

My name is Allison Quirion, I am a resident in the Town of Hebron, and Founder of Decoding Dyslexia-CT, a parent led grassroots movement, advocating for students with Dyslexia. I am submitting testimony concerning House Bill 5308, An Act Concerning a General Education Multi-tiered System of Instruction and Supports. I respectfully request you consider the following:

I think we need to ask the questions “Where will we be with compliance with this revised SRBI guidance document without accountability and consequences?” and “Without holding districts responsible for compliance violations, what weight or effectiveness will this document have?”

The problem lies with implementation and accountability on the guidelines and as been a problem with the current version. The revision to the original Department of Education’s 2008 version of the department's framework for response to intervention entitled "Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions: Improving Education for All Students" as outlined in HB 5308 is great in content and theory, however, holds no weight. The 2008 version, which was also rich in content, also did not provide accountability and/or consequence and therefore wasn’t implemented with fidelity or as intended in many districts. If districts don’t want to implement the recommendations and guidelines, they don’t have to. There are no consequences for districts should they not implement! I refer to the “Scientific Research-Based Interventions” as the “wait to fail system”. Students with Dyslexia enter SRBI, stay for years and rarely make progress. Students with Dyslexia end up receiving more of what didn’t work in general education and more of it within tiered interventions. Appropriate instruction and progress monitoring within tiered interventions/SRBI continues to provide problems and delays for students with Dyslexia.

I call your attention to Section 1 subsection (4); we should not be recommending, “scientific research-based progress monitoring”, however, it should be a requirement to gauge progress and inform instruction. If you do not know what skills student have mastered, over time, how can you plan for their future academic needs?

Lastly, in Section 3, the Commissioner needs to outline and impose consequences should the recommended guidelines concerning compliance with federal law relating to provision of services for children with disabilities be violated. Although, parents have due process rights many complaints, mediations and due process hearings have been swept under the carpet due to settlements, agreements, gag clauses or withdrawals and districts receive no consequences. We continue to see the same repeated violations without any penalty. We cannot allow districts to continue to make the same violations time after time. By Imposing consequences it will help with accountability and compliance.

If the SRBI guidelines continue to be recommendations and don't hold any weight, districts will continue to operate on what they see as appropriate and NOT what is shown to be best practices.

I hope you reconsider this bill and add accountability, weight and consequences. HB 5308 is a great bill and the New SRBI Guidelines has the potential to be a great document, however, as with the 2008 version holds no weight.