

My name is Ellie Spangler, and I live in Westport, 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 am a parent of a fifth grade student in the Westport Public Schools who has been classified as Dyslexic this past year. I can't tell you how heartbreaking and difficult the journey has been to get in place the appropriate Orton-Gillingham instruction for him in the public school setting. Despite testing done last year by our school that supported a dyslexic profile, we experienced much pushback from our child's team classifying him as such. And once the Dyslexic classification was finally agreed to, it was very difficult to get the appropriate goals and objectives built into his IEP document.

Although we have caring and well meaning teachers and staff, it is critical to have Special Education teachers understand what Dyslexia is and also trained in delivering evidence based instruction to this student population. We can not expect these teachers to be able to provide meaningful instruction for a learning difference they do not fully understand. Statistics now support that 1 in 5 have some degree of dyslexia. Please be part of the solution to close this learning gap so that more children get the help they need.

This is my written testimony and I will not be testifying at the hearing.

Sincerely,

Ellie Spangler
Westport, CT