

**Testimony of Dr. Dawn Shinew, Dean
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Ohio House of Representatives Higher Education Committee**

Chair Young, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and Ohio House Higher Education Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am Dawn Shinew, and I proudly serve as dean of the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University. I am also a two-time BGSU alumna and the third generation of teachers in my family to graduate from BGSU.

By an act of the legislature, BGSU was established in 1910 as a teacher-training institution. Our state's leaders, and the public, saw a need to prepare Ohio's teachers with standard practices and support. My grandmothers, Gladys Shinew and Lucille Delph, were among the very first graduates of Bowling Green Normal School. While much has changed in the last 114 years – the spirit of how, and why, BGSU was founded has not. Teaching and learning have been at the core of BGSU's mission from the beginning.

Today, BGSU is the largest producer of teachers at a single site in the state and one of the largest in the country. Our alumni teach in nearly every K -12 school district in Ohio. Over the years, we have continued to innovate and respond to state needs in education. Over a decade ago, BGSU launched the state's first dual-licensure program in general and special education and has built on this success with other dual-licensure programs.

Our reputation for excellence in educator preparation has helped us maintain steady enrollments, even in the face of significant declines at the state and national levels. Currently, BGSU has over 2000 aspiring teachers enrolled in our undergraduate programs, and we anticipate increased enrollments with our fall cohorts across nearly all education majors. We host one of the largest teacher job fairs in the country, an event that brings 150 school districts from across Ohio and the nation to BGSU each spring. Last year, we graduated over 400 new teachers.

In addition to our traditional academic programs, BGSU has been innovative in finding solutions to address the teacher shortage. Five years ago, we developed the state's first entirely online and only competency-based alternative route to licensure program to grow our K-12 teaching workforce. To date, this program has graduated 53 special education teachers, 15 math teachers, 18 science teachers, and nine world language teachers – all licensure areas experiencing significant shortages in Ohio.

We continue to be a leader in Ohio in embracing technology in training our students. In 2019, BGSU became the only university in the state to offer a mixed reality platform that blends artificial intelligence with live human interaction. This platform, Mursion, provides future teachers with opportunities to apply what they are learning to real-world situations like classroom management, parent-teacher conferences, job interviews, and positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). Last year, BGSU initiated a unique partnership with Penta Career Center, one of Ohio's career technical high schools, to offer their Teaching Professions program on BGSU's campus. In just one year, enrollment has increased by 68% and the number

of school districts represented went from two to twelve. Districts are excited about this model as an opportunity to “grow your own” teachers. In the fall of 2025, BGSU will begin offering an online program with initial licensure in special education at the undergraduate level; this program is designed to support districts in rural and urban areas that face challenges finding qualified special education teachers to serve their most vulnerable student population.

Even as BGSU has developed new pathways into the teaching profession, we have maintained our singular commitment to ensuring that Ohio’s children have well-qualified teachers who are ready to serve in any of the over 700 districts in Ohio, including the 91 districts in which we place our teacher candidates each year for practicum experiences and student teaching. To that end, BGSU has provided comprehensive preparation in all content areas, including reading, that has aligned with state standards and Ohio’s Assessment for Educators licensure exams. BGSU requires our students to pass all required state licensure exams prior to graduation, guaranteeing that all of our graduates meet the state’s requirements for the initial four-year resident educator license. To be clear, all of our teacher candidates who successfully complete our programs have met all of the state’s licensure requirements, including (and in PK-5 and, Intervention Specialists, perhaps especially) in reading.

In order to ensure that our students meet the state’s requirements, BGSU has been responsive to Ohio’s standards. Until six months ago, these standards were not exclusively focused on the Science of Reading and included strategies that are no longer endorsed by the state of Ohio. Similarly, Ohio’s 700-plus school districts have not previously adopted a cohesive and coordinated approach to reading. As we have prepared teachers for all of Ohio’s classrooms, we have been obligated to educate our teacher candidates on the wide variety of programs and strategies necessary to meet previous Ohio state standards, pass required licensure exams, and utilize schools’ assigned curriculum.

Now that Governor DeWine and Ohio’s legislature have clearly identified the Science of Reading as the only model for the state, BGSU can be much more focused in our approach. Evidence-based practice and the five pillars that define the Science of Reading are not at all new to BGSU; these have been integral to our programs since the initial recommendations from the National Reading Panel in 2000. The real impact of the current emphasis on the Science of Reading is going to come from having a unified, cohesive model that is implemented in both PK-12 and higher education.

BGSU is well-positioned to help Ohio’s children reach their full potential as readers. Over the last two years, our College of Education and Human Development completed a strategic reorganization. In addition to significantly reducing administrative costs, this new organizational structure moved all initial teacher licensure programs into one School of Inclusive Teacher Education. We are now able to ensure consistency across courses taught by different faculty regarding the Science of Reading and to be more efficient and effective in aligning our programs with new standards and audit metrics. Currently, our faculty are completing the final steps in fully implementing and aligning our programs to the new Science of Reading standards and audit metrics, including the redesign of five undergraduate courses and four graduate courses. Our programs will be piloting newly revised reading courses in August and will be ready for full implementation by the spring semester.

For the last six years, BGSU has been building our faculty members' knowledge, expertise, and capacity to teach the Science of Reading through several grant-based initiatives that have supported faculty collaboration, professional learning and research, including:

- A 2018 Deans Compact grant to support early literacy partnerships
- A 2018 US DOE Teacher Quality Partnership grant to support a comprehensive revision of our phonics course
- A 2019 Deans Compact grant to promote general and special education collaboration focused on the inclusive 12-hour core grounded in the Science of Reading, an initiative that has served as the foundation for current revisions
- A 2022 ODEW grant to develop high-dosage tutoring using evidence-based practices
- A 2023 Deans Compact grant to revise adolescent literacy coursework to reflect SOR and evidence-based practices
- A 2024 ODHE grant to support teacher candidates' placements with mentor classroom teachers who have been trained in the Science of Reading
- A second 2024 ODHE grant to support the curriculum development described above.

These initiatives have provided BGSU's faculty with opportunities to work together, as well as with other colleges and universities across Ohio, through Communities of Practice and professional development, including Science of Reading-aligned programs such as Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) and The Writing Revolution. Our faculty have also sought individual professional development through professional organizations such as International Literacy Association, the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, and the International Dyslexia Association, as well as Ohio's Reading Science Summit.

With this strong foundational knowledge of the Science of Reading, we are utilizing well-developed course materials, including model syllabi from Mount St. Joseph's and the P20 Literacy Collaborative, as well as texts rated as exemplary by the National Council on Teacher Quality and English Language Arts curricular materials identified as High-Quality Instructional Materials by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. None of our courses require texts authored by Marie Clay, Fountas and Pinnell, or Lucy Calkins.

BGSU's students are introduced to structured literacy in their phonics coursework, and preservice teachers learn about the rationale for why teachers need to provide explicit, systematic and cumulative evidence-based practices to reach all students. We do not use three cueing as part of coursework leading to licensure. Instead, we provide our teacher candidates with a firm foundation in developing students' skills for word recognition through phonics and phonemic awareness. In further alignment with Science of Reading, BGSU's program no longer utilizes running records. Instead, our teacher candidates learn to conduct oral reading fluency (ORF) assessments and analyze reading errors for potential re-teaching of specific phonics skills.

For over a decade, BGSU has used a data-based system for continuous program improvement through "Data Days," bi-annual meetings during which program coordinators and faculty are provided with data and asked to make program improvements based on what the data shows

about student success. As previously noted, faculty regularly analyze student performance on the Ohio Assessment for Educators' Foundations of Reading Assessment, and we require all graduates to pass this exam before graduation.

In our continued work to meet workforce needs, our faculty and administrators engage with a Teacher Advisory Board twice each year, where we also share our data and ask for feedback on the quality of our graduates. Finally, as dean, I meet monthly with a group of superintendents representing urban, rural, and suburban districts in northwest Ohio. These collaborative relationships ensure that we have timely feedback on the quality of our teacher candidates and that we are addressing the many challenges facing our PK-12 partners.

Local, state, and national partnerships have been essential to our focused approach to teaching the Science of Reading. We participate in the P20 Literacy Collaborative, Ohio Deans Compact, the State University of Education Deans group, and the Ohio Association for the Colleges of Teacher Education. Nationally, we work with the non-profit Deans for Impact group that advocates for evidence-based practices, multiple pathways into the teaching profession, and aspiring teachers as tutors who utilize structured tutoring strategies and high-quality instructional materials.

I appreciate this committee's dedication and attention to the implementation of the Science of Reading and the opportunity to provide this update. I am confident in BGSU's ability to align with the new standards and audit metrics. As this committee continues its work, I would be remiss not to ask that you consider the challenges we face due to recent changes in licensure bands. We must now ensure that teacher candidates in the new PK-8 licensure band are well-prepared to support emergent and early readers using the fundamentals of the Science of Reading, as well as master the content knowledge, especially in STEM disciplines, that will be critical in educating Ohio's future workforce. And, of course, our goal is that they are able to achieve all of this in a four-year program of 120 credits.

As a public university for the public good, teacher preparation has played a critical role in Bowling Green State University's mission since our founding in 1910. Offering innovative and relevant programs has been critical to our continued success as a university and important in meeting Ohio's needs. As dean of our College of Education and Human Development, I believe teacher preparation is the foundation of a healthy economy, a thriving democracy, and an educated society.

I appreciate your time and commitment to ensuring our teachers are supported. Thank you.