

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6016

As Amended by House, April 13, 2009

Title: An act relating to training for educators to identify students with dyslexia.

Brief Description: Regarding educator training to enhance skills of students with dyslexia.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Benton, McAuliffe, Swecker, McDermott, Roach, Delvin, Stevens, Honeyford, McCaslin, Morton and Shin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/19/09, 2/25/09 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/12/09, 48-0.

Passed House: 4/13/09, 98-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6016 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair, Early Learning; Oemig, Vice Chair, K-12; King, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Hobbs, Holmquist, Jarrett, McDermott, Roach and Tom.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Since 2005 the Legislature has provided funding for up to five school districts to pilot a research-based, multi-sensory literacy intervention for students with dyslexia. Participating schools must have a three-tiered reading structure in place, provide professional development training to teachers, assess students, and collect and maintain data on student progress. In December 2008 the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) issued a report to the Legislature regarding the dyslexia pilots. The report found that 40 percent of the students who received services through the pilots met standard on the reading component of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), whereas only 17 percent of the same students had met standards on the reading WASL in 2007. The report included recommendations to provide statewide support and to develop a dyslexia handbook.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Legislature intends to sustain the work of the dyslexia pilot projects and expand the implementation to a level of statewide support.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Within available resources, OSPI must develop an educator training program to enhance the academic skills of students with dyslexia by implementing the findings of the dyslexia pilot program. The training program must be posted on the website of OSPI and may be regionally delivered through the Educational Service Districts (ESDs). Beginning September 1, 2009, the ESDs must annually report to OSPI the number of individuals who participate in the ESD training. OSPI must report that information to the legislative education committees.

OSPI must develop a dyslexia handbook to be used as a reference for teachers and parents of students with dyslexia. The handbook must be modeled after other state dyslexia handbooks. OSPI must post the handbook on its website.

When developing the educator training program and the handbook, OSPI must consult the school districts that participated in the dyslexia pilot programs and an international non-profit organization dedicated to supporting identification of and instruction for individuals with dyslexia. The ESDs may seek assistance from the international non-profit organization to deliver the training.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 16, 2009.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Many people are aware that dyslexia exists and that it affects learning, but most do not realize how widespread it is. Too many of our children are labeled learning disabled when they are dyslexic. We know how to teach students to be academically successful with dyslexia. Our educators must be trained to correctly identify students with dyslexia and to provide specialized help. It is time to expand the successful results of the pilot program through the ESDs because all our school districts should have the opportunity to have their educators trained and a handbook for reference.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Benton, prime sponsor; Cheryl Anthony, International Dyslexia Association; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; Cheryl Young, OSPI.

House Amendment(s): The term "students who are dyslexic" is changed to the more respectful term "students with dyslexia."