

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today.

My name is Dr. Kay Rosheim and I have the best job in the world because I get to teach students how to read and teachers how to teach literacy.

I have concerns regarding my reading of H.F. No. 629 dated 2/10/23 –Specifically:

- Referencing lines 5.27-5.30 – defining the “Science of reading” there is no mention of writing. Research suggests that teaching students to write in an integrated fashion with reading is not only efficient, it is effective (Graham, 2022)
- I offer by changing that phrase “science of reading” to “Comprehensive Science of Literacy,” the language in the Read Act will more adequately address the complexity of literacy instruction and at the same time take a step towards banding together all of us interested in supporting children’s literacy learning.
- I’d also like to express my concern for the definition of “Literacy specialist” on lines 5.23-5.26, specifically the limiting language of “someone who is trained in the science of reading” and “is eligible for certification from the Center for Effective Reading Instruction in structured literacy. While in my instructional toolbox I have the simple view of reading, Scarborough’s reading rope, the four-part processing model for word recognition and Tolman’s hourglass, it is not nearly enough.
- In the past few years elementary-age children in the U.S. who do poorly on school’s reading screening are placed in the same intervention because of mandates for certain interventions or curriculum. This is like having your vision screened and everyone getting the same prescription for glasses or contact lenses.

If we truly want to meet the needs of all students, we must ensure that teachers have access to the full range of evidence-based research and practice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today. My name is Dr. Kristi Tamte. I am a professor of education at Saint Cloud State University. I teach literacy courses to future elementary teachers. I would like to share my grave concerns about the Read Act and the Science of Reading movement. The Science of Reading movement comes from the field of Special Education and was designed to support children with learning disabilities. Requiring this Science of Reading approach for all children in our schools will harm children who do not need such a remedial program and narrow view of reading. The Science of Reading approach to teaching reading is not new. The US Department of Education reviewed 50 years of research on the effectiveness of this Science of Reading in our schools and found there was NO evidence of effectiveness. In 2021, England published their report on their implementation of the Science of Reading and found that it failed. All of the major literacy organizations oppose this type of implementation of the Science of Reading. This includes the International Literacy Association, The Literacy Research Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English. To improve reading achievement in Minnesota we must begin with a needs analysis to understand why children are not meeting expectations on the state-wide exam because there are many different profiles of reading difficulties and barriers to learning. Requiring Literacy Specialists to be trained in the Science of Reading privileges funding for one type of reading difficulty. Also, the definition of comprehension in this act is woefully incomplete, and all students would fail the state reading exam based on this definition. We must take out all reference to the Science of Reading movement and replace this with 'evidence-based' reading instruction to improve reading achievement for ALL students in our schools. This funding for the Science of Reading movement is unethical, considering the wide variety of needs we have in our schools today.

Dr. Kristi Tamte
ktbergeson@stcloudstate.edu
Assistant Professor of Education
St. Cloud State University

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.

My name is Dr. Stephanie Rollag Yoon; I am a former classroom teacher, and I teach preservice and practicing teachers.

On my best days as a teacher, I draw on the processes of reading and assessment, the backgrounds children bring with them, the link between reading and writing, and the individual identities and interests of students. For example, I was providing targeted instruction to a small group of third graders who needed support. It wasn't enough, as they were still not making progress. In response, I reflected on what I knew about the students. Then, I had them take pictures and tell stories related to those pictures. I typed up those stories to make them part of the text. With this shift, they started to feel more confident, were engaged, and their fluency and comprehension increased. In the decisions I made, I moved from a one-size-fits-all script to meeting the children's needs based on a comprehensive, evidence based approach to reading.

As I connect with literacy specialists across districts, I hear a similar message. The concepts described as the "science of reading" alone are just not enough to fully support students. They are not enough for interventions and they are certainly not enough for whole-class instruction. In addition to this lens, teachers need to consider the context surrounding their readers, what culturally responsive pedagogy looks like in action, the interests, backgrounds, and languages students bring to school, and the ability to identify when a specific strategy is helping them move forward or not. As outlined in our 4th bullet in the at-a-glance document, preservice and practicing teachers need professional development in all of these areas.

As it is currently written in the Read Act, there is a mention of culturally responsive materials, but the mandated curriculum and professional development that is tied to funding is defined around the "science of reading." This narrows the content, pedagogy, and possibilities that could contribute to overall reading success for students. Further, good teachers want to draw on the vast body of research and knowledge so they can support all of their students. If we limit their ability to do so, we risk losing strong teachers. To reach all students and to support our educators, we need to expand the language and action steps of the Read Act to include comprehensive sciences of reading and literacy.

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today. My name is Audrey Lensmire. I am a professor of literacy education at Augsburg University where I teach future elementary teachers.

The comments my colleagues and I are making today about policies--that will determine definitions of evidence, reading, and how to teach reading-- are connected to a larger story in this country where **teachers and teacher educators are blamed for stubborn achievement gaps in standardized test scores.**

According to Wetzel in 2020, this targeting:

“pulls attention away from the overwhelming influence of racist and other oppressive practices in schools and society, that greatly constrain generative opportunities for teaching and learning to read, particularly for learners from marginalized communities.”

This same blame game has been going on for 100 years. We reject the idea that we are to blame.

But, now we know more, so we can do more *now*.

The Read Act can be improved in simple ways. Do not pit “science of reading” against all other forms of research and knowledge that has informed how teachers can support learners “particularly those from marginalized communities.”

I get that it feels good to say “this will improve reading scores” and it will “end the achievement gaps” but unfortunately an overemphasis on “science of reading” will not produce your desired results. Further, the current plan holds impoverished views of teachers and learners. While it overemphasizes certain aspects of learning to read, it diminishes or ignores others.

Instead, we might draw on a different model of teaching and learning to guide our policy-making. We might frame our statewide literacy work around a comprehensive vision that includes equity work such as that of Dr. Ghody Muhammad, who emphasizes that identity, skills, knowledge, and criticality are building blocks for sound educational practice. Notice that skills are not ignored in this framework but joined with other equally valuable foci of curriculum and teaching and learning.

My colleagues and I would like to support the state of Minnesota by collaborating with this body, MDE, and other stakeholders. The legislature can do better than this version of the Read Act. **We welcome the opportunity to continue the work together.** Thank you.