



TESTIMONY of the CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS  
(CAPSS)

Before the Education Committee

EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING  
WEDNESDAY MARCH 17, 2021

**Raised H.B. No. 6620 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO READ AND  
ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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Good day, Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Fran Rabinowitz and I am the Executive Director for the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS). I am here on behalf of CAPSS to speak on **Raised H.B. No. 6620 An Act Concerning the Right to Read and Addressing the Opportunity Gaps and Equity in Public Schools.**

The ability to read is essential, and CAPSS fully embraces the work this bill seeks to accomplish. However, establishing a separate and parallel structure to the Connecticut State Department of Education creates yet another bureaucracy for districts to deal with and fragments expectations and services for our schools and students.

With the federal dollars now being made available, it is time for Connecticut to go big with an early reading success platform that offers effective and ongoing training under the auspices of Acting Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker from the Connecticut State Department of Education. The Department, which has been woefully understaffed, would now be able to hire the experts it deems appropriate to support this work. This platform should include a significant revision to the preservice experience of teachers who are woefully unprepared to teach reading. These efforts must be developed and sustained to mitigate staff turnover, particularly in our urban areas. CAPSS welcomes a separate council formation, as long as it reports to the Connecticut State Department of Education on this important endeavor.

Recently CAPSS published a ***Blueprint to Transform Connecticut's Public Schools***. In it, we described a set of 30 recommendations to transform education in Connecticut. Improving the ability to read will directly and positively impact many of these recommendations, including Special Education, English Learners, Early Childhood, Structural Racism and Discrimination, Student Well-Being, and Disengaged and Disenfranchised Youth.

CAPSS believes reading attainment is the pathway to success for all children, strongly impacts structural racism, and helps to demolish the prison pipeline that so many of our children experience. We look forward to working with the Connecticut State Department of Education to accelerate this important work on behalf of Connecticut's children.

CAPSS applauds the outstanding work that SERC did on the development of the African American/ Latino Curriculum and fully endorses them as the lead professional developers for this curriculum.