

Dear Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and Members of the Education Committee.

My name is Lawrence Berliner and I am providing written testimony pertaining to AAC Dyslexia since I am unable to appear today in person at the public hearing. I am an attorney in private practice with over thirty years of experience in the field of special education law representing children with disabilities who are not reading commensurate with their abilities or simply not reading at all. I am **opposed** to the current language in the proposed legislation since it requires too little to ensure that teachers are properly trained and qualified to teach reading to students with dyslexia and other learning challenges. This legislation should be amended.

The proposed legislation only requires teachers to complete "a course in the diagnosis and remediation of reading," rather than participate in a comprehensive course of studies that will prepare teachers to acquire knowledge of an evidence based reading curriculum and possess the corresponding ability to deliver such instruction with fidelity as part of a student's overall reading program. A single course on Dyslexia in college is not effective and will not prepare teachers to deliver the principles behind the science of reading to students with Dyslexia and other students who struggle with reading.

In 2000, there was a report by the National Reading Panel ( a link is posted below) that discussed the principles behind the science of reading and the need to have teachers properly educated in *all* areas of reading instruction and not just some areas. Some school districts in Connecticut are providing their teachers with opportunities to obtain comprehensive instruction from various practitioners of reading program such as Orton-Gillingham, Wilson, and Lindamood-Bell to name a few methodologies. In my experience, many districts are providing teachers with the opportunity to obtain an introductory level course in these reading methodologies. Many more will simply state that because our teachers are "certified" by the State Department of Education, they are "qualified." An introductory course does not in or itself make a teacher qualified to teach reading to those students who are not reading or who are at-risk of not learning to read in the early grades. Research demonstrates that unless a child learns to read by the third or fourth grade, then that student will have difficulty for the rest of his or her life with reading. I believe that the State's Commission on Children found that the average reading ability amongst the male prison population in Connecticut was *below* the third grade level.

The proposed legislation should be amended to require teachers and those seeking to enter the teaching profession to receive comprehensive instruction in evidence based practices in the science of reading to ensure that students with Dyslexia, and for that matter all students who are struggling with reading, will receive proper evidence

based instruction from teachers who have taken college level courses from their colleges and universities as part of their under-graduate and post-graduate coursework. A single course is not sufficient and the legislation should be amended to require much more coursework in evidence based reading instruction.

Thank you in advance for considering my testimony.

Lawrence Berliner

LINK TO NATIONAL READING PANEL REPORT:

[\[PDF\]National Reading Panel - Teaching Children to Read: An ...](https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/scientific-research-planning/scientific-resources/2000-national-reading-panel-reports)

[https://www.nichd...](https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/scientific-research-planning/scientific-resources/2000-national-reading-panel-reports)

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Reading Panel, and this Report of the National Reading. Panel: Reports of the ... scientific evidence to the research review process so that conclusions and ...

[National Reading Panel](https://www.nic.nh.gov/publications/scientific-research-planning/scientific-resources/2000-national-reading-panel-reports)

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Mar 17, 2015 - NICHD Publications · Scientific Research Planning · ScientificResources ... On April 13, 2000, the National Reading Panel concluded its work and submitted its final reports. The Panel has not been reconvened since that time ...