

Moats Associates Consulting, Inc.
Sun Valley, ID 83354

March 30, 2017

Re: Testimony Regarding Appropriate Standards for Teachers of Students with Dyslexia
and Related Reading Difficulties

Dear Chair Roblan and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

I was Chair of the International Dyslexia Association's committee to develop appropriate standards for the training of teachers of reading (*Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*, IDA, 2010). Development of the standards was necessary because existing standards for preparation of teachers of reading were either lacking in specificity or were not aligned with the science of reading. The "science of reading" refers to converging, inter-disciplinary understandings about how children learn to read, what causes reading difficulties, and what instructional programs and practices have the best chance of preventing and ameliorating reading, spelling, writing, and language difficulties in all students who are at risk. This scientific body of work, largely funded by the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the US Office of Education, is summarized in numerous consensus reports, textbooks, journal articles, and advisories.

While one would assume that such a voluminous body of scientific work would influence what is taught in schools of education and courses for teachers in training or professional development, that is usually not the case. This unfortunate fact has been documented in a series of studies over the last twenty years or so as well as analyses conducted by the National Council on Teacher Quality. Most teachers emerge from their licensing programs without the knowledge and skills necessary to reach those students who are at risk for learning difficulties, including dyslexia. The parents who are pressing for more stringent and specific guidelines about teacher qualifications know full well what impact this state of affairs has had on their children.

In the past six years, the IDA standards have been used to develop a test of teachers' knowledge of reading science, language structure, and effective instructional practices for all students who struggle with problems involving language comprehension, speech sound awareness, memory for print patterns, fluency in word recognition, spelling, and written language formulation. In addition, the standards have been used as the basis of an accreditation process for teacher preparation programs and a certification process – both for regular classroom teachers and for dyslexia practitioners and therapists. They have been widely praised and widely accepted as substantive, comprehensive, and meaningful.

I know of no other set of standards that state as clearly, specifically, accurately, and practically what goes into the effective teaching of students who must be taught how to read. I urge the committee to view them as the most relevant, current, and defensible standards for all teachers of reading, and to reference these standards in adopting guidelines for determining and supporting the preparation of qualified teachers.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dr. Moats has been a teacher, psychologist, researcher, graduate school faculty member, and author of many influential scientific journal articles, books, and policy papers on the topics of reading, spelling, language, and teacher preparation. Dr. Moats developed the content and methods of the professional development program, *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling* (LETRS) over many years as an instructor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, St. Michael's College in Vermont, the Dartmouth Medical School Department of Psychiatry, and the University of Texas, Houston as Co-Principal Investigator of an NICHD Early Interventions Project in Washington, DC public schools. Dr. Moats was also Principal Investigator on two small business innovation research (SBIR) grants from the National Institutes of Health awarded to Sopris West. She led the committee that developed the International Dyslexia Association's *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*.

Dr. Moats is also the lead author of *LANGUAGE!Live*, a structured language, blended learning program for adolescent poor readers. Dr. Moats' awards include the prestigious Samuel T. and June L. Orton award from the International Dyslexia Association, for outstanding contributions to the field, and the Eminent Researcher Award from Learning Disabilities Australia.