



Testimony by the Connecticut Association for the Gifted
Senate Bill 317, Raised; Hartford, CT, March 2nd, 2016

On behalf of the Connecticut Association for the Gifted (CAG), we are writing in support of the Raised Senate Bill 317. If passed, this legislation would require that teachers applying to teach remedial reading, remedial language arts or acquiring a reading consultant endorsement complete a properly designed course that includes instruction on dyslexia.

For many years, our organization has been advocating for the academic and social emotional needs of Twice Exception students, students that are both gifted and academically challenged, sometimes classified as “disabled with high cognition.” Many of these students are dyslexic. Recent research seems to suggest that perhaps over 50% of dyslexic students may be gifted. However, these students are not being placed in gifted programs because their reading difficulties mask their high ability in areas in which gifted programs are offered. At the same time, because these students are able to compensate for the reading disability with their acute analytical, reasoning and comprehension skills, their need to receive proper reading instruction is often not recognized and is neglected until later years. Many of these students forego careers in reading-intensive fields, mistakenly ascribing their difficulties and dislike of reading to reasons other than their learning disability. Twice exceptional students are often twice misdiagnosed.

Voluminous research confirms that students whose special needs, be it a disability or giftedness, are not properly met in school register higher levels of behavioral problems and underachievement than the general population of their peers. This is especially manifest in under-funded communities where identification for these special needs is often not even done. Connecticut strives to provide excellence in education for ALL students. Students with special needs require special attention.

We are here in support of the testimony presented by the Decoding Dyslexia organization of Connecticut. A mandate to serve students with dyslexia, which is not buttressed by the requirement of proper teacher preparation will only be partially effective, and may leave our dyslexic kids where they are today: vulnerable to misdiagnosis and missed opportunities rather than excellence in meeting their educational needs.

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