

Hello:

This is my written testimony; I will not be testifying at the hearing. I do wish there were accessible options for phone conferencing for persons like myself with diseases and injuries that prevent participation.

I support SB 317, with amendments - An Act Concerning Dyslexia.

As a special educator, I know that specialized training in comprehensive literacy evaluation and evidence-based interventions - such as Orton Gillingham, Wilson, Lindamood, and other comprehensive methodologies used at specialized centers for learning disabilities such as Ben Bronze - was obtained on my own time during summers in order to meet my students' literacy learning and progress needs.

As an administrator in an amazing district that had massive instructional practice needs with a very dedicated staff and an amazing professional development plan, it was truly impossible to help teachers get from where they were to where they needed to be to meet the literacy evaluation and intervention needs of their students fast enough without sacrificing learners along the way.

Thus, a course for educators in Dyslexia is not sufficient. Nor is school professional development. Those important professional learning opportunities - coupled with reading journals, accessing professional learning communities, doing action research, etc - are for keeping up with current best practices, not for back filling knowledge and practice gaps.

I request an amendment for comprehensive teacher preparation using graduate level evidence-based curriculum content in dyslexia evaluation and dyslexia literacy instruction that must take place in our Connecticut institutions of higher education. The Connecticut Department of Education must require these sophisticated college preservice teacher preparation programs to be aligned with remedial reading intervention endorsements (i.e., 102) that match the International Reading Association's 'Child's Bill of Literacy Rights' and the International Dyslexia Association's 'Teacher's Reading Knowledge and Practice Standards.'

As a mom of two children who are gifted with deficient fluency that affects their student experience in reading, writing and math and which requires specialized instruction and accommodations, I believe millions of dollars are wasted on legal fees to protect school systems from the child find and intervention knowledge their teachers are lacking. If we just acknowledge the elephant in the room and redistribute funds from lawyers to teachers and infrastructure, all children could excel. We could reduce the School to Prison Pipeline, close the achievement gap, increase universally accessible learning (inclusion/TWNDP), increase college attendance and on-time college completion of students with dyslexia and truly protect these children's literacy and learning future. We need their brilliance in our schools and workforce.

Thank you for your work so far (it's truly groundbreaking) and for considering my testimony requesting an amendment to SB317 as described. If you can call me at 860-884-9719, I'd be

happy to read this aloud during the public hearing via speakerphone conference call at a time of the Education Committee's convenience.

Sincerely,

Jill