

Testimony: Dyslexia Legislation

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*My statements do not reflect the opinions of **any** District. These are my personal and professional experiences. Please enact mandates for teachers to implement instructional methodology already outlined in our Guidelines. Without legal mandates, appropriate instruction will not be provided.*

CT Guidelines for Identifying Children with Disabilities 2010 stipulate “A student whose primary need is in the area of word decoding should have research-based interventions and progress monitoring assessments focused on decoding skills, not comprehension...intensive, systematic teaching of phonics integrated with phonemic awareness instruction is especially critical.”

My son’s data conclusively confirmed a “critical” need for decoding instruction. His school data confirmed his Reading achievement levels are significantly discrepant by several grade levels below his chronological age. He needed a decoding program exclusively, however, this is not what he received.

Rather, my son’s Reading program aligned with *Whole Language* instructional methodology. *Whole Language* has been aggressively advocated by District leadership and educators. *Whole Language* is the methodology The National Reading Panel, The International Dyslexia Association, No Child Left Behind Laws, and Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act sought to eradicate.

My son will begin Fourth Grade at a First Grade decoding level if I do not provide him with intensive instruction that his school failed to provide. I live in a town with ample resources, yet dyslexia fails to be remediated appropriately. I can only imagine how dire the situation is for other children around the State of CT.

CT has already stipulated what works to remediate dyslexia. However, our teachers are not provided professional development to follow these guidelines. **CT needs legislation to mandate implementation of these guidelines specific to dyslexia.** Absent legal mandates, administrators will not require teachers to implement the best practices in dyslexia remediation as stipulated in this document. And these best practices can be implemented with existing materials with **no cost to Districts**. It’s simply following a predetermined instructional sequence with a multi-sensory routine.

PPT meetings are grueling negotiations over services as if we are negotiating the sale of a car. Last Friday, I recorded our 2-hour PPT meeting. You are welcome to hear the intense debates that result in the District’s repeated denials of appropriate instruction for dyslexic children because they are not “required” to. I encourage you to listen to this meeting. You may contact me directly to hear some or all of what parents are subjected to in order to secure an appropriate education for their children: ahickmann9@gmail.com

This was our fifth and our final PPT meeting. I have no choice but to revoke my consent for Special Education services and seek remediation on my own.