



February 16, 2022

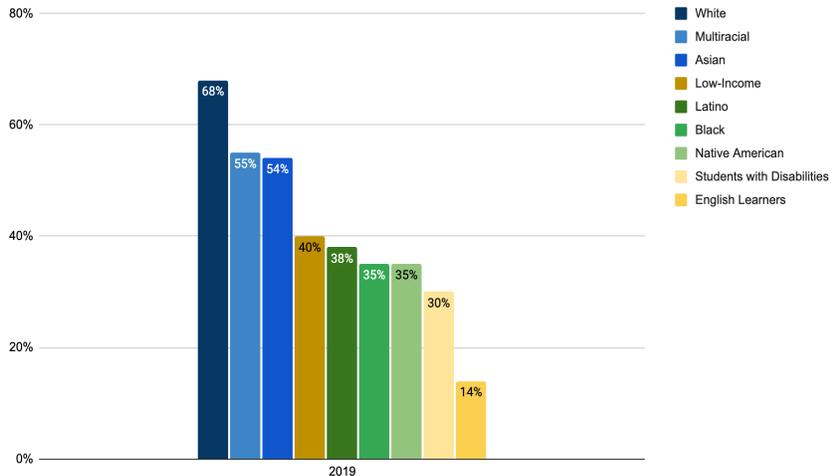
Chair Chamberlain
95 University Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55103
Re: Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling Grants

Dear Chair Chamberlain and members of the committee,

Reading proficiency is critical for success in college, career, and life. Research has found that students who were not proficient in reading by the end of third grade were four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers.¹ Despite this, being able to teach reading was one of the most common things over 50 educators told us that they didn't learn, but wished that they had, in teacher preparation.² This need is not unique to Minnesota. Despite a large body of research supporting scientifically-based methods of early reading instruction,³ the vast majority of teacher education programs do not teach it.⁴ Only 22% of teacher education professors say they center their philosophy around explicit, systematic phonics,⁵ the method which most effectively supports early readers.

This is why we support SF 2872, which would allocate \$33 million to provide Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling Grants training for all K-5 teachers in the state to have access to this training. Our youngest Minnesotans—particularly those who have traditionally underserved—do not have time to wait and deserve educators with expertise in literacy instruction. Minnesota educators also deserve the opportunity to be trained in the science of reading so they can have the essential tools and knowledge to better serve their students. For an individual teacher, the cost of LETRS training can be prohibitive which makes SF 2872 a smart investment in early literacy and will build off the success currently being achieved by last session's appropriation.

Reading Proficiency, MCA 2019



Sincerely,

Matt Shaver
Policy Director

¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). "Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters." http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-Early_Warning_Full_Report-2010.pdf

² Kaput, K. (February 2020). "10 Things All Teacher Candidates Should Learn in Teacher Prep." EdAllies. https://edalliesmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Teacher-Prep-Brief_Final_Digital.pdf

³ Schwartz, S. & Sparks, S. (October 2, 2019). "How Do Kids Learn to Read? What the Science Says." Education Week.

⁴ Lubell, S. (February 2017). "The Science of Teaching Reading." National Council on Teacher Quality. 2018. "A Closer Look at Early Reading: Graduate and Alternative Route Elementary Programs." National Council on Teacher Quality.

⁵ Will, M. (January 22, 2020). "Preservice Teachers Are Getting Mixed Messages on How to Teach Reading." Education Week.

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