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Subject: Testimony for S.15: An act relating to providing supplemental reading instruction in all schools.

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I wish to express my support for S.15, an act relating to providing supplemental reading instruction in all school. I am sure you will hear plenty of numbers, I'll share a few, but mostly wish to share a single experience, an "N of 1" that is representative of the many students who would be served by the passage of S.15. I will call the student "Joe."

Our high school predictably receives students from four middle schools (often more), and from even more elementary schools. These students come to us at all levels of reading, from a variety of reading programs, some that embrace the science of reading, and others that are only beginning to implement these practices. We are fortunate to have a passionate reading interventionist on our staff to support our struggling readers. But the passion wasn't enough.

In the past two years, our interventionist has embraced the sound, thorough practices in the science of reading. She has gone out of her way to enroll in many professional development opportunities, from one-day seminars to credit-bearing courses. As a result, the effects of her work with our readers have become markedly more positive.

"Joe" came to our school as a freshman (9th grader) who was reading at a lower elementary school level. This resulted in poor grades throughout all his classes. Poor reading comprehension led to disaffection for school, poor attention while in class, marginal attendance, and a large number of behavioral referrals. Joe's struggles in math were primarily due to his inability to interpret the written problems, not because of math aptitude. Joe, to no one's surprise, would like to attend our tech center.

As tech centers lose their stigma (which is a good thing), they are becoming more competitive. They often have more applicants than they can take. Acceptance is usually based on a variety of criteria, including attendance, behavior, and grades. Joe's numbers on these fronts would not work in his benefit for the program he most aspires to attend. And we want Joe to get in.

For a year and a half now, Joe has been receiving additional support outside of class from our reading interventionist who herself is more and more effective and studied in her work. In a meeting that took place this month, Joe's teachers reported that his comprehension has skyrocketed. I can bear witness to the fact that the last time Joe was in my office, it was for something positive. His attendance has improved. Joe's grades are much better. To my mind, Joe stands a very good, and fair, chance of getting the future he wants for himself. This isn't due just to maturity. It's due to our school deepening our understanding of the science of reading and the implementation of better and better practices.

Every student deserves this opportunity, and I'm pleased to say that our school is in a place to offer it to Joe and many others. But this kind of support for our struggling readers shouldn't be left to chance. It should be a given that our public schools are using the latest and most effective strategies.

Please cast your vote in support of S.15.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth M. Cadow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Kenneth M. Cadow

Co-Principal, Oxbow High School

Bradford, Vermont