

Honing Your Story



The Opening

- Give a salutation and introduction.
- Make a *Hometown Connection*: Parent/Teacher/Community Member/Children in Grade ____.
- Mention Decoding Dyslexia Maryland: DDMD is a grassroots organization with chapters across Maryland that work to make changes at the local and state level.
- Explain Passion/Purpose: Working to ensure all students learn to read and have access to evidence based instruction by knowledgeable teachers trained in the science of reading.

The Need: General Statistics and Personal Example

- Think about how you can catch your audience's attention and succinctly summarize your story.
- Use DDMD's fact sheets, resources, and research found [on website](#). Examples:
 - 3/4 of students who are poor readers in 3rd grade will remain poor readers in high school.
 - In 4th grade, students need 2 hours of instructional time to make the same gains as made in 30 minutes of instructional time in Kindergarten.
 - Students who cannot read and write face limited job opportunities and earning power.
- Include your District's reading scores and other data (PARCC, # of students in interventions, # of HS students enrolled in Bridge project for graduation).
- Provide personal/child evidence of reading difficulty (ex. In 5th grade but reads at a 2nd grade level, told to repeat a grade, had to pay tutors).

The Response: Efforts to Support Early Screening

- Continue with personal story. Be brief and to the point.
 - When did you know that your child struggled with reading?
 - When did the school identify an issue?
 - How could earlier screening and intervention have helped your child?
- Emphasize the early screening and intervention as an effective tool to prevent illiteracy and help all students.

"When at risk students receive early, effective interventions, the percent of students who struggle can be reduced to under 5%." (Florida Center for Reading Research, Technical Report #8, <http://www.fcrr.org>).

The Ask: Support the Ready to Read Act

- General request to support the Ready to Read Act.
- Make a specific ask (Co-sponsor, letter of support...) based on your audience.
- Incorporate most salient DDMD Talking Points in your message. See DDMD document:
 - Reading screening and who will be covered
 - Recipe for success for local districts, does not usurp local control
 - Cost effective and equity driven prevention model
 - Aligned to Maryland Reading Standards

The Closing

- Remember your goal is to engage in further conversation and provide an opportunity to follow-up with more information.
- Express gratitude for opportunity to share.
- Leave contact information and supporting documents.