

March 4, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for adding the teaching of African American Studies (HB 7082), Latino Studies (HB 7083), Computer Literacy (SB 957), and Climate Change (HB 5011) to Connecticut classrooms. While I understand that the last bill on the list has not been raised for a public hearing, I still believe that it should be included due to the increasing concerns posed by climate change.

I am a father of a current elementary school student and two young men who both attended Connecticut public schools. In addition, I am a high school English teacher at Haddam-Killingworth High School in Higganum. As both a seasoned father and teacher, I vehemently support the addition of all of the topics covered in these bills because they represent not just the future social and educational environment of Connecticut, but the current one, as well. In other words, it is essential that all Connecticut students understand the high-tech, multi-cultural world in which they live if they are to be contributing and successful citizens of Connecticut and the world.

In my daily work with teenagers in a school populated predominantly by white students, I try to bring a multi-cultural awareness through literature that they might not otherwise receive. For my students to be exposed to that same literary milieu even earlier in their schooling would only improve their awareness and understanding. The same goes for the teaching of computer literacy. Too often, adults assume that today's kids -- the "digital natives" -- inherently understand computers and technology. Sadly, that has not been my routine observation with high school students. Indeed, they need formal and structured education in computers and technology -- the younger, the better.

Finally, I would urge the General Assembly to seriously consider climate change be added to the elementary curriculum, too. Perhaps my feelings for this issue were best expressed in an op-ed I wrote for CT News Junkie (among my other bimonthly columns), which can be found here:

https://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/20190225_op-ed_2_bills_address_climate_change_scientists_endorse_one/

I thank you for taking the time to consider my endorsement of HB 7082, HB 7083, SB 957, and HB 5011. As you well know, ensuring Connecticut's future through the education of our children is among our most important endeavors.

Sincerely,
Barth Keck
Chester, CT