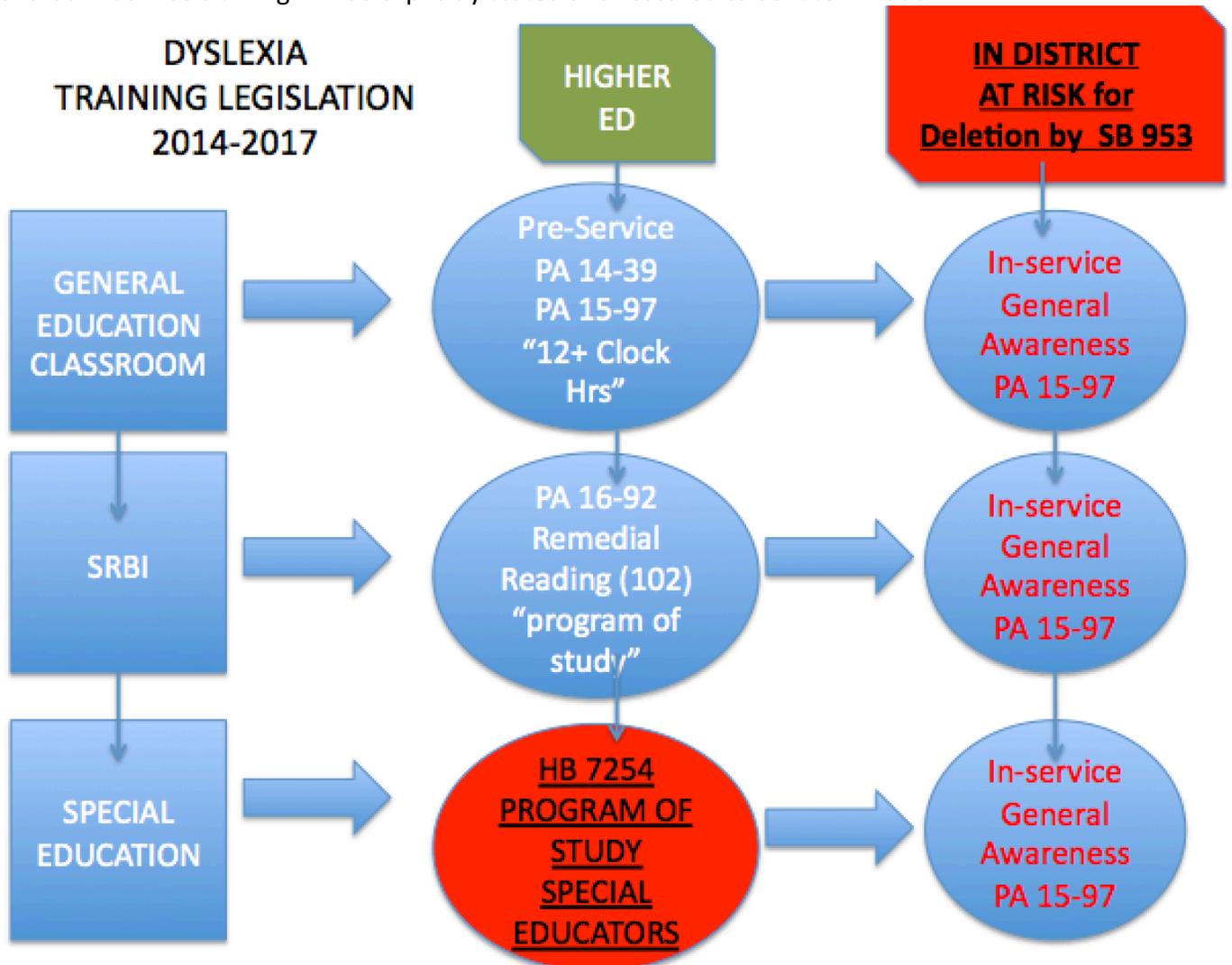


March 16, 2017

My name is Allison Quirion, Founder of Decoding Dyslexia-CT and a parent of a dyslexic child. I fully support House Bill 7254, An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete a Program of Study in Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia.

I want to commend and thank this Committee for its continued support of students with Dyslexia. This Committee has proven the true meaning of democracy by listening to and considering the voices of Connecticut residents. We are truly grateful!

I am support of HB 7254 as it completes training in Higher Education in Dyslexia. Dyslexic students within Special Education are some of our most vulnerable students and require an educator with appropriate training in Dyslexia. HB 7254 will provide special education teachers with a program of study in Dyslexia before they reach our school districts, which is critical need! As you can see from the flowchart below, HB 7254 will complete pre-service educator training in Dyslexia within all levels of education: General, SRBI & Special Education. We are hopeful that in-service training will be explicitly stated and restored to Senate Bill 953.



Created by Decoding Dyslexia-CT 3/9/17

WHY WE NEED programming for Special Education Teachers who teach students with Dyslexia IN INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

CT FEDERAL DATA:

1. The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSEP) has implemented, in addition to compliance requirements of Part B in IDEA, a Results Driven Accountability (RDA) matrix for States. Under OSEP's new RDA accountability framework, it brings into focus the outcomes for children with disabilities while balancing compliance requirements.
 - a. 2014 – CT Results Performance Total 65% (13/20) - Needs assistance
 - b. 2015 – CT Results Performance Total 92% (22/24) - Meets Requirements
 - c. 2016 – CT Results Performance Total 71% (17/24) - Meets Requirements, even though **Reading Assessment Element Points decreased** from 10 Points earned in 2015 to 7 Points earned in 2016.
2. **CT NAEP scores shows a decline in scores** for Children with Disabilities in the 4th grade for Basic Reading from 34% down to 27% and Proficient Reading from 10% down to 8%. Although 8th graders show a slight increase:
3. CT State Department of Education (CSDE), as part of it's Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan/State Identified Measurable Result for Children with Disabilities (**SSIP/SIMR) is to increase the reading performance of all 3rd grade students with disabilities (SWD)**) statewide, as measured by Connecticut's approved ESEA Flexibility Performance Index.
 - a. Children with Disabilities (CWD) perform poorest on reading vs. all other subject areas.
 - b. CWD are performing at least 10 index points lower than all other historically underperforming subgroups except English Language Learners (ELL)
 - c. CSDE performed a review to identify CT's SIMR and it was determined that there was no one factor that could be contributed to the reading failure of children with disabilities. Therefore, the SIMR encompasses ALL 3rd grade SWD.

CONNECTICUT DATA:

1. **Project ReadConn: (Taken from CT SSIP April, 2016)**
 - a. "Informed by the results of the Foundations of Reading Survey, the CSDE is planning a multi-year PL series. Its purpose is to support teachers in their understanding and implementation of the foundational components of effective, comprehensive reading instruction, regardless of the instructional approach used by districts and schools. This series will also build the capacity of Connecticut's K-3 teachers to support the planning and delivery of specific intervention strategies (i.e., Core instructional program supports for ELs, SWDs [**including those with dyslexia**], and students at risk for reading difficulties) to accelerate learning of all students." Emphasis added.
2. CSDE also has a collection of special education/SSIP focused activities:
 - a. **Dyslexia Initiative (Taken From CT SSIP April, 2016)**
 - i. "The CSDE understands that each child has a different profile of strengths and areas of concern, and that there is no one best method of instruction or intervention for each child with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)/Dyslexia. However, there is a great deal of evidence-based research supporting structured language programs as successful approaches for working with students with SLD/Dyslexia. These instructional approaches differ in specific techniques and materials, but they all include structured, explicit, systematic, cumulative instruction designed to promote understanding, memory, recall, and use of spoken and written language. They also have multiple components that focus on such areas of instruction as phonological skills, phonics and word analysis, spelling, word

recognition and oral reading fluency, grammar and syntax, text comprehension, writing, and study skills.

- ii. In addition to the increased collaboration across divisions in the agency, the CSDE has recently improved its infrastructure by creating an SLD/Dyslexia Workgroup. The group's charge is to compile EBPs for the screening, identification, and instruction of students with SLD/Dyslexia. Furthermore, collaboration between the CSDE and one of its external partners, the State Education Resource Center (SERC) has resulted in numerous resources/PL opportunities related to using EBPs targeted specifically to students SLD/Dyslexia, including the following:

- An SLD/Dyslexia Assessment Resource Guide

IEP Team (in Connecticut a "Planning and Placement Team" [PPT]) members will find this resource useful in planning a comprehensive evaluation for students suspected of having SLD/Dyslexia. The guide merges the aforementioned Research-based K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments (developed by the Academic Office) with tests and subtests useful in assessing the component skills of reading, as well as speaking, listening, spelling, and written language.

- Increasing Awareness of SLD/Dyslexia

An archived online webinar in which Connecticut leaders in SLD/Dyslexia review Connecticut's definition of dyslexia, explore issues surrounding the identification of students, and present EBPs for structured literacy instruction and intervention.

- Identifying Students with SLD/Dyslexia: An Online Course

This free, self-paced Web-based course offers an early elementary case-study comprehensive approach to understanding reading difficulties and SLD/Dyslexia. Participants are guided through a school team's process for a collaborative decision-making system through SRBI, including examining universal screening data, designing and implementing tiers of reading instruction, monitoring student progress via trend line analysis, and engaging families. The special education eligibility determination process includes designing a comprehensive evaluation and applying Connecticut's 2010 Guidelines for Identifying Children with Learning Disabilities.

- SLD/Dyslexia: Connecting Research to Practice in Connecticut

This advanced-level PL opportunity is a comprehensive series of Web-based learning modules that address the foundations of reading acquisition and appropriate identification of SLD/Dyslexia. Connecticut content experts and educational leaders will present current research on reading and language development, subtypes of reading difficulties, implementation of core literacy instruction, assessment of SLD/Dyslexia, and the components of structured literacy instruction, including spelling and written expression. Each module will be followed by a reflection segment and professional dialogue led by a literacy expert and a district professional to guide educators through the process of examining and altering current SLD/Dyslexia practices.

- b. Another of the CSDE's external partners, the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) has also developed webinars designed to provide information on identification, research-based intervention, and appropriate instruction for individuals with reading difficulties and SLD/Dyslexia.

These include a three-day introductory workshop on the Wilson Reading System[®]; a two-day workshop on dyslexia, reading disorders and SLD; and a summer institute on structured teaching methods to address language and literacy disorders."

3. CK3LI: (Taken from SSIP, April 2015)

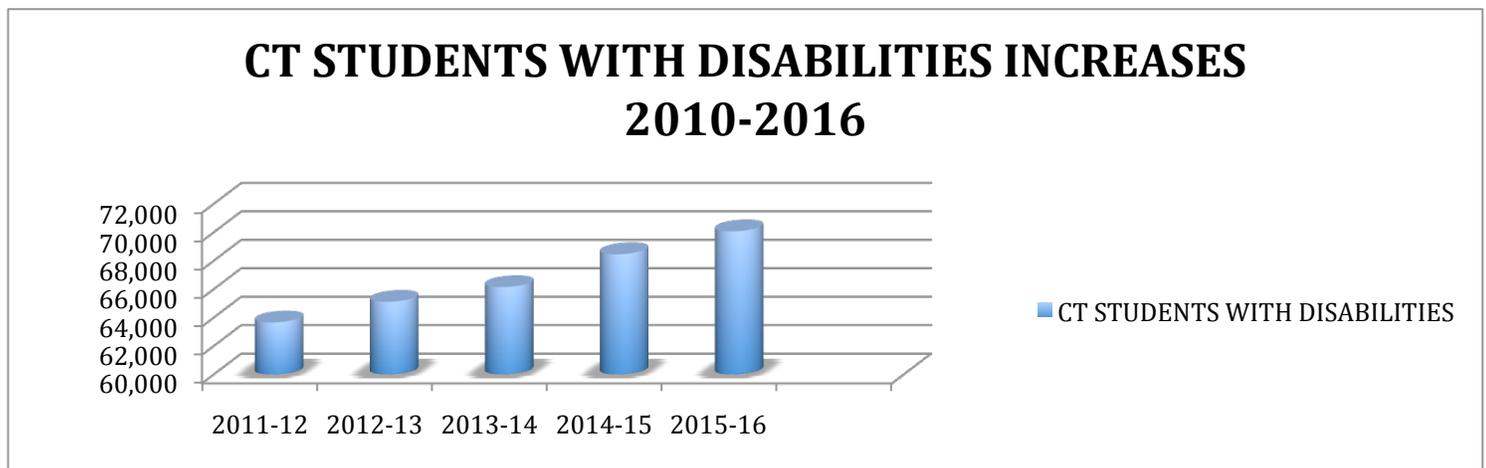
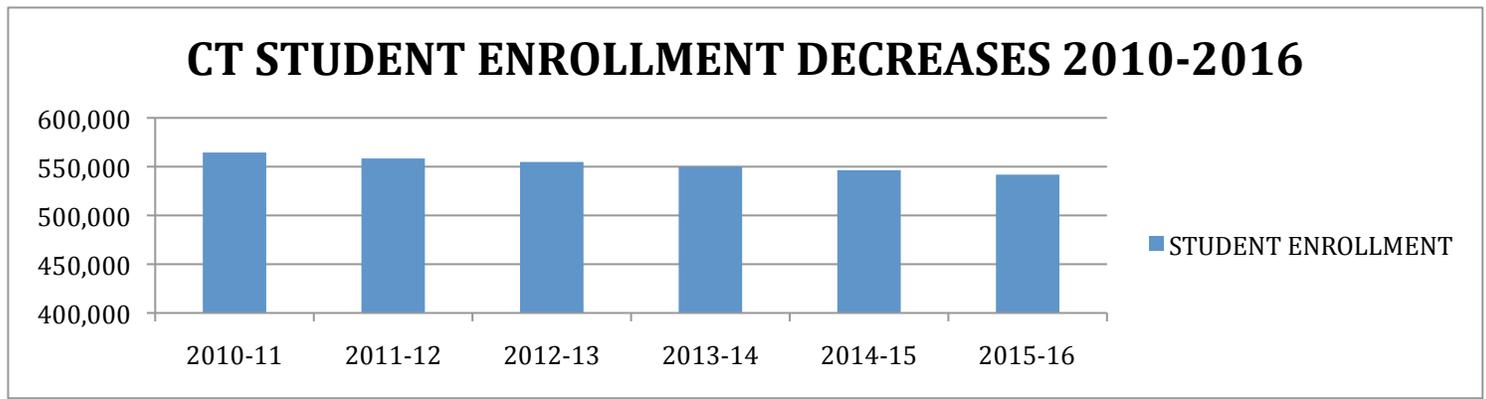
- a. "The priority goals of CK3LI are:

- i. Implement leadership routines and systems necessary to institute evidence-based literacy practices within a tiered instructional model and build capacity to ensure sustainability of the school-wide literacy model.
- ii. Collaborate with schools to implement research-based programs within a multi-tiered system of support framework.

- iii. Create a consistent knowledge base and common language among teachers that is based on the overview of reading, current reading research and evidence-based practices in reading and writing instruction.
- iv. Collaborate with the school leaders to establish a framework and process for using scientifically-based dynamic assessments to make instructional decisions at the district, school, grade, classroom and individual student levels.
- v. Develop and implement a school-home/family model for student support.”

NOTE: READCONN AND CK3LI CT initiatives are looking to address teacher knowledge in the area of literacy at the District level. If we do not address teacher preparation within IHE in the area of literacy, we will continue to spend MILLIONS of dollars to train teachers at the District level, because higher education has failed to do so. This must be a two-prong approach (1) district initiatives and (2) quality higher education teacher preparation to see any type of systemic sustainable changes in the area of literacy. See attached chart on cost.

4. The number of students in Connecticut continues to decrease, while the number of students with Disabilities continues to increase:



SLD REMAINS THE LARGEST DISABILITY CATEGORY IN CT AND INCREASES IN SIZE EACH YEAR

When looking at children with disabilities in Connecticut, Specific Learning Disabilities is the largest disability category, which makes up 36% of the total disabilities (CWDs IDEA ages 6-21 state %), of that 80% are Dyslexic. (Approximately 80% of people with learning disabilities have dyslexia. *Shaywitz, N. Eng. J. Med. (1988)*)

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT’S POSITION:

- President Obama, on February 18, 2016, signed the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia (READ) Act! This act supports important research to further our understanding of dyslexia, including better methods for early detection and teacher training.

- The *READ Act* requires the president's annual budget request to Congress to include the Research in Disabilities Education program of the National Science Foundation (NSF). As amended, the bill requires the NSF to devote at least \$2.5 million annually to dyslexia research, which would focus on best practices in the following areas:
 - Early identification of children and students with dyslexia
 - Professional development about dyslexia for teachers and administrators
 - Curricula development and evidence-based educational tools for children with dyslexia
- President Obama, on December 10, 2015, signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), officially replacing No Child Left Behind. Included in the law, among other things, is a focus on improving literacy instruction through two initiatives that provide (a) evidence based strategies for educators and parents to effectively teach reading and writing to all students including those with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, and (b) resources to identify and intervene when students are struggling.
- U.S. Department of Education issued guidance on October 23, 2015, wherein it clarifies that "that there is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations, or IEP documents.

SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE:

Failure is expensive. Interventions are affordable. Average annual cost per CT inmate \$34,697 (Plus initial investment of education) vs. Average annual cost per CT pupil \$17,500.

- a. While the prevalence of dyslexia in the general population is about 20%, the prevalence of dyslexia in prisons is more than twice that or 48%. *Scientific study conducted by Dr. K.C. Moody and colleagues at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Conjunction with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (published 2000).*
- b. Of youth incarcerated 38.6% have a SLD. The high rates of incarceration in this population should be a wakeup call to public schools that a disproportionate number of youth with educational disabilities are in juvenile corrections. *Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections: A National Survey. By Maggie Magee Quinn, et al.*
- c. Domus a non profit that operates 3 charter schools in CT servicing primarily students who are at risk, state many of the 20% of Domus students identified as needing special education were never considered for special education in public schools. *CT Health Investigates Team. Prisons Try to Span Learning Gap. Gail Braccidiferro MacDonald. 8/4/11*

CONCLUSION:

I truly believe the work that has transpired over the past few years regarding Dyslexia will change the trajectory and outcomes for students with Dyslexia! To do this, however, we must ensure that the Dyslexia legislation is implemented as intended and with fidelity and assign accountability measures.

I would also like to recognize the Connecticut State Department of Education and SERC for their initiatives. Regarding SLD/Dyslexia, CSDE and SERC have provided numerous training/professional development opportunities for school district staff, developed guidance documentation, webinars, resources, and have been available to parents and caregivers to help answer questions.

I thank you for supporting our students with Dyslexia and ALL your efforts on behalf of all students in Connecticut.

Forever grateful,
Allison Quirion, Founder, Decoding Dyslexia-CT

REFERENCE INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF ALLISON QUIRION, DDCT'S TESTIMONY
IN FAVOR OF HB 7254:

OSEP Documents, State Performance Plan (SPP), Annual Performance Report (APR) & State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIP): <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322094>
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/special/ct_partb_ssip_phase2_report.pdf
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/special/ct_partb_ssip_phase1_report.pdf
http://www.ctserc.org/bts15/am/CSDE%20Presentations/Back%20to%20School_AM_SSIIP%20%20Data%20Updates.pdf

CT 2015 & 2016 Part B RDA

Although CT "Meets Requirements" for 2016, Reading Assessment Elements/Results & RDA show a decline.



CT NAEP:

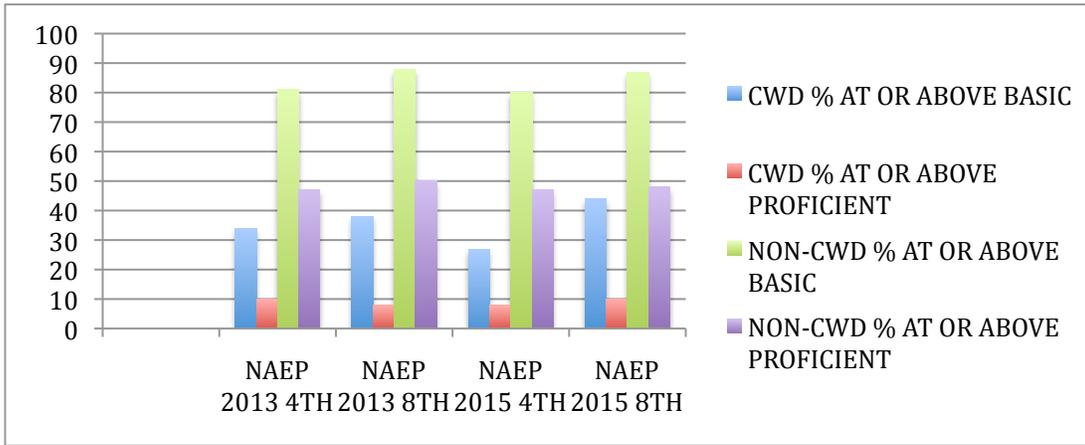
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&q=334514>
<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

CT NAEP SCORES 2013 & 2015

Grade and Subject	Student Group	% at/above Basic	% at/above Proficient
NAEP 2013: Grade 4 Reading	CWD (excludes 504)	34	10
NAEP 2013: Grade 4 Reading	Non-CWD	81	47
NAEP 2013: Grade 8 Reading	CWD (excludes 504)	38	8
NAEP 2013: Grade 8 Reading	Non-CWD	88	50

Grade and Subject	Student Group	% at/above Basic	% at/above Proficient
NAEP 2015: Grade 4 Reading	CWD (excludes 504)	27	8
NAEP 2015: Grade 4 Reading	Non-CWD	80	47
NAEP 2015: Grade 8 Reading	CWD (excludes 504)	44	10
NAEP 2015: Grade 8 Reading	Non-CWD	87	48

CT NAEP SCORES 2013 & 2015



PROJECT READCONN:

[https://ctcorestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ReadConn Frequently Asked Questions.pdf](https://ctcorestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ReadConn_Frequently_Asked_Questions.pdf)

CK3LI:

<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3131588/CK3LI-CT-Kindergarten-Grade3-Literacy-Initiative.pdf>

<http://hillforliteracy.org/results/featured-clients/ck3li/>

STATE OF CONNECTICUT/LITERACY INITIATIVES & COST

2012-2015 6.7 MILLION DOLLARS- CK3LI

2016 IN EXCESS OF 4.5 MILLION DOLLARS-CK3LI, READCONN, SSIP/SIMR & OTHER INITIATIVES

WITH ADDITIONAL MONIES TO BE EARMARKED IN 2017

<u>INITIATIVE</u>	<u>PARTNERS AND SOURCE INFORMATION</u>	<u>FUNDED BY</u>	<u>TERM</u>	<u>COST</u>
CK3LI: Connecticut K-3 Literacy Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEAG School of Education at UCONN • Literacy How • Hill for Literacy • CT State Department of Education • Commission on Children, Women & Seniors • Black and Puerto Rican Caucus <p>Background: CK3LI announced in August 2012 by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy as part of the State’s Education Reform to improve overall outcomes, was developed by the General Assembly’s Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. The initiative is based on research gathered in 2011 through a study funded by the Grossman Family Foundation promoting best practices in early literacy and closing the academic achievement gaps. Literacy How conducted the study in 15 Connecticut schools that showed the importance of proper reading assessment tools, timely interventions, well trained teachers and coaches, and school leaders who make reading a priority. The Commission on Children also participated, teaching parents how children learn to read and what they can do at home and in school to bolster reading.</p> <p>http://education.uconn.edu/person/michael-coyne/ Michael Coyne, NEAG School at UCONN</p>	<p>CT State Department of Education</p> <p>2016 2.5 million</p>	2012-2016	9,200,000

<p>ReadConn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CT State Department of Education Public Consulting Group (PCG) LearnZillion <p>Background: Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-145r, the CSDE has implemented the reading survey requirement for K-3 teachers. Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-148b, the CSDE must provide professional learning aligned to the reading survey subareas and objectives in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-145r.</p> <p>INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM RFP http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/rfp/rfp15sde000_3_k_3_teacher_reading_professional_learning.pdf http://ctcorestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ReadConn_Frequently_Asked_Questions.pdf</p>	<p>CT State Department of Education</p>	<p>2016 (up to five years)</p>	<p>2,000,000 x 5 Years** **The scope of services must be provided over a five-year period, up to \$2,000,000 per annum pending available funding.</p>
<p>CT SSIP/SIMR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CT Bureau of Special Education CSDE has been using the Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC) as its primary stakeholder group for input <p>Background: STATE IDENTIFIED MEASURABLE RESULT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES (SIMR): Revised April 2016</p> <p>Increase the reading performance of all 3rd grade students with disabilities statewide, as measured by Connecticut's English/Language Arts (ELA) Performance Index</p> <p>http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/special/ct_partb_ssip_phase2_report.pdf</p> <p><u>ADDITIONAL EFFORTS:</u> PD Early Literacy SPDG efforts in literacy support to districts CPAC efforts in early Literacy.</p>	<p>*CT Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education</p> <p>*IDEA Funding</p> <p>Email from Bureau Chief: "no particular funds earmarked for SIMR or SSIP, we will be utilizing IDEA professional development funds through SERC get the work done."</p>	<p>2015-2016</p>	<p>???????</p>

CT DATA REGARDING STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND DISABILITIES NUMBERS: (Part B Displays)

- <https://osep.grads360.org/#program/idea-part-b-profiles>
- <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322094>
- <https://osep.grads360.org/services/PDCService.svc/GetPDCDocumentFile?fileId=20159>

FEDERAL GUIDANCE:

- U.S. Department of Education guidance letter issued on October 23, 2015
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf>
- Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia (READ), signed by President Obama, on February 18, 2016
<https://www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr3033/BILLS-114hr3033eas.pdf>
- ESSA Gives States More Control, Targets Needs of Struggling Readings, article from IDA, January 2016
<https://eida.org/essa-gives-states-more-control-targets-needs-of-struggling-readers/>