



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**Amy Dowell, Executive Director
Education Reform Now CT**

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Co-Chairs Currey and McCrory, Vice-Chairs Winfield and Leeper, Ranking Members McCarty and Berthel, and distinguished members of the Education Committee—thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of [*S.B. 14, An Act Assisting School Districts in Improving Educational Outcomes*](#). My name is Amy Dowell, and I am the Executive Director of Education Reform Now CT (ERN CT), a 501(c)(3) that operates as a think tank and policy advocate, promoting great educational opportunities and achievement for all students by increasing equity, protecting civil rights, and strengthening the social safety net.

In 2021, ERN CT was part of a coalition called Right to Read CT, which worked with Senator Miller, the Education Committee Chairs, and the members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus to secure the passage of landmark early literacy legislation in Connecticut. While shifting our state towards research-based instructional practice, this bill has also become a national example for systemic change.

The Right to Read bill established a Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success (the Center) within the State Department of Education as the hub of a comprehensive, statewide strategy based upon the science of reading. It tasked the state with setting reading curriculum requirements for districts to adopt by 2025, and with providing aligned professional development to districts as they pursue implementation. As the bill's implementation has rolled out, it has been met with some resistance to change, but—by and large—it has marked a tremendous commitment to research-based best practices and prioritizing student needs by the state and by this legislative body.

Although Right to Read is notable for tackling the issue of early literacy comprehensively, touching a variety of systems and structures, one critical challenge has been in establishing oversight over teacher preparation so that it aligns to the science of reading.

This bill, sponsored by the Governor, would shift the responsibility of ensuring educator preparation program compliance to the purview of the Office of Dyslexia

and Reading Disabilities, with further oversight. It is a shift we heartily endorse because we believe that the Office of Dyslexia has both the knowledgebase and the capacity to handle this important and complicated effort.

S.B. 14 also tasks the State Department of Education with auditing preparation programs and developing compliance measures on their provision of scientifically-based reading instruction. This, too, we strongly support and believe is necessary. We are grateful to Governor Lamont for elevating it as a statewide priority.

Lastly, we want to thank the Chairs of the Education Committee, the members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, and especially Senator Pat Billie Miller for their longstanding commitment to protecting students' right to read.

Please support S.B. 14.



About Education Reform Now CT

The state chapter of a national organization and affiliate of DFER CT, Education Reform Now CT is a 501(c)(3) that operates as a think tank and policy advocate, promoting great educational opportunities and achievement for all students by increasing equity, protecting civil rights, and strengthening the social safety net.