

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5372

AN ACT CONCERNING DYSLEXIA INSTRUCTION OFFERED IN TEACHER

Title: PREPARATION PROGRAMS.

Vote Date: 3/15/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Education

PH Date: 3/8/2018

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following Joint Favorable Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

State Senator Catherine A. Osten, 19th Senatorial District.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Many teachers are not trained to recognize dyslexia and as a result, children can go undiagnosed for several years and fall behind in school.

Substitute language:

- Lines 35 and 38: replaces the requirement that the program of structured literacy instruction be accredited by the International Dyslexia Association with the requirement that it simply be "accredited"

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Rachael Gabriel, PhD, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut.](#)

Dr. Gabriel has concerns about the financial, academic, and organizational impact of this bill. She stated that it will cost UConn and the State money and other resources that neither can afford at this time and it duplicates requirements for initial teacher licensure.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[State Senator Catherine A. Osten, 19th Senatorial District.](#)

Senator Osten testified: "By establishing this council within the Office of Higher Education, we can better coordinate and improve our State's efforts to prepare our future teachers with the skills needed to better educate our children, especially those diagnosed with dyslexia."

[State Representative Noreen S. Kokoruda, 101st Assembly District.](#)

Representative Kokoruda testified: "This bill will require teachers to be educated in the signs and symptoms of dyslexia as well as be trained in specific, research-based, interventions are critical. . . . This bill not only helps the teacher to be properly trained but identifies the symptoms of dyslexia early so that the instruction required is not necessarily needed

throughout the child's schooling life. This in turn will save the school district money in the long run."

[Jule McCombes-Tolis, Ph.D., Program Director, Reading and Language Development, Fairfield University.](#)

Dr. McCombes-Tolis testified: "Having an agreed upon definition of Structured Literacy, and a set of accompanying educator preparation standards, will help to ensure that higher education programs are producing teachers who share a minimum standard of competency related to Structured Literacy, for both knowledge and skill.

". . . most importantly however, proposed House Bill 5372 will help to ensure that *every child* has the benefit of a teacher who is adequately prepared to design and deliver reading instruction that reflects a Structured Literacy approach."

[Jaclyn Cincotta, M.A., SYC, Adjunct Professor, Practicum Supervisor, Fairfield University, Second Grade Teacher, West Haven Board of Education.](#)

Ms. Cincotta submitted written testimony: "Coursework in higher education should help candidates understand how to recognize when a student may be at risk for reading failure, what Structured Literacy is, and how to apply the principals and practices of structured literacy to help all readers."

[Barbara Connery, Instructional Coach, Regional School District 6.](#)

Ms. Connery submitted written testimony: "This legislation is essential to meet the needs of students with dyslexia while strengthening the teaching practices for all students."

[Yvette Goorevitch, Chief Specialized Learning and Student Support Services, Norwalk Public Schools](#)

Ms. Goorevitch submitted written testimony that the Norwich School System collaborated with Fairfield University to develop the first public school district dyslexia clinic to provide in-service training to special education teachers, speech pathologists and psychologists in research based assessment and intervention strategies.

[Stacey Heiligenthaler, Assistant Director of Specialized Learning and Student Services in the Norwalk Public Schools](#)

Ms. Heiligenthaler submitted written testimony: " Setting a minimum standard of knowledge and practice related to structured literacy within institutes of higher education, developing accountability models for structured literacy instruction within institutes of higher Education, and ensuring appropriate teaching credentials for faculty teaching structured literacy and supervising practicum is an important step forward to ensure that students with dyslexia receive appropriate instruction in the public schools."

[Fifty-four more people testified or submitted testimony in support of this bill.](#)

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

See Response from Administration/Agency.

Reported by: Jeanie Phillips, Clerk

Date: March 19, 2018