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MEMORANDUM

Date: May 4, 2021

To: Members of the House Education Committee

From: Löki Gale Tobin, Office of Senator Tom Begich

RE: Evidence-based reading interventions for English language learners

Dear House Education Committee Members,

Please allow me to present materials regarding the efficacy of evidence-based reading interventions for English language learners. To paraphrase Commissioner Johnson, there is ample evidence that reading proficiency in one language helps a student learn to read in another language (reading skills are transferable).

Published in 2006, the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences created the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth. The panel was charged with "identifying, assessing, and synthesizing research on the education of language-minority children and youth with regard to literacy attainment and to produce a comprehensive report on this literature." (1)

Over four years, the panel convened experts in "second-language development, cognitive development, curriculum and instruction, assessment, and methodology" to produce a comprehensive report on recommendations that went through two robust external reviews by anonymous reviewers.

The major findings of the panel found that the key components of reading – identified by the National Reading Panel – have clear benefits for language-minority students. Additionally, the panel found that oral proficiency and literacy

in a first language can facilitate literacy development in a second language and reading proficiency assessments need to be evidence-based (assessing letter naming and phonological awareness) to adequately assess a student's progress and help inform teaching practices.

In "Evidence-Based, Small-Group Reading Instruction for English Language Learners in Elementary Grades," researchers again affirmed that evidence-based reading interventions "highlight effective teaching for early literacy skill development for first- and second-grade ELL students." (2) Again, researchers acknowledged a strong correlation between oral reading proficiency and early literacy.

Finally, the CEEDAR Center worked with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs to produce a clear set of recommendations for educators of minority-language students using evidence-based practices. The 84-page report summarizes effective teaching practices from peer-reviewed literature published between 2005-2015. The report makes clear recommendations that include evidence-based reading interventions, monitoring student progress, developing family-school partnerships and engagement, and culturally responsive teaching. (4)

References:

- (1) https://www.standardsinstitutes.org/sites/default/files/material/developing-literacy-in-second-language-learners-executive-summary_2.pdf
- (2) <https://ace.nd.edu/files/ACE-ENL/Current/EDU70110/Use%20of%20Evidence-Based%20Small%20Group%20Reading%20Instruction%20for%20English%20Language%20Learners%20in%20Elementary%20Grades.pdf>
- (3) <https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/EBP-for-english-learners.pdf>