

To: Honorable Members of the Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
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From: Rosanne C. Daigneault, Retired District Administrator, Reading Consultant
Re: Submission of the following questions/comments regarding the reading
Portion of CGA HB6620 (17-26), (132-585)

1. HB 6620 removes much of local district decision-making regarding reading curriculum/ model. If a district requests a waiver because scientifically-based and evidenced based curriculum/model is/are in place and the waiver is denied, is there an appeals process in place? (17-26)
2. Has current data shown that Connecticut school districts currently implementing scientifically-based and evidence based reading instructional materials (166-170) have closed the opportunity gap among racial groups, ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, genders, and English language learners and students whose primary language is English? (161-165) Have these districts been identified?

Has current data shown that districts not presently implementing scientifically-based and evidence based instructional reading materials (166-170) have not closed the opportunity gap among racial groups, ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, genders, English language learners, and students whose primary language is English? Have these districts been identified?

3. Of the reading experts consulted regarding this proposal, which are experts in the instruction of English language learners?
Do these experts in the field of English language learners support this proposed reading instructional program?
Which research supports the specific use of the proposed reading programs/curriculum/ models for use with English language learners?
4. As a lifetime educator and former reading teacher and administrator, I am deeply concerned by the language in HB 6620 that subsumes comprehension under fluency and omits text comprehension (178-179).
Although fluency is critical for comprehension, fluent reading does not necessarily mean the reader is comprehending. In my 45 years of experience, I have encountered many students who achieve fluency, but do not understand what they have read. They can decode/read each word. Each word may hold meaning, thereby giving the reader comprehension at the word level. However, these readers require intentional, explicit instruction focused on understanding phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and entire pieces of writing/text. Comprehension requires thinking while reading; constant monitoring of the reader's own understanding. Students must be taught what good readers do

automatically. They must ask themselves questions while reading: “What is this about?” “I read about this topic before, what do I know about it?” “What is this saying? I’d better go back and reread.”

If intentional, explicit comprehension instruction does not occur, for many students content materials (science, history, social studies) as well as increasingly complex literature can be a long term, if not a lifetime struggle. Thinking while reading needs to be taught very early. Without meaning, there truly is no reading, merely words strung together. Lack of such instruction creates the opportunity gap, which is increasingly difficult to close as students move from kindergarten to grade 5 and beyond. Comprehension needs to stand alone as a critical pillar of reading.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted March 16, 2021
Rosanne C. Daigneault

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