

March 1, 2016

Testimony for SB 317: An Act Concerning Dyslexia

This is my written testimony. I am unable to testify at the hearing on March 2, 2016.

As a certified (K-6) teacher, practicing as a Literacy How Mentor across districts in Connecticut, I support Senate Bill 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia but I am requesting an amendment. Candidates seeking a remedial reading endorsement should complete a graduate level program aligned with evidence-based practices and the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.

One course in identifying and remediating dyslexia is not enough. Teachers need substantial opportunities to practice explicit, systematic instruction alongside several courses designed to teach dyslexia identification and remediation.

As a practicing educator since 2004, I have seen numerous students passed through grades without learning to read. Some of these students have never learned to read because they were never identified appropriately and were never provided adequate services. This is a tremendous failure of our education system, as most students *can* learn to read. We must adequately prepare our teachers to teach reading in explicit and systematic methods so that our students are able to learn to read.

Personally, I plan to apply to the Fairfield University Reading and Language Development program next year as I believe I still have much to learn about identifying and remediating reading disabilities such as dyslexia. The program is aligned to the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading and covers the identification and remediation of reading disabilities, including dyslexia, across multiple courses. Again, it is my hope that *all* teacher preparation programs in the state of Connecticut, especially for candidates seeking remedial reading endorsements, provide these critical opportunities to candidates so that we may best serve Connecticut's public school children.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the amendment to Senate Bill 317.

Sincerely,

Stephney Gonzalez

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