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H.406

Introduced by Representative Leffler of Enosburgh (By Request)

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; dyslexia; screening and instruction

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require that students in public schools be screened for dyslexia and that teachers receive training concerning dyslexia.

An act relating to screening students for dyslexia and ensuring teachers receive training concerning dyslexia

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. chapter 1, subchapter 10 is added to read:

Subchapter 10. Dyslexia

§ 141. DYSLEXIA SCREENING AND INSTRUCTION OF STUDENTS

WITH DYSLEXIA

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin, characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, that typically results from a deficit in the phonological component of language and that is often unexpected in

1 relation to other cognitive abilities. Secondary consequences may include  
2 problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can  
3 impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

4 (2) “Research-based methods of instruction” means evidence-based,  
5 specialized reading, writing, and spelling instruction that is multisensory in  
6 nature, equipping students to simultaneously use multiple senses, including  
7 vision, hearing, touch, and movement. Research-based methods of instruction  
8 employ direct instruction of systematic and cumulative objectives, with the  
9 sequence beginning with the student’s easiest and most basic elements and  
10 progressing methodically to more difficult material, as indicated by systematic  
11 progress monitoring. Each step is built on those steps previously learned.  
12 Components of research-based methods of instruction include instruction  
13 targeting phonological awareness, sound symbol association, syllable structure,  
14 morphology, syntax, and semantics.

15 (b) Early screening for dyslexia.

16 (1) Students enrolled in public schools in Vermont shall be screened for  
17 dyslexia:

18 (A) during the fall semester of kindergarten; and

19 (B) during the spring semester of kindergarten, first grade, and  
20 second grade if a student does not meet the expected literacy standards for  
21 those grades.

1           (2) In addition to these screening times, a student shall be screened for  
2           dyslexia upon the request of the student's parent, guardian, teacher, counselor,  
3           or school psychologist to determine if the student qualifies for the school's  
4           multiple tiered system of supports or response to intervention services.

5           (c) Students identified with dyslexia. If a student is identified as having  
6           dyslexia by the school, the school shall:

7                   (1) notify the student's parent or guardian;

8                   (2) provide the student's parent or guardian with information and  
9           resource material about dyslexia;

10                   (3) provide the student with appropriate research-based methods of  
11           instruction; and

12                   (4) monitor the student's progress.

13           Sec. 2. TEACHER PREPARATION AND LICENSURE; DYSLEXIA AND  
14           READING DIFFICULTIES

15           The Vermont Standards Board of Professional Educators shall amend its  
16           rules governing teacher licensure to require every person seeking initial  
17           licensure or renewal of a license to complete awareness training, provided by  
18           the Agency of Education, on the indicators of dyslexia and the research-based  
19           methods of instruction, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 141, and accommodations for  
20           dyslexia. The Agency of Education, in collaboration with the Vermont Higher  
21           Education Council, shall ensure that all teacher preparation programs offered at

1 postsecondary education institutions in Vermont provide information to their  
2 students in the fields of education on the identification of students at risk for  
3 learning disabilities, including dyslexia, other language-based learning  
4 disabilities, and attention deficit disorder.

5 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATES

6 Sec. 2 and this section shall take effect on passage, Sec. 1 shall take effect  
7 July 1, 2020.