

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 198 Session of 2013

INTRODUCED BY NEILSON, MICCARELLI, PAYNE, FLYNN, MILLARD, O'NEILL, KOTIK, GIBBONS, DeLUCA, THOMAS, CALTAGIRONE, NEUMAN, J. HARRIS, ROEBUCK, BIZZARRO, SWANGER, MCNEILL, BISHOP, PICKETT, ROZZI, DAVIS, COHEN, V. BROWN, CLAY, MURT, O'BRIEN, MIRABITO, YOUNGBLOOD, FREEMAN, GINGRICH, FARINA, MICOZZIE, DENLINGER, QUINN, MASSER, BRIGGS, BROWNLEE, HARHAI, P. DALEY, K. BOYLE, GRELL, MUNDY, MIRANDA, B. BOYLE, McGEEHAN, KIM, SNYDER, MULLERY, KAVULICH, M. DALEY, PAINTER, PARKER, W. KELLER, DAVIDSON, SABATINA, HAGGERTY, CRUZ, SIMS, DIGIROLAMO, HARKINS, MCCARTER, TAYLOR, MILNE, PETRI, FRANKEL, DEAN, PASHINSKI, KORTZ, SANTARSIERO, MATZIE, HEFFLEY, SAINATO, READSHAW, WATERS AND D. EVANS, JUNE 4, 2013

AS AMENDED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JULY 1, 2013

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," providing for Dyslexia Screening
6 Pilot Program.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
10 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding an
11 article to read:

ARTICLE XVII-C

DYSLEXIA SCREENING PILOT PROGRAM

14 Section 1701-C. Short title of article.

1 This article shall be known and may be cited as the Dyslexia
2 Screening Pilot Program Law.
3 Section 1702-C. Definitions.

4 The following words and phrases when used in this article
5 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
6 context clearly indicates otherwise:

7 "Department." The Department of Education of the
8 Commonwealth.

9 "Dyslexia." A specific learning disorder that is
10 neurological in origin and that is characterized by unexpected
11 difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by
12 poor spelling and decoding abilities not consistent with the
13 person's intelligence, motivation and sensory capabilities,
14 which difficulties typically result from a deficit in the
15 phonological component of language. OTHER DIFFICULTIES MAY <--
16 INCLUDE PROBLEMS IN READING COMPREHENSION AND REDUCED READING
17 EXPERIENCE THAT CAN IMPEDE THE GROWTH OF VOCABULARY AND
18 BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE.

19 "Pilot program." The Dyslexia Screening Pilot Program
20 established under this article.

21 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.
22 Section 1703-C. Establishment.

23 (a) Pilot program.--~~The~~ TO THE EXTENT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE, <--
24 THE department shall establish a Dyslexia Screening Pilot
25 Program to provide evidence-based early screening and evidence-
26 based intervention services for children with risk factors for
27 dyslexia, such as low phonemic awareness.

28 (b) School districts.--The department shall select at least
29 three school districts to participate in the pilot program. To
30 be considered for the pilot program, a school district shall

1 submit a proposal to the department that DEMONSTRATES THAT THE <--
2 SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR THE PROGRAM AND THAT
3 identifies an evidence-based method of screening children for
4 low phonemic awareness and other evidence-based risk factors for
5 dyslexia, provides for the enrollment of children identified as
6 having evidence-based risk factors for dyslexia in a reading
7 program staffed by teachers trained in evidence-based
8 intervention programs, for example, multisensory structured
9 language programs, and includes a methodology for evaluating the
10 effects of the reading program on the children's identified risk
11 factors.

12 (c) Program operation.--The TO THE EXTENT FUNDING IS <--
13 AVAILABLE, THE pilot program shall operate for three full school
14 years, beginning with the school year that begins at least six
15 months after the effective date of this article.

16 (d) Evaluation.--The goal of the pilot program shall be to
17 evaluate the effectiveness of evidence-based early reading
18 assistance programs for children with risk factors for dyslexia
19 and to evaluate whether those programs can reduce future special
20 education costs.

21 Section 1704-C. Departmental responsibilities.

22 (a) Funds.--The department shall apply for Federal, private
23 and other non-State funds and shall use available State funds
24 appropriated by the General Assembly for the pilot program.

25 (b) Consultation.--The department shall consult with the
26 International Dyslexia Association, or any other nationally
27 recognized organization that specializes in and has expertise in
28 the scientific basis of dyslexia and its treatments, in
29 establishing and operating the pilot program.

30 (c) Report.--Not later than December 31 of the third school

1 year in which the pilot program is operating, the secretary
2 shall submit a report to the General Assembly containing the
3 secretary's evaluation of the pilot program and legislative
4 recommendations whether to continue, expand or make changes to
5 the pilot program.

6 (d) Guidelines and procedures.--The department shall
7 establish guidelines and procedures for the pilot program not
8 later than three months after the effective date of this
9 article.

10 Section 1705-C. School district responsibilities.

11 (a) Responsibilities.--Under the pilot program, each
12 participating school district, through early childhood reading
13 instruction and reading assistance programs, shall screen
14 children upon school entry in kindergarten through second grade
15 for indications of dyslexia, provide appropriate evidence-based
16 reading intervention services for those children suspected of
17 having dyslexia and administer assessments, approved by the
18 department, to ascertain whether the intervention services
19 improve those students' reading and learning.

20 (b) Notification.--When a child is suspected of having
21 dyslexia, the participating school district shall notify the
22 child's parent or guardian that the child, as part of the pilot
23 program, is eligible to receive reading intervention services to
24 measure the effectiveness of early reading assistance programs.
25 The participating school district shall require the parent or
26 guardian to indicate in writing that the parent or guardian
27 voluntarily and knowingly consents to the child's participation
28 in the pilot program. Each participating school district shall
29 provide to the parents of children suspected of having dyslexia
30 information about dyslexia and recommended evidence-based

1 treatments.

2 (c) Report.--Each participating school district shall
3 annually report to the department data and information about the
4 operation of the pilot program in the manner prescribed by the
5 department.

6 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.