



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 George Sugai, Ph.D.
University of Connecticut
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Members of the Education Committee:

I write to strongly and enthusiastically support the Right to Read Act (H.B. No. 6620).

My name is George Sugai, and I am a Professor Emeritus in the Neag School of Education and previously Director of the Center for Behavioral Education and Research at the Neag School of Education and co-Director of the National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. My research and scholarship focused on school improvement, school climate and culture, school discipline, positive behavior supports, and implementation of effective practices, especially for students at risk for experiencing learning difficulties and disabilities.

I'm proud and privileged to be involved in the early efforts to document and demonstrate the important outcomes and values of an empirically based approach to improving literacy outcomes for all young students but especially for those who are disadvantaged by opportunity inequities linked to disability, race, poverty, neighborhood, and other academic and social risk factors.

Those early efforts were significant because of the unified vision, focus, and passion of talented researchers, policy-makers, family and community members, and practitioners. Early meetings were led with passion and energy by members of the CT Black and Puerto Rican Caucus; Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors; and CT Department of Education. The attention and support by implementation researchers and practitioners were quickly secured, for example, Literacy How, Hill for Literacy, and Center for Behavioral Education and Research at UConn. The outcome was the formation of the Connecticut Kindergarten to Three Literacy Initiative (CK3LI) which was endorsed and supported by the Education Committee and the CT state legislature.

I'm particularly proud of the students, educators, schools, and districts (e.g., Bridgeport, East Hartford, Waterbury, Hartford, Colchester) who were involved in the early demonstrations and evaluations that documented the favorable outcomes of CK3LI, especially for students disadvantaged by opportunity inequities. These early accomplishments contributed to the formation of the CT Literacy Model that focused on implementation fidelity, supporting high quality personnel preparation, and scaling implementation to more CT schools and districts.

Since those early efforts and successes, CK3LI and CT Literacy Model matured and evolved into the features that anchor the Right to Read Act and make it an enviable model for other state and federal school improvement efforts. In particular, I fully support the key features of the Right to Read Act that include, for example, (a) application of research based literacy instruction, (b) establishment of a Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, (c) implementation based on a multi-tiered support

framework, (d) continuous collection of assessment data to inform decision making, (e) provision of high quality personnel development for new and current educators and administrators, (f) integration with other academic instructional efforts (e.g., math, social studies, and social and behavioral skills), and (g) attention to reading for all students, especially those disadvantaged by opportunity inequities and traditionally inadequately supported.

Although I have not been involved in the latter implementation phases of the CT Literacy Model, I'm extremely excited to see its growth, outcomes, and progress, and I give my **strongest and most enthusiastic support for H.B. No. 6620 An Act Concerning the Right to Read and Addressing Opportunity Gaps and Equity in Public Schools.**

Respectfully,



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