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A Message from the MRA President

Teachers have been in the news lately. Specifically Michigan teachers. On April 13, 2006, the Detroit News featured an article, *State warns colleges: Prep teachers better* (www.detnews.com). Michael Flanagan, the state superintendent of public instruction, revealed plans to develop a process to evaluate the quality of teacher preparation programs at Michigan colleges and universities.

One possible evaluation method would analyze percentages of teachers passing the teacher certification subject area tests. For example, the preliminary statewide data included in the article indicated that 80.5% of first time test-takers, passed the Elementary Language Arts exam. Secondary Language Arts first-time test-takers performed higher at 92.5. These figures are not particularly alarming, and the percentages in the English language arts area were higher than several other subject areas. Yet, nearly 20% of potential teachers struggle with passing the Elementary English Language Arts test. **What does the Michigan Reading Association think about this issue?**

The same week, on April 14, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm signed new legislation into Public Act No. 118. The act originated with Senate Bill 327 (www.michiganlegislature.org). This bill amends the Revised School Code to establish additional reading instruction requirements for the renewal of a teacher's provisional teaching certificate or the advancement of a teacher's certification to professional certification, beginning July 1, 2007.

Public Act 118 requires 6 hours of reading credit for all elementary teachers and 3 hours of reading credit for all secondary teachers (previously required in the school code). The current revision in the code now specifies that the teacher successfully completes at



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least a three-credit course (of the required credits) in the *diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities and differentiated instruction*. **What does the Michigan Reading Association think about this issue?**

These two issues provide an opportunity for action by the Michigan Reading Association. Will we provide support for teachers preparing for certification testing with study guides, discussion groups, and mentoring so that 100% of the test-takers pass the first time?

Will we contribute to the content, format, and teaching of the three-credit course in the diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities and differentiated instruction? What about similar expectations for pre-service teachers?

These challenges and possibilities are offered to you—in this, our 50th anniversary year—as a way to move from celebration to action. We welcome your ideas and support for these two challenging issues facing Michigan teachers.

In appreciation for your support and guidance during this presidential year,

Cynthia Clingman
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2005-2006
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