

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5349

As Passed Senate, March 11, 2005

Title: An act relating to reading instruction.

Brief Description: Creating a dyslexia reading instruction pilot program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kastama, McAuliffe, Weinstein, Haugen, Berkey, Rasmussen, Hargrove, Kohl-Welles, Franklin, Regala, Shin, Fraser, Jacobsen and Kline).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/2/05, 2/16/05 [DPS-WM].

Ways & Means: 3/4/05, 3/7/05 [DPS(EKHE), w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 3/11/05, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5349 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Carrell, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Mulliken, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Brian Jeffries (786-7422)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5349 as recommended by Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Fairley.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability, which results in students having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties in other language skills such as spelling, writing, and speaking. It is referred to as a learning disability because dyslexia can have an adverse affect on student academic performance.

The International Dyslexia Association has estimated that 15 to 20 percent of the population has a reading disability and that 85 percent of those with a reading disability have dyslexia. Under current state administrative rules, a student with dyslexia may qualify for special education services as a student with a specific learning disability. To qualify for special education services, the student's dyslexia must adversely affect the student's educational performance and cannot be addressed exclusively through general education environment with or without individual accommodations.

Summary of Bill: The dyslexia reading instruction pilot program is created. The purpose of the program is to improve reading instructional methods for students with dyslexia, with additional focus on writing and speaking skills and the early identification of students with dyslexia. The Superintendent of Public Instruction must administer the program, to the extent funds are available, in up to five school districts selected from various regions of the state (including at a minimum northwest, southwest, and eastern regions) to participate in the program based upon research-supported assessment and treatment. The Superintendent of Public Instruction must conduct an evaluation of the pilot program, and based upon the evaluation, provide information to educators throughout the state on effective practices in helping students with dyslexia. The pilot program expires June 30, 2010.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, to the extent funds are available, must conduct a study on the effectiveness of the identification of students with dyslexia and the effectiveness of the educational services received by students with dyslexia. The study must be completed by June 30, 2010.

The dyslexia reading pilot program will be known as The Lorraine Wojahn Dyslexia Pilot Reading Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2005.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Reading is a foundational skill for all students. Dyslexia has an especially adverse affect on student success, not only in reading and other academic content but in the overall success of students. Dyslexia crosses genders and cultural. Dyslexia, when not addressed by the school, can have a negative affect on student behavior, school completion, interpersonal relationships, motivation, attitude toward school, and self-esteem. Dyslexia can be addressed and there are a number of effective practices that have been researched and identified. Unfortunately, too few schools and too few educators are aware of and/or employ these practices. Testing for dyslexia is inadequate. Students with dyslexia are often unidentified and their needs are not addressed.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Jim Kastama, prime sponsor; Enid Duncan, parent; Edward Duncan, parent; Anthony Duncan, student; Angelica Duncan, student; Cathy Price, parent;

Chris Price, parent; Joan Santucci, parent; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition.