Jeremy Thiesfeldt

STATE REPRESENTATIVE . 52nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bill 962 UW Landscape Analysis for Teachers

Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

Good afternoon, Chairman Murphy and honored members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify on Assembly Bill 962, an important bill that should be instrumental in making a difference in education in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's reading proficiency scores for K-12 students is abysmal. Fewer than 30% of our state's students are proficient at reading, and horrifically, Wisconsin has the worst racial learning achievement gap in the country. These statistics have been going on for far too long in our state.

A ray of hope is that there has been much research on the science of reading and the best, most effective ways to teach children how to learn to read. You would think that reading would come naturally, but it actually doesn't, and we have found that many teachers are actually teaching children wrong. Family after family and student after student have contacted us letting us know that their middle school students and high school students are really terrible readers. There was a long wave in which teachers were teaching students inaccurately, and years of test scores data show that the students never catch up and it usually affects them for life.

The key is to ensure that teachers know the best ways to teach children to read, and that's where this bill comes in.

We have long-standing data showing that our teachers are graduating college illequipped for the job of teaching children to read. In fact, there is the Foundations of Reading Test that all K-5 teachers, special education teachers, reading teachers, and reading specialists need to take in order to be licensed to teach in Wisconsin, and the pass rate is just over 50%, which means that, after paying for a four-year college degree, and we know how expensive that can be, half of our would-be teachers can't even pass the test to teach. Not only that, but many of them are flunking it many times.

That's where this bill comes in. We want to ensure that undergrad students graduating to be teachers are properly taught to teach.

Jeremy Thiesfeldt

STATE REPRESENTATIVE * 52nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

The third ESSER education package that was approved by both JFC and DPI recently has in it the ability for UW System institutions to participate in a landscape analysis study to see what is working and what is not working in their teaching curriculum. The funding is there, as JFC and DPI already approved the funding and the mechanisms for the study. This bill, AB 962, ensures that UW System institutions participate in this study.

Each college participating will receive an individual report that will show them the areas they are doing well and also where and how they can tweak their teaching and their curriculum to ensure that the teachers of tomorrow are being fully prepared to teach our state's students.

We would love your support on this important bill that will really help families and students across Wisconsin be able to truly succeed in school. Thank you.

STATE SENATOR KATHY BERNIER

TWENTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT



State Capitol • P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707 Office: (608) 266-7511 • Toll Free: (888) 437-9436 Sen.Bernier@legis.wi.gov • www.SenatorBernier.com

From: Senator Kathy Bernier

To: The Assembly Committee on Colleges & Universities

Re: Testimony on Assembly Bill 962

Relating to: UW System institution participation in Department of Public

Instruction-initiated landscape analysis

Date: February 10, 2022

Thank you Chairman Murphy and committee members for allowing me to provide testimony on Assembly Bill 962.

Wisconsin has a dire reading problem. 64% of Wisconsin 4th graders are not proficient readers, while a full 34% struggle to read at even the most basic level. Nationally, Wisconsin is one of only a handful of states where students of each and every demographic group underperform the national average for their peer group.

Although Wisconsin was once a leader in literacy, our students now lag behind states where evidence-based approaches to early literacy have been adopted. In fact, over the last three decades, each of Wisconsin's three largest demographic groups have fallen at least 21 places in national reading rankings.

If we don't change course, the outcomes for our children are bleak. Children who don't learn to read by the end of third grade are likely to remain poor readers for the rest of their lives, and are much more likely to drop out of high school, live in poverty, and end up in the criminal justice system. Almost 90 percent of high school dropouts struggled to read in the third grade, and seven in ten prison inmates cannot read above a fourth-grade level.

Thankfully, over the past two decades, neuroscience – including groundbreaking research at UW-Madison - has allowed us to move beyond theory and guesswork, to identify exactly how all children – even those struggling to read – can become skilled readers.

To help address Wisconsin's continued reading problem and help us move toward adopting proven, science-based reading instruction and practice at every level, the Joint Committee on Finance dedicated \$5M in federal ARPA funds for an evidence-based reading initiative. In addition to professional development for teachers, training for principals and administrators, and grants to expand state-based literacy supports, the initiative includes funding for a landscape analysis of reading instruction within UW teacher preparation programs.

Modeled after successful studies in other states, the landscape analysis is designed to give each institution clear, confidential feedback on the effectiveness of their program in preparing pre-service candidates to be effective reading teachers for all students - especially those who have fallen behind or struggle to read. The analysis will be conducted by an independent, third-party organization selected by the

Department of Public Instruction, and will review course materials for adequate coverage of evidence-based content and practices, as documented by the National Reading Panel Report and subsequent updates of the research by the Institute for Education Sciences.

Participating programs will receive a confidential report that includes institution-specific findings and recommendations to assist programs in further integrating the best of evidence-based instruction in course work and clinical experiences to better prepare prospective teachers. Participating programs will also receive \$100,000 in planning grants to help programs implement change.

An aggregate report will be given to the Department of Public Instruction and relevant standing committees of the Legislature that includes recommendations for improving effective reading education for prospective teachers statewide. Under the plan, the Department of Public Instruction will use the landscape analysis to review and update state licensure and certification standards in the area of literacy instruction in collaboration with Wisconsin schools of education.

Assembly Bill 962 simply requires that all UW teacher preparation programs participate in this landscape analysis. Full participation means every school will get an evidence-based second opinion on their programming along with \$100,000 to make improvements that will benefit future teachers. Full participation will also ensure an accurate and complete landscape analysis that can be used to better inform the sustained, comprehensive approach required to turn Wisconsin's dire reading situation around.

Lastly, I want to say very plainly that this bill is not about blaming Wisconsin's reading problem on teacher training. In fact, it's quite the opposite. When Wisconsin faces difficult problems in any area, it's so often our UW schools that rise to the occasion and bring forward the solutions we need. We truly need UW's help and expertise to solve this crisis long-term, and that's why this plan provides an objective evidence-based review along with grant money to help UW help us in that endeavor.

Thank you once again for hearing Assembly Bill 962. I hope you will join me in support of this bill as we work toward sustained, comprehensive change that leads to every Wisconsin 4th grader becoming literate.

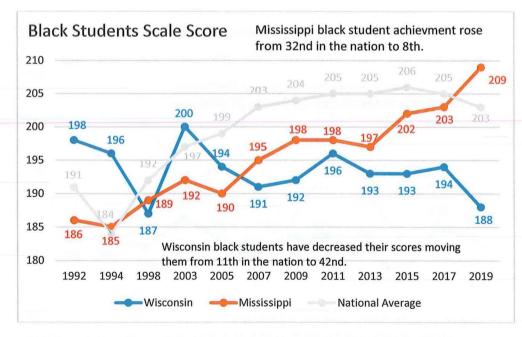
Wisconsin vs. Mississippi:

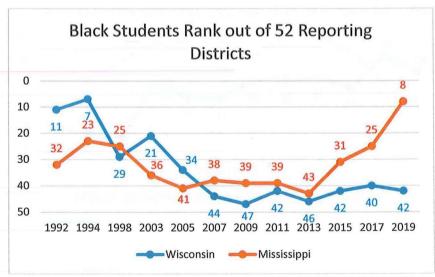
4th Grade Reading Scores-The National Assessment of Educational Progress

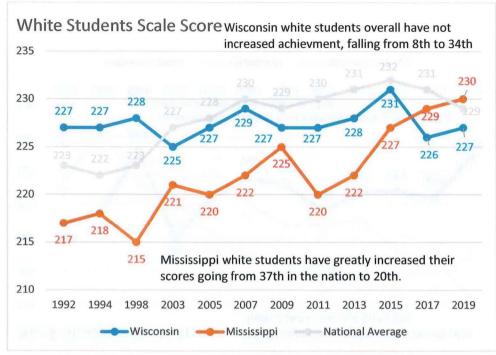
Rankings include all 50 states plus The District of Columbia and DoDEA. Not all states have data available for each demographic

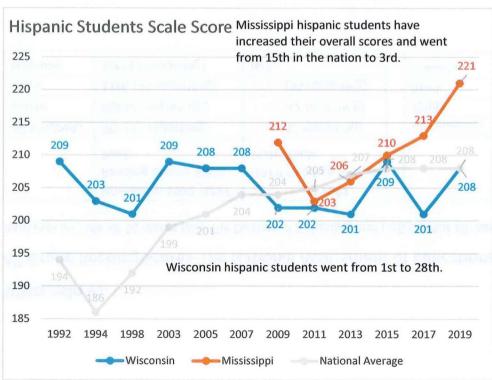
-	Wisconsin 1992 NAEP	Mississippi 1992		
	Reading Scores State	NAEP Reading Scores		
	Rank	State Rank		
All Students	6th (42 reporting)	41st (42 reporting)		
White	8th (42 reporting)	37th (42 reporting)		
Black	11th (35 reporting)	32nd (35 reporting)		
Hispanic	1st (21 reporting)	N/A		

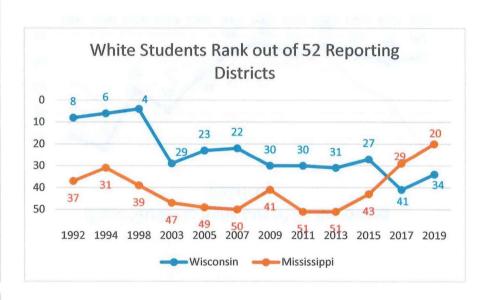
- Am	Wisconsin 2019 NAEP, Reading Scores State Rank	Mississippi 2019 NAEP Reading Scores State Rank	
All Students	27th (52 reporting)	30th (52 reporting)	
White	34th (52 reporting)	20th (52 reporting)	
Black	42nd (42 reporting)	8th (42 reporting)	
Hispanic	28th (49 reporting)	3rd (49 reporting)	

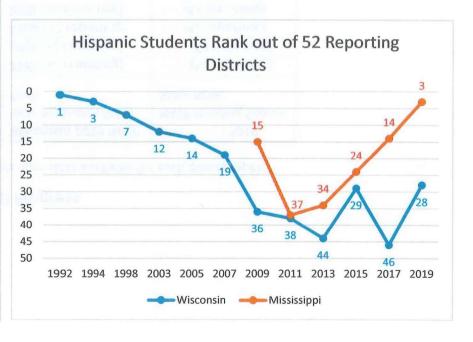








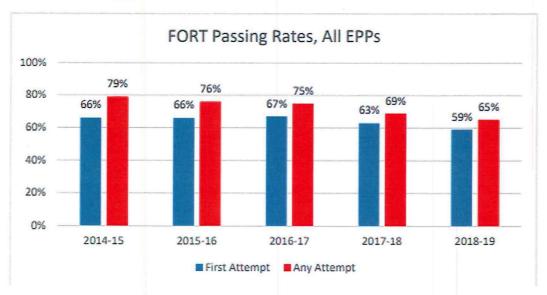




Foundations of Reading Test (FORT) Passage Rates

The Wisconsin Foundations of Reading Test (FORT) assesses proficiency and depth of understanding of science-based reading and writing development among prospective teachers. Applicants for initial licensure as an elementary teacher, special education teacher, reading teacher, or reading specialist must pass the FORT.

EPP (2018 -2019)	Percent of Candidates Passing on First Attempt	Percent of Candidates Passing on Any Attempt	
UW - Eau Claire	71%	83%	
UW - Green Bay	50%	53%	
UW - La Crosse	68%	80%	
UW - Madison	89%	91%	
UW - Milwaukee	53%	56%	
UW - Oshkosh	59%	63%	
UW - Parkside	*	*	
UW - Platteville	49%	64%	
UW - River Falls	68%	80%	
UW - Steven Point	41%	53%	
UW - Stout	58%	65%	
UW - Superior	57%	60%	
UW - Whitewater	48%	60%	
System Wide Average:	59%	67%	



Joint Finance Committee ARPA ESSER III Literacy Allocation

Background

Under the American Rescue Plan's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funds, the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) approved a \$5M reading initiative to help address falling reading scores across Wisconsin. In addition to grants for professional development, training for principals and administrators, and expanding state-based literacy supports, the initiative included funds for a landscape analysis of UW educator preparation programs in the area of literacy.

Excerpt from Approved JFC Motion:

Items 8e-f: a Landscape Analysis of UW Educator Prep Programs

8e. Allocate \$600,000 for a landscape analysis of educator preparation programs. Require DPI to select an independent organization for the analysis that can demonstrate recent experience conducting statewide, multi-institution studies of early literacy courses in educator preparation programs to ensure adequate coverage of evidence-based content and practices, as documented by the National Reading Panel Report and subsequent updates of the research by the Institute for Education Sciences. Require that the organization demonstrates that it has done at least all of the following when conducting previous studies: (1) conducted a thorough review of all course materials: (2) conducted classroom observations through which reviewers determined to what extent course instruction matches syllabi; (3) reviewed how well evidence-based practices are modeled for pre-service candidates and opportunities are provided for candidates to connect knowledge to practice; and (4) extensively used interviews and focus groups to gather other relevant information about evidencealigned program content and delivery. Require DPI to issue a request for bids or proposals for the purpose of retaining an organization within 30 days of the approval of the state's application for funds.

Require that the organization conducting the landscape analysis do all of the following: (1) invite all 13 UW System educator preparation programs to participate in the analysis; (2) analyze educator preparation program required reading courses, including syllabi and course schedules, textbooks, assignments, and exams, to ensure adequate coverage of evidence-based content and practices, as documented by the National Reading Panel Report and subsequent updates of the research by the Institute for Education Sciences, and to determine to what extent programs connect reading knowledge to instructional practice and prepare pre-service candidates to be effective reading instructors for all pupils, especially those who have fallen behind or struggle to read; (3) after completing the landscape analysis, provide the Department and the committees of the Legislature tasked with oversight of K-12 education and higher education with an aggregate report on the overall effectiveness of Wisconsin

educator preparation programs in providing candidates with evidence-based practices and explicit, systematic instruction of the five essential components (phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension) that prepare them to be effective teachers of reading for all pupils, along with recommendations for improving educator preparation program reading content and clinical experiences statewide; and (4) after completing the landscape analysis, provide each participating UW System educator preparation program with a confidential written report that includes institution-specific findings and ways to integrate evidence-based instruction in early literacy course work and clinical experiences for pre-service candidates.

Specify that DPI will use the recommendations from the landscape analysis to review and update state licensure and certification standards in the area of literacy instruction in early education through grade 12 in collaboration with teachers and institutions of higher education, and coordinate with educator preparation programs to strengthen and enhance pre-service courses for students preparing to teach children from birth through grade 12 in explicit, systematic, and intensive instruction in evidence-based literacy methods.

8f. Allocate \$1,300,000 for grants to UW System educator preparation programs. Require DPI to award programs participating in the analysis under (e) with up to two grants of \$50,000 each for the purposes of addressing and implementing recommendations in the report within 24 months. Require DPI to award the first grant upon successful completion of the landscape analysis, as determined by the organization conducting the landscape analysis. Require DPI to award the second grant upon certification by the independent organization that the educator preparation program has adopted an adequate plan to implement the recommendations in the individual educator preparation program report.



Wisconsin Legislature 10 February 2022

As newly minted teachers enter classrooms each year unprepared to teach reading, legislatures should consider a landscape analysis of teacher preparation programs to find out why.

Mississippi has conducted two such studies of teacher preparation programs to determine to what extent new candidates were being prepared using evidence-based practices. Results of the first study in 2003 precipitated a new licensure requirement for programs to ensure that candidates were introduced to the five components of reading. The second study in 2014 called for a professional growth model for faculty to ensure that those who were preparing teachers also had the knowledge of the science of reading.

Even though higher education faculty possess advanced degrees, those degrees rarely addressed content related to the science of reading. Therefore, even if states adopt new licensure requirements specifying content in undergraduate courses, if faculty themselves do not possess the knowledge of the science of reading, they are not prepared to transfer this knowledge to their candidates.

Mississippi's model for reviewing teacher preparation programs has drawn interest from as many as twenty states. Alabama is in the process of conducting a thorough review of its programs to ensure they are aligned with the Alabama Literacy Act. North Carolina is calling for the same. In response to numerous inquiries about the landscape analysis, The Barksdale Reading Institute initiated a multi-state initiative (The Path Forward) to assist other state teams in addressing the gaps in teacher preparation. Cohort 1 includes Arizona, Colorado, Massachusetts, Missouri, North Carolina, and Ohio. As state teams continue to develop their action plans, reviewing teacher preparation programs remains a critical lever.

Even though all teachers benefit from peer support and ongoing professional development once in the field, making sure their pre-service training is grounded in the science is far more effective and cost efficient.

Kelly Butler, CEO The Barkesdale Reading Institute February 8, 2022

Steven P. Dykstra, PhD Licensed Psychologist 2342 N. 61st Street Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Chairpersons and Members Senate and Assembly Education Committees

Re: SB895/AB962

Dear Chairpersons and Members:

I regret that it was impossible for me to appear before you in person to express my support for SB895 and AB962. Instead, I will do my best to explain the importance of these bills and respond to what I imagine might be the concerns some of you feel.

I think it is important that we begin with a quick review of the state of early reading achievement in Wisconsin. For the last twenty years, Wisconsin fourth-graders have lagged behind their peers in early reading achievement based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This pattern of poor performance is not limited to any district, or demographic group. Urban, rural, black, white, brown, poor, not poor, male, female; every group and demographic in Wisconsin performs poorly compared to similar students in other states. The most fair and honest assessment of this data supports the conclusion that fourth-graders in Wisconsin rank among the bottom fifteen, more likely the bottom ten states in the nation when it comes to their ability to read. No group escapes the trend, and over the last two decades the differences are getting worse, not better.

Previously, Wisconsin ranked in the upper echelon for fourth grade reading achievement. Since then, our performance has declined barely at all. Our scores today are about the same as they were when our ranking was much better. We have not declined, instead we have been passed by dozens of other states who have learned to teach reading better than we do. This decline began roughly around the time that two major reports, one from the National Reading Panel in 2000, and the other from the National Academy of Sciences in 1998, synthesized decades of research to clearly establish what is known today as the Science of Reading. Since then, States that have abided the science in their educational policy and teacher preparation have generally improved their ranking compared to other states, and particularly compared to those states, like Wisconsin, which have neglected or resisted that science.

For myself and others, the link between our neglect of the Science of Reading and the decline in our ranking is so well supported by the evidence that it is obvious, even indisputable. Others, without citing evidence but relying instead on deeply personal philosophies, see it differently. By and large, those philosophies have held sway at the Department of Public Instruction, and in most school districts and departments of education across the state for the last several decades.

Many factors, including poverty, racism, funding, and myriad influences unique to individual communities, schools, and families make major contributions to the development of reading and literacy in young children. But, the broad pattern of uniformly poor performance by every group and

demographic for the last twenty years, and the fact that the dozens of states which have passed us by experience the same poverty, racism, funding, and other issues which affect us, demonstrates that there must also be causes for our shameful performance which are common to our entire state, to every district, and which distinguish us from the growing list of states that have passed us by. We must ask ourselves, what do all the schools in Wisconsin share in common with each other that they do not share with other states?

Even without understanding the Science of Reading, without knowing anything about the history of the Reading Wars, or having any familiarity with the content of courses used to prepare teachers to teach reading in our state, any honest effort to discover why every group, and every demographic in our state has fallen so badly behind would have to lead to at least the consideration of the possibility that we have failed our teachers in the way we prepare them to teach reading, and by extension failed our students. If we do consider the Science of Reading, and what we know about how other states have passed us by, the possibility that we have failed our teachers and students at this most basic level becomes an inescapable likelihood.

Some will disagree. They will cling to their philosophies and characterize this as an attack on teachers. This is no attack on teachers. It is quite the opposite. If we have failed teachers, and I believe we have, if we are failing teachers now, and I believe we are, how can learning about that so we can fix it be characterized as an attack on teachers?

Others will point out that funding, poverty, and racism are also factors in why many children do not learn to read early and well. But, as I have pointed out, these are factors everywhere, not just in Wisconsin, and they are often more severe in places which nonetheless outperform us. Furthermore, poverty and racism cannot be used to explain why white, Wisconsin 4th graders who don't get a free lunch rank 35th in the nation, well behind the national average for their group, and even further behind Mississippi. Funding, poverty, racism, and a long list of other factors are very real contributors to literacy challenges for many of our children. But that should not distract us from the plainly obvious fact that something which all of our students, and schools have in common is a factor as well.

We must have the courage to consider the possibility, the likelihood, that we have failed our teachers and by doing so are failing our students. You must consider the possibility, the likelihood, that individuals and groups who oppose this legislation do so not because it isn't needed, but because it is needed, because they suspect, exactly as I do, that we will uncover one of the roots to our shared problem and by doing so we will trigger changes that they do not want, in a system they have built and steered for decades.

Please, for our teachers and for our children, be brave.

SEP. Outst, Pho

Sincerely,

Steven P Dykstra, PhD

Students	Rank	Below Nation	Significantly below Nation	Below MS	Significantly below MS
All	27/52	X	X		
White	34/52	X	X	X	
Black	42/42	Х		X	Х
Hispanic	28/49	X		X	X
Free lunch	43/51	Х		X	X
No free lunch	32/51	X		Х	X
W/Free lunch	40/50	X		X	X
W/No free lunch	35/51	X	Х	X	Х
B/Free lunch	40/40	X	Х	Х	Х
B/No free lunch	23/23	X		_	_
H/Free lunch	28/47	Х		Х	Х
H/No free lunch	22/33	X		_	_
W/City	23/45	Х			_
W/Suburbs	21/46	X			
W/Town	26/39	X		X	
W/Rural	33/46	X		Х	Х



Office of Government Relations Van Hise Hall 1220 Linden Drive Madison, WI 53706 www.wisconsin.edu

DATE:

February 10, 2022

TO:

Members of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

FROM:

Deej Lundgren, UW System Interim Associate Vice President for Government

Relations

RE:

Written Testimony on Assembly Bill 962

Thank you, Chair Murphy and committee members, for providing the UW System (UWS) an opportunity to provide testimony on Assembly Bill 962 (AB 962).

Our 13 universities that provide educator preparation programs are committed to ensuring that teachers entering the field, in any subject area, learn the research-based knowledge and skills to ensure positive outcomes for Wisconsin's K-12 students. This includes our literacy faculty and staff in each UW educator preparation program, who are fully committed to providing teacher candidates opportunities to learn the evidence-based strategies that promote children's literacy. Our institutions' educator preparation programs comply with the rigorous accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the program approval criteria and standards of performance set by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), including submission of data for the Institution and Program Report Card (IPRC) required by the U.S. Department of Education as part of Title II (Sections 205 through 208) of the *Higher Education Act*.

Every UW System institution that offers an education preparation program which leads to licensure must be approved by the DPI. The goal of this approval and oversight is to ensure quality teaching practices in Wisconsin schools by assuring educator preparation programs have met a level of practice, as measured by the performance of their students and graduates. As part of the approval process, each institution must submit written evidence that their program complies with the performance-based standards and statutory and rule requirements specified in Wisconsin Statute 118.19 and Wisconsin Administrative Code section PI 34. This evidence must be based on research of best practices in education and must address how the institution's assessment system evaluates candidate quality. In turn, the evaluation data is used to improve programs.

Given that our institutions' preparation programs are already evaluated and approved by the DPI and HLC accreditation standards, a further independent review of these programs seems duplicative and detracts faculty from their primary purpose of preparing the next generation of Wisconsin teachers.

(Cont.)

That said, our faculty are committed to improving literacy rates across Wisconsin. We welcome being part of the development of a comprehensive plan to address children's literacy. Our recent graduates are an important, but comparatively small pool of educators in the workforce. There are approximately 61,000 teachers across Wisconsin and our recent education graduates represent just over 1,800 or 3% of these educators. Of the 1,800 recent graduates, less than half are licensed educators for our elementary and middle schools, or special education programs, where children's literacy development is most critical. Therefore, we encourage any discussion of a comprehensive literacy plan include strategies to provide research-based literacy training for the larger Wisconsin educator workforce.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our thoughts on this legislation.

Support for Senate Bill 895 and Assembly Bill 962

Who Am I?

- · Donna Hejtmanek, Harshaw, WI
- · Retired special education teacher/reading specialist 41 years
- President for the Literacy Task Force of Wisconsin a non-profit whose mission is to promote
 the use of evidenced based instructional approaches and awareness of reading difficulties
 and solutions for students www.wi-read.org
- Advocate for reading reform serving on the Dyslexia Information Study Group and the Read to Lead Council

Why I'm Here?

- Wisconsin schools of education are failing to infuse researched based practices into their teacher prep programs
- Pre-service teachers do NOT get the basic knowledge of scientific knowledge of how learners become readers
- Deans of Wisconsin schools of education are resistant to conversations about programming for their pre-service teachers (Aug 2019)
- Frustration in August of 2019 after testifying during public hearings on the Dyslexia Guidebook led me to create a FB group- Science of Reading-What I Should Have Learned in College, 135K members worldwide in 100 countries.

Here are some quotes from our members in the FB group Despite having a masters in literacy, I have learned more from this Facebook group than anywhere else.

Thank you for all the work you do for this group!! I have truly learned more from this group in the past 6 months than in my 16 years of teaching! THANK YOU!

It is mind blowing how I have learned more from a Facebook group than I did in my college experiences and PDs. I feel so lucky to have stumbled across this.

As a first year teacher, this is the best group. Instead of wasting my time on strategies that don't work. I'm learning so much more now than I ever did in college.

Wish we could get a refund on college. We should've only been taught researched based skills and strategies. We must use peer reviewed articles. So why weren't the college programs also using this same standard. Now we're in major debt and seeking knowledge on our own. So sad

And from a college professor. It is very frustrating, but I just want to remind you that many college professors also don't know better. Take me for example...I grew up in the whole language era and then was trained in the balanced literacy era myself. I am currently finishing up my doctorate in...a balanced literacy program. I am having to completely train myself on my own time and with my own money. It is sad to think of all of my past college students that I have trained erroneously, but I am committed to doing a better job now. Hopefully, with this science of reading movement, we can inspire more college professors to do the same and

then there will be more structured literacy-trained professor to fill positions and train teachers the correct way. It will be a long haul, but we can all do this together!

What is Wisconsin doing?

According to the WI DPI WI Instructional Materials Matter Statewide Curriculum Map a survey conducted, Fall 2020, (80% of WI districts responded, including 681 K-2 curriculum responses, the following instructional materials are most consistently used in WI K-2 classrooms:

21% - Lucy Calkins (Heinemann)

19% - Fountas and Pinnell (Heinemann)

12% Teacher and District made

40% of school districts are using curriculums with failing marks from EdReports.

https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/new-curriculum-review-gives-failing-marks-to-popular-early-reading-programs/2021/11

 Wisconsin State Reading Association the largest professional organization in the State of Wisconsin withholds information to its members on Science based reading instruction because the leadership does not support evidenced based practices

What's the problem and the solution?

Instead of requiring schools of education to provide evidenced based instruction for preservice teachers, inservice teacher training is being utilized in many states through mandated training for teachers.

- More states requiring science of reading. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/more-states-are-making-the-science-of-reading-a-policy-priority/2021/10
- https://hechingerreport.org/states-urgent-push-to-overhaul-reading-instruction/
- Eighteen states and the District of Columbia have said they'll <u>use federal Covid funds</u> to train teachers or change the way they teach reading. Along with <u>Connecticut</u>, <u>North Carolina</u> and <u>Tennessee</u>, <u>Delaware</u> wrote the "science of reading" into state law this year. The term "science of reading" is used to describe five components of effective reading instruction: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

Why wait to teach what teachers should have known all along?