



SHORELINE PEDIATRIC NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, L.L.C.  
ASSESSMENT AND CONSULTATION SERVICES

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SHELLEY F. PELLETIER, PH.D, NCSP, ABPP  
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST  
BOARD CERTIFIED IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY  
BOARD CERTIFIED IN CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHOLOGY  
BOARD CERTIFIED SUBSPECIALIST IN PEDIATRIC NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

Testimony re. SB 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia

I am a board certified school psychologist and a clinical neuropsychologist, with a subspecialty in pediatric neuropsychology. I am in private practice in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, and I work with children who have a wide range of educational, social, and emotional difficulties. Many of these children have reading disabilities. The state has recently specified that dyslexia, when present, must be specifically identified during the identification and eligibility process.

Dyslexia is a term used to describe students who display a particular pattern of reading impairment (Shaywitz, 2005). It is not the only type of reading disability, and the term should not be used to classify all students with reading problems (Cutting, et. al., 2013). Students reading disabilities, including dyslexia, require specialized instruction in order to make adequate educational gains.

While I commend the legislature for beginning to codify the training needs for educational professionals in Connecticut who work with students who have dyslexia, further modifications to the bill as written appear warranted. This legislation suggests that a single course in dyslexia is sufficient training, which is a gross mischaracterization of the current knowledge and understanding of reading instruction.

The legislature is urged to consider an amendment to SB 317, which clarifies that candidates seeking a remedial reading endorsement complete a graduate level program aligned with evidence-based practices and the International Dyslexia Association's professional standards: Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (2010). In order to provide effective instructional services for all children, including those with reading disabilities and dyslexia, comprehensive teacher preparation must use evidence based curriculum regarding the literacy instruction for students with Dyslexia. Evidence based standards have been identified, and current teacher preparation practices must align with these current standards that have proven to be effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. This is my written testimony and I will not be testifying at the hearing.

Respectfully submitted. March 1, 2016

Shelley Pelletier

Cutting, et al. (2013). Not All Reading Disabilities are Dyslexia: Distinct Neurobiology of Specific Comprehension Deficits. *Brain Connectivity*, 3, 199-213.

Moats, et al. (2010). *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*, International Dyslexia Association, Professional Standards and Practices Committee.

Shaywitz, S. (2005). *Overcoming Dyslexia*. New York: Vintage Books.