

March 20, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the Education Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HF 629 - The Read Act. My name is Dr. Annie Ittner. I am a former elementary teacher, ESL teacher, and Literacy Coach. I have a PhD in Literacy Education and a Masters in Language, Literacy and Culture with licensure in ESL and Elementary Education. I now work as a teacher educator, preparing teacher candidates to teach reading.

I am writing to oppose the Read Act as it's written. I urge Minnesota policymakers to carefully consider the wording about reading instruction. Specifically, I would like to see:

1. **“Science of Reading” eliminated from the Read Act.** In policies, practices, and media, the term “science” as it relates to reading is being misrepresented. There is only one kind of “science” that is represented in the definition, and it does not represent the full picture of how children learn to read. Moreover, much of the research that is linked to the “science of reading” does not include research conducted with English learners (for example, the National Reading Panel (2000)).
2. **Clarify language related to English learners.** I encourage lawmakers to use language that represents the sciences that describe reading processes for English learners. For example, I would consider using “evidence-based practices for teaching multilingual learners”

While the Read Act states “For English learners developing literacy skills, districts are encouraged to use strategies that teach reading and writing in the students' native language and English at the same time.” This is not sufficient language for teaching reading to English learners.

Moreover, in the section that states: “(b) Of this amount, \$30,000,000 must be used to train teachers in the science of reading.”

Please include specific language that points to training teachers and literacy specialists to teach reading to multilingual learners.

Please reach out with any questions.

Thank you for your time,

Dr. Annie Ittner | Assistant Professor | St. Cloud State University

This written testimony does not represent any official policy or position by my employer St. Cloud State University. The statements here are mine alone.