

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR READING RESEARCH

Legislative Report
Board Meeting April 25, 2015

The materials in this report were previously covered in the CSBE minutes of 4-6-'15 and the report to the General Meeting of 3-19.

Diana Roberge-Wentzell has been appointed as the Commissioner of Education.

Early Childhood

The following Bills are moving through the legislative process:

- An act concerning the Kindergarten assessment tool. This act requires the development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment tool [SB00339]
- An act establishing a full day kindergarten requirement. [SB00944]. This Bill is now in appropriations, generally the final step before a vote.
- An act concerning the date on which a child must reach age five in order to enroll in kindergarten. (Oct.1) [HB05995]
- An act prohibiting the out of school suspension of children under 8. [SB01053]

There will be a Kindergarten symposium on Tuesday May 12, 2015 devoted to building a Revised Kindergarten Entrance Inventory. It will be held at the Four Points Sheraton in Meriden, CT. I was planning to attend but have been waitlisted. I am hoping one of our Board/Membership will be there.

Report on the Condition of Education

Members of the SDE presented the yearly Condition of Education report to the CSBE.

Highlights included:

- Student enrollment in CT has declined by over five percent in the last decade.
- Enrollment is increasingly more diverse (41 % are nonwhite), poor (37% eligible for free or reduced lunch), and have greater educational needs (12% with disabilities and 6% ELLs).
- The teaching force remains homogeneous (92% white).
- Suspension/expulsion and chronic absenteeism rates are declining but continue to be evidenced disproportionately among students of color, poverty, with special learning needs, and ELLs.
- Almost 45 % of all students who take the SAT are attaining the college and career readiness benchmark; more graduating seniors are also passing AP exams.
- High school graduation rates are rising and the graduation rate gap between student subgroups continues to shrink. Nearly three-quarters of students in a high school graduating class enroll in a two- or four-year college/university within one year of graduation; forty-seven percent of the high school class graduates from college with a two- or four-year degree within six years.
- There is no data related to college remediation courses

As a research group, I think we should be the achievement results in this report are for students who most likely entered school around 1991-1993. None of the instructional

practices that were prevalent in that time is covered in the report. This was a period during which the DRA and CT Mastery were the major Language Arts tools. Testing results were not tied to teacher evaluation.

Mastery Testing (Common Core)

These Bills are currently in process:

- An act prohibiting the use of student mastery test results in teacher performance evaluations.
- An act concerning student testing during the junior year of high school. (eliminate common core in grade 11)

SLD/Dyslexia Workgroup

I attended the final meeting of the workgroup. The legislation that developed was added to Public Act 14-39, the Act establishing the Office of Early Childhood. This legislation requires an employee of the Department of Education to be responsible for providing information and assistance to the public relating to dyslexia, includes specific programmatic requirements for teacher preparation courses relating to dyslexia, and includes dyslexia instruction as part of the in-service training for educators.

The definition submitted by the group for use by districts is:

*Dyslexia, as included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), is a specific learning disability (SLD). Dyslexia impacts reading, specifically decoding and accurate and/or fluent word recognition and spelling. It is **neurobiological** in origin (i.e., intrinsic to the individual), is unexpected and/or inconsistent with a student's other abilities and **despite** the provision of **appropriate instruction**. Dyslexia typically results from a significant deficit in phonological processing (i.e., a persistent difficulty in the awareness of and ability to manipulate the individual sounds of spoken language).*

Students with dyslexia typically have strengths and cognitive abilities in areas such as reasoning, critical thinking, concept formation, problem solving, vocabulary, listening comprehension, and social communication (e.g., conversation). Early identification and appropriate instruction of the underlying phonological processing deficits that characterize dyslexia may minimize its educational impact.

At the final meeting, there was conversation about a PK language test for ELLs.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Mulready