

Maryland State Board of Education Testimony  
August 28, 2018  
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Right to Read- Maryland has been working diligently to improve teacher preparation in reading instruction as it specifically relates to reading skills acquisition for all. Reading is THE foundation of learning. Without the ability to read, opportunities for academic and occupational success are limited.

We have presented testimony to the Maryland State Board of Education and the Professional Standards Teacher Education Board as well as introduced legislation to accomplish this goal. In 2018, HB493 and SB638 addressed the need for a foundations of reading test in the science of reading for the certification of certain teachers. These bills were sent to the Kirwan Commission for consideration. The Design Assumptions of the Kirwan on August 15, 2018 stated “Teachers will be required to pass State-specific exams of teacher mastery of reading and content at least on par with the rigor of Massachusetts for elementary education...”

We are placing students in special education who do not have learning disabilities but are instead victims of ineffective instruction. Baltimore County is now spending over one million dollars to train teachers in the foundations of reading instruction. These are professional development dollars that are being spent on teaching information that should have been provided in our colleges.

Dr. Steiner has often said that in order to insure that our institutes of higher education reform instruction, we should require a rigorous assessment in evidence-based reading instruction for certification. Because this would require a phase in period of this instruction at the colleges and universities, the Board might consider a provisional certificate for a certain period of time.

The mission of the Maryland State Board of Education is to provide leadership, set policy, and advocate for continuous improvement of Maryland’s educational system in order to assist every student to realize his or her potential and to ensure educator effectiveness. We would appreciate the leadership and guidance of the State Board to set regulations for certification in reading instruction to benefit all children and teachers in Maryland.