
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,
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PICKETT, ROZZI, DAVIS, COHEN, V. BROWN, CLAY, MURT, O'BRIEN,
MIRABITO, YOUNGBLOOD, FREEMAN, GINGRICH, FARINA, MICOZZIE,
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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 AND SANTARSIERO, JUNE 4, 2013

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JUNE 4, 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:

12 ARTICLE XVII-C

13 DYSLEXIA SCREENING PILOT PROGRAM

14 Section 1701-C. Short title of article.

15 This article shall be known and may be cited as the Dyslexia

1 Screening Pilot Program Law.

2 Section 1702-C. Definitions.

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

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

8 "Dyslexia." A specific learning disorder that is
9 neurological in origin and that is characterized by unexpected
10 difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by
11 poor spelling and decoding abilities not consistent with the
12 person's intelligence, motivation and sensory capabilities,
13 which difficulties typically result from a deficit in the
14 phonological component of language.

15 "Pilot program." The Dyslexia Screening Pilot Program
16 established under this article.

17 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.
18 Section 1703-C. Establishment.

19 (a) Pilot program.--The department shall establish a
20 Dyslexia Screening Pilot Program to provide evidence-based early
21 screening and evidence-based intervention services for children
22 with risk factors for dyslexia, such as low phonemic awareness.

23 (b) School districts.--The department shall select at least
24 three school districts to participate in the pilot program. To
25 be considered for the pilot program, a school district shall
26 submit a proposal to the department that identifies an evidence-
27 based method of screening children for low phonemic awareness
28 and other evidence-based risk factors for dyslexia, provides for
29 the enrollment of children identified as having evidence-based
30 risk factors for dyslexia in a reading program staffed by

1 teachers trained in evidence-based intervention programs, for
2 example, multisensory structured language programs, and includes
3 a methodology for evaluating the effects of the reading program
4 on the children's identified risk factors.

5 (c) Program operation.--The pilot program shall operate for
6 three full school years, beginning with the school year that
7 begins at least six months after the effective date of this
8 article.

9 (d) Evaluation.--The goal of the pilot program shall be to
10 evaluate the effectiveness of evidence-based early reading
11 assistance programs for children with risk factors for dyslexia
12 and to evaluate whether those programs can reduce future special
13 education costs.

14 Section 1704-C. Departmental responsibilities.

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

18 (b) Consultation.--The department shall consult with the
19 International Dyslexia Association, or any other nationally
20 recognized organization that specializes in and has expertise in
21 the scientific basis of dyslexia and its treatments, in
22 establishing and operating the pilot program.

23 (c) Report.--Not later than December 31 of the third school
24 year in which the pilot program is operating, the secretary
25 shall submit a report to the General Assembly containing the
26 secretary's evaluation of the pilot program and legislative
27 recommendations whether to continue, expand or make changes to
28 the pilot program.

29 (d) Guidelines and procedures.--The department shall
30 establish guidelines and procedures for the pilot program not

1 later than three months after the effective date of this
2 article.

3 Section 1705-C. School district responsibilities.

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

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

25 (c) Report.--Each participating school district shall
26 annually report to the department data and information about the
27 operation of the pilot program in the manner prescribed by the
28 department.

29 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.