

My name is Amanda Dawley. I am a parent from Montville. My youngest child attends Mohegan School, which is one of the three elementary schools in Montville. Senate Bill 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia, calls for a course for teachers to be taken to support students with dyslexia. What is proposed in this Senate Bill nowhere near meets the actual requirements of students with dyslexia. Highly qualified(graduate level) teachers using an evidence based curriculum must take place in our CT institutions of Higher Education. Teacher preparation must coincide with evidence based standards that are proven effective to actually make a difference for students with dyslexia. IDA knowledge and practice standards for teachers of reading should be aligned with the remedial reading(102) endorsement.

My determination was the reason my son was eventually identified dyslexic at the end of third grade. It was apparent at that time that the teachers and administration at Mohegan School did not understand dyslexia and the needs of my child. So I purchased 10 copies of Sally Shaywitz's book, Overcoming Dyslexia, to get them started. Since then my district has made some efforts, and bears the cost, in professional development which consists of two day training for two teachers. This is very minimal training for a minimal number of teachers. I still have not heard of my district identifying children with dyslexia.

My child is now in fifth grade and has progressed from a first grade reading level to a fourth grade reading level since he was identified. He is taught to read one on one for an hour each day before his regular school day even begins. He is taught by using the Wilson reading program by a special education teacher who has her masters degree and Wilson reading instruction steps 1-6. Often times para professionals who have the least amount of training, work with students with dyslexia with a minimally effective program. My child is the only student who receives Wilson instruction at his school. His instructor comes from another school to work with him. He also sees a therapist in school and out of school on a weekly basis. He often says that his teachers, besides his Wilson instructor, do not always understand his disability and how he learns. His therapists often help in this area of misunderstanding and communication. It would have benefited his entire educational experience if he were identified at an appropriate age. My son works everyday to make up from how our education system failed him with his disability.

I hope one day he does not have to spend his time catching up in school due to the lack of identification and structured literacy approach with in our school system. I would like commend everyone in this room for coming here today in efforts to make positive and effective change for our teachers and students in the area of dyslexia.