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From the Editors

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From the Editors...

by **Patricia A. Edwards** and **Tanya S. Wright**

The lazy days of summer are over. The new school year is here, and we believe it will be your best year ever. We recognize that the start of a new school year is a bittersweet experience for many teachers. On one hand, you miss having time to make phone calls during normal business hours, sitting down to lunch with other adults, and knowing that you can dress like every day is casual Friday if you want to. On the other hand, the start of a new school year is also filled with exciting possibilities—new students, new lesson plans, new colleagues, and new opportunities to make a difference in the lives of your students.



Patricia A. Edwards



Tanya S. Wright

No matter how long you teach, the opening days of a new term are likely to be your busiest and most exhausting time of year. It is no wonder that so many of you sleep poorly at the end of summer vacation, plagued by those teacher nightmares in which you stand helplessly in front of your class while noisy students ignore your attempts to call them to order. You toss and turn, worrying about everything related to your profession and doubting that you will ever be ready for school to begin. As stressful as this time of year can be, however, there are plenty of things that you can do to get the school year off to a great start. We hope that reading all of the exciting and informative articles in our fourth issue of *MRJ* will help you get off to a great start.



In this fourth issue, we have included two *Bridging Research and Practice* articles. The first article focuses on project-based learning and the second article addresses empowering partnerships in literacy through home visits. For the popular *Critical Issues* section, Nina Hasty and Joshua Cowen provide two different perspectives on teacher evaluation reforms. *Voices from Around the State* continues to be well-received by our readers, and in this issue we have teacher tips from Dr. Nancy Gibney and Sue Homant, at the University of Detroit Mercy, Stacie Bittikofer, at St. Patrick School in Brighton, and Kalyn Willis, at Woodworth Middle School in Dearborn. We also have a teacher tip from one of our Canadian colleagues, Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson, past International Literacy Association Board Member and Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Dr. Stagg Peterson discusses dramatic play and writing in kindergarten and grade one in an Ojibwa community. Brandy Archer from the Michigan Department of Education discusses some of the new professional development resources from MDE to support research-based practices in early literacy and math instruction.

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. We include a column edited by Dr. Laura Apol entitled, *For the Love of Literature*.

We encourage our readers to read updates and information about the journal by visiting the Michigan Reading Association page on Facebook, following @michiganreading on Twitter, and searching and following Michigan Reading Association on Pinterest. We thank you for all of the wonderful comments we have received about *MRJ*. Please keep the comments coming!

Our journal email address is 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 again 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 Montoya, Michigan Reading Association President, Lisa Rivard, as well as the MRA Board for supporting our efforts.

Similarly, we wish to thank the following MSU graduate students for their service as reviewers during the 2014-15 year: Donald Barringer, Julie Bell, Yue Bian, Cassie Brownell, Yunjeong Choi, Amy Croel-Perrien, Matthew Deroo, Mandie Dunn, Theda Gibbs, Mark McCarthy, Jon Wargo, and Julene Wilson.

We hope that you enjoy our fourth issue of *MRJ*, and that you will continue to tell your friends and colleagues about us. Happy reading!

Warmest Regards,

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Co-Editors, *Michigan Reading Journal*