

Jeffrey Ruggiero
Eagle Hill Southport School
214 Main St.
Southport, CT 06890

March 15, 2017

Re: HB 7254

To the Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Jeff Ruggiero, 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. I submit my testimony as an educator who has worked with dyslexic children for the past 26 years.

As a teacher and administrator at Eagle Hill Southport School, a school for children with dyslexia, I am reminded DAILY of the importance of proper training in evidenced-based literacy interventions, when working with our students. I have observed struggling readers grow into independent learners with the aid of high-quality instruction. All of our teachers receive training the Orton-Gillingham approach, as well as on-going mentoring, support and professional development. This type of evidence-based literacy instruction is crucial for our children. It has made all of the difference at our school.

I am in full support of the call of HB 7254 for a "Program of Study" in Dyslexia for special educators within Institutes of Higher Education; for teacher preparation for special educators with evidence-based structured literacy, along with a requirement for supervised practicum hours, which is critical; and, to allow for special education teachers to receive Dyslexia training as pre-service teacher candidates, before they graduate and reach our local school districts. Those steps are essential to meet the critical needs of students with Dyslexia and would benefit all learners in the State of Connecticut.

It is with a great sense of urgency that I respectfully request that you pass HB 7254. It is only through the use of the evidence-based approaches coupled with the right training and practicum experiences that we will see changes in reading outcomes in our schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Ruggiero
Director of Education
Eagle Hill Southport School