



Testimony in Support of the Connecticut Commission on Children

Submitted by Michael Coyne
University of Connecticut
February 18, 2016

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Michael Coyne. I am a Professor of Special Education and Educational Psychology and Co-Director of the Center for Behavioral and Educational Research at the Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut. My research and scholarship focuses on early literacy and reading development, especially for students at risk for experiencing learning difficulties and disabilities.

I write to express my admiration and appreciation for the vital and impactful work of the Connecticut Commission on Children and to emphasize the importance of continuing support for their ongoing efforts on behalf of children and families.

As a researcher and teacher educator concerned with ensuring that all our children receive effective reading instruction, I can't overstate the impact that the Commission on Children has had on helping to inform policy and build the systems and supports in Connecticut that are helping to narrow the reading achievement gap in our state.

The Commission on Children's efforts to support early literacy and close the reading achievement gap in Connecticut have been comprehensive and multidimensional. The Commission has been instrumental in informing state literacy policy, building statewide capacity for training teachers and principals in effective reading practices, bringing together diverse stakeholders in collaborative partnerships to improve reading (including the State Department of Education, the legislature's Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, and the University of Connecticut), and including parents as equal partners in school reform efforts.

Specifically, the Commission has been instrumental in providing research-based teacher and principal training in reading instruction, developing a more effective and efficient reading-assessment system, and implementing a comprehension K-3 reading model with the goal of ensuring reading success for all students. The Commission's efforts have resulted in measureable increases in teacher knowledge of effective reading practices and improved student reading outcomes in high priority school districts in Connecticut.

Personally, I am honored to have had the opportunity to partner with the Commission and seen first hand the incredible reach and impact of their work. We are lucky to have such a knowledgeable, experienced, effective, and dedicated group of professionals working on behalf of children and families in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time.

Michael D. Coyne, Ph.D
Neag School of Education
University of Connecticut

Neag School of Education
Department of Educational Psychology
Center for Behavioral Education & Research

249 GLENBROOK ROAD, UNIT 3064
STORRS, CT 06269-3064
PHONE 860.486.2793
FAX 860.486.0180
www.cber.uconn.edu

