

Re: H.B. 7254, AAC REQUIRING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TO COMPLETE A PROGRAM OF STUDY IN EVIDENCE-BASED STRUCTURED LITERACY INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA.

Dear Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing in my capacity as an attorney practicing in the area of special education law for over thirty years representing children with disabilities and their families in special education matters including Dyslexia and other learning challenges. I have a state-wide law practice and I reside in the Town of Guilford.

I am writing to urge that you and members of the Education Committee to support the enactment of H.B. 7254, **AN ACT REQUIRING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TO COMPLETE A PROGRAM OF STUDY IN EVIDENCE-BASED STRUCTURED LITERACY INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA.**

This proposed legislation will expand upon the General Assembly's previous efforts to support the education of children with Dyslexia, such as the enactment of Public Act 15-97, which expanded the requirements that all specialized staff and not only teachers will have knowledge of Dyslexia. As set forth in my testimony in support of Public Act 15-97 (attached) teachers in the elementary school grades should have the specialized knowledge to recognize a student is struggling with the acquisition of reading and language arts skills as early as possible, rather than passing the student onto the next grade without adequate reading and language arts skills. By requiring special education teachers to have at least a basic understanding of recognizing Dyslexia and the corresponding training and ability to implement scientific based research interventions as soon as possible, then students who are struggling with the acquisition of basic foundational reading skills, will have trained and knowledgeable staff immediately available, along with the provision of evidence based interventions being provided as soon as possible by properly trained staff.

As I had pointed out in my testimony to the General Assembly both this year and last year, there is a plethora of evidence based research available from Yale University and other universities in this state which is available to all educators, clearly demonstrating that with the implementation of aggressive reading interventions, often *before* the third grade, then students who are struggling with acquisition the basic skills for reading or those students who are at risk of not learning to read, will more likely than not, acquire the basic skills and learn to read, and they will not fall further behind in school, eventually leading to poor educational outcomes and worse.

We expect our children to succeed in this highly competitive national and international environment. We should also expect their educators to provide them with the necessary tools and skills that they will need in order to successfully compete in the 21st Century and become independent and productive members of our society. The provisions within H.B. 7254 continues the previous efforts of the General Assembly and builds upon previous legislation to ensure that children with Dyslexia will have the opportunities to succeed in school with educational staff who are properly trained in the latest programs of evidenced based interventions that will be designed to meet each child's unique and individual needs.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Lawrence Berliner

cc. Senator Ted Kennedy  
Representative Sean Scanlon