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S.75

Introduced by Senators Terenzini, Benning, Brock, Collamore, Cummings,
Hooker, Lyons, McCormack, Parent, Pollina and White

Referred 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 markers of 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

1 problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can
2 impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

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

14 (b) Early screening for markers of dyslexia.

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

17 (A) during the fall semester of kindergarten and first grade; and

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

1 (2) In addition to these screening times, a student at any grade level,
2 kindergarten through grade 12, shall be screened for markers of dyslexia upon
3 the request of the student’s parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, or school
4 psychologist to determine if the student would benefit from intervention within
5 the school’s multi-tiered system of supports.

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

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

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

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

13 (4) monitor and, subject to State and federal privacy laws, report the
14 student’s progress to the parent or guardian and all involved parties.

15 (d) Notification.

16 (1) Each public school shall, at the beginning of each school year, notify
17 all parents or guardians of enrolled students of, if relevant to the grades offered
18 by the school:

19 (A) the required screenings and the screenings that may be requested
20 under subsection (b) of this section, and

1 (B) the school’s duties to address dyslexia under subsection (c) of
2 this section.

3 (2) The notification required under this subsection may be included with
4 other information provided by the school to parents or guardians and students
5 at the beginning of the school year.

6 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

7 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.