

Senate Education

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SB22-004 Evidence-based Training In Science Of Reading

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Kristin Jardien  Against  Self	<p>As a librarian, I want to share my concerns regarding SB22-004. While I applaud the intentions of this Bill, there are issues with the specifics of the Bill that are cause for concern. Primarily, the Bill states that the Director of the Board of Trustees will be called upon to identify materials and activities for parents and children to improve literacy, and for the Director to ensure that these materials are updated monthly. First, the librarians are being asked to show proof of training, and the Director is not. Thus, it's a concern as to why this role would be assigned the task of identifying materials for literacy. Librarians who purchase materials for a collection are highly trained and specialized in this area. There are many elements to consider when adding items to a public library collection beyond just the content of an item. The Director of the Board of Trustees is not in a position to make these kind of decisions, especially for larger library systems consisting of multiple branches. Secondly, this type of collection development is far outside the duties of a board of trustees. The Colorado Public Libraries Board and Trustee Handbook outlines responsibilities of a public library board. Board members are responsible for approving policies related to public libraries, not the implementation of policies or the day to day operations of a public library. Finding passionate, knowledgeable board members is already a challenge in many communities. Adding duties that are far outside the training they receive and the generally accepted purview of the job is likely to only further limit the candidate pool. Third, the State Librarian is called upon to assist in the duties related to these tasks, but no specifics are offered as to how that should be achieved. There are over 90 separate public library organizations in the state, which means over 90 Directors who will need assistance in this newly assigned task. Without specifics, that's putting a large burden on the state library. Finally, no mention is made in the Bill regarding how these things will be funded. If the library is required to purchase specific literacy materials, but no additional funds offered by the state, then other elements of library service will have to be sacrificed. Librarians love literacy and want to support our communities in their literacy goals, but SB22-004 is not the way to help libraries or communities that depend on them. Thank you.</p>
Pearl Bass  Against	<p>I am writing as a credentialed Youth and Family Services Librarian with concern about the inclusion of public libraries in this bill. While the intentions behind the bill are positive, its specifics prevent libraries from</p>

<p>Self</p>	<p>best supporting literacy in Colorado, and impede efforts that are currently underway.</p> <p>The bill requires “each person employed as a librarian in a public library to successfully complete evidenced-based training in the science of reading,” but not all public librarians work with youth, and not all library staff that primarily work with children are titled “librarians.”</p> <p>The bill also states that the library director should “identify materials and activities for parents and children to improve literacy.” However, the director employed by the board of trustees may or may not be a librarian by degree or training, or have experience working with children and families. Trained youth librarians are much better suited for this task, and we (youth librarians) already do this in our everyday work of preparing children's programs and services.</p> <p>Furthermore, this bill does not provide additional funding to libraries to provide the literacy-improving services and resources specified by the bill, meaning that public libraries would have to cut existing programs and resources in order to accommodate this new requirement. Public libraries develop collections and services in response to the unique needs of their communities, and this bill would prevent libraries from continuing these much-loved and necessary services.</p> <p>As the CLEL steering committee said in their official statment, "including public libraries in this bill imposes an unnecessary, unfunded, and cumbersome burden." I believe that public libraries should be able to continue their current efforts to support literacy, which align with the evidence-based practices of Every Child Ready to Read, rather than following the misguided requirements of this bill.</p>
<p>Sofia De La Mora</p> <p>Against</p> <p>Colorado Libraries For Early Literacy</p>	<p>Dear Senate Education Committee,</p> <p>My name is Sofia De La Mora, I am a Children’s Librarian in a large public library system in our state and a resident of Jefferson County. I am also the Co-Chair of the Advocacy and Fundraising Committee for CLEL.</p> <p>I am expressing my opposition to Bill 22-004 for the following reasons:</p> <p>Libraries and library staff that work directly with children already support literacy and the Science of Reading in many different approaches, including</p>

	<p>Every Child Ready to Read®. This is a library-specific initiative, established by the Public Library Association and Association for Library Services to Children. We use evidence-based practices to create our programs and guide our work.</p> <p>Each library works very carefully to meet the specific needs of the community they serve. Each community is unique and has its own distinctive demands.</p> <p>Not all librarians work with children and youth and not all library staff that work with children and youth have the title of librarian.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees is a governing body that does not necessarily have the experience or training in the direct work of librarians with their patrons and may not have the knowledge to be responsible for identifying materials to improve literacy and support families with children through the process of learning to read. This also applies to the library directors.</p> <p>Libraries, children’s librarians and library staff that work directly with youth are committed to supporting and promoting the joy of reading and lifelong learning opposed to only teaching children to read. And, we spend a minimal amount of time with each child and/or family and assist with specific needs.</p> <p>Librarians were not consulted in the writing of this bill and as a result, the bill does not align with the way that public libraries operate. It is an unfunded and burdensome piece of legislation that was written without the understanding of the purposes and functions of public libraries.</p> <p>I appreciate your time to read my statement and urge you to reject the bill or at the minimum, remove the mention public libraries and librarians from it.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Sofia De La Mora</p>
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<p>Kelly Allan</p> <p>Amend</p> <p>Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy</p>	<p>Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL) submits this testimony regarding our concerns about the role of public libraries in SB22-004: Evidence Based Training in the Science of Reading.</p> <p>Since 2008, CLEL has worked with the Colorado State Library to strengthen children’s literacy across the state. Our work, and that of our many public library partners, is grounded in evidence-based practices such as those put forth by Every Child Ready to Read®. This library-specific national initiative is rooted in much of the same research as the Science of Reading, largely rendering the intent of this bill superfluous.</p> <p>Furthermore, the requirements of the bill are not practical nor feasible given the way Colorado public libraries operate and are governed. The lack of funding to support the completion of the mandated training, or provide activities and resources, imposes a cumbersome and unnecessary burden.</p> <p>Lastly, public libraries support multiple forms of literacy in their communities and multiple paths to literacy, not just one prescribed method. The bill does not philosophically align with public library values, and we are wary of a measure that would establish the precedent of allowing a state legislative body to mandate the materials public libraries must purchase or the programming they must provide.</p> <p>We ask that public libraries be removed from this bill or that it be postponed until legislators and public library stakeholders can work together to draft an acceptable amendment.</p>
<p>Judith Bergquist</p> <p>Against</p> <p>Self</p>	<p>I am concerned that Colorado bill SB22-004: The Science of Reading, Is unnecessary.</p> <p>The requirements of the bill are not practical or feasible given the way Colorado public libraries operate and are governed. As written, this bill would require many public library staff to assume inappropriate roles</p> <p>As this legislation does not philosophically align with public library values, and we are wary of a measure that would establish the precedent of allowing a state legislative body to mandate the materials public libraries must purchase or the programming they must provide. The public libraries are a strong organization locally and nationally and is very aware of how to help communities and children and the legislators are not equipped to do so.</p>

	<p>Remove the bill.</p>
<p>Mary Kuehner Against Self</p>	<p>I am a librarian who specializes in early literacy, and have doing this job for more than 20 years. This bill, while good intentioned, is absolutely NOT the way to encourage and support libraries in their work with young children and families. In my system, librarians specialize in many areas in addition to early literacy - career services, business, teen services, and more. To ask a library system to put all of their librarians through a training that may or may not relate to their area of expertise and actual job is nonsensical. What are the librarians working hard to help patrons find jobs going to do with this training? It is an absolute waste of time and money.</p> <p>Additionally, this bill assumes that libraries are not already doing work around supporting young children's early literacy development. I am one of the founding members of Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy -- which has been supporting libraries and librarians around Colorado for more than 12 years. I have been incorporating early literacy skills building into my programs for longer than that. I have presented information to countless parent groups about helping their children get ready to read. I have worked with preschool teachers and early childhood centers on how to make reading aloud more engaging and how to incorporate more early literacy development. This work is happening, and if you want a report, the Colorado State Library exists for just this purpose. Forcing libraries to report on their early literacy work is an unnecessary piece of busywork.</p> <p>Asking the library's director to personally select books for the collection? And the involvement of the library board? Why? These people, while good at their jobs, have not been focusing on early literacy like I have. They do not have the knowledge to make informed and important decisions like this. We have a dedicated children's collection development librarian who makes purchase decisions with an eye to maintaining a balanced collection, being a good steward of taxpayer funds, AND making sure we can meet readers' developmental needs.</p> <p>Again, while this is a good intentioned bill, it's an unnecessary and pointless burden on already stretched public libraries who are already doing excellent work around helping young children develop their early literacy skills AND supporting parents who are their child's first and best teacher.</p> <p>If you must move forward with this bill, PLEASE remove the burden on public libraries.</p>

	Thank you.
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Dear Colorado Education Committee,

As a librarian, former educator and parent of a child with dyslexia, I would like to voice my concerns about bill SB22-004. As an early learning librarian, this bill affects my job immensely. I currently train all storytime providers at Denver Public Library on early learning skills, child development, storytime, brain development and so much more. I am well versed in the science of reading as well. I have learned through the years of what makes sense to train staff on and what is too much. The full science of reading is TOO much for all librarians to have to learn. I can most definitely see having a few key people at libraries take this course and then provide other staff members with the knowledge that pertains to their job. It does not make sense for all librarians to take this course. 1. It is cost prohibitive because of staffing. 2. Not all librarians work with children and need to have this knowledge. 3. We do not have a way to track statewide who has taken the course like CDE does with teaching licenses. In addition, the bill would like us to procure books that work for the science of reading. I would love to have more books like this in the library, however, they are not readily published in a format that works for the library and publishers do not tend to publish books that work well for the earliest readers.

This leads into being a parent of a child with dyslexia. I have had to navigate the process of getting my child evaluated, diagnosed and getting an IEP for her. This was an extremely lengthy and difficult process that took almost a full year. Not enough teachers yet know how to see the signs of learning disabilities and help parents through the process. So, I feel we need to focus more on schools and getting them the funding they need to help with this process before we move onto the libraries. I know all K-3 teachers have to go through the science of reading curriculum before the end of this coming summer, but this is not enough. The only way my child got a diagnosis was because of my diligence and understanding of the system as a whole. If we can have a better understanding within the school system this will help immensely!

So, as the bill is currently written, it does not make sense for libraries. There needs to be some careful thought put into this and discussions with libraries, the Colorado Dept of Education, the State Library, the READ Act team, schools and publishers before this can move forward. Please do not put this undue burden onto librarians without more thought and purpose behind this bill. We are already dealing with more than our fair share.

Thank You,

Lisa Dengerink

February 9, 2022

Dear Senator Hansen,

I'm writing to share my great concern with and opposition to Senate Bill SB22-004 regarding evidence-based training in the science of reading.

My name is Melissa Depper, and for 25 years I have been a children's librarian in Denver and Arapahoe Counties. My primary duties have been to serve young children and their families, through literacy-based storytimes, programs, services, and initiatives. My current position is Storytime Supervisor, and I lead a team of 13 paraprofessional staff in providing in person, virtual, and recorded storytimes at the Arapahoe Libraries. Our vision is "a literate, informed, and fulfilled community" and one of our department's guiding objectives states in part, "We will increase literacy empowerment by preparing our youngest to learn to read."

To this end I have pursued post-masters degree continuing professional education in early literacy development and pre-reading skills. I am a founding member of Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy, the advocacy organization that works alongside the Colorado State Library; I have taught early childhood services library courses at The University of Denver to graduate students; and I have presented nationally at library conferences and organizations on storytime goals, competencies, and staff development. For the last 15 years the focus of my career has been to bring as many research-based resources and opportunities as possible to families in our community so they can better support and scaffold their children's education and reading journey. Please understand I am cognizant of the vital importance of literacy and of the challenges we face in Colorado bringing all of our children to educational justice and grade level reading skills.

I deeply appreciate the impulse behind this bill and the desire to effect immediate change for the benefit of our youngest learners. However, public libraries across the state already work to train their staff, purchase educational materials, and share developmentally appropriate programming. They seek to support and strengthen literacy development in ways that best suit their specific communities.

This bill does not seem to recognize the ways libraries support early literacy efforts. It calls for all librarians to receive training, yet not all librarians work directly with children, and many staff who do work with children are not degreed librarians. The bill calls for oversight from the library director and library board to identify materials and activities or create a plan to support literacy, but that subject matter expertise, programming responsibilities, and collection selection duties are typically outside the scope of their roles, education, and training.

I understand that parts of the original bill may have already been amended, but the overall scope and intent of this bill seem misaligned with the charge of public libraries to support our whole communities with a wide variety of resources, approaches, and opportunities for learning, rather than dictate one particular curriculum. Librarians and library staff strive to support the education of our patrons, but are not and cannot be classroom teachers and I don't believe we should be included in this bill as written.

Please vote no on this bill. Let's look for other ways for public libraries to continue our decades of work in supporting children's literacy.

Sincerely,

Melissa Depper, MLIS  
Storytime Supervisor, Child and Family Library Services  
Arapahoe Libraries

Librarians are capable of finding these trainings on their own and are willing to ascribe to the SoR model. We just don't want to lose funding, time, or energy when it comes to our students and collections. Forcing this training on us would limit the time we are able to spend crafting relevant collections that serve our diverse student populations. We want to further early literacy and comprehension, but not at the expense of our students and ourselves.

As stated, this vague component of the bill would require Colorado's 3,462 (2020 reporting number) public librarians to take an unspecified training in the Science of Reading. While staying abreast of early literacy research is important, the logistics of this need to be defined. Not all public librarians work with youth and not all who work with youth are designated librarians.

While public libraries are a place to foster the joy of reading, librarians have not traditionally taken on the role of reading instruction. One undefined training in SoR is not enough to turn a librarian into a reading teacher. Instead, we should focus on providing resources and knowledge about SoR to our communities.

Providing materials and activities to assist with reading competency in the library is a great thing, but this bill does not include any additional funding to do so. This would mean many libraries would have to remove existing materials and activities in order to comply.

Colorado Library Law does allow for the general assembly "to aid in the establishment and improvement of library programs, to improve and update the skills of persons employed in libraries through continuing education activities."

The American Library Association Library Bill of Rights states that: "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."

If SB22-004 were to pass, it could set a precedent of state legislative control over public library materials and programming.