

Dear members of the Educational Committee,

My name is Michelle Cubanski and my son is Ward Cubanski. He is 7 years old and has been diagnosed with Dyslexia. Ward attends Beecher Road School in Woodbridge, Connecticut and is in the second grade. I am in support of Senate Bill 1054, An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia however there needs to be additional supports included in the bill for instance professional training for early identification and trained teachers in the methods proven to work for students with Dyslexia.

When Ward was in preschool he attended Beecher Road School in their special education preschool classroom. While in the classroom he struggled with learning the alphabet and identifying the matching sounds to the letters. He could not rhyme and he had speech language issues. I asked his special education teacher what is going on here. There was silence.

In Kindergarten these issues continued. By the end of Kindergarten he was not reading and the teacher's recommendation was to hold him back. I asked have you seen this before? What could be going on with Ward? Again there was silence. At the beginning of 1st grade I asked his special education teacher if Ward could have Dyslexia and her response was no. I asked what was her reasoning and she stated that Ward does not write his letters backwards. (This is not an identifying factor of Dyslexia.) She then started teaching him the Foundations program by Wilson. By the end of 1st grade, he was still on a beginning Kindergarten reading level and I requested that they test him to see if he had a reading disability. The school refused stating that he already qualified for special education. I expressed my concern that he may have Dyslexia and that identifying this was important so that they could use a proven method to teach him to read. The response I received was the Special Education Director leaving the room and bringing back a book titled, "The Gift of Dyslexia." She stated that she knew he had Dyslexia and that what they were doing was enough.

In the summer prior to entering 2nd grade, I took Ward to an Orton Guillingham Certified Trained teacher for 20 sessions. When he entered 2nd grade he was reading at a beginning 1st grade level. The school refused to pay for further tutoring.

Ward is now over half way through the 2nd grade and still working on a beginning 1st grade level. The school has been using the Wilson approach since the beginning of 2nd grade and he is still at a beginning 1st grade level. I have asked the school to provide a certified Wilson teacher, but his teachers have only gone to the 3 day seminar. I have hired an attorney and finally received testing for my son by a Neuropsychologist who diagnosed him with Dyslexia. The testing revealed he was in the 1st percentile for his age for reading on the Gray Oral Reading Test. This score is the lowest that a child can receive. The school continues to say that the teachers are trained despite the Wilson Program clearly stating that those with the 3 day Introductory workshop are not trained in the Wilson Reading System. Wilson goes on further to say that Level I or Level II teachers should be used to appropriately and effectively use the program for students.

Despite the evidence from Wilson and the Neuropsychologist recommending Ward have a properly trained teacher Ward continues on the same path of making inadequate progress. The results speak clearly for my son, by not having a trained certified teacher he remains at a deficient level in reading. The response I received regarding the need for properly trained

teachers was from the school's lawyer. "There is no law Mrs. Cubanski that teachers need to be certified in these methods to teach your son."

Early identification by his teachers and early intervention by a certified teacher in one of the scientifically proven multisensory methods could have helped my son as well as many others. Now we have no choice before things becomes worse. Ward's father and I are looking for a private school to meet his needs. School districts would save themselves a lot of money with proper early intervention and education. More importantly they will save a lot of children from going down the path of failure in life. Instead public education continues on the same path of remaining silent and doing nothing. Please act and change the future for thousands of lives.

Thank you for listening to our story today.