

## TESTIMONY

March 1, 2016

My name is Susan C. Lowell, M.A., B.C.E.T. and I'm a part time resident of New Hartford, CT. I am providing testimony concerning Senate Bill No. 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia. I respectfully request you amend this bill to include licensure and teacher preparation requirements, which align with the International Dyslexia Association's (IDA) Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading, so we may meet the literacy needs of ALL students, including those with Dyslexia.

As an educator and adjunct faculty member at Simmons College in Boston, teaching in the *Language and Literacy Program*, a graduate program for reading teachers, I continue to see the benefits of a research-based teacher preparation program. The *Language and Literacy Program* is accredited by IDA as a comprehensive and rigorous program that meets the Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading. Teachers graduate understanding reading research, not just fad and opinion, and they know what works. They know how to teach literacy skills directly and systematically, with fidelity, matching the strong results found in intervention studies. Graduates from high quality programs like those accredited by IDA understand the structure of language and know how to teach reading to all students; they know how to identify, define, and diagnose reading problems including dyslexia. Well prepared teachers know that the treatment for reading disorders and dyslexia is high quality structured language instruction or remediation plus accommodations. The treatment for dyslexia is instructional – it is all about what teachers do! Let's be sure all CT teachers graduate with the tools to teach every aspect of language and literacy.

Sadly, many college and university preparation programs do not have similar results. Studies from Spear-Swerling, Joshi, and others examined college syllabi and showed many schools of education do not teach research-based information. These studies also show many college textbooks do not teach research-based information, continuing to perpetuate myths about literacy acquisition. Federal studies show many U.S. schools of education continue to graduate students who cannot pass teacher exit exams, indicating they do not have not been taught the requisite research-based information that form the body of professional knowledge in the field of language, literacy,

and reading instruction. National data continues to show high numbers of students in fourth grade and beyond who cannot adequately read or spell.

This can change with legislation that mandates high quality teacher training for all. Our teachers are demanding high quality, rigorous coursework in reading research, reading instruction, and structure of language so that they are able to help all students learn to read. Literacy is a fundamental human right; yet, national data continues to show the prevalence of reading problems and the ensuing high societal costs of systemic reading failure. Intervention studies demonstrate that this can be changed; we can teach all but the most disabled readers to read and write on grade level given the appropriate type and intensity of instruction.

Please vote to support Senate Bill No. 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia. Support our teachers so they can support all students.

Sincerely,

Susan C. Lowell, M.A., B.C.E.T.

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