

May 16, 2022

Dear Conferee,

My name is Sara Spafford Freeman, I'm a graduate of Dover-Eyota Public Schools and the parent of 3 students in Minneapolis Public Schools. I am writing in support of MDE's BOLD plan. Last week's testimony and Member comments largely attributed the struggle of many public school students to read entirely to poverty - but two of my children have or still struggle to read, despite being raised in a middle class family with two college-educated parents and the benefit of preschool and PreK. The struggle to read, and the educational debt and disparities incurred by children of color in MN's public schools, are bigger than poverty. MDE leaders and the BOLD plan understand that.

Along with Khulia Pringle and David Weingartner, I co-lead a group of parents and educators called the Academics Advocacy Group. We are more than 400 people committed to pushing public school districts to serve all students, address racial disparities and implement the types of tools described in the BOLD plan.

Effective Literacy instruction requires four equally important components: teacher training, evidence-based, knowledge-rich & culturally relevant curricula rooted in the science of reading, effective interventions, and actionable assessments. The BOLD plan provides concrete guidance to school districts on all four of those necessary components, and focuses explicitly on the importance of using evidence-based instruction tools & teacher training.

But ensuring students and teachers have access to these important Literacy tools isn't as simple as a statewide Literacy plan - the Legislature must invest greater resources in K-12 schools. And with the state's \$9 Billion surplus, you have not just the opportunity, but the obligation to do so. The needs are great and the time is now. Thank you.

Sara Spafford Freeman