

March 1, 2016

Thank you Chairman and Education Committee members for giving us the opportunity to share our experiences with dyslexia.

As a daughter of a teacher and a sister to three more teachers, I understand somewhat that when educational bills that are passed for a specific special need, they many times can create mandates and regulations that can become daunting and at times overwhelming. It is my hope that senate bill 317 is seen as a help for all students not just dyslexics.

I despise the use dyslexia and learning disability in the same sentence, dyslexia is a gift. The dyslexic brain creates unique minds, thinkers who approach problems differently.

Dyslexics learn best using multi sensory approaches to learning, hands on and project based instruction and my favorite story telling with lots of pictures of course. When teaching is only about reading and writing we are setting up dyslexics for failure, our language doesn't make logical sense to dyslexics and it requires tons of mental and even physical energy just to process it.

Imagine a world of students where various talents shine, where students can learn not only from the teacher but from each other. Where these beautiful dyslexic minds are on the same playing field as the so called normal mind. Where dyslexics begin to teach others a new perspective on various different problems and subjects.

It is possible, and we can achieve it. We need to train our teachers to identify students with dyslexia, to understand its challenges and embracing their abilities.

This is our future we are talking about, 20% or 1 in 5 students are dyslexic and that is a growing number. Consider who these gifted students will become, currently 35% of wildly successful entrepreneurs are dyslexic. Dyslexics are engineers, film makers, architects, lawyers and even political leaders.

As a dyslexic my gift has served me well. I have built a very successful design business here in CT. Yet I still struggle every day, I've learned to compensate and highlight my individual talents and on occasion when I'm really in a jam blame my dyslexia!

Look around this room, we need to foster growth in educating these gifted minds we need independent thinkers to lead us, in business, medicine, design and in the world. Let's encourage these beautiful minds to not only grow but to teach others too. ... and that begins with who teaches them.

Thank you .
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