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To: [KDE KBE](#)
Subject: Read to Achieve grant
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Dear Board Members:

The percentage of 4th grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level in Reading/Literacy was 35 percent in 2019: the remaining 65% of Kentucky 4th graders performed below proficiency level. One reason for this may be related to gaps in teacher training and the lack of effective reading instruction in our state. Surprisingly, most collegiate level teacher training programs do not adequately prepare teachers to understand how children learn to read or how to create/choose a literacy curriculum proven to be effective through evidence based outcomes.

A majority of the school districts across the Commonwealth are not offering effective evidence-based tier 1 (general curriculum) instruction based on the science of reading. While research indicates that structured literacy curricula based on the science of reading are necessary for children who have Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Disabilities (reading), these literacy programs benefit all children: leading to gains in their literacy skills and scores. Several states across the nation have already begun to pass laws requiring professional development for teachers and literacy instruction (general education) based on the science of reading. Mississippi is one state that has made these changes and had significant improvements in their NAPE scores.

I am delighted by the changes being implemented to support science of reading for Kentucky teachers through the Kentucky Department of Education's plan to use ESSER funds supporting LETRS training for schools and the Read to Achieve grant moving towards supporting the science of reading practices. These important changes would put the

Commonwealth in line with other states such as Mississippi which made impressive gains in their NAEP scores. LETRS training helps administrators and teachers understand how students learn to read leading to the selection of effective reading curricula and helps fill the current gap in University training and professional development. LETRS is the gold standard in teaching teachers how students learn to read. As a parent of a child that required appropriate instruction based in the science of reading to learn to read, write, and spell, I know how important it is for our teachers to be given this training. This is the quality instruction that will give all children a chance to develop these critical skills!

The changes made in this grant will allow more of Kentucky's children access to appropriate instruction and give teachers much needed training in the science of reading. My children are a success story thanks to appropriate instruction and teachers who understood how to apply the science of reading. Too often kids aren't given the tools they need to be successful readers. According to the Department of Justice, "The link between academic failure and delinquency, violence, and crime is welded to reading failure. Over 70% of inmates in America's prisons cannot read above a fourth grade level."

I implore each of you to do what is right for all of Kentucky's children! Children deserve to learn to read, write and spell! Please support the Kentucky Department of Education in using their ESSER funds to support LETRS training for schools and in allocating Read to Achieve grant money to support Science of Reading practices, curricula and interventions in Kentucky's schools. This is a win for everyone as Kentucky's literacy scores will undoubtedly improve in response to these efforts.

Thank you for supporting these important and necessary changes in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,
Rosanna Gabriele