Introduced by Representative Leffler of Enosburgh

Reflected to Committee on Date:

Subject: Education; dyslexia; screening

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

An act relating to screening students for 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

(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 markers of dyslexia.

(1) Students enrolled in public schools in Vermont shall be screened for markers of 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.

(2) In addition to these screening times, a student shall be screened for markers of 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

(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. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.