



## MEMORANDUM

To: All House Members

From: Rep Stephen Kinsey and Rep Tarah Toohil

Date: March 28, 2017

Subject: Co-Sponsorship – Adding definition of “Dyslexia” to “Children with Exceptionalities” in Public School Code (former HB 1662 of 2015)

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In the near future, we plan to re-introduce legislation amending the Public School Code (Article 13, Section 1371, definition of Children with Exceptionalities) by adding dyslexia to what constitutes a disability, requiring specially designed instruction.

Federal regulations identify the 13 disability categories mandated to be addressed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Pennsylvania, we have adopted by reference these federal definitions (at 22 Pa. Code 14.102). Pennsylvania has not, to date, adopted any additional disability categories beyond those mandated in federal regulations. Under the IDEA regulations, there is no standalone disability category of dyslexia. Dyslexia is identified as an included condition under the category of Specific Learning Disability in addition to other conditions, but is oftentimes not addressed in schools where their budgets are not adequate.

Our legislation would add the International Dyslexia Association’s definition of dyslexia to the Public School Code, thereby increasing the required educational services that are offered to students with dyslexia.

Act 69 of 2014 was passed through a bipartisan effort which resulted in a Dyslexia Pilot Project, but it will be a considerable amount of time before the findings of this program are realized and recommendations can be instituted to benefit children with dyslexia. There is a strong desire from many in the dyslexia community to promote the intensive reading instruction models such as Orton-Gillingham or Wilson Reading approaches for students identified as dyslexic. These approaches have shown very favorable results in remediating reading difficulties for students with dyslexia.

Please join us in sponsoring this legislation. If you have any questions, please contact my office at (717) 787-3181,

## 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," in pupils and attendance, further  
6 providing for definition of children with exceptionalities  
7 and reports and examination.

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

10 Section 1. Section 1371 of the act of March 10, 1949  
11 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is  
12 amended to read:

13 Section 1371. Definition of Children with Exceptionalities;  
14 Reports; Examination.--(1) The term "children with  
15 exceptionalities" shall mean children of school age who have a  
16 disability, including but not limited to dyslexia, or who are  
17 gifted and who, by reason thereof, need specially designed  
18 instruction.

19 (2) It shall be the duty of the district superintendent, in  
20 every school district in accordance with rules of procedure

1 prescribed by the Secretary of Education, to secure information  
2 and report to the Department of Education, on or before the  
3 fifteenth day of October of each year, and thereafter as cases  
4 arise, every child with exceptionalities within said district. A  
5 report shall be made to the Department of Education of all  
6 children determined to need special education services or  
7 programs consistent with chapter 14 of State Board of Education  
8 Regulations, as well as chapter 342 of Department Standards.

9 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.