

Patricia Babina
27 Wedge Hill Drive
Oxford, CT 06478
trish.babina@gmail.com

March 10.2015

Re: Bill No. SB 1054 "An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia"

Position: SUPPORT

I am a Connecticut resident and a former public school teacher, having taught in several schools within the city of Milford for over thirty-five years, in the field of Special Education, grades K-12. Currently, I am volunteering time every week to tutor adults, with the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury.

My experiences as a classroom teacher, a Learning Disabilities specialist, and a literacy tutor, have convinced me that early identification of dyslexia is a critical factor in the measure of success students will have with any specialized instruction delivered to improve reading skills. Once a student is identified through a screening process, then reliable, recognized interventions should be provided. These systematic, proven interventions should be delivered by qualified educational specialists, who consistently adhere to the exactness of a prescribed program, and with the recommended frequency. These supports should be part of any educational plan for helping students who struggle with reading. With the addition of these supports, students who thus demonstrate a need for specialized instruction would have a much better chance to become capable readers.

Kathy Crockett, a parent advocate and leader of the Connecticut chapter of a national parent advocacy group called "Decoding Dyslexia", wrote "I could say if we had a definition of dyslexia in the education code, if we had teacher training, *early screening*, and then *the implementation of evidence-based programs*, we would be much farther ahead with these children who have dyslexia." (Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity. c. 2015 www.dyslexia.yale.edu)

Dr. Sally Shaywitz, who has written what many in my profession call the "bible" for interventions and strategies for specialists who address reading difficulties in the schools, that is, Overcoming Dyslexia, (c. 2003, A.A. Knopf) insists that early identification and intervention with children who

are at high risk of school failure because of reading problems can change the course of their futures. She cites the following: "According to G.Reid Lyon, who guides reading research at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), widespread implementation of these scientifically proven prevention and early intervention programs will substantially reduce the number of children needing special education in higher grades. In one Tallahassee, Florida, elementary school where such a program was implemented, the percentage of struggling readers dropped eightfold- from 31.8 percent to 3.7 percent." (p. 261)

I am asking that the following proposed additional supports be added to the SB 1054: (1) Early assessments and universal screening for dyslexia (2) Evidence-based instruction taught with fidelity and (3) Student access to specialists who are able to provide interventions.

I respectfully ask that you pass this legislation for the benefit of the many students who struggle with dyslexia in our public schools. Thank you for your consideration of my opinion.

Sincerely,

Patricia Babina
Oxford