

My name is Stephanie Carvin, I live in Branford, Connecticut. 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.

I recently took the Dyslexia training module required by the State of Connecticut for students seeking teacher certification. I am a School Library Media Certification/Master of Library and Information Science student at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. I found the module to be so comprehensive that I feel it should be required by all certified teachers currently employed as part of professional development. I fully support HB 7254 because Special Education Teachers need to be properly educated to help those students with Dyslexia.

My daughter is 11 years old and was diagnosed as Dyslexic last year. Since she was not diagnosed until 5th grade, but struggled throughout elementary school while learning to read, she was seen by "Reading Specialists" through the Response to Intervention program. Special Education teachers and those teachers "teaching" reading should be well versed on noticing the signs of Dyslexia and what literacy interventions can help students. For example, if a school district uses a method such as Wilson Reading System to instruct children with Dyslexia, they should have appropriately trained and certified special education staff. Several school districts in the state employ Wilson, but it is implemented by staff who are not Wilson certified.

On a personal note, our daughter's Special Education teacher is certified to teach Wilson Reading System and she receives instruction five days per week for 50 minutes per day. Our daughter is progressing beautifully. We have to wonder, though, why no one suggested to us earlier that her below grade level reading could be indicative of a learning disability. Perhaps this proposed bill could be extended to those "Reading Specialists" or "Response to Intervention" teachers who work directly with non-identified, but below grade level students. Instructors who work directly with children with special learning needs related to literacy, should be trained in a variety of evidence based structured literacy intervention methods to best meet the needs of individual students.

Thank you,

Stephanie Carvin