



March 14, 2023

Dear Chair Cwodzinski, Senator Maye Quade, and Members of the Senate Education Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SF 1273 – the READ Act championed by Senator Maye Quade.

The Minnesota Business Partnership represents the senior leaders of Minnesota’s largest employers. One of Minnesota’s greatest advantages is the strength of our workforce, and we believe it is imperative that our education system equips every student with the skills and abilities necessary to thrive.

Ensuring every child can read well at every grade level is critical for future success. Reading is an education issue and an economic issue - literacy opens doors for students in academics and life. However, reading proficiency disparities are startling – according to the Nation’s Report Card, only one-third of current fourth graders are currently reading at grade level. Results are trending in the wrong direction, with reading scores having fallen more than a grade level (12 points) from 2013 to 2022.

These disparities necessitate immediate action, which is why the READ Act is so important. Minnesota needs to go all-in to transform how we teach students to read, and the READ Act includes several important tools demonstrated in other states to improve how reading instruction is delivered:

- Professional development and literacy training grounded in evidence-based science of reading
- Literacy specialists to assist classroom teachers strengthen reading instruction
- Screening tools to determine student needs and progress
- Resources to adopt evidence-based science of reading curriculum
- Robust use of data to support students, teachers, and leaders

Minnesota is fortunate to have a sizeable state budget surplus, and it is imperative that the state invests in tools like those contained in the READ ACT to improve and intensify reading instruction strategies.

Implementing the READ Act is one of the best steps the legislature can make this year to ensure every Minnesota student reads well at every grade level. Thank you for supporting this important set of tools to strengthen reading and ensure our students’ future success.

Sincerely,

Amy Walstien
Senior Policy Director
Minnesota Business Partnership