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## H-0101 Testimony

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I am speaking to today to support H.101 to provide grant funding to build *systems-driven, sustainable literacy support for all students with measurable outcomes.*

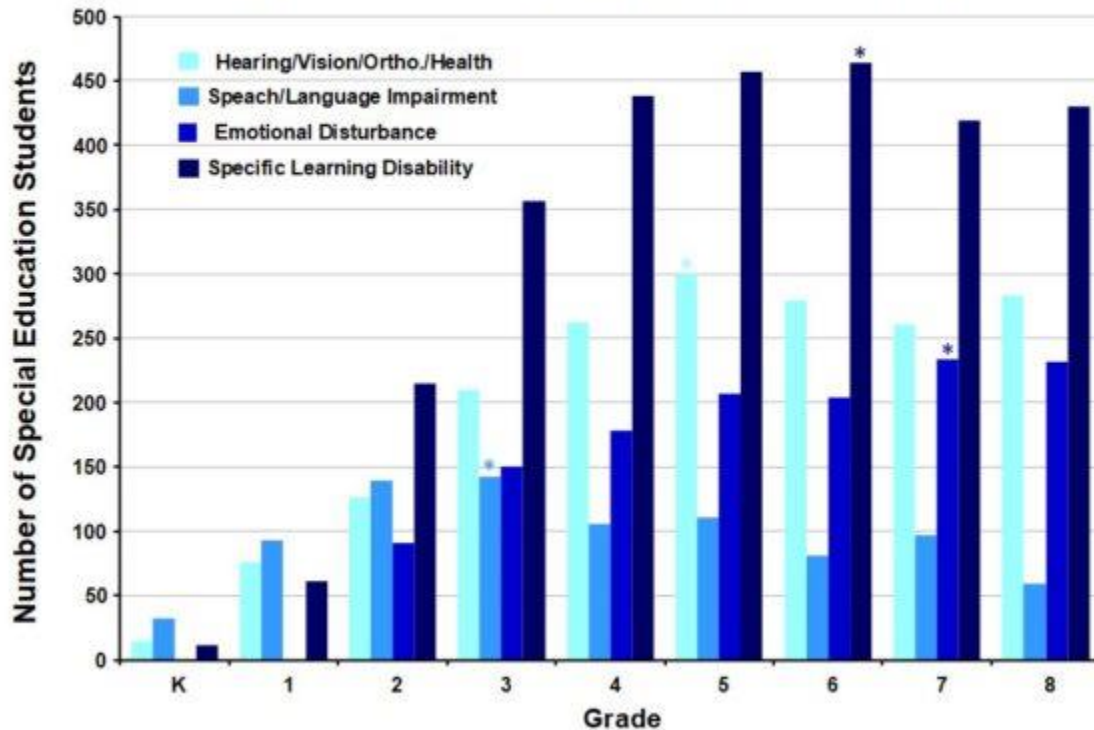
First and foremost, for this bill to be effective it will need to adhere to the science/neuroscience as it relates to “best practices” in reading to include “structured literacy” or “evidence-based literacy instruction”, as demonstrated by research to be most effective and necessary for building a effective, system for learning. H.101 requires that in order to be an eligible grant recipient for an AOE grant schools must be transitioning to best practices in the area of K-3 literacy with attention to the essential foundation skills in reading necessary for educational success (phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension).

I see this bill as an opportunity to build a sustaining system, with integrity, that is reinforced by the principles necessary to assure a culture of continuous improvement within a multi-tiered system of support. With evidence-based literacy at its center, teachers will enhance their knowledge so that students can benefit from high quality instruction with improved outcomes, evidenced by data. Working in concert with the intersecting components of MTSS and the foundation skills critical to reading success, the stage is set for the equity in opportunity that literacy affords. (Greater explicitness in the connection between the MTSS and the need to adhere to the research that comprises evidence-based literacy instruction needs to be made to build literacy instructional leadership).

Employing evidence-based structured literacy instruction, “including for students at risk for dyslexia” (page 11, line 4 (G), must include a common assessment approach for dyslexia screening) in order to ensure that robust instruction is provided to mitigate the prevalence of high numbers of students identified as eligible and in need of special education in the upper elementary grades and in middle school.) There are too many casualties of inappropriate intervention or failure to intervene when 90-95 percent of struggling readers can learn to read with appropriate research-based instruction, early on.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress tells the story of performance that has been virtually unchanged over the past 10 years. Sixty-three percent of Vermont’s fourth grade students perform below proficiency in reading. Sixty percent of Vermont’s eighth grade students scored below proficient in reading with students on free and reduced lunch performing below that level.

## Most SLD students receive services after 2nd Grade as typical students begin to read fluently.



We have an opportunity to pass H-101. The impact of not passing this bill has implications throughout our K-12 system and for college and career readiness.

- Children who get off to a poor start in reading rarely catch up
- By 4<sup>th</sup> grade most students struggling to read have missed the window to learn to read fluently
- Every year 1.2 million students drop out of high school in the US (one student every 26 seconds or 7,000 a day)
- 82% of sixth graders who failed English did not graduate from high school

The research is clear, we know what we need to do to build a strong system necessary to develop students' reading across the K-12 continuum. Systemic change, by advancing teacher knowledge, using evidence-based literacy instruction and engaging in data-based decision making promulgated throughout all VT schools will make lasting change. For now, H101 begins to address these issues K-3 and must be passed so we can build for tomorrow.