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Re: Please support HRB 5562: An Act Concerning Special Education

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

I am a parent of a child with dyslexia and am an education advocate, working on behalf of children with disabilities throughout Connecticut. In addition, I previously served as the president of the Learning Disabilities Association of Connecticut. I support adding "SLD – dyslexia" as a primary eligibility category on the IEP under "specific learning disabilities."

Based on what I have experienced myself in West Hartford and on what I have seen in districts throughout the state, I am very concerned that we are allowing many students with dyslexia to slip through the cracks. This is serious, as those with unremediated dyslexia are at increased risk for poor outcomes, such as dropping out of school, experiencing depression, becoming involved with the juvenile justice system, and ending up unemployed/underemployed.

According to the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, "More than 20% of the population is dyslexic, yet many remain undiagnosed, untreated, and struggling with the impact of their dyslexia." (See <http://dyslexia.yale.edu/MDAI/>) This number may sound high to some, but our CMT data shows that we are failing to teach approximately 40% of our third-grade students to read on grade level. Wouldn't it make sense that many of those students have dyslexia?

It is a concern that we do not yet know how many Connecticut students receiving special education are diagnosed with dyslexia. Raised Bill 5562 would provide us with an easy means to obtain this information, by simply adding a box on the IEP. This would cost virtually nothing, as the IEP form is electronic and typically not printed until it has been completed for an individual student. We need this data to help us ensure that schools receive sufficient resources to support every student.

I appreciate all the work you do and hope you will support HRB 5562. If you have any questions, please email me or call. Take care!

Sincerely,

