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President's Message...

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Michigan Reading Association

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President's Message...

by Jill Erfourth, MRA President 2021-2022

“Real change, enduring change happens one step at a time.”
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Fall happens to be my favorite season. A new school year upon us, a fresh start with excitement and eagerness to build upon a previous year while reflecting on areas of improvement. Fall is a time of transition. We watch in splendor as leaves change to beautiful tones of red, yellow, and orange. This change signifies a journey to the next season then to the next while the process unfolds one day at a time.



Jill Erfourth

As we go through change, sometimes we move slowly, like one leaf at a time falling from the trees letting go little by little. Perhaps for some, we spring into change like tulips that suddenly begin emerging into bloom as we look to sunnier days after long winter months. In either case, transformation happens over time and is part of a process that builds all year. It is not until after that process that you can begin to see the beauty in change, all while looking back to reflect on the journey.

Over the past two years, we have experienced changes in the climate of education as well as our personal lives and globally. We adapt, learn, and accept the changes that better us while leaving others behind that served a short-term purpose. MRA has also been impacted by change as we closed our physical office space this year in Grand Rapids and downsized it to accommodate a remote workspace. In August, we hired a new Executive Director, Jeanette Field, who manages the daily operations of MRA. Our annual conference saw changes this past March as we moved to a virtual platform while remaining committed to providing the highest quality experience for all our members. As we reflect through the process of these changes, we have moved forward with new growth and opportunities that will enable us to strengthen our commitment to supporting Michigan educators and students.

This year, MRA will develop a new strategic plan that will evaluate our core beliefs to guide us with a revised mission statement and vision for the association's future. Our board of directors will work together to reflect on our priorities as an organization, establish goals and develop actionable steps to advance our mission and vision forward. A strategic plan will be the foundation of what guides our work and service to our membership as we advocate for equity through literacy across the state. As a member of the Michigan Reading Association, your feedback is valuable to our board of directors as we develop our strategic plan. An email survey will be forthcoming to assist us in the process.

I am honored to serve as president this upcoming year. Your dedication and commitment to our profession, along with your vital work every day in the field, are inspirational. Collectively we can positively change the landscape of education in our great state to profoundly impact our 1.4 million students across Michigan.

“The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

~ Steve Jobs

Jill Erfourth is the 2021-2022 President of the Michigan Reading Association. Jill has over 25 years of experience as an educator in Utica Community Schools. Previously she has served as a second-grade teacher for 18 years and a literacy coach for the past two years. Jill is currently a District K-6 Literacy Consultant in UCS. As a Macomb County Literacy Ambassador, she shares her love of reading and advocates for equity through literacy in Utica Schools and across the county. Jill is the co-author of *Interacting With informational Text for Close and Critical Reading*. She holds a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Saginaw Valley State University. Jill has been nominated for Michigan Teacher of the Year, in which she placed as a 2018-2019 MTOY semi-finalist. You can reach Jill Erfourth at jerfourth.michiganreading@gmail.com.



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