

**My name is Melissa Murphy and I live in Fairfield, 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. This is my written testimony and I will not be testifying at the hearing.**

Our third daughter, currently a senior at Hopkins School in New Haven is dyslexic. Despite glaring symptoms of dyslexia since in pre-school (i.e. could not recite simple poems, reading level not commensurate to her expected ability, had trouble writing her own name and memorizing her address, etc) she was not identified as at-risk for a learning disability until I requested testing late in her first grade. Our older 2 children were typical readers so I did not have any experience or knowledge of reading disabilities. If it was not for a friend that is a psychologist specializing in diagnosing LD children Kayla probably would have had a VERY different academic career. While in first grade, Kayla was taken out of the classroom and given very remedial reading help by a "reading specialist" para professional. This was a complete waste of time! If her special education teachers had dyslexic training their ability to diagnose and treat would have obviously changed our daughter's very rocky elementary school career.

One in FIVE children have a reading disability! In our own state of Connecticut at Yale New Haven Hospital, we have internationally acclaimed forefront researchers in the field of reading disabilities and dyslexia, Drs. Shaywitz', though we lag terribly behind in knowing how to teach dyslexic children. Teachers need to be taught how to teach dyslexic children how to read and at the very least to identify them earlier to guarantee them earlier success. If special education teachers are NOT taught how to identify or teach a child with a reading disability than how can they do their job???

Special education teachers REQUIRE these skills to most effectively do their jobs. Too many children have and will continue to fall through the cracks if our teachers are not trained and taught HOW TO teach. Learning evidence based programs increases the future teacher's skill set to reach the most amount of students!

PLEASE do the right thing and PASS HB 7254

The time was yesterday to teach our teachers 20 years of known research the skills to reach all students.

Melissa Murphy