Dear MCPS Staff,

As you may know, students learn phonics in their early school years. Children connect the sounds in our spoken language to individual letters and combinations of letters representing those sounds. When youngsters see new words to “sound out,” they rely on their knowledge of phonics. Similarly, when children write a word they are hearing for the first time, they rely on many things they know about sounds, suffixes, prefixes, and spelling patterns. If we could peek inside the brains of our young readers and writers, we would see that they are doing quite extraordinary things!

Many third, fourth, and older-grade students can benefit from reviewing and practicing the phonics patterns to make reading and writing more effortless and less arduous. Parents find practicing phonics difficult without specific guidance and sequential lessons and examples to follow because adults have forgotten all about learning phonics. Open Source Phonics provides 120 lessons that go step-by-step through phonics patterns, spelling rules, and decodable stories that students can use to practice skills and increase fluency. This practice is designed to be stress-free, as students build on what they know rather than guessing. There are also activities to promote phonemic awareness.

As educators, we know parents are partners in their children’s development as readers. We develop our children's background knowledge and vocabulary when we have conversations about current events or the world. We build comprehension skills by reading or listening to audiobooks or discussing a movie we have seen. When we visit the library and help children find interesting books, we nurture their love of reading.

We are excited that families can now use this free resource to help their children gain more proficiency with the mechanical aspects of reading and writing. Families can visit Open Source Phonics for more information. MCPS Families can use the document linked here for more information on how to use the resources.