

All right. Welcome everybody. So excited that you are here.

Always happy. Oh, and there's a baby. Look at the little baby over there.

That's fun.

I'm Noura Shebiby. I am the founder of EBLI,

Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction, and it's a system of effective, efficient,

research-based strategies and activities, to help

anyone reach their highest potential in reading, writing, and spelling, and it's

teacher training and student instruction that

is, again, based on the research. So making teachers' and kids'

lives easier while making them very highly literate.

So tonight, I'm very excited to talk about

parent-teacher communication, and many of you know that

my background is not in education.

I came to this literacy world through nursing.

I was an neonatal intensive care nurse, and I came to it

specifically because of my own daughter's literacy struggles back in the

1990s. And when I look at this, and what made me want to do this

webinar was because I thought, I was so naive.

I didn't know what I didn't know.

My communication with both my

daughter's teachers and her administrators

didn't go well. I'm positive I could've done things

a lot better, a lot smoother, a lot more efficiently, a lot

of different ways, and I've learned a lot over time.

And also I get to spend so much time now with teachers, having trained

thousands of teachers, and see things from their perspective,

which is

really very enlightening and helpful,

in thinking about how can we communicate so that the end

result is a win-win and positive for everybody,

right? So looking at tonight, with our panel that we have

here, my goal is to look at ways that they have

done this. Not always been the smoothest road,

also, so we want to be real honest with that, but ways that they have had

effective communication that really keeps the

children, whether it's the parents' personal childrens, or the teachers

and the students that they are teaching, to keep the children as

the focus front and center and their highest and

best good as the main tunnel

vision. Okay? So that's what we want to do.

So the plan is tonight, I'm going to introduce each of our four

panelists, and in alphabetical order is how I decided to do

that. I'm going to read a little bit.

Each of them wrote their own bio for me, so you'll be hearing from them

through their own words, and then a little bit that they wanted to share with you.

Then I'll share how I know them, a little couple tidbits about

them, and then I have a question that I have for each of them.

Okay, so that's what we're going to do, and at the end, we're going to take questions. So as somebody's speaking and you have a question come up, please put it in the chat, and Alyssa and Shannon will grab that and make sure that we have those questions at the end.

All right? So that is our format. Please also be sure that you introduce yourself in the chat. Tell us where you're from, what you do, anything you'd like to share about that.

Anna Hold is that baby. You can tell us that.

So any kind of

great info in the chat, because I really feel like I've told you before, I read everything that you guys write in the chats when these are over, and connect with you. If we don't get to all the questions at the end, then we'll make sure and answer them before we send out the recording tomorrow.

All right? So with that, I'm going to try to do this without my glasses.

I'm going to see how that goes. All right, so our first person is Holly Miller. Holly, can you say hi so people know who I'm talking about?

Hey, everyone.

So cute, sweet Holly. So Holly is a second grade teacher, currently in her 22nd year of teaching. She has a background in special education and early intervention. She has served in various roles over her career as interventionist, ASD teacher consultant, first grade teacher, pre-K teacher, and more.

She feels like the place where she can make the most difference is directly in the classroom with students, which is why she has landed in second grade currently.

As an adult, Holly has gone through her own journey, discovering that she was barely a reader growing up.

She developed skills to compensate and got by throughout her education and the start of her teaching career.

She worked over the years to grow her own reading skills as well as her skills in teaching reading. She was one of two first grade teachers to be the first to go through EBLI training in her district about six or seven years ago.

The training was a game changer for her in the classroom and was a perfect addition to her own journey as a reader. And some of the things that Holly would like you all to know: "I think where we are at right now with parent communication looks different than it was two years ago.

To keep it real, as a teacher right now, this is the most challenging year I've ever had. The last day of school I didn't have a student out on quarantine was October 12th." She just told us that last Friday she had everybody there, so we're getting them back.

"And it has ranged anywhere from two to seven students out at a time.

I am responsible for the plans while they are out, therefore the time involved has been massive. This has limited my time available for other extras that I normally would like to be able to do, including extensions with literacy for parents. I also want to respect what some of these families are dealing with at home as well.

The challenge is that each situation is unique, as it is for each of their needs.

Therefore, the plans I create look different to each child.

That time really adds up. As a second grade teacher, receiving students that have had EBLI in both kindergarten and first grade is huge.

I love being able to expand on their knowledge.

This hasn't always been the case. My approach with second grade parents is different than when I was a first and pre-K teacher.

In first grade, especially the first years when EBLI was new for the families at our school, we hosted a parent night where parents could come in and learn what EBLI is and how they can support their child at home.

All parents left with a whiteboard marker and eraser." "In first grade, each time we did a new sound sort, I would post the sort in my classroom Facebook group. Parents were asked to have their child point out the spellings and sounds when the child would read at home.

This was a great way to keep parents in the loop with what their emerging reader was focusing on. In second grade, I do not share the sorts in our Facebook group, though I do share articles or ideas for work at home when possible, and the Ebly app info, of course.

In second grade, we do not do parent nights.

However, I do not hesitate meeting with parents of struggling readers one-on-one. This year, I held three one-on-one parent meetings in the fall for students I had concerns with. I shared ideas for simple PA

games," phonemic awareness games, "the parents could do at home and other strategies. When parents tell me that getting their child to read to them at home is a fight, I always tell them to stop having them read at home. I tell them to read to them daily instead. This is usually such a shock and relief for parents.

I tell them to let me work with their child at school, and leave the reading fun at home. When their child is ready, they will take the book out of your hands. So far, this advice hasn't failed me." That's really great advice, Holly. "I work so hard to stress to second grade parents the importance of reading to their child, even though they can't read themselves.

I share the benefits with them and give reminders often, and to students, too.

When I ask my class who has a regular routine at home, the number has greatly dropped over the past several years.

This is a cause worth not giving up on."

So Holly works in a fairly affluent school district, and we ended up eventually training all of their kindergarten teachers, and she is one of the lucky few as far as first and second grade people, because of their principal, who made that happen.

And she has been vigilant over the years to really refine her instruction and continuing to move all of her kids as far as they can go.

And I really respect her and always love interacting with her

about that. So let's see. Parent education. Okay.

So this is my thoughts on with her. Parent education, awareness of what's happening in her classroom, and how to support the children in literacy learning at home is really phenomenal, of course, for any teacher to be able to do. And it's just like all of her instruction of students, the parent part, I used to be able to take part in many of their parent nights over there in her school district, when they had them. And it was like this well-oiled, delightful, fun, fantastic evening. It was just really, really wonderful.

So,

I've really appreciated this journey with Holly.

And she's also been a mentor and a motivator for a lot of the teachers that came after her trained in Ebly.

So, here's my question for you, Holly.

I need my glasses for this one because it's in italics. All right.

You have been teaching for a long time and at a variety of grade levels.

Can you share one or two specific examples of parent-teacher communication you've had that involved challenging conversations, especially about literacy instruction, and the components that led to it having a positive outcome? So can you talk about that?

Thank you, Nora. It's funny hearing you say those words again after having talked about that a while ago.

I was reflecting on how, over these past five or six years, how this is just the norm now, versus five or six years ago, when this was all so new for our building, for the families we were working with, and how nice it is now that this is just become the culture of our kids in K2. And that translates obviously up to three, five.

So it's really changed a lot, and what it used to look like looks a lot different from now.

So I'll give two examples, as Nora had asked. So, looking back, when we made that transition and once we were trained in Ebly, my teaching partner and I, I just will never forget, and the first time, and I remember telling Nora this, the first time I had parent-teacher conferences, and how the struggle before Ebly, and before we were teaching kids explicitly, that parents didn't know what to do with their kids at home.

I didn't know what to tell them, to be quite honest with you. They would struggle, and we'd come to conferences, and I'd show them their reading level was at a level B, and we wanted them to be here, and didn't really have a whole lot of advice to give them.

So, I think once we started doing Eby and started

looking at just more of that

direct instruction, it really changed.

It was such a game changer because parents were saying, I can't tell you how many parents said, as a first grade teacher, how many parents would say, "Could you do this with my fifth grader? Could you do this with my seventh grader?"

Because my first grader is spelling so much better than they are."

I thought, yeah, that's when you teach them the sounds, they're going to spell better, right?

So that for sure, we've definitely seen that evolution.

And one of the students who really stuck out to me, last year, because of COVID, they put all of our twins together.

I don't know if any other teachers had that experience.

So I had two sets of twins in my class last year.

They were all split up this year, thankfully.

But

I had a set of the sweetest girls, and one was my second highest reader, and one was my lowest reader, and they were twin sisters.

And that presented quite a challenge as a teacher,

too. I'll never forget the lower student,

the first few weeks of school just sat there and almost in tears every day at reading time. And it

just broke my heart because her sister's over there reading chapter books, and

that's all she wanted to do was read a chapter book.

That she just wanted to be like her sister.

And they're the only girls in this family, no other siblings.

So, with the parents, it was a challenge.

And they were wonderful to work with, to be honest.

They were great, but they were struggling just as I'm here

struggling, trying to help that lower reader get the confidence to at

least try so that she is going to get there.

And

So,

one of the things that Nora said of telling, one of

my go-to with these lower readers is telling parents, "Stop having them

read. They're practicing bad habits at home.

If you can, don't have her read at home, just read to her." And I said, "And

you know what? Your higher reader, she's going to do just fine if you're just

reading to both of them every night. It's okay if she's not reading at home.

She's reading enough here in the classroom." So, told her to just grab a

chapter book. My go-to, honestly, is the American Girl series for

first and second grade. Any of those American Girl series are fabulous, and the

kids get into them, and even the boys.

The Meet Addy series, that one is just fantastic, and there's so much great

conversation you can have and great vocabulary.

So that's one of the things that I often recommend, boys or

girls. And the boys always cringe at first, and then they get two pages in, and they're hooked.

But that's what I told her is, "Stop the reading at home," which sounds so weird to parents, but it is so often such a relief. And that little one, I tell you what, she is flying now. So it was just before spring break.

It was a long process, and she decoded every word sound by sound. Every single word she came to.

I don't care if it was, "We," I don't care if it was, "Different," every single word was decoded sound by sound.

But I tell you, by spring break, I remember I took a video of her and sent it to her mom because she would not put down, I think it was "Flat Stanley," would not put it down. And she was so proud of herself, and she's flying now. So,

just sometimes we have to back up a little bit in order to get them to go forward.

Were those... I'm just going to ask a quick question, and you guys are putting questions too in the chat. So as far as the parents,

Holly,

did they give you any concern or pushback or as

far as, I love your reading to them at home thing, and don't have them read when they don't know how to read yet. Hallelujah.

Right.

We think, oh-

And then they're giving them the bad strategies.

So I had that with another student this year.

They were paying the neighbor to tutor this student.

I said, "Well, what's her background?

What's her training?" I said, "Stop paying for this neighbor who

I have no idea what she's doing with your child."

So I said, "We can't have her learning something different at home from this

random tutor than what she's learning here at school."

But,

with those parents, it was, I think, a shift.

It's always just such a shock when I tell a parent that.

But I think then when they see the stress level come off and there's a lot of

trust there. And I've been teaching 22 years.

There is a respect there, I think. And I'm not ignorant to that.

If I had been teaching five years, I think it might be a little bit different if I

was telling that parent that. There is a reputation there.

So, thankful, which I'm grateful for.

So they did respect that and trusted me, thankfully.

So-

Yeah

... so far it's worked. Thankfully.

Very good. Whoopsie. Whoa. My computer

keeps doing this. Oh, no.

Shannon, start talk. Can you go, okay.

My computer has been going off all day long like there's some alien here.

It just-

Is it working? Is it good?

Could you see me when I was blacked out?

I could, yep.

Okay, good. Okay, if it goes black, I'll just keep talking then, so that's fine.

Yeah. We can see anyway.

All right. So I won't freak out. I want to say too, Holly, that was

interesting you say about please don't teach them something different there that

I'm teaching here. I had a conversation today with a Title I

director of a school where we've had about a dozen of their kids.

It's not a very big school. And we've had many of their kids, and

more on our waiting list. And she called and said, these

parents, and even, I guess a student had said to the teacher, "I'm going to do my

Epley stuff, and I'm not going to do what you're saying," which was like, ooh,

well, that's a little tricky. But she said,

"They say that you're telling them not to do the Title I

instruction." And I said, "Well, you're teaching these older kids,

and that hasn't worked for them yet." So what happens is the

habits that they have with that, of guessing the words and looking at the pictures,

isn't serving them. It's not working.

So if they come here and we teach them how to read the words accurate and that type of thing, and then they go five days a week to you with those habits and practicing them that haven't been serving them, it's kind of like, and what I said to her, it's like a child's on a basketball team. Okay, they're in the classroom.

And then they have two different private coaches that they're going to.

One, you can see some really good progress, and they're doing great with them.

The other one, they're not doing so well.

You don't want to have them go to both of them still.

So, that's why she really was not happy with

me, but I said, "We really have to keep the student and their

progress. That's what we should be looking at, not what we feel like as the

adults and that type of thing." And I thought this was a very challenging

conversation, and everybody on my team, I think, had a cup to the outside door to

hear like what was going on there. Because that's tricky,

but it's just speaking the truth and like you with the

parent, too, like if this is working, we're making progress, we're seeing that.

So more is not better, especially if it pushes against

what is working. So-

Right

... that's a challenging-

It's getting parents to trust you, and I think that's such a huge piece of it is

being able to get that trust built

makes all the difference.

Right. All right. I'm going to go on to Brett.

And please, again, if you have any questions for Holly, put them in the, if it were me, I'd forget what they were, so put them in the chat, and we'll be sure and ask her. And I'm going for my glasses now because I can't see so well.

All right. So Brett Tingley. Brett, can you say hey to everybody?

Oh, I was muted. Hello, everyone. And Holly, I wish you were my kid's teacher 10 years ago. Very jealous.

Brett's joining us from Ohio. She's a Michigan girl, but she lives in Columbus, Ohio, which is an oxymoron kind of thing, but.

Yeah. Go Blue.

Yes. Go Blue. We like that. All right.

So Brett is the parent of three amazing children, one of whom is dyslexic. She has master's degrees in engineering and business administration from the University of Michigan.

She is the co-founder and president of her local dyslexia parent group, Upper Arlington Kids Identified with Dyslexia.

UAKid created many significant changes, and now her district has shifted to the science of reading. Their work was featured in Emily Hanford's first American public media documentary, "Hard to Read: How American Schools Fail Kids with Dyslexia," published in 2017.

Brett worked to expand the science of reading in Ohio by founding a statewide grassroots coalition of dyslexia parent groups, OHkid.

That was instrumental in getting dyslexia legislation passed and ensuring every child in Ohio learns to read. She currently serves as the president of OHkid.

In order to further the spread of science of reading, she and her team formed a nonprofit and put together the documentary with 125,000 views that I hope you will be able to see entitled "Our Dyslexic Children," and we'll put that link in the chat, and we'll also put it in when we send the recording tomorrow.

Brett is currently working on an online course to educate and activate parent groups all over the world to be released in 2022.

Brett has been dismayed at how few teachers learn about dyslexia and science of reading in teacher preparation programs, but is gratified to see how well-received science of reading is by teachers once they find it.

When we know better, we do better. And Brett's important points, "I have found that when parents band together in a group, they are much more likely to have an impact than if they go it alone. That philosophy has driven my work. During the Truth About Reading documentary trailer, one of the experts mentions that parents need to get fed up and demand reading be taught properly. That is my passion."

I just met Brett, I feel like I've known her forever, but maybe a month ago. She contacted me with the work that I'm doing with the Truth About Reading documentary, and I'm like, "Oh, my gosh." She is a

powerhouse. She and I share the same
passionate intensity for literacy because
we came to it from the same way, with our children suffering,
and both left our professions to make this our life
mission. So,
she and I can relate on a lot of levels, even though what we've done and how we've
done it has been very different. So I greatly appreciate
her. And so your question, Brett. I'm like, "Where is my question?"
Okay. Your question is,
your journey has included many facets, including a process of extensive
communication with teachers, administrators, and parents.
Can you tell us a bit about that process, what worked well, what didn't,
and how that all continues to inform your work as you move to scale up your model
nationally and internationally?
And I know we talked about this a little bit before we let people on.
She's like, "This wasn't a tiptoe through the tulips happy story at the
beginning." So she's going to share it with you, and
it's very fascinating, with a happy ending, which is awesome.
So take it away, Brett.
Well, thank you, Nora. And yeah, when I saw the
trailer for the Truth About Reading and I
figured out that you were kind of behind it, I tracked you
down

and found you. So yeah, I love what you're doing and
I'm really excited about your work. So I knew that we needed to talk.
So our journey,
we are in Ohio, right next to the Ohio State
University, the North American
headquarters of Reading Recovery, and where Fountas and
Pinnell are based, and so we're in a very
heavy whole language district.
My work began about a decade ago
when I realized that my daughter wasn't learning to
read, and we tried to work with the district
initially to
talk to them. We came to them in the spirit of, "Look at this
information that we're learning." We read Sally Shaywitz's "Overcoming
Dyslexia." She's from Yale, very highly regarded, all the
fMRI studies. My background is in science, so I was very
comfortable, and I realized that kids with dyslexia could learn to read,
and that there was a way to do it, and I wasn't sure that we
were doing it. So we took that approach very,
"Let's learn about this together." Our district,
unfortunately, was not just ignorant of dyslexia,
science of reading, but also arrogant.
Reading Recovery, they

used our grade school to do the
testing for Reading Recovery initially.
So they did not like what we were saying,
and so they tried to push us off a little bit.
They tried to do different things to act like they were listening,
but they really weren't. So unfortunately,
but fortunately for all the children in the district,
we banded together
and we filed a systemic
group complaint,
and the district was found in violation on all of the allegations, primarily
Child Find, and a little bit of FAPE,
Fair Appropriate Public Education.
And so what happened was several of the
administrators retired or moved or left
early,
and what we were able to do was then to come together with the
district
with a new superintendent, student services director, and build the
district that we wanted.
All of our kids are screened when they come in in
kindergarten. They're getting
scientific-based reading instruction,

kindergarten through third.

We have pretty highly trained intervention specialists.

One of the other things in terms of communication, when the new superintendent came to town, we went in to meet with him and we took in our mission and our vision And one of the things our parent group did was to very carefully, in a businesslike manner, write down our mission statement.

These are the exact things that we are looking for, so that there'd be no misinterpretation of motives.

You want kids identified, you want good remediation, you want good core reading instruction, teachers

with professional development, parents a part of the IEP team, and students with reading struggles graduating at similar levels as intuitive readers.

And we went, and we told the new superintendent that one of the reasons that we'd kind of gotten sideways was that communication had broken down. And so we pitched the idea of a dyslexia task force.

And so we now meet on a quarterly basis to this day. We meet quarterly with the assistant superintendent, who I find actually kind of runs the district, curriculum director, literacy, student services director, and then our

parent group. In each one of those meetings, we try to figure out how do we make this school district better for our students with dyslexia. The beautiful thing is it not only helps students with dyslexia, but they saw what good reading instruction does, and the regular education teachers asked to pilot these things in their classrooms.

And so

K through 3, we've got really good reading instruction for all the students.

So, the work then,

kind of the primary theme that has influenced or driven my work is that parents coming together have much more strength and a much greater ability to affect change than parents taking this on alone.

So coming together on a district-wide level, you can make change in your own district for your children and all the children in that district.

But then coming together, right now, OH KID has 25 dyslexia parent groups across Ohio with districts representing over 185,000 students.

We've been helping. We've got legislation in play right now and an Ohio dyslexia guidebook that we are

really working to get approved by the state school board.

There are all kinds of really important things that can come out of parent groups coming together.

And then for the online course that you mentioned, we're actually developing a dyslexia parent group database. And so we're going to-- I

find that there are a lot of people who are kind of in silos doing all this amazing work. That's why I wanted to reach out to you, Nora, was because

I was like, "I want to learn from you." And

by developing this database, we can have parents from all over the country

join hands, and maybe we change the way reading is taught all over the country.

Very exciting.

And the scaling up piece, so can you talk a little bit about how, it's basically going to be a course that parents go in.

Is it going to be a free course, or is it paid?

No. Everything that we do is free. We

feel that

reading is a civil right, it's a human right, and so to charge for

it is kind of ugly. We do take donations, but we work with

people, kind of a means to get them to support

people who might not have the economic resources.

The trick that we found was that if you don't

have money for an evaluation, for tutors,
for private school, your dyslexic child might not ever
learn to read. And so our work is to fix that
disparity.

Yeah. And their website, too, is ourdyslexicchildren.com.

And Shannon can put that in the chat, too, because there's a lot
of great stuff. And you're doing a lot of things for video.

I know you said to me, too, a lot of
dyslexic kids or kids who struggle to read, a lot of times their parents do, too,
so you do a lot of your stuff through video.

And-

Well, and what we're doing is we've teamed up with the
producer of the documentary to tape
this roadmap. This online course is a roadmap for
parent groups just to kind of educate them, then to help
them structure themselves in a business manner
with officers, a mission statement,
to really plan their strategy of how to switch their district,
and then what to do, and then how to come back and
create the district that you've been looking for.

Almost all of it, we're trying to do video based.

And it's amazing. I was reviewing some footage today, and we've
got Louisa Moats, Kareem Weaver, Steven

Dykstra, Pete Wright, some amazing people.

I need to interview you at some point.

All right.

It's fun. It's such amazing stuff, and I'm meeting all kinds of amazing people, really strong, quality people.

Well, it's phenomenal work that you're doing, and it's very exciting, I think, too. And you said a quote here, too, "I've always been a problem solver.

Some parent groups whine and wine," as in meh, and drink the wine,

"and that isn't interesting. I use the frustration not as an excuse to do nothing, but as motivation to help more and more children to read." But that is true.

So oftentimes, we admire the issue or complain about, instead of having that communication. And what I think is really interesting about what you guys did is there was contention there and legal stuff, but then you banded together to say, "Can we work together, please?

We all want the best for our kids, so let's do that." And I love that you have that model and that you're scaling it so other people-- Because we hear parents all the time saying, "What do we do?"

Well, yeah, and send them to us.

Some of the conversations that I've had with Kareem Weaver, he's with the Oakland NAACP. He calls it hard war, easy peace. And in our interviews, he talks about nobody enjoys going hard on a district, and you

don't want to have to.

But for your children, literacy is not something you can compromise on. But once you get that over with, and your district will flip, then you immediately embrace them.

And Emily Hanford says, "When you know better, you do better." And the thing that's so amazing, what I have found to be a revelation, is that really, at first, you're fighting your teachers, your administrators, but actually, when you get on the other side, parents and teachers and the administration are actually on the same team. Because the colleges of education are not keeping up with the science, teachers are losing money because they've paid for an education that is not doing anything, administrators have huge professional development costs, and parents have children who cannot read.

So what we've found is that we really come together with our district after this shift, and we are working to try to change the colleges of education.

There we go. We all have a lot of work ahead of us on all those things for sure. Good thing we're energized. So thank you, my dear.

Fascinating. All right. Now, Julie Van Leer.

Julie, can you say hey to everybody so they know who you are?

Hi.

There's our Julie. So Julie is a 21-year veteran kindergarten teacher in a high-poverty school in southwest Michigan.

Although she has her master's plus an additional 30 hours of graduate credit, she realized that those classes taught her nothing about how kids learn to read, and that those credentials were meaningless.

Kind of piggybacking off of what Brett just said.

Seven years ago, when Julie transferred from an affluent school to a high-poverty school within the same district, she became discouraged because her students were not making the same academic gains as they had in her previous school.

She was working harder and harder, and spending more and more time at night and on the weekends at school, only to have her students tank on assessments.

While researching what she needed to do to change in her instruction, she discovered EBLI. After attending the EBLI training, Julie drove the hour home, absolutely dumbfounded by what she had learned, and panicked that school started in just a couple of weeks.

As Julie taught EBLI that first year, she came to discover that everything she'd learned about how kids learn to read was wrong, and that her district provided balanced literacy curriculum was at fault for not producing good readers.

Julie used the COVID shutdown to research more about the science behind how the brain learns to read. She also started a virtual learning group that consisted of several teachers from her school, including her principal.

She invited the curriculum director to join, but he told her she knew nothing because she wasn't a coach, was moving into the wrong reading camp,

and needed to leave the district. That told Julie she just needed to fight harder for her kiddos. Julie has always prided herself on her parent-teacher interactions. Prior to COVID, she hosted parent meetings, with childcare provided for the children, to teach parents about the reading and math the kindergartners were learning about in school.

When she moved to her new school and had students who couldn't even hold a pencil or write their name, she held Make It, Take It events, where parents came in and learned about the importance of fine motor development, and then took home fine motor activities to help their children practice.

During COVID, when parents were not allowed in school, she switched to teaching parents through short videos that she would email and post on ClassDojo. Dojo. That's a fun word.

She also sends videos of individual students reading, writing, or spelling words to show parents what their children are learning and what they're capable of doing.

If teachers are noticing a discrepancy between what the district is telling them to do versus what they are learning from outside sources, they need to speak up to their principal and go to higher-level administration.

The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

Well, that or they get fired, is what she wrote that.

If teachers don't know the correct way to teach reading, then parents who aren't in education won't know either. Parents are more than willing to help their kids if they know how to help. Parents are also a lot more tech-savvy because of the virtual learning. If parents have older kids, they need to understand that their

children need to be untaught balanced literacy reading strategies. Now, you can tell by that, and I can't see you guys right now because I'm back on my blackout screen, so hopefully you can hear me, that Julie is a go-getter. Julie is fierce, and I mean that in the very best way.

She called me, she emailed, she's like, I don't remember exactly how you learned about EBLI, Julie, but she's like, "Tell me this." And she's like, "Oh, you're coming over to Grand Rapids to work in some schools. Let's have dessert." And so Hannah and I met Julie for dessert.

She has been dedicated for all the years, I don't know if it's been three or four years that she's been training in EBLI, to consistently do all that she can to take her 27, 28, 29 students, which is what she has, that are horrifically disadvantaged, and move them all so that they become highly literate, and she does it. And it's a sight to see, and it's absolutely beautiful. I love going into her classroom.

So,

she really will stop at nothing to ensure that all of her children leave kindergarten as readers. And it does not matter, there is no reason to talk about what they can't do, because she's always focused on what they can do.

So that's pretty cool and exciting.

All right, Julie, here is your question.

Your work in a high-poverty school has challenges that were not present in your previous school, and these challenges impact many aspects of your teaching as well as your parent communications.

Will you talk about how you have overcome those challenges, what has gone well, and what have been sticking points along the way?

Also, if you could, talk about how you address the sticking points.

All right. You're going to make me cry with that whole introduction.

But,

when I switched schools, I was

asked actually to switch because there were a lot of teachers that were leaving through retirement and marriages.

And I knew going into the school that there would be a lot more behavior challenges, but I really didn't consider the academic differences. And I think I probably cried the first month of school.

I hated it. My kids, as you said in

introduction, they couldn't hold a pencil. They couldn't write their name.

They couldn't

cut with scissors. They had no idea what to do with a glue stick.

And I thought, "Okay. How can I help these kids?"

And the best way to do it, I've found through teaching in public schools, is there's lots of parent title money.

And so, I started doing a make a take it.

A couple of years, I did it with just my class, and then I offered it to

parents before school or at lunchtime, or right after school. In those years, I had a student teacher, so she would take those kids and do something fun.

It was really eye-opening because a lot of parents, you don't know what to do,

or how to help them. And I also saw my husband interacting with our young daughters, and he didn't know how to help them.

And so I guess I just thought, "Okay, first steps first.

If we can't hold a pencil, then we need to learn how to do that, and we need to learn how to strengthen our fingers." So they would make a bunch of different fine motor things.

They'd take clay and put it in a tray, and I'd give them a dice and a golf tee to write with.

We did spinning tops because how you hold a top is how you should hold your pincher fingers.

I gave them different pin pokes. It was really good.

I had a few parents come back and say, "I've got a first or second grader that can't write very well." So then I would make them the packets. A few years, I opened it up to young fives through first grade parents, and I didn't want teachers to balk at it. So I'm like, "Here's the RSVP.

I'll do all the work. I'll get all this stuff out." Because once you have it once, you just pull out your file.

So the fine motor was a real... Fine motor in
not even being able to write any letters, including the letters in your name.

That was a real shock for me. They were also very
academically behind. What I was doing in

September at the higher economic school,
we did not get to until probably October, November.

I also had a lot more move-ins, so some weeks I'd have--

There's lots of move-ins, lots of different things.

So I started thinking about, "How can I catch parents?" And we have a
lot of kids who live in trailer parks.

Some of them are sort of rundown. I've been to them.

We have a lot of parents who
either have their GED or just
quit school.

And so I thought, "Not only do I need to get the kids
excited, I need to get the parents excited too, and I need them to
see that school can be fun and exciting." If I hated
school, I never would've done a master's plus 30 credits.

So

I started

doing just a lunch and learn. And parents would RSVP, and

I would provide sandwiches or something from somewhere local, and we'd
start talking about-- I'd have a focus, either reading or writing or

math. And then I thought, "Well, this isn't fair." Because if you work all day, again, you can't come. So then I did the same thing before school, I did the same thing after school.

And I always had a student teacher, so she would take the kids.

I had a lot of good parent

feedback from it, and they said, "Oh, I didn't realize," or, "I didn't know," or, "This is easy."

A really nice thing about COVID

was that we had to learn technology that we've never had to use before. So for example, this year we

do the Acadience testing. Parents get a three-sheet

report. It's a lot of words on it. So I made a Loom video,

and I said, "This is the absolute heart of kindergarten.

The phonemic awareness, blending, and segmenting." And so I just made a really short video, talked about some examples of how

you could do blending activities with your kids, how you could do

segmenting activities. I actually took a lot of your

tips from the phonemic awareness one you did.

I don't remember the title. But I took a lot of tips from that and incorporated it.

Parents also were forced, during COVID, to have to use

ClassDojo because that's what we used K2.

And so if we did a Simon Says with

blending, I would post it and say, "Here's this fun activity we did today. Try this at night."

Or else the name game that's in Ubli that you sing your name, like Julie Julie Bo Booley.

We did that every single day. And so I'd say, "Oh, so-and-so is our special person. Here's our song. Try it at home." And I found that by giving little nuggets here and there, I'm getting the parent buy-in, and I'm getting the kids really excited to go home and show their parents what we're doing. A really nice-- Well, not that there was really anything nice about quarantine and isolating, but

I would teach Ubli in small groups, and I was able to really differentiate for my kids. And I have a few parents text me and they're like, "I'm not a good reader.

I've been sitting off to the side when you're teaching them, and I'm learning right along with them." And it just gave me goosebumps because there's so many good things that were coming out of having to be stuck on a computer. And it just made me really up. Like when we learn some sounds, I'll put a video on Doj, like, "Here's how we make them." Or when we start blending words together, I would put a video and say, "This is how we do this." And then I just screenshot a few words and say, "Try this with your kid."

So that's been going well.

I still feel like I want to get buy-in

from parents. I want them to send their kids to school. I want them to be involved.

So with Evely, we start reading in

September, which just blows me away because we didn't do that with balanced

literacy until January, February, March.

But I would say, "Look at this. Look at your kid.

They're a reader."

And parents love to get those videos.

I don't think there's a whole lot of teachers that take the time to send a

video of the

parent's child to them, and I just really make it a point of, "Look

at what your child is doing." Or when we're writing, and they say the sounds,

I'll take a picture. I'm like, "Look, they got all these four sounds in this word."

So I really do a lot with trying to use,

like every parent always has their phone on them, so if I can post

something or send a video,

that's how I try to get the buy-in from parents.

And getting the parents excited about school and hopefully not the

same experiences they had when they were in school.

Well, I've had sticky situations with parents, but it

has nothing to do with how I teach reading.

Prior to COVID, I was doing balanced literacy.

Now, I'm gung ho

the structured literacy.

So when I talk to parents, I will say, "If you have an older child,

they probably learned a different way to read."

And sometimes I'll compare it to medical, and I'll say, "Just like

we change procedures and what we do when we go to the doctor and

the advice they give us,

research has shown that there's a more efficient way to teach reading."

So I don't have parents question me about that.

Unfortunately, whatever I said about balanced literacy way back, they

took that as gold too. So

I don't have those issues, but I keep reiterating that there's a better, more

efficient way to read. The only sticky points that I have

is when it comes to academic coaches and when it comes

to central office administration,

and trying to get them to see that their coveted

loved ways are not working, and it's what's causing my

evaluation to not be good, and it's causing the kids' scores not to be

good.

And that's a whole different topic, but really my only sticky points are when it

comes to the academic coaches giving us PD.

This year we had a PD about look at the beginning sound and then look at the

picture. And

so

my sticky points are not with parents.

Yeah. Lots of interesting things to have to deal.

How many years have you been in this school?

This is my seventh year.

And this school?

And this is my third year with Evelyn.

Okay.

Another thing I think is really important, and this has been something that's

brought up to me a lot about these parents who, reading is, they're

very sub literate themselves, and they have a fear of

going to school. It hasn't been a positive experience.

So I love that you're doing those things to not only help them help their

children, but also in effect, helping them too.

I think that's brilliant.

Thank you.

Yeah. That's pretty grand. I've got a black screen here, so this is really weird to

look at just my head.

You're doing really well, though.

I'm glad that you guys can see me. Thank.

You look like you're right there.

Oh, do I? Good. I look like I can see, because I can see nothing.

So whatever you're doing, I don't know what it is, everybody. So that is good.

Yeah. Thank you so much for sharing that, Julie.

That made me think about a different way to read.

I like that too. And I think it's important, too, like you said, when you were doing balanced literacy, everybody was cool.

And now this way,

I think that's interesting. And I wonder about parents, too, that you had their children, but previous children have come through and they're like, "Oh, this is..."

Mm-hmm.

I guess it's-

I want to say, the nice thing about teaching kindergarten is under balanced literacy, they really just needed to know their sounds.

So I didn't have the side like Holly has of the older kids because we always said, "Well, in first grade they'll start reading," or, "In first grade."

But actually now with Evelyn, I have kids that are reading better than first and second graders, so it's all in that instruction.

Yeah. It really is, which is true. A lot of interesting things to think about.

All right, we're going on to Molly. Molly, can you say hey?

Hi, everyone.

That was a nice, quiet, gentle, "Hi, everyone." All right.

So Molly's literacy journey is twofold.

As a student, she struggled her entire education to grasp the key to reading

proficiently and spelling accurately.

Testing into an accelerated program called TASK, Teaching

Academically Skilled Kids, right out of kindergarten, Molly was one of

only a couple of children in her class that hadn't picked up reading easily from an

early age. Therefore, she was given little to no instruction, good or bad,

throughout grade school. Molly developed her own coping skills and

strategies that worked well enough on the surface to get high marks and continue

in accelerated classes, even through higher education.

Her strategies, however, were slow, mentally taxing, and often weren't good

enough to save her from emotional distress, embarrassment, and self-esteem

issues. It was not until her junior year when she sought help to

increase her reading speed in hopes of being able to test higher and get further on

the ACT, that Molly discovered there was a learnable code used in the

English language to read and write accurately.

A code that she was never taught, therefore was never able to apply

This aha

moment later led Molly to join the Ebley team in hopes of making sure

more children didn't suffer and struggle needlessly as she had.

She admits, though, that it wasn't until her own children entered kindergarten that

she realized the magnitude of the literacy issues facing our schools.

Molly witnessed those very same ineffective strategies she developed out of

necessity to make herself look like a good reader were now being taught

by teachers as reading instruction in her children's school, and in most schools,

unfortunately. The immense fear that her children would struggle as she did compelled Molly to intervene and make sure that her kids received effective reading instruction. Even though she now knew what successful instruction looked like and had the means to implement it at home, Molly found the most difficult part of the journey was how to navigate the issues that arise when instruction outside of school directly contradicts the instruction in their classrooms.

I don't know, where did my next page go? Here we go.

And this is from Molly: "I had hoped that by giving my children adequate instruction outside of school, I wouldn't need to approach the teacher about my concerns. This was not the case. The two contradictory instructional methods put everyone, including my child, in an uncomfortable situation that needed to be addressed.

I found that if I pointed out a specific strategy we used at home that led to a positive learning behavior in my child, then the teacher was more than willing to help facilitate that strategy with my child in the classroom, too.

This was an effective approach. In addition, I discussed specific strategies that were being used in the classroom and how they were producing a negative learning behavior or outcome for my child. The teacher offered to do her best to eliminate that strategy with my child as much as she could in the classroom. I also found that I had the most successful conversations with teachers when I spoke specifically about my child's successes or difficulties in regards to instruction, instead of speaking in regards to

teaching the whole class." So Molly is our financial director here at Ebley, and she also was, as Brett said, this might've been before we started officially, but Molly was featured on Emily Hanford's "At a Loss for Words." She's at the beginning and at the end. It's a very worldwide, actually, renowned radio documentary, and she also is in "The Truth About Reading" teaser video that is out as the documentary continues to be produced. And Molly also is my niece, so her ACT prep work that she did, she was my very first ever student that I worked with, and it was about an hour and a half of instruction to try to increase ACT scores. And she increased by three points, which was pretty impressive, and we have done many ACT/SAT prep since then. So that is Molly's story, and I've gotten to have a front row seat to all of her experiences. I taught her oldest daughter, Claire, also, who is really brilliant, and she's got that super glue brain that takes in what people teach her, including guessing the word, and undoing that was very, very tricky for her. So it's been quite an evolution to watch

that whole thing unfolding, to watch Molly so beautifully and deftly and respectfully interact with the schools in some really very uncomfortable situations. So kudos to you, Molly, because you really are amazing at what you have done and how you have done it. It's highly commendable.

So here is my question for Molly: Can you explain your approach to teachers and administrators during your journey with your children?

What went well, what didn't, and how did you effectively navigate the situation when things were not going smoothly?

Yeah, so I did not have a Holly or a Julie who was teaching structured literacy in the school that my kids went to.

And to speak towards Brett's point about being the lone parent and it not being a very successful way to go at things, on the administrative point, and in our district as a whole, I was very unsuccessful, and I'm still very unsuccessful as a lone parent voicing my concerns and hoping for a positive change in our literacy structure at our school district. So I definitely agree with that, Brett.

I was not successful in that way, and I started kind of advocating for change in our district before my children went there, since I had been working at Ebley and had seen what effective structure looked

like and knew that's not what was being used in the school district that is in my community. And so it wasn't successful, and I have yet to be successful, but I'm not giving up, and I will definitely look into some of the things that Brett mentioned and-

Comment.

Yeah, for sure. And I have gotten together...

So I've only gone at it alone. I'm not alone in my frustration in my community and in my school district.

I hear from parents all the time who've seen me post or being verbal about my concerns.

We just haven't, as you said, banded together, and we've met, and not much has been accomplished yet, but I think I'm kind of starting to pull in and all of us foot soldiers are there and ready. We just need a plan of action.

But meantime, here are my children getting more and more behind. So while I wasn't successful in that way, I needed to figure out how can I be successful for my children specifically, and now, not two years from now.

So I luckily had more success with that and have navigated that a little bit better.

And like Nora said, I've really found that in the classroom with talking one-on-one to a teacher that is Teaching my children, that it's been immensely helpful for me to remember I'm advocating solely for them in that situation. And I think that that makes it easier to the teacher too. I'm not saying, "Oh, you're not using decodable books with everyone?" Instead saying very specifically, "I notice at home when we get predictable text, that my daughter's looking at the ceiling and saying the words and not looking at the page, and I find it really helpful to use..." And I would say, "... a Bob Book or this book that is easily decodable and starts with CVC words." Just being very specific and saying, "This is really helpful, so would you mind switching out their predictable text with this?" And, it's so important to remember that the teacher is on the same page. They want the same thing. Our goal is for our kids, their students, our children, to read. And so when you point out something that's working successfully, they, in my experience, have been more than happy to accommodate and to do that. If not for the whole classroom, at least for my children.

I've had a
lot of issues with the inventive spelling
being such an issue, and like Nora said, especially with my daughter, who things
stick so easily in her mind, I would get
pages and pages of writing with the same words for months on end
spelled incorrectly.

And,
when I went in and said, "I'm having some difficulty with the
spelling and the way it's being left unattended or
no hints or error correction,"
there was immediate pushback at first.

It was like, "Oh, well, here's our Words Our Way book, and look at how..."

And wanting to show me all the things they were doing.

And again, I took a step back and specifically
spoke to my child and what has worked at home.

If I fix it immediately and we work through it,
I don't see it for months on end like I was with the other
mistakes. So,

I think it's worked really well for
advocating specifically for my own children.

And like I said, I definitely
would love to chat and be more successful
now that both of my children, my son is in second grade and my daughter is in

fourth grade, and I am happy to report that they are both well above grade level now. And so I feel like now that that weight is off my shoulder, I am really looking forward to helping all of our school district's parents feel that same way.

Yeah. That's pretty huge. And you told me something, Molly, and I know that I knew it because I'm sure you told it to me. She's always sending me the DRA levels and all that, and here's Claire. And I didn't realize, and I think it was first grade when I worked with her into second grade, but she was at level 20 for three years, right?

Yep.

Level 20. She never made any progress. And this child is brilliant.

That guessing thing and the bad habits that were inefficient, and you navigated that so beautifully. Now she's level 60 or something like that, so she's just like, whew, well above where-

Yeah. And I think the toughest part, it wasn't that she didn't necessarily make progress. She wasn't making progress with the school's assessment.

Yes.

The way the school-

With what they were looking at.

Yeah.

That's a good point. That's a very good distinction.

Because she was definitely making a lot of progress as far as improving her accuracy, all of that kind of good stuff. But yeah.

Yeah. And to speak more towards,

I hate conflict, I really do. It's really difficult for me.

I'm,

by nature, a people pleaser, I think.

And so, plan A was teach her at home, take her to Nora,
take her to Adley.

Keep quiet and all will be merry. And that failed miserably
and really rather quickly because not only
was it not working because we'd take one step forward at home and two steps back
with the contradictory instruction, but it put
my daughter in a really horrible
spot. And I'm going to get emotional about this because I never
thought about that, but
she wanted to please her teacher. And with little kids, everything's very black
and white, and the teachers are these superheroes. And they are.
They're absolutely wonderful. And my daughter and son's teacher
have all been an absolute blessing in their life, and I've loved
every teacher they've had. But it was really hard for my
daughter to go to school, and I would

tell her, "Be respectful and do what your teacher is telling you," and then come home and say, "Well, that's not exactly what we're going to do because this works better." And she really struggled with that because at first she fought me. It was like, mom knows nothing. Teacher knows school, mom knows home stuff. So she fought me and fought me. And then when she kind of saw like, "Oh my goodness, this is working. I'm reading doing it this way," she kind of had to have a shift. And then it was like, "But what do I tell my teacher?" And so I had to help her navigate that, and the best way to do that was to set up a meeting and speak with her teacher openly and honestly and let her know that the methods we're using at home were contradicting the ones in school, but that my hope and cross my fingers that my daughter would come to school and can still be respectful to her and still listen to her without interfering. You know, with her lessons in school. So that was incredibly difficult, and my daughter Claire and I kind of navigated that together every year as we got a new teacher. But absolutely, there was no way around having those conversations, as hard as they were. And I think it was a big like moment afterwards because for the teacher too, you have that elephant in the

room. And I think as long as you are respectful
and honest and it comes from a place of
good, that it was really taken respectfully, too.

So, and it helped my daughter be able to excel
and

make what we were doing at home have the benefits that it
should have.

And I think, Molly, that's so important, that straightforward, honest
communication. It's like, "Oh, what do I do here?" And kind of going in even a
passive-aggressive way or that type of thing, or talking to other people, the wine
and whine, like Brett says, as opposed to talking directly to the teacher or even
the teacher talking directly to the parent.

I think that that is probably the number one
best piece of advice, is to be really open and really
honest and really straightforward. And respectful.

Everybody being respectful really gets you to
the end result, I think,

better. So thank you for that, my dear.

So Alyssa, do we have questions?

Sorry, bear with me. Yes, we do. We have a couple questions. Can you hear me okay?

Uh-huh.

All right. First, okay, I don't know if it's Catra or Kaytra.

It's a beautiful name.

Mm.

"I'm really interested in how to progress my son from transferring

what he's read to writing about it.

Any resources will be greatly appreciated."

So this is kind of-

I'm assuming that you're talking about, how do I get him

to spell correctly and be able to write sentences that I can read and that

have correct punctuation and all? Are you on here? I'm not seeing.

Do we see

this person's...

Um.

She just said, "Yes, please."

Oh, yes.

She said, "Yes, please."

Thank you.

Okay, here's the deal.

How old is this child? Can you tell me how old he is?

Do, do, do. Eight.

He's eight.

Yes, okay.

Or she, I don't know.

All right. So,

spelling is at least-

He is eight

Okay. Spelling is at least twice as challenging as reading.

So because there's a lot of ways to spell almost every sound in English, up to 20. Like if you want to talk about shh, there's 20 ways to spell shh.

Usually about 10 ways to spell most vowels and consonants, okay, on average. So the more that you read,

if you're reading not from memorization, not from looking at the picture, and not from guessing. If you really are decoding and you understand, like Molly said she didn't understand until she was in high school, that this is a code and how to decode it.

If he's being taught like that, teaching spelling at the same time that they know that this is a code is huge. Like, "We're going to spell phone.

This is your ph spelling." He knows there's eight ways, or there are six ways to spell ph, or whatever. So this is your spelling.

Now, the spelling will come more as they read, and again, it's important that they understand the sound-to-symbol correspondence of the sounds that we say are, in print, represented by letters on a page, and that they understand that every word is made up of a bunch of sounds and different spellings for the sounds.

And different things, like up to four letters can spell a sound.

So if he understands that, spelling should be taught at the same time as reading. They're the same thing using the same code.

Reading, you have something that, okay, I'm reading from this page, I can pick

the words up off the page. It's a lot easier to kind of figure it out than if I have a blank slate and I'm spelling the word phone and I'm like, "What ph spelling? What O spelling? What N?" Especially if I haven't read and haven't had a lot of words under my eyes. So what I would do, highly recommend, this is what we teach our teachers and we also teach our parents, that have your child write, but do not ask him to write a page or a dissertation or a whole bunch of stuff, especially at eight at first. Start with this.

Every great novel or piece of writing starts with a sentence. We have to be sure that the kids can do a sentence, and that they actually apply making a capital letter at the beginning and punctuation at the end, and that the spelling is what we call acceptable spelling, how we have agreed in English to spell the words.

So not letting, like Molly said with Claire, who had so deeply, and even in fourth grade, still she's trying to undo that spelling.

My daughter, it took me three hours to teach her how to read.

It took me two years, she's only been in second grade, two years to undo her spelling errors, because she'd practiced them so many times.

So it's critical that you not only show the child, if they spell phone F-O-N, and like, "I answer the phone." There's all kinds of errors that could happen in there. But that you show, "Okay, phone, F-O-N.

You put above, this is the ph. Now you fix it.

Not you, the mom, but you, the child, okay?

Not you, the teacher, you, the child.

It has to come out of your hand, your mouth saying ph, your ears, your eyes, okay? So that they fix that, so that the last thing that's imprinted on those amazing neural pathways in the brain is the correct spelling.

Because if the last thing imprinted on the brain, like Claire got a million repetitions of, like Colleen got a million repetitions of, is the wrong spelling, with was as W-U-Z, they are very, very adept at

spelling was as W-U-Z. And I read something that depending on how many years, like by second grade, it takes 400 extra repetitions to undo misspellings. We need some new research on spelling because, in education, it has been believed, and teachers have been led to believe, that misspelling is a great plan. We don't do that in anything else.

We don't do mis-adding, right, where we have them miss, two plus two is seven or whatever, or Michigan is in South America or whatever. We don't teach them wrong information, except for with spelling and sometimes with reading when they guess the words.

So we have to be sure and ensure that, without overwhelming them and in a respectful manner, if they're learning the code With reading, and he is really learning the code, which is the minority of what happens in most classrooms, unfortunately.

But if he's really learning the code, he needs to be applying that code to spelling. If he's not really learning the code, he needs to be really learning the

code and applying it both for reading and spelling.

So hopefully that-

Nora, can I add something in too?

Yes, please.

One of the things that I saw on that question was

that he's struggling on how to transfer what he's read about

to writing about it. So I guess I would also be curious is how is he doing with

writing when it's not about what he's read, and I'm not sure if there's that piece

that it's-

Oh

... there's something going on.

Like is he comprehending? Yeah.

Yeah. So just making sure that is he orally able to do that first before he's

getting it into writing.

Yeah, that's a great question.

That connection, once we started

EBLI, the writing,

it was just amazing to watch the writing take off.

Yeah.

And the kids who were always up to the bathroom and the pencil sharpener and all

that-

Yeah

... it was just gone. But

going from a writing workshop model to explicitly teaching how to write was, go figure with first grade, a game changer.

It's a very-- I wonder if she can unmute, if you're willing to, if you can give me any more information, to help clarify, because that's a good point, Holly, thank you. If you would like or if you have any...

If not, that's okay. It's also an interesting thing.

Spelling tests don't tell you anything about spelling, by the way.

Spelling tests, my daughter was 100% on all of them, she was great at them.

I actually have them over here in her whole second grade binder from almost 30 years ago. So spelling tests tell you how well your rote memory is.

Like if somebody gave me a number and said, "Oh, dial, call whatever this person at 725-5052," and I'm like, "Okay," dial it, and

I answer. That was actually my number growing up, not around anymore.

So I dial it, and somebody answers, I talk to them, I hang up, and somebody says,

"What was that number?" And I'm like, "I don't know.

I used it for what I needed it for." That's what happens with spelling tests.

My daughter would get 100% on a spelling test.

Literally she could not spell the same words an hour later.

She could not transfer them to writing in the correct spelling.

So that's a rote memory thing. We want to have the spelling that if you can spell accurately on a spelling test, you can also spell those words accurately in your writing, that type of thing.

So the spelling piece, if they're writing a grocery list or a note to you, that's what we ask our parents, "How is their spelling?" And if their spelling is inaccurate, and obviously a kindergarten, first grader, moving up a little bit. If you're transitioning into that, for sure, should always be getting better.

But if you're not by second, third grade, if you're misspelling words, and especially older than that, your reading is not to its highest potential. The better you spell more accurately and by sound, the higher your reading is going to go, too.

So there is that one. So if you have any other questions that you can ask, I forgot what this person's name was, but you can ask them in the chat, too.

What else, Alyssa?

Julie Van Lare has a question for Molly, and it's, "I'm guessing that your kids had to silent read and do some version of writing workshop. How did you handle that specifically since they were learning to read and write differently with EBLI?

Did you send books for them to read at school?"

No.

So the silent reading, so my son is a second grader now, and last year, every single day before school, he had a stomachache, every single day in first grade. He would go down the office multiple times to get a Magic

Mint, and it would help for momentarily.

And his teacher would say, "How else can we help him?"

And it wasn't until they came home

for a COVID break that I realized, he had told

me that he-- So

his daily five is in the morning where they silent read, and

he had told me that during breakfast, so our school offers free breakfast in the classroom, so after they already start class.

So he doesn't eat free breakfast, so their option is silent reading.

And then right after breakfast is daily five, and he starts silent reading.

And then after that is math, and when they get done, their only other choice if

they get done fast is silent reading, which my son is brilliant at math, so it takes him about three seconds to do his math.

So when I figured it all out, he was silent reading for over an hour every single morning at school.

And he was not, at that point in first grade, reading at grade level whatsoever.

He wasn't reading at all,

really. So

that's heartbreaking, and besides having a

conversation asking if there was any other options, I asked if

when he was done with math, if he could do another math sheet instead of more silent reading.

But really the only way that we fixed that was when during that break, he came home at a 20, I think, on his DRA, and I had four weeks with him at home, and we did no school homework that came home.

I let his teacher know that we were going to not interfere and just try this since we had the time and see how it went.

And he was tested three weeks after he went back to school at a 38, and his teacher specifically came outside

for pickup and flagged me down and was just like, "I've never seen...

He did so awesome." So

yeah, I did not have a solution for that in the classroom.

With my daughter in first grade, my solution was that was the time that my wonderful, sweet father went and took her over to Flushing to see Nora for an hour in the morning during school, during her time that would've been her silent reading at school. So we did that once a week for her first grade year to try to just eliminate the

conflict of teaching. But I know everyone doesn't have that option, so that's not going to work for everyone.

And as far as the writing

What they did in school is what they did in school, but when we got it home, I would go through and pick out the five

most misspelled repeated words, and I'd ask her to come up with a sentence with those words in it, or two sentences with those words in it, and then we would specifically do just that.

And she hated me because I was like, "Oh, that's not a capital at the beginning of a sentence," or, "Oh, what goes at the end of a period?"

Oh." And her too, when she came home for the four weeks during our COVID break, she despised me sitting over her because I'd make her figure.

I said, "Oh, that's great work, but let's fix this word, this word, and this word."

And, "Oh, we don't have to fix anything at school." I was like, "Yeah, well, unfortunately they sent you home, and now you have to deal with me."

But she also made-- Her teacher said, "I've been teaching for 10 years, and I've never seen a jump this large," when after the four weeks

I came home, just doing Ebly and declining the Title

I that

her school had given her. So, unfortunately, I really have found that you just can't do both and get the success. So, okay.

Thank you.

There's that.

That's good. Thank you.

Anything else, Alyssa?

There are a few questions.

TL

Tavani, I don't know if that's just like a screen name.

Does Ebly have a program specific for teaching reading to adults?

Yeah. Now, teaching reading, how we teach second graders is no different than how we teach

20-year-olds, 30-year-olds, 40-year-olds.

How we deliver it, a little bit differently, of course, that type of thing, but the skills, the concepts, the information, the process is all exactly the same. You differentiate based on the strengths and especially on the weaknesses. So you strengthen them as far as with each learner or each group of learners, as far as that goes.

But yes, we teach--

The program we have for adults is Ebly, and we teach many adults.

We've taught adults that can't read a word.

We've taught adults that have multiple master's degrees that have never read a book.

So yeah, we have had a lot of experience with that, and so our program for that is the same. We have a classroom teacher training for kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, classroom teachers. And then we have a remediation training that is for anybody who teaches kindergarten through adults, and there's different

tracks

based on

the age and the ability level of who's being taught.

Yeah. And we can share that link, too.

Shannon, can you share the link about the training page?

Okay.

Another question. S. Marlow, "I think Ebly had a

conference recently. Was it recorded?

Thank you for this useful information tonight." I'm thinking maybe it's PlainTalk.

I don't know if that's-

Yes. We did have a conference. I thought, "Oh, we're going to be in this nice

little hotel, little room." And it's a ballroom

with 500 chairs. And I'm like, "Wait a minute." So that was fun, and not

recorded, unfortunately, because it really was very grand.

But, yes, they did not record it, and they did not allow a

recording. So we did have a conference, but we do not have

a recording of it.

It was pretty phenomenal. If you haven't seen David Chock's interview thing,

he and I spoke of his learning. They wanted to talk about how

many months or years did it take

him to learn to read. It actually took 11 hours over six days.

So we shared about that and about his experience at 62

learning to read in 11 hours, being severely dyslexic. Yeah.

I had the honor of watching that, and it was amazing.

It was amazing.

That's right. You were right there.

She was going to be my videographer, and then somebody in the table right in front of her in the first row, our picture person, taking pictures and stuff.

But you still did do some, Brett, yeah.

So yeah, that's a great conference, for sure.

Okay, I have another question

from S. Marlow. "As a teacher, what are some of the best books you would recommend for us as a guide?"

My number one favorite book is the book I read back in 1998, probably, after six months of researching reading and reading a lot of books, a lot of books, and research and all of that.

And it's called "Why Our Children Can't Read and What You Can Do About It."

It's by Diane McGuinness, and it talks about speech-to-print instruction, which is a very

small percent of instruction and very rarely in schools.

It's in Ebly schools, because that's what Ebly is, is speech-to-print instruction.

But researching what to do with my daughter and how to teach her.

She'd already been taught print to speech.

She'd been taught a traditional phonics program with rules and all of that, and it hadn't worked. She'd also been taught whole language because we'd moved here from Guam, and she had both of those experiences, and she still wasn't

reading. So I knew that what I was reading about

wasn't

what she needed. And so that's my favorite book, and

it remains my favorite. I've read hundreds of books since then, and it remains my

favorite book. I have a few other favorite books, but they-- Actually, I have it

right here because I was talking about it to somebody today.

"This Is Why Our Children Can't Read and What You Can Do About It."

Some on learning, some on cognitive processing, those types of things.

So I would say that's my top one. I would say start with that, and when

my brain is not at 8:30 at night, I could

do better with that. But that one stands out so much from all the

rest, in my opinion. Lots of great books out there about a lot of good

things and great things for sure. But other things on cognitive processing and how

we learn. I think that especially in education, there's very

little talked about. We integrate it in our Ebly training for teachers,

and we don't talk about what we're doing, really, but every single step

based on the research of how we learn, and there's great

research out there about how we learn, not just to read, but learn in general.

So I think that that's critical, too. I don't know if it's the shift.

Usually I have here. You can probably imagine that my desk is not the cleanest

here.

It might be the shift. I'll figure that out,

and put that book.

It's by three cognitive psychologists, and that's a very good one also.

So

There's one more quick question, and this is kind of a different kind of question, that says, "Is there any type of attendance documentation that we can use to submit for this webinar?" These feel like PD so many times, so I feel like that's kind of a-

Yeah. We do get that. We don't do anything that way. We only do that with our teacher training.

People that have been trained, we do coaching calls, and we take attendance for that. But no, we don't have that. But it's interesting because I was talking to someone, Donna from the Science of Reading page, actually.

She and I

were in Chicago together a couple of days ago, and she talked about how she's doing something, making a business where when you do things like this, you can get some sort of credit. So I'll check into that, and I will make a note of that to check into that, but not yet. We don't have that as far as yet.

So, yeah.

Good question, though.

Anything...

Oh, I see. Your school gives credit.

If you want me to send you an email, if you email us at info@evelyn.com, we could say that you attended an hour and a half on

this,

if that would work. So yeah.

You might be able to forward a copy of the webinar, too, to-

Yeah

... your administration.

You know what, though?

I know, Cross, that would work.

Okay, because we send you a recording tomorrow. Great. Thank you, Holly.

That's awesome.

You could also do a screenshot of your name on the-

Oh, yeah

... recording.

Oh, do that. Look at all you guys knew clever stuff.

See, this is great minds and many. So, yes.

So do the recording thing. If you need anything from us, just email us, and we'll get that to you. So that's awesome.

All right, anything else? Are we-

I have more of a comment than a question.

Just listening to Molly and Brett both, I'm just kind of drooling, wishing that I had parents like you to work with.

Mm-hmm.

And I think

we're in just

such an interesting time in education where we're being doubted
left and right with what we're doing, with what our practices are in the classroom
in every area but reading.

It's masking our kids, it's banning these books, all
these different things, and I live in a very conservative area where a lot of
issues are coming before the school board, where I'm literally pulling my hair out
saying, "Parents, this is not where you should be hanging your hat."

That's a good point, Holly.

"Let's talk about the real issues.

Let's talk about what I really want you to be going to the school board over.

Let's get our kids to read,"

rather than... So, I just really appreciate the work that

Molly and Brett are both doing as parents and being those parent advocates.

You know, that's so... Go ahead, Molly.

I would say, first of all, thank you for saying that.

You might not feel that way if you were my kid's teacher, but-

Yes, I would. If you went to my school board, I would.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Well, we talk about that sometimes in Evely meetings, is that I feel
like

as parents, it's really hard to know

if your kids are doing well or not, especially depending

on the assessments you have.

I think for a while, a couple of years, my kids weren't flagged

as having any issues, really.

And then once I thought personally, like I saw their success,

the school then thought they were.

You know what I mean? That I feel like that sometimes the assessment doesn't give parents an accurate... Do you feel that way as well?

You know what I mean? I guess maybe not you guys because you're doing different assessments, but I think-

Well, the assessment that we have is running records,

Fountas and Pinnell running records.

That is the only score that goes on a report card is based on that reading level.

But your kids blow it out of the water, though, too.

So, yes, but it just takes me a whole month to do my assessments.

Yeah, you let them-

And then now, obviously we started doing STAR for the third-grade reading law here in Michigan.

But I'm doing my own stuff.

But it's communicating that to parents, too, and looking

at, okay, here's... And after I got done doing running records, too, there were

a couple of kids that are still going to score as a one, which is the lowest score

on the report card, but I wrote them emails right away and just said,
"Okay, even though it says one, this is what your child is doing now that they
could not do-

Yeah

...

three months ago. So ignore that number because here's what
they can do,

and where they're going. So, instantly, I'm on there emailing
them, saying, "Okay, here's where we're at, and don't
focus on that because it's not a good assessment"

now that I've been told that.

That's hard, too, because it's like they're looking at how does our car look all
put together? How beautiful is this car?

Wait a minute, we don't even have the engine in there yet.

We haven't even-

Yep.

You can't be judging this car when we don't even have the parts
in place. Yeah. Julie, did you have something, my dear?

I was just laughing about the running records.

Last year, I only had 20 kids,

only because that many more wanted virtual, and it took me six hours

to do running records. And I told our superintendent this year when I met with him,

and our principal, I'm like, "I'm not wasting six hours again of my life." I'm

like, "I'm not doing them."

I wish it only took six hours, because once they start moving up, and they move up,

and they move up, and they move up-

That's the other problem

... and they move up.

That's the thing about kindergarten, you only get to like-

Yeah

... H, I, J, and...

And you want an independent level and an instruction level.

Yeah.

Yeah, that's a lot of time.

So I have a question for-

It's a waste

... Brett. Brett, do you find that some parents don't know their

children are struggling to the degree until...

Are you working on that, too? Are you helping inform?

Yes. What we try to do, so we develop this roadmap, and

that's what the online course will be.

It will be all these videos that have this roadmap.

And the first thing we talk about is just kind of dyslexia in general, help

you to understand. And a lot of people don't know.

You trust the district, and you trust these teachers.

They are the experts. They've gone to school to

learn what you assume is how to teach kids how to read.

So I also found, and I feel like you may be

having some of this feeling, the stages of grief that

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross talks about.

You don't believe it, you're angry, you deny it,

and finally you realize

Really through no fault of their own, they don't know how to teach our kids how to

read. But it takes a while. I was lucky because I had two older

kids, but if my dyslexic was my first one, I wouldn't

know.

But I kind of figured it out early. And then,

another very important thing that we try to teach our parents in

our course is what your legal rights are.

And until we had attorneys involved, very little

happened. So with the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act, your public school district has an affirmative

obligation to find your child with specific

learning disability in reading, so that's dyslexia.

If they are not searching for

children and finding them, then they are in breach

of federal law. After they find them, they have

to

give them instruction that's based on their specific needs, and

they have to show meaningful progress.

Nobody knows this stuff. So what that means is they should be doing these things. So when you go in, you shouldn't have to go in there begging and pleading for them to help you. You should go in and say, "Federal law backs me up on this. We can work together, but you need to know that you should be finding our kids and helping our kids." And then again, forming that parent group and shifting the district, and it doesn't always have to be a complaint.

Some people run people for the school board.

Some people have an attorney make their meeting.

We have several different examples, varying levels.

But again, our district was such a whole language district.

We developed the DRA in my school district.

Thanks, Brett.

I apologize.

But we're not using Reading Recovery anymore and-

That's fantastic

... I also find on a national level, people do not know that only a third of children in this country are proficient readers.

People do not know that. I can say that to people.

They have no idea.

They also don't believe it when you say it, actually.

They're like, "Mm, you're wrong."

That's why your documentary is so important, because I'm sure that some of those

figures, there is an awareness issue that people don't know.

Yeah, and that brings me to the point of our next month's webinar in March.

It's going to be on the 24th, I think it is.

It's called, and Molly came up with this title, thank you, Molly, Signs that Scream Success and Those that Don't.

So how do you know by looking at your child, whether you're the teacher or the parent, if your child is a proficient reader or a pretend reader?

And that is huge to be able to see those things, because oftentimes by the time teachers or parents, and teachers quite frankly,

I always feel bad for third grade teachers because I'm like, "Bummer," because that's the fall apart year. That is when everybody's memory gives out and they fall apart tremendously, and it's like, wait a minute.

And the first grade teacher's like, "They were great with me.

They were great readers. What'd you do?"

And so looking at that so that you don't have to wait until

it's too far gone, and that you have to do so much more

work to be able to get these kids to

be highly proficient. So

that's what we're going to be talking about the next time.

So we'll share that link with you guys, too.

Any other questions or thoughts or wonderings or anything anybody wants?

I did get one more from a

private

question.

Okay.

Are your trainings just focused on teachers, or is there online

tutoring for kids over the summer or spring break?

We do.

Our training is for teachers. We've had parents that take our training, too, and

we've had people from all walks of life.

So anybody can take our training, for sure.

We also do work one-on-one with

children and adults at our reading center here.

We do it virtually, and we also do it in person, depending on how far away they

live, of course. But we do have consistently

50-ish people on our waiting list that takes about three to six months.

So there's about a three to six month wait. We also have apps.

Shanna, can you share the link with the apps?

I would highly recommend those if you email us.

I did some free lessons over COVID time

for kindergartners, and then first graders and second graders and above.

We had some adults even in the second grade and above.

There's 16 lessons that are 45 minutes long, each of them.

Never done anything like it before in my life. I would have 125 kids.

I'd have to be going through the screens and doing corrections and stuff.

I had so much fun.

It was a lot of work, but it was a lot of fun.

And interestingly, when I was at Plain Talk before, as we were getting ready and we

were having tech stuff and all kinds of stuff, this lady comes up in tears and she

said, "I just have to come and say something to you because I'm from

Wyoming, and my son in third grade could not read a single word, not

one word. He knew maybe a third of the sounds that he was supposed to, and he hated

school, and he was miserable. He's a meth baby, who was

horrifically abused before I adopted him.

And he did your lessons live." You even said his name once, and he was thrilled.

"And he did your lessons live. He was in trouble every day in school, multiple

times every single day in school. And he was depressed." And

she said, "After he did those eight weeks of twice a week of lessons,

now the only time he ever gets in trouble in school is because he's reading too

much." She said, "You saved his life." And I'm like,

"What? How crazy is that?" So I'm like,

wait a minute, a meth baby who had very severe cognitive stuff, and he's on a group with 125 kids, and he is reading?

So we're working on shoring up a lot of things as far as our teacher training, and then I'm going to put my time and energy toward instructional lessons that can be direct to parents and direct to students because

I'm like, if that can happen and you're...

And I was even doing maybe a quarter at Ebly.

I'm like, "I don't know what I'm doing. Parents are freaking out.

Teachers are freaking out. We can't teach the kids.

Nobody's teaching our kids." And I'm like, "All right, let's do this." We took our whole entire team. Talk about losing everything, time, and energy, and money, and blah. And talk about gaining everything because we would get email after email after email from these parents all over the world, and I mean all over the world. We had one little kid in Malaysia who would cry if her mom wouldn't let her stay up till midnight, because that's when her lesson was for the older kids. She'd take a nap at night and then stay up at midnight so she could join the lessons live. So we do have those.

If you email us, we will send those to you.

We don't have them out on our website right now, but when people contact us, another interesting thing on that waiting list, when Cricket calls the people back and say, "Okay, we have a space available," they're like, "You know what?

We did those lessons and my child isn't struggling anymore."

16 45-minute varied group lessons that are only partial.

I'm like, "Wow." So we do have those things.

And

we have Ebly Island for very beginning readers, Ebly Space for a little bit older,

and Ebly Sight Words by Sound. Those are \$4.99, and you can use

them for a whole bunch of kids, and you have it forever.

So that's another thing is our apps. So yeah, we do that.

We're serious about teaching the world to read.

There's just a lot of different tentacles that fly off of that, that we

work on to

make that happen. So thank you for asking.

Anything else, Shannon or Alyssa?

That's it.

All right. Well, thank you all. Hopefully, you'll come and join us next month in

March, the week after St. Patrick's Day.

I'm an Irish girl, so always like March.

This also starts our birthday. We have what we call work

birthdays that we have celebrations, and March starts off.

We're kind of all condensed into a few months, and we start in March and have our

work birthday celebrations regularly for a few months after that.

So March is a good month. And I thank all of you guys for joining us, for

your passion for this. I really want to thank Holly, and Brett,

and Molly, and Julie for sharing, for

this topic keeps coming up, and I'm like, "What can we do with this?" I'm like, "I

wasn't sure how this was going to look or what it was going to be," but I really

appreciate you guys for sharing, for being open.

Together, all of us can make such a huge difference in

this literacy issue so that our kids don't have to have

that experience of suffering when it's

totally preventable. So and open lines of

communication is huge in every

aspect for us to get there. So thank you for being here. And we went way over.

Usually, I'm pretty good about stopping at 8:15, but I appreciated

hearing from all of you and all of your sharing.

So thank you very much, and have a good rest of your evening.

Bye, guys.