



March 12, 2021

The Honorable Connie M. Leyva
Chair, Senate Education Committee
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: SB 488 (Rubio) as amended on March 4, 2021 – Support

Dear Chair Leyva:

On behalf of EdVoice, I write to express support for SB 488 as amended on March 4, 2021. When the latest data indicate nearly half of California's students do not read at grade level, and possibly more as a result of the pandemic, it is important to ensure new elementary school teachers and education specialist candidates successfully pass a licensure requirement to demonstrate they can teach children to read using proven instructional strategies in early reading skills.

SB 488 establishes a framework with transparency and legislative oversight to transition to a performance based candidate licensure requirement to demonstrate competency in science-based reading instruction. SB 488 maintains California's statutory commitment to approaches supported by strong empirical evidence on the foundational skills and instructional strategies to support early reading and literacy. Importantly, the bill also clarifies the responsibility of the state in maintaining content validity in licensure exams, accreditation criteria, and oversight of schools of education to ensure novice teachers are provided training in the science of reading, as specified in statute.

Overwhelming empirical evidence supports using science-based instructional strategies in teaching foundational skills to all students, including struggling readers, English learners and children with dyslexia to improve literacy outcomes. Teacher candidates in lower grades and education specialists must continue to be required to demonstrate that they can teach a child to read. Single subject English language arts candidates must be trained how to identify and refer struggling readers for help. And, schools of education—which are getting paid tuition—must actually provide the training to candidates to ensure novice teachers know how to teach all students successfully.

Accordingly, we recommend an aye vote on SB 488. If you or your staff have any questions regarding our position, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Lucia".

Bill Lucia
President

cc: The Honorable Susan Rubio, California State Senator, 22nd District
The Honorable John Laird, California State Senator, 17th District
Members of the Senate Education Committee