do like hypothetical situations where the teacher would pretend to be the teacher and we would pretend to be the students. And that's great. just talking about it, but then when you get out in the field, you don't really know what you're doing because your students aren't 18, 20 year old's, like they were pretending to be.

So, I think having that experience of where you get to be in the schools, observe it. It's almost like the, I do, you do, or I do, we do, you do. Like I watch the teacher do it. You can co teach it with the teacher and then you do it. And I think that would prepare prospective teachers a lot more.

Superintendent Choudhury: Are you. Are you, so I want to make sure I'm hearing the gist of what you're saying, would you argue for more clinical experience and less kind of in the classroom sitting at Salisbury and is that what you're saying or am I missing the heart of what you're saying?

Lexi Swink: No, absolutely. I feel like most of my learning happened during my internships. Like I learned the most in the classroom.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. So more clinical experiences, almost making the clinical experience count as a class, right? Or more classes, right? And, and giving credit for that. What is a better test than actually performing and, and being able to do that? That's helpful. Thank you.

Ms. Johnson, I know you know about The reading screeners, right? Cause you masterfully use them. Can you help our readers understand more about, especially the practitioners, what has helped a lot for you to use those well, cause Maryland, you know, a lot of states across the country have passed various literacy laws.

Some are more aggressive than others. Maryland has something called the ready to read act that requires literacy screeners, right. To see how our kids are doing. And then ultimately. Use those screeners to, to respond, right. And we use the Wicomico as one of our learning labs this year. And so, and it was the problem of practice was how do I use screener data to effectively adjust instruction and do that work.

And so, if you can share a little bit about like. What it's been like for you and has it has it been very helpful? Is it more tedious? Are there some tips that you would share and then and how powerful it's been if you believe it has been?

Ashley Johnson: Yeah, I absolutely do think it's been powerful. Um, what we've been doing is using the 95%. Phonics skills assessment that correlates with the phonics program that we're using. So, we will administer the assessments and it gives you what skills that they're working on. So, then they are placed within the skills group. You're working with them daily every other day and the skills. The chip kits after about three weeks of working with the students, then after the fourth week, you assess them again.

And it's 10 words and I think it's about 10 words, um, 10 nonsense words, but are using those skills. Um, and then they have to read the words in the sentence and that's it. So, if they can pass that, then you move them on to the next skill. If they can't pass that, then, you know, to keep them in the skill set that they are on, work with them again for about three weeks, assess again on the fourth week. So. You're working with them every day in the same skill set. Ideally, you want to see some growth within those three weeks so that you can move them on to the next skill set.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. Got it. So, so, so people understand, like, you are assessing and reassessing pretty much all throughout the year. Is that, is that a fair assessment or is there only, is that a fair assessment of your assessment? Is there, is there, is, or is it up to a certain point in the year and then you stop? Like, what, what would you say?

Ashley Johnson: I would definitely say the beginning of the year is more assessment heavy for all students. But then once the students are showing so much growth that they're above where we are in the school year, you don't assess them as much. Then you're working more. Assessing the students

that still need to show more growth. So, yes, you're still assessing all year long, but you're assessing less students as they're making the growth that they need to make. Does that make sense?

Yes, it does. So, but you got to be, you got to be heavy on the front end because that's your, that's when you got more time in the year. And so, and so you're doing more universal screening on the front end. And then as you get through the year, uh, it's, it's more targeted for certain students because you've hopefully helped the, the large amount of, the greatest amount of students you can move forward. Is that kind of.

Ashley Johnson: Yeah, and we all know in the summertime, they lose a little bit of what they learned the year before. So, there's a little bit of catch-up time, and then once they get there, then it's growing like weeds. They're learning faster than we can keep up with sometimes. So, then that's when you bump into the next skill group and keep going.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. Got it. I have a question for you, Lexi, before I go into my last question. Is what you... What would be one advice you would give a new teacher, right? Who is starting out to go through EdPrep and wants to be an early, an elementary teacher, especially in the early grades around, and, you know, in, in embracing and ensuring that they really pick up and hone in on literacy instruction. Well, as they start their career, what, what, what does one advice you would give them piece of advice?

Lexi Swink: I would say that definitely making a group, like, of peers, like, that are in the same position as you are, because maybe your situation with your cooperating teacher isn't the best, but we're, we also, I worked a lot off my peers, I had two friends that went, interned at the same school as me, both at Beaver Run, so if there was one thing with That one teacher had, even if they did, they did have great mentors, of course, but even a new idea from another mentor, kind of sharing with your classmates also helps a lot.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. So, you're not alone. And so, make sure you don't isolate yourself. Same things like teachers, teachers should not become an island into their own school and their classroom. Right. And so in the same way, new teachers, you're not alone as well. And you, you have a version of a PLC that you should form.

And so that's your advice. I like that. That's, that's, that's great. I'm kind of thinking on how we can support that more at the state level and what that looks like. So my question is related to what parents and guardians can do to support literacy, uh, development in their child, knowing that not all of our parents have the luxury to support in the same way, but something regardless of your Socioeconomic status, it is something that you can do to reinforce or support or extend.

What is one thing you would recommend for our families? For, for, for especially families who have children in the elementary grades, in the early grades. to support their literacy development. Who wants to start?

Ashley Johnson: I don't mind. I can go first. Just having deep, meaningful conversations with your children. And I know we always say as teachers, make sure you read to your children every night, but it's not just about reading.

It's about exploring that text together, reading it with them and building not only your background knowledge and your vocabulary, but Talking about those words with your kid, too. Do you know what that word yacht means? Have you ever seen what a yacht looks like? No? Alright, well let's either go find one or let's Google it and see what we can find about it. Just always questioning what you're reading and finding out more about it.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. I love that. Definitely wish I had that, so I appreciate that when I first encountered that word. Let's go to Lexi. What would you say to our families out there?

Lexi Swink: I agree with Johnson fully. I think. Making those connections for them to connect their reading to their real life really puts it in perspective for them and also can make it more interesting for them. So, I think having those discussions and asking those questions is the best way.

Superintendent Choudhury: I appreciate that. So, there you go. Like, it's not just about read to your child, read to your child. It's like engage in a conversation. Around ideas, the thoughts, et cetera, and in that whole process is reinforcing the experience they're having at school and, and not only cultivating a love of learning, but also exploring maybe a word or a topic.

Uh, on a deeper level, very, very, very great advice there. And we should all definitely be thinking about it as a new dad. I that's something I've been, I've been thinking about as well. And just even the notion of learning through play, I was a secondary teacher. I was in an elementary teacher. I did middle school, high school.

So, the notion of learning to play. And my own apartment right now is something I am embracing and what that looks like. And so definitely harder than it is at the secondary level than at the younger level. So definitely appreciate that feedback. So, as we wrap up, I have what I call the million-dollar question, literally, right?

You know, one of the things we do at the state level is allocate dollars to our school systems. And then on top of allocating dollars based on formula, we also do grants. Right. And you know, for example, Wicomico has responded to our call to a grant called Maryland leads and really embraced the science of reading strategy.

Cause if they were already headed down that path to be able to further accelerate and fill any gaps that they may have had locally. So, question for you, right? If you could invest 1 million in your local school community. What would you invest it in? So, think of a school, right? You were at the school, like, what would you invest a million dollars in specifically?

And it can be related to science or reading. It does not have to be related to science or reading. But I really want to get your thoughts on what you think there, there, there needs more investment on, right? And so, let's go ahead and ask that question. You want to start Lexi first this time since we started with Ms. Johnson, are you, if you already know your answer or you can pass it back to her and if she's already ready to go.

Lexi Swink: Sure, I'll start. I think that I would invest the million dollars in to trying to create a safer school environment. I know it's something that we struggle with a lot. It's kind of a downer topic, but it's something that's very prevalent. I think, investing in some violence prevention programs so that students are, like, especially early on, learning to deal with their anger and issues with other students

in safe ways, um, different trainings for teachers and how to de-escalate situations, and, um, mainly a focus on the student's mental health. So more time for them to talk about their feelings, more counselors in schools or psychologists just to prioritize their mental health.

Superintendent Choudhury: Got it. Got it. So, I'm going to repeat back. What I heard is school safety, but specifically in there in your school safety, you're not saying more cameras and other things. You're saying, uh, a prioritization of mental health, specifically in related to counseling services, teachers being able to master the ability to deescalate situations before they get bigger. And then for students, being able to work on violence prevention type program, regulating their emotions, et cetera, because all those things ultimately help keep something worse from happening. And so that's where your million-dollar investment would go. Is that right?

Lexi Swink: Correct. Yes.

Superintendent Choudhury: Great. What would you invest it in, Ms. Johnson?

Ashley Johnson: This was a great question, and I put a lot of forth. I put a lot of effort towards this answer, and it's, I have a couple suggestions. Um, I want to know more about science of reading.

If I'm going to be implementing it, and I can see the benefits of it, I want to keep learning about it. So, send me to some conferences or send some of our coworkers to some conferences that are teaching all about science of learning. I want to see what other counties in Maryland are also doing. I know that our coaches got a chance to go to other schools and see what they're doing, but can I go too?

I want to see what other teachers are doing as well. And I know that I'm in a brand-new building and it's beautiful and it's gorgeous, but I know that there's other schools in the and we're over capacity. So, I think we need to spend some of that money building new schools and more classrooms so that we can get some of our class sizes down because 27 first graders and a brand-new building. That's a lot.

Superintendent Choudhury: Yeah, 27 is up there. Definitely on the higher end of that number. So, so I heard you would invest in one being able to. Add more classrooms or build some classrooms. I don't know if a million would go very far in that, but hey, make it work. And, but also like there is more to learn in the science of reading. And so you want to make sure that there's opportunities to constantly get better and expand your knowledge base.

Ashley Johnson: Yes.

Superintendent Choudhury: And that it's not just limited to what you're getting in your county, but the ability to lean into other colleagues across the state. And so, and that's where I need to rise up to that challenge and think about what that looks like for, for our teachers and what opportunities look like.

So, I appreciate you sharing that. You know, for example, one element of the science of reading, I think people... Not that it's purposely getting slept on, but is the notion of content knowledge and the power of content knowledge and building content knowledge, right? Phonics alone is not enough, right?

Content knowledge and having background knowledge is important. That's why I love that read aloud moment, right? Like we have to build, that's why science and history are still very, very important. Topics, right? You know, I wouldn't know what a yacht is because I've never been on a yacht, but I read it somewhere one day and picked up on it and made it part of my knowledge.

And so, I, when I see it on a test or something, now I know what it is, right? And so those things are not easily accessible, especially for students who may be historically disadvantaged or the region that they're growing up in is very different from other regions. And so that's a, that's an area I've been thinking about, but there's so much more related to that.

So, I really appreciate your guys' time. You guys are awesome. Thank you so much. You know, we, we have a lot of work to do at the state level, you know, as I said, we're, we're really focused on what policies we can set to shape the, the practices on the ground. And, you know, I heard a lot of great things today.

One. Let's make sure teacher prep talks about the science of reading and, and, and, and, and in a way that is not just in a textbook chapter four, but in through rich clinical experiences that bring that up. Not because, you know, we just hope that the mentor or cooperating teacher has it and good luck, right?

Like that's not, no, it needs to be a guaranteed thing. So that's one thing I heard, like I heard about, you know, making sure that, you know, the science of reading and all of the instruction there, there's the word science is key there, right? There is explicit, right? There's instructions, there's the manual, there's how to do that.

Ms. Johnson really hit on the notion of making things explicit, like, do not, like, this is not one of those things, like, hey, Yeah, you could try this. You could try that. No, there is a playbook in how to pull this off. If a student is struggling with X, here's what you run. If a student's struggling with Y, here's the play you run.

And, and, and making sure that none of that is a mystery and, and making sure that that is available to all of our teachers in a universal manner, wherever they are across our schools. Like that is very important. And then just. The other piece that I just heard in terms of being able to both support our veteran teachers as well as our new teachers is, um, we need to make sure that people can learn from one another and there is that the experience of becoming an island does not happen.

So, if you're a new teacher. Like you are not alone in being a new teacher, right? Maryland needs a lot of new teachers. We have challenges and shortages. So, there's gonna be a lot of new teachers and less and less people have become interested in, in being a teacher. And so, in order to make sure that more and more people are interested is you want to make sure that you can persist through that journey.

And then ultimately, you know, one of the things that I want to make sure is when you start soon at Frederick, you got to have a powerful induction experience because you still also need a master teacher. to support you during the early years of your career, right? And so, one of the important things that we're going to do this year is revamp our induction regs because that's a little bit, it's 24 different flavors right now of what that looks like.

And for Ms. Johnson, you guys also want to continue to grow. Like there is so much more to learn. Like we're not just done, like, just because we're a veteran does not mean like that's, that's all we want to do, right? Like maybe you wanna learn how to be an effective mentor. You want to learn about how someone else is building out content knowledge or how someone else is running that play in the science of reading in a new way that still gets at the science.

It's just done differently. And so being able to create those rich opportunities where you can connect with colleagues across the state of Maryland. And those are all things that we can do things at the state level. So, I accept those challenges and, and must meet them as well. So, thank you guys so much.

Uh, Lexi, I wish you the best and if you guys, is there anything I can do? Please email me. I read every email. If there anything I can do help, please, please let me know. Thank you for listening to this episode of the Maryland EdCast. We want to keep you engaged. To find out more information on this podcast and the resources discussed, visit [Maryland Public schools.org/MDEdCast](http://MarylandPublicSchools.org/MDEdCast).

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