

Distinguished members of the education committee,

My name is Laura Carl, I reside in Barkhamsted, Connecticut. I am a parent member/special education advocate of Decoding Dyslexia-CT. I have two children, Nicholas and Audriana that have Dyslexia. They both attend The Kildonan School as day students, which is about 1 hour from us. I fully support HB 7254, An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete a Program of Study in Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia.

In the sense of saving time I would encourage you to evaluate the different special education services available in public school that are/can/should be provided to a child diagnosed with Dyslexia. Prior to the Dyslexia identification a child is put through a comprehensive educational evaluation (often times this is only done upon request, however should ALWAYS be done under Child Find). The evaluation consists of several tests in the area of reading, writing, speech and language, ADHD, physical therapy and/or occupational therapy. So throughout a child's testing he/she encounters a Speech and language pathologists, Special Education teacher(s), School psychologists, Occupational & Physical therapists. This may seem like a large list of individuals but they each provide the necessary test results to provide the Dyslexia identification.

It may seem like year after year parents/children/advocates are coming back to request seemingly "new" requests for better supports of students with Dyslexia. I really feel that this is a perfect opportunity to connect with them and have them put aside their child's journey & focus on all the professionals that have access to the process of identification and diagnosis of Dyslexia. The fact that a child can have a Dyslexia diagnosis, and Independent Education Plan "IEP" put in place but make zero progress or minimal growth as it pertains to their benchmark goals/objectives is inexcusable. Currently there are professionals in almost every school district in Connecticut that are not trained in the detection or intervention methods for Dyslexia. For those students with Dyslexia that are the most severe wind up in the hands of the least trained interventionists. These are our Special Education teacher, Speech and language pathologists and Occupational therapists.

I believe that sometimes it's okay for children to struggle when it comes to navigating their way through life's lessons; on the contrary it's extremely scary to watch your child struggle to learn how to read, write and/or solve basic math equations. This education committee has an extraordinary opportunity to take all of Connecticut's future teachers and students into a new era. An opportunity to set the bar high and be a model for other states and collages across the country that will undoubtedly see and hear the change we are making.

I look forward to any questions the committee might have for me.