

My name is Allison Quirion, I am the Founder of Decoding Dyslexia-CT, a grassroots movement aimed to support students with Dyslexia and I am a resident within the Town of Hebron. I am in support of Senate Bill 317, however, it does not begin to address the time needed to prepare a teacher in the area of literacy to meet the needs of a student with Dyslexia. I respectfully request that you amend Senate Bill 317 to require ALL Remedial Reading coursework to align with structured literacy, evidence-based interventions and the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.

Senate Bill 317 adds a requirement for teachers applying for a remedial reading endorsement to complete a **course** in Dyslexia. Teaching reading is rocket science and one course will NEVER even come close in preparing teachers to meet the literacy needs of students with Dyslexia.

1. **"A course" is not enough time to learn content.** The International Dyslexia Association's Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (IDA K&PS), "guide the preparation, certification and professional development of those who teach reading and related literacy skills in the classroom, remedial and clinical setting" and cannot be delivered within "a course". Currently, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) nationwide have implemented these standards contained within designated Master's Degree programs, comprehensive certification programs and comprehensive reading endorsements to prepare teachers to meet the needs of this student population NOT in "a course".
 - a. **Examples:**
 - i. William Carey University (MS), Master of Education: Dyslexia Therapy, **30 Hours Credits and 720 Supervised Clinical Hours, over 2 yrs.**
 - ii. Fairleigh Dickenson University (NJ), Orton-Gillingham Dyslexia Specialist Certificate, **30 Credits, including 100 hours of practicum, over 2 years.**
 - iii. Simmons College (MA), Master of Science in Education: Language and Literacy, **48 credits including 150+ hours of practicum, over 16 mo-2 years+.**
2. **Many of the IHE remaining curriculum offered to Remedial Reading Candidates will not align with evidence-based structured literacy instruction.** Many IHE preparing our Connecticut teachers are not teaching evidence-based structured literacy reading. Instead, they are teaching whole language, a three-cueing system involving syntactic, semantic and phonological guessing as a primary strategy to teach decoding. This type of approach does not work for students with Dyslexia.

Teacher preparation programs in remedial reading (and all reading programs) need to teach teachers how to provide instruction concerning sound-symbol (phonics) and word study skills including syllables and morphemes as outlined in the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards. This instruction should be evidence based systematic, explicit, direct and multisensory for reading, writing and spelling.

Here is a comparison of ILA (current standard) VS One Section of the IDA standards (requested standard)

Comparison of Standards' Specificity	
IRA Standard	IDA Standard
1. Foundational Knowledge	B. Knowledge of the Structure of Language: <i>Morphology</i>
1.1 Candidates understand major theories and empirical research that describes the cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural foundations of reading and writing development, processes, and components, including word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading-writing connections. (Standard et al., n.d.)	<p>Phonology (The Speech Sound System)</p> <p>B.1. Identify, pronounce, classify, and compare the consonant and vowel phonemes of English.</p> <p>B.2 Orthography (The Spelling System)</p> <p>Understand the broad outline of historical influences on English spelling patterns, especially Anglo-Saxon, Latin (Romance), and Greek.</p> <p>B.7 Identify and categorize common morphemes in English, including Anglo-Saxon compounds, inflectional suffixes; Latin-based prefixes, roots, and derivational suffixes; and Greek-based combining forms.</p> <p>1. Understand and explain the language processing requirements of proficient reading and writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Phonological (speech sound) processing · Orthographic (print) processing · Semantic (meaning) processing · Syntactic (sentence level) processing · Discourse (connected text level) processing

Regardless of social class, race, or income roughly a third of all kindergartners require an evidence-based explicit, systematic approach to learn how to read. A study performed in 2006 analyzed higher education courses to determine which individual components of good reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) were taught with the most regularity in IHE. "Our findings suggest that some college professors may not be teaching the science of reading, not just because they are ideologically opposed to the science, but because they may be reluctant to teach what they themselves do not know."

Sally & Bennett Shaywitz, Co-Directors of the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity provided written and oral testimony in 2015 in support of SB 1054, wherein they stated: "We must replace anecdotal and common, but, non-evidence-based practices, with those that are proven, that is, they are evidence-based. Schools of education must ensure that aspiring teachers are taught evidence-based methods to teach reading and have monitored experience demonstrating that they are effective in implementing these methods."

Margie Gillis from Literacy How, Inc. stated in her 2015 testimony in support of SB 1054, wherein she stated: "Over the course of fifteen years working in schools around the state, I have seen first-hand that teachers are not adequately prepared to diagnostically assess and prescriptively teach children fundamental reading skills."

Until we align with evidence based structured literacy instruction within IHE, we will continue to see reading failure within the State of Connecticut.

CONNECTICUT DATA SUPPORTS REQUEST TO ALIGN REMEDIAL READING ENDORSEMENT WITH EVIDENCE BASED STRUCTURED LITERACY:

- Only 8% of 8th grade children with disabilities (CWD) are proficient in reading, according to the 2015 NAEP Scores.

- Only 10% of 4th grade children with disabilities are proficient in reading, according to the 2015 NAEP Scores.
- There was a decrease across ALL grades in reading performance from the CT CMT (2012-2013) to the SBAC (2014-2015) scores.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services found CT to “Need Assistance” in 2014 in the implementation of Part B of IDEA.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services found CT to “meet requirements” in 2015 despite a reported decline in reading assessment for children with disabilities.
- Connecticut Data Presented by SDE shows:
 - CWD perform poorest on reading vs. all other subject areas.
 - CWD are performing at least 10 index points lower than all other historically underperforming subgroups except English Language Learners (ELL)
 - SDE performed a review to identify CT’s SIMR and it was determined that there was no one factor that could be contributed to the reading failure of children with disabilities. Therefore, the SIMR encompasses ALL 3rd grade SWD.
- CT’s number of special education students increased from 12.4% in 2014 and to 12.7% in 2015
- CT’s SLD Disability category (including students with Dyslexia) continues to be the largest disability category making up 35.1% in 2014 and increased to 35.4% or 22,213 students in 2015 of the total 62,751 CWD (IDEA) ages 6-21. The disability of Autism only represents 11%.
- CT’s 2015 Statewide Assessments show only 41% of CWD in 4th grade were proficient in reading/language arts compared to the overall proficiency of all students at 77%.

CT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S RESPONSE TO LITERACY CONCERNS:

- CT State Department of Educations (SDE), has a current initiative entitled “CT Core Standards in K-3 Reading: A system of Professional Learning”. SDE Contact Joanne White.
 - Funding of “Up to” 2 million dollars awarded “up to” 5 years. A cost of potentially 10 MILLION DOLLARS TO TRAIN TEACHERS IN LITERACY!
- SDE/CT Bureau of Special Education developed a Theory of Action as part of it’s SSIP/SIMR, which incorporates previous Dyslexia Higher Education legislation, (PA 14-39), where it is stated the legislation “will help ensure that Connecticut students are given appropriate reading interventions and, if appropriate, referred for special education evaluation in a timely manner”. The referenced legislation WILL NOT accomplish what the Department has stated.
 - CT State Department of Education, as part of it’s Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan/State Identified Measurable Result for Children with Disabilities (SSIP/SIMR) is to increase the reading performance of all 3rd grade students with disabilities (SWD) statewide, as measured by Connecticut’s approved ESEA Flexibility Performance Index.
 - The SIMR will be funded by IDEA “set aside” funds. Cost unknown.
- Connecticut receives funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For FFY 2015 IDEA Part B funds Grant Section 611 (ages 3-21) CT received \$131,332,590 and breaks down as follows:

- CT spends from the total amount on administrative functions a total of \$3,027,590. The MORE COMMISSION reported it was unclear how SDE spends these funds and recommended an investigation by The General Assembly's Program Review and Investigations Committee.
- CT has a maximum set aside for "other activities" for the State of CT a total of \$13,172,325. This amount is not to be commingled and is recognized contractually with multiple deliverables expected when requested and identified as activities related to IDEA.
- The remaining 88% or \$115,123,675 goes to local school districts.

These two CT initiatives are looking to address teacher knowledge in the area of literacy at the District level. If we do not address teacher preparation within IHE in the area of literacy, we will continue to see the need to invest MILLIONS of dollars to train teachers at the District level, because higher education has failed to do so. This must be a two-prong approach (1) district initiatives and (2) quality higher education teacher preparation to see any type of systemic sustainable changes in the area of literacy.

Dianna Wentzell, Commissioner of the State Department of Education, commented at a State Board of Education Meeting, held on 1/6/16, "if people knew better, they would do better". She then stated that a large group of kids are identified for learning disabilities. Among the biggest reasons students are identified for learning disabilities is failure to learn to read on time (although she would need to confirm).

At the same State Board of Education Meeting, Ellen Cohn, Deputy Commissioner at the State Department of Education stated "My experience at the school and district level that kids find themselves in special education when in fact it is an "instructional disability" and they haven't been able to read because they didn't get the explicit instruction that they need.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S POSITION:

- President Obama, on February 18, 2016, signed the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia (READ) Act! This act supports important research to further our understanding of dyslexia, including better methods for early detection and teacher training.
 - The *READ Act* requires the president's annual budget request to Congress to include the Research in Disabilities Education program of the National Science Foundation (NSF). As amended, the bill requires the NSF to devote at least \$2.5 million annually to dyslexia research, which would focus on best practices in the following areas:
 - Early identification of children and students with dyslexia
 - Professional development about dyslexia for teachers and administrators
 - Curricula development and evidence-based educational tools for children with dyslexia

PLEASE NOTE THAT CT HAS ALREADY ENACTED THE FIRST TWO POINTS LISTED ABOVE!!! WHAT WE ARE MISSING IS THE EVIDENCED BASED CURRICULUM FOR TEACHER PREPARATION.

LET'S ACCOMPLISH THIS IN SENATE BILL 317!!!

- President Obama, on December 10, 2015, signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), officially replacing No Child Left Behind. Included in the law, among other things, is a focus on improving literacy instruction through two initiatives that provide (a) evidence based strategies for educators and parents to effectively teach reading and writing to all students including those with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, and (b) resources to identify and intervene when students are struggling.
- U.S. Department of Education issued guidance on October 23, 2015, wherein it clarifies "that there is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations, or IEP documents."

CONCLUSION AND WRAP UP:

I have spoken to hundreds of parents and constituents over the years that are struggling to obtain early identification and evidence-based interventions. I have also spoken with teachers, administrators, advocates, tutors, educational therapists and special education attorneys who all acknowledge, to some extent, that teachers within our local school districts are NOT prepared to meet the needs of students with Dyslexia. These individuals also agree that it has been difficult to obtain training for teachers through professional development at the district level and it would be beneficial for students (and their bottom line) if teachers were prepared before reaching the local school districts. Public testimony over the past two years has also shown the need for teacher preparation.

BE OUR CHAMPION AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THESE CHILDREN, by ADDING evidence based structured literacy interventions into all remedial reading coursework.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison M. Quirion
Founder Decoding Dyslexia-CT

RESOURCES:

International Dyslexia Association Knowledge and Practice Standards, <http://eida.org/knowledge-and-practices/>

International Dyslexia Association, Just the Facts: Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading, <http://eida.org/1252-2/>

International Dyslexia Association, University Programs Accredited by IDA
<http://eida.org/university-programs-accredited-by-ida/>

What Education Schools Aren't Teaching about Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning, Executive Summary May 2006, National Council on Teacher Quality

What Makes a Teacher Effective, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education,
<http://www.ncate.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JFRrmWqa1jU=>

Aaron, P.G., Joshi, R. Malatesha, Quatroche, Diana, (2008). *Becoming A Professional Reading Teacher*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Joshi, R.M., Binks, E., Graham, L., Ockerdean, E., Smith, D., Boudware-Gooden, R., (2009). Do Textbooks Used in University Reading Education Courses Conform to the Recommendations of the National Reading Panel? *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 42, 358-463.

Joshi, R.M., Binks, E., Hougen, M., Dahlgren, M., Ocker-Dean, E., Smith, D (2009). Why Elementary Teachers May be Inadequately Prepared to Teach Reading. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 42, 398-402.

National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). (2011). *Nation's Report Card: National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

National Council on Teacher Quality (2006). *What Education Schools Aren't Teaching About Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning*, Executive Summary. www.nctq.org

Spear-Swerling, L., Cheesman, E. (2012). Teachers' Knowledge Base for Implementing Response-to-Intervention Models in Reading. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 25, 1691-1723.

Spear-Swerling, L., *The Power of RTI and Reading Profiles: A Blueprint for Solving Reading Problems*, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, Baltimore, MD, 2015.

U.S. Department of Education, State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Forms, and Supporting Documents,
<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/sppapr.html>
<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/partbspap/allyears.html>

Education Week, *Common Core's Big Test: Tracking 2014-2015*, November 16, 2015
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/map-common-core-2015-test-results.html#ct>

Special Education Data Update as presented at the Connecticut Department of Education's Back to School Meeting, September 16, 2015 & Part B State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report, contained therein
http://www.ctserc.org/bts15/am/CSDE%20Presentations/Back%20to%20School_AM_SSIP%20%20Data%20Updates.pdf

Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut's SPP and APR
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322094>

U.S. Department of Education guidance letter issued on October 23, 2015
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/spced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf>
Request for Proposals, CT Core Standards in K-3 Reading: A System of Professional Learning

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/rfp/rfp15sde0003_k3_teacher_reading_professional_learning.pdf

MORE Committee Special Education Recommendations 2015

http://www.housedems.ct.gov/more/SPED/pubs/2015-02-18_Recommendations.pdf

State of Connecticut, State Contracting Portal Contract Results, CT Core Standards in K-3: A System of Professional Learning

http://www.biznet.ct.gov/SCP_Search/ContractDetail.aspx?ID=16241

Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia (READ), signed by President Obama, on February 18, 2016

<https://www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr3033/BILLS-114hr3033eas.pdf>

State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell Report on Special Education, to Connecticut State Board of Education dated January 6, 2016

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/board/boardmaterials010616/overview_of_special_education_in_connecticut.pdf

State Board of Education Meeting, January 6, 2016, CT-N

<http://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=12355>

ESSA Gives States More Control, Targets Needs of Struggling Readers, article from IDA, January 2016

<https://eida.org/essa-gives-states-more-control-targets-needs-of-struggling-readers/>

John Alexander, Head of Grove School, Letter dated January 19, 2015, Dear Presidents of Universities and Colleges and Resources, Attached

E-mail from State Department of Education, Renee Savoie, Re: 2015 NAEP Scores, October 15, 2015, Attached

E-mail from Bureau of Special Education, Bureau Chief, Dr. Isabelina Rodriguez, dated December 7, 2015 (IDEA) and February 25, 2016 (SIMR/SSIP), Attached

Public Hearing Testimony 2014, HB 5562

https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/CommDocTmyBillAllComm.asp?bill=HB-05562&doc_year=2014

Public Hearing Testimony, 2015, SB

https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/CommDocTmyBillAllComm.asp?bill=SB-01054&doc_year=2015

CT Office of Legislative Research 2015 Achievement Gap Data, January 27, 2016, Beecher, Lara

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2016/rpt/pdf/2016-R-0026.pdf>



From: "Savoie, Renee" <Renee.Savoie@ct.gov>
To: 'Allison Quirion' <ddconnecticut@yahoo.com>
Cc: "Krisst, Abe" <Abe.Krisst@ct.gov>; "Murphy, Diane" <Diane.Murphy@ct.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 30, 2015 11:33 AM
Subject: RE: 2015 NAEP Scores

Allison,

My colleague reminded me that I forgot one VERY important footnote—When NAEP reports out the performance of CWD, they include 504 students. Here is an updated table that shows performance differences across the three different groups. My apologies.

NAEP 2015: Grade 4 Reading	CWD (includes 504)	35	15
NAEP 2015: Grade 4 Reading	CWD (excludes 504)	27	8
NAEP 2015: Grade 4 Reading	Non-CWD	80	47
NAEP 2015: Grade 8 Reading	CWD (includes 504)	52	15
NAEP 2015: Grade 8 Reading	CWD (excludes 504)	44	10
NAEP 2015: Grade 8 Reading	Non-CWD	87	48

CSDE

Renée A. Savoie, Ed.D.
NAEP State Coordinator
 Connecticut State Department of Education
 Performance Office
 860-713-6858

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[Inbox](#)

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**From:** Isabelina Rodriguez

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To: Allison Quirion**Cc:** Laura Stefon Kelly Donnelly Thomas Boudreau

Questions regarding IDEA funding

December 7, 2015 at 6:12 PM

Inbox -- ddcconnecticut@yahoo.com

Dear Allison,

Tom forwarded your email to me with your questions regarding IDEA funding. Below please find the responses in blue.

- How much money does the State of Connecticut receive in IDEA funding for 2015? Part B alone?
The State of CT received in the FFY 2015 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Grant Section 611 (ages 3-21) - \$131,332,590 and Part B Grant Section 619 (preschool ages 3-5) - \$4,587,514.
- How much money does the State of Connecticut retain for administrative functions?
State of CT can retain in FFY 2015 IDEA Part B Grant Section 611 (ages 3-21) - \$3,027,590 and Part B Grant Section 619 (preschool ages 3-5) - \$253,317 for administrative functions. It is my understanding that the State Department of Education is allowed to keep a certain percentage of federal special education funds received by the state for SDE administrative functions, with the remainder being disbursed to school districts. What is this breakdown?
For FY 2015:
\$115,123,675 or 88 percent IDEA Part B Grant Section 611 (ages 3-21) goes to local school districts.
\$3,704,136 or 81 percent IDEA Part B Grant Section 619 (ages 3-5) goes to local school districts.
How are the set aside federal special education funds spent and is there an itemization of this information?
The maximum set-aside for other state activities for the State of CT in FFY 2015 IDEA Part B Grant Section 611 (ages 3-21) - \$13,172,325 and a modified Part B Grant Section 619 (preschool ages 3-5) - \$630,061. The IDEA funds distributed are not to be comingled and are recognized contractually with multiple deliverables expected when requested and identified as activities related to IDEA.
I hope you find this information helpful.
Isabelina Rodriguez

