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From the Editors

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From the Editors...

by Patricia A. Edwards and Tanya S. Wright

Dear *MRJ* Readers,

We are so excited to share with you our inaugural edition as editors of the *Michigan Reading Journal*. We wanted to use this opportunity to introduce ourselves to you and to share our vision for the journal over the next three years of our editorship.



**Dr. Patricia
A. Edwards**



**Dr. Tanya
S. Wright**

Dr. Patricia A. Edwards, a member of the Reading Hall Fame, is a Professor of Language and Literacy in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. She served as a member of the IRA Board of Directors and later as President. She also served as the first African American President of the Literacy Research Association (formerly the National Reading Conference).

Dr. Tanya S. Wright is an Assistant Professor of Language and Literacy in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. She is a former kindergarten teacher whose research and writing focuses on curriculum and instruction in early language and literacy, with a particular interest in improving educational outcomes for children living in poverty.

We have been asked by the board of the Michigan Reading Association to re-imagine the *Michigan Reading Journal* as we move into the future. As we all know, this journal is the face of our organization, and we envision it as a catalyst for bringing people together to focus on literacy in our state. We have taken the board's request very seriously, and so you will see many changes and new features in this edition of the journal.

Most importantly, our vision for the journal includes voices from around the state of Michigan. This includes (1) inviting authors and review board members from a range of regions, institutions, and districts to contribute to the journal (2) inviting articles from a range of stakeholders, and (3) making the journal accessible to new audiences who may not have read it previously.

In reimagining the journal, you will see that research articles have been reframed to focus on *Bridging Research and Practice*. These articles now include practice-relevant information that readers can implement in their schools and classrooms. We have included a new section of the journal entitled *Voices from Michigan* where you can read about the wonderful work that teachers, administrators, and school districts in Michigan are doing to promote literacy at the local level in our State. We have also added a section of the journal called *Critical Issues* to focus on policy issues related to literacy. We often feel as though we are reacting to national and state policies, but the goal of this section is to keep you informed about issues so that you can be proactive about critical issues that matter to you. In this issue, we focus specifically on third grade retention for students who do not pass state reading assessments. We have included an article from Representative Amanda Price who has proposed this legislation as well as a response from faculty members at the University of Michigan who shed light on research that informs this issue. We provide reviews of professional texts for teachers in a column titled *Must Read Texts*, which is edited by Dr. Kathy Highfield and Dr. Laura Pardo. There is also a new column entitled, *For the Love of Literature*, edited by Dr. Laura Apol.

continued on next page

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continued from previous page

Another way that we are reimagining *MRJ* to expand our reach is by posting updates and information about the journal on social media! You can get updates and information about the journal by linking to the Michigan Reading Association page on Facebook, following @michiganreading on Twitter, and searching Michigan Reading Association on Pinterest. Also, watch your email for a survey from *MRJ* focused on *What's Hot and What's Not* in literacy in Michigan. This survey will help us to learn more about what you would like to see included in the journal and what is important to you, our readers.

Finally, our journal has a new email address mrj@msu.edu. We invite you to join the conversation by contributing to *MRJ*. Please email article submissions that are appropriate for any of the sections in our journal to our new email address. We look forward to hearing from you.

We would like to thank our fantastic editorial team of Laura Hopkins and Kristen White. These wonderful MSU doctoral students have been indispensable in supporting our work on this journal. We would also like to thank Laura Guzman, Jessie Hughey, Michigan Reading Association President, Dee Halstead, as well as the MRA Board for supporting us in turning the journal that we imagined into a reality.

We hope you enjoy our re-imagined *MRJ* and that you will tell your friends and colleagues about us. Happy reading!

Best,

Patricia A. Edwards and Tanya S. Wright

Co-Editors, *Michigan Reading Journal*