

Dear members of the Educational Committee,

This is my written testimony and I will not be testifying at the hearing. My name is Michelle Cubanski and my son is Ward Cubanski. He is 8 years old and is diagnosed with Dyslexia. We live in Woodbridge, Connecticut. Ward is in the third grade. I am in support of Senate Bill 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia. However, the Bill is NOT comprehensive enough to provide the needed supports. There must be comprehensive teacher preparation using evidence based curriculum on literacy. The instruction should be taught at the graduate level in our higher education institutes in Connecticut. The content of the courses should be aligned with (IDA)the International Dyslexia Association. Without proper training and instruction children with Dyslexia will not learn how to read.

My son was at Beecher Road School since Kindergarten. He was identified as having problems learning to read at the beginning of 1st grade. The school implemented Foundations by Wilson. At the end of 1st grade, he had not made any progress and remained at a Kindergarten level. At the beginning of 2nd grade the school implemented the Wilson Program. Despite no progress in reading at the end of 2nd grade, the school continued to say he was making adequate progress. The school stated Ward's teachers were trained in Wilson. The Wilson Program clearly states that those with the 3 day Introductory workshop are not trained in the Wilson Reading System. Wilson goes on further to say that Level I or Level II teachers should be used to appropriately and effectively use the program for students. Despite the evidence from Wilson and the Neuropsychologist recommending Ward have a properly trained teacher Ward continued on the same path of making no progress. The results speak clearly for my son, by not having a trained certified teacher he remains at a deficient level in reading. The response I received regarding the need for properly trained teachers was from the school's lawyer. "There is no law Mrs. Cubanski that teachers need to be certified in these methods to teach your son."

I cannot begin to express in enough words, the hurdles that my husband and I have had to jump over for our child. We have had to make countless calls and send numerous letters to the school asking for help, which often went ignored and unanswered. We finally had to hire a lawyer to get our son the services that he is entitled under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). All the while paying for our lawyer to fight the school's lawyer through our own tax dollars.

Throughout this time fighting, my child fell farther and farther behind his classmates. He would have been in 3rd grade this year, but was performing at a kindergarten level despite having above average intelligence. Ironically the scientifically researched based method was available, but Beecher Road School was and is still unwilling to properly train their teachers in that method.

As I stated above, children with disabilities are entitled under the law. In the law, it states that children are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). It is not only our duty, but a moral duty as a society to provide help for our most vulnerable children. Please make it a requirement that teachers be adequately trained.

Thank you for listening to our story today.