

Dear Chair, Cwodzinski and committee,

Thank you for championing strong literacy instruction based in structured literacy. In my role as the Executive Director at Lead the Way MN, I work alongside families, students, and educators every day. Our organization is dedicated to building a stronger community of independent youth and women who can lead, rise and empower others. Lead the Way's mission is to educate, engage and advocate for East African youth and women.

Your bill, SF 1273, answers a crucial need for curricula based in structured literacy and for teachers to receive the training and ongoing support they would need to implement such curriculum well. As introduced, your legislation ensures that kids would receive high quality literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading. I applaud your leadership on this important effort. Ensuring that every Minnesota student can read well at every grade is critical to closing opportunity gaps and ending internalized oppression.

As the legislative process unfolds and you and your colleagues work to balance various interests, I urge you to keep the language about the science of reading clear and hold the guidance on curriculum selection to that standard. I am concerned that amendments around definitions that lack structure and clear guidance could result in significantly watering down the standards for curricula and move away from the proven approach of the science of reading.

I also urge you to keep equity at the center. It has been scientifically proven that 95% of children can learn to read if given access to the science of reading. All students, regardless of learning needs or neurodiversity must have access to strong, science-based literacy instruction.

Kids should be learning how to read in their classrooms, and the Read Act is the best way to ensure that their teachers have the best tools, training, and support to ensure that they do just that in a scientifically proven way.

Thank you again for your leadership on this critically important work. I stand ready to help move this bill forward and welcome continued dialogue along the way.

Sincerely,

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