

Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

I am Peter Hutchinson. In my career I have had the honor of serving the State of Minnesota as your Commissioner of Finance and the people of Minneapolis as their Superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools.

The READ Act is an essential piece of legislation for ending the reading crisis in Minnesota. It will significantly enhance the life prospects for all Minnesotans, our communities, and our economy. As it has evolved in this session it is getting stronger. Combining the BOLD literacy provisions of HF2497 with the READ act provisions HF629 will lead to an even stronger, may I say BOLDer, set of tools for assuring the literacy of every Minnesotan.

Beyond what is already in those two bills, there are eight things that would make the final result even stronger:

- 1) Extend the required professional development in evidenced based literacy to elementary building administrators as well as teachers. Make that same professional development available to teachers and administrators in middle and high school.
- 2) Require that all professional development related to literacy include not only strong content but equally strong hands-on application of that content with students.
- 3) Require not just completion this professional development but both a demonstration of having acquired the necessary knowledge and a demonstration of mastery in the effective application of that knowledge in practice.
- 4) Require that re-licensure of teachers require mastery of both the knowledge and effective application of that knowledge in practice.
- 5) Require that initial licensure of teachers require mastery of both the knowledge and effective application of that knowledge in practice.
- 6) Require that teacher preparation programs be certified/ recertified that they include an evidenced based literacy curriculum, that that curriculum includes application of that content with preK-12 students, and that those they graduate and recommend for licensure have mastered both the requisite knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in the classroom.
- 7) Increase the funding for literacy that flows to school districts and schools by 10-fold for two or three years to jump start this effort (using one time money) and then return to sustainable base funding.
- 8) Add to the list of allowed uses for all funding that flows to school districts and schools the following:
 - Pay and incentives for teachers to successfully complete the required professional development and allow them to do so outside of the regular school day or year.
 - Fund high dosage interventions for current students and even recent graduates as the hands-on application component of the professional development for teachers.

In Minnesota we are proud of our schools. But we cannot be proud of graduating students who only can read well enough to get by but not to get ahead. As Frederick Douglass said, "Once you learn to read you will be forever free." It's time to guarantee that freedom to all of our children.