



# DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

## Testimony on SB 971

*February 6, 2024*

Thank you Chairman Jagler for a hearing on Senate Bill 971. SB 971 is a bill to create two new appropriation lines relating to early literacy. 2023 Act 20 made a number of changes to the law surrounding early child literacy, including setting up a grant program for local school districts to defray costs for new curriculum and professional development.

When the Joint Finance Committee took action on K-12 education on June 13<sup>th</sup> of last year, it set aside \$50 million for early literacy purposes. There were no new appropriation lines, however, as negotiations over what would become Act 20 had yet to be completed. I look forward to deploying this \$50 million toward the transition toward the science of reading. I anticipate a 13.10 request from DPI sometime in February.

Unfortunately, there is not a good and germane appropriation line item in current statute for the Legislature to deploy these funds. AB 1017 would create two new appropriation lines. The first is a continuing appropriation for the Office of Literacy, which would cover both administration and the literacy coaches program. The second is a biennial appropriation for aid to schools in implementing Act 20.

This is as technical of a bill as I can recall authoring, but it is important that the appropriation mechanisms the Legislature uses are properly adapted to our policy goals. Act 20, as well as the budget agreement on the \$50 million, were a good example of bipartisan governance. I hope this technical, implementation legislation can follow in those footsteps. Thank you.