

9116

I N A S S E M B L Y

January 28, 2016

Introduced by M. of A. O'DONNELL -- read once and referred to the
Committee on Education

AN ACT to establish a pilot program to provide early screening and
intervention services for children with risk factors for dyslexia

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-
BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. (a) The commissioner of education is hereby directed to
2 establish a pilot program to provide early screening and intervention
3 services for children with risk factors for dyslexia, including low
4 phonemic awareness. The commissioner shall select three school districts
5 to participate in the pilot program, one of which shall be located in an
6 urban setting, one of which shall be located in a suburban setting, and
7 one of which shall be located in a rural setting. Any school district
8 selected to participate in the pilot program may establish a partnership
9 with a regional library or library system for purposes of the pilot
10 program. To be considered for the pilot program, a school district shall
11 submit a proposal to the commissioner which:

12 (1) identifies a method of screening children for low phonemic aware-
13 ness and other risk factors for dyslexia;

14 (2) provides for the enrollment of children identified as having risk
15 factors for dyslexia in a reading program staffed by teachers trained in
16 multisensory structured language programs; and

17 (3) includes a methodology for evaluating the effects of the reading
18 program on the children's identified risk factors.

19 (b) The goal of the pilot program shall be to demonstrate and evaluate
20 the effectiveness of early reading assistance programs for children with
21 risk factors for dyslexia and to evaluate whether those programs can
22 reduce future special education costs.

23 (c) The commissioner shall establish guidelines and procedures for the
24 pilot program. The commissioner shall consult with the international
25 dyslexia association or any other nationally recognized organization
26 that specializes in multisensory structured language programs for the
27 treatment of dyslexia in establishing and operating the pilot program.

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (d)(1) Under the pilot program, each participating school district,
2 through early childhood reading instruction and reading assistance
3 programs, shall:

4 (i) screen children six years of age or younger for indications of
5 dyslexia;

6 (ii) provide appropriate reading intervention services for those chil-
7 dren suspected of having dyslexia; and

8 (iii) administer assessments, approved by the commissioner, to ascer-
9 tain whether the intervention services improve those students' reading
10 and learning.

11 (2) When a child is suspected of having dyslexia, the district shall
12 notify the child's parent or guardian of that fact and that the child,
13 as part of the pilot program, is eligible to receive reading inter-
14 vention services to measure the effectiveness of early reading assist-
15 ance programs. The district shall require the parent or guardian to
16 indicate in writing that the parent or guardian voluntarily and knowing-
17 ly consents to the child's participation in the pilot program for the
18 provision of reading intervention services. Each district shall provide
19 to the parents of children suspected of having dyslexia information
20 about the learning disability, recommended multisensory treatments, and
21 possible services under this pilot program or the education law.

22 (3) Each participating school district shall report annually to the
23 commissioner data about the operation and results of the pilot program,
24 as required by the commissioner in the manner prescribed by the commis-
25 sioner.

26 (e) For the purposes of this act, "dyslexia" means a specific learning
27 disorder that is neurological in origin and that is characterized by
28 unexpected difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by
29 poor spelling and decoding abilities not consistent with the person's
30 intelligence, motivation, and sensory capabilities, which difficulties
31 typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of
32 language.

33 (f) The pilot program shall operate for three full school years,
34 beginning with the next succeeding school year that begins at least
35 three months after the effective date of this section.

36 S 2. The commissioner of education shall apply for private and other
37 nonstate funds, and shall use available state funds appropriated to the
38 department of education for the pilot program established pursuant to
39 section one of this act.

40 S 3. The commissioner of education shall submit a report to the gover-
41 nor and the legislature no later than the thirty-first day of December
42 of the third school year in which the pilot program is operating
43 containing the commissioner's evaluation of the results of the pilot
44 program and legislative recommendations whether to continue, expand, or
45 make changes to the pilot program.

46 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.