

Education Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-362

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION IN READING.

Vote Date: 3/14/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/8/2018

File No.: 164

***Disclaimer:** The following Joint Favorable Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

Education Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-362

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION IN READING

Vote Date: 3/14/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/08/2018

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following Joint Favorable Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee
Sen. Toni Boucher, 26th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

SB 362 requires SDE to provide its reading readiness program for early literacy, which is currently provided to each alliance district, to all districts in the state. The program involves a number of steps including SDE conducting an assessment of the reading readiness of students enrolled in kindergarten to grade three, and providing tiered literacy supports depending on the need determined by the assessment.

The bill also requires all districts, rather than just priority districts, to develop a personal reading plan for each student in grades three to five who fails to meet the state-wide standard for remedial assistance on the reading component of the mastery examination (unless the principal determine such additional instruction is not necessary).

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dianna Wentzell, Commissioner, State of Connecticut Department of Education:

Commissioner Wentzell wrote that the Department fully supports the goal of SB 362, but will not be able to carry it out without appropriate funding. She stated that they currently have one Reading Director and one K-12 English Language Arts consultant within their Academic Office, and the provision of a needs assessment for each school and district in the state, analysis of those needs, and technical assistance to each is profoundly beyond the capacity of the Department.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Michele Ridolfi O'Neill, Educational Issues Specialist, Connecticut Education Association (CEA):

O'Neill introduced the CEA as Connecticut's largest teachers union, and wrote that they support the intent of SB 362 but have concerns about the funding and the expansion of certain requirements. With Section 1 of the bill, which broadens readiness programs and assessments to all schools, they had concerns regarding the State Department of Education's capacity and available resources. They were also concerned that the bill would require what they call an unnecessary and costly expansion to the Foundations of Reading survey to teachers not currently required to take it, and stated that teachers who have taken the survey report that it did not improve or inform instruction, and believe there are other strategies that could be explored for supporting districts where students are deficient in reading.

CEA recommended as an alternative the use of focus groups of educators, to explore "other, more actionable and responsive methods of improving reading instruction". On the subject of Section 2 of the bill, expanding requirements for personal reading plans to all districts, again CEA supported the intent but said it could result in an increase in staff workload and the number of students recommended for summer school, which could place a burden on school districts and funds. Finally they commended the attention to early reading and literacy contained in the bill, and said they remain hopeful that funding for important services like those proposed will be restored and expanded.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc. (CABE):

CABE wrote that they support the intent of SB 362, but are concerned that remedial reading programs, SDE and local districts lack the resources for expansion at this time.

Reported by: Edward Waters

Date: 4/9/18