

To the members of the Colorado House Education Committee:

ExcelinEd in Action stands in strong support of Senate Bill 151. Our organization has supported the passage and implementation of comprehensive early literacy policy in 13 states over many years, and we write today to share what we have learned.

We know that learning to read by the end of third grade is the gateway to lifelong success. When students are not able to read by the end of third grade, their risk of falling behind grows exponentially. Research shows that nearly 90 percent of high school dropouts were struggling readers in third grade. High school dropouts are not eligible for 90 percent of the jobs in our economy and make up nearly half of the heads-of-households on welfare. Seven out of ten prison inmates cannot read above a 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. We know that ensuring all kids can read by the end of third grade sets them on the path to learn, graduate, and succeed.

Senate Bill 151 addresses a key feature of any strong, comprehensive early literacy policy - the role of parents and community in ensuring students have the tools and resources they need to succeed. By equipping parents with detailed information about the unique ways each school approaches literacy instruction, as well as key reporting on the outcomes of their programming, we give parents the power to actively choose and participate in the instructional models that work best for their kids.

Parent engagement and public reporting are key features of a well implemented comprehensive reading policy. Among the states that have implemented literacy policy with fidelity, the results are clear and strong:

- Six states with early literacy programs are **improving faster than the national average** on the NAEP fourth grade reading assessment.
- Mississippi's NAEP fourth grade reading score has **increased by 11 points** since implementation.
- Ohio has seen a **12% increase in students reading on grade level** since implementation.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill. ExcelinEd in Action urges your support.

Katie Dauphinais  
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