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

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

(b) Early screening for dyslexia.

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

(A) during the fall semester of kindergarten; and

(B) during the spring semester of kindergarten, first grade, and second grade if a student does not meet the expected literacy standards for those grades.
In addition to these screening times, a student shall be screened for dyslexia upon the request of the student’s parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, or school psychologist to determine if the student qualifies for the school’s multiple tiered system of supports or response to intervention services.

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

(1) notify the student’s parent or guardian;

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

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

(4) monitor the student’s progress.

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

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

students in the fields of education on the identification of students at risk for

learning disabilities, including dyslexia, other language-based learning
disabilities, and attention deficit disorder.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATES

Sec. 2 and this section shall take effect on passage. Sec. 1 shall take effect

July 1, 2020.