



Testimony in support of H.B. No. 6620 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO READ AND ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Submitted by Kelly Soule, M.A., CAGS, HILL for
Literacy, Inc.

March 16, 2021

Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Kelly Soule. I am a HILL Facilitator at HILL for Literacy. HILL for Literacy is a non-profit organization that partners with state departments and school districts to implement multi-tiered systems of supports aimed at improving reading outcomes.

I write to strongly support the Right to Read Act.

Connecticut has one of the largest reading opportunity gaps in the country. This persistent and insidious reading opportunity gap affects thousands of children across Connecticut, and disproportionately impacts children from poverty and children from underrepresented groups. The long term effects of the reading opportunity gap are significant and substantial – with compounding negative impacts not only on academic achievement, but also on important social and economic outcomes as well.

The current Connecticut K-3 Literacy Initiative, is an example of how to effectively establish sustainable MTSS model of instruction in the highest need districts. The funding and support for the CT K-3 Literacy initiative has enabled schools to focus their literacy efforts on providing effective literacy instruction driven by assessment data to ensure that all students learn to read and write on grade level. The evaluation of the CK3LI initiative in the initial pilot schools demonstrated that our tiered instructional, assessment and leadership model (MTSS) leads to improved student outcomes. Furthermore, the funding has supported literacy training, consultation and coaching support to over 70 schools across Connecticut. The Right to Read Act will sustain and extend the reach and effectiveness of these home-grown efforts to narrow the reading opportunity gap in Connecticut. Along with having experience in both implementing and evaluating the CT's K-3 Literacy Initiative (CK3LI) model as an Interventionist and Coach, I am a lifelong resident of Connecticut and have gone through the public school system here. I experienced the opportunity gap on a personal level and I am invested in improving Connecticut's literacy gap.

The proposed bill, will enable the current thought partners in collaboration with various state agencies to create a sustainable literacy center anchored in current research. The Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success will serve as permanent technical assistance and training center to reach all school districts across the state. Through the literacy research center, the adequate support will be provided to SDE to increase the capacity to extend the training and coaching to more schools and impact the reading achievement of more students.

Respectively submitted:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Soule".

Kelly Soule

Facilitator

HILL for Literacy

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