



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
OAKLAND BRANCH**

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Dear Chairman O'Donnell and Members of the California Assembly Education Committee:

We write in strong opposition to SB 614 (Rubio) which would repeal explicit language in the Education Code on the foundation skills of research-based reading instruction and also remove the assessment to demonstrate knowledge in this area as part of teacher certification. This bill is unconstitutional, will exacerbate the literacy crisis, and sets the stage for California districts to repeat one of the biggest mistakes of the last 25 years.

The proposed bill is in violation of Article IX, Section 1 of the California Constitution, which states that education is "essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people." Section 44283 of the Education Code (requiring the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment [RICA]) is **part and parcel of the California Constitution's guarantee of a right to an education**, and any attempts to remove it is unconstitutional.


The National Council on Teacher Quality's [2018 audit](#) of California's teacher preparation programs showed that only 23% of programs (up from 16%) teach the reading elements identified within our Education code, known as **Structured Literacy**, that RICA assesses and which **60-65% of students require to learn how to read** (see attached chart*); this is a main cause of RICA's low pass rate. Yet, SB 614 eliminates the safeguard that assesses teachers' preparation and will only increase the number of **unprepared teachers who, overwhelmingly, will serve the most vulnerable student populations**. It also removes the legislative mandate and certification requirement being currently used to engage universities and k-12 school systems about their literacy training and practices.

We are concerned that SB 614 reopens the door for repeating mistakes of the early 2000s. To address the teacher shortage, Oakland Unified hired many teachers from out-of-the country. The new teachers, mostly from Spain and the Philippines, struggled with the instructional, cultural, institutional, and financial challenges of this new environment. SB 614 removes the assessment and codified assurance that candidates have basic knowledge of evidence-based reading practices. It lays the groundwork to replicate the previous, failed experiment. **It tries to solve the demand for new teachers, 88 percent of which is due to turnover, but ignores that attrition is driven by inadequate preparation.**

The NAACP recognizes and appreciates the legislature's recent [Juneteenth declaration](#), recognizing the end of slavery. Correspondingly, we urge you to reject any measure that undermines access to full and complete literacy because freedom without literacy is like being in a rowboat without paddles. And since [75%](#) of African-American boys in California classrooms do not meet reading standards, we celebrate the right to sit at lunch counters while also realizing that many of our children cannot read the menu.

We must better prepare educators to meet the bar - not eliminate it. Passing SB 614 would disregard the science of reading, data about the causes of teacher turnover, the [National Reading Project](#) findings, meta data on learning effect sizes ([Hattie 2017](#)), the [California Guidelines for Dyslexia](#), and the California Constitution. We ask you to oppose SB 614.

Sincerely,

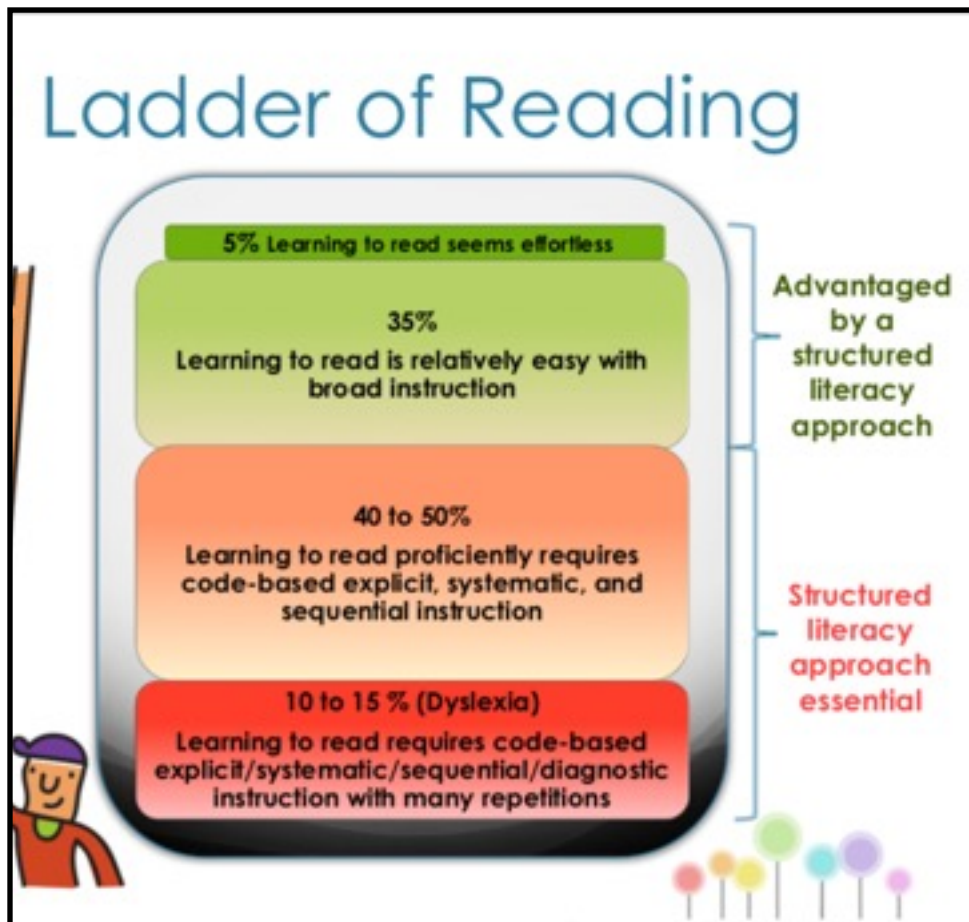


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Source: • [Reading Ladder*](#) and the Statistical [Underpinning](#).