

This is my written testimony and I will not be testifying at the hearing.

My name is Maureen Ruby, and I live Madison, Connecticut. I have a Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Connecticut. I have worked as a full-time tenured faculty member in the Connecticut State University System at Eastern Connecticut State University, where I co-developed the two graduate reading certification programs (Remedial Reading Specialist [102] and Reading Consultant [097]) and also taught the required certification course in Special Education. As an Adjunct Professor at the University of Connecticut's Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates, I also taught Reading for Special Education candidates.

I have served as a Central Office administrator in New London and Norwalk and I am currently Assistant Superintendent in Brookfield. No matter where I have worked, I have found the same thing: Special Education teachers who have gone to school for certification, predominantly in Connecticut, who are hard-working and dedicated educators, yet their toolboxes are empty when it comes to assessing, developing programs for, and teaching students with identified reading disabilities and dyslexia. Please help put a stop to this travesty!

I was once called by an administrator from Avon who interviewed one of my special education students – a student who I had taught in my special education reading course in the TCPCG at UConn. The administrator said that the candidate knew more about reading than the reading specialists in her district and she wished she could hire her for reading! I am confident that we can prepare teachers to begin their careers with the appropriate beginning tools in their educational tool kits. We must do this for all teachers, regardless of what program they attend or which professor they get! Having to teach students about Evidence-based Literacy may also increase the knowledge of the content of those who prepare our candidates.

As an assistant superintendent, I spend a great deal of time working with the Special Education Department in the district on professional learning relative to all things “reading.” Our students deserve to have teachers who graduate from their certification programs with a foundation that is ready to be expanded and deepened, rather than needing the district to build their initial foundation in assessing and instructing literacy!

I fully support HB 7254, An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete a Program of Study in Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia. In fact, I believe the special education teachers should have been included in our earlier legislation along with our regular education teachers. Furthermore, I think the legislature should seriously consider requiring special education teachers and administrators, as well as elementary administrators, literacy coaches, reading teachers, and reading specialists to take the Reading Survey. While there is a cost associated with expanding the number of educators required to take the Reading Survey, the cost to society relative to students not being served is much more costly and the ramifications of illiteracy are boundless.

Thank you.